

Ideational Peace

- Revisiting our own Ontological and Epistemological Approaches to Peace*

Aidan Gnoth, Hyukmin Kang,
Jiyoung Heo, and SungYong Lee

I . Introduction

Ideational approaches to studying and understanding peace are informed by the greater ‘ideational turn’ in political science (Blyth 2003; Carstensen 2015) and comprise a crucial *foci* of peace research. Countering the dominance of behaviouralist and empirical studies, this approach seeks to understand how ideas legitimise discourses and relations of power, shape actors’ understandings and interpretation of the world, and inform and justify their behaviours and actions (Jarstad *et al.* 2019, 14). Within peace studies, the ideational turn has focused on capturing the different meanings or understandings of peace that exist (Firchow 2018), the areas of congruence and contradiction between these interpretations (van Iterson Scholten 2020), the various ways in which our thinking about peace has shaped (or is shaped through) our interactions (Mac Ginty 2010), and how ideas legitimise particular discourses and behaviours in peace efforts (López-López *et al.* 2014).

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Though contestation over the meanings of peace is hardly a new realm of enquiry for scholars, contemporary efforts to explore the concept beyond mere understandings of violence are relatively novel. Here, critical works acknowledge the contested and pluralistic nature of peace and have begun to uncover spaces for more nuanced and fruitful explorations of its various experiences and possibilities.

Within the broader fields of political science and International Relations, ideational theories have done much to challenge the interest and material driven logics of rational choice theories. Of key importance is the contention that “the context in which actors find themselves is no longer a guide to their behaviour” (Gofas and Hay 2010, 18), as behaviours can change depending on how actors’ interpret their interests, environments, and peers. Instead, theorists seek to explain difference through nonmaterial factors, or “the *content of actors’ cognitions*” such as their preference for different material outcomes, their causal beliefs (theories of change), and “descriptive beliefs about the state of the world” (Jacobs 2015, 44). As such, while ideas can be affected by material considerations (or structural and situational factors such as economics and physical security), difference cannot solely be reduced to these elements, but is also shaped by their interactions with other ideas, cultures (“systems of meaning and the practices in which they are embedded” (Steinmetz 1999, 7) and discourses (the “social and linguistic boundaries” which delineate “what is possible to think, say, and do” (Padamsee 2009, 417). While significant discussions continue to be held regarding the causal or constitutive nature of ideational factors (Hay 2002) which undoubtedly have great implications for explaining how ideas affect behaviours and thus experiences of peace and conflict, within this article we are more interested in the prior task of scrutinising ideas and perceptions of peace themselves, drawing on the descriptive rather than explanatory impetus of ideational theories.

Within peace research, in particular, ideas are understood to affect

policy and practice by embodying actors' world views, which they use to understand environments and interactions, make value judgements of what is right or wrong, and determine their objectives (Goldstein *et al.* 1993). Ideas also act as road maps, determining acceptable policy preferences and the levels of co-operation and cohesion within groups, enabling the resolution of collective action problems. Given the role ideas play in meaning-making and legitimising actions and political orders (Olivius and Hedström 2021), understanding different ideas of peace and their impact upon actors is of central importance to peace efforts. Not only because attempts to build peace need to resonate with the ideas and perceptions of those local communities intervened upon, but because operations must be supported by the "material... collective and intersubjective understanding of international actors" if they are to take place (Coleman and Williams 2021, 242–243). Ideas of peace can thus describe what peace is, and what it ought to be, and can be related to relational and situational dimensions. Exploring different ideas, how they shape behaviours, and how they are transmitted and transformed through interactions is thus of great importance to social scientists attempting to evaluate how ideas of peace may decrease or exacerbate violence (Klem 2018).

In this context, this article introduces and critiques the VoP frameworks of ideational peace and other relevant approaches. It then will discuss the utilities of ideational peace approaches in proposing alternative/supplementary views on the peace(s) in the Korean Peninsula. Though each of these disciplinary *foci* have the potential to uncover new understandings of peace within the Korean Peninsula, we are more interested in exploring context-specific experiences and ideas of peace, rather than generating universalised understandings of how humans interpret, understand, and act upon these ideas. As such, while we draw on literature from across disciplines to inform our understanding of ideational peace, our focus below is more upon specific approaches

which we feel resonate with the Korean context.

II. VoP Framework

Ideational analysis is perhaps the most complex and difficult approach to measuring and understanding peace out of the three types evaluated in this volume, as it relies on the subjective experiences and deductions of both the researcher and their subjects, providing significant room for misperceptions and misunderstandings. While there is a significant and centuries-long discussion regarding what constitutes an idea, ideational analysis within peace research (as within much of academia) tends to operate through Cartesian thinking, whereupon ideas are understood as abstract phenomena, construed as representational objects in the mind's eye. They are experiential, in that they are produced through our interactions with each other and the world around us. They are also co-constitutive, and shape how we interpret the world and act within it. Ideas are abstract in nature and cannot be studied directly and must instead be captured, analysed, and compared through interpretative methods such as discourse analysis or interviews.

Significant literature exists on each of these methods, and researchers have drawn on a range of disciplines, including psychology, anthropology, political psychology, and pedagogical approaches to explore ideas of peace (see, for example, Hakvoort and Oppenheimer 1998; Richmond, Pogodda and Ramović 2016). Delineating between these disciplinary approaches is problematic given the shared phenomena and phenomenological understanding of the world that guides them. While this shared foundation can cause confusion, when terms have different definitions or understandings across disciplines, this cross-pollination can also generate new insights and ways of thinking, which improve our methodological, analytical, and conceptual tools

(Millar and Lecy 2016).

Within the VoP project, ideas are conceived of as complex and distinct phenomena that have their own independent force. They are “products of cognition, entities with a certain degree of continuity, which separates them from fleeting impressions or casual attitudes” (Jarstad *et al.* 2019: 13). Acknowledging the myriad approaches to analysing and interpreting ideas, the VoP project suggests scrutinising ideas through a typology of cultural biases (grid group cultural theory) or descriptive/functional analysis to systematically map discourses of peace and explore their effects on policy. These two approaches will be briefly summarised below before assessing how they may be altered to better align with the aims of critical research as well as the South Korean context.

1. Descriptive and Functional analysis

The first method proposed within the VoP project resembles a combination of discourse analysis and process tracing, both of which are relatively common within ideational analysis (Padamsee 2009). Here, descriptive analysis seeks to interpret the meaning of ideas (in a similar manner to discourse analysis), while functional analysis seeks to ascertain the origins and effects of ideas, or how they have informed policies and behaviours over time. These methods have had considerable uptake within peace studies, where scholars have sought to expand causal theories of conflict to explain, for example, why despite similar material conditions, some groups choose violence to resist dissent and others do not (Masullo 2021).

As with discourse analysis, descriptive analysis can be undertaken on a plethora of data types to capture ideas and interpret their meaning, from policy documents to speeches and interviews, but could just as easily be carried out on cultural dynamics, such as “symbols, myth, ethos,

historical precedents and collective narratives, as well as phrases, idioms and metaphors regarding peace” (Gavriely–Nuri 2010). Once captured, ideas must be systematically evaluated and interpreted, typically through the use of a sociological framework to help make sense of the data. For example, Hardell (2020) uses the dimensions of situational and relational peace laid out by Jarstad *et al.* (2019) to explore the meaning of different policies, while others may choose to interpret meaning through other conceptualisations of peace, such as Galtung’s (1969) positive/negative dichotomy, or Wallensteen’s (2015) Quality Peace. Once ideas have been identified and interpreted, their effects can be explored through policy analysis or process–tracing techniques (Jacobs 2015).

One example of the descriptive functional approach has been provided by Hardell’s (2020) analysis of Russian ideas and perceptions of peace as they have been articulated within the United Nations. Employing Vedung’s (2018) descriptive and functional ideational approach, Hardell scrutinises how ideas of peace underpinned policy and political positions across two aspects of peace: situational (understood through Jarstad *et al.*’s (2019) dimensions of political order and security) and relational (understood through Sönderström *et al.*’s (2020) dimensions of behaviour, perceptions, and ideas). Hardell (2020: 52) demonstrates how Russian ideas of situational peace are characterised by “strong and legitimate state governance, responsible for addressing root causes of conflict and conflict management” while relational elements include promoting cooperation, friendly relations, and attitudes of trust.

2. Grid Group

The second approach suggested to understand ideas of peace within the VoP project is through application of Grid–Group Culture Theory (GGCT), where the assumptions underpinning ideas (or cultures) are categorised upon a four–part matrix of ideal types to expose the

contradictions and overlaps between different actors' perceptions and understandings of peace. While a descriptive element is still required to first identify and interpret ideas, the difference when compared to descriptive/functional analysis is that ideas are then interpreted or understood through different cultural types, or "the shared attitudes, values, behaviours, practices, and artefacts of a particular group that views itself united by a common history" (Oxford 2014: 3). As cultures form around ethnicity, religions, language, classes, as well as epistemologies and ontologies (Galtung 1990) they can be used to categorise groups, from families to entire nations, based on elements ranging from shared histories to accepted forms of behaviour (for a comprehensive list, see Oxford 2014, 5).

GGCT is already well established within peace research, given its seminal role in early conflict resolution theories which used cultural differences to explain tensions and animosities between conflicting parties (Avruch 1998), or why internationally led peace efforts may be rejected or repurposed by local communities when opposing values clash (Björkdahl and Kappler 2017). Cultures can be thought of "as a mosaic of identities, attitudes, values, beliefs, and institutional patterns" comprised of "a cluster of attributes that enables peaceable behaviour to take place in a society..." (Boulding 1998: 445–446). Although ideas can be distinguished from cultures, shared ideas make up an integral component of this mosaic. By drawing on ideas of peace, interpersonal relations, cultural biases, as well as behavioural strategies (Mamadouh 1999), ideational studies seek to facilitate greater understandings of how "values and beliefs affect behaviours, which in turn affect the way people organise social relations, and vice versa" (Sahovic 2007a: 24). GGCT can be used as a full-fledged theory to explain or predict how frictions are generated through interactions between cultures, or, less problematically, as a heuristic device or classification schema which assists researchers in categorising data. It is this latter ambition that has been of most

relevance to contemporary and critical attempts to understand peace.

GGCT is based on three underlying assumptions: (1) culture matters and shapes how we perceive, act, and justify our social relations; (2) we can identify and typologise various cultural types; and (3) these typologies and their various combinations are universal (Mamadouh 1999). It holds that people interpret and act within the world based on their “adherence to a certain way of organising social relations”, determined by “two basic dimensions of social life: incorporation or boundedness (group) and regulation or prescription (grid)” (ibid, 397). Group refers to the “incorporation into a bounded group” (Mamadouh 1999, 397), or whether the society is more individualistic or collectivist, while grid relates to the “level of external restraints people are willing to accept” (Käll 2021, 15), or the rules and norms which individuals are subjected to or conform with in their interactions with others. From these two dimensions, four specific (and ideal) cultural types can be determined, “the ‘individualist’ (low group / low grid), the ‘fatalist’ (low group / high grid), the ‘egalitarian’ (high group / low grid) and the ‘hierarchist’ (high group / high grid)” (Sahovic 2007b, 3). Each of these types thus tells us something about a culture, for example, low grid and group cultures are typically considered individualistic and emphasise self-sufficiency, whereas high group and grid cultures reflect hierarchical societies with coherent and strict social roles that determine appropriate behaviours. While all cultural dynamics are present in a society at any given time, their degree or influence changes as actors interact with their environment and each other, allowing researchers to capture (or predict) socio-cultural or socio-political change and determine the extent to which a particular culture may be peaceable or not. While some commentators have critiqued these earlier uses for the implication that violent conflicts are inherent to the particular cultures of post-conflict communities themselves (Chandler, 2010; Sabaratnam, 2017), current research attempts to avoid such problematic moral implications by merely

describing the various contradictions and congruences held by different actors without stating preferences.

To instrumentalise this typology, each culture must be understood in relation to a type of peace or peaceable behaviours, such as the concept of “culture of peace” articulated by the United Nations to determine supportive and oppressive peace discourses (see, Gavriely–Nuri 2010). Within the VoP project, researchers have drawn on an adapted GGCT framework called socio-cultural viability (Sahovic 2007b, 2018) which repurposes the four cultural solidarities (fatalist, individualist, egalitarian, and hierarchical) into recognised peacebuilding approaches (forced peace, negotiated peace, just peace, controlled peace). Such a model seeks to first categorise actors into their various cultural solidarities to illuminate aspects of contention and similarity and has been used by Sahovic (2007a) to explore the likelihood of whether or not peace deals might be accepted or rejected by parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

These various types have also been drawn upon to explore how ideas shaped divisions and deadlocks in Cypriot peace processes. Käll (2021, 11), for example, examines ideas of peace as they have been expressed by political elites and argues that the Cypriot peace process is deadlocked due to the contrasting ideas which guide political elite actions (See Table 1). Based on this analysis, Käll suggests that peacebuilders need to move beyond the material or physical divisions between Cypriot communities to understand how ideas of peace themselves contradict and contrast with each other.

Interestingly, and as is often the case in ideational studies of peace, the ideational approach employed here sought to understand actors’ perceptions of relational and situational peace using pre-determined peace types (fatalism, realism, liberalism, and idealism, see Richmond 2008), rather than uncover and generate new and more everyday understandings of peace themselves.

In short, VoP adopts the description/functional approach to capture

〈Table 1〉 Peace Types

Ideal type	Grid dimension	Group dimension	Idea of peace
Just peace	Peace from within	Cooperation to solve conflict issues	Justice, equality and reconciliation, broad definition
Negotiated peace	Peace from within	Cooperation to a limited degree with clear set of rules	Democracy, economic development, freedom
Controlled peace	Peace from above	Cooperation to solve conflict issues	Security and stability through strong institutions and control over deviants, injustice and inequalities accepted
Forced peace	Peace from above	No cooperation	War will resume, peace forced through protectorate or occupation as a pause in between wars

Source: Käll 2021: 17

the meanings of peace(s) as different groups interpret in their own views, as well as utilises Grid Group Cultural Theory to distinguish and compare different approaches in a straightforward manner. The underlying thoughts, moreover, highlight the importance of acknowledging and examining ideational factors that influence people's visions on the prospects of peace in their own societies.

III. Implications for the Korean Context

Although ideational analysis has proliferated over the past few decades, as with much of Peace and Conflict Studies, the primary focus of scholars has been to explain conflicts and their causes, rather than differing perceptions of peace (Gleditsch, Nordkvelle and Strand 2014). Early applications of the VoP framework, however, have already pointed to promising avenues for exploring peace which offer significant

opportunity to contest dominant framings and identify alternative perceptions of peace across the Korean Peninsula. Indeed, the visions for peace(s) in the conventional discourse in South Korea have been restricted by the homogenous and majority-centred perspectives on the 'Korean nation.' Due to such a bias, alternative forms, dimensions and modalities of peace have had little space to be explored. The following section begins to explore how ideational analysis might be applied to disrupt dominant conceptions of peace within Korea, before assessing shortcomings and possible ways this approach may be adapted to generate more nuanced and locally grounded enquiries.

1. Contesting Peace as Unification

An ideological approach to studying peace is beneficial for numerous reasons, not least because it can help to overcome dominant and problematic discourses by identifying hidden or marginalised perspectives and narratives. Within the context of the Korean Peninsula, the application of frameworks such as GGCT enables a plurality of peace(s) to emerge which can then be assessed in terms of their contradictions and incompatibilities, potentially proffering new paths towards peace. For example, the long-held assumption over a shared and homogenous ethnicity between the two Koreas has frequently led the South Korean government to focus on short-term problems related to the division structure while continually pushing for reunification, the non-negotiable goal of its peace policies. Emerging critical research has shown, however, that this dominant interpretation of 'peace as reunification' may obscure other perspectives and possibilities for peacebuilding. For example, this myopic focus on national reunification frames peace as political outcome rather than an ongoing process, as is it has increasingly been viewed amongst critical literatures (Chung 2010; Chung 2021; Kim 2020), preventing improvement on issues such as the social re-integration of

communities in the North and South, which cannot be examined amidst the current political deadlocks. Indeed, a more critical and grounded interrogation of peace problematises the very prospects of reunification due to deep-seated incompatibilities between the two Koreas in areas of politics, economics, identities and culture, and suggests that peaceful coexistence, rather than unification, should be the goal of peace efforts (Choi 2018; Park 2018).

This dominant perception of ‘peace as unification’ has also produced numerous policy dilemmas for South Korean governments which can benefit from ideational scrutiny. First, ideational analysis can provide new paths for understanding how the conflict is maintained. It must be noted that while South Korean governments appear to increasingly recognise the unfeasibility of achieving unification in the immediate future, shifting towards a ‘peace first’ policy (Moon administration 2018–2022, see Ministry for Unification 2022), unification remains firm as the nation’s ultimate goal at the expense of other endeavours. For example, there has been little effort to transform cultures and perceptions of the conflict in either Korean society, where it continues to be considered intractable and the fault of the other. This is despite evidence demonstrating the profound dependence that each Korea has on external actors in constructing and maintaining these disparate identities. Here, Bleiker’s (2005) ideational analysis has illuminated the constitutive nature of Korean identities, shaped by how others perceive and interact with each nation (for example, through the conception of North Korea as a ‘rogue state’), as well as how they understand and interact with others. To Bleiker (*ibid*), it is the construction of these national identities that give rise to the ongoing crisis, as both Koreas seek to legitimise themselves through othering, emphasising and distorting differences to consolidate inter-group cohesion. Second, ideational analysis can shed light on why attempts to build peace through unification can actually be counterproductive. Here, the requirement for unification as the ultimate

and non-negotiable goal of the nation and peace efforts increases competition over which Korea can be considered the legitimate and representative political order. In short, unification policies have often been interpreted in zero-sum terms where unification is seen to comprise an existential threat to each regime causing the dominant understanding of peace held by the South Korean government to be a threat to peace itself. Lastly, ideational analysis can explore how and why political polarisation amongst national identities hinders peacebuilding efforts.

In South Korea, opinions and ideas of how the government should approach the North have become increasingly polarised since the 2000s and led to a 'South-South Conflict' between left and right-wing groups. This has left little room for plausible policy options that rely on compromise and reconciliation, as opinions are split between those on the right who seek short term conciliatory measures to gradually build peace in pursuit of unification, and ethnic nationalists on the left who argue for unification first, given that attempts to build peace amidst the division structure simply maintain unequal distributions of power. This polarisation has also resulted in increased political fatigue and indifference on peace related issues amongst the public, and surveys have suggested a correlation between the duration of the conflict and the importance of reunification.

While the desire for a unification-centred peace is understandable considering the material and socio-psychological costs of the long-lasting intractable conflict and division system, there are numerous entrenched problems that would need to be overcome before any political or practical progress was possible. As such, the GGCT framework could help to move beyond dominant state framings of peace and the focus on unification to explore perceptions amongst a variety of actors, exposing their congruences and contradictions, and helping to shape minute and everyday peace processes.

Moreover, to move beyond the understanding of 'peace = unification'

can enable people to adopt more creative and pragmatic approaches, in which short- and long-term problems are distinguished and dealt with step-by-step. For instance, efforts to deconstruct hostile identities, transform negative interdependence, and promote nonviolent methods of conflict resolution by removing military options from the policy toolbox could all be undertaken without needing to first address political polarisation and the intractable positions which actively maintain the status-quo division. In sum, the idea of stable peace seeks to establish peaceful coexistence between conflicting parties initially, before increasing integration in the long term, with the goal of eventually establishing a shared security community or union (Kupchan 2010). In addition to the example of stable peace, numerous other dimensions for conflict transformation could be undertaken while steering these longer-term political peace processes at the national and international levels, such as social integration of hostile societies, and the construction of shared or common identities and narratives. Here, agnostic theories of peace could provide useful insights into how this ideational transformation could occur, by reframing the friend/enemy dichotomy as one between adversaries (Shinko 2008, 478) and allowing for iterative processes of reconciliation to take place while avoiding those non-negotiable political elements.

2. Uncovering Marginalized Voices

Another aspect of the bias that the homogenous and majority-centred approach to the Korean nation presents is to ignore minority voices. Similar to Hardell's (2020) descriptive/ functional analysis of peace in Russia, an ideational analysis of the Koreas could expose alternative perceptions of peace (description), such as those held by marginalised, minority, and victim communities, and explain why they have emerged (functional). As an example, let's consider victims' perceptions of peace

which are focused on their self-recognition, needs, and meaning making. A descriptive/functional analysis helps us to clarify ideas on how victims and perpetrators think about who they are, what needs they aspire to develop, their willingness to reconcile with others, and what ideas, cultures, and discourses might encourage them to act as agents for peace (or violence). Such examinations may be seen as micro and unofficial, and yet uncover and address actors' profound motivations that fundamentally form their understanding of the conflict and subsequent behaviours.

To identify how people understand the causes of conflict and how they are involved in the conflict is a crucial step to promote peace and reconciliation in a post-conflict society. Different groups in the society may present radically different perspectives on the conflicts depending on their positions, and one individual or group frequently possesses multiple and simultaneous positions as both victims and perpetrators. During the Korean War, for instance, many villagers in local and extended communities had engaged in various interactions with each other, creating complex ingroup-outgroup dynamics. One family once became identified as the 'friends of communist revolution' when the North Korean army occupied its area, and later became the 'frontline people against the communist traitors' when the South Korean counterparts possessed the land. In many cases, such 'identification' was done by military or political powers who were external to the local communities. Once they had been branded as 'communist associates,' people experienced massive violence followed by stigmatisation in South Korea. As the perpetrators of violence had held central power until the late 1990s, victims of the state violence had to live docilely to avoid further discrimination. In contrast, perpetrators in power continued to deny their violent acts and enjoyed '*power-over*' their victims in everyday life. This social context forms individuals' and groups' recognition in relation to the aftermath.

Functional analysis can be further used to explore people's perceptions of peace and the opportunities for reconciliation by understanding how it formed in relation to ideational and material experiences and needs. Here, prospects for peace are directly linked to perceptions of what peace is or should be, such as material needs that were previously unfulfilled due to violence. Such understandings help not only to understand previous experiences of peace and conflict, but what factors might improve peace efforts. A wide range of needs-based literatures have identified a positive correlation between victims' and perpetrators' basic needs and their willingness to reconcile. That is, satisfying their emotional and instrumental needs in the aftermath of conflict improves possibilities for reconciliation. This approach reveals for instance what kinds of needs the Korean victims of political violence and perpetrators aspire to satisfy in their social and cultural context, how they make use of power (that is restricted under the current political structure) and morality as a means of restoration and empowerment (Kang and Lee 2021). Unlike conventional views on reconciliation which rely on the somewhat binary understanding between punitive and restorative justice (Breen-Smyth 2007), an ideational approach may offer different understandings about what process is needed between victims and perpetrators beyond the apology, compensation, and punitive justice.

Moreover, while mass violence fundamentally alters victims' and perpetrators' self-recognition and everyday experiences, how this impacts their internal processing and sense making of the world after violence has scarcely been studied in peace literatures. Worldview is a critical component to understanding how actors perceive peace and right or wrong behaviours. It also forms ideas of what peace should be and encourages both victims and perpetrators to think of ways to transform violence, informing ideas of social change. Within the context of the Korean Peninsula, the failure to fully interrogate these everyday understandings and perceptions of peace potentially exacerbates outdated

and false assumptions which have, to date, been characterised by state-centric narratives and a myopic focus on reunification.

IV. Problematising Ideational Peace

The recalibration of cultural typologies to fit ideas of peace is somewhat awkward, as ideas of peace are categorised by the broader elements which shape them rather than the specific ideas and aspirations of which they might be comprised. As such, this top-down approach may sit uncomfortably alongside calls for scholars to engage more deeply and authentically with local voices to generate more contextualised and sensitive understandings of peace. Indeed, given the dominance of Eurocentric thinking in peace studies (Weerawardhana 2019), we must caution attempts to utilise pre-existing cultural typologies to capture nuanced, hidden, and everyday experiences and aspirations of peace within disparate communities. Indeed, such an approach potentially undermines many of the merits that led to the ideational turn in the first place, reducing its interpretive and subjective elements in favour of methodological pragmatism and abstraction, in line with material and interest-based behavioural models. While there is not the space here to debate the differences and problems between rational choice and new-institutionalist approaches to culture (for such discussions, see Grendstad, Selle and Thompson 2003; Chai 1997), the predictive potential of these pre-formulated or top-down approaches changes dramatically as it reflects the actor(s) being studied and their experiential and cultural histories. Existing work has already highlighted the significant differences that exist between, for example, Confucian cosmology and its emphasis on harmony, and Western, Kantian, or Judeo-Christian conceptions of peace (Chen 2016) and, while attempts to map disparate perceptions of peace across Korean communities will

undoubtedly prove interesting, great care is needed to ensure these are accurately and ethically captured, suggesting a descriptive rather than explanatory approach.

To many, such cautions may resonate with the past ten years of critique levelled against frameworks of hybridity (Höglund and Orjuela 2012; Wallis, Jeffery and Kent 2016) and friction (Björkdahl *et al.* 2016). Indeed, while the GGCT can be used purely as a descriptive tool and typologise understandings of peace, it can also be used to identify and predict clashes between interpretations of peace, in a similar manner to how hybridity and friction explored clashes between norms, understandings, and practices of peace during operations. While critical research has rightly problematised the simplistic binary between international and local actors in these studies (De Coning and McDonald-Colbert 2021), as well as the ability for practitioners to plan and predict experiences of peace (Millar 2014), this recognition did not prevent scholarly and practitioner attempts to ‘localise’ (Acharya 2004) international norms and expectations of peace (Sabaratnam 2017). Despite this, and like hybridity and friction before, the rigid typologies needed to instrumentalise ideational approaches to peace are nevertheless useful as heuristic devices – to identify, describe, and make sense of differing perceptions of peace. While caution must be exercised by researchers employing them, this should not exclude them from studies of peace. The following section explores several methodological adjustments that may further benefit and nuance such endeavours.

1. Reconsidering Approaches

Ultimately, it is unclear whether either approach is better suited to capturing localised and previously unnoticed elements of peace, though this was not the intent behind the ideational framework laid out within the VoP project. As noted, a significant issue with this approach is the

tendency to try to match lived and described understandings of peace with pre-conceived typologies, which seems to contrast critical peace efforts to disrupt and contest orthodox understandings with alternative, and typically 'local', perceptions. To this end, eschewing rigid frameworks such as the grid/group typology may allow for researchers to dampen the impacts of cultural or ideational determinism, but at the expense of comparative utility of the approach.

One such possibility has been employed within the Everyday Peace Indicators project (*Everyday Peace Indicators*, no date) which draws on participatory research methods (Morgan 1996) to generate understandings of peace through continual reflective consultation with local focus groups and community members. Participants are empowered to construct and select indicators themselves, which are then categorised, analysed, and measured longitudinally through surveys (Firchow 2018, 69) reflecting critical and decolonial calls for oppressed peoples to critically evaluate their own situations and take part in analysis of their lived experiences (Freire 1996; Smith 2021). Its application in Columbia and Uganda benefitted from partnerships with civil society organisations and on the ground researchers, creating a series of dynamic feedback loops to assist in the generation, translation, and carrying out of surveys. The large and systematic capture of these 'crowd sourced indicators' (Mac Ginty 2013) is staggering, illuminating experiences and expectations of peace as diverse as whether or not people were digging in their gardens to whether or not they heard gunshots or dogs barking in the evening (both of which might be construed as perceptions of situational peace). Such studies can be used to understand whether people's perceptions or experiences of peace have changed over time, as well as align peacebuilding efforts and objectives with the ambitions and understandings of local populations themselves.

This approach, which resonates with grounded theory (Timmermans and Tavory 2012), attempts to construct indicators and understandings

of peace from the bottom up, and is thus well suited to ongoing efforts to recognise a plurality of peace types or heterotopias (van Leeuwen, Verkoren and Boedeltje 2012). However, its flexibility poses problems for normative scholars and practitioners seeking to build peace, and who must accommodate these differences in customs and understandings even when they contrast or contradict their own. While shallow attempts to reconcile these differences may simply encourage practitioners to alter their operational sequencing to reduce frictions, a burgeoning field of scholarship has investigated how understandings of agonism might enable deeper understandings of peace as well as reflective, sensitive, and sustainable peace processes (Aggestam, Cristiano and Strömbom 2015).

These efforts to adopt ‘locally-driven approaches’ are related to the fundamental consideration of “who determines peace for whom?”. This question can be particularly important for examining the peace(s) that social minorities in South Korea experience and develop in their everyday lives. In many conventional studies, researchers attempt to evaluate the states and conditions of peace by looking at the institutional support or policy areas. For instance, when examining the success of foreign migrants’ settlement in the Korean society, researchers evaluate the ‘successes of the government policies’ by drawing on aggregated data of the governmental budgets including the amount spent on migrant support, the number of supporting institutes established across the country, and the number of migrants who used services (Kim 2009; Kim, Cho, Choi and Lee 2008; Kim *et al.* 2008). It should be noted that these research reports are meant to offer policy implications for the relevant government agencies; nevertheless, as most studies on migrants’ life environment focus on the mechanisms developed and supported by the state agencies, they tend to conceptualise migrants as passive recipients of the support and neglect the agency that they possess.

Employing bottom-up and ideational approaches to understanding peace provides an opportunity to identify and examine the nature and

experiences of peace as determined by migrants themselves. While the social and structural conditions largely determine the environments for peacebuilding, in this regard, migrants living in South Korea can develop their own strategies for responding to the conditions and restrictions. As a result, the local actors in peacebuilding bring about dissimilar and occasionally frictional or conflict-promoting types of peacebuilding strategies that generate various types of inter-personal and inter-group relationship building. Hence, studies can learn more about the agency of migrants that can be used to further promote the space for peace. Despite the significance of them, the roles of such social minorities in building peace cannot be acknowledged unless a suitable framework is adopted by the researchers who set the ideational visions to do so.

While drawing on grounded theory approaches to build new understandings of peace would ensure greater explanatory and contextual relevance, it would also decrease the comparative utility of the understandings (and theories) that such studies generate. One of the primary rationales guiding these burgeoning approaches to understanding peace has been to produce more nuanced understandings of peace which can be identified, measured, and compared with other contexts so that we may begin to understand a plurality of desirable characteristics which move beyond the simplistic and dichotomous conception of peace as the antithesis of violence. The generation of bottom-up characteristics potentially undermines this rationale, and thus scholars may elect to more simply augment these existing models with more contemporary understandings of culture. Here, Hofstede *et al.*'s (2019) extended cultural typology may prove useful, in which scholars have drawn on data conducted through thousands of surveys across the world for over twenty years and utilised a multifactor analysis to generate six value dimensions of culture which might be used to augment, extend or potentially replace the GGCT model (for alternatives, see for example Schwartz 1994; Knafo, Roccas and Sagiv 2011). While many of these

dimensions (individualistic/ collectivistic, masculine/ feminine, uncertainty avoidance, power distance, time perspective, indulgence/restraint) are already captured within the GGCT model, the inclusion of additional provisions, or the uncoupling of all dimensions from the four rigid cultural typologies may provide for a more nuanced approach to understanding cultural delineations of peace. Through these dimensions it might be possible to chart, for example, the extent to which the two Koreas have diverged along cultural lines since their separation, a factor which, although understudied, has been noted to produce and further antagonistic behaviours between the two states (Kang 2018).

V. Conclusion

The merits of the ideational approaches are many, allowing for a variety of different interpretations of peace to be captured and examined so that peace efforts can be recalibrated to resonate more closely with the subjects of interventions, and to more deeply challenge the assumptions and biases which continue to shape our understandings of what peace is. Analysing the perceptions and understandings of peace across the Korean Peninsula seems likely to produce a myriad of theoretical and practical insights which can be used to move peace processes forward and improve the everyday lived experiences of communities. As examples, this chapter focused on the visions for promoting peace between North and South Korea, which has been restricted by the prevalent notion of the one Korean nation, as well as the suppression of social minorities' voices due to the majority-centred approaches to peace. Recognising that interpretive and descriptive approaches to uncovering and understanding new notions of peace must be undertaken with care to avoid homogenising or erasing alternative narratives, the need to expand beyond these dominant narratives of peace seems pressing if scholars and

practitioners are to overcome existing political deadlocks.

Despite this, in the current academic debates, efforts to map ideas of peace and consider their overlaps and incompatibilities are relatively few and far between. At least within existing peacebuilding literature, ideational approaches to understanding peace frequently overlook its ambitious and aspirational quality in favour of exploring how actors perceive its relational and situational elements – how they currently experience peace. Recognising the immense complexity involved in societal interventions (de Coning 2020), this focus frequently fails to grapple with the wider systemic and structural factors which continue to produce inequalities and promote conflict (Gnoth 2020). Due to the well-intentioned desire to mitigate the most immediate instances of violence, existing works seeking to understand that localised understandings of peace are bound by their subjects' proximity to violence (Firchow 2018, 15), capturing limited and minimalistic perceptions of peace rather than more holistic and ambitious notions that could offer more long-term benchmarks for assessing peace efforts. As such, the ambitious and more utopian nature of peace (Klem 2018) appears to be lacking from both emerging everyday expressions, which have been captured in post-conflict spaces, as well as in broader and more universalist notions drawn on by scholars.

A recent study, exploring how critical scholars critiqued ideas of peace to understand the extent to which new and ambitious notions had been developed since 2005, speaks to this lacuna. Gnoth (2020) argues that peace scholarship has largely failed to offer more than a fleeting consideration of the concepts underlying the liberal peace, including the legitimacy of violence, the Weberian notion of a state's right to violence, as well as a host of institutions that give rise to inequalities and increased grievances such as the capitalist economic system, notions of private property and individual ownership, etc. This effort leaves problematic aspects of peace unchallenged, and ambitious and

aspirational notions unimagined. To overcome this lacuna, it could be worth expanding projects such as the everyday peace indicators into more peaceful regions of the world as well as capturing more imaginative interpretations.

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