Jukka Halkilahti

Conflict(ing) narratives; scientific interpretations of the conflict between the government of Indonesia and Free Aceh Movement

University of Tampere
Department of Political Science and International Relations
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This thesis studied how the Aceh conflict is explained in scientific literature. The purpose of the thesis was to construct a post-modern understanding of scientific inquiries following neo-pragmatist understanding of scientific research. The object of my research was to analyse the scientific narratives regarding the conflict between the government of Indonesia and the separatist group Free Aceh Movement (Gerakan Aceh Merdeka – GAM). The analysis focused on five scientific narratives and the purpose was to find out why the Aceh conflict emerged.

The second chapter of the thesis examined various paradigms in peace research that are or continue to be influential in the field. It distinguished the theories into two groups, traditional and social constructivist perspectives and further argued that although the discipline of peace studies has cemented its position within social sciences, the field, nevertheless, is very fragmented. The third chapter constructed a post-modern perspective on scientific research. It was argued in chapter three how language in scientific inquiries can be understood in a dual sense. On the one hand, language is utilised by the scholars to represent the world and, on the other hand, academics apply it in order to cope with the world. The fourth chapter argued that scientific inquiries can be meaningfully seen as narratives or stories. The narrative approach was clarified as the method in this thesis. It was examined how narratives are generally structured and how an additional element in narratives was the rhetoric. The final chapter analysed five scientific narratives of the Aceh conflict. The first narrative presented a historical analysis, second was based on greed-grievances paradigm, third followed a wide array of Social Constructivist literature, fourth examined a positivist perspective and finally fifth gave an anthropological perspective.

The analysis showed how none of the interpretations succeeded in giving practical suggestions for resolving the conflict. Therefore, the tradition of how a theory meets practice, which is highly valued in peace and conflict research, has either been broken or the analysed conflict by the researchers was so intractable that scholars did not find any means to cope with it. The most interesting element of the inquiry was to locate the story with other stories and how they connect with each other.

The analysis showed how even the most recent scientific narratives did not provide any valuable new insights to the conflict. It would be presumptuous to claim for the utter insignificance of these studies but I would like to question the practical usability of them. In other words, instead of describing the conflict ever more clearly or attempting to find the truth of the matters, the focus could lay on the pragmatic questions. The analysis also showed that none of the presented narratives offered any precise means to solve the conflict. What is clearly lacking in these suggestions is the Rortyan utopia; a clear and practical vision of a better future world.

Key words; peace and conflict research, post-modernism, neo-pragmatism, narratives.
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1. Introduction

1.1. The prevalence of violent conflict

The end of Cold War was seen as the last great conflict on a road towards a perpetual peace. Western liberal-democratic values appeared to have prevailed which encouraged some scholars to claim for the end of history.\(^1\) While on an interstate level it actually appeared that the scourge of war was eradicated from the international scene; on a domestic level the situation seemed much different. Mary Kaldor suggests that during the 1980s and 1990s a new type of organized violence developed which is a feature of the current globalised era. Kaldor makes a distinction between new wars, which are common to current globalised era, and old wars that were predominant in the early 20\(^{th}\) century and from which Western notion and understanding of the concept of war derives from. According to Kaldor, old wars were considered to belong to the property of states, thus, wars were conceived as a rational instrument for a state to pursue its interest.\(^2\) In other words, as Carl von Clausewitz states, “[…] war is an act of violence intended to compel our opponent to fulfil our will.”\(^3\) Old wars were socially organised activities in a sense that they clarified and constitutionalised several distinctions such as public–private, internal–external, civil–military and war–peace.\(^4\)

The most distinctive feature of the new wars is that they are predominantly civil or intrastate wars and they are instigated, for instance, by ethnicity, nationalism, religion, identity or a struggle over a control of state power and its resources.\(^5\) According to the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), all the ongoing armed conflicts in 2006 were distinguished as intrastate wars, although five of them included eminent international aspects.\(^6\) Hence, in spite of the local context, new wars often involve a countless number of transnational connections and a wide array of actors ranging from non-governmental organizations (such as Amnesty International) to powerful super states (such as United States).\(^7\) Typical to the new wars is that the violence is directed against civilian population who are often terrorised by the conflicting participants while the battles between the opposing parties are rare. The terror against civilians causes them to seek safety in other countries as

\(^1\) Fukuyama 1992.  
\(^2\) Kaldor 1999, 1-2, 15.  
\(^3\) Clausewitz 1997, 5.  
\(^5\) Kaldor 1999, 2; Francis 2006, 69.  
\(^6\) Harbom & Wallensteen 2007, 626; For an updated data see www.prio.no.  
\(^7\) Kaldor 1999, 2; Francis 2006, 69.
refugees, consequently, new wars commonly cross state borders by spilling-over to the neighbouring states ultimately creating regional instability. New wars are also partly a product of the economic globalisation since they are sustained by control over resources or by external financial support. Another distinctive feature that is commonly recognised in the new wars is the erosion of state authorities and its security structures. To conclude, the distinctions, such as internal–external, civil–military and local–global, that distinguished old wars have either eroded or blurred in the new wars. In the new wars, the military fronts are not defined, the phase of events is fluid and the power disparity between the participants is highly asymmetrical.

The historical processes such as globalisation and the end of Cold War arguably have had an impact on the nature and processes of current violent conflicts. This does not, however, imply that current conflicts form a common departure from the past conflicts. The concept of new wars is generally used to describe some current conflict where a non-state actor or groups of actors fight against the government. However, various scholars have contested Kaldor’s distinction. For example, M. Smith observes that there is nothing intrinsically new in the contemporary conflicts “[…] either as a phenomenon or as an object of study.”

The outbreaks of ethnic conflicts in the aftermaths of the post-Cold War era, such as the conflict in the former Yugoslavia and in Rwanda, gave rise to the idea that these conflicts were something new compared to the old wars as described by Kaldor. Smith asserts that this exhortation of the appearance of new wars is nothing more than an indication of the dominant Eurocentric mindset represented by most scholars of varying disciplines. During the Cold War, most of the scholarly interest was focused on issues regarding Great Power rivalry with issues such as disarmament and deterrence. The difference from the Cold War era is that academics are now focusing more on the previously neglected issues of intra-state wars than before. Additionally, the media coverage of the current conflicts and particularly of the atrocities committed by the contestants is much wider than in previous times.

Edward Newman, on the other hand, comments that Kaldor’s description of new wars adequately explains the processes, patterns and elements (such as the actors, objectives, economy, social structures and spatial context) embedded in most of the contemporary conflicts. However, Newman too, stresses that all of these factors that characterise new wars have been present and influenced by a varying degree of all the previous conflicts in the past 100 years. For instance, the atrocity

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8 Kaldor 2003, 121; Francis 2006, 67.
12 Smith M. 2003, 25, 34.
towards civilians as a deliberate political strategy is not a new phenomenon. Terror was widely used, for example, during the 2nd World War as well as in lesser conflicts like in the Mexican revolution during 1910-1920. Another basic argument among the protagonist of the new wars phenomenon is that the sheer number of inter-state wars has declined after the end of Cold War while the number of intra-state conflicts has increased.\textsuperscript{14} This argument is inaccurate, violent intra-state struggles have always outnumbered the interstate wars even during the seemingly non-violent Cold War era.\textsuperscript{15} Statistics support this argument, since the end of World War II, there has been a total of 232 armed conflicts and the vast majority of them have been intrastate wars.\textsuperscript{16} Smith argues that the end of Cold War has been meaningless for most of these so called new wars, as the cases of Columbia, Kashmir, Palestine, Basque Country and Sudan, vividly prove.\textsuperscript{17} Nonetheless, figures show that the number of conflicts has been in sharp decline after 1990s resulting in 2006 with 32 ongoing armed conflicts. Despite the sharp decline, many of the current conflicts have been active for more than ten consecutive years. Even though these protracted conflicts have, at some point, experienced temporal de-escalation or lull phases, they often escalate or restart after a couple of years. Therefore, a group of highly protracted conflicts forms the core of current global conflicts.\textsuperscript{18}

Researchers have developed numerous, diverse concepts and terminology to describe contemporary conflicts such as intra-state wars, civil wars, asymmetric warfare, low intensity conflict, deep-rooted conflicts, political violence, unconventional war, ethnic conflict, and anti-colonial war. These are just some of the conceptualisations generally used in the scientific and popular lexicon.\textsuperscript{19} However, identifying a conflict to a certain type neglects its complexity, since the dynamic nature of contemporary conflicts means that the elements which lead to the emergence of conflict might not be the same that cause its intractability.\textsuperscript{20} As Smith argues, all wars are unique to their time and place –each with its distinctive origins and directions, and because they are multifarious they defy categorisation. Francis echoes Smith’s thoughts by stating that any conflict should be examined on a case-by-case basis, along with the knowledge that conflicts have multiple causes.\textsuperscript{21}

The diverse and complex nature of contemporary conflicts have prompted a situation in which academics and research centres have often provided conflicting answers to Quincy Wright’s

\textsuperscript{14} Newman 2004, 174, 175, 179, 181, 182.
\textsuperscript{15} Smith M. 2003, 34.
\textsuperscript{16} Harbom & Wallensteen 2007, 623, 625.
\textsuperscript{17} Smith M. 2003, 34.
\textsuperscript{18} Harbom & Wallensteen 2007, 623, 625.
\textsuperscript{19} Smith M. 2003, 20, 21; Francis 2006, 66-67.
\textsuperscript{20} Jabri 1996, 18; Diehl 1992, 335.
\textsuperscript{21} Smith M. 2003, 37; Francis 2006, 66.
questions: “How is war fought? How is war thought? Why is war thought? Why is war fought?”22 Wright’s questions lead to the focus of this thesis. To be more specific, it is thought in this thesis that the changeable and incoherent nature of contemporary conflicts prompts academics to differing descriptions of the same conflict. Therefore, despite the decades of research and the development of numerous theoretical frameworks it still seems apparent that “To different people war may have very different meanings.”23

1.2. Post-modernism as a theoretical perspective

Previous chapter explained how conflicts encompass multiple elements. Hence, it is merely sensible to argue that there can, consequently, be equally many versions of the reasons of the conflict. There is a wide or at least growing consensus among academics that in social sciences there are no objective and universal truths; the meanings or facts are always situated in certain time and place. This line of thought is commonly characterised as post-modernism which is a rather mixed collection of views. For instance, Paul Rabinow & William Sullivan construct their post-modern argument by following an interpretative tradition and state that

“There is no outside, detached standpoint from which we gather and present brute data. When we try to understand the cultural world, we are dealing with interpretations and interpretations of interpretations.”24

In other words, both the interpreter (for example social scientist) and the interpreted are entangled in the cultural world which does not present itself neutrally or with one voice and thus, there are no brute facts, absolute perspective, privileged position or facts prior to interpretation.25 From this understanding, Charles Taylor makes a rather hopeless discovery for the utility of social sciences by arguing: “[…] there is no verification procedure that we can fall back on. We can only continue to offer interpretations; we are in an interpretative circle.”26

Taylor’s position exemplifies the current post-modern condition and while there are different basis for explaining post-modernism, common to all these theories is that they challenge the central and traditional notions of science, such as truth, objectivity and universality.27 Consequently, it is impossible to construct value-free, neutral or objective studies in social sciences because there is

22 Wright 1965, 20.
23 Wright 1965, 3.
24 Rabinow & Sullivan 1988, 7.
26 Taylor 1988, 75.
not one truth nor metanarratives but many truths where each scientific inquiry presents a smaller narrative or story.\textsuperscript{28}

What can the post-modern perspectives offer to peace research? The idea that it is impossible to find objective, value-free truths fits uneasily with peace research. After all, a fundamental tenet in any inquiry of conflict is to find answers (or true knowledge) in order to resolve the conflict or at least to enhance one’s knowledge of conflicts. Some commentators argue that post-modern approaches can be rather nihilistic; criticism is made for the sake of criticising without any claims for finding real answers to the underlying problematic issues. In other words, if everything is relative, how is it possible to tackle questions of conflict that often are highly political and normative? On the premise, the post-modern approach seems utterly useless and undesirable for conflict research.\textsuperscript{29} However, one cannot simply ignore the critique posed by the post-modern scholars towards the traditional notions of science. The idea that a peace researcher as a disinterested observer would find the real causes of conflicts is nowadays increasingly difficult to sustain. Hence, this thesis takes as its starting point the current post-modern condition attempting to explain the field within this perspective.

The purpose of this thesis is to construct a post-modern understanding of scientific inquiries. More specifically, this thesis follows neo-pragmatist understanding of scientific research which begins with a post-modern conception that one will never be able to step outside of language, that is, the reality cannot be grasped without the mediation of a linguistic description. Therefore, any object of inquiry can only be described in one language or another.\textsuperscript{30} There is an infinite number of ways to describe the reality and none of the ways is more accurate description than another.\textsuperscript{31} Consequently, pragmatists consider truth as well-justified belief that helps one to cope with the world. In this sense, there is always room for improved ideas and beliefs, since there are no eternal, universal and ultimate truths.\textsuperscript{32} In accordance to pragmatist perspective, this thesis constructs a point of view in which language is conceived as a tool for representing as well as coping with the reality. In other words, peace researchers utilise language as a tool for representing the conflict as well as presenting ideas how to resolve a particular conflict.\textsuperscript{33} This idea is thought to be aligning with the peace and conflict studies’ tradition which holds that theoretical knowledge ought to be followed with praxis.

\textsuperscript{28} Vasquez 1995, 217-218, 219; Lyotard 1984, xxiv, 60; Jameson 1984, xi-xii.
\textsuperscript{29} Jackson & Sørensen 2003, 250-253.
In this sense, in academic inquiries "Theories thus become instruments, not answers to enigmas, in which we can rest."  

Regarding scientific inquiries, this thesis constructs a view on how each study begins with the scholar’s choice of his or her perspective. Accordingly, as the researcher chooses his or her specific point of view, different explanations of the events result. Scientific inquiries are always situated in a certain time-place context; to be more specific, within a certain language-game that determines the rules and vocabularies used in that language-game. Additionally, each language-game in parts determines or at least influences the perspectives that the scholar chooses. Within these language-games, inquiries are seen as narratives, where each story constructs distinctive description of the same social phenomenon, that is, a conflict. Additionally, this thesis regards narratives as representations of the world and utilises the theoretical insights of narrative construction in order to interpret the empirical material.

1.3. The research questions

Protracted conflicts tend to create protracted peace processes and because of the extended timeframes analysts have a tendency to separate the different phases of the conflict (context, process and outcomes) to manageable parts. In other words, academics only attempt to explain a part of the whole conflict process. Contextual issues of the conflict refer to the causes, reasons and meaning, that is, why is war fought. The process refers to the various peace processes, that is, how peace was achieved. The outcomes refer to post-agreement phases, that is, how well a particular settlement maintains the peace. This distinction between three stages of conflict is artificial since it is practically impossible to separate a conflict into neatly demarcated spheres. However, the factual unfeasibility of examining the whole conflict that, for instance, has continued for decades including multiple peace resolution processes, in a single study often lead scholars to this practical distinction. This thesis follows this logic and distinctively focuses on the contextual aspects of conflict.

This thesis constructs a post-modern theoretical framework of studying the social world and examining scientific interpretations of the Aceh conflict. This thesis argues that there are multiple and even conflicting scientific stories to tell about a particular conflict. Facts are always theory-driven, there are no facts prior to interpretation and each interpretation of a conflict forms a

34 James 2000, 28.
36 Wittgenstein 1974, §§ 2, 21-23, 31, 43-44.
distinctive world view. Additionally, each inquiry is considered as a narrative or a story. From this post-modern position follows the primary purpose of this thesis which is to examine how differently a conflict can be explained. That is, the purpose regarding the empirical material is to analyse five alternative academic narratives of the Aceh conflict. This understanding forms the first research question:

1. **How do scientific narratives explain the Aceh conflict?**

An important element in peace studies is its practicability. Theoretical knowledge is often followed by praxis. But how does this tradition result in scientific inquiries? Following the post-modern perspective, this thesis constructs an understanding of language as tool for the researcher to represent the conflict as well as present ideas how to cope with the conflict. Thereby, it is thought that scholars, in accordance with the tradition, include in their descriptions of the conflict means to cope with the conflict as well. This understanding forms the second research question:

2. **What tools do the narratives propose in resolving the conflict?**

1.4. **The case study and personal perspective**

The object of my research is to analyse the scientific narratives regarding the conflict between the government of Indonesia and the separatist group Free Aceh Movement (Gerakan Aceh Merdeka – GAM). The conflict has waged for over three decades and it is one of the many contemporary protracted conflicts, that is, at least for now, being resolved. On December 26, 2004 a devastating earthquake hit the Indian Ocean, creating a series of tsunamis that eventually killed approximately 160,000 people in Aceh leaving more than 500,000 people homeless.\(^{37}\) The tsunamis and the earthquake severely damaged the territory which acted as a catalyst for opposing parties to reiterate the need to resolve the conflict. In the spring of 2005, official peace talks were held in Finland in a series of meetings. They were arranged by an organization called Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) whose chairman, the former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari, led the negotiations. As a result, peace agreement was signed in Helsinki on August 15, 2005.\(^{38}\)

\(^{37}\) BRR 2006, 7, 14.

\(^{38}\) Aspinall 2005, vii-viii.
My interests for this case awakened during my exchange year in England in 2005-2006 where I participated to a bachelor thesis module. In the beginning of the module, our convenor suggested that we should make our dissertations on an issue that has some connection to our lives. As the only Finn in the whole module, the Aceh case was something I could relate to and which peace negotiations during the spring 2005 I had followed. While writing my bachelor thesis I was puzzled by the questions how to study conflicts and overwhelmed by the sheer number of paradigms, schemas and diagrams that scholars have constructed within peace studies.

In my bachelor thesis, I applied two paradigms in order to explain the Aceh case. I was sceptical, however, how these paradigms and diagrams could in any way capture such a complex social phenomenon such as conflict. For this thesis I wanted to continue with the same topic but change the perspective. Furthermore, I wanted to find a theoretical perspective that would go beyond paradigms, thus, making some sense of the fragmented field of peace research. Ultimately, my purpose was to find a theoretical position that would make sense, at least, to me.

I believe that the Aceh case is a prime example of the complexity of contemporary protracted conflict. The conflict breaks through all the levels of analysis (international, societal and individual) and it can be studied through several different ways, hence, forming differing explanations and understandings of its dynamics and elements.

1.5. The outline of the thesis

The second chapter presents an overview of the literature of peace and conflict research. The scale of peace studies is enormous, thus, this chapter focuses only on most important paradigms that have been or continue to be influential in the field. Additionally, the focus will be on theories that attempt to explain why and how conflicts emerge. Thus, the purpose of this chapter is to examine how a conflict is understood in academic literature. The end of the chapter critically evaluates the current state of peace research.

The third chapter commences the theoretical framework of this thesis. It presents a post-modern view of peace studies and conducting scientific inquiry, in particular. It presents a post-modern understanding of conducting scientific inquiries arguing that there are infinite ways of describing the reality. The descriptions vary according to the perspective that the scholar has chosen as well as
the specific language-game within which the study is constructed. Consequently, chapter three presents an argument that in scientific inquiries the world is made rather than found.

The fourth chapter continues the theoretical discussion by presenting a view how scientific inquiries can be understood as narratives or stories. This chapter clarifies the understanding how scholars construct or make the world that is under examination. The first purpose is to argue how narratives are a form of telling rather than a form of being. The second purpose is to lay down the methodological elements when examining the empirical material. That is, this chapter examines how scientific narratives are structurally constructed and what is included in the interpretive process.

The fifth chapter forms the case-study part of the thesis and it analyses five altering scientific narratives of the Aceh conflict. Chapter begins by explaining the research framework for the analysis, also, clarifying the choice of empirical material. Following parts analyse the narratives and it will be argued that although the researchers’ interpretations of the Aceh conflict differ significantly, none of them succeeds in giving practical suggestions for resolving the conflict.

The final sixth chapter concludes the study by presenting the arguments of this thesis. It examines how I succeeded in meeting the research questions. It further develops arguments for further studies.
2. The academic field of peace and conflict research

What are the causes of war, what is a conflict and how do we understand it? This chapter presents an overview of the peace and conflict studies focusing on how academics have attempted to form an understanding of the reasons, causes and meaning of conflict. In peace studies, several paradigms have been introduced in order to analyse the complex dynamic processes of the conflict. Every paradigm forms a distinct way to view the world, thus, highlighting divergent understandings of the origins and processes of conflict and conflict management. As Dennis Sandole states “Different paradigms, different mappings of the ‘same thing,’ mean different ‘realities’ […]” The literature on peace and conflict research is massive, hence, this is not a comprehensive account but a simplified view on various paradigms. In addition to paradigms, academic literature on peace research has developed a myriad of concepts or groups of concepts in order to explain a particular view or a response to a conflict. For instance, what is the difference between conflict resolution, conflict transformation, conflict settlement, conflict management and conflict containment? How do we define important concepts such as war and peace? Some of these concepts are self-explanatory, for example, conflict containment refers to a situation where the purpose is to constrain the conflict in order to reduce its intensity or to limit it from spilling-over to other areas. Thus, it does not attempt to resolve or transform the conflict, in other words to end the quarrel perpetually. The terminology is very confusing and sometimes the same definition is used intermittingly with different paradigms or means. In this thesis, Conflict Resolution and Conflict Transformation when written in capital letters are recognized as paradigms in their own respect. Conflict management, conflict settlement, conflict resolution and conflict transformation (written in small letters), then, will be considered parallel concepts and they will be used to refer to a positive handling of a conflict – that may include different processes to resolve the conflict such as mediation or facilitation.

In this chapter, the literature on peace and conflict research has been divided between traditional approaches and social constructivist approaches. The traditional views are: Realism, Liberalism, Marxism, Conflict Resolution, Conflict Transformation and the work of Johan Galtung. The social constructivist views are: Social Constructivism, Feminism, Discourse Analysis and Neo-Marxism. Again, following the writing logic of this thesis, Social Constructivism, when written in capital

40 For an overview of peace and conflict research see e.g. Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall 2005; Sandole 1996; Barash 1991; Rogers & Ramsbotham 1999; for an overview of the vast scale of contemporary peace studies see e.g. Crocker, Hampson & Aall 1996; Galtung & Webel 2007.
letters refers to a paradigm, whereas when it is written in small letters, it is regarded as a meta-theoretical approach. This distinction will be clarified in chapter 2.3. Nonetheless, the division between traditional–social constructivist approaches is not necessarily an accurate distinction and there are alternative ways on making the distinction. One common way is to distinguish between subjective and objective approaches whereby the former focuses on the subjective elements of the conflict such as perceptions, beliefs, misperceptions and values of the participants. The latter objectivist approach, then, focuses on the external and objective qualities of conflict. Therefore, when analysing conflicts, it emphasises, for example, the social and overt behavioural elements or the structural variables such as the distribution of power.\textsuperscript{42} Tarja Väyrynen, on the other hand, makes the distinction between totalist and non-totalist approaches to conflict, in other words, whether the paradigm advocates a universal explanation of conflicts and conflict management or whether the paradigm promotes relativist stance towards examining conflicts.\textsuperscript{43} Accordingly, the paradigms presented cannot necessarily be distinguished as uniform schools of thought since each approach entail differing thoughts among its representatives.

This chapter begins by exploring the historical development of peace and conflict studies mainly by focusing on explaining the central characteristics of the field. Next part examines the traditional and social constructivist approaches to conflict. The final part critically reviews the current state of peace and conflict research.

\textbf{2.1. The historical development of the peace studies}

The study of peace and conflict can be traced to the social and liberal internationalist movements of the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century. These pacifist movements were influenced by the atrocities of the 1\textsuperscript{st} World War and they tried to develop a whole new field of peace research where the goal was to prevent future wars.\textsuperscript{44} The study of international relations, too, was originally committed to the idea that through research, it would be possible to eradicate war as a mode of diplomacy in world politics. During the early years of Cold War, much of the academic interest was focused on the great power rivalry with issues such as prevention of nuclear war, arms control, disarmament and confidence-building measures. The development of the peace and conflict research as a specific discipline in the social sciences was further institutionalised with the creation of academic journals and research

\textsuperscript{43} Väyrynen T. 2001, 2-3.
\textsuperscript{44} Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall 2005, 34.
centres during the 1950s and 1960s.\textsuperscript{45} According to Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall, by the end of the 1960s, peace and conflict studies

“[…] had defined its specific subject area in relation to the three great projects of avoiding nuclear war, removing glaring inequalities and injustices in the global system, and achieving ecological balance and control.”\textsuperscript{46} The discipline further expanded its interests from the early 1970s, focusing on intra-state conflicts, or what are variously termed in the literature as deep-rooted conflicts, intractable conflicts or protracted social conflicts, and to the procedures how to peacefully manage them such as negotiation and mediation.\textsuperscript{47}

In spite of these mentioned interest areas, there continues to be problems to define the boundaries of the discipline, in other words, what kind of research can be categorised under the general rubric of peace studies. This largely depends on how broadly the core concepts such as peace, war and conflict are defined and what other issues areas are linked to these notions.\textsuperscript{48} Johan Galtung comments that strict definitions of the field might encapsulate it towards a certain realm, perspectives and questions, hence, shadowing all the future problems or issues.\textsuperscript{49} According to Galtung, peace studies are a research into the conditions for moving closer to the state of general and complete peace.\textsuperscript{50} Unto Vesa similarly asserts that the core locus of peace research has remained the same as it was defined by the early academics of the field, that is, to study the causes of war and the conditions for peace. This categorisation considers that, for example, the studies regarding the resolution of conflicts are at the centre of peace research while studies (such as environmental studies) that do not directly point to the questions of war and peace might still have relevance for developing more peaceful world. According to Vesa, the \textit{raison d’être} for peace research, then, is to contribute through research in developing a more peaceful world.\textsuperscript{51} Nonetheless, the debate on this regard continues and perhaps it is more helpful to clarify the identity of the field by examining the affinities that the representatives of the peace studies share.

Johan Galtung distinguishes three distinct aspects of peace research: applicability, multidisciplinary and internationality. Peace and conflict studies are applied science, in a sense that, the purpose is not merely to present how things actually are but also to tell how they ought to be.\textsuperscript{52} Furthermore, Galtung explains that “Peace research should also be peace search, an audacious application of

\textsuperscript{45} Patomäki 2001, 724, 725; Rogers & Ramsbotham, 742-748.
\textsuperscript{46} Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall 2005, 47.
\textsuperscript{47} Rogers & Ramsbotham, 742-748.
\textsuperscript{48} For instance, see the lively debate between Antti Kaski and Unto Vesa. Kaski 2005; Vesa 2006; Kaski 2006.
\textsuperscript{49} Galtung 1964, 1; although the editorial is unauthorised it was most likely written by Galtung. See Vesa 2006, 56.
\textsuperscript{50} Galtung 1964, 2.
\textsuperscript{51} Vesa 2006, 59-60, 64.
\textsuperscript{52} Galtung 1969a, 12-13, 17.
science in order to generate visions of new worlds [...]”\textsuperscript{53} There is a strong normative tradition in peace studies and in order to support this idea an analogy is often drawn with the role of the physician – just as the normative objective of medicine is health the objective of peace studies is peace. Therefore, the aim is not only to construct interesting, high-quality studies of various issues but the research needs to be relevant as well.\textsuperscript{54} The close relationship between theory–praxis and research–activism has created criticism. For instance during the 1960s, critics argued that peace and conflict studies had become too close to the political decision-making process, thus, it had lost its value basis and normative characteristics.\textsuperscript{55} Additionally, majority of the scholars insist that theoretical insights must be empirically tested, hence, despite the efforts to delineate theory–practice and research–activism, these two fields have commonly overlapped.\textsuperscript{56}

According to Galtung, the normative commitment to applicability and relevance necessitates multidisciplinary. Galtung rather robustly argues that a peace research which is not constructed in a multidisciplinary way does not have any significance.\textsuperscript{57} While one might not agree with Galtung’s strong argument, the fact is that the multi-faceted nature of conflicts has lead to a situation that multiple fields, such as anthropology, psychology, politics, economics, sociology and international relations studies, have contributed to peace studies.\textsuperscript{58} The final distinctive feature of peace studies is internationality, in other words, peace studies ought to transcend states’ borders. Galtung neatly summarises this point by declaring that the “Peace researcher has no fatherland. His or her aim is the whole world.”\textsuperscript{59} Therefore, the purpose is not simply to study the conditions of one country but to construct studies in such a holistic manner that the conditions for peace could become more real everywhere in the world.\textsuperscript{60} The function of peace research is neither to use it as a tool for maintaining some ideology over another nor to utilise it in order to support policy choices of organizations such as foreign ministries or NGOs. Galtung argues that when peace research becomes such a tool, it ceases to be either science or research. The purpose of peace research is to help to understand war and peace without prejudices in a more realistic and adept ways.\textsuperscript{61}

To sum up, peace and conflict research has a strong tradition for scientific knowledge, original belief of peace studies held a commitment that through science it is possible to eradicate war as well
as enlighten humanity.\textsuperscript{62} Throughout the history of peace research, there has been attempts to ground the subject into qualitative research and comparative empirical study.\textsuperscript{63} Vivienne Jabri observes that the principal aim of peace and conflict research is explanation but the field also has a purposeful practical objective, i.e. amelioration of violent conflict through scientific understanding of conflict processes.\textsuperscript{64} Other affinities amongst the academics and characteristics of peace studies are the normative commitment to the analysis of conditions for social and political change, multidisciplinary nature and holistic approach combined with qualitative and empirical methodologies in studying the issues of peace and conflict. Rogers & Ramsbotham comment that all of these have affected so that the field has developed into a distinctive discipline in the social sciences.\textsuperscript{65} Despite some disagreements amongst the representatives, a central commitment or objective has prevailed, which is, formulating and applying theoretical paradigms designed for preventing, managing and ending a violent conflict.\textsuperscript{66}

\section*{2.2. Traditional views of the conflict}

This part presents six paradigms and the first three, Liberalism, Realism and Marxism, are approaches that are not specifically constructed for the purposes of conflict analysis. They all stem from a wider philosophical discussion from which they morphed into a more subtle and precise frameworks in the various fields of social sciences. In politics, these perspectives are often distinguished as ideologies. Oliver Richmond argues that these approaches offer “determinist grand narratives” to conflict. Liberalism presents one-size-fit all progressive framework with limited or no recognition of difference. Realism, on the other hand, presents a negative peace based on inherency and finally Marxism offers “[...] grassroots emancipation from determinist structures of the international political economy via violent revolution.”\textsuperscript{67} Despite the labelling as traditional, all of the three approaches have been and continue to be highly influential both in the world politics as well as in the field of peace research.

The three other paradigms presented in this part, Conflict Resolution, Conflict Transformation and the work of Johan Galtung, on the other hand, are approaches that have been specially created for

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{62} Patomäki 2001, 726.  \\
\textsuperscript{63} Rogers & Ramsbotham 1999, 741.  \\
\textsuperscript{64} Jabri 1996, 12.  \\
\textsuperscript{65} Rogers & Ramsbotham 1999, 742.  \\
\textsuperscript{66} Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall 2005, 54.  \\
\textsuperscript{67} Richmond 2008, 3.
\end{flushleft}
analysing conflicts. These are labelled as traditional since they all have decade long traditions and they continue to be influential in the field.

2.2.1. Liberalism, Realism and Marxism

The dominant paradigm after the World War I was Liberalism. The idea underlying this approach was a liberal view of human being. Human nature is essentially good and altruistic and, thereby, wars must only result from either actor’s mutual misunderstanding or from the dominance of uneducated minds in the political process. Domestically, the answer for the problem of war is democracy which prevents the proponents of war (in other words uneducated minds) from the political process. Internationally, the answer is to create organizational structures through which the political leaders could perceive more accurately the non-aggressive aims of their potential opponents. Other proposals from Liberalists include ideas such as strengthening the system of international law, promoting international organizations such as United Nations, outlawing the war, disarming, promoting free trade and establishing an international police force.\(^{68}\) Especially the idea of expanding international commerce, trade and capitalism has been a major part of the liberal antiwar credo. Non-violence or pacifism has also been a prevailing tenet of liberal ideology.\(^{69}\) Liberalism encourages the cooperative non-adversarial processes of conflict management such as non-zero-sum and win-win approaches in dealing with conflicts.\(^{70}\) The current approaches to Liberalist paradigms are, for instance, the democratic peace theory, promotion of human rights and proponents for the global civil society.\(^{71}\) Most of the contemporary peace and conflict research could be distinguished as being Liberalist since in most of them the underlying ideology is based on Liberalist tradition. Researchers, furthermore, tend to understand the term peace in Liberal terms, hence, many studies support institutions and values, such as democracy, human rights, market economy and the rule of law. To sum up, according to Richmond, Liberal peace is the dominant mode of thought in peace studies.\(^{72}\)

The atrocities of World War II provoked strong criticism towards Liberalism from the Realist thinkers. Realists accused Liberalists for being naïve (in other words idealistic or utopian) in their legalistic and moralistic assumptions about the prospects of peace and progress through human

\(^{69}\) Barash 1991, 18, 19; Richmond 2008, 30.
\(^{70}\) Sandole 1996, 4-5.
\(^{71}\) On democratic peace see e.g. Russett 1993, on global civil society see e.g. Kaldor 2003.
\(^{72}\) Richmond 2008, 12-14, 263.
aspiration. E.H. Carr published in the 1940s a book that later became a canon for Realist tradition.\(^{73}\) In his book, Carr proposed that international relations should be viewed as they were rather than as they might be.\(^{74}\) Realism, then, is defined in terms of Hobbesian view on human nature which suggests that non-violent interaction is an artificial condition achieved only through an imposed order.\(^{75}\) States are the primary actors and they act within an anarchical international environment. Because of the absence of any higher authority or mechanisms above the states, the decision-makers have to rely on power politics where everyone is competing against each other in order to maintain the survival of self, group or state. Dennis Sandole comments that the Realist worldview encourages the competitive processes, in other words, power-based, confrontational, zero-sum, win-lose approaches in dealing with conflicts.\(^{76}\) In the study of international relations, the Realist paradigm has maintained its influential position partly because of the rise of Neo-Realism whose basic tenets have been presented in Kenneth Waltz’s book “Theory of international politics\(^{77}\)”. In his book, Waltz advances beyond traditional realism by arguing that the basic domain of international politics is the anarchical system which conditions the behaviour of all states within it. In this way Neo-Realism moves forward from Realism which was concentrated on looking at national political systems as an explanatory factor.\(^{78}\) Richmond comments that in Neo-Realist world system there is only an absence of war or a hiatus from violence. In other words, peace is only temporary, until the states, that are driven by selfish national interests and fear for their security (security-dilemma), resort to arms. To conclude, Realism offers domestic peace limited by the need to prepare for war and a victor’s peace at the international sphere.\(^{79}\)

Marxism presents yet another view of conflict and it has developed from its traditional understanding to numerous and varied Neo-Marxist theories. Traditional Marxism focused on the inevitable conflict between socioeconomic classes, thus, violence is unavoidable and integral to the nature of world politics. According to Dennis Sandole, Marxism emphasises “[…] structural change, especially in the system of ownership of the means of production, as the way to bring about behavioural change.”\(^{80}\) Traditional Marxism holds that the structural hegemony of Realism and Liberalism driven by the rich and powerful denies the agency and freedom of the individuals. This hegemonic domination creates an unequal distribution of material resources. Neo-Marxism preserves the idea of structures as means of exploitation and oppression claiming that the global

\(^{73}\) Carr E.H. 1946.  
\(^{74}\) Carr E.H. 1946, 10-13.  
\(^{75}\) Jabri 1996, 6.  
\(^{76}\) Sandole 1996, 4-5; Kegley & Wittkopf 2001, 32.  
\(^{77}\) Waltz 1979.  
\(^{78}\) Burchill 1996, 90.  
\(^{79}\) Richmond 2008, 49, 51, 52, 56.  
\(^{80}\) Sandole 1996, 5.
economy and trade are advantageous only for a small elite or a social class who control their rule through state and international institutions. This leads to global injustice and to the disempowerment of much of the world’s population. Peace in these exploitative structural terms cannot exist. Neo-Marxists have redirected the universalistic class struggle aspirations of the traditional Marxism towards more subtle local perspectives in which the purpose is to remove the oppressive structures by the realisation of the actual agency of individuals through emancipation.\textsuperscript{81}

Marxist’s and Neo-Marxist’s perspectives, furthermore, see the whole Western conflict resolution enterprise as misconceived since it tries to resolve problems that are inherently irresolvable through the contemporary processes available. Contemporary peace research lacks an analysis within a properly global perspective on the forces of exploitation and oppression. Marxist’s perspectives have mainly focused on the structural aspects of conflicts such as world-systems, imperialism, class conflict and capitalism, in order to tackle issues such as economic and social justice, unequal distribution of wealth and empowerment of the oppressed social classes. Marx’s writings have influenced several social constructivist schools such as critical theory and feminism, as well as provided fertile ground for criticising the contemporary peace research of supporting Western ideology.\textsuperscript{82} These perspectives and their critique will be discussed in chapter 2.3.

2.2.2. Conflict Resolution, Conflict Transformation and the work of Johan Galtung

The approach of Conflict Resolution emerged during the 1960s in response and as an alternative to the dominant Realist power political world view.\textsuperscript{83} This approach contested the view that human behaviour is explained by the negative and aggressive nature of human beings but instead argue that human beings have certain inherent drives that cannot be suppressed by coercive power.\textsuperscript{84} In order to clarify the argument the main proponent of Conflict Resolution, John Burton, draws a distinction between disputes and conflict

"'Disputes’ involve negotiable interests, while ‘conflicts’ are concerned with issues that are not negotiable, issues that relate to ontological human needs that cannot be compromised."\textsuperscript{85}

Conflict, thus, emanates from the unfulfilled deep-rooted human needs such as autonomy, recognition, identity and security.\textsuperscript{86} The perspectives of Conflict Resolution regard conflicts as

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{81} Richmond 2008, 58, 59.
  \item \textsuperscript{82} Richmond 2008, 58, 59, 61, 70; Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall 2005, 7.
  \item \textsuperscript{83} See Burton 1969.
  \item \textsuperscript{84} Burton 1990, 32; Tidwell 2001, 75-77.
  \item \textsuperscript{85} Burton 1996, 55.
  \item \textsuperscript{86} Burton 1990, 4, 32-33; Tidwell 2001, 76-78.
\end{itemize}
universal phenomenon affecting all cultures and existing on all levels from interpersonal, societal, to international. It offers a generic explanation on human behaviour, as well as, an explanatory variable when identifying the real issues underlying a conflict. Furthermore, it assumes that through scientific analysis it is possible to find means for the resolution of the conflict.\textsuperscript{87} The theory of Conflict Resolution purports to solve deep-rooted conflicts through the process of problem-solving workshops in which a third party assists adversaries to understand and to reassess more accurately the underlying causes of the conflict and the cost of the consequences of their behaviours.\textsuperscript{88} The highly influential Conflict Resolution theory has been under strict scrutiny because it neglects the cultural and social construction of human beings.\textsuperscript{89} Another field of critics has been scholars who promote the Conflict Transformation approach.

Just as Conflict Resolution was a reaction to Realism, the proponents of Conflict Transformation argue that the root causes of the conflict are not static, as is expected by the Conflict Resolution, instead conflicts are always in a flux and always being transformed into something else.\textsuperscript{90} According to Raimo Väyrynen

“A dynamic analysis of conflicts is indispensable; the study of their resolution in a static framework belies social reality. […] the issues, actors and interests change over time as a consequence of the social, economic and political dynamics of societies.”\textsuperscript{91}

Hence, conflicts are highly elastic, changeable processes and therefore any approach that seeks to alter a conflict must be equally dynamic and changeable.\textsuperscript{92} Proponents of Conflict Transformation criticize the view that conflicts could be resolved for good instead in some cases it might be better to let the conflict to transform rather than to seek solutions for it.\textsuperscript{93} The purpose is to find ways to transform the conflict into something which is socially useful and non-destructive. Furthermore, any intervention to a conflict will change its dynamics whether the end result was successful or not.\textsuperscript{94} Peter Wallensteen argues that Conflict Resolution approach purposefully seeks commonalities between the participants whereas Conflict Transformation adheres towards changing the relationship between the opponents. The change in the relationship might happen through resolving the conflict but it also may occur if one party achieves a total victory over the other one. In either case, the conflict has been transformed.\textsuperscript{95}

\textsuperscript{87} Burton 1990, 1; Tidwell 2001, 77, 79, 80.  
\textsuperscript{88} Burton 1990, 3-7.  
\textsuperscript{89} See for instance Avruch 2004; Väyrynen T., 2001.  
\textsuperscript{91} Väyrynen R., 1991, 4.  
\textsuperscript{92} Tidwell 2001, 74.  
\textsuperscript{93} Väyrynen R., 1991, 12, 23.  
\textsuperscript{94} Tidwell 2001, 73.  
\textsuperscript{95} Wallensteen 1991, 129.
Wallensteen describes Conflict Transformation as “[…] a generalized learning from historical experience.” It stresses a long-term analysis of conflicts and its development particularly focusing on the structural aspects of conflicts such as patriarchy, racism and capitalism as causes of human behaviour. Karin Aggestam comments that Conflict Transformation stresses holism in dealing with conflicts and, therefore, has especially focused on the procedures of post-agreement phases such as peace-building and reconciliation. Conflict Transformation theorists have also attempted to analyse the dynamic nature of protracted conflicts. Intractable conflicts experience temporal escalation and de-escalation phases. In the literature among the proponents of Conflict Transformation, a lot of discussion has been about the concept of ripeness, in other words, when the conflict is considered as ripe or ready for third party intervention. Another issue that has been widely debated is the notion of power asymmetry between the participants. Conflict Transformation theorists have been criticised for overemphasising the structures, hence, neglecting the conscious reasoning of individuals and their interaction.

One scholar whose work could be categorised under the rubric of Conflict Transformation is Johan Galtung. Galtung’s work has influenced peace and conflict studies to such an extent that it could be argued that his work has greatly defined and characterised peace research. Galtung suggests that conflicts can be viewed as a triangle with behaviour (B), contradiction (C), and attitude (A) at its vertices. Behaviour refers to the objective aspects of conflicts such as material interests, structural relationship as well as physical and verbal behaviour of the conflict participants. The contradiction refers to the underlying conflict situation and it includes the actual or perceived incompatible interests or goals of the participants. Attitude refers to the subjective elements of the conflict, in other words, emotive and cognitive aspects of the opponents, such as the perceptions and misperceptions of what the opponents have of each other and themselves. These three aspects are constantly changing and influencing one another, therefore, all three aspects need to be transformed in order to resolve the conflict.

Galtung defines peace as an absence of violence. Violence, then, is “[…] the cause of the difference between the potential and the actual, between what could have been and what is.” With this notion, Galtung attempts to broaden the notion of violence beyond direct or visible violence. Accordingly, Galtung makes a distinction between direct violence (people are murdered –B),

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96 Wallensteen 1991, 129.
97 Aggestam 1999, 18-19, 22, 23.
99 Aggestam 1999, 23.
100 Galtung & Tschudi 2000, 206; Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall 2005, 10.
101 Galtung 1969b, 168.
structural violence (people die because of poverty –C) and cultural violence (way of legitimizing or justifying direct or structural violence –A). ¹⁰² These three notions of violence overlap with the conflict triangle respectively. In order to end the direct violence, behavioural aspects of the conflict need to be transformed, structural violence necessitates changing structural contradictions, and cultural violence can be diminished by changing attitudes. ¹⁰³ Galtung makes yet another distinction between positive peace and negative peace. Negative peace is the absence of direct violence whereas positive peace is the absence of structural violence. ¹⁰⁴ An example of negative peace is for instance Pax Romana in imperial Rome which practiced slavery (structural violence). Positive peace, on the other hand, refers to a situation where the violence is absent and the exploitation is either minimised or eliminated altogether from the society. ¹⁰⁵

Galtung’s notion of peace has been widely criticised, for instance, Georg Sørensen accuses Galtung of utopianism. According to Sørensen, Galtung stresses values, such as peace, extensively thereby disregarding the contradictions and problems presented by the empirical data. ¹⁰⁶ Similarly, Kenneth Boulding criticises Galtung’s research for being too normative in a sense that the description of reality suffers. Boulding argues that while much of the peace research is by virtue normative science “There is always a danger that our norms act as a filter which leads to a perversion of our image of reality.”¹⁰⁷ Sørensen comments that there are societies in which there is a high level of violence against the large majority of the population, thus, it

“[…] becomes almost logical for the mass of the people to resort to direct violence in order to get rid of the misery and repression created by the ruling elite and the highly unequal social structure over which it precedes.”¹⁰⁸

Sørensen’s remarks point out that a conflict can have a positive social function as is presented by Lewis Coser. Coser defines conflict as “[…] the clash of values and interests, the tension what is and what some groups feel ought to be.”¹⁰⁹ For Coser, conflict can serve the function of directing the society onwards, for instance, generating new norms, new institutions and stimulating economic and technological innovations. In other words, the conflict can, also, have a positive function of facilitating a social change.¹¹⁰

¹⁰² Galtung 1990, 291.
¹⁰⁴ Galtung 1969b, 183.
¹⁰⁵ Barash 1991, 8.
¹⁰⁷ Boulding 1977, 77.
¹⁰⁹ Coser 1957, 197.
¹¹⁰ Coser 1957, 198, 200-201.
2.3. Social constructivist approaches to conflict

As already acknowledged in the beginning of this chapter, all of the subsequent studies can be categorised as being part of social constructivism. In contemporary peace and conflict research, social constructivism as a paradigm, is becoming more popular. Like any other contemporary philosophical trend, constructivism, however is not a uniform school of thought. Instead, constructivist theories are quite diverse and they vary from one discipline in social science to another.\(^{111}\)

Emanuel Adler identifies four constructivist strands which focus either on (1) Agents, (2) Structures, (3) Narratives of knowing, (4) Post-modern deconstruction.\(^{112}\) Despite the growing enthusiasm towards constructivism, there are at least two identifiable lacunae with its practical use as a theory in social sciences. First, social constructivism is not a precise theoretical framework per se, but rather a social theory which provides a basis for explaining various social phenomena. A common denominator for all of these perspectives is the notion that the social realm is, indeed, socially constructed.\(^{113}\) As Adler’s categorization shows, there is a wide disparity of constructivist perspectives that emphasise divergent aspects of the social realm. Furthermore, these aspects are often examined separately even though they all are, obviously, part of and constituting the same social world.\(^{114}\) Second, the relationships between ideas, norms, institutions, identities, roles and rules are not well defined, hence, one analyst’s norm might be another’s institution and a third scholar’s identity. Precisely this lack of precision and clarity has created confusion and disputes as to what exactly constructivism is all about.\(^{115}\)

To sum up, social constructivism can be understood in different ways; for some it is a theory like any other, whereas for others, it is not a theory but rather a meta-theoretical approach shared by a group of academics with a set of core commitments but otherwise varied ontological and epistemological foci.\(^{116}\) Social constructivism is understood in this thesis as a meta-theoretical approach which includes differing paradigms, such as Social Constructivist theoretical framework, Feminism, Discourse Analysis and Neo-Marxism. In other words, Social Constructivist theoretical framework, written in capital letters, refers to a paradigm. That is, the scholar has utilised it as a specific framework for the study. Additionally, the post-modern perspective of this thesis, which

\(^{111}\) Walt 1998.
\(^{112}\) Adler 1997, 335-336.
\(^{113}\) Adler 1997, 323.
\(^{114}\) Boekle, Rittberger & Wagner 2001, 105.
\(^{115}\) Aggestam 1999, 33.
\(^{116}\) Williams 2007, 5.
will be presented in the following chapter, also is categorised as being part of the social constructivism.

2.3.1. Social Constructivism and Feminism as theoretical frameworks

Two peace studies, Karin Aggestam’s and Tarja Väyrynen’s, can be mentioned as an example of using specifically the theoretical Social Constructivist framework. Aggestam in her study, “Reframing and resolving conflict: Israeli-Palestinian negotiations 1988-1998”\(^{117}\) focused on understanding the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations through Alexander Wendt’s social constructionist theory, particularly focusing on the agent-structure dynamics and the question of how the meaning of conflict may change. In contrast to many conflict studies that are concerned on theory-testing, the basis of Aggestam’s study is on theory-building where the theoretical framework adapts to and is shaped by the empirical evidence. Hence, Aggestam does not intrinsically utilise the constructivist insights, rather the eclectic element of her study leads to multiple different solutions regarding ontology and epistemology.\(^{118}\)

Tarja Väyrynen critically examines John Burton’s Conflict Resolution paradigm in her book “Culture and international conflict resolution”.\(^{119}\) As acknowledged in chapter 2.2.2., a totalist human needs theory regards sources of conflicts to be universal which leads to the “[…] denial of culture and the socially constructed nature of human existence.”\(^{120}\) In her study, Väyrynen constructs a non-totalist understanding of conflict which is based on a social constructionist image of human being and takes into account the “[…] organic relationships between the individual, social group and culture.”\(^{121}\) Conclusively, Väyrynen defines conflict as a “breakdown of shared reality” which means that the parties no longer share the same typifications and meanings over the reality. In other words, co-operation presupposes shared typifications and congruent understanding of the reality. A conflict, in contrast, is characterised by a situation where typifications are broken down or denied and common understanding of a shared reality is collapsed.\(^{122}\) The location of the conflict, then, becomes over definitions of reality; parties are struggling over their typifications of reality in order to compel one’s definition of reality upon the other. Struggles to impose definitions of reality entail the play of power, thus, conflict and conflict management practices are not free from power.

\(^{117}\) Aggestam 1999.
\(^{118}\) Aggestam 1999, 6-9.
\(^{120}\) Väyrynen T. 2001, 2.
\(^{121}\) Väyrynen T. 2001, 8.
\(^{122}\) Väyrynen T. 2001, 8.
Power can be defined in multiple different ways and Tarja Väyrynen suggests that it “[…] should be considered as an attribute of discourse and manifest in the production and contestation of consensus.” Practices of power, furthermore, set “[…] the agenda for what are considered appropriate or inappropriate matters of institutional debate.” Väyrynen’s postulate focuses on explaining the interpretative elements of a conflict, to be precise, how social groups and individuals comprehend the conflict. As Väyrynen comments:

“By shifting the focus from the functional questions of what causes conflict and what conflict accomplishes materially and politically to the contextual and interpretative question of how people think about conflict, we start to see the importance of the culturally construed interpretations of the world for the study of conflict.”

Väyrynen’s approach, therefore, focuses on the subjective elements of the conflict which raises a concern regarding the relationship between the agent and structure; do individual’s or group’s typifications or beliefs affect the reality or do they merely reflect it. In other words, do social structures influence the common-sense thinking of an individual, and if so, how and to what extent? This is a common problem in most peace studies constructed according to a Social Constructivist theoretical framework.

According to J. Ann Tickner, Feminism “[…] challenges the often unseen androcentric or masculine biases in the way that knowledge has traditionally been constructed in all the disciplines.” Feminist scholars often point out that gender is socially constructed and that the world is pervasively shaped by gendered meanings. Gender, thus, is not just a variable that is placed in a world. Rather, it is a way of seeing the world. Furthermore, Spike Peterson notes that we do not experience the world as abstract humans but as gendered beings. Therefore, it is impossible to have an approach of the world which is either gender-neutral or gender-free standpoint. One of the first insights that Feminism has brought to contemporary international relations study is the notion that personal is political. According to Cynthia Enloe this phrase is “[…] disturbing, because it means that relationships we once imagined were private or merely social are in fact infused with power, usually unequal power backed up by public authority.”

This notion has lead Feminist scholars to study personal experiences of people whose voice otherwise is silenced in international politics. Feminist research in peace and conflict studies is not solely interested in women’s own experiences but also about the gendered production of war and

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123 Väyrynen T. 2001, 118.
124 Väyrynen T. 2001, 118.
128 Tickner 2005, 3.
130 Enloe 1989, 195.
peace. Feminist scholars have, for instance, problematised the embedded meanings of dichotomies, such as men–women, war–peace and masculinity–femininity. Feminist theorists have focused on showing how these binary opposites are discursively upheld. Feminist research is influential in peace studies since it questions the traditional views and assumptions of examining the social world and the views on how the social realm ought to be organised.\textsuperscript{131}

### 2.3.2. Discourse Analysis and Neo-Marxist’s critique of Western conflict enterprise

Another approach that derives from constructivist thinking is Discourse Analysis which asserts that the language and discourse are constructing elements of the reality and conflict. Language and discourse, therefore, play a prominent role in providing a system of categories and meanings through which people construct the reality. This approach is generally referred to as post-structuralism which advocates that language has, for instance, a central role in reproducing the structures of domination and exclusion that produce and maintain violence.\textsuperscript{132} One post-structuralist view is offered by Sara Cobb & Janet Rifkin who studied 30 different mediation attempts through discourse analysis. They examined how mediators produce and sustain dominant ideologies through the rhetoric of neutrality. They came to a conclusion that mediation is a hegemonic process because it generates a dominant ideology by creating a web of shared meanings in which the initial story dominates not by coercion but by consent.\textsuperscript{133}

Vivienne Jabri, on the other hand, following Anthony Giddens' “theory of structuration”\textsuperscript{134} has studied how discursive and institutional processes reproduce war and violent conflict. According to Jabri, understanding the phenomenon of violent conflict necessitates the “[...] uncovering the continuities in social life which enable war and give it legitimacy, backed by discursive and institutional structures.”\textsuperscript{135} Jabri identifies two specific discursive mechanisms for the construction and reproduction of war. The first mechanism is the legitimation of war through dominant modes of discourse; these are militarism and just war doctrine which constructs continuity within social systems. The second mechanism is the production of dominant identity through exclusionist discourse, thus, receiving support from the general population. The collective identity works as a medium through which the individual is related to collective violence.\textsuperscript{136} Jabri comments that the

\textsuperscript{131} Weber C. 2005, 99; For a Feminist approach on peace studies see, for instance, Ehlstain 1995; Väyrynen T. 2004.
\textsuperscript{132} Burr 2004, 62, 80, 90; Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall 2005, 296.
\textsuperscript{133} Cobb & Rifkin 1991, 60-62.
\textsuperscript{134} Giddens 1979.
\textsuperscript{135} Jabri 1996, 3.
\textsuperscript{136} Jabri 1996, 2-3, 90, 97, 120-121, 139.
sovereign state is the dominant system in which these nationalist discourses of war are being upheld. In other words, war is a product of nationalist discourse and as Jabri points out “War is also a constructed discourse, enabled through identiational discursive and institutional continuities which give it legitimacy.”

Jabri presents a framework based on Jürgen Habermas’s communicative ethics which purports to reconstruct a transformative discourse on peace. In other words, the purpose is to form a process of unconstrained discourse where all affected parties participate freely and in which the dissent against authority is legitimately open for argumentation. Although Jabri’s framework might seem appealing, she recognises that

“Discourse ethics as process is a locale of emancipation from the constraints of tradition, prejudice, and myth. However, some of the most pervasive conflicts of late modernity concern issues of religious belief which preclude a questioning of norms, where the text and image considered sacred are not allowed into an inter-subjective space of equal interpretation and contestation.”

That is to say, some elements of the conflict may form a condition which does not allow the occurrence of unconstrained discourse, thus, precluding the possibility for any inter-subjective consent.

Oliver Richmond offers yet another critical approach to peace and conflict studies. Richmond criticises that the notion of peace is rarely conceptualised either in academic literature or by the practitioners. Theorisations of the concept of peace are often sidelined by the questions regarding war and conflict. Peace is, thereby, frequently presented in Liberal terms and in a universalistic and idealistic form towards which any society should strive for without considerations of alternative discourses on peace. Richmond states that

“The whole apparatus of peacebuilding is sometimes colonial (and, perhaps, racist) in that it implies the transference of enlightened knowledge to those who lack the capacity or morality to attain such knowledge themselves.”

Richmond asserts that Liberalism has a privileged position in relation to peace in modern Western thought which, though inferring pluralism, more often confines prosperity over democracy or human rights. Furthermore, the embraced idea of democratic peace also contains illiberal tendencies such as majority rule over minorities and individuals. The proponents of Liberalism consider its values to be universal, however, Liberal notions do not apply in all cultures. Richmond asserts that

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137 Jabri 1996, 140.
139 Jabri 1996, 166-167.
141 Richmond 2007, 249, 250, 257, 268, 269.
142 Richmond 2007, 268.
Liberalism substitutes “rights for virtues”; liberal peace might sometimes mean a “loss of community” or a loss of trust and social ties within a given community.\textsuperscript{143}

Richmond argues that the current dominance of Liberal paradigm in peace research is due to the “hybridisation of liberalism and realism”, in which state controlled forces support the liberal and democratic political, social and economic institutions of a liberal polity. This hybridisation explains both violence and order, and how they are related in the maintenances of domestic and international order. The liberal-realist framework for security is based on territorial sovereignty and international governance as well as on universal normative order that offers legitimate and consensual government for most people – if not for all. Marxist structural thinking adds to this axis a notion of social justice and legitimacy but these elements are mainly dealt within a liberal-realist context by democratisation rather than by the promotion of social justice.\textsuperscript{144}

Richmond comments that there is an inherent paradox in the Liberal-Realist alignment. On the one hand, the ideology elevates state beyond individuals but, on the other hand, the ideology also tries to control and monitor state’s excesses, thus, incorporating views to protect human life. Through conserving the individual human rights, Liberal hegemonic thought also retains the right for the use of force, for instance, for the just war purposes. In other words, the idea of state territorial sovereignty is constantly contrasted with the right to intervene or responsibility to protect the individuals. Richmond concludes that from a Western standpoint there seems not to be viable or realistic alternatives to Liberalism.\textsuperscript{145}

Despite the prevalence of Liberal peace, Richmond observes that peace is always temporally and spatially situated, supported and influenced by numerous groups including politics, military and civilian guise that evidently create multiple overlapping forms of peace.\textsuperscript{146} Richmond himself adheres to a relativist notion of peace by arguing that peace “[…] should never be assumed to be monolithic and universal in that the ontology and methodology of peace vary according to cultural, social, economic, and political conditions.”\textsuperscript{147} Richmond, furthermore, comes to a conclusion that the agenda for a peace research ought to construct “multiple conceptions of peace” with the special focus “upon the everyday life of their constituents”.\textsuperscript{148} Richmond, thus, advocates an implementation of local knowledge or bottom up perspective in peace processes.

\textsuperscript{143} Richmond 2008, 92. 
\textsuperscript{144} Richmond 2008, 13-14, 95. 
\textsuperscript{145} Richmond 2008, 93, 96. 
\textsuperscript{146} Richmond 2007, 264. 
\textsuperscript{147} Richmond 2007, 264. 
\textsuperscript{148} Richmond 2008, 163.
study also supported this point of view and many feminist theorists have a similar agenda. John Briggs & Joanne Sharp also make analogous comments. They share the view of empowering local voices though acknowledging the global material forces, such as capitalism and their influence on particular indigenous communities.149

2.4. The current state of peace and conflict research and its critique

The current state of peace and conflict research is very fragmented. The conventional concerns about the armament, disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and deterrence have given away to the new concerns that include issues such as ethno-nationalism, religious fanaticism, north-south disparity, humanitarian intervention, environmental degradation, intra-state conflicts, liberal peace theories, peacekeeping, and post-agreement phases such as peace-building, reconstruction and reconciliation.150 Some commentators interpret this fragmentation to be due to the collapse of the Soviet Union. Issues regarding the great power rivalry were at the centre of peace research and, therefore, there were doubts and questions about the validity of the discipline in the future.151 Hence, after the 1990s, peace research has in its eagerness and in its desperate search for a new identity extended its interests accordingly into an each new area of concern created by contemporary events.152 As Hylke Tromp sarcastically already in 1980 commented

“[…] peace research has become what a black hole is in astronomy. There seems to be no social problem which in the final analysis does not have its legitimate place within peace research, and therefore is absorbed by the definitional processes in peace research.”153

Sarah Williams argues that the fragmentation of the field has led the scholars to favour a certain “‘à la carte’ approach to theorizing and methodology” evidently sidelining a more broad and systematic understanding of the social world.154

Williams’s observation is not entirely accurate as the discussion on peace studies reveal. Academics have, especially when considering protracted intra-state conflicts, tried to develop paradigms that would encompass universal explanatory relevance beyond single cases. Ironically, exactly disciplines’ universalistic aspirations towards multi-cultural conflict models and the firm belief in establishing generalisations about the causes, nature and effect of conflict have created strong

151 Väyrynen T. 2006, 48-49.
152 Williams 2007, 3.
154 Williams 2007, 3.
criticism from academics that adhere to a non-totalist view of studying the social realm.155 Vivienne Jabri argues that in peace studies it has been long thought that “[…] any separation of types of conflict based on levels of societal interaction is an artificial one built on the exigencies of the division of the social sciences into separate academic disciplines.”156 Therefore, the focus of research is the artificially isolated and articulated conflict where it is assumed that theories on the origins, dynamics and resolution of the conflict have explanatory potential in investigations of such seemingly diverse conflicts such as family disputes, interstate wars, intra-state conflicts and inter-racial conflicts.157 Jabri’s observation is spot-on, even regarding this chapter. Theoretical frameworks such as Realism, Marxism, Conflict Resolution and Discourse Analysis can hardly be utilised to analyse the same conflict, in other words, one paradigm serves better for certain purposes than the other.

Kalevi Holsti distinguishes three other problems with the current peace and conflict research. First, a significant proportion of the studies concentrate on analysing the causes of war through single independent variables ranging from a genetic to cosmic explanations. It is through rigorous study that academics expect to find causal correlations between these explanatory variables, that is, how a variable A affects B and vice versa; and how these variations might predict or explain the incidence of war. The scholars have, nonetheless, failed to prove the comparative significance of these explanatory variables, to be exact, which variable is more important than the other.158 There is a prevailing positivist tradition to search for causal relations between variables in peace studies. The conventionally adopted epistemological framework has been and to a certain extent still is that if the theory which is grounded on observable cause-effect regularities withstands empirical testing, it will serve as an explanation as well.159 Herbert Reid & Ernest Yanarella argue that the empirical research approach tends to break down dynamic, complex and sometimes holistic social phenomenon into manageable parts which then receive their value as facts or data. This approach neglects the more fundamental ontological and epistemological questions of the social realm.160

This positivist temper stems from 1960s when peace researchers sought to legitimise their normative commitment towards peace through scientific empiricist practices. This combination of ideological (normative) and scientific (objective) approach brought the research much needed

156 Jabri 1996, 12.
157 Jabri 1996, 12.
159 Jabri 1996, 22.
160 Reid & Yanarella 1976, 330.
approval, though, at the cost of conducting a truly critical peace studies.\textsuperscript{161} However, knowledge is neither objective, outside observation of the social world nor politically neutral (value-free) and the justifications for conducting peace research cannot “[…] be made merely in terms of medical analogies.”\textsuperscript{162} Instead, resolving a conflict or committing a research is a commitment to and a perception of some worldview over another. The field of peace research has developed mostly by the works of Western scholars, and as a consequence, the values that inform conflict resolution are largely Western.\textsuperscript{163}

Reid & Yanarella, additionally, argue that positivist approaches can only explain the social realm but not serve as a guide for action. Therefore, the connection between theory and practice, a notion which is highly embraced by the peace researchers, becomes impossible, as practice becomes simply a form of moral exhortation.\textsuperscript{164} Ironically, Reid & Yanarella’s argument could as well be pointed towards critical theoretical formulations. Critical theorists frequently analyse and critique how things are but fail to account how things ought to be. Hence, the connection between theory and practice which is also highly embraced by the critical theorists becomes merely a form of moral exhortation. Woolly notions such as individual emancipation further blur the understanding what these theorists actually adhere to. The question “whose peace?”, which is frequently posed by the critical theorists, remains a valid critique regarding their work, too.\textsuperscript{165}

The causes of the conflict, nevertheless, are interconnected with the various geographical levels such as local, national, regional and global. Hugo van der Merwe comments “Attempts to change conflict dynamics or address the sources of conflict are of limited use if they are aimed only at one source or one level of conflict manifestation.”\textsuperscript{166} According to Holsti, this forms the second major problem concerning contemporary peace and conflict studies. Most studies concentrate solely on one level of analysis which leads to the perennial issue between determinism and free will. The objective as well as the genetic approaches are largely deterministic while the subjective approaches, then, come closer to the free will end of the spectrum.\textsuperscript{167} Earlier, Johan Galtung was quoted when it was mentioned that one of the distinct characteristics of peace research is its multidisciplinary nature. Despite the ideal of conducting truly interdisciplinary studies, analysts have more often pursued their studies following the almost institutionalised dichotomy between

\textsuperscript{161} Reid & Yanarella 1976, 316.
\textsuperscript{162} Patomäki 2001, 730.
\textsuperscript{163} Tidwell 2001, 17.
\textsuperscript{164} Reid & Yanarella 1976, 331.
\textsuperscript{165} See Bernstein 1976, 182-183, 206.
\textsuperscript{166} Merwe 1996, 263.
\textsuperscript{167} Holsti 1991, 5.
internal and external dimensions of study where sociologists, anthropologists and psychologists have been concentrating on the former (with issues such as civil wars, revolutions, riots and revolts) and international relations scholars’ focusing on the latter (with issues such as interstate wars, security, terrorism and nuclear proliferation). Some scholars have attempted to construct a multi-level analysis that would take into consideration all the levels of analysis. Consequently, this has lead to a conceptual enrichment as well as disputes about appropriate theoretical framework and methodological inquiries.168

The final problem, according to Holsti, is the prevalence of contradictory findings. For example, some studies assert that arms races lead to war while other studies refute this claim.169 The problem with inconsistent results prompted David Singer to write that the systematic study of war has failed to “[…] achieve any significant theoretical breakthrough.”170 Singer states that there is no “compelling explanation” for war.171 Indeed, as the examination of the various approaches to conflict reveals, it is apparent that one is confronted with “one barren assurance” that has “just as much value as another”. Hence, conflicts can be explained through multiple different ways, where each paradigm presents its own explanation or truth of the matters.172

170 Singer 1979, 14.
171 Singer 1979, 15.
172 Modified from Hegel 1807, 135; Bernstein 1976, xix.
3. Neo-Pragmatist post-modernism

Previous chapter presented an overview of peace studies and how conflict has been comprehended in academic literature. The purpose of this chapter is to construct an understanding of the whole field of peace studies, to be more specific, how academics construct their studies and how their inquiries are a part of some language-game or another. In other words, the purpose of this chapter is to paint a picture of the post-modern perspective of this thesis. This chapter relies heavily on Richard Rorty’s neo-pragmatism, who himself is influenced by classical pragmatists such as John Dewey as well as philosophers such as Martin Heidegger and Ludwig Wittgenstein. According to Rorty, all of these philosophers set aside epistemology and metaphysics as possible disciplines of inquiry – an idea which Rorty agrees with. Rorty for his own part attempts to undermine the reader’s belief on issues, such as epistemology, as something about which there ought to be a theory as well to question the traditional Western scientific dogmas of universality, objectivity, rationality, transcendentality and truth. Cornel West argues that Rorty refuses to privilege one language, language-game, morality or society over another solely by appealing some eternal and universal criteria. Therefore, one should abandon traditional dogmas of science and, instead, speak about historically transient practices, contingent descriptions and revisable theories.

Rorty’s purpose has not been to present new theories but to show that those time-honoured metaphysical and epistemological problems underlying all scientific inquiries do not exist, or rather that there is no use for problematising these problems. As Rorty comments “To say that we should drop the idea of truth as out there waiting to be discovered is not to say that we have discovered that, out there, there is no truth.” Therefore, inquiries into the intrinsic nature of things or of getting the reality right are, thus, futile and, instead, one ought to concentrate on solving actual human problems. The core idea with pragmatism has always been to convert mysterious questions of the social realm into decidable problems and find practical solutions for them. As a consequence, pragmatists prefer a sort of “means-to-a-human-end” approaches where the purpose of scientific research is to solve actual human problems. As John Dewey states “The first step in knowing is to locate the problems that need to be solved.”

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173 Neo-pragmatism and pragmatism will be used as synonyms in this chapter and it always refers to Rorty’s understanding on pragmatism, albeit there are different neo-pragmatist perspectives as well as differences among pragmatists themselves.
174 Rorty 1980, 6-7; West 1985, 262-263.
175 Rorty 1989, 8.
176 Rorty 1989, 8; Rorty 1991, 1, 41; Rorty 1999, xxi, xxv.
178 Dewey 1999, 94; “Ensimmäinen askel tietämäessä on paikallistaa ongelmat, jotka kaipaavat ratkaisua.” Translated
Rorty’s philosophy is characteristically post-modern – one could argue that it is “dangerously relativist and cynical” – and as such, his position has been subjected to a vast critique. Other neopragmatists, such as Hilary Putnam and Rom Harré as well as various other scholars, view Rorty’s approach towards science as a sort of threat; Rorty’s stance undermines the value of science. Harré, for example, professes that Rorty is trying to abolish the reason of scientific realism and along with it “[…] the moral authority of the scientific way of life.”

In this chapter, however, the critique has been purposefully sidelined since it would evidently lead to a rather complex and lengthy philosophical discussion regarding metaphysics and epistemology. Instead, the focus will be on theory building and constructing the post-modern perspective of this thesis.

In the first part of this chapter, a point of view is presented which accords that any inquiry begins with the inquirer’s choice of his or her ontological (i.e. theoretical) perspective towards the oncoming study. There is no detached standpoint from which to describe the social world, therefore, scientific inquiries cannot be value-free, neutral or objective. The second part explains how language is understood as a tool of encompassing a dual significance. On the one hand, language is used to represent the world and on the other it is used to cope with the world. The use of language begets infinite possibilities for one to describe the world; a phenomenon, such as a conflict, can be explained in various different ways. Additionally, each inquiry is subject to the rules and vocabularies of its specific language-game. The third part continues the discussion on language by presenting a view on how the truth of any inquiry can be understood merely as a well-justified belief to a certain audience. The fourth part summarises the discussion in this chapter as well as explains how the pragmatist understanding of science has influenced peace research in general. It will be argued that pragmatism is at the very centre of any peace study.

3.1. The scholar’s choice of theoretical perspective

Chapter two examined various paradigms in peace studies and according to Paul Rogers & Oliver Ramsbotham, in many theories, there is an inherent ontological gap between whether the postulation attempts to construe an agent-based approach (e.g. Conflict Resolution) or whether a
paradigm adheres to a structural understanding of the conflict (e.g. Marxism). Martin Hollis & Steve Smith maintain that these two points of view cannot be combined, because there is no objective, neutral position where to assess which ontological entity (agent or structure) influences more a particular social action, hence there are always “two stories to tell” about social sciences. According to Osmo Kivinen & Tero Piironen, underlying much of the ontological debates is the understanding of heavy ontology which signifies that there are intrinsic objects out there that exist independently without anyone describing them. According to this view, the purpose of scientific knowledge is to produce accurate descriptions of the human-independent world subsequently discovering the structures and the causal laws of the world out there.

Hilary Putnam asserts that there is an essential problem with the notion of structures which he identifies by distinguishing whether the structure is seen to cause the observed phenomenon or whether it merely forms the background condition for it. Putnam argues that deciding which is which “[…] depends on a picking out, an act of selection, which depends on what we know and can use in prediction; and this is not written into the physical system itself.” Putnam is here following an old pragmatist understanding that causes can only be seen from an actor’s point of view, in respect and in accordance to his or her purpose and interest. William James argues that human mind is designed in such a way that it needs to be interested in the causes that are most relevant for the purposes of the current inquiry. Human awareness is essentially partial and very limited in scope, thus, it “[…] can be efficient at all only by picking out what to attend to, and ignoring everything else, - by narrowing its point of view.” In other words, causes are always relevant and interesting from some actor’s point of view which will then influence the inquiry. Therefore, there are various points of view that must be distinguished when describing the world and, accordingly, as the researcher focuses his or her emphasis on certain direction different formulations of truth result.

William James argues that philosophers who adhere to the “universal fatality of human actions” – to the structural, deterministic conditioning of social realm – ought to be able to take the whole spatio-temporal infinity of the social realm at a glance. James comments “Such a divine intelligence would see instantaneously all the infinite lines of convergence towards a given result, and it would, moreover, see impartially […]” James’s notion of the “divine intelligence” is similar to what

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181 Rogers & Ramsbotham 1999, 753.
184 Putnam 1990, 87.
185 James 1880, 442.
187 James 1880, 442.
Putnam calls “God’s eye view” which refers to the impossible idea that the inquirer would somehow be in a position to form a single, true and complete description of the way the world is. For Putnam, the heart of pragmatism was the Jamesian and Deweyan insistence on the supremacy of the agent’s point of view.\textsuperscript{188}

Following James’s and Dewey’s footsteps, Putnam argues that science itself and not just “ordinary language”, is deeply pluralistic in its ontology. That is, there are several possible ontologies (i.e. theories and perspectives) that the researcher may choose for his or her inquiry.\textsuperscript{189} Similarly, Rom Harré suggests that ontologies should be understood as “grammars”, in other words, as “[…] ways of identifying and marking the boundaries of particulars for some purpose of other.”\textsuperscript{190} According to Harré, social sciences are constructed by choosing an ontology through which the phenomena is identified, ordered and explained. The choice of ontology is largely justified pragmatically; on the grounds of how much of the relevant phenomenon of interest it enables one to comprehend in a fruitful way.\textsuperscript{191}

From a pragmatist perspective, the ontological question whether certain structures exist is not, therefore, a matter of differentiating between warring natural orders or discovering the being of beings but the question is merely functional. In other words, it is a question of choosing a perspective that best explains the phenomenon at hand.\textsuperscript{192} Additionally, following pragmatist understanding of the inquirer’s position when conducting scientific studies, it becomes obvious, that one cannot isolate the world from theories of the world. Any discourse about the world is relative to the theories available, hence, there is no theory-free world. The subjective choice of choosing an ontology also signifies that nobody’s descriptions (theories) of the world can be neutral or objective. Consequently, science is a “value-based enterprise.”\textsuperscript{193}

### 3.2. Language as a tool for representing and coping with the reality

For centuries, philosophers were discussing the same topic on realism and its opposite idealism. But in contemporary philosophy – after the so-called linguistic turn – language has replaced mind as of something that stands over and against reality. Therefore, the dialogue has shifted from whether

\textsuperscript{188} Putnam 1987, 70; Putnam 1981, 49.
\textsuperscript{189} Putnam 1990, 95.
\textsuperscript{190} Harré 1997, 178.
\textsuperscript{191} Harré 1997, 174, 178.
\textsuperscript{192} Hildebrand 2003, 48, 49; Kivinen & Piiroinen 2004, 235.
\textsuperscript{193} West 1985, 264; Aronowitz 1972, xiii, xiv; Rorty 1980, 341.
material reality is mind-dependent to questions about which sorts of statements stand in representational relations to non-linguistic things. The whole Western field of theory of knowledge has grown up around the problem of knowing whether one’s representations are accurate descriptions of the reality or not.\textsuperscript{194} For most realist philosophers, knowledge is evaluated on the basis how accurately sentences represent, reflect and correspond with the reality that they refer to.\textsuperscript{195}

Rortyan pragmatism begins with the post-modern perception that there is an unlimited number of ways to describe objects but none of them is ontologically more real or in closer correspondence to reality than another.\textsuperscript{196} John Dewey explains how one and the same thing can be expressed with an infinite number of different meanings. For instance, what one usually identifies with the meaning paper could, for different purposes, be viewed as “something to start a fire with”, “something like snow”, “made of wood-pulp”, “manufactured for profit” and “property in the legal sense”.\textsuperscript{197} Similarly, when someone drops a ball in a playing field, according to the rules of gravity, it falls down. This is a causal event, but this causal event can be interpreted and explained in multiple different ways. There is no way to decide which of the countless ways of describing things is the correct one, in other words, which, thus, would correspond with reality.\textsuperscript{198}

Therefore, each description forms its own, in Nelson Goodman’s terms, “ways of worldmaking”. Does this perspective signify that there exists multiple worlds or realities? Goodman argues that there, sensibly, is only one actual world, which can be described in multiple different ways. Therefore, the reality consists of ways of talking about it, rather than multiple actual worlds. One is, thus, always confronted with different versions of the world. Goodman, nonetheless, argues that worlds may differ in a sense that not everything that belongs to one world belongs to the other.\textsuperscript{199}

Is the world, then, dependent on the observer? In other words, as ridiculous as it might sound, does the world exist unaided without anyone describing it? Rorty states that pragmatism does not include the idea of the world not being out there. Most things are causally independent of the observer but what Rorty questions is if they are representationally independent of the spectator.\textsuperscript{200} Hence, pragmatism does not imply that every aspect of the world is socially constructed; as Searle remarks

\textsuperscript{194} Rorty 1991, 2; Rorty 1980, 139-140.
\textsuperscript{195} Kivinen & Piirioinen 2004, 231.
\textsuperscript{197} Dewey 1958, 319-320.
\textsuperscript{198} Rorty 1991, 81; Rorty 1998, 67–68.
\textsuperscript{199} Goodman 1978, 2-4, 8, 20-21.
\textsuperscript{200} Rorty 1998, 86.
“The world (or alternatively, reality or the universe) exists independently of our representations of it.”  

Realists often say that surely there were mountains before people had the idea of a mountain in their minds or the word mountain in their language. Rorty argues that nobody denies that. For Rorty, it is pointless to ask whether there really are mountains or whether it is merely convenient for one to talk about them. It is equally pointless for Rorty to ask whether reality is independent of one’s way of talking about it. It is obviously intelligible to talk about mountains within a language-game but the utility of those language-games has nothing to do with the ontological question of whether reality has mountains, apart from the way that it is handy for people to describe it.

Rorty argues that there needs to be a distinction between the claims that “the world is out there” and “truth is out there.” It is common sense to say that the world is out there, that it is not the creation by the people who inhabit it, and that “[…] most things in space and time are the effects of causes which do not include human mental states.” The statement truth is not out there simply states that where there are no sentences there is no truth and since sentences are elements of human language, and human language is created by the humans, the truth is also a human creation. In other words, truth cannot exist independently of the human mind out there, because sentences cannot exist out there. The world is out there but descriptions of the world are not; and only one’s descriptions can either be true or false, the world “[…] on its own – unaided by the describing activities of human beings – cannot.” Rorty conclusively makes a rather sensible comment by arguing that “The world does not speak. Only we do.”

To recapitulate, one’s mind or shared language does not create the world outside oneself, but neither does the world divide itself into facts. It is only a person’s use of language that divides the world into facts and, consequently, truth exists only within language. Therefore, use of language does not create objects but evolving and ever-changing descriptions of objects that are construed as a response to a certain problem and as a mean to overcome and satisfy particular needs and interest. In other words, ideas, words, and language are not mirrors of something real or objective that exist out there but tools with which one copes with his or her world. Language makes describing and re-describing objects over and over again available for oneself so that one can find new ways of thinking and new connections between descriptions. Language is, thus, seen as a tool signifying
dual meaning; representing and coping with the world. According to Rorty, people make worlds, instead of just mirroring them. Therefore, representation always signifies subjective creation of the world. Consequently, truth is made rather than found. Additionally, the conception of language as a tool signifies how it is utilised for finding successful ways in helping to do what one wants to do.\footnote{Rorty 1980, 9-10, 344, 345; Rorty 1989, 53.}

Rorty’s understanding of language and language-games stems from Ludwig Wittgenstein who argued that the meaning of the word is its \textit{use} in a language-game. Language-game signifies the situation between communicators; stating the rules, vocabularies and practices that are used between the communicators.\footnote{Wittgenstein 1974, §§ 2, 21-23, 31, 43-44.} For example, if one would ask a layman whether a certain object exists, one would not be answered with an in-depth philosophical contemplation regarding metaphysics and ontology. Rather, the layman would be completely unfamiliar with this kind of vocabulary and, thus, find the whole question about existence simply absurd. Therefore, it is obvious that those who participate in the ontological discussions are familiar to a certain discourse (language-game) with its own historical tradition, rules, set of practices and vocabularies.\footnote{Kivinen & Piiroinen 2004, 238.}

In this thesis, social sciences (or humanities) are seen to form a language-game of its own that then divide into more precise vocabularies and rules in each of its own disciplines. A scholar might not be familiar with the philosophical meta-discourses regarding the whole field of social sciences but still can participate in the discussion in his or her own specific discipline. In this sense, peace research forms its own distinct language-game, however, as acknowledged in the chapter two, the field is very fragmented and multiple disciplines contribute to the discourse within peace research. For instance, a historian and an anthropologist who study the same conflict share a meta-level language-game (humanities and peace research) but differ in their own areas of specification.

Kivinen & Piiroinen argue that all what is seen as intelligible and relevant research questions inside one scientific field is ultimately specified by the vocabularies used in that particular field. All scientific fields have their own rules, traditions and prospects so that relevant research as well as the legitimised knowledge is always dependent on its specific social context, stemming partly from the history of the field. A particular scientific language game offers the meaningfulness for each description and all substances have to be articulated within each particular language game.\footnote{Kivinen & Piiroinen 2004, 240, 241; See Wittgenstein 1974, §§ 2, 7, 17, 18, 23.}

In other words, each specific language-game, also, influences the way in which the world is made.
Already in the 1940s, Quincy Wright commented how scientists tend to select events which will contribute to “verifiable generalisations” preferring theoretical explanations. Politicians, in contrast, select events in accordance to the general public to whom the text is addressed preferring psychological explanations since they are most comprehensible to the general audience. Finally, historians select events that deemed important for the public of the time and place written about, thus, historians prefer functional explanations and interpret the happenings in terms of the whole story.\textsuperscript{213}

Finally, the objects of any scientific inquiry are described as objects in some language, and as such, they are related to other described objects in terms of language-games played in that particular scientific field. In other words, linguistic descriptions are understandable only in relation to other linguistic descriptions.\textsuperscript{214} Richard Rorty explains that one can think of sentences and language-games as if it were a number. For instance, if one considers the number 17, it is impossible to reach any deeper essence for the number 17 than through descriptions like “less than 22”, “the sum of 6 and 11”, “the square root of 289”.\textsuperscript{215} Rorty suggests that one should think any object as resembling numbers in the following respect “[…] there is nothing to be known about them except an initially large, and forever expandable, web of relations to other objects.”\textsuperscript{216} Therefore, sentences can be understood as having multiple relations to one another, in this sense, scientific inquiries are like pieces in a puzzle, where each description adds to the already existing knowledge.\textsuperscript{217}

\section*{3.3. The concepts of truth, relativism and objectivism}

Rorty shares an old pragmatist understanding of truth as it is encapsulated by William James who viewed truth as something “what is better for us to believe” and not as “the accurate representation of reality.” In this sense, truth is simply a compliment paid to those well-justified beliefs that, for the moment, do not need further justification and which helps one in coping with the world.\textsuperscript{218} Hence, the core idea of pragmatism is to replace the notion of true beliefs as correct representations of the world and, instead, consider beliefs as successful rules for action or habits of action. The idea of truth as something “what is better for one to believe in” also states that there is always room for improved ideas and beliefs which might come forth due to new evidence or vocabulary. In other

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{213} Wright 1965, 26.
\item \textsuperscript{214} Rorty 1999, 48; Kivinen & Piirainen 2004, 240.
\item \textsuperscript{215} Rorty 1999, 52-53.
\item \textsuperscript{216} Rorty 1999, 53.
\item \textsuperscript{217} Kivinen & Piirainen 2004, 240; Goodman 1978, 21.
\item \textsuperscript{218} Rorty 1980, 10; Rorty 1991, 23-24; James 2000, 38.
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words, there is always the possibility that someone someday may come up with new evidence or better hypothesis and show that one’s propositions were not ‘true’.\footnote{Rorty 1991, 23, 65-66; Rorty 2001a, 4; Rorty 2001b, 57.}

This line of thought is commonly known as fallibilism\footnote{Rorty comments that fallibilism should not be confused with scepticism which accords that a mere possibility of error defeats any knowledge-claim. (Rorty 2001a, 5.)} and it refers to the idea that one’s knowledge and beliefs cannot be grounded or anchored onto some foundation such as God, science, reason, mind or experience. Hence, since there is not any metaphysical guarantee for any knowledge or belief, one’s beliefs are subject to change with new knowledge and interpretations.\footnote{Bernstein 2006, 3; Käpylä & Mikkola 2005, 91 footnote 150; Rorty 1980, 3, 178; Bacon 2005, 404-405.}

Fallibilism is commonly connected with the writings of Charles Peirce who argued that “[…] we can never attain a knowledge of things as they are. We can only know their human aspect. But that is all the universe is for us.”\footnote{Peirce 1966, 426.} Because of this, doubts about the premises “[…] may spring up later; but we can find no proposition which are not subject to this contingency.”\footnote{Peirce 1966, 101 footnote 11.} Truth and knowledge can only be judged by the standards of the inquirer’s specific spatio-temporal context, therefore, one can only work within one’s premises. Rorty argues that this does not signify that human knowledge is less important or more “cut off from the world” but it means that nothing counts as justification unless by reference to what one already accepts. In other words, one cannot justify one’s beliefs in academic disciplines or in any other area of discourse to everybody but only to those whose beliefs to some extent already overlap with one’s own beliefs. In this respect, the process of justification of propositions becomes a social practice, a way of conversation within some language-game or another. Furthermore, truth can, thus, be understood as merely a matter of laying a victorious argument in a conversation rather than a matter of interaction with nonhuman reality or as accuracy of representation.\footnote{Rorty 1980, 156-157, 170, 178; Rorty 1991, 30-31 footnote 13; Rorty 2001a, 4.}

If one considers truth as merely a well-justified argument, is pragmatism \emph{de facto} relativism then? Relativism is the common term used by the critics of post-modernism to characterise the futility of post-modern condition. According to Rorty, there are commonly three different views of the use of the term relativism. The first is that every belief or proposition is as good as any other. The second is that the term truth is ambiguous term and, therefore, can have as many meanings as there are procedures of justification. The third view is that there is nothing to be said about truth apart “[…] from descriptions of the familiar procedures of justification which a given society – \emph{ours} – uses in one or another area of inquiry.”\footnote{Rorty 1991, 23.} Rorty argues that pragmatists hold the ethnocentric third view but
pragmatists do not accept the self-refuting first view or the eccentric second view. The third definition signifies that there can be no higher appeal than a given conceptual scheme, language game, set of social practices or historical period. Concepts, such as knowledge, truth and reality are relative to a specific conceptual scheme, that is, theory, paradigm, form of life or culture. For a relativist, the world is constituted by a plurality of schemes and practices without an overarching framework that would bind them together; there are no universal standards that would, in some way, stand above and outside these competing alternatives.

Relativism is commonly contrasted with objectivism that generally refers to the idea that there is some permanent, a-historical thing or foundation to which one can ultimately appeal in determining the nature of issues such as knowledge, truth, reality and morality. Hence, objectivism can be distinguished as an opposite idea to fallibilism and, according to Richard Bernstein, as such is closely related to foundationalism. Foundationalism refers to conviction that there is or ought to be a Archimedean point upon which one can ground one’s knowledge. Bernstein has called this widely held view “Cartesian Anxiety” which means that without a proper grounding, such as God or reason, one is left adrift in a morass of relativism and nihilism, that is, chaos and madness. The term objectivism is also commonly used to designate metaphysical realism. In other words, that there exists an objective world that does not depend on the observant but whose nature or essence one can know for certain. In this respect, objectivism refers to the idea that in order to search for an objective truth or a universal standpoint, one must first detach him- or herself from any particular community.

Rorty would like to substitute the scientific search for objectivity with unforced agreement which begets the question with whom exactly this agreement is negotiated. Us? The Nazis? If truth is conceived in a pragmatist way as something good for us to believe in, it also suggests that any coherent proposition is as good as any other proposition since there are no universal criteria to differentiate between beliefs. If a pragmatist defends his or her moral propositions, one could argue that he or she cannot justify this because there are not any foundations for his or her beliefs. Hence, what is the pragmatist answer to the classic relativist dilemma; what if one day the truth would be the one shared by the Nazis? As Jean-Paul Sartre has more eloquently stated the fallibilist attitude.

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227 Bernstein 1985, 8, 11-12; Davidson 1984, 189.
228 Bernstein 1985, 8, 16-18.
229 Bernstein 1985, 9; Rorty 1991, 30.
“To-morrow, after my death, some men may decide to establish Fascism, and the others may be so cowardly or so slack as to let them do so. If so, Fascism will then be the truth of man, and so much the worse for us.”

According to Rorty, Sartre should have not said that Fascism will be “the truth of man”, because there is no such thing. Instead, Sartre should have said that the truth might be forgotten or become invisible—and “so much the worse for us.” Rorty comments that us does not signify us humans, since Nazis are humans too but rather something like “us tolerant wet liberals.” Rorty argues that pragmatists do not deny morality—they only deny the possibility that there exists moral propositions outside one’s historical situation. In this respect, for contemporary Westerners, Nazis are crazy because they are not us. The limits of insanity are set by what we can take seriously, and our propositions and moral views are determined by our upbringing and our historical situation. In other words, we are able to say that our community is better than Nazi-Germany but we cannot base this understanding on any eternal foundations, instead, we can only justify it on ethnocentric basis according to our premises and beliefs. Rortyan ethnocentric view is congruent with Dewey’s statement: “All of the actions of an individual bear the stamp of his community as assuredly as does the language he speaks.”

3.4. Conclusion of the discussion – the world is made not found

Rorty argues that in Western culture the notions of science, rationality, objectivity and truth are connected with one another. Science is seen as offering objective and hard truth that corresponds to reality, in other words, the only sort of truth that matters. The rhetoric of Enlightenment painted a picture of the scientist as a sort of a priest who achieves truth by being methodological, logical and objective. While it was useful during its time, the picture is less useful nowadays. In Rorty’s ideal liberal polity, the cultural hero would be a “strong poet” rather than the truth-seeking, objective and logical scientist. Rorty comments that in this sense, it is not a matter for universal theories in science but for ethnographies there would be a general turn towards narratives in scientific inquiries. According to Jacques Bouveresse, Rorty sees scientists, philosophers and poets as part of the same enterprise creating new stories and vocabularies that serve one’s different pragmatic

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231 Sartre 1977, 40.
234 Dewey 1922, 317.
236 Rorty 1989, xvi, 53.
aims – some better, some worse. These all are voices in the discourse of the humanity and none of them has a privileged position in relation to other.\textsuperscript{237}

Rorty states that since one can never tell which beliefs are true, the truth cannot be the goal of scientific inquiries. Instead, from a pragmatist perspective, the purpose of scientific inquiries ought to be to achieve agreement among people about what to do, that is, how to cope with the world.\textsuperscript{238} Donald Davidson concurs with Rorty and argues that people will always be left with fallible beliefs and, although they are able to enhance their knowledge, they can never know for certain which of the beliefs that they hold are true. Moreover, since the truth is neither visible as a target nor recognisable when achieved, it is futile to see the truth as a goal of inquiry.\textsuperscript{239} Pragmatist understanding of truth as well-justified beliefs exemplify the current post-modern condition where there is not bedrock and ultimate truths or privileged, accurate representations of the reality. Rorty comments that we should relish the thought that the sciences will always provide a spectacle of fierce competition between alternative theories, paradigms and schools of thought. As Rorty asserts “The end of human activity is not rest, but rather richer and better human activity.”\textsuperscript{240}

If truth does not have any correspondence with reality or whatever you invent to say, what prevents you from conducting scientific inquiries about remote Aceh conflict from your cosy sofa at home? Nothing else but the community within which you write. The traditional conventions of scientific inquiries obviously restrict and permit the author in his or her journey. For example, during the 19\textsuperscript{th} and early 20\textsuperscript{th} centuries, it was common for anthropologists to write about distant cultures without ever actually visiting the locations. A self-respective anthropologist in the 21\textsuperscript{st} century would never act in this presumptuous way. Hence, the scientific inquiries are always situated in certain time-space context that restricts and permits the author(s) in one way or another. Therefore, the pragmatic understanding of science does not signify that “anything goes”, as people’s beliefs and theories are subject to the evaluation of their community and the rules and vocabularies of the particular language-game within which they write. Furthermore, from a pragmatist perspective, the evaluation of inquiries ought to begin with the question “[…] what definite difference it will make to you and me, at definite instants of our life, if this world-formula or that world-formula be the true one.”\textsuperscript{241}

\textsuperscript{237} Bouveresse 2001, 130; Käpylä & Mikkola 2005, 100 footnote 173; West 1985, 265; Rorty 1980, 264.
\textsuperscript{238} Rorty 2001c, 262; Rorty 1999, xxv.
\textsuperscript{239} Davidson 2001, 67.
\textsuperscript{240} Rorty 1991, 39.
\textsuperscript{241} James 2000, 27.
The understanding of language as a tool of coping with the reality is very much at the centre of peace research, where scholars regularly add suggestions and ideas how to resolve conflicts. However, one should not think that the rest of the inquiry is just some meaningless jargon about the conflict. Obviously, what scholars purport to do is to represent the conflict as accurately as they can. After all, it would practically be impossible or at least sound rather omniscient to give suggestions for resolving the conflict if you would not first introduce the causes of the conflict. Pragmatism has, also, reflected into different perspectives and policies regarding peace studies and world politics. Perhaps the most well known application is David Mitrany’s functionalism. In peace research, functionalism refers to the idea of peace processes searching for functional solutions that would have positive affect on both participants. In other words, finding a consensus on what to do while, possibly still disagreeing about the reasons for fighting.242

Language is comprehended in this thesis to encompass a dual purpose regarding scientific inquiries. On the one hand, in peace research the scholars utilise language to represent the conflict. On the other hand, language is used to change the world; to make visions of the possible better world. The term representation does not reflect something objective and a-personal textual creation. How a certain phenomenon is explained depends on the point of view that the inquirer has chosen as well as on the specific language-game in which he or she participates. The language-game defines the vocabularies and to an extent, also, the perspectives that the scholar presents. To conclude, in scientific inquiries the world is made rather than found. The following chapter argues that scientific inquiries can be understood as narratives, examining how the world is made in these stories.

242 See e.g. Mitrany 1966; Burton 1969, 88-94; Väyrynen 2001, 121-123.
4. Scientific inquiries as narratives

Previous chapter laid down the foundations for the post-modern condition of this thesis. It questioned the traditional notions of science, such as objectivity, universality and truth, arguing that scientific texts can be meaningfully understood as works within a certain language-game. Rorty’s metaphorical notion of academics as “strong poets” conveniently lead to the aim of this chapter, which is to present how a single scientific text can be meaningfully understood as a narrative and to explicate how such a story, is structurally constructed.

The narrative turn in the 1980s prompted a growing enthusiasm for narrative inquiries in all social sciences’ disciplines. One implication of this turn has been the uncritical eagerness to consider all events as narratives, as Brian Richardson observes: “Now, narrative is everywhere.”

Two altering positions can be distinguished regarding the question how to comprehend narratives. On the one hand, stories can be understood as a fundamental element of human beings, as Alasdair MacIntyre argues: “[…] man is in his actions and practice, as well as in fictions, essentially a storytelling animal.” On the other hand, stories can be comprehended merely as a convenient way for one to tell of the various, often discordant, happenings of the social world, as Jerome Bruner argues: “[…] ‘stories’ do not ‘happen’ in the real world but, rather, are constructed in people’s heads.”

While these positions concern the question what narratives are, a wider discussion has revolved around the question how narratives are structurally constructed. Basically, a story consists of “someone telling about somebody doing something.” According to William Randall, to qualify as a story at least three things are required. First, a story needs a storyteller who narrates the story with a certain point of view (voice). Second, story necessitates a character or a group of characters whose ordeals it concerns (actors). Third, probably the most important element of a story is the plot which “[…] lays out whatever these characters do, the actions in which they engage, and the situations and conflicts with which they must cope.” Other elements of a story include theme or style and a setting which forms the temporal and spatial context within which the characters act. Finally, perhaps the most important element is the receptive part of the storytelling; the audience to whom the story is told and their interpretation and re-creation of the story.

244 MacIntyre 1987, 216.
246 Randall 1995, 86.
The first part of this chapter examines what are narratives, that is, are they a form of telling or being. The second part commences the methodological discussion of this thesis by studying how narratives are structurally constructed. The final part continues the methodological discussion by examining what elements are included in the interpretive process.

4.1. Narrative research – what are narratives?

In scientific lexicon, the word story is often used as a synonym for narrative, however, in colloquial language, the word story has a better connotation compared to the word narrative which, according to Donald Polkinghorne, has an equivocal connotation. William Randall shares this argument by commenting that narrative is a technical term and, thus, utilised by those who adhere to develop a respectable science from the study of stories. Randall prefers the word story since the term is more emotional compared to the technical term narrative. Matti Hyvärinen criticises Randall’s notion since in scientific jargon the term story is as technical as narrative, thus, they both differ from the common use of colloquial language. Hyvärinen, consequently, distinguishes between a narrative and a story – the latter refers to the series of events of the narrative. Therefore, from the same story of a conflict, it is possible to construct multiple differing narratives.

According to Hannu Heikkinen, narrative research is not a method or a school of thought but rather a sparse frame of reference of studies that distinctively focus on the narrative construction and mediation of the social reality. Heikkinen distinguishes between four differing ways of how the concept of narrative has been used in scientific lexicon. It can be understood as an epistemological process, (as a way of knowing and the nature of knowledge), to characterise the form of the empirical material, as a way of analysing the empirical data, and in a practical/pragmatic sense (as a tool in coping and transforming the world). In the first sense, narratives are understood as the end-result of the knowledge constituting process. A research inquiry traditionally begins by references to the former studies through which a new story is construed. The new inquiry, thereby, connects to the former studies and the underlying scientific discourse in which reality is constantly re-interpreted and re-constructed ever anew by new narratives. In the second sense, narratives are understood as the nature or form of the empirical material that can either be written or spoken narratives. In the third sense, term narrative refers to the scientific process of how the empirical

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249 Randall 1995, 85-86.
250 Hyvärinen 2006a, 3, 4.
251 Heikkinen 2000, 47, 49, 50, 51.
material is being analysed. Polkinhorne distinguishes between analysis of narratives and narrative analysis. Analysis of narratives focuses on categorising the empirical material into distinct genres, for instance, on the basis of the characteristics or categorisations of the narratives. In narrative analysis, the focus is on the construction of the new narrative on the basis of the empirical narratives.\textsuperscript{252} In the fourth sense, narratives are understood as a practice or tool to transform the world, in contrast to merely representing the world. With this respect the theoretical narrative is also praxis, a tool to change the reality of its constituents to certain direction. In other words, narratives are utilised in this sense to improve people’s lives.\textsuperscript{253}

Heikkinen’s distinction is not, obviously, all-inclusive; several scholars attest that narratives can either be understood as a type of discourse or rhetorical act. For example, Jens Brockmeier considers narratives to be a discourse genre that is “[…] inextricably embedded in ongoing processes of human communication.”\textsuperscript{254} James Phelan, on the other hand, suggests that narratives can be fruitfully understood as a rhetorical act, as “[…] somebody telling somebody else on some occasion and for some purpose(s) that something happened.”\textsuperscript{255} Nonetheless, the dual meaning of the essence of narratives is evident from these descriptions. That is, the essence of narratives can be understood in two ways: narratives as a way of constituting the social reality and narratives as a way of mediating the social reality.\textsuperscript{256}

To clarify how narratives are understood in this thesis based on the previous discussion. This thesis comprehends narratives to characterise the form of the empirical material, that is, the analysed empirical material is thought to include a narrative form. Second, narratives are, also, understood as a way of analysing the empirical data, that is, how stories are structurally constructed. Additionally, narrative are also comprehended in a pragmatic sense as a tool in coping with the world.

**4.2. Narratives as being and acting in the world or as representing the world**

Many scholars comment that narratives are not just another scientific method among others but narratives have several roles in people’s everyday lives; narratives are a way of being and acting in the world. Through narratives, people can comprehend and manage the past as well as the future. Narratives are, thereby, a cognitive construction that parses phenomena and experiences into a

\textsuperscript{252} Polkinhorne 1995, 12; Heikkinen 2000, 52.
\textsuperscript{253} Hatch & Wisniewski 1995, 117.
\textsuperscript{254} Brockmeier 2004, 285.
\textsuperscript{255} Phelan 2005, 18.
\textsuperscript{256} Heikkinen 2000, 47.
meaningful whole. Narratives can also be seen as a form of discourse and communication between people, as a way of sharing experience and constructing ties. Another aspect is the notion of humans as narrative beings; narrative, thus, forms the ontological conditions for being a human itself. Analogous to this idea is the notion of life as narrative which signifies that human beings understand their own lives as stories. As a result, there are many ideas how the conception of narrative is understood and the main difference is whether narrative is understood to constitute the world or whether it is considered to merely represent the world. In other words, the difference is whether narratives are lived or told, more specifically, what is the connection between life and narrative.

There is an extensive debate concerning this issue, and it was prompted by Louis Mink who commented:

“Stories are not lived but told. Life has no beginnings, middles, or ends; there are meetings, but the start of an affair belongs to the story we tell ourselves later, and there are partings, but final partings only in the story.”

In other words, life and narrative are separate, thus the narrative qualities of the life narratives are transferred from art, folklores and myths to life. The idea of sequential storyline (beginning, middle and end) in life narratives stems from the oft-quoted citation from Aristotle, who considered that a good and complete narrative encompasses a beginning, middle and an end. Aristotle, however, was distinctively discussing a specific narrative genre, tragedy, which, according to him, embodies this form. Aristotle’s citation has, nonetheless, lived on, and many scholars have emphatically quoted this phrase.

David Carr and Donald Polkinghorne, for instance, refute Mink’s conception in order to support the perspective of life as narrative. For Carr, Mink’s statement of stories being told not lived is mistaken and, instead, narration should be seen as part of the human existence itself. Carr approaches narratives from a phenomenological standpoint –its premise is the individual and his or her consciousness and experience. Carr attempts to show how narrative structure arises from the personal experience. Polkinghorne is on a similar mission by commenting: “Experience forms and presents itself in awareness as narrative. It is from this original experience that the literary form is derived.” Therefore, the historian, or a student of international relations’ discipline, does not

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257 Hyvärinen 2006a, 1, 15; Whitebrook 2001, 9.
258 Hyvärinen 2006b, 23.
261 Aristoteles 1997, 1450b23-34.
263 Polkinghorne 1988, 68.
borrow the narrative structure from the arts but, instead, a primitive form of narrative configuration is inherent in people’s understanding of their own and others’ actions.\textsuperscript{264} The argument is that without such narrative formation already in people’s minds, human action would be experienced as inconsistent, confusing and temporally unformed. Hence, narrative form is not simply imposed on pre-existent real experiences. Rather, it is inherent and as such helps to give them a form.\textsuperscript{265} Carr’s notion is analogous, he asserts that human action is not chaotic but it is structured in accordance to the narrative form with beginning, middle and end, which brings the act to a closure.\textsuperscript{266}

Carr’s and Polkinghorne’s difference with Mink is that they see people as purposeful actors with a clear vision of the ongoing action at hand and of its result. When is it really possible to say that the narrative has reached its end? Does the notion of closure end the narrative? Many have contested the view that narratives always have an ending but, instead, most stories are left open, allowing the reader or viewer to make one’s own ending. For example in fiction, novelists have long construed stories that do not have any clear closure or ending. Furthermore, the notion of human action as structured narrative with closure corresponds uneasily with the real life. For instance, if one looks at phenomena such as conflicts, it is difficult to determine when the Aceh conflict began and whether it reached its end with the signing of the peace agreement. The idea of closure becomes even more suspicious, since one knows that most protracted conflicts have a tendency to renew themselves.\textsuperscript{267} Moreover, the notion of human action as purposeful means-ends calculations correspond poorly with the facts of the reality, as Max Weber states

"It is certainly true, and it is a fundamental fact of history […] that the eventual outcome of political action frequently, indeed regularly, stands in a quite inadequate, even paradoxical relation to its original, intended meaning and purpose."\textsuperscript{268}

According to Polkinghorne, one of the most daunting critics against life narrative approach has been Hayden White, who argues that “[…] stories are not lived; there is no such thing as a real story. Stories are told or written, not found.”\textsuperscript{269} Following this logic, Hayden, being a historian himself, argues that there can be no discipline of history, only historiography.\textsuperscript{270} This is because historians arrange or invent the historical events into historical stories instead of finding them. In other words, the same historical event, such as the death of the king, can serve as a different kind of element of many different historical stories, depending what particular function the historian points to that

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\item \textsuperscript{264} Polkinghorne 1995, 20, 68; Hyvärinen 2004, 299.
\item \textsuperscript{265} Polkinghorne 1988, 68.
\item \textsuperscript{266} Carr D. 1986, 47-49.
\item \textsuperscript{267} Hyvärinen 2004, 301, 302; Hyvärinen 2006a, 3-4.
\item \textsuperscript{268} Weber M. 1994, 355.
\item \textsuperscript{269} White 1999, 9; Polkinghorne 1995, 20.
\item \textsuperscript{270} White 1975, xi-xii; Czarniawska 2004, 2.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
particular event. Thus, it can be a beginning, an end, or merely a transitional event depending on how the historian chooses to present the story.\textsuperscript{271} For White, the world does not present itself for the viewer in a coherent, clear understandable way. That is to say, as a well-made story with central characters, proper beginnings, middles and ends. On the contrary, the world presents itself in the form of a mere sequence of events without beginnings or endings from which the narrator organises the events into a coherent whole.\textsuperscript{272}

To recapitulate, according to Hyvärinen, Carr considers all human experience and action as narratives. White, in contrast, wants to keep narratives strictly in the field of representation, therefore, drawing a clear distinction between the world, action and narrative. For White, the temporal order of things is clear; events of social world come first and narratives follow them as representations. As a result, events themselves do not produce narratives. In other words, narratives signify configuration, making sense of something, whereas the real events of the social realm are often characterised by chaos, contingency and disorder.\textsuperscript{273}

Hyvärinen argues that Paul Ricoeur balances between these strict distinctions of life and narrative. Ricoeur talks about the possibility for the pre-narrative quality of human experience and in this sense his notion of narrative constructs a gap between the life and narrative.\textsuperscript{274} But these analytically separated conceptions are closely intertwined together, since the notion of pre-narrative quality of experience positions an understanding of life “[…] as a story in its nascent state, and so of life as an activity and a passion in search of narrative.”\textsuperscript{275} In other words, human life demands narrative configuration and Ricoeur explains this with the conception of “semantics of action”. Human life is already mediated by all sorts of symbolic systems, as well as stories that one has heard. These symbolic systems are, for instance, non-vocal signs, such as raising a hand, that can have different meanings in different contexts. For example depending on the context, it can signify a greeting, voting or hailing a taxi.\textsuperscript{276} Hence, the vocabulary through which the actors understand their actions connects the actions to narratives.\textsuperscript{277}

Hyvärinen interprets that in Ricoeur’s theory, there exists a circular movement between action and narrative and individuals are entangled in narratives even before a single event is narrated.\textsuperscript{278} As

\textsuperscript{271} White 1975, 6-7.
\textsuperscript{272} White 1987, 24.
\textsuperscript{273} Hyvärinen 2006b, 25, 27; Hyvärinen 2004, 303.
\textsuperscript{274} Ricoeur 1984, 74-75; Ricoeur 1991, 29; Hyvärinen 2004, 304, 305.
\textsuperscript{275} Ricoeur 1991, 29; Hyvärinen 2004, 305.
\textsuperscript{276} Ricoeur 1991, 28, 29; Ricoeur 1984, 54-58.
\textsuperscript{277} Ricoeur 1991, 29; 1984, 74–75; Hyvärinen 2004, 305.
\textsuperscript{278} Hyvärinen 2004, 305.
Ricoeur points out “[…] are we not inclined to see in a given sequence of the episodes of our lives ‘(as yet) untold’ stories, stories that demand to be told, stories that offer anchorage points for narrative?” 279 A narrative of action can, thereby, function as a model for the following future action. In this sense, according to Hyvärinen, it is possible to “live the narrative”. 280

Although, it is possible to comprehend the connection between life and narrative in Ricoeur’s terms, in a sense, of living the narrative, this thesis follows White and Mink’s notion of narratives as representations of the world. The storyteller, therefore, is in a position to configure a coherent and sensible story out of something what otherwise might be conceived as a chaotic and incoherent reality. That is, the storyteller renders his or her world version understandable to a particular audience. Additionally, following pragmatist understanding, narratives are also understood as tools in coping with the world. 281 The idea of narratives intersecting with life is not completely abandoned since, for instance, anthropologists often narrate themselves as a participant in their stories. Nonetheless, the connection between life and narrative becomes even more problematic if one considers what is narrated in the narratives in the first place.

### 4.3. What is narrated in narratives?

The idea that there is an analogous sequential structure with action and narrative has two more fundamental problems that both refer to the question what is narrated in the narrative. Firstly, an action that begins and receives its closure is not necessarily narratable. Secondly, edifying the narrative, in other words, removing the insignificant events or canonical scripts, is part of the narrative process. For instance, a tautological description of one’s daily activities does not present a particularly interesting narrative to be told for an audience. Narrative is, therefore, something more than a mere chronological report –a narrative has to involve something new and interesting, something worth telling. 282

Bruner describes this element of newness in narratives with the concept of breach. Narrative telling does not warrant one to describe all events since some events are pointless for a good story. For instance, when describing a conflict it might be irrelevant to narrate individuals in their daily activities that include cooking, working, studying etc. These events form a canonical behaviour or

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279 Ricoeur 1984, 74.
280 Ricoeur 1984, 76; Hyvärinen 2004, 305.
282 Hyvärinen 2004, 301.
script in a particular culturally defined situation of the narrative which forms the necessary background for the narrative but does not constitute the narrative itself.\textsuperscript{283} As Bruner explains

“For to be worth telling, a tale must be about how an implicit canonical script has been breached, violated, or deviated from in a manner to do violence to […] the ‘legitimacy’ of the canonical script.”\textsuperscript{284} Bruner comments that breaches are influenced by the narrative tradition and as such they are readily recognisable as, for instance, “the betrayed wife”, “the cuckolded husband”, “the story of human progress” or “the story of conflict”. Both scripts and breaches provide fertile ground for the innovative storyteller since he or she may go beyond the conventional scripts and lead “[…] people to see human happenings in a fresh way […] in a way they had never before ‘noticed’ or even dreamed.”\textsuperscript{285} The breach in canonicity, evidencing something unusual, thus, warrants the narrative’s “tellability” and can be created either by linguistic means or as a precipitating event in the plot.\textsuperscript{286}

To recapitulate, there is a general confusion to consider all common everyday speech acts or literal statements as narratives. However, a mere chronological description of events or a statement, such as Mr. Smith walks home, does not constitute as a narrative or at least as an interesting narrative for one to research about. Narratives, rather, need to include an element of narrativeness, that is, a breach of canonicity, a process of change or transformation from one point to another. Similarly, narratives often causally amalgamate events together, this linkage, however, necessitates that the events have a thematic connection. For instance, a sentence, Hasan di Tiro leaves Aceh and Mr. Smith travels to Denmark, does not create a shared world in which the events can relate to each other.\textsuperscript{287}

The narrative turn also overlaps with the critical desire to create multivocality in scientific inquiries; giving voice to the people, to the silenced and to the author, in contrast to the more general hegemonic a-personal discourse of academic texts.\textsuperscript{288} In academic narratives, the narrated people do not speak for themselves but their stories are mediated by the author. Social science is, thereby, a kind of a staged conversation in which the aim of political representation coexists with the scholar’s awareness of his or her mediator’s position in the representation process.\textsuperscript{289} As a consequence, the noble ambition of speaking on behalf of the other is practically impossible, as Clifford Geertz

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{283} Bruner 1991, 11.
\bibitem{284} Bruner 1991, 11.
\bibitem{285} Bruner 1991, 12.
\bibitem{286} Bruner 1991, 6, 12.
\bibitem{287} Hyvärinen 2006a, 3.
\bibitem{288} Atkinson & Delamont 2006, xxxvi-xxxvii.
\bibitem{289} Czarniawska 2004, 121, 122.
\end{thebibliography}
argues that the idealisation of an anthropologist to be “[…] a tribune for the unheard, a representer of the unseen, a kenner of the misconstrued” is nowadays increasingly difficult to sustain.290

A fundamental problem, therefore, exists: how to represent the multiple voices (subjectivities) that comprise the social world in scientific narratives? In anthropology and sociology this has been referred as the crisis of representation and the matter is highly political in character.291 Consequently, the problem is political besides being practical; it becomes necessary to silence some of the voices that form the polyphony of the social realm in order to give some other voices more space. Therefore, a typical problem arises; whom to exclude, whom to include and what type of attention is directed towards whom?292

4.4. The structural construction of narratives

The following sub-chapters focus on the structural elements of the narratives. As already discussed, narratives include some elements of newness or breaches in the canonical scripts of their constituents. These breaches form the events which the narrator selects and organises into a meaningful whole; the narrator transforms them into story elements through the use of plot, emplotment, setting and characterisation that confer structure, meaning and context. The arrangement of events necessitates temporal ordering so that questions, such as how and why events happened, can be established.293

The Russian formalists distinguished three aspects of story: fabula, sjuzet and forma that can roughly be translated as theme, discourse and genre. Fabula and sjuzet refer to the timeless and sequenced aspects of story. More specifically, fabula is the timeless theme that a story is about; it is the universally transcended plight of human life, such as birth, death and love. The sjuzet, then, is the mode of telling, which incorporates or enables the fabula in a certain time-place context and in the form of a plot and emplotment. It is possible, therefore, to arrange new plots (sjuzet) of the same theme (fabula). Furthermore, a possibility, also, arises for the inventive narrator to render previously familiar fabulas uncertain and problematic, challenging the reader into a fresh

290 Geertz 1988, 133.
291 Atkinson & Delamont 2006, xxxvii.
292 Czarniawska 2004, 120-121.
293 Maines 2006, 122.
interpretive activity, in other words, to make the ordinary strange.\textsuperscript{294} Forma, then, is the form or the genre of the story, such as tragedy, comedy, farce or a story of individual growth.\textsuperscript{295}

To conclude, every narrative is construed in temporally distinct dimensions, fabula and sjuzet. Fabulas present theme that are narrated through sjuzet which is then experienced by the audience into a certain forma. For instance, it is possible to argue that a conflict is a universal, timeless fabula of human existence and through sjuzet it is narrated ever anew in a certain time-space context. Jens Brockmeier asserts that it is often more in the plot than in the fabula that narratives permit insights into the self-understanding of the cultures they pertain.\textsuperscript{296} Besides a form, a way of telling and a certain structure narratives also include a certain media. Stories are always told to people in a certain time–space context, under specific cultural and discursive conditions and with a concrete intention.\textsuperscript{297}

4.4.1. Plot and emplotment

Barbara Czarniawska comments that already Aristotle differentiated between a simple story in which events are arranged in their time sequence and a plot that arranges them according to a sense of causality. As already acknowledged, a story in which events are connected by mere succession does not constitute a particularly interesting or narratable story.\textsuperscript{298} A narrative, therefore, necessitates a plot which binds events, characters and their action(s) together giving them sense and meaning in the storyline. As Ricoeur explains, a plot grasps together and integrates multiple and scattered events into single meaningful whole, a complete story. A narrative does not therefore leave things in discordance but through the use of the plot, arranges them into a sensible order. The configuration of the plot in the narrative might also impose a sense of ending on phenomena which otherwise might be conceived as a mere indefinite succession of events.\textsuperscript{299} The plot, thus, enables endless possibilities for narrative telling; of making sense what might be otherwise conceived as incoherent, discordant and dissonant world.\textsuperscript{300} Similarly, plot is important for the reader, since with the help of the plot one is often able to translate the story into one combining and single thought.\textsuperscript{301}

\textsuperscript{294} Bruner 1986, 7, 7-21; Bruner 1991, 12-13; Bruner 2006, 103.
\textsuperscript{295} Heikkinen & Huttunen & Kakkori 1999, 49.
\textsuperscript{296} Brockmeier 2004, 292.
\textsuperscript{297} Brockmeier 2004, 292; Hyvärinen 2006a, 3.
\textsuperscript{298} Czarniawska 2004, 124, 125.
\textsuperscript{299} Ricoeur 1984, ix-x, 65-67.
\textsuperscript{300} Hyvärinen 2006a, 10-11.
\textsuperscript{301} Ricoeur 1984, 65, 67.
In order for the narrative to become a plotted story, the events or episodes need to be related by transformation. For example, the subsequent sentence, an important natural gas resource was found in Aceh in the early 1970s, and then in the late 1976 a new rebel movement called the Free Aceh Movement was found, clarifies the sequential, temporal order of events but does not explain the reasons or causes for these events. Hence, another third plot or third episode needs to be included. The third plot might go as follows, the revenues generated by taxes from the gas industry were transferred directly to the central government, while very little of those profits were recycled back to the province of Aceh, which created a feeling of resentment and injustice amongst the Acehnese. The third sub-plot further highlights and connects the contribution that the first two events make to the development of the story. Without the third plot, events would appear as discontinuous and separate. The third sentence, thereby, does not change the temporal sequential order of the episodes but rather links them together evidently constructing a meaningful whole.  

Narrator is always confronted by multiplicity of events, hence, narrating involves a choice of what to tell or not to tell. As a consequence of this selective process, the narrative might include multiple “narrative gaps”. Ricoeur argues that the process of narrative reconfiguration always includes the cognitive process of emplotment, that is, productive imagination and an act of judgment between the reader and the text. Emplotment is an integrating process in which the reader reconfigures, in other words, fills the gaps of the narrative. Therefore, for Ricoeur, the process of narrative configuration is not completed in the text but in the act of reading. Emplotment, on the other hand, also refers to the process of configuring narratives. In this sense, according to Hyvärinen, emplotment refers to the idea that narrating is not an act of replicating the past events in their pristine state but rather an active process of understanding and interacting. Every narrative is an interpretation of life – an attempt to understand it. Although commonly in narratives concordance is valued over discordance in the configuration of the plot, David Herman reminds that it is possible that the plot is not necessarily a sequentially coherent connection of events but can also follow fuzzier non-linear logic.

The plot is highly significant for the social scientist since often multiple things occur simultaneously. Consequently, novels and academic texts usually contain more than one plot, which then must be connected to one another. Such a plurality of plots is commonly achieved with either two strategies: linking (i.e. coordination) and embedding (i.e. subordination). Linking refers to the

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305 Hyvärinen 2006a, 11.
306 Herman 2002, 212; Hanska 2007, 66; Ricoeur 1984, 4.
way when simple plots are connected to each other so that they fit together whereas embedding refers to the way when a plot is situated inside another plot. Additionally, the plot of the academic story can either be outcome-embedded or ending-embedded. The former has plots that are subordinated to one another in a sequence; the outcome of one episode determines the plot of the next. The latter has all plots subordinated to the one that is revealed at the end. Traditionally, social scientific texts include ending-embedded plots as the entire text is geared towards conclusions or results, thus, forming a natural disclosure to the story. The outcome-embedded plots, on the other hand, typify theories that allow contingencies. In other words, theoretically tuned texts are plot-endowed where the theory forms the narratable plot of the thesis.307

Along with linking and embedding, Bruner distinguishes two other strategies for the narrator in order to create a coherent version of the world. One of the strategies is what Bruner calls “historical-causal entailment”. For example, the natural gas drilling in Aceh and the consequent unequal distribution of its profits is seen to cause the conflict. Another strategy is “coherence by contemporaneity” which refers to the idea of relating independent events together despite their disparity. For example, some commentators have connected the conflict in Aceh to a wider American led metadiscourse of war against terrorism.308

A scientific story of a conflict can have multiple differing plots, and the plots can be understood as the premises of a particular scientific narrative or the work’s theory.309 For instance, in peace research the plot might be what the scholar thinks the conflict is ultimately about or alternatively the plot might follow some theoretical paradigm, such as Conflict Resolution. A scientific narrative does not necessarily have a clear temporal ending, for example, in peace studies when the scholar interprets the causes of conflict he or she leaves end or closure of the narrative open for the readers to imagine possible solutions for the conflict. Sometimes, however, peace researchers themselves suggest feasible endings for the conflict, that is, visions of the future peaceful conditions.

4.4.2. Time–temporality and space–spatiality

Temporal ordering is considered to be a basic feature of any narrative, and it follows from the dominant Western understanding of time as an uninterrupted, linear and endless timeline. One of the functions of the understanding of linear clock time is to provide a coherent framework for

307 Czarniawska 2004, 81, 83, 125, 126.
309 Czarniawska 2004, 124, 125.
relating and connecting events and processes together. Typically, this understanding states that a story presents a time-evolving plot that forms the fundamental element of the story’s coherence. In other words, a temporal ordering of a story in time is an implication of people’s ability to tell a story coherently.\textsuperscript{310}

For Ricoeur, the experience of temporality is not something chronological or linear in the form of beginning-middle-end; instead, temporality can be circular or it can bounce back and forth. That is, one’s experience of time encompasses expectations of future, travelling back to past, and telling in present time. The experience of time is, therefore, something more than a linear clock time. Ricoeur connects temporal experience with narratives by arguing that “[…] time becomes human to the extent that it is articulated through a narrative mode […].”\textsuperscript{311} Thereby, temporality in narratives similarly does not necessarily follow the linear clock time but narratives can move backwards and forwards and the events of a story might potentially lead to multiple directions. In other words, the time in narratives is human time rather than abstract clock time.\textsuperscript{312}

Following this logic, David Herman argues that some narratives exploit a “fuzzy temporality”, temporal sequencing, which is strategically inexact, making it difficult or even impossible to assign narrated events to a fixed position along a timeline in the storyworld. By storyworld, Herman refers to the world that the narrative presents. Herman parallels the notion “fuzzy temporality” with the previously mentioned “fuzzy logic”. Both of these are elements of ”polychronic narration” that are narratives which order events in a fuzzy or indeterminate way. That is to say, the events in the storyworld may or may not occur in a certain time or their occurrence might be indeterminate. Consequently, it may be possible to divide the events in the storyworld into earlier, later or indeterminate. Hence, the time in the storyworld can move rapidly or slowly, stop or bounce forward, enabling the narrator to utilise it as a tool. The concept of space has, also, a significant role in narratives and its fundamental function is to situate things in time. Narratives prompt the readers to spatialise the storyworlds into configurations of participants, objects and places. Narratives, furthermore, present textual cues to the reader in order to prompt the interpreters to assign events a place in time, in other words, stories cue recipients to spatio-temporally order the events in the storyworlds.\textsuperscript{313}

\footnotesize{311} Ricoeur 1984, 52.
\footnotesize{312} Ricoeur 1984, 3, 52, 59-64; Hyvärinen 2006a, 10; Hyvärinen 2006b, 28-29; Bruner 1991, 6.
\footnotesize{313} Herman 2002, 211, 212, 263, 270.
Two specific, although differing textual strategies can be distinguished for the temporal description of the storyworld: feedforward and feedback. The feedforward strategy presents the history of the phenomenon as the story so far, sometimes in a form of a chronology. The feedback strategy emphasises the temporal description of here and now, the narrative then reverses in time in a selective fashion –describing only those elements that have some relevance for the entire plot construction. The purpose of feedback is, thus, to return or retrospectively fill in the earlier gaps in the narrative, in other words, the past is viewed through the lens of the present. Similarly, two analogous strategies can be distinguished in order to describe the spatial dimensions of the storyworld: zooming in and zooming out. The former zooms in from space to place –a move from a larger context (nation, global) to the concrete field under scrutiny (city, factory). The latter descriptive strategy performs an opposite procedure, from a detailed description of a concrete place to a more far-reaching description, such as a global scale.

To sum up, in traditional non-fictive narratives the events are narrated according to the chronological order of their occurrence. However, a narrative, whether fictional or non-fictional, encompasses its own temporal dimension which is different from a spoken discourse, thus, the narrated events do not need to follow the real-time speed. The notions of “fuzzy temporality” and “fuzzy logic” enable endless possibilities for the inventive narrator to utilise. The author might include pauses that represent a hiatus in the action or construe longer or shorter durative descriptions in order to cue the readers of the relative importance of some events over others. As Herman explains

“When a storyteller passes over events quickly or fails to mention them altogether, story recipients regularly infer those events to be of relatively little importance vis-à-vis the narrative as a whole.”

The narrator might, also, add more “fuzziness” by deliberately leaving open how many times certain events occurred, or by completely dismissing particular events altogether.

4.4.3. Narrative genres or formas

Everyone is familiar with the recognisable narrative genres such as romance, tragedy, comedy and satire. Romance is the classic Cinderella-plot where the innocent princess, after a prolonged search with emplotted hardships, finally meets her chivalrous hero with whom she lives happily ever after.

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315 Czarniawska 2004, 119-120.
316 Herman 2002, 215-216.
Tragedy comprises the central figures of the narrative against a number of laws of fate that test the characters forming continuous emplotted crisis toward which the main character cannot influence on but with which he or she has to manage. A good example of a classic tragedy is Romeo and Juliet. In comedy, human beings are not represented as subject to laws of fate which act within organic unity working to resolve everything into harmonious, new and better society or self. The plot takes a form of a journey and it is emplotted with funny setbacks and complications. The transition in comedy is, therefore, emplotted with friction, which however, only function to fuel the narration ultimately arriving to a happy ending. A classic example of comedy is Don Quixote’s journey, in which the silly hero confuses reality with fiction, fiercely fights against windmills, evidences setbacks, but finally arrives at happy ending. Finally, satire shows the absurdity of everything that occurs and, thus, of all of the formerly mentioned narrative genres. It rejects the common harmony and happy ending in comedy, the laws of fate in tragedy and the narrative disclosure of true meaning in romance. A classic example of satire is, again, Don Quixote, which was written in the 17th century as a parody against the conventional and traditional chivalry tales of that time.\(^{318}\)

It is difficult to categorise a narrative fictional or otherwise to a single genre since they usually comprise multiple genres which serve as a way of emplotting the narrative to certain direction. Furthermore, when one categorises several narratives into a single genre one might in the interpretation process lose the new or hidden element that some of the narratives might encompass. Genre is then also a form of telling besides being a property of a text, or a way of comprehending the narrative. One perspective while examining the genres is to distinguish between progressive, stabile and regressive narratives. By combining these with the underlying genres of the narrative, one is able to distinguish the arcs that are necessary for telling, for instance, a tragic story.\(^{319}\)

It is possible to categorise academic texts according to the traditional genres of romance, tragedy, comedy and satire, but this might necessitate some inventive imagination and the end result would be a rather forced categorisation. One might also understand the academic texts to form a genre in their own respect; they follow certain rules and conventions, such as universality, objectivity and neutrality. For instance, in peace research the author is generally hidden and the traditional characterical heroes that are found in laymen narratives (our benevolent president or our fierce rebel leader) are either questioned or represented objectively to embody some faults.\(^{320}\)

\(^{318}\) Czarniawska 2004, 21.
\(^{319}\) Hyvärinen 2006a, 18; Bruner 1991, 14.
\(^{320}\) Keränen 1996, 117.
4.4.4. Actors, actants and participants

Along with a plot, stories include characters or actors who perform certain functions in the storyline. Vladimir Propp conceived functions that these characters perform as “[…] an act of character, defined from the point of view of its significance for the course of the action.” A function, thus, forms a participatory element in the plot, linking characters into the storyline. Moreover, functions serve as a stable element in the plot independent of how and by whom they are fulfilled. Propp further argued that characters perform many seemingly diverse functions which conjoin together creating a few typifiable “spheres of action”. Based on this, Propp developed seven roles, such as villain, hero, princess and helper, which correspond to the ways in which characters can participate in the plot structures. According to David Herman, Propp’s notion of actants subordinated characters to the action; characters were providing participatory, though elementary, roles in the plot but they were not conceived as personalities. Propp’s insight, thereby, redirected the interest from the interior states of the actors to their manifested deeds. The term actant became to signify a general category which is same for all narratives, while actors and their specific qualities vary accordingly. Furthermore, an actant does not need to be a human being but it can also be an object, a concept or an animal; actants are beings or things that participate in the action.

Propp’s profound ideas provided the basis for structuralist accounts of actants. According to Barbara Czarniawska, Algirdas Greimas, who was influenced by Propp’s work, further developed the model for understanding the organising principles of all narrative discourses. According to Greimas & Courtés, it is possible to reveal a “canonical narrative schema” that encompasses three trajectories: the qualification of the subject which introduces it into life, the realisation of the subject by means of which it acts, and finally the sanction that simultaneously signifies retribution and recognition which alone guarantees the meaning of subject’s actions and installs it as a subject of being. Greimas advanced the structuralist account of narratives by introducing a notion of “narrative program” which signifies a change of state produced by any subject affecting any other subject. The actions of subjects are, then, chained to one another in a logical sequence, consequently forming a “narrative trajectory”. Greimas, additionally, further developed the actant-model presenting six actants to which all narrative actors could be reduced: subject, object, sender, receiver, helper and opponent. Greimas’s theory of actants, however, provides obvious

323 Herman 2002, 123, 124.
324 Czarniawska 2004, 79; Herman 2002, 123.
325 Greimas & Courtés 1982, 204-208, 245-246.
difficulties when one examines a certain narrative. For example, in the case of the Aceh conflict the actors/actants, the Free Aceh Movement and the government of Indonesia, can be presented in a single narrative both as subjects, anti-subjects, objects, opponents and so on.\textsuperscript{327}

The blurred line between these categorisations of actants prompted Herman to shift from the narrow idea of narrative actants to an account of participants and their roles and relations in narrative contexts.\textsuperscript{328} Narrative participants are the “[…] elements or individuals involved (in various ways) in processes encoded in narrative discourse.”\textsuperscript{329} Whereas the actants referred to the participants in certain processes depicting how and when, Herman’s conception of participants refers to the notion of the character’s role and relations in the whole process of constructing the narrative or what Herman calls the storyworld.\textsuperscript{330}

Herman further distinguishes participants from circumstances in which the processes are represented as occurring. According to Herman, readers commonly distinguish participants from circumstances, that is, nonparticipants, who then are matched according to processes and how those processes are instantiated in particular events. The reading process creates a sense of how participants relate to one another and the circumstances in the storyworld. The relationship between the participants and the circumstances is not, however, straightforward and clearly demarcated. A participant’s role can change to form the circumstances in the storyworld, thus acquiring a non-participant role. In other words, in the storyworld, the roles are also subject to change; what can be a participant in a certain situation, can change to form the circumstances for the next event. Therefore, the process of reading involves a continuous framing and reframing of the participant’s roles and the circumstances.\textsuperscript{331}

The challenge with the whole narrative interpretation is to understand the connection between the action and its participant (who did what to whom) and how this conditions participants together and to the circumstances. The roles of the participants vary constantly, and hence the relationship between participants and the circumstances need to be constantly re-evaluated during the interpretive process.\textsuperscript{332}

\textsuperscript{327} Herman 2002, 128-129.
\textsuperscript{328} Herman 2002, 129, 133.
\textsuperscript{329} Herman 2002, 115.
\textsuperscript{330} Herman 2002, 115; Hanska 2007, 75.
\textsuperscript{331} Herman 2002, 115, 116; Hanska 2007, 75-76.
\textsuperscript{332} Herman 2002, 150, 164; Hanska 2007, 76.
4.4.5. The Rhetoric in narratives

Although the narrative inquiry is different from rhetoric inquiry, narratives commonly utilise rhetorical elements. According to Marja Keränen, the element of rhetorical studies in narratives directs the questions from methodology to communication, thereby highlighting the connection between the author and the audience. The rhetorical elements of the narrative include: the choice of descriptive vocabulary, the selection of illustrative materials, and the general rhetorical concomitants. The author might utilise all of these elements in order to persuade the reader to share the perspectives of the text including the conclusions or findings that the author has stated or discovered. A good narrative seems plausible and engaging for the reader besides establishing relations with other equivalent texts and a relation of similarity and difference with the social world and events it purports to represent. In other words, a plausible narrative needs to reproduce a recognisable world of concrete detail but not to appear as a mere recapitulation of it.

As already discussed, the accurate representation of events or the truth of any text is dependent on the rhetorical elements used to persuade the audience and it factually determines the truthfulness of the text’s propositions. One common way to evaluate whether a story is truthful is to examine if it conforms to canons of logical consistency. However, the element of “fuzzy logic” or violations of the logical consistency might distort the structure of the story, thus, making it seem illogical for the reader. A story is judged on the basis of certain criteria that vary regarding to the audience and context in which the story is presented. Traditionally in scientific language-games, the narratives and their hypothesis receive their goodness and relevance, for example, according to their internal logical consistency; whether they are empirically verifiable or whether the study has followed a certain method. This is, obviously, in stark contrast to fictional stories which are evaluated, for instance, on the basis of their entertainment value or their dramatic origins. Nonetheless, following the post-modern perspective of this thesis, it was suggested how scientific narratives could be evaluated on the basis of their practical results; how much a certain inquiry helps one to cope with the reality, not how accurately a particular narrative represents the reality.

As acknowledged, conducting a scientific inquiry is a way of communicating in some historical time-space context. Academic texts also incorporate persuasive elements; the author has written the

334 Atkinson 1990, 2.
335 Atkinson 1990, 15.
336 Atkinson 1990, 2.
337 Bruner 1986, 12; Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2002, 124.
narrative in a certain situation with some purpose, and the aim of the author is to persuade the readers to accept the propositions of the text. In this sense, the academic texts do not differ, for instance, from political manifestations. However, the persuasive element of academic texts is exactly based on the fact how the author hides rhetorical elements of the text besides portraying the narrative as neutral, un-authorised and transparent. Thus, ironically because the rhetorical elements are hidden, the first problem with a rhetorical inquiry with a particular scientific narrative is to find these purposefully hidden elements.\textsuperscript{338}

For an academic narrative to be believable or persuasive, it must follow certain canonical writing habits in order to prove its authority, probative force and credibility. A text must prove how it belongs to certain discipline, hence, scholars commonly refer to the canonical texts of one’s particular research field. The continuous process of reference, also, functions as a way of justifying that particular discipline’s status within various fields of the social sciences. Another element in referring to old knowledge is the general idea that science is a progressive endeavour where old knowledge is replaced with new and better knowledge. Thus, in scientific texts, the author can present the inquiries into the tradition in a way which logically leads the author to certain conclusions or direction. Therefore, referring to the old knowledge can also be utilised as a way of introducing new knowledge. Rhetorically the replacement of the old knowledge becomes possible, for instance, when the author rhetorically belittles the old findings, research results or knowledge.\textsuperscript{339}

\section*{4.5. The interpretative process – re-configuring the storyworlds}

Ricoeur argued that the process of narrative configuration is not completed in the text but in the act of reading.\textsuperscript{340} The process of interpretation has, therefore, a critical role when analysing the empirical material, as Umberto Eco comments “[…] a text is only a picnic where the author brings the words and the readers bring the sense.”\textsuperscript{341} Charles Taylor explains that the purpose of interpretation is to make sense of a text which in some way is misleading, unclear or incomplete; to bring to light an underlying coherence or sense through expressing the meaning of a text in a new way.\textsuperscript{342} The coherence is not inherent in the text as such but rather it is construed by the reader who

\textsuperscript{338} Keränen 1996, 112, 114-115.  
\textsuperscript{339} Keränen 1996, 120, 123, 124.  
\textsuperscript{340} Ricoeur 1991, 26.  
\textsuperscript{341} Eco 1992, 24.  
\textsuperscript{342} Taylor 1988, 33, 36.
searches for the relationship and underlying sense of the text. Coherence also refers to the idea that every interpretation is an association, that is, tying the text to other texts, times and places. These form the context or tradition that surrounds the interpreted text.

Hans-Georg Gadamer explains that in the process of interpretation the reader must be sensitive to the text’s quality of newness which does not signify neutrality but awareness of one’s own hermeneutic situation, that is, fore-meanings and prejudices. The interpreter and the text are linked by a context of tradition which implies that the interpreter already has a pre-understanding of the object as he or she approaches it, therefore, it is impossible to begin the interpretation with a neutral mind. The pre-understanding or prejudices of the interpreter’s situation in a historical tradition constitutes a given horizon of understanding from which the subject begins his or her task of interpretation. Even scientific inquiries are guided by the tradition. After all, there would be no anticipation and interest towards new knowledge if one would not be aware of the current knowledge of the particular research field. Hence, tradition in this respect can also be understood as the wider theoretical discussion in some particular scientific field.

Critical theorists emphasise that the reader must also be aware of the ideological structures within the tradition as well as one’s own biased fore-meanings. Critical theorists argue that frequently embedded in the academics’ explanations of the social reality are their own subjective positions, values and interests. Hence, the academically constructed knowledge is often merely a disguised form of supporting some ideology over another. This was discussed in chapter two where Liberalism was distinguished as the dominant ideology in peace research. The conception of ideology is, thereby, a relevant aspect when examining the empirical material since commonly in the academic texts, the traces of context, the writing process and the author are either dispelled or hidden.

Interpretation is sometimes understood as some sort of a code-cracking, revealing the hidden strata of the text’s essence or the objective truth of the text. Gadamer asserts that the discovery of the meaning of a text is never finished. Rather, it is an infinite process. The text always

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343 Herman 2002, 177; Rorty 1992, 97.
345 Gadamer 1979, 238.
348 Lehtonen 1998, 166.
349 Bernstein 1976, 176.
351 Rorty 1992, 92-93.
represents more than the author intended, and it is also possible to read it differently in different circumstances.\textsuperscript{352} Similarly, Ricoeur argues that written discourse attends to an unidentified audience and potentially to anyone who can read. That is to say, the text transcends its own social and historical conditions of production and, thus, opens itself to an infinite series of readings.\textsuperscript{353} As Ricoeur explains, the text “[…] decontextualise[s] itself in such a way that it can be ‘recontextualised’ in a new situation […] by the act of reading.”\textsuperscript{354}

According to Ricoeur, for the interpreter there are two possible attitudes towards the text. On the one hand, the reader may adopt a structuralist approach attempting to explain the text in terms of its internal relations. On the other hand, the reader may seek to uncover the non-ostensive references of the text, which begets the possibility for the reader to seek “[…] not something hidden behind the text, but something disclosed in front of it.”\textsuperscript{355} In other words, what one then wants to understand is something within the text that points towards a possible world. Understanding a text at this level is to move from its sense to its reference, from what it says to what it talks about.\textsuperscript{356} Ricoeur clarifies this with the notion of appropriation which means “[…] ‘to make one’s own’ what was initially ‘alien’.”\textsuperscript{357} What is made own in appropriation is the projection of a world; the kind of a world that the text presents, unfolds, reveals and discloses in front of itself. Ricoeur states that through the revelatory power of the text, it is possible to understand the author better than he or she would understand himself or herself.\textsuperscript{358}

\textsuperscript{352} Gadamer 1979, 262-266, 269; Bleicher 1980, 111, 122-123.
\textsuperscript{353} Ricoeur 1981, 139-140, 201-203.
\textsuperscript{354} Ricoeur 1981, 139.
\textsuperscript{355} Ricoeur 1981, 218.
\textsuperscript{356} Ricoeur 1981, 139, 152-162, 218-219.
\textsuperscript{357} Ricoeur 1981, 185.
\textsuperscript{358} Ricoeur 1981, 143-144, 182, 191-192.
5. Scientific narratives of the Aceh conflict

This chapter forms the case-study part of the thesis and it analyses five interpretations of the Aceh conflict. These interpretations are scientific narratives and they have been purposefully chosen to represent altering positions of the conflict. To be precise, each analysed narrative describes the contextual issues of the conflict, that is, underlying causes, reasons and meaning. In other words, explaining why the Aceh conflict emerged. Following the post-modern perspective of this thesis, the question of truth is regarded as irrelevant, in other words, the analysis in this chapter does not aim at constructing a true description of the conflict. Instead, each narrative has been chosen with a view on how each author purports to represent the conflict with a certain perspective, thus, forming a distinctive description of the conflict as well as proposing how the conflict could be resolved.

In these narratives, the conflict forms the timeless and universal fabula (theme) that is then narrated differently through using altering sjuzets (plots). The formas (genres) in these stories differ with respect to the language-game that the scholar has participated. For instance, a historical narrative is seen to form its own type of forma, which is different from anthropological texts. However, both of these might be constructed in according to the same literary genre, such as comedy or tragedy. The titles of the narratives either refer to the sjuzet or to the underlying forma that the narrative is using. Additionally, although a conflict forms the general fabula embedded in all of these narratives, some stories might include additional fabulas which can be found through analysis.

This chapter begins by explaining the research frame of this thesis. The first part clarifies the purpose of this analysis besides explaining in detail the specific research questions that are posed towards the empirical material. Additionally, the first part clarifies how the empirical material was chosen; discusses the problems concerning the study and finally provides background information of the Aceh conflict. The following parts analyse five scientific narratives of the Aceh conflict. The final part discusses the research findings as well as how well the analysis gave answers to the research questions.

5.1. Framework for the research

5.1.1. The purpose of the research

The primary purpose of this analysis is to study how the Aceh conflict is explained in scientific
literature. This analysis focuses on five scientific narratives that explain why the Aceh conflict emerged. The post-modern theoretical position forms the foundation for the research. It is understood that from the same conflict it is possible to construct scientific stories that differ from each other. Therefore, the purpose has been to choose scientific interpretations that explain the causes of the conflict differently. Regarding the empirical material, the purpose is to analyse how each narrative represents the conflict as well as provides suggestions in order to cope with the conflict. The research follows qualitative analysis, to be more precise, narrative method. (See chapter 4)

5.1.2. Research questions

Following the research questions two sorts of questions will be posed towards the empirical material. These are aligning with the dual understanding of language in this thesis, that is, seeing language as a tool for representing and coping with the reality. (See chapter 3. especially 3.2. and 3.4.) Following this understanding, the subsequent research questions are determined towards the empirical material

1. How do scientific narratives explain the Aceh conflict?
2. What tools do the narratives propose in resolving the conflict?

Ricoeur argued that there are two possible attitudes towards the text. On the one hand, reader may attempt to explain the possible world that the text presents or, on the other hand, the reader may adopt a structuralist attitude attempting to explain the narrative in terms of its internal structure. (See chapter 4.5.) Accordingly, the analysis of the empirical material in this thesis attempts to achieve both tasks. The discussion on chapter four clarified the structural examination of narratives. (See chapter 4.4.) It was argued that narratives commonly incorporate elements such as plot, participants, circumstances, time-space context and the rhetoric. Accordingly, the analysis of each scientific narrative in this thesis begins with the examination of the story’s plot and rhetoric. This is followed by an analysis of the narrative’s participants, circumstances, time-space context and/or again rhetoric. The subsequent part examines what sort of peace the story proposes. The structural examination of the narrative answers to the first two research questions: How does the scholar explain the Aceh conflict; What tools does the scholar offer in order to resolve the conflict?
Besides the structural examination, Ricoeur argued that the second possibility for the interpreter was to reveal the possible world that the narrative incorporates. (See chapter 4.5.) In this thesis, Ricoeur’s notion of revealing the possible world within the text, is understood how each narrative is a part of a certain language-game. (See chapters 3.1. and 3.2.) Therefore, the final part of each narrative’s analysis attempts to locate the examined narrative within the peace studies and explain the underlying perspective. (See chapter 2 especially chapters 2.2. and 2.3.)

Finally, Jouni Tuomi & Anneli Sarajärvi argue that an important element in qualitative analysis is, also, the logic of discovery. According to them, there is no such thing as a scientific method which would produce intelligent opinions by itself. The researcher is him- or herself responsible for raising some interesting and intelligible themes out of the empirical material. This does not signify that anything goes, that is, that the researcher might invent anything out of the material or construe a completely new discourse out of his or her findings. On the contrary, the findings must be located within the framework of the research problems and questions. In other words, the interpretive process necessitates certain sensitivity to the narrative’s quality of newness which might bring up new interesting elements and questions besides the precise research questions that were presented.\textsuperscript{359}

5.1.3. The choice of empirical material

According to Jari Eskola & Juha Suoranta, in qualitative analysis, the scholar is confronted with infinite number of empirical material, hence, a major part in any analysis is to strictly define what material was included and what was excluded. Indeed, there are dozens of scientific narratives on Aceh conflict made by scholars as well as research centres. Therefore, as Eskola & Suoranta argue, an important element for the researcher, who is constructing a qualitative analysis, is to study the empirical material well. Eskola & Suoranta assert that one characteristic of qualitative analysis is the careful choice of the suitable empirical material by the researcher. The appropriate material is largely justified on the basis of the theoretical perspective as well as regarding the research problem and questions. In other words, the empirical material is chosen to meet the purpose of the current inquiry.\textsuperscript{360}

The empirical material was chosen based on five criteria. The first criterion was to select scientific narratives constructed by academics, thus, eliminating all the other stories that are made, for

\textsuperscript{359} Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2002, 101-102; Also see chapter 4.5.

\textsuperscript{360} Eskola & Suoranta 2000, 61, 64-65.
instance, by popular magazines or research centres. The second criterion is related to how scholars tend to separate a conflict into neatly demarcated spheres. Following this logic, the criterion was, then, to choose narratives that in one way or another purport to describe the contextual issues of the Aceh conflict. In other words, how the narratives attempt to explain the underlying causes, reasons and meaning of the conflict, thus, answering to questions, such as why the conflict emerged and what the reasons for violence in Aceh are.

Based on the third criterion, narratives were chosen to present altering descriptions of the Aceh conflict. The fourth criterion was to choose narratives that represent differing perspectives (theoretical positions). Perspective refers to how the narrative is constructed, for instance, how the scholar may have chosen a theoretical or a historical perspective in order to explain the conflict. Finally according to the fifth criterion, narratives were chosen on the basis of how well they can be contrasted with each other. That is, the purpose was to construct a dialogue where each narrative is followed by another which contrasts or questions the previous narrative’s research results or perspective.

Regarding the differing descriptions, Patrick Barron & Samuel Clark identify three strands of literature on Aceh conflict that each emphasise different dimensions of the conflict. First group of stories, which is probably the most common, focus on the “[...] natural resource extraction and state-perpetuated violence and repression.”361 The second group of studies focus on the Indonesia’s security forces and how their activities have escalated or caused the conflict. The third strand of literature focus on the social construction of Acehnese identity in describing Aceh’s alienation with Indonesia and the escalation of the conflict.362

Based on this categorisation, one narrative was chosen from each group. The choice was, also, viewed through the prism of the two other criteria, that is, perspective and how well the narrative reflects with other chosen stories. Consequently, three narratives were chosen and these will be analysed in the subsequent parts in the following order. The first is Geoffrey Robinson’s narrative and it presents a traditional historical analysis of the conflict. The second is Lesley McCulloch’s narrative and it presents a greed-based perspective on the Aceh conflict arguing that the predatory Indonesian security forces are responsible for fuelling the conflict. The third is Edward Aspinall’s narrative and it contrasts these two views by arguing that the conflict would not have commenced without the proper socially constructed identity framework which gave to the prevailing

circumstances violent interpretations.

Despite this categorisation, it was decided that three narratives were not sufficient in meeting with the research questions. The reason for choosing two more narratives was to gain more understanding of how the Aceh conflict has been interpreted in scientific literature. Having five narratives instead of three enables better analysis regarding the research questions. Additionally, five narratives were considered appropriate number of empirical material since more would have resulted in repetition. The final two narratives were, then, chosen following the three criteria laid down earlier. That is, the basis of their description of the conflict, the perspective and how well they are in a dialogue with each other. Consequently, the fourth one is Barbara F. Walter’s narrative and it constructs universal picture of conflicts attempting to explain why certain countries experience recurring civil wars while others do not. It specifically argues that the micro-level motives are important when evaluating the reasons for recurring conflicts. The final fifth is Elizabeth F. Drexler’s narrative and it attempts to explain the conflict from the grassroots’ perspective, evidently forming a post-modern and relativist understanding of the conflict while, also, revealing a set of principles in order to analyse other conflicts.

5.1.4. Problems concerning the analysis

There are some noticeable problems concerning the investigation of the empirical material in this thesis and most of them are related to the subjective element when conducting qualitative analysis. The first problem is my language skills which are confined to English and Finnish, evidently this has restricted the choice of narratives. Hence, I was not able to choose articles written in other languages that would, presumably, have a different world-view, thus, bringing interesting and differing interpretations of the Aceh conflict. There is another problem regarding the question of language which is that the use of English factually determines the specific Western language-game within social sciences and, in particular, peace studies. In other words, it could be argued that the dominant Western worldview in peace research, which was determined in chapter 2.2.1 as Liberalism, is already inherent in the use of the language.\(^{363}\)

Another problem concerns the choice of the analysed narratives. Previous part explained the criteria for choosing the narratives, however, ultimately the choice is, obviously, purely subjective. Therefore, another person could have chosen different narratives. Consequent problem relates to the

scale of the empirical material. Tuomi & Sarajärvi argue that it is worth noting in qualitative analysis whether one wishes to have the empirical material to be homogenous or heterogeneous. However, if one chooses to select heterogeneous cases, it is not sensible to choose five cases from which researcher creates five different types of narratives. In other words, if the researcher wishes to give a comprehensive picture of the examined cases, there ought to be an extensive amount of empirical material in order to support his or her arguments. This critique is linked to the first noticed problem concerning the choice of the empirical material. Eskola & Suoranta, however, remark that the scale of the empirical material in qualitative analysis does not directly influence or have significance in the successful outcome of the research. They comment that in qualitative analysis more important than the scale of the empirical material are the interpretations and results that the researcher discovers.

The subjective positioning, also, presents problems for the interpretive process and to the traditional aim of objectivity in scientific inquiries. Tuomi & Sarajärvi comment that there is no such thing as neutral qualitative analysis which would somehow produce objective results. (Also see chapter 3.1.) Tuomi & Sarajärvi note how in qualitative analysis the subjectivity of researcher is an important element of the analysis, that is, what he or she actually observed, interpreted and discovered. However, in this thesis this view was contrasted by arguing that while it is impossible to conduct objective inquiries, this particular tradition continues to influence scientific writing, thus, setting certain rules for the researchers. Otherwise, researcher might conduct a hefty interpretation of some scientific narratives without ever reading them. (See chapters 3.2. and 3.4.) Eskola & Suoranta remark that awareness of one’s own subjective position is an important step towards the scientific ideal of objectivity. In other words, the researcher ought to be aware of his or her biased fore-meanings and prejudices or at least render them transparent in the analysis, for instance, by referring to the texts according to the rules as well as making it clear which arguments are presented by the author and from others.

Finally, a brief remark regarding the interpretation of the empirical material. The authors of the examined narratives naturally follow the traditional conventions of science by referring to other sources (such as texts or interviews) in order to legitimise and support their argument. As these narratives are interpreted, I should as well go to the source in order to achieve the true meaning of the referent’s text. However, I will take some liberties regarding this convention since the purpose

364 Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2002, 92.
367 Eskola & Suoranta 2000, 17-18, 20-22; Also see chapter 4.5.
is not to discover whether the scholar in the analysed narrative has understood someone’s text correctly or quoted it accurately. In other words, the interpretive process in this regard does not aim at finding the objective truth of the analysed narrative.

5.1.5. Background to the Aceh conflict

The purpose with this section is to provide background information of the Aceh conflict. The aim is to introduce the main participants, circumstances and time-space context of the Aceh conflict so that the reader would comprehend the consequent analysed narratives more easily. The description of the conflict has been structured chronologically beginning from the 19th century until the latest 2009 developments in the province. Additionally, the background information progresses beyond the thematic boundaries (i.e. context) of this thesis but this has been thought with a view of the reader who might be unfamiliar with the conflict and, thus, be interested to known of the various peace processes and what is happening in the province at the moment.

The province of Aceh is located on the northern tip of Sumatra Island in Indonesia. The people of Aceh (Acehnese) have long lasting traditions of political resistance to external rule and of Islamic identity. First struggles in the territory were against colonial rule. Dutch forces invaded Aceh in the late 19th century, which led to a thirty year Aceh War (1873-1903), where the Islamic leaders of Aceh played an important role mobilising the troops and presenting a view that the war was a holy war against Dutch colonisation efforts. Dutch colonial forces prevailed in 1903 but infrequent opposition to Dutch rule continued for the next forty years. During the Second World War Japanese forces invaded Aceh on March 1942 replacing the Dutch colonial forces.

Japanese forces surrendered in August 1945 which paved the way for the occupation of Dutch and Allied forces in Indonesia. Aceh, however, was never re-occupied and according to Geoffrey Robinson the “[…] the revolutionary forces were able to attain an unusual degree of political, economic, and military autonomy.” These revolutionary forces were primarily Islamic groups which took over the political power vacuum left by the Japanese forces and continued to hold it after Indonesia’s independence in 1949. During the Japanese occupation a consciousness of anti-colonial Indonesian nationalism grew in the whole archipelago of Indonesia which led to a National

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368 Kingsbury 2007, 168.
Revolution in 1945-1949 and finally to Indonesia’s independence in the late 1949.\cite{Robinson2001}

The Islamic rebellion (also known as Darul Islam rebellion) developed in the whole archipelago of Indonesia after the Second World War and its purpose was to create an Islamic State of Indonesia (Negara Islam Indonesia). The leaders of Aceh joined the rebellion in 1953 and it ended in 1962 after years of complex negotiations and low-level fighting between Acehnese and central government authorities. Although the rebellion failed to achieve its original goal of establishing an Islamic State of Indonesia, the Aceh province received recognition as Special Region (Daerah Istimewa) with nominal autonomy in the realms of religion, customary law (adat) and education.\cite{Robinson2001}

The negotiations between the Darul Islam rebellion leaders and the government of Indonesia (GoI) went relatively effortlessly since the rebellion never sought to separate from Indonesia. According to Geoffrey Robinson, the Acehnese DI-leaders had joined the rebellion since they opposed the centralising tendencies of the Indonesian government and its softness towards the Indonesian Communist Party (Partai Komunis Indonesia –PKI) but they did not seek to threaten the unity of Indonesia. For the next fourteen years Aceh posed no particular political or security problems to the central government, instead, the former adversaries joined their forces to a fight against a common nemesis PKI destroying it during 1965-1966.\cite{Robinson2001}

In the late 1976 new rebel movement called the Free Aceh Movement (Gerakan Aceh Merdeka –GAM) was founded in Aceh. In contrast to the Darul Islam movement GAM unequivocally called for the independence of Aceh from Indonesia and subsequently on December 4 1976 unilaterally declared independence. The government of Indonesia (GoI) responded with a swift military operation aimed at capturing the leaders of the movement and consequently in 1979 the leader of GAM Hasan di Tiro left the country to form a government in exile. By the end of 1982 the rebellion appeared to have been crushed with most of its leaders either in exile, in prison or killed.\cite{Robinson2001}

It is worth noting that there are differences in the analysed narratives of the labelling of the rebellion group. Most scholars identify the 1976 rebellion with the group GAM. Some scholars, however, label the rebel group as Aceh Merdeka (AM) while others use the name Aceh-Sumatra National Liberation Front (ASNLF). Additionally, majority of the academics do not delineate these names from each other but refer to the same rebellion and to the same group.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \cite{Robinson2001} 215.
\item \cite{Robinson2001} 215-216; Sukma 2003, 166.
\item \cite{Robinson2001} 216.
\item \cite{Robinson2001} 216; Sukma 2003, 167.
\end{itemize}
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From the early 1989, GAM was able to launch a series of armed attacks in Aceh against local security authorities. Indonesian government quickly responded declaring Aceh as a Military Operations Area (Daerah Operasi Militer –DOM) which remained in effect until 1998. During the DOM-period the government’s security forces (Tentara Nasional Indonesia –TNI) relied largely on terror beating, killing, arresting, raping and torturing the citizens of Aceh. The hostilities between the parties continued throughout the 1990s but after the collapse of Indonesia’s president Suharto’s New Order regime in 1998 hopes were high that a political solution could be found to the conflict.\footnote{Suharto was the president of Indonesia during 1966-1998. When he came to power he established an authoritarian New Order government. Suharto’s regime was hierarchical and centrally governed and he relied heavily on military to assert his rule. (Aspinall & Berger 2001, 1003-1008.)}

In 1999, the Henry Dunant Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HDC) initiated a peace process which culminated in the signing of a Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA) on December 2002.\footnote{Huxley 2002, 35-36, 37; Robinson 2001, 217.} Disagreements, however, quickly broke down between the opponents over various issues so another meeting was arranged on May 2003. The two sides were unable to reach an agreement and shortly after the closing of negotiations the government of Indonesia declared a martial law in Aceh.\footnote{CoHA 2002.}

The second attempt to explore the possibility for peace talks began soon after the collapse of CoHA. It was instigated by Juha Christensen, a Finnish businessman, who had lived in Indonesia and through his former connections he attempted to arrange an informal meeting with the government of Indonesia and the leaders of GAM who were staying in exile in Sweden. Christensen was, however, unable to persuade the leaders of GAM who refused to participate in a meeting which was not formally supported by a recognised international organization. At this point, Christensen approached President Martti Ahtisaari who had upon retirement established a NGO called Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) which focuses on conflict resolution. Ahtisaari agreed to act as a mediator and both sides were now willing to meet and an invitation for meeting at Helsinki was sent in 24 December 2005. However, two days after the Christmas Eve an earthquake occurred in the Indian Ocean creating a chain of tsunamis destroying severely the province of Aceh and killing over 100,000 people.\footnote{Aspinall & Crouch 2003, viii-x, 1, 10, 32, 45; Sukma 2004, 18-22; Huber 2004, viii-ix, 1-3, 19-20, 30-33. Aspinall 2005, 18-19.}
The tsunamis triggered an unprecedented global humanitarian response and added the pressure on both sides to reach a peace agreement. The official talks of the peace process were arranged by CMI with the help of Finnish government during the spring of 2005. President Martti Ahtisaari mediated the negotiations. The starting point for the negotiations was “a peaceful solution with dignity for all” which was based on a principle of “nothing is agreed before everything is agreed”. Finally, the peace agreement, The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), was signed in Helsinki on 15 August, 2005. The MoU agreement is based on a solution of “self-government” for Aceh within Indonesia. It outlines a comprehensive peace arrangement with provisions concerning the political participation, economic matters, human rights, the rule of law as well as measures for the disarmament of GAM and its members’ reintegration into society.

As of now, the peace agreement is still withstanding, although, the tensions have been rising this year. In the first months of the current year, there have been sporadic shootings and grenade attacks in the province which is probably due to the general election that was held in 9th of April 2009. There remains a risk for low-level violence in the aftermaths of the elections. The following years will further prove the prevalence of the peace.

**5.2. Centre versus periphery**

The first analysed narrative is Geoffrey Robinson’s “Rawan Is as Rawan Does: The Origins of Disorder in New Order Aceh”. Robinson’s narrative follows what could be argued a traditional perspective of conflicts. He constructs a progressive narrative of growing Acehnese grievances during the Suharto’s repressive New Order regime. His point of view is characterised by many scholars as the “orthodox view” of the Aceh conflict. This chapter analyses Robinson’s narrative and attempts to show how Robinson’s plot is plotted and arranged according to perception of centre-periphery relations specifically focusing on the progressive construction of Acehnese grievances.

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382 Ahtisaari 2008, 10.  
385 ICG 2009, 1, 10-12, 14.  
386 Robinson 2001; Robinson translates the word rawan as trouble; See Robinson 2001, 213.  
387 See Nessen 2006, 177; Aspinall 2006, 149-150; McGibbon 2006, 315.
5.2.1. The plot: New Order policies as enhancing the Acehnese grievances

Robinson commences his narrative by feedforwarding the past historical events of the Aceh conflict. He utilises this strategy in order to delineate the Aceh Merdeka (AM) rebellion from the previous struggles. (See chapter 4.4.2. on feedforwarding) Robinson comments that Aceh’s reputation for rebelliousness and Islamic militancy is so “legendary” that it is tempting to view the AM-rebellion as a continuation of the tradition.\(^{388}\) He argues that the problems in Aceh were not the “[…] inevitable result of the region’s cultural, religious, or other primordial differences with other parts of the country, nor of its often noted tradition of resistance to outside authority.”\(^{389}\) According to Robinson, the focus on tradition obscures the significant differences in the aims of the different rebellions. For example, the Darul Islam (DI) rebellion sought to protect Islamic law and culture, whereas AM focuses directly on demands for political and economic independence.\(^{390}\) Furthermore, the focus on tradition obscures the long periods during which Aceh has been loyal to the central Indonesian government (GoI) as it was from 1945 to 1949. Moreover, Aceh was politically peaceful and orderly throughout most of the 1960s and 1970s, including much of the 1980s. Robinson states that these periods of peace disprove the arguments that Aceh has been driven to rebellion by historical tradition.\(^{391}\) Robinson comments that his perspective does not dismiss the role that culture and tradition have in producing the unsettling conditions in Aceh. Nonetheless, these elements provide only a partial explanation of the problem.\(^{392}\) They do not explain why and how the challenge from Aceh Merdeka (AM), which was minimal in 1976 and 1989,

“[…] degenerated into widespread violence, and produced the deep-seated bitterness toward the regime that had become the norm by 1998. Nor do they explain why serious political violence, including political killings, suddenly resumed in late 1998.”\(^{393}\)

Robinson states that the “[…] New Order regime itself was largely responsible for the serious and protracted violence in Aceh.”\(^{394}\) This forms the general plot of Robinson’s narrative, in other words, he attempts to explain how New Order policies aggrieved Acehnese sentiments towards the central government. Robinson distinguishes two specific New Order policies that especially influenced this development, he states “First, its approach to the exploitation of natural resources and the distribution of the benefits; and second, the doctrine and practice of its armed forces.”\(^{395}\) These policies have produced a “legacy of deep mistrust and animosity” amongst Acehnese towards the

\(^{388}\) Robinson 2001, 218.
\(^{389}\) Robinson 2001, 214.
\(^{390}\) Robinson 2001, 218.
\(^{392}\) Robinson 2001, 214.
\(^{393}\) Robinson 2001, 214.
\(^{394}\) Robinson 2001, 214.
\(^{395}\) Robinson 2001, 214.
central government of Indonesia. Robinson’s narrative constructs a progressive story of growing Acehnese grievances during the Suharto’s repressive New Order regime.

In Robinson’s narrative, the events are described in sequential or chronological order, thus, the plot follows what Bruner calls “historical-causal entailment”. (See chapter 4.4.1.) Consequently, the two New Order policies, exploitation of natural resources and military’s activities, which Robinson distinguished as particularly contributing Acehnese discontent, are presented in succession. These two policies form the circumstances of his narrative. In his narrative, Robinson plots the circumstances with the participants in order to strengthen the general plot-construction, that is, the argument that the New Order regime itself is largely responsible of the violent conflict.

5.2.2. Participants, circumstances and the time-space context

The description of the plot already clarified the temporal dimension of Robinson’s narrative. He demarcates the Aceh conflict from past conflicts, only focusing on the events from 1976 when Aceh Merdeka was found until 1998 when Suharto’s rule collapsed. The main characters in Robinson’s narrative are the rebellion group Aceh Merdeka (AM), the people of Aceh (Acehnese), the government of Indonesia (GoI) and its military forces (TNI). As explained in chapter 5.1.5., scholars tend to identify the 1976 rebellion group with different names. (See chapter 5.1.5.) Robinson names the rebellion group as Aceh Merdeka and he does not introduce nor consider on the question of various names. The GoI and TNI are portrayed in Robinson’s narrative as the Greimasian villains, that is, it is their policies and actions that produce hardships for central hero of the narrative which is the people of Acehnese. (See chapter 4.4.4. on participants) Robinson comments the relationship and acts of his narrative’s villain and its opponent as follows

“[…] problems were compounded by the sometimes extreme insensitivity of Indonesian government and military authorities toward local people, who were commonly described as ‘fanatics,’ whose culture and worldview were in need of modernization and improvement. In return, some Acehnese blamed ‘outsiders’ for encouraging practices they found offensive to Islam and to local custom, such as gambling, drinking, and prostitution.”

Robinson distinguishes two New Order policies that have especially contributed to the growing Acehnese grievances. These two policies form the circumstances of his narrative. First, the exploitation of Aceh’s natural resources and the subsequent distribution of the benefits; second the doctrine and practices of Indonesian armed forces. (Robinson 2001, 214) Robinson describes these

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396 Robinson 2001, 214.
397 Robinson 2001, 222.
circumstances in great detail plotting them together with participants.

Robinson explains the first set of circumstances as follows, “From the mid-1970s through the 1980s, Aceh was catapulted from its status as an economic backwater into the fastest-growing provincial economy in the country.” The reason for this economic growth was the “LNG boom”, that is, “huge deposits of liquid natural gas (LNG)”, which were found in the early 1970s on Aceh’s Northern coast. Finding the vast natural gas reserves created an economic boost for the region and as a result “[…] Aceh became one of Indonesia’s most important export earners and sources of central state revenue.” Robinson explains in detail how throughout the 1980s Aceh’s natural gas fields contributed annually between 2 to 3 billion dollars for the central government coffers.

Robinson plots the LNG boom and emergence of AM together by arguing that the “LNG boom appears to have provided fertile soil” in which the rebel movement emerged coincidently in the year of 1976. He further provides arguments

“The timing of Aceh Merdeka’s rise, the targets of its attacks, and its geographical focus, lend additional support to the view that the movement was stimulated by the tensions generated by New Order economic policy. It was probably not by chance, for example, that Aceh Merdeka’s declaration of rebellion in late 1976 and its first military action in 1977 coincided with the opening of PT Arun, Aceh’s first major facility for the extraction and processing of LNG.”

Robinson explains that the economic boom created “fertile soil” partly because the “[…] benefits of the boom were not equally shared.” More importantly, he argues that “As the central government and foreign companies reaped enormous revenues, the promised ‘trickle down’ effects of the massive investment proved to be limited.” Through this description, Robinson plots the first set of circumstances (natural resources) with the main villain (GoI) who exploited the region which led to the emergence of the second participant (GAM).

Robinson describes in detail how the economic boom created “undesirable side-effects” aggrieving the Acehnese from GoI. He explains that, for instance, from the early 1970s the

“[…] employment opportunities for the local people declined dramatically, and the majority of well-paid jobs were filled by Indonesians from different regions or by foreigners. The problem of employment was especially acute in the town of Lhokseumawe, in the immediate vicinity of the major [LNG] production facilities.”

Robinson continues the description of “undesirable side-effects”. He explains that the land needed

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398 Robinson 2001, 221.
399 Robinson 2001, 221.
400 Robinson 2001, 221.
401 Robinson, 2001, 224.
402 Robinson 2001, 221.
403 Robinson 2001, 221.
404 Robinson 2001, 221-222.
for the creation of the industrial enclave was expropriated from the local small farmers “without adequate compensation.” Furthermore, the GoI failed to “[…] provide adequate social amenities and infrastructure for displaced communities and migrant workers”. Additionally, industrial plants created large-scale pollution and “serious environmental degradation” in the vicinity of the factories. Especially angering for the Acehnese were the distribution of the benefits of the LNG boom; Robinson remarks that the

“[… ] substantial revenues generated by taxes and royalties were channeled directly to the central government, and there was a perception that very little was recycled back to the province in the form of government investment or subsidies.”

Central government’s economic exploitation of Aceh’s vast natural resources created a “feeling of resentment” amongst the Acehnese that they were not “getting a great deal more in return.” This policy was “[…] especially irritating to Acehnese intellectuals and local government technocrats, who felt that far more of the locally generated revenues ought to have been spent locally.”

Robinson remarks that the members of Aceh’s business class were “unhappy for slightly different reasons.” They were aggrieved since “outsiders”, especially those with good political connections with the GoI or with the military, were getting all the lucrative business contracts. Robinson comments that “Perhaps not surprisingly, therefore, members of all these groups – intellectuals, technocrats, and businessmen – were among the strongest supporters of Aceh Merdeka.”

The second set circumstances, that is, New Order policies that Robinson distinguished as contributing to the growing Acehnese grievances was the doctrine and practices of Indonesian armed forces. Robinson connects the military’s activities with the first circumstances (natural resource distribution) by commenting that the

“Aceh’s newfound economic importance guaranteed that the central government and military authorities would respond swiftly, and with considerable force, to any perceived threats to security in the region, especially those in the immediate vicinity of the production facilities.”

In other words, the rich natural resources resulted in the increasing militarisation in the province which had its own consequences in creating the growing Acehnese grievances. In order to connect the second circumstances (TNI’s activities) to the general plot-line, Robinson argues that the economic development does not explain the “[…] extreme levels of violence that engulfed in the

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405 Robinson 2001, 222.
406 Robinson 2001, 222.
408 Robinson 2001, 222.
409 Robinson 2001, 222.
410 Robinson 2001, 223.
413 Robinson 2001, 223.
area from mid-1990 to 1993." Therefore, the actions of Indonesian military in Aceh were not a mere response to a rebellion but an “[…] integral part of the development of that rebellion, and of the condition of recurrent violence and instability which grew from it.”

Robinson describes in detail the TNI’s activities in the region. He distinguishes two military practices that especially downgraded the centre-periphery relations

“[…] first, the institutionalization of terror as a method for dealing with perceived threats to national security; and second, the systematic and forced mobilization of civilians to serve as auxiliaries and spies in counter-insurgency operations.” (Robinson, 2001, 226)

Robinson explains that after the mid-1990s, the military relied largely on terror in order to keep the security situation under its control. TNI’s methods included “[…] arbitrary arrests, routine torture of detainees, the rape of women associated with the movement, and public executions.” Robinson comments that the government’s policy involved the deliberate use of “shock therapy” in order to achieve a “strategic political and security objective.” The purpose with arbitrary killings was to sow terror, “[…] to create an atmosphere of fear, and to ensure that witnesses to such crimes remained silent.” Robinson argues that the second and equally important factor in generating political violence in Aceh was the strategy of “civil-military cooperation” which was the military’s “[…] euphemism for the policy of compelling civilians to participate in intelligence and security operations against real or alleged government opponents.” Military led campaigns in which civilians were encouraged to hunt and kill any suspected AM members. Robinson comments that “This was an essential element in the dynamic of violence in Aceh.” Local people were, also, recruited to serve as spies and informers for the military which reinforced the atmosphere of “pervasive fear and silence.”

Robinson remarks that the strategy worked at least on a short term, however, “In the long term […] the military’s use of terror stimulated a profound anger among a broad cross-section of Aceh’s population.”

“These features of New Order military doctrine and practice ensured that in Aceh a much broader spectrum of people came to experience the hard edge of the regime, to feel deep bitterness towards it, and to sympathize more completely with the opposition.

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418 Robinson 2001, 228.
419 Robinson 2001, 228.
420 Robinson 2001, 229.
422 Robinson 2001, 228, 229.
These methods also encouraged greater violence and disruption in local society, and inflicted wounds that would prove exceptionally difficult to heal.” (Robinson, 2001, 226)

Robinson asserts that the military tactics served to “[…] stimulate a significant shift in Acehnese public discourse.” In 1976-1979 and 1989-1990, AM rallied around issues of economic injustice and political self-determination, after 1991 the main focus shifted to military’s behaviour and its systematic violation of human rights. Robinson remarks

“That change may have represented a tactical decision by the Aceh Merdeka leadership, in an effort to garner greater domestic and international support for the cause. Its effectiveness as a tactic, however, lay in the grim reality that ABRI [i.e. TNI] was in fact committing the most outrageous crimes against ordinary people.”

5.2.3. What kind of peace for Aceh?

It is obvious from the previous description that Robinson largely blames the New Order policies for creating the violent conflict in Aceh. Regarding the possible peaceful conditions in Aceh, he proposes that the

“[…] demise of the New Order state, and its replacement by a less authoritarian, less militaristic, less centralized variant, could bring a swift end to the unsettled conditions that have plagued Aceh in recent years.”

Robinson’s narrative is written in 2001 and for him the changes in the domestic political context of Indonesia after Suharto’s fall in 1998 provide some “grounds for optimism” for the possible peaceful prospects of Aceh. He remarks that the change in governance offers a “rare opportunity” to pursue investigations into “[…] military wrong-doing, to prosecute the authorities responsible, and thereby to break the cycle of impunity that had for so long encouraged abuses to continue.”

In other words, the political climate is more conducive to the investigation of human rights violations and for the punishment of those responsible. Robinson remains hopeful by stating that the continued conflict in Aceh and in other “trouble spots” of Indonesia is by no means inevitable. He states that a change in New Order policies could bring an end to the violence and “[…] perhaps even to demands for independence.” Robinson proposes that “[…] a shift toward a less authoritarian political system – and one which is less wedded to the used of terror – may provide the best possible guarantee of its continued unity and viability.”

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Although Robinson does not give explicit suggestions what ought to be done in order to achieve perpetual peace in Aceh, from his description it is possible to interpret that there are four elements that have to be tackled. First, a shift towards a more participatory and democratic domestic political context; second, an investigation into the human rights violations committed by the military; and third punitive measures for the one’s responsible of the human rights abuses. Fourth Robinson, also, clearly suggests that there ought to be an equal distribution of Aceh’s rich natural resources. From this description, it is rather obvious that Robinson’s view of the peace is in accordance with the Liberalist perspective, to be exact, with the liberal-realist framework. This framework is based on territorial sovereignty and democratic government as well as the Neo-Marxist conception of empowering the local voices. These two perspectives are not contradictory but Neo-Marxists thinking add to the liberal-realist axis a dimension of social justice and legitimacy. (See chapters 2.2.1. and 2.3.2.) Robinson does not propose that a new nation would be the only solution. On the contrary, he explains that if the described four issues are tackled, it might end the demands for independence.

Finally, Robinson adds an international element in his narrative by arguing that in the early 1990s Western governments were reluctant to criticise the New Order regime’s human rights violations since they sought to “[…] capitalize on the then burgeoning economies of the region.”\textsuperscript{431} The vast majority of Western and Asian governments remained silenced on the subject even though they had credible information about what was happening in the province.\textsuperscript{432} The silence allowed GoI to conduct “business as usual” that “[…] unquestionably helped to ensure that military operations, and human rights abuses, would continue in Aceh for nearly a decade.”\textsuperscript{433} Robinson strongly argues that “The inaction of the international community, on the other hand, was inexcusable.”\textsuperscript{434} Robinson, nonetheless, fails to account what exactly the Western governments ought to have done. In other words, would a stronger international critique or, for instance, international trade embargo resulted in a change of GoI’s policies. There is another problem regarding the outcries for the action of the international community, that is, it is difficult to point out to whom these stories are actually addressed. I mean that the notion of Western governments is by no means a homogenous group with shared interests and policies. On the contrary, at least from a Realist perspective, each state has its own interests towards any given new issue or problem.

\textsuperscript{431} Robinson 2001, 232.  
\textsuperscript{432} Robinson 2001, 233.  
\textsuperscript{433} Robinson 2001, 233.  
\textsuperscript{434} Robinson 2001, 233.
5.2.4. Conclusion: Centre versus periphery as traditional case-study narrative of conflicts

Robinson’s narrative is probably the most common case-study narrative on any conflict. His story does not specifically follow any paradigm, however, the idea of peace in his story is in accordance to the liberal-realist framework. His narrative presents a progressive story of growing local grievances of some social group that are due to the oppressive policies of the central government. As such, his story is based on the centre-periphery relations that perhaps are the most usual descriptions of contemporary conflicts. Generally in these types of historical narratives, or in most conflict narratives for that matter, there are two asymmetrically powered characters fighting against each other. Additionally, the stronger opponent is characterised as the villain who terrorises and represses the weaker opponent. While this might often be the true description of the events, these narratives, also, have a lot of similarities with the layman narratives of weaker but witted David fighting against a stronger but dummier Goliath. Perhaps the persuasive element in these narratives is exactly the notion that most Westerners have some historical, culturally specific memory of a violent struggle in their community where the fight was against stronger opponent. What is notably missing in these stories is the description from the perspective of the villain.

There is little focus in Robinson’s narrative on the government’s side of the story, hence, several questions could be raised. For instance, what if the benefits gathered from Aceh’s economic boom were used to peaceful and benevolent purposes, such as funding other more underdeveloped provinces? Would that situation justify the use of state violence? One could argue that such is the case in the conflict between Basque-country and the government of Spain. Another line of questions could be posed with the view of the Conflict Transformation theorists, that is, what if the Indonesian government would have succeeded in succumbing the situation under its control through the use of violence, thus, factually transforming the conflict. (See chapter 2.2.2.) Should the international community stand aside and wait for the process to finish itself?

5.3. Greed

The second narrative is Lesley McCulloch’s article “Greed: the silent force of conflict in Aceh.” McCulloch argues, like the title of her article already suggests, that a “[...] system of profit, power and protection that benefits certain groups has emerged [in Aceh], and it is this that largely explains

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the violent conflict."McCulloch plots her narrative according to the notion of greed, to be more specific, she utilises a popular theoretical framework, greed-grievances paradigm, as the basis for her plot-construction.

5.3.1. The plot: Greedy Indonesian security forces

Like Robinson, McCulloch begins her plot-construction by delineating her study on other studies of the Aceh conflict. She argues that

“[…] there has been little systematic attention given to the economically motivated actions and processes involved in generating and sustaining the conflict in Aceh. To view these economic factors only in terms of profits being denied by Jakarta is somewhat simplistic. Other economic activities have given the war a distinctive dynamic.”

McCulloch belittles the traditional perception of the Aceh conflict by using words, such as “little systematic attention” and “simplistic”, with the purpose of differentiating her story from the others as well as elevating the importance and significance of her own narrative and its upcoming insights. McCulloch describes the plot of her narrative in the following argument

“[…] in the case of Aceh, it is the state security apparatus that has had an impact on both the longevity and intensity of the conflict; seeking to maintain the war and also arguing for the deployment of additional troops. It is not only the abundance of natural resources available in the province that provides opportunity for economic enrichment, the involvement in the economy of these actors is more all-inclusive than this implies. The security forces have become an integral part of the functioning economy and society […] because of some very special circumstances that exist in Aceh.”

In other words, the conflict has been fuelled by the greedy security apparatus that seek to benefit from the conflict. McCulloch utilises Paul Collier & Anke Hoeffler’s greed-grievances paradigm as the theoretical framework for her narrative. This paradigm has become popular in contemporary peace studies, however, it was not examined in chapter two. In order to clarify its insights this study takes a hiatus from the analysis of McCulloch’s narrative and describes the Collier & Hoeffler model in detail. The explanation of their paradigm will, also, enhance the interpretation of the following narrative, that is, Edward Aspinall’s story.

Collier & Hoeffler’s paradigm suggests that civil wars can be explained in terms of greed or/and

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436 McCulloch 2005, 203.
437 McCulloch 2005, 203.
439 McCulloch 2005, 212.
grievances that respectively provide motives and opportunities for warring parties. They argue that, on the one hand, civil wars can be explained through examining the severe grievances in the region, such as economic inequality, a lack of political rights, or ethnic and religious divisions in society. Grievances provide motives, that is, the circumstances in which people want to rebel. On the other hand, civil wars can be explained by examining the greed-aspect that provides opportunities for the rebel organisation to build up their forces. Opportunities are determined by factors related to financing the rebellion such as extortion of natural resources, donations from diasporas or subventions from hostile governments. Opportunity might also be dependent on other factors, such as geography; mountains and forests might help to incubate the rebellion providing the rebels safe havens. Opportunities, thereby, provide the circumstances in which people are able to rebel.

According to Collier & Hoeffler, the availability of natural resources influences the opportunity for rebellion, since they provide opportunities for extortion, evidently, making rebellion “feasible and perhaps even attractive.” Thus, the abundance of natural resources substantially increases the incidence of civil war. Conclusively, Collier & Hoeffler claim that economic opportunities provide “[...] considerably more explanatory power than grievance.” Therefore, “Economic viability appears to be the predominant systematic explanation of rebellion.”

McCulloch explains how she utilised the insights of the greed-grievance paradigm in order to interpret the Aceh conflict. She, nonetheless, highlights some differences between the model and with her approach to the conflict. First, McCulloch asserts that commonly in the greed-grievance approaches the nation state is the unit of analysis while sub-state (micro-level) analyses are rare. Thereby, the application of the paradigm to Aceh conflict forms a departure of the general appliance of the model. However, the applicability of the model is, according to McCulloch, relevant since the sub-state conflicts are regularly in regions, such as Aceh, where the most intense relationship between war and economy can be found.

Second, McCulloch critiques the Collier & Hoeffler model by arguing that there is a general methodological problem. The problem concerns the collection of concrete data on the given issue since the ones who profit are unlikely to be so naïve as to admit to greed as a motive. Third, McCulloch argues that most of the greed-based approaches tend to focus on the rebels and to their revenue extortion, thereby, emphasising their role as the instigators of the conflict. Instead of

441 Collier & Hoeffler 2001, 16.
442 Collier & Hoeffler 2001, 16.
443 Collier & Hoeffler 2001, 1.
444 Collier & Hoeffler 2001, 1.
445 McCulloch 2005, 211.
focusing on the rebels, McCulloch’s narrative focuses on the Indonesian security forces. McCulloch comments that it is “[…] generally assumed that the primary motive of the military in Aceh is to defeat the ‘enemy’ […] in order to achieve peace and stability, and to maintain the unity of the state.” There is, also, a broad understanding that the conflict has prompted the collapse of the local economic and political system as well as produced “mindless and senseless violence”. McCulloch explains that this has led to a new system in Aceh “[…] which favours the interests of the government in Jakarta, the Aceh political and business elite, and the military – while impoverishing other sectors of the community.” In other words, the conflict is facilitating economic opportunities for the minority while at the same time destroying them for the majority.

It is worth quoting McCulloch again in order to clarify her plot, McCulloch argues that the economic interests of the military and police should be specifically identified as one of the primary motivators of the conflict. These ‘professionals’ appear free to openly participate in exploitative economic practises. Consequently, the exploitation by the security forces has lead to the economic and social deprivation of the Acehnese society. Additionally, McCulloch follows the basic premises of the Collier & Hoeffler model and, thus, focuses on the opportunities that the natural resources have provided for the greedy security forces. The opportunities are the circumstances on her story and they will be clarified in the following part.

5.3.2. Participants, circumstances and the time-space context

The main participants in McCulloch’s narrative are the security forces who are acting in the region, that is, the Indonesian military (TNI) and the police force. McCulloch describes the villains of her story as follows

“The professionally driven motives of the security forces have been replaced by economic ambition to profit from Aceh’s resources. To facilitate such profiteering and enrichment the military and the police now have a vested interest in maintaining a level of conflict that justifies their presence.”

From her description, it is apparent that McCulloch largely blames the security forces for fuelling the conflict. Several other participants, such as the “local business elite” provide certain specific functions in the plot-line or their role is more or less insignificant as is the case of GAM.

446 McCulloch 2005, 210, 211.
448 McCulloch 2005, 208-209.
450 McCulloch 2005, 209.
452 McCulloch 2005, 211.
McCulloch acknowledges that GAM might also benefit financially from the conflict but the most significant “[…] plundering and profiteering can be attributed to the entrepreneurial military and police”. As a consequence, McCulloch comments that the profiteering activities of the GAM are not the focus of her article since GAM’s actions are “[…] not the cause of the continuation of the conflict.” Additionally, McCulloch does not focus on the grievance aspect which she sees merely to form a consequence of the greed. As she states “[…] greed is the cause of the nature and intensity of the conflict, while grievance is merely its consequence.” Like Robinson, McCulloch does not wonder about the naming of the rebellion group. She mostly uses the labelling GAM in her narrative, although in some occasions she distinguishes the group as ASNLF, without clarification on whether that group is seen as different from GAM.

Albeit Collier & Hoeffler’s model presents a nation-state level analysis of conflicts, McCulloch, in her article, zooms in to the Aceh-region in order to apply the premises of the model. The spatial dimension of her article is, thereby, a clearly demarcated province of Aceh and she does not broaden the perspective to include other regions of Indonesia or, for that matter, the world.

Temporally McCulloch’s narrative covers periods from the mid-1970s until the end of 2004 when the tsunamis struck the province, however, the main focal point being the post-Suharto era. McCulloch specifies the conflict in Aceh into three stages. The first stage was between 1976-1979 and in 1989-1990 regarding the questions of economic injustice and political self-determination. The second phase began in 1991 when attention turned to the military and its human rights violations. The third stage started after the fall of president Suharto in 1998. The temporal focal point in McCulloch’s narrative is the third stage, that is, from 1998 to 2004 and she explains the prevalence of violence in the aftermaths of Suharto’s regime to be due to the greed of the security forces in the region. McCulloch acknowledges that the security forces’ profiteering is not a new phenomenon, thereby, she also chooses events from the first stages of conflict to support her argument. However, McCulloch also leaves some events indeterminate along the timeline.

Unlike Robinson’s narrative that focused on the liquid natural gas (LNG) boom, the circumstances (opportunities) in McCulloch’s story are a broader notion of natural resources. She comments

“The province has a wealth of natural resources, manufacturing and agricultural capacity. Oil resources have dwindled in significance in recent years, but gas,

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454 McCulloch 2005, 228 footnote 11.
455 McCulloch 2005, 229 footnote 11.
particularly LNG, remains highly profitable. In addition, there are fertiliser and cement plants; the forests harbour valuable wood and the coastal waters are rich fisheries. The province is very fertile, and commercial crops such as palm oil, rubber, coconuts and coffee grow with ease.\textsuperscript{459}

As acknowledged in McCulloch’s narrative, the circumstances are the opportunities (natural resources) that fuel the participants’ actions.\textsuperscript{460} McCulloch describes in detail all the business activities of the security forces, and robustly presents her view of such action by stating “[…] many of the activities are illegal. Such profiteering is criminal opportunism.”\textsuperscript{461} McCulloch specifies six economic interests that she further explains in great detail; these are drugs, arms, logging, protection, fishing and coffee.\textsuperscript{462}

First circumstance, the security forces, is involved in the drug business by encouraging the local farmers to harvest the crop for a predominantly military market. The profits are accrued to the military personnel while the farmers live in poverty. According to McCulloch, the drug business has been an “increasing cause of conflict” although the military’s involvement in the drugs economy is “less so now than in the past.”\textsuperscript{463} The word “past” offers a vague notion when these occurrences have happened but as argued it does not diminish the value of her plot-construction. The temporally ambiguous definition of the drugs business as “less now than in the past” is just one example how McCulloch is able in her narrative, because it is a theoretically tuned story, to leave some events as indeterminate along the timeline without concerns whether the story’s logic or argument would suffer.

Second circumstance, according to McCulloch another of Aceh’s “common secrets” is that the military has been supplying weapons to the GAM, while reporting them as “seized in battle”. McCulloch quotes GAM’s spokesperson who commented the activities:

“Yes, it is true, we do receive weapons from the military – ammunition too. It is a very reliable source. But recently the cost of these weapons has increased, so we may be looking for alternative avenues.”\textsuperscript{464}

Third circumstance, security forces is also actively involved in the illegal logging business. Companies, of which many are owned by foreigners, pay the local military and police to “look the other way” as they log out the allowed area.\textsuperscript{465}

Fourth circumstance is the protection business. The military has been involved in “protecting for a

\textsuperscript{459} McCulloch 2005, 205.
\textsuperscript{460} McCulloch 2005, 203, 212, 226.
\textsuperscript{461} McCulloch 2005, 215.
\textsuperscript{462} McCulloch 2005, 214-221.
\textsuperscript{463} McCulloch 2005, 216.
\textsuperscript{464} McCulloch 2005, 217.
\textsuperscript{465} McCulloch 2005, 218.
fee” business, for instance, concerning the oil palm, coffee and rubber plantations. The most lucrative protection business for the military has been with the ExxonMobil which owns the drilling rights in the LNG fields. Initially, GoI brokered a deal with Exxon which involved a provision for the military to protect the company’s operations. McCulloch asserts that the association between TNI and Exxon is “mutually beneficial” where Exxon provides financial and logistic support for the military whereas the military in return provides protection. Consequently, attacks against the company’s infrastructure have been minimal.466

Fifth circumstance, is Indonesian navy at the coastline and sea, Indonesian Navy frequently board local fishermen’s vessels for inspection and who then are coerced to sell their catch to the security forces at a price below market value. In addition, McCulloch states that the fishermen are also obliged to pay regularly for local military or police for protecting their boats.467 Sixth circumstance, is the coffee market. McCulloch notes how the situation is very similar as in the cases of fishing and logging. Coffee farmers are forced by the military to sell their products at reduced price. Moreover, in some districts the militia has driven the farmers away from their plantations which are then utilised as training camps, as well as, coffee production facilities in order to provide revenue for the military and militia.468

Finally, McCulloch comments that the security forces’ business also includes many other activities, such as illegal tolls and levies for roads usage, confiscation of food and other items (e.g. cigarettes) in restaurants and coffee shops, as well as seizures of vehicles which then will be returned for a fee. Arbitrary and unofficial arrests have also become more common where a fee is charged for the release of the accused. Furthermore, local contractors regularly pay to the military between 8 to 10% of the total value of the contract. Military, also, utilises its own supply lines for profit. For instance, petrol, fish, coffee and other commodities are sold by the local security forces above market prices to the Acehnese who are too afraid to buy those products elsewhere.469

The final circumstances in McCulloch’s narrative are the tsunamis on late December 2004. She comments that the enormous international aid effort that was mounted to redress the immediate disaster and help to rebuild the province was a “magnet to the TNI.” Consequently, TNI controlled the food aid, demanded bribes from aid agencies for the use of roads and controlled the aid into the

466 McCulloch 2005, 219-220.
467 McCulloch 2005, 220.
468 McCulloch 2005, 221.
469 McCulloch 2005, 221-222.
refugee camps.\footnote{McCulloch 2005, 225.}

To sum up, the circumstances (natural resources) provide opportunities for the greedy participants (i.e. TNI and local police) to satisfy their predatory profiteering businesses. McCulloch argues that these in turn have impacted how the security forces treat with Acehnese. She comments

“The impact on levels of human rights abuses from all this economic activity is substantial. Those who dare to resist are killed, tortured or disappear, and their houses, boats or shops are burned. They generally suffer both personal and economic ruin. Throughout Aceh, the destruction of people’s homes and livelihoods by the military and its militia is highly visible. There are many cases of the destruction by the military (often in conjunction with the militia) of almost entire villages.”\footnote{McCulloch 2005, 221.}

These human rights violations in turn result in grievances within the Acehnese towards the local security forces, as well as, towards the Indonesian government in general. Nonetheless, as already acknowledged, McCulloch does not consider these grievances to form the reason nor engine for the conflict.\footnote{McCulloch 2005, 203-204, 221-222, 225-227.}

5.3.3. What kind of peace for Aceh?

McCulloch does not clearly state what could be the possible future conditions in Aceh or what measures might help to resolve the conflict. Because she does not present any visions of the possible better conditions, it is difficult to connect her understanding of peace to the discussion presented in chapter two. Nonetheless, as the analysis shows, McCulloch plainly argues that the security forces are to be blamed for continued violence. As she states: “In Aceh, personal enrichment has become a significant pillar of the conflict; remove such opportunism and both the nature and intensity of the conflict would change.”\footnote{McCulloch 2005, 212.} Thereby, some measures ought to be taken, in order to tackle the predatory military and police forces. A political solution to the problem is according to McCulloch, nonetheless, difficult since “The military’s civilian paymasters hold neither political nor economic authority over the armed forces.”\footnote{McCulloch 2005, 212.} And because “Politically, the central government must rely on the support of this very powerful sector of the state.”\footnote{McCulloch 2005, 212.}

An economic solution does not seem workable either for McCulloch since the central government is unable to allocate funds to increase military salaries or to provide for the operational costs of the
military and police. Furthermore, McCulloch does not consider that the lack of finances would explain, or justify, the type of economic opportunism by the security forces. If anything, the profiteering largely explains the lack of professionalism of these forces.\footnote{McCulloch 2005, 212, 226.} But would an increase in military salaries lead to higher levels of professionalism? McCulloch rejects this proposal, instead, she argues

“[…] in reality, even a five-fold increase in military salaries would not compensate serving personnel for the ‘off-salary’ income resulting from the criminal opportunism in places such as Aceh. (McCulloch 2005, 226) To suggest otherwise ignores the desire for increased profitability, by whatever means, that characterises Indonesia’s elite politics. Increased government contributions to the TNI merely increase its profit margin; they do not decrease its criminality.”\footnote{McCulloch 2005, 226-227.}

Accordingly, McCulloch argues that since the “powerful minority” are the beneficiaries of the conflict, they “[…] may feel less inclined toward finding a peaceful solution.”\footnote{McCulloch 2005, 226.} In other words, “If conflict facilitates their inflated income; peace will only serve to decrease it.”\footnote{McCulloch 2005, 226.} McCulloch quotes Paul Collier who has argued that “[…] peace will depend upon those groups which gain from peace being more influential than those which gain from continued war.”\footnote{Collier 1999, 10 cit McCulloch 2005, 226.} While McCulloch concurs with this argument, she, nonetheless, remarks that in Aceh those “[…] who stand to gain economically – from ‘relative peace’ and ‘relative war’ – hold not only the political persuasion, but also the ‘firepower’.”\footnote{McCulloch 2005, 226.}

What is clearly lacking in McCulloch’s narrative are the specific suggestions about what to do in order to resolve the conflict. It is obvious that she suggests that the issues regarding the security forces’ opportunism and their lack of professionalism ought to be tackled. Nonetheless, the allocation of increased funding is not a feasible solution for her. Nor does she introduce any practical or real solutions to the problem. She leaves the reader, thereby, rather hopeless with regards to the resolution of the conflict.

5.3.4. Conclusion: Determinist grand narrative of conflicts

In the beginning of this chapter it was argued that conflict forms the timeless and universal \textit{fabula} (i.e. theme) in each of these narratives. After examining McCulloch’s narrative, it is possible to
argue that in her narrative there exists a specific universal, or at least within Western discourse very familiar, *fabula* which is the human greed as perceived in the view of homo economicus. In other words, underlying McCulloch’s interpretation of the conflict is the perspective of people as homo economicus. Where does this conception stem from? According to Joseph Persky, the term "Economic Man" was first used in the late 19th century as a critique towards John Stuart Mill’s work. In 1844, Mill wrote

“[Political economy…] does not treat of the whole of man’s nature as modified by the social state, nor of the whole conduct of man in society. It is concerned with him solely as a being who desires to possess wealth, and who is capable of judging of the comparative efficacy of means for obtaining that end.”

John Kells Ingram critiqued Mill’s notion of political economy which "[…] dealt not with real but with imaginary men – ‘economic men’ […] conceived as simply ‘money-making animals.’" This interpretation of Mill’s portrayal of human being characterised as money-driven monomaniac pawed the way for the modern understanding of the homo economicus as a being who is driven by narrowly defined interests (wealth). The contemporary identification of homo economicus combines this inherent drive towards wealth with rationality. Rationality is understood in this respect as an act of making sensible (rational) choices, thus, the homo economicus no longer bewilderedly stumbles towards luxury but his or her actions are aided by rational means-ends calculations.

McCulloch’s picture of the Indonesian security forces is very similar to the conception of homo economicus. Additionally, regarding the theoretical perspective that she utilised, Collier & Hoeffler’s model, too, corresponds with this picture of money-driven protagonists. However, the analysis of McCulloch’s narrative revealed that there is a distinct difference with her point of view and with the theoretical perspective that she utilises, that is, the Collier & Hoeffler model. While Collier & Hoeffler present a determinist grand narrative of human being, McCulloch utilises its basic premises for her purposes in order to show how the *greed of the few* fuels the conflict in Aceh. Therefore, she does not attempt to construct a universal explanation or description of the conflict or, for that matter, of human being. Regarding the Collier & Hoeffler model, their conception of human greed provides a determinist grand narrative similar to the ones presented in chapter 2.2. where traditional approaches of the conflict were introduced (Realism, Marxism, Conflict Resolution etc.). Consequently, it provides a universal perception of human being with little or none cultural

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482 Persky 1995, 222.
483 Mill 1874, 97.
484 Ingram 1887, 224.
variation. In this sense, it is very similar to Burton’s Conflict Resolution paradigm, which claimed that human beings are steered by an inherent drive towards satisfying their needs.

McCulloch argues that the Collier & Hoeffler model offers a valid foundation for other studies and can be applied more generally in conflict analysis. Indeed, the greed-grievance paradigm has become immensely popular in peace studies. Perhaps one reason for this is that it corresponds well with the general audience, that is, Western academics who are familiar with these type of determinist grand narratives of money-driven monomaniacs. In other words, many Westerners are familiar with the layman narratives of greed conceived as homo economicus beginning from Christian teachings of seven deadly sins and the portrayals of Midas to a contemporary version in the form of the character Gordon Gekko from the movie “Wall Street”. In other words, greed-based narratives are particularly persuasive since they present a point of view to which Westerners can relate to, in other words, these stories make sense. Obviously, one could also argue that the popularity is due to the paradigm’s explanatory value.

5.4. The social construction of Acehnese identity

The third narrative is Edward Aspinall’s article “The Construction of Grievance: Natural resources and Identity in a Separatist Conflict”. Aspinall contrasts his view with the previous narratives by arguing that the question of natural resources and consequent grievances should be viewed within a wider framework of cultural identity construction and “collective action frame”. Therefore, Aspinall presents “[…] an alternative reading of the conflict that views natural resources as only one field among many through which the conflict was expressed and legitimated.” His study focuses on the rebel movement and emphasises the social construction of identity. He argues that the resource extraction triggers a conflict only if an “[…] appropriate collective action frame exists in the cultural toolkit of the group in question.”

5.4.1. The plot: Greed and grievances in a social context

A significant part of Aspinall’s plot-construction is the greed-grievance distinction. These two

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486 McCulloch 2005, 226.
488 Aspinall 2007, 951.
489 Aspinall 2007, 952.
490 Aspinall 2007, 951.
points of view, greed and grievances, are often contrasted with each other. Aspinall notes how the Collier & Hoeffler’s model has stimulated a “burst of scholarly interest” towards the greed-based interpretations of conflicts. Aspinall remarks that the Aceh conflict is often portrayed as a “paradigmatic resource conflict” because foundation of GAM in the 1970s coincided with finding of the natural gas fields. While the first examined narrative, made by Geoffrey Robinson, highlighted this linkage, Aspinall belittles this understanding by stating how this perspective is part of the narrative that GAM leaders have constructed. As he states

“GAM leaders and other Acehnese dissidents emphasized their [natural gas] exploitation, and exploitation of other natural resources, in their condemnations of the Indonesian government. Many scholars have been inclined to follow their lead and depict the conflict as being primarily about resources.”

For Aspinall, the rich natural resources of Aceh province form only a single element as do the grievances. Aspinall outlines his plot in the following argument

“[…] what determines rebellion is not the presence of a natural resource industry and its material effects, but rather how it is interpreted by local actors. [Thus, grievances…] may be understood only within a particular historical, cultural, political context. In some circumstances, the context may give rise to ways of thinking about group identity and entitlement that prompt interpretations of natural resource industries in grievance terms, linked to condemnation of the wider political system or of ethnic adversaries. In such cases, violence is more likely than when such an identity-based interpretive framework does not exist, even if patterns of natural resource use are similar.”

In other words, Aspinall’s plot attempts to show how in Aceh an identity-based interpretive framework developed which prompted the natural resource situation to be viewed by the Acehnese in grievance terms consequently leading to violent conflict. Aspinall comments that there were three “mechanisms” which gave rise to an “identity and collective action frame” that contributed to violence in Aceh. They are “[…] the legacy of past conflict, state institutionalization of ethnic identity, and the agency of a counterelite that extended the official discourse on ethnicity to justify revolt.”

Aspinall’s plot construction has some elements of fuzziness. Fuzziness might correspond well with fictional novels by adding an element of uncertainty in the plot, thus, taking the reader by surprise. However, in Aspinall’s narrative, the element of fuzziness only distracts the reader. Academic studies are often evaluated on the basis on logical consistency and how well the author persuades the readers of the story’s point of view. Aspinall’s narrative is fuzzy especially in the manner of logical consistency. (See chapter 4.4.5.) As described, Aspinall’s plot utilises three mechanisms

491 Aspinall 2007, 950, 951-952.
492 Aspinall 2007, 952.
493 Aspinall 2007, 950, 953.
494 Aspinall 2007, 953.
495 Aspinall 2007, 951.
which are all overlapping processes in the plot. That is, the first is viewed as the circumstance, the second as both participant and circumstance and finally the third as the second participant. Aspinall attempts to point out who did what to whom, and which results each circumstance produced at a given moment. Nonetheless, because of the overlaps, the result is fuzzy. Another problem with fuzziness concerns the way how Aspinall uses social constructivist literature. He does not, however, follow any specific theoretical framework but, instead, bases his arguments following a wide array of social constructivist literature. This creates conceptual confusion, that is, he includes various concepts such as “cultural toolkit”, “collective action frame” and “counterelites” without explicitly defining what these concepts mean. The following part attempts to clarify as these mechanisms by distinguishing them as circumstances and participants.

5.4.2. Participants, circumstances and the time-space context

Aspinall identified three mechanisms that gave rise to the identity framework; past historical events, state institutionalisation and the local protagonists. The first acts as circumstances in his plot, while the second mechanism mixes the roles by being both participant and circumstance whereas the last mechanism is vaguely defined but can be seen as participant, nonetheless. The first set of circumstances in Aspinall’s narrative is the legacy of previous histories of violence. Aspinall’s historical narrative is congruent with what could be argued as a traditional story of Aceh’s history. (See chapter 5.1.5. for background) Aspinall begins by describing the Dutch invasion in the late 19th century which was followed by the Indonesian independence in the late 1940s. However, after describing the Darul Islam (DI) revolt that occurred in the 1950s, Aspinall distinguishes his narrative from the traditional story. Unlike, for instance, Geoffrey Robinson, who distinguished DI-revolt from GAM-rebellion, Aspinall argues that there is an element of “direct continuity” between earlier DI and later GAM rebellions. Aspinall explains that many of the persons who established GAM had participated in DI rebellion, or were children of participants. Aspinall’s plot does not, however, necessitate this linkage between the rebellions. In other words, he could have just started his story from the GAM rebellion, since most of his descriptions point to that period of time. For one reason or another he obviously sees the necessity to construct a clear, linear and progressive story which carries effortlessly from the beginning to the end. There are, however, some bumps in his story which he acknowledges. Aspinall states that commentators who argue for the discontinuity of these two conflicts are correct in so far that violence during the GAM rebellion was not simply a revival of earlier conflicts. Aspinall agrees that there was, indeed, a stark ideological

496 Aspinall 2007, 957-958.
497 Aspinall 2007, 958, 959.
Aspinall plots the first circumstances with the second by asserting that “[…] the legacy of past violence was important primarily because it was institutionalized in a way that created a novel territorialization and ethnicization of identity.” In other words, the second circumstance is the institutional and political relations between the Acehnese and the central government. This relationship forms the context for the “[…] emergence of an Acehnese identity defined by resistance to, and victimization by, Indonesia.” The Indonesian government is, therefore a participant in Aspinall’s plot as well as a circumstance. In order to clarify this relationship Aspinall skips from the DI-rebellion to the time when Suharto’s New Order regime had collapsed. Aspinall explains that by the late 1990s there had been a “[…] shift in the basis of Acehnese resistance, with government opponents emphasizing ethnicity more than Islam. Separatist guerilla leaders and student activists campaigning for a referendum stressed that the Acehnese represented a nation distinct from and incompatible with Indonesia. A new ethno-history stressed the allegedly ‘illegal’ nature of Aceh’s incorporation into Indonesia and denied the enthusiastic support Acehnese had given Indonesia in the 1940s. Critics now denounced the government in largely ethnic terms, as a vehicle for ‘Javanese’ interests (the Javanese being Indonesia’s largest ethnic group).”

This temporal feedforwarding, however, creates even more fuzziness to Aspinall’s plot, since it only explains how there had been a shift in framing the Acehnese identity not why this process occurred. Aspinall explains that the shift from Islam to ethnicity arose from two processes; one concerns institutional context, the second political agency. Thus, whereas GoI was determined earlier as the participant, it had now changed to form the circumstances (institutional context) for the new participant, that is, “political agency.” Aspinall argues that the first process resulted from the “[…] contradiction between the political settlement promised to Aceh after Darul Islam (in essence, a form of regional autonomy) and the reality of political centralization.” The political settlement constructed post-DI designated Aceh as a “special territory” granting it rights to regulate its own affairs in custom, religion and education. This settlement was “[…] justified in terms of the contribution the Acehnese had made to Indonesian independence.” Aspinall comments that “The formulation was vague, but it helped to localize the aspirations of Aceh’s Islamic leaders.” In other words, according to Aspinall the settlement institutionalised the Acehnese identity by

498 Aspinall 2007, 959.
499 Aspinall 2007, 959.
500 Aspinall 2007, 958.
501 Aspinall 2007, 959.
502 Aspinall 2007, 959.
503 Aspinall 2007, 959.
504 Aspinall 2007, 959.
505 Aspinall 2007, 959.
extending its provincial status through the designation of “special region” while at the same time informally recognising the Islamic law in Aceh. Aspinall links the second circumstance with the new participant by asserting that one of the immediate consequences of the “special region” status was the “[…] political prominence of a new breed of local technocrats.”

Another factor, contributing to the shift from Islamic to ethnic themes in Acehnese resistance was “[…] purposeful manipulation by nationalist entrepreneurs seeking new ways to confront the state.” This is exactly what occurred in Aceh. The chief actors in the GAM rebellion were a small group of former supporters of Darul Islam and their sons. Aspinall describes that this group “[…] embarked upon a process of ‘rediscovery’ of Acehnese history and culture parallel to that of the provincial political elite.” They perceived this in a context of failure of DI-rebellion and the “special territory” compromise concluding that it was necessary for Aceh to achieve complete independence.

Aspinall uses several conceptualisations of the “new breed of local technocrats”, that is, the participant. Aspinall comments that Aceh was significantly different from other provinces of Indonesia where outsiders headed local administrations since in Aceh the top positions were taken by Acehnese. In Aceh, the secular-educated intellectuals controlled the top positions who viewed their main task as being to modernise Aceh’s “moribund society and economy”, thus, achieving a complete integration into the Indonesian nation-state. “Special status”, also, “produced an energetic project” of Acehnese identity construction. The newly established technocratic elite “expended much energy” on embracing a sense of Acehnese “specialness”. Aspinall comments that that the purpose of the elite with the identity construction was precisely to “[…] legitimate the arrangement that justified their relative privilege.”

Aspinall states that the local government technocrats during the Suharto’s New Order period promoted a “marginalist ideology” presenting a view on how Aceh was a “backward region within a rapidly developing Indonesia” and, thus, the central government should enable it to catch up with the rest of the country. Aspinall comments that GAM, which is introduced as the third

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506 Aspinall 2007, 959.
507 Aspinall 2007, 959.
508 Aspinall 2007, 961.
509 Aspinall 2007, 961.
510 Aspinall 2007, 961.
511 Aspinall 2007, 961.
512 Aspinall 2007, 959-960.
513 Aspinall 2007, 960.
514 Aspinall 2007, 963.
participant, for its part, extended the technocrats’ arguments about “[…] backwardness by locating a precise cause for Acehnese impoverishment (‘Java’) and by putting forward a simple solution (independence).”\textsuperscript{515} Aspinall distinguishes the resource discourse as a way for GAM to differentiate itself from other adversaries. Aspinall comments

“The rebel movement’s emphasis on resources was thus a counter to a set of ideas then dominating Aceh’s political landscape. When GAM attacked the government for its alleged drain of Aceh’s natural riches, this was a way for it to respond to and denigrate dominant official discourse and to mark the movement off from its local adversaries. To argue that GAM was merely or even mostly a reflection of a living sense of resentment in the population about resource conflict is to mistake the complexity of the dynamic at play. GAM also reflected the state’s own obsessions, even as it rejected them.”\textsuperscript{516}

The resource issue, thus, gave the possibility for the “ethnic entrepreneurs” of GAM to persuade their audience by arguing that if Aceh was so “special”, why its resources are exploited and consequently if Aceh would become independent this problem would be solved.\textsuperscript{517}

Aspinall explains the relationship with the main protagonists, GoI and GAM as follows

“GAM’s attempt to fashion a sense of Acehnese identity mandating armed resistance involved stressing not only the positive features of being Acehnese, but also the negative attributes of Indonesian identity: where Aceh was ancient and authentic, Indonesia was novel and artificial; where the Acehnese were noble and brave, Indonesians were perfidious and cruel, and so on. It is a truism that such binary contrasts between a ‘Self’ and ‘Other’ are crucial to identity construction in most if not all contexts. What deserves emphasis here is the central role played by grievance in this process. Elements of the identity of the Indonesian Other stressed by GAM were only those that were harmful to the Acehnese (Indonesian greed, repressiveness, deceitfulness, and so on). It might thus be said that grievance is the bridge that links Self and Other in identity construction, at least in instances where the Other is depicted as both hostile and powerful. In this way, grievance should be viewed as integral to identity construction, not as antecedent to or contingent upon it.”\textsuperscript{518}

Aspinall describes the second circumstances and how it provided the “special territory” status on paper envisaging considerable amounts of authority to local officials. However, from the late 1950s onwards, Indonesia experienced growing authoritarianism and state centralisation which culminated in the Suharto’s military-backed New Order regime. State-centralised political conditions signified that Acehnese elite could not deviate from the central government’s directions. Thus, although Aceh formally retained the status “special region”, in reality, it was subjected to the extreme centralisation of state power tendencies of the Suharto’s regime.\textsuperscript{519} For instance, during the 1960s, Aceh’s provincial legislature attempted to formalise the place of Islamic law in the province and to

\begin{footnotes}
\item[515] Aspinall 2007, 963.
\item[516] Aspinall 2007, 963.
\item[517] Aspinall 2007, 964.
\item[518] Aspinall 2007, 964.
\item[519] Aspinall 2007, 960.
\end{footnotes}
demand greater share of natural resource revenues, these demands where abruptly denied by GoI.\textsuperscript{520}

Hence, in Aceh, the “special region” status

“[…:] laid the ground for conflict because it reinforced and celebrated Acehnese identity while preventing the realization of regional political demands, thus deepening rather than ameliorating disillusionment.”\textsuperscript{521}

Eventually, these developments were expressed in what Aspinall defines as a narrative of “broken promise”. An emphasis on betrayal already existed after the DI-rebellion but it became “all-pervasive” after the collapse of Suharto’s regime and “[…] the decades of soft-identity formation that had accompanied it.”\textsuperscript{522} Aspinall comments

“Many Acehnese now said that the promises of ‘specialness’ had been betrayed. Stories that had been part of the official mythology justifying special status were now used to legitimate ethno-nationalist mobilization.”\textsuperscript{523}

Besides the narrative of “broken promise”, an integral element to the late 20\textsuperscript{th} century development of a distinct Acehnese identity was a “discourse of deprivation”. Aspinall remarks how in identity construction, often emphasis is on cultural aspects, such as ethno-histories, cultural traditions and folklores. According to Aspinall, there is plenty of this type of cultural tradition in Aceh. However, the more important was a narrative of suffering which signified not of what the Acehnese were but of what they had suffered and what had been extracted from them.\textsuperscript{524} Aspinall explains

“By the 1990s, it had become central to public discourse that the Acehnese had continually been exploited and abused by Indonesia. This image first emerged in the 1950s, although then the chief complaints centered on the place of Islam and only secondarily on mistreatment of the Acehnese per se. In the 1970s, ‘neocolonial’ exploitation of Aceh’s natural resources was added to the mix. In the 1990s, the theme par excellence was human rights abuses. Each layer of grievance built on top of that which preceded it, such that Acehnese identity became one founded in suffering at Indonesian hands. It was an identity of victimhood, albeit not a silently reproachful and helpless victimhood, but one that stressed Acehnese resistance and heroism.”\textsuperscript{525}

Two structural elements have not yet been analysed in Aspinall’s story, temporality and spatiality. Not surprisingly, the temporal dimension in Aspinall’s narrative is somehow fuzzy. He discusses extensively on the historical development of Acehnese identity construction beginning from the late nineteenth until the mid-twentieth century, as he states “A starting point for the analysis is the previous history of violent conflict in the territory, dating from the late nineteenth to the mid-

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\item \textsuperscript{520} Aspinall 2007, 960.
\item \textsuperscript{521} Aspinall 2007, 960.
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\item \textsuperscript{523} Aspinall 2007, 960.
\item \textsuperscript{524} Aspinall 2007, 962.
\item \textsuperscript{525} Aspinall 2007, 962.
\end{itemize}
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twentieth century.”

However, in another statement he explains that “The article concentrates on the most recent period of conflict in Aceh, which began with the formation of the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) in 1976.” In Aspinall’s first argument he defined “starting point” for the study to be “late nineteenth” century. The second argument explains that the locus is on the latest rebellion beginning from 1976.

Regarding the spatial dimension, the space in Aspinall’s narrative is the Aceh province but he, also, zooms in to two other provinces of Indonesia, Riau and East Kalimantan. Aspinall’s purpose with this spatial relocation is to compare the situation in these provinces with Aceh. He remarks that Riau and East Kalimantan experienced “virtually identical processes of natural resource exploitation” as occurred in Aceh. However, what is missing from those provinces is a “similar context of historical violence and institutionalization of ethnicity”. Consequently, these provinces have not become “sites of intense separatist or ethnic violence.” Additionally, neither province had the same eagerness from the local officials to “fed steady diet of propaganda” to the population in order to persuade them on how their province also deserved special status. As a consequence, in these two provinces “The resulting ideological climate was less conducive to separatist mobilization.” Aspinall’s reason for this spatial relocation is to further legitimise his interpretation of the Aceh conflict.

Aspinall also utilises the spatial dimension in order to support his argument regarding the connection of the various rebellions in the province. Earlier it was argued that a major gap in his plot is the connection between DI and GAM rebellion. A traditional historical notion of these rebellions is that they were distinctively different. Aspinall, however, highlighted that there existed “direct continuity”. Hence, by little spatial cues he attempts to persuade the reader of this position. He argues that the conflict in Aceh arose largely according to the “logic that was divorced” from the natural gas industry. He further states that “The heart of the insurgency was in the remote, backward, and mountainous interior, rather than in areas most seriously disrupted by economic modernization.” Aspinall notes how GAM’s “geographical spread” in its early years did not match with the location of the liquid gas industry. Rather, GAM’s geographical heartlands [...] replicated almost exactly the chief base areas of the old Darul Islam revolt.”

526 Aspinall 2007, 952.
527 Aspinall 2007, 953.
528 Aspinall 2007, 952-953.
529 Aspinall 2007, 953.
530 Aspinall 2007, 966.
531 Aspinall 2007, 962.
532 Aspinall 2007, 963.
533 Aspinall 2007, 962-963.
statement, Aspinall attempts to prove how there exists a direct continuity with DI and GAM rebellions, unlike what the traditional historical narrative of the conflict suggests. (See chapter 5.1.5. for background)

5.4.3. What kind of peace for Aceh?

The analysis identified three mechanisms from Aspinall’s narrative which played the key role in the cultural production of violence. They were the legacy of previous conflicts, state institutionalisation of ethnic identity and emergence of conflict protagonists. From the previously analysed narratives, it was relatively easy to interpret what the authors’ suggestions for resolving the conflict were. From Aspinall’s description, on the other hand, it is difficult to interpret what possibly could have been done in order to meet these suggestions. Aspinall does not propose any precise suggestions for to cope with the situation in Aceh. However, this might be due to the fact that his narrative is published in 2007 which is two years after the MoU peace treaty.

Aspinall, nevertheless, argues that identity construction is highly important in giving a specific group a framework how issues are interpreted and perceived, therefore, it would be equally important to find some solutions if this process can create violent uprisings. In other words, if the social construction of identities can contribute to the emergence of violence, should it not be at the forefront of any examination to find out methods to cope with this question. That is, how do you construct an alternative identity discourse of peace? Aspinall does not spend time on these questions. Maybe he should, since if his description is correct, the decades long identity construction has not vanished from the Aceh province after the signing of the peace agreement.

Aspinall does not provide any solutions for other conflicts either. He explains how there exists a similar situation in other provinces in Indonesia. He distinguishes Riau and East Kalimantan and explains that the situation has not escalated into violence because of the lack of political entrepreneurs and appropriate institutional context. But if the Aceh conflict was a product of decades long identity construction what prevents these provinces from experiencing the same?

There is extensive academic literature concerning the question of identity construction. Additionally, academics have, also, pondered on the question how conflict participants could change the violent images of the enemy. For instance, Tarja Väyrynen comments that face-to-face interaction between the participants might help to change the negative images they have of each
other. She notes that the face-to-face interaction between the opponents is one of the core ideas that have been advocated by the Conflict Resolution approaches that attempt to solve protracted conflicts through the process of problem-solving workshops. It presumes that when opponents have a possibility to meet face-to-face in a “[…] supportive environment it will encourage them to change, for example, misperceptions and to ‘humanise their mutual images.’” Additionally, “The notion of the We relationship is implicitly referred to in many problem-solving approaches when the foundations of interpersonal understanding are theoretically constructed.”

5.4.4. Conclusion: Social constructivist perception of conflict

Aspinall’s narrative situates within the social constructivist group of literature which was discussed in chapter 2.3. From the examined peace studies, Aspinall’s narrative has similarities especially with Tarja Väyrynen’s study and Vivienne Jabri’s study. (See chapters 2.3.1. and 2.3.2.) It, also, has similar elements with Johan Galtung’s work who argued that conflicts can be explained through conflict triangle with attitudes, contradiction and behavior at its vertices. (See chapter 2.2.2.) Aspinall does not, however, construct his narrative according to any specific social constructivist theoretical framework but, instead, utilises many different studies.

There is a wide array of theoretical studies regarding the question of identity construction and how images of self-other are formed and these in turn might change from peaceful images of the other to enemy images. Usually, case-study analyses that concentrate on identity construction do not attempt to build a universalistic picture of conflicts but rather focus on some specific civil war with the purpose of building a narrative on how a certain group became estranged from the other group(s). The reasoning for estrangement might be due to ethnicity or for some political motives such as nationalism. Aspinall explained how both affected and contributed to the Acehnese alienation from the central government.

The social construction identity and how it is conducive to violence is highly important and apparent in many contemporary protracted conflicts, such as Israel-Palestine. The theoretical understanding regarding this process is extensive and there also are, albeit less prominent, literature regarding the matter how one could resolve an identity based conflict. Like any question regarding conflicts, this problem is highly normative and political. Perhaps for this reason, many scholars tend to merely explain the identity based conflicts instead on focusing to the subsequent more important

534 Väyrynen T. 2001, 120.
question on how to resolve the conflict.

Another question arises from these types of narratives and that is whether the peace researcher should actually focus his or her efforts to help the central government in constructing a legitimate identity construction for its population. In other words, why not to help the government to construct a narrative of friend-foe à la Venezuela where the US is the villain for all the hardships of the country, thereby, enforcing rather than disintegrating the nation-state.

Finally, a brief observation on how these types of identity narratives might seem for the recipient. Narratives of identity construction are often constructed in a teleological manner in which the sensible ending, at least from the reader’s point of view, is ultimately a new nation-state. In this sense, the genre is similar to the romantic narratives, that is, the battered social group after experiencing serious of hardships finally receives its long lost independence. (See chapter 4.4.3.)

5.5. \( p(\beta_E = \beta_C) \)

The fourth analysed narrative is Barbara Walter’s article “Does Conflict Beget Conflict? Explaining Recurring Civil War.” The first historical narrative explained that conflicts have been a recurring scene in Aceh. In her narrative, Walter analyses why “[…] some countries experience recurring civil war while others do not?” This question forms the general plot of her story. She comes to a conclusion that “[…] low quality of life and barriers to political participation – can help predict which countries will continue to experience civil war and which will not.” Walter’s narrative is based on the positivist view of the social world.

5.5.1. The plot: why some countries experience recurring civil wars?

Walter’s plot is easily comprehended and she begins her narrative by raising the reader’s interest towards the oncoming study. Her opening statements goes

“Civil wars create what has been called a conflict trap. Societies that have experienced one civil war are significantly more likely to experience a second or third war than are societies with no prior history of violence.” Walter’s statement concurs with what could be argued as common knowledge, that is, conflicts

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have a tendency to renew themselves. However, in the same paragraph she grasps the reader’s interest by stating “Empirically, however, we know that most civil wars are not destined to repeat themselves. Between 1945 and 1996, only 36% of civil wars were followed by an additional war.” Therefore, there is something wrong with the current knowledge since single civil wars seem to be more the norm. Walter ends her first paragraph with the following question “Given this variation, what explains why some countries experience recurring civil war while others do not?” This question forms the main plot of her narrative, that is, to study what the underlying causes for recurring civil wars are.

Like the previous two narratives, Walter’s story, as well, begins with a short description of the research field. That is, how war recurrence has been explained in academic literature. At the beginning of the literature review, Walter already demarcates her study from the earlier ones by stating “[…] In what follows, I argue that none of these factors will lead to a second or third war in the absence of strong economic and political incentives for the average citizen to fight.”

From the previous literature, Walter distinguishes three types of studies why the civil war has re-emerged. First group of studies focuses on the issue why the original war began. A common argument is that certain types of civil wars are more difficult to reconcile than others and, thereby, they are more prone to re-ignite. Particularly intractable conflicts are those that, for instance, include elements of competing identities (such as ethnic rivalries) or the ones in which rebels demand extreme objectives, such as elimination of regime. Second group of studies, according to Walter, focus on how the original war was fought. To be more precise, the argument focuses on the costs of a previous war to determine whether combatants are likely to return to the battlefield. According to Walter, some studies have shown how parties that are involved in costly wars are more eager to resort to arms compared to situations in which parties would have faced and sustained less suffering. However, other studies have argued how costly wars could, also, have the opposite effect. In other words, prolonged fighting might cause “combat weariness” thus making it more likely for sustaining peace. Third group of studies, focus on how the original war ended. Walter asserts that one argument presented according to this view is that conflicts that leave the combatants physically separated are less prone to restart. The opposite argument, however, states that a partition serves to signal other “[…] ethnic groups that the government is conciliatory and will likely

acquiesce to their own demands for greater self-rule.” Walter’s description of the previous literature clearly shows how in positivist studies there is prevalence for contradictory findings and how scholars have failed to prove which variable is more significant than other. (See chapter 2.4.)

Walter comments that earlier studies on civil war recurrence have focused on the characteristics of the previous wars in order to explain why a second war occurred. In other words, in these views, earlier wars are seen to set the stage for conflicts that occur in later years because the original reasons that ignited the first war were not resolved. Walter argues that it is not so much the previous war and its reasons but the possibilities for the rebel leaders to recruit soldiers that lead to subsequent wars. As she comments

“A distinguishing feature of civil wars is the need for rebel leaders to recruit sufficient soldiers to man a rebel army. Civil wars will have little chance to get off the ground unless individual farmers, shopkeepers, and workers voluntarily choose to enlist in the armies that are necessary to pursue war, and it is the underlying political and economic conditions that make enlistment attractive that are likely to drive a second or third civil war (as well as the initial war). Only if we identify these micro-level motives for recruitment can we begin to explain why civil wars arise in some countries and not others, and why individuals who were once willing to join an army may or may not be willing to join again.”

This lengthy quotation was added since it captures the aim of Walter’s narrative. Walter purports to proof that “micro-level motives” of individual citizens are highly important when evaluating whether a civil war is going to occur again.

Walter contrasts her study with previous research by stating that “[…] factors related to rebel recruitment will be at least as important in determining where war will recur as factors associated with a previous war.” Walter bases her argument on the “simple observation” that in order for the rebel leaders to continue, or re-enact the war, they must first conscript hundreds or thousands of citizens. According to Walter, this places the responsibility for the renewed war on “[…] ordinary people and the trade-offs they must make for returning to war or staying at peace, and their decision to enlist or not enlist is likely to be based on very personal cost calculations.” Walter paints a picture of a rational individual whose actions are directed by rational means-ends calculations. She further clarifies her understanding of individual citizens by commenting

“The attributes of a previous war may matter, but civilians are not going to transform

544 Walter 2004, 374.
547 Walter 2004, 372.
549 Walter 2004, 374.
themselves from shopkeepers back into soldiers unless the conditions that exist at any given point in time encourage this transformation.”

Thus, the choice for enlistment is not purely subjective, on the contrary, it is influenced by objective conditions. Walter illuminates this by explaining that enlistment is more likely when two conditions hold. The first and the “most important” is a situation of “[…] individual hardship or severe dissatisfaction with one’s current situation. The status quo must be perceived to be worse than the possibility of death in combat”. Walter calls this condition “misery”. The second situation is the “[…] absence of any nonviolent means for change. Violence must be perceived as the only available tool for the average citizen to improve his or her situation”. Walter calls this condition “lack of voice”. Walter draws a conclusion that countries with high levels of individual hardship and restricted accesses for non-violent means of change “should be more likely” to experience recurring civil wars, in spite of what happened in the past. Walter contrasts her perspective with previously mentioned Collier & Hoeffler model by arguing that individuals are not motivated by greed but rather by desperation. In other words, they are not purposefully seeking for profit but merely attempting to improve their extremely low standards of living.

Walter’s focus, thus, becomes individual citizens and their immediate incentives for enlistment. According to Walter, this perspective helps to explain why “[…] individuals who were once willing to join a rebel army are then unwilling to join again.” She further constructs her understanding of rational individuals by commenting that “Individuals will have few incentives to enlist once their living standards have reached the point where the potential net benefits from fighting no longer exceed the status quo.”

In the final part of her narrative, Walter explains the findings of her study and whether civil war recurrence correlated with the individual incentives to fight. She distinguishes two conclusions from the analysis, “First, civil war recurrence is related to some of the characteristics of a previous war.” The second “important conclusion” from the analysis is that “[…] current living conditions do play a significant role in whether additional civil wars occur.” Regarding the first finding, Walter identifies two factors, duration and partition, that had a “significant effect” on whether a given country experienced recurrent civil wars. In the case of duration, Walter comments that

552 Walter 2004, 374.
553 Walter 2004, 374-375.
555 Walter 2004, 375.
556 Walter 2004, 375.
prolonged wars reduced the likelihood that a country would face a subsequent war. Walter comments that other studies also concur with this finding. In the case of partition, her analysis found that governments that had “[…] agreed to partition their country as a result of one war were significantly more likely to face additional wars.” Other studies’ findings are conflicting regarding this matter. Walter comments that some studies have found similar results whereas other studies have refuted this argument. Walter, for her part, argues that “Government concessions over territory in one case appear to encourage additional challengers to initiate their own demands.”

Walter states that all of the other factors “[…] related to the original war appear to have little effect on the re-emergence of violence.” For instance, wars that were fought with the aim of total victory or between different ethnic groups were “no more likely” to happen again than wars fought over less demanding issues or between the same ethnic groups. Additionally, Walter comments that the costs inflicted during the original war, measured in terms of battle related deaths, “had no real effect” on the probability that another war would take place. Similarly, there was no clear relationship between how a war ended and a subsequent war other than the effects of partition. Hence, wars in which the main grievances remained unsettled or that ended with a decisive victory were not more prone to repeat themselves. Therefore, according to Walter, “[…] the attributes of a previous war do not appear to doom combatants to enter a cycle of repeated violence.” However, she specifically identifies partition and duration having a significant relation to the onset of a new civil war. She comments “[…] while short wars certainly have their merits, and partition has been advocated as a means to prevent additional wars, both appear to have the undesirable effect of triggering additional wars.”

Regarding the second finding, current living conditions, Walter argues that they have a significant role in determining whether any additional wars will occur. She states that this finding “[…] lends support to the idea that individuals choose to re-enlist with rebel organizations when conditions at home are dire.” She comments that “[…] individuals turn to violence because their overall quality of life is low and also, potentially, because they believe conditions are declining rather than improving.” Regarding the regime type, Walter argued that it […] affects the average person’s
decision to enlist in rebel army or not.”

After examining the findings, Walter states that the results have not supported this prediction. She comments that the relationship between democracy and violence is very complex. Nonetheless, she found a “clear indication” that “true” or “mature democracies” are “less likely” to experience renewed civil war than “semi-democracies.”

Therefore, Walter states that “[…] it may be that liberal democracies are really the only types of regimes that can truly insulate themselves from violent internal challenges.” In other words, the ability of individuals to participate in political processes “could play an important role” in whether a war would recur.

5.5.2. Participants, circumstances and the time-space context

There is only one reference in Walter’s narrative to a specific conflict, that is, conveniently, the Aceh case. In addition, the temporal aspect is equally vague. One could argue that the time-space context is noticeable from the empirical dataset that the story utilises. For instance, Walter uses the Correlates of War (CoW) project dataset. CoW lists all the countries that experienced a civil war between 1946 and 1996. Walter explains that the civil war is defined as a conflict that involved at least 1,000 battle related deaths within a given year. From the dataset, Walter distinguishes 58 conflicts which were chosen by using a “cross-sectional time-series format.” If one would interpret from the previous description the narrative elements, one could state that Walter’s story situates spatially to the countries that experienced civil war whilst temporally to a period after the Second World War. However, that would be quite an obscure analysis. With regards to participants, Walter’s narrative does not present any, notwithstanding her brief description of GAM. Additionally, although she distinctively focuses on the rebel side of civil wars, Walter does not specify any participants.

Walter zooms in to the Aceh conflict in order to legitimise her case. She comments that GAM had a difficult time recruiting members between 1976-1989 because of rapid economical growth, increased GDP and increased individual income levels. She explains that the same persons who were fighting for independence between 1976-1979 were not interested continuing the war effort once their economic situation had improved. Consequently, according to Walter, the

569 Walter 2004, 385.
570 Walter 2004, 385.
571 On CoW project see Singer 1979.
572 Walter 2004, 376.
“[… ] conflict dissipated even though the movement's main objective (independence) had not been met. Enlistment significantly dropped even though no concessions had been made to the separatists. As living standards improve, the incentives to risk one's life to change the status quo decreases, even if grievances and animosity remain.”

Walter’s description of the Aceh conflict is in stark contrast with the first two narratives. McCulloch and especially Robinson argued how GoI has only exploited the region, thus, decreasing rather than increasing the economic prosperity in the province. Walter’s short description of the Aceh conflict exemplifies how she used a single case in order to strengthen her argument. Additionally, with the example Walter showed how her narrative, too, concerns real life issues, that is, the study has significance beyond academic spheres.

5.5.3. What kind of peace for Aceh?

Walter’s study found out that two factors, partition and duration, had an effect on civil war recurrence. Her analysis suggested that governments who were willing to partition were more likely to experience recurrent wars. Indonesia is interesting example in this case since with its numerous internal conflicts, it is constantly inclined for recurring civil wars. Additionally, the latest peace agreement between government of Indonesia and GAM, in which GoI made concessions, would suggest that other conflicting provinces might be fuelled by this evolution. It has to be acknowledged, though, that in the case of Aceh, GoI did not agree to full partition but merely extended the autonomy laws of the province. Another interpretation would be to see this question with regards to East Timor, in which GoI was forced to partition in 1999. This would explain the intensified violence in Aceh in the aftermaths of Suharto’s downfall. However, this interpretation clearly demarcates the violent acts after the collapse of Suharto’s regime from the emergence of the conflict in 1976.

Walter’s finding was that governments who fought short wars were more likely to experience recurring civil wars. This would suggest that the latest GAM rebellion that has lasted for three decades would finally be over. Or at least, if another conflict would occur in the region, it would not be followed with similar demands as was stipulated by GAM. This suggests that the latest rebellion in Aceh is separate from the other rebellions that have occurred in the province. The problem with this interpretation is that it is difficult to determine whether GAM rebellion has actually lasted for three decades or whether it simply has experienced recurring episodes of violence as was suggested, for instance, by McCulloch. Moreover, following Aspinall’s narrative, one could argue that the

573 Walter 2004, 375.
conflict has developed during a long period of time through the constant process of identity framing.

Regarding the second finding, Walter argues that her empirical analysis support the idea that “[…] low quality of life and barriers to political participation – can help predict which countries will continue to experience civil war and which will not.” Therefore, war-torn countries should open up the political systems as well as improve the individuals’ living standards. She, also, remarked how “true” or “mature democracies” are less likely to experience recurrent wars. These notions are quite vague but interpreting this finding with Indonesia, which is a relatively young democracy, would suggest that Indonesia is more prone to recurring civil wars. Additionally, the notion of “true democracy” suggests that strong state-centralised democracies, à la Russia, are more prone to recurring civil wars.

From this description, it is apparent that Walter is supporting Liberal peace. (See chapters 2.2.1. and 2.3.2.) In other words, strong democracies with strong economies are less likely to experience civil wars. This seems to be a norm or a dominant narrative in Western discourses of peace and this is, also, apparent in the analysed narratives. She did not, however, specially opt for the traditional Liberal peace element, that is, free-market economies, but left the question how to improve the state’s economy unanswered. As she comments

“It is less clear what factors encourage positive economic growth and improved individual welfare over time. Despite substantial research on this latter set of questions, considerable disagreement still exists. Ultimately, if these questions can be resolved and leaders are willing to implement strategies that will improve individual living conditions and expand democracy, the conflict trap may be broken.”

Walter further comments that “some preliminary analysis” on her dataset suggests that “outside intervention” particularly “outside economic aid and third-party intervention” can have a positive effect on political openness and democratisation. Thus, following Walter’s suggestions, it would be essential to give outside support for Indonesia in order to build stronger foundations for its democratic development.

Finally, if Walter’s findings are true, that is, if individual welfare and political openness correlate with the question of war recurrence, how is it, then, possible to get leaders of war-crippled countries to open up their political systems and improve the individuals’ general well-being when it is not always in their immediate interests? Walter answers “Simply informing them that they are likely to

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574 Walter 2004, 385.
575 Walter 2004, 386.
576 Walter 2004, 386.
faced renewed war if they do not act may be one important step.” A cynical reader might consider her suggestion as naïve but with this comment she, at least, connects her theoretical findings with praxis unlike the other scholars whose narratives has been analysed so far.

5.5.4. Conclusion: Positivist views on conflicts

It was already argued in the beginning of this chapter that Walter’s narrative is based on a positivist view of the social world. What does this tradition then hold? The central tenet of the positivist tradition is the methodological unity of science. Consequently, the positivist tradition assumes that fundamentally the social world and the natural world are similar, thus, there are no essential differences between them. Therefore, according to Mark Neufeld, positivists assume that “[…] the social world contains the same kind of regularities independent of time and place […] as exist in the natural world.” This leads to an assumption that the scientific method developed for analysing the natural world is considered appropriate for analysing the social world, too. As a result, the positivist point of view purports to construct precise, objective, non-relativist and scientific approach to study the social realm.

Richard Rorty explains that natural sciences have long been seen as paradigms of rationality and the objective truth is, then, thought to be able to be achieved by using reason. Rationality is also conceived in science as something which one is able to attain if only one follows the procedures laid down in advance, that is, following a particular method. In this sense, natural science can be seen as a paradigm of rationality but on the other hand humanities are not seen as rational. This is because the humanities are commonly concerned with ends rather than means, hence, there is no way to evaluate the success of a social scientific inquiry in terms of antecedently specified criteria. In other words, if people would already know what criteria they would like to satisfy, they would not need to worry whether they are pursuing the right ends.

The purpose with positivist methodology in social sciences was and is to make the field scientific, in other words, rational. There is a prevailing positivist tradition in peace research stemming from the 1960s. The scientific approach brought the newly established field of peace research much needed approval. (See chapter 2.4.) The positivist temper of peace studies and its significance to the

577 Walter 2004, 385-386.
578 Neufeld 1993, 40.
579 Neufeld 1993, 40; Jackson & Sørensen 2003, 238; for a defense for making a positivist inquiry see Vasquez 1995.
field in the early days is neatly encapsulated in the following statement from John Vasquez:

“The scientific study of war began with the hope and promise that the collection of reproducible evidence and its systematic analysis would result in a major breakthrough in our understanding of general factors associated with war and peace. That breakthrough has not yet occurred; the task has been more intractible than was thought. Nevertheless, during the last fifteen years an increase in statistical findings on war has contributed a new body of evidence and insight separate from those provided by history, traditional discourse, and political philosophy.”

Vasquez’s comment how the “breakthrough has not yet occurred” published in the 1980s has not stopped the scholars from trying. In peace research, positivist studies begin with the assumption that conflicts are universal phenomenon, thereby, the purpose is to identify variables and construct explanations that are applicable to as many cases as possible. Positivist tradition continues to be very influential despite the decade long criticism from the scholars who adhere to the relativist conception of human being, that is, to the notion that human life is fragmented.

The analysis on Walter’s narrative shows how positivist studies frequently present contradictory findings. This is not, necessarily, a fault since one purpose with scientific research is to challenge the prevailing knowledge. (See chapters 2.4. and 3.4.) Perhaps it is not reasonable to introduce all the critique that has been directed towards positivist research. However, I would like to question the utility of these studies, such as Walter’s narrative, from a pragmatist perspective. (See chapter 3.3.) Previous part attempted to interpret how Walter’s findings might be used to cope with conflicts in a national and local level. While locating Walter’s findings to a specific conflict, I find that her results can be interpreted in various ways, thus, forming contradictory results or even suggestions. One could argue that the rationale in her study was to find variables that would help to predict when a country would be facing a civil war. In this respect, Walter’s study is part of a wider discussion in academic literature that purports to construct early-warning systems that might help to predict the emergence of violence. Nonetheless, if findings are deficient or contradictory, how can we persuade the leader of some country to accept the study’s findings? The persuasive element in these studies is based on how they mimic the studies conducted within natural sciences, unfortunately, the results are not as convincing.

The problem with positivist research regarding this thesis is that they rarely introduce explanations of a specific conflict. In other words, it is the reader’s duty to apply study’s findings to a specific conflict of interest. It could also be argued how positivist studies are ill-suited for the purposes of this thesis since they rarely introduce explanations to a specific conflict. Additionally, the narrative method, in particular, is not either the most suitable perspective towards analysing these types of

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581 Vasquez 1987, 108.
stories. That is, positivist studies incorporate very little narrativeness. (See chapter 4.3.) For instance, arguably the spatio-temporal dimensions do not exist in positivist narratives. The rationale for this is that positivist peace studies attempt to construct universal and timeless descriptions of conflicts, hence, there is no use for the scholar to consider what the specific spatio-temporal dimensions are.

Surprisingly, I find Walter’s narrative more persuasive than, for instance, Aspinall’s story. The reason for this is that her narrative is well structured with a clear plot whereas Aspinall’s story with its multiple sub-plots was very difficult to follow. Additionally, whereas Aspinall did not introduce any suggestions how to cope with identity based conflicts, Walter at least offers some suggestions. Nonetheless, as I already argued in the beginning, a narrative analysis is not particularly suitable for analysing positivist studies. This is because they do not encompass narrativeness, for instance, a rhetorical inquiry would probably acquire better information and analysis from these types of studies.

5.6. Living the narrative

The fifth narrative is Elizabeth F. Drexler’s article “The Social Life of Conflict Narratives: Violent Antagonists, Imagined Histories, and Foreclosed Futures in Aceh, Indonesia.” Chapter 4.2 examined how narratives can be understood either as being in the world or as representing the world. It was argued that this thesis follows the understanding of narratives as representations of the world. However, it was also noted how narratives intersect with life, thus, it becomes possible to comprehend the connection with life and narrative as “living the narrative”. In this chapter, this connection refers to the literary style how the author includes his- or herself to be a participant in the story, thus, it becomes possible to say how he or she is living the narrative.

Elizabeth Drexler constructs her narrative according to this notion of living the narrative. Drexler’s narrative explains and examines representations and narratives about the Aceh conflict that are “[…] produced by conflict protagonists, policymakers, and humanitarian workers.” Based on these narratives, Drexler develops a “[…] series of principles for analyzing conflicts that appear to be intractable, noting how certain conflict narratives and interventions based on them participate in

582 Drexler 2007.
583 Drexler 2007, 962.
extending conflict.”

In contrast to the positivist study presented earlier, which purported to make sense of the incoherent world, Drexler’s story highlights the murkiness of the social world. She explains the rationale for her to study the messy side of conflicts as follows “My observations of the Aceh conflict over the last ten years show that oversimplified analyses of conflicts extend and even intensify violence.”

5.6.1. The plot: principles of the Aceh conflict

Drexler herself confronted the blurriness of conflicts in 2000 when she worked as a policy analyst for an international organisation examining the Aceh conflict. Drexler explains that her experience as a policy analyst showed the difficulties of moving from the “[…] messy accounts that anthropological fieldwork discloses to the executive summaries and recommendations that policymakers demand.” Drexler describes that her purpose with the narrative is to “[…] analyze how violent conflicts are represented and explained, both by those immediately involved and by interested outsiders.” From these descriptions, Drexler abstracts a series of principles in order to highlight the “social life of representations and narratives” about conflicts that are produced by conflict protagonists, humanitarian workers and policymakers.

The principles are presented with the purpose for analysing other conflicts, that is, Drexler concentrates on finding “[…] analytic devices that could be used by scholars and policymakers to explore conflict situations, narratives, and representations in places beyond Aceh and Indonesia.” This forms the general plot in Drexler’s narrative, in other words, her plot is structured according to several principles that she raises from the fieldwork and interviews which she conducted during 1998-2006 while working as an anthropologist and policy analyst in Aceh.

Drexler begins her narrative by telling an “ethnographic moment” when she met with a rebel commander in Aceh in 1999. She explains in great detail and length how she was anxious to meet the commander and how the meeting was arranged. It is worth quoting how Drexler describes the
journey

“We drove up to the edge of a camp of solidly built sky blue wooden structures raised on stilts anchored in concrete foundations, close to the main road. The buildings circled a tall pole from which the GAM flag flew. As soon as the taxi stopped, several men in camouflage approached us. They held walkie talkies, their mouths bent to the speaker and the antennae flying above their heads. [...] We sat on bamboo mats covering the wooden floor. Men, women, and children in ordinary clothing watched us climb the stairs. We were seated near the front. An older man with graying hair leaned against the low wall at the edge of the platform; his eyes scanned the compound for anyone who might be approaching.”

From this quotation, it is obvious that of all the described narratives Drexler’s story comes closest to a traditional fictive novel. Events are portrayed in length and with much detail, thus, creating an atmosphere for the reader to relate to. Additionally, the personal style of describing the events further enhances the reader’s belongingness to the story. The focus on details and of the context of the meeting raises the reader’s interest. Earlier when Aspinall’s narrative was analysed it was argued that it included elements of fuzziness (See chapter 4.4.1.) Whereas in Aspinall’s narrative the fuzzy factor simply distracted the reader, Drexler’s narrative, however, is more open for fuzziness. This is because of the literary style she is utilising. Traditional academic monographs do not seem to allow fuzzy factors whereas fuzziness is a common element in any novel. Written in a more participatory manner, the reader is more prone to accept that something unexpected breaches through from the narrative. (See chapter 4.3.)

Subsequently, Drexler describes her meeting with the GAM commander

“A large man wearing camouflage entered carrying an old AK47, a small, black rectangular box, and a thick sheaf of photocopied newspapers stapled with a green cover curling on the right corner. He said, ‘My name is Abdullah Syafi’ie. I am 43 years old. I am the Commander in Chief of Aceh Merdeka [Free Aceh].’”

Drexler remarks how the commander encouraged them to photograph himself posed with the Aceh’s flag and the supporters standing behind him. Drexler argues that the commander’s performance relied on the [...] photocopied histories, the black box, and the gun, along with the victims whom he called upon for testimony.” Drexler describes that the black box contained ammunition and the GAM commander carried the ammunition to “[...] counter rumors that GAM had only older weapons left from the 1950s [DI-rebellion] and no ammunition.”

Drexler’s description of the mysterious black box forms what I call a post-modern moment. Before explaining what I mean by this, I refer to Drexler who gives the box meaning as follows, “[... the
black box, an inscrutable container whose contents were not open to inspection but whose existence attested to the contemporary power of GAM.”

While the previous quotations merely described the black box, the following arguments form the post-modern moment in Drexler’s narrative

“I suggest that the ammunition is in fact the existence of ‘GAM.’ Unpacking this description of the Aceh problem is like trying to look inside a black box that is impossible to open or, if pried open, reveals a mechanism whose workings are utterly incomprehensible. [...] GAM exists because it commits acts of violence that are met with state violence, delivered both directly by the Indonesian military and indirectly through other armed forces. The violence of the state demonstrates the existence of GAM. [...] The black box is inscrutable, but the conflict continues with live fire being exchanged from both sides. Perhaps the ammunition even changes hands in the shadows.”

The post-modern moment refers to the way how scholars explain commonsensical or old knowledge in a new way. Often the new way of describing things is conducted with linguistic means. In other words, the acknowledgment that rebel organisations exist as long as they rebel receives a new way of telling in the form of the black box.

After this post-modern moment, Drexler describes her interview with GAM commander. Drexler remarks how commander Syafie’ie constructed a narrative of GAM by “[...] splicing together different episodes of resistance and bravery.” Drexler interprets that Syafie’ie’s historical story constructs an essentially continuous narrative of anti-colonial struggle beginning from the Dutch invasion until the present, disregarding contradictory meanings and interpretations with differing events along that path line.

Drexler comments

“Syafie’ie’s narrative of Aceh Merdeka consolidated the grievances of the recent past and the greatness of the distant past into an identifiable group as the representative around which a people’s dissatisfaction could coalesce. [...] The existence of GAM requires the historical narrative performed by Syafie’ie, but this narrative of its continuous struggle also provides an unending supply of ammunition to animate and extend the conflict.”

From the above discussion, Drexler gathers her first principle “It is impossible to separate the discourse from the materiality of the conflict.” Drexler comments that all conflicts have narratives that constitute participants, construct histories, make known grievances and legitimate the conflict for the actors on various sides. The existence of identifiable conflict participants is critical for all processes regarding the conflict, such as analysis, policymaking, intervention as well as negotiation and resolution. Drexler states that commonly it is thought that violence occurs

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597 Drexler 2007, 968.
598 Drexler 2007, 968.
599 Drexler 2007, 968.
600 Drexler 2007, 969.
601 Drexler 2007, 969-970.
602 Drexler 2007, 969.
603 Drexler 2007, 970.
604 Drexler 2007, 970.
because of group of rebels against a “militarized state exists”. She reverses this “commonsensical notion” by claiming that “GAM exists because violence is committed.”

Drexler comments that although contemporary conflicts appear to be locally produced, they, nevertheless, take place in a global context that affects the various elements, such as duration and narration, of the conflict. From this, Drexler draws her second principle: “Local conflicts are always linked to global geopolitical conditions and shaped by prevailing understandings of other conflicts.”

Drexler states her third and fourth principles as follows

“Conflict protagonists exist because there is violence; violence does not occur because conflict protagonists exist. A fourth principle follows: The existence of a conflict protagonist obscures the process of distinguishing the group from others and consolidating various interests into a single force.”

Drexler remarks that this phenomenon is most evident in the convergence of historically distinct moments and groups into the continuous narrative of Aceh Merdeka, however, the rule also applies to the Indonesian government. Drexler expresses her fifth principle as “[…] the struggle between conflict protagonists obscures narrative convergences that consolidate both state and enemy.”

Drexler comments that

“Conflict chronologies, on which both antagonists and international observers may agree, reiterate a set of terms and apply it to changing conflict situations as if the groups involved and grievances at issue were stable over time.”

Drexler observes how visual and empirical evidence of violence, such as photographs and eyewitness testimonies, are “composed, interpreted and deployed” as strategically as was the case with the commander Syafi’ie black ammunition box which he carried with him wherever he went. The rationale for constructing these testimonies and documents is on the assumption that visual and oral evidences on atrocities are so “disturbing to observers” that it raises concerted action to end them. Drexler, however, comments how the linkage between images-words and conflict narratives-dynamics is “multivalent and manipulable” rather than fixed or given. From this discussion, Drexler draws her sixth principle “Documentary evidence can mislead analysts by

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605 Drexler 2007, 970-971.
606 Drexler 2007, 973.
607 Drexler 2007, 973.
608 Drexler 2007, 973.
609 Drexler 2007, 973.
610 Drexler 2007, 978.
611 Drexler 2007, 978.
612 Drexler 2007, 979.
obscuring the conditions of possibility for violence and representation in the first place.” Drexler eloquently describes this principle in detail

“Factual details and snapshots are mobilized to support various narratives at the same time that they distract our attention from the conflict logics themselves. Criminality appears as a set of events without apparent causes and lying outside of narratives, but the forensic residues of criminality can later be turned into evidence for different narratives.”

Nevertheless, the conflict discourse became “[…] structured by understandings of the conflict as an armed separatist movement led by GAM, rather than unresolved state violence and regional economic inequalities.” Drexler construes her seventh principle based on previous discussion “Narrative logics can corrupt forensic evidence and limit state liability for acts of violence its agents have acknowledged perpetrating.”

The final aspect in Drexler’s narrative is the peace processes. Although, this topic goes beyond the thematic boundaries of this thesis, it is worth noting her findings regarding these processes, since it is at the end that she presents her eight principle. Drexler comments that in the first peace process the facilitator, Henry Dunant Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HDC), “chose GAM” as a negotiation partner for GoI. According to Drexler this choice bypassed the “[…] more complex coalitions of civil society groups and human rights advocates that had recently organized in Aceh.” The legalisation of GAM as the only opposition group was significant for the Acehnese who wished to critique the state or military since they had to identify as members of GAM. Drexler states that the legalisation of GAM presented it as a

“[…] solid movement with a continuous history and social legitimacy. The terms and consequences of the agreement obscured GAM’s relationship to the military and popular suspicion of many Acehnese toward these reputed rebels.”

Drexler is equally critical of the recent MoU treaty. She comments that the treaty, “validated and institutionalized the historical narrative” on which the parties agree and which constitutes the GoI and GAM as the sole “protagonists and legitimate representatives” of the peoples of Aceh and Indonesia. Drexler’s final eight principle goes as follows

“Interventions are never neutral. How conflicts are understood shapes strategies for their resolution and may reproduce the very conflict formation that the intervention was
designed to resolve.”

5.6.2. Participants, circumstances and the time-space context

Previously analysed narratives identified either GAM or AM as the rebellion group, that is, the participant in the story. Additionally, common to most of the already analysed narratives is that they see GAM as a unified, coherent participant to the conflict. Nevertheless, conflicts tend to blur the distinctions between friend-foe and ally-enemy, hence the participants to the conflict are not always so clearly distinguishable. Drexler writes extensively on this aspect of conflicts. She explains that there are distinctions between Aceh Merdeka (AM) which emerged in 1976 and Gerakan Aceh Merdeka that surfaced in 1979. Instead of distinguishing clear identifiable participants, Drexler highlights the messiness of the Aceh conflict. She describes that as an anthropologist, she discovered that it was crucial to understand the “complex indeterminacy of conflicts” rather than reducing the violence to be constituted by two “independent protagonists with clear identities.” Therefore, it is difficult to state who the main participants in her story are. Drexler bases much of her story on her interview with the GAM commander Syafi’ie who is the most important character in Drexler’s narrative. Other participants include GoI, the abstract notion of human rights workers, TNI and Acehnese.

Rather than trying to make sense of who the participants in Drexler’s narrative are, perhaps it would be more interesting to follow how she explains the naming process. Drexler comments that

“[…] neither conflict protagonist forms a self evident unity with well defined limits in action or discourse. In some black boxed situations, indeed, state and resistance forces may not necessarily be clearly distinguishable from one another on the ground.”

Drexler comments how, when she first met Commander Syafi’ie in 1999, he spoke in the name of Aceh Merdeka (AM), that declared independence in 1976, “[…] not Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (GAM, Free Aceh Movement), which emerged as the Indonesian state’s shadowy antagonist during the late 1980s.” Indonesian government was also part of the naming process. Drexler argues that despite the traditional narrative, GAM was not founded in 1976 but it developed from successive events in which the GoI was “intimately involved” and through “political transformations” which were enabled by a historical narrative that appealed to earlier state violence and “brave popular

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621 Drexler 2007, 985.
622 Drexler 2007, 990 footnote 10.
623 Drexler 2007, 963.
624 Drexler 2007, 974.
625 Drexler 2007, 974.
resistance.”

The Indonesia’s security forces further had its own naming process and it distinguished criminal gangs as “Security Disruptor’s Gang” (GPK) and in 1992 GPK and GAM were linked to be the same participants through court trials. Drexler remarks that through this process “Many civilians who were not involved in politics or criminal enterprises were accused of being GPK or GAM”, thus, the term GAM was extended well beyond the original members. Drexler remarks that conflicting explanations disclose the difficulty of knowing who was who in the Aceh conflict. There were excesses from both sides, from the military as well as on the GPK side. What further blurs the distinguishing of the warring parties is that the

“[…] signs that might normally confirm the identity of military members—possession of a weapon, uniform, or expertise—could be used by either side creating an atmosphere of extreme insecurity and distrust for most people.”

Regarding the spatio-temporal dimensions, Drexler’s narrative does not have any clear temporal demarcation. Rather she constructs various temporally unrelated descriptions of the conflict narratives that she gathered. Spatial dimension is almost equally blurry, apart from the obvious Aceh province. Drexler, nonetheless, stresses how conflicts are, also, globally constituted.

5.6.3. What kind of peace for Aceh?

The purpose with Drexler’s narrative was to find a set of principles based on her experience through which it would be possible to analyse conflicts. Thus, although she does not propose any specific solutions for the Aceh conflict, like many other peace studies, Drexler’s narrative lays down several lessons on conflicts. The rationale for presenting lessons is to enhance the general knowledge on conflicts. At the end of her narrative, Drexler presents several questions from which it is possible to interpret what her perception of peace would look like. Drexler asks

“How lasting can a peace be that is based on historical narratives constructed through the active collaboration, perhaps even collusion, of some parties to the conflict, but do not take into account the voices and viewpoints of those who suffered from the violence it visited upon them?”

Additionally, Drexler, also, stated her view of the conflict. She viewed both protagonists as responsible for escalating the conflict. Drexler highlights this finding by constructing a historical narrative based on the principles she discovered from the Aceh conflict. She comes to a conclusion

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626 Drexler 2007, 975.
627 Drexler 2007, 976.
628 Drexler 2007, 976.
629 Drexler 2007, 983.
630 Drexler 2007, 986.
that the “[...] Indonesian military and GAM were as much collaborators as opponents in the protracted conflict that victimized the people of Aceh throughout the 1990s.”

From previous description, it is easy to see that Drexler’s perception of peace is from the grassroots perspective. Similar perspective was offered, for instance, by Marxists/Neo-Marxists and often Feminist scholars have a similar agenda as well. (See chapters 2.2.1., 2.3.1. and 2.3.2.) Drexler further gives arguments towards her point of view how peace ought to proceed from bottom-up by stating

“How much faith can less powerful people place in institutions of justice if the military leaders who perpetrated systematic campaigns of terror against civilians enjoy immunity from prosecution?”

Apart from these questions, Drexler does not propose any precise solutions how to cope with the conflict or with any other conflict for that matter.

Drexler is very sceptical of the latest peace treaty (MoU) as she comments “What kinds of new inequalities will be institutionalized by these agreements and the initiatives and programs designed to support them?” What kind of peace processes are diminished by these esoteric questions? Drexler raises concerns relating to how, through legitimization of GAM, the ex combatants concerns are taken care of in the conflict resolution and reconstruction programs but “Yet conflict victims have been marginalized from political and social initiatives.” Drexler remarks how she talked in 2006 with many human rights defenders who had been working in Aceh but whose focus had shifted from reporting human rights violations to recovery programs. Drexler states how she was “stunned to discover” that these reporters, who had been working for a decade to document human rights violations, were now silent about the past.

One could critique Drexler’s peace building from the grassroots perspective by asking, following the narrative turn, whom to include and who to exclude in peace building processes. Drexler portrayed in her narrative Acehnese as victims, but surely she confronted local technocrats, businessmen and other citizens who benefited from the conflict but who were not intimately involved in reproducing it.

631 Drexler 2007, 987-988.
632 Drexler 2007, 987.
633 Drexler 2007, 987.
634 Drexler 2007, 986.
635 Drexler 2007, 986.
5.6.4. Conclusion: Relativist post-modern conception of conflicts

Drexler presented an anthropological understanding of the Aceh conflict. Regarding peace studies, her narrative has similarities with the paradigms of Conflict Transformation as well as social constructivist paradigms in general. To be more specific, Conflict Transformation stressed that conflicts are highly elastic, changeable and dynamic processes that belie strict categorisation. (See chapter 2.2.2.) Similarly, Drexler argued for the dynamism of conflicts, however, stressing how the conflict protagonists attempt to interpret the conflict according to a teleological perspective presenting a view that contingencies are inevitable.636 The difference with her narrative compared to Conflict Transformation is that Drexler proposes bottom-up perspective on peace-building whereas some Conflict Transformation theorists consider that it is sometimes better to just leave the conflict to transform. Additionally, Drexler’s focus was on the subjective element, how individuals have experienced violence, whereas Conflict Transformation theorists stress the structural factors, such as poverty.

With regards to social constructivist studies, Drexler’s narrative has similarities, for instance, with Discourse Analysis and Neo-Marxism. (See chapter 2.3.2.) Discourse Analysis stressed how prevailing conflict discourses maintain and reproduce violence, similarly, Drexler remarked how the conflict protagonists render themselves as well as the opponent visible. Neo-Marxism, on the other hand, presented a grassroots-perspective on analysing conflicts as well as peace building. Drexler’s story, thus, also situates within these types of studies.

Drexler’s narrative is, also, part of the narrative turn. (See chapter 4 introduction) Therefore, the problem with the analysis of Drexler’s story was that it becomes problematic to find Drexler’s narrative from the narratives that she describes. Additionally, because Drexler emphasises the murkiness of the Aceh, it was difficult to encapsulate her plot with a single thought. The genre (language-game) within which Drexler writes, anthropology and in particular ethnographic method, further blurs the finding of the plot. From the surface, Drexler’s story seems like a fictive journey where she narrates events as they come by.

Drexler’s story followed a perspective of living the narrative. This has become a common methodological usage in anthropological texts. The author, thus, instead of hiding her subjective position, writes herself to be part of the narrative, thus, consequently ridding the scientific convention for objectivism. Narratives constructed in this matter become more personal in contrast

636 Drexler 2007, 978.
to obvious a-personal accounts of scientific narratives which is widely utilised strategy for instance by feminist scholars. With this strategy, the purpose could be claimed to be that the narratives are more real or more authentic and of course more persuasive, at least, for the reader who is willing to abandon the objectivist position for subjective post-modern condition. Nonetheless, a fundamental problem regarding the question of “crisis of representation” exists in Drexler’s narrative, too. That is, why certain voices were included while others were excluded. (See chapter 4.3.)

One question can be raised from Drexler’s eloquent writing style and, that is, to whom are these esoteric post-modern narratives addressed? Drexler’s purpose was to lay down principles in order to analyse other conflicts, however, her lessons were not straightforward or easily understandable, arguably, not even to native speakers. It was argued that based on Drexler’s narrative, sometimes post-modern scholars, in order to describe what otherwise could be seen as ‘old news’, add so called Post-modern moments in their narratives in a new refreshing way, thus, making the old news sound like a new invention. In my opinion, Drexler created a Post-modern moment when describing the black box of conflict protagonist. It could be argued that her insight is equally commonsensical. It is commonsensical to claim that certain protracted conflicts exist simply because the participants have a vested interest in continuing the struggle, rather than finding solutions for it.

Finally, one could argue that the perspectives Drexler utilised, anthropologist and policy analyst, are contradictory, that is, that they present two opposite sides where the former attempts to explain a conflict from a grassroots-perspective presenting a relativist conception of the conflict while the latter focuses on detailed description following the objective ideal of scientific inquiries. Drexler’s purpose of presenting a set of principles in order to analyse other conflicts further states her commitment for constructing objective studies.

5.7. Research findings

This chapter analysed five scientific narratives that were deliberately chosen to represent dissimilar positions. Analysed narratives presented a comprehensive picture how Aceh conflict has been interpreted in scientific literature. The analysis answered to the two research questions of this thesis:

1. How do scientific narratives explain the Aceh conflict?
2. What tools do the narratives propose in resolving the conflict?
The first analysed narrative, written by Geoffrey Robinson, presented a view on how the policies of Suharto’s New Order regime created grievances amongst the Acehnese which resulted in violent uprisings. The narrative constructed a progressive historical narrative beginning from the 1970s plotting the events in a chronological order until the downfall of Suharto’s regime in 1998. The main participants were the GoI, TNI, GAM and the people of Aceh. Circumstances that contributed to the growing Acehnese grievances and for the popular support to the GAM were determined to be two New Order policies, economic exploitation of Aceh’s natural resources and military’s human rights violations. Robinson argued that GoI and TNI are responsible for igniting and fuelling the conflict. He did not, however, present any precise suggestions for dealing with the violence. However, from Robinson’s description, it was clear that he supported Liberal peace combined with Realist conception of state sovereignty. Additionally, Robinson promoted investigations into the human rights violations committed by TNI and punitive measures for those who are responsible. He further criticised international community for being silent during the New Order period. Robinson’s story was categorised as a traditional narrative of conflicts where two asymmetrically powered participants are fighting. Furthermore, the historical perspective, also, is probably the most common way of conducting scientific narratives of conflicts. Despite the few suggestions, Robinson’s narrative clearly lacked precise proposals on how to handle the situation in Aceh.

The second analysed narrative, written by Lesley McCulloch, presented a view that the predatory money-driven Indonesian security forces have exploited the province of Aceh, thus, escalating the conflict. It was based and plotted according to a popular greed-grievance paradigm explicitly focusing on the greed aspect. The main characters in the narrative were the Indonesian security forces, TNI and the local police. Circumstances that influenced the participants’ actions were determined as the opportunities, that is, Aceh’s rich natural resources. Temporally the narrative was situated from 1998 to 2004 while the spatial dimension was the clearly demarcated Aceh region. McCulloch’s narrative did not provide any means for coping with the conflict either. She was cynical of the possibilities for resolving the conflict which was created by the greed-driven security forces. Nonetheless, McCulloch clearly stated that the issues relating to the security forces’ economic opportunism and their lack of professionalism ought to be dealt with. Within peace studies McCulloch’s story positioned with other determinist grand narratives. It was further argued that the persuasiveness and perhaps even the popularity of the greed-based stories, especially when conceived in the contemporary form of homo economicus, stems from the audience already being familiar with these types of narratives.
The third analysed narrative, written by Edward Aspinall, presented a view which contrasted previous perspectives by arguing that the Aceh conflict would not have occurred without a proper socially constructed identity framework that gave the greed-grievances distinctions violent meanings. The narrative was plotted according to the perception how culturally constructed context provide the framework in which the conflict circumstances are being interpreted. Aspinall defined three mechanisms in his narrative that gave rise to identity framework; the legacy of past violence, state institutionalisation of ethnic identity and the agency of conflict protagonists. It was argued how the overall plot-construction included elements of fuzziness and how it corresponded poorly with theoretically tuned academic monographs. That is, the fuzziness distracted the reader from making the narrative’s propositions more incoherent. The temporal dimension began from the 19th century until the present. The spatial dimension was the province of Aceh, although Aspinall relocated his narrative to two other provinces in Indonesia in order to further persuade the reader of his study’s findings. The main participants were the Acehnese, GoI, GAM and various unidentified conflict protagonists. Aspinall’s narrative did not include any suggestions on how the conflict could be resolved or how the narrative’s insights might help to cope with other protracted conflicts. Furthermore, based on Aspinall’s description, it was difficult to interpret what needed to be done in order to redirect the violent interpretations into peaceful descriptions. Aspinall’s study was positioned within peace research with a wide-ranging scale of literature that concern the social construction of identity. These studies have gained much momentum due to the protracted nature of contemporary conflicts, such as Israel-Palestine.

The fourth analysed narrative, written by Barbara Walter, presented a point of view why certain countries experience recurring civil wars. The narrative was plotted according to this question. Regarding other narrative elements, I argued that positivist studies are particularly unsuitable for narrative analysis since they do not incorporate narrativeness. Additionally, the narrative factors of participants, circumstances and time-space context are notably missing. Therefore, the focus in the narrative analysis with Walter’s story was on its rhetorical aspect. Consequently, I found her narrative persuasive since it was well structured and the main plot was simple, clear and intelligible. Regarding her findings Walter suggested that two variables, the low quality of individual well-being as well as barriers to political participation, can help to predict which countries will experience recurring civil wars. I interpreted her research results in the context of Indonesia and Aceh, finding that it is possible to see that her results produce conflicting interpretations. Unlike the previous narrative, Walter gave some suggestions for how to cope with the problem of civil war recurrence. She explained how true or mature democracies with strong economies are less prone for recurring civil wars. Additionally, economic aid and outside third-party intervention can have a positive
effect on the democratisation process in a given country. Apart from these rather vague suggestions Walter’s study did not propose any other resolutions. Inside the field of peace and conflict studies, her study was located within positivist literature that continues to be a significant part of the discipline. It was, also, shown how Walter’s study continued the prevailing positivist tradition of producing contradictory results.

Finally the fifth analysed narrative, written by Elizabeth Drexler, presented a grass-root perspective on the conflict arguing how conflict protagonists are upheld through various processes, such as naming, resolving, photographing and discursive practices. It utilised the narrative turn explaining the messiness of contemporary protracted conflicts. It was argued how Drexler’s narrative proceeds from two contradictory positions, anthropology and policy analysis. As an anthropologist, she confronted the blurriness of conflicts, thus, highlighting the relativist and incoherent nature of civil wars. On the other hand, as a policy analyst, she created a set of principles on analysing conflicts, thus, committing her study to a certain extent with universalistic aspirations. Drexler’s narrative was the most difficult one to interpret. This was due to her esoteric writing style and perhaps, ironically, the fact that her narrative was part of the narrative turn which was utilised in this thesis. In other words, it was difficult to interpret Drexler’s narrative from the other narratives that she analysed. The fundamental problem underlying her conviction to construct principles was that those principles were either commonsensical or written in such an eloquent manner that I wonder if anyone will be able to utilise her findings. Drexler did not provide any precise means to cope with the Aceh conflict either. However, it was very clear that Drexler supported the grassroots perspective. In peace studies, Drexler’s study was located within Marxist/Neo-Marxist and social constructivist studies especially Discourse Analysis and Feminism.

While all these narratives presented different interpretations of the same conflict, I found out that the stories, however, were not worlds apart. The first three stories shared the same participants and location and largely accused the Indonesian government and its military forces for perpetuating the violence. GAM’s role in the reproduction of the conflict, however, was not downgraded. For instance, Aspinall’s story emphasised how the local protagonists sought ways to confront the state. McCulloch, on the other hand, briefly acknowledged how GAM, too, benefited financially from the natural resources. The main sufferers were the Acehnese who were subjected to the retaliation of GoI. For instance, Robinson described how GoI’s actions created popular support for GAM. Despite these few remarks on GAM’s role in the conflict in the first three narratives, GAM was more often portrayed as a Greimasian hero rather than a villain. GAM’s struggle received its justification in these narratives through the acts that GoI committed. Fourth narrative only briefly
described the context in Aceh arguing that GAM had a difficult time in recruiting combatants. The final narrative, written by Drexler, did not portray GAM as freedom fighters but stressed how it was part of the production of conflict protagonists and violence. Drexler stressed the local perspective, the people of Aceh, and how they have borne the consequences of the conflict. This was aligning with most of the other narratives as well. The narratives stressed how the local Acehnese carried the wounds inflicted by violence. Although the temporal dimension in all of the narratives was different, it had little effect on how scholars chose events. Scholars tended to choose the same circumstances, such as Dutch colonisation efforts, DI-rebellion, GoI’s exploitation of Aceh natural resources, GAM’s uprising beginning from the 1970s and the DOM-period with military oppression. The only difference was how the events were described. (See chapter 4.3.)

What difference does it, then, make if none of these descriptions is the true one? In my view, none. Additionally, if most descriptions were only words apart, what purpose does it serve to construct yet another interpretation of the same conflict? Even the narratives that were published after the latest MoU agreement, Aspinall’s and Drexler’s, failed to give fresh interpretations of the conflict. Those narratives did not provide any new insights either that would have enhanced the general knowledge of conflicts, helped to resolve other conflicts or the conflict in Aceh. Consequently, although there is a prevalent tradition in peace studies how theory connects with praxis, there seems to be little of that praxis visible in the analysed narratives. None of the analysed narratives answered in detail to the second question of how to cope with the conflict. Unquestionably, a scholar must first discover the reasons, causes and meaning of the conflict before offering valuable solutions for its resolution. However, there are not any obstacles in presenting visions of possible better conditions. Perhaps the other equally valued tradition, the search for objectivity, still influences to such an extent that it restricts scholars for truly conducting visionary studies. On the other hand, as acknowledged previously the objectivity does not need to be viewed as an obstacle but simply as a rule which helps us to conduct more persuasive studies. It still seems that the two worlds, theory and practice, are not just words apart but worlds apart.

Most of the analysed narratives supported the idea of Liberal peace. This has become an almost obligatory remark in any peace study. From a Rortyan perspective, scientific inquiries are conducted in one language-game or another, and the scholar only needs to persuade a certain audience. Peace research is largely a Western-dominated field, however, a mere acknowledgement to Liberalism does not persuade but rather inflicts an outcry from post-modern and Neo-Marxists scholars. Although, Liberalism might sound reasonable one must still present arguments for it. Additionally, concepts, such as democracy, are so vague that the reader is left wondering whether
the scholar suggests a state-centralised democratic government, à la Russia, or a more participatory democracy, à la, Switzerland. Many of the analysed narratives included elements of social justice, especially for those who have been victimised by the Indonesia’s military. Alternatively, the last analysis argued for the bottom-up peace processes as well as justice for the victims of the conflict. This perspective, too, is in accordance with the Liberal ideology, however, it differs from the others since the perspective for peace was from the grassroots points of view and it did not include the realist-liberalist hybridisation.

Four of the examined texts included elements of narrativeness. Each story had its central participants, circumstances and a time-space context. The most visible element was the plot. The first four narratives attempted to make sense, that is, to render the reality understandable for the reader. The reality was not described as fuzzy, instead, the fuzziness in these descriptions was due to the poor plot-construction. For instance, Aspinall’s description with its three mechanisms was difficult to follow while also being at partly illogical. (See chapters 4.2. and 4.4.1.) The final narrative, Drexler’s story, underlined the chaotic and confusing nature of conflicts. However, she too valued coherence over incoherence which became clear with her conviction to set principles. Drexler’s story was, also, fuzzy but it was mostly due to the esoteric writing style. It demanded more knowledge of the language-game from the reader. The fourth narrative was a poor choice regarding the narrative perspective of this thesis. As a part of positivist studies it, however, presented an excellent example of those types of inquiries. Despite these few observations, I find that there was not much narrativeness in the analysed studies in general.
6. Conclusion

This thesis began with the research questions:

1. How do scientific narratives explain the Aceh conflict?
2. What tools do the narratives propose in resolving the conflict?

The second chapter examined various paradigms in peace research that are or continue to be influential in the field. It distinguished the theories into two groups, traditional and social constructivist perspectives. Traditional perspectives were Liberalism, Realism, Marxism, Conflict Resolution, Conflict Transformation and the work of Johan Galtung. Social constructivist perspectives were Social Constructivist theoretical framework, Feminism, Discourse Analysis and Neo-Marxism. It further argued that although the discipline of peace studies has cemented its position within social sciences, the field, nevertheless, is very fragmented. Scholars usually follow habits that are determined within their own respective fields, thus, forming altering perspectives and interpretations of conflicts. The field continues to operate on such a wide array of perspectives as well as issues that it is sometimes difficult to define what the core of the discipline is. However, some common denominators were determined that define the field, applicability, multidisciplinary and internationality.

The third chapter constructed a post-modern perspective on scientific research. It argued that any inquiry begins with the academic’s choice of a theoretical perspective. The author constructs his or her study according to the certain rules and vocabularies that are persistent and specific within his or her academic field. Consequently, the scientific inquiries present altering explanations and interpretations of the discussed phenomenon. Furthermore, it was argued that since there is no way to judge which of these descriptions are true; truth ought not to be seen as the goal of inquiry. Instead, every interpretation could be viewed based on their pragmatic results, that is, how well a particular description helps one to cope with the world. From this understanding, it was argued in chapter three how language in scientific inquiries can be understood in a dual sense. On the one hand, language is utilised by the scholars to represent the world and, on the other hand, academics apply it in order to cope with the world. Regarding peace research, this acknowledgement was seen as a relevant and widespread tradition. In peace studies, scholars commonly add suggestions how to resolve the conflict which is in align with the neo-pragmatist understanding of language.
The fourth chapter argued that scientific inquiries can be meaningfully seen as narratives or stories. It distinguished that scholars structure their descriptions in narrative form, thus, attempting to represent the world. The narrative approach was further clarified as the method in this thesis. Accordingly, chapter four examined how narratives are generally structurally constructed including elements, such as plot, participants and time-space context. Additional, element in narratives was the rhetoric. Scholars utilise rhetorical means in order to persuade the reader of the inquiry’s results. Chapter four, also, explained what is incorporated in the interpretative process arguing how it is impossible to form an objective truth within a text. Instead, every interpretation is an association, that is, the interpreter connects the text to other texts, times and places.

The final chapter analysed five scientific narratives of the Aceh conflict. It attempted to present a comprehensive account on how the conflict has been interpreted by scholars and how these descriptions differ from each other. The analysis showed how none of the interpretations succeeded in giving practical suggestions for resolving the conflict. Therefore, the tradition of how a theory meets practice, which is highly valued in peace and conflict research, has either been broken or the analysed conflict by the researchers was so intractable that scholars did not find any means to cope with it. Liberalism was distinguished as the dominant mode of peace in almost all of the stories. There were, also, remarks from the Neo-Marxists perspective for social justice especially for those who have been victimised by the conflict protagonists. Apart from some outcries for punitive measures, the narratives failed to provide any precise suggestions in this respect.

6.1. Research process, problems and possible directions for future research

Rortyan neo-pragmatism was chosen as a theoretical perspective for this thesis and I consider it to be an appropriate choice. Neo-pragmatist perspective corresponds and reflects well with the field of peace and conflict research. The idea of language as a tool in coping with the reality is seen as an important part of peace and conflict research and an old but relevant insight regarding future peace studies. Despite the fact how the analysed narratives fell short of making practical inquiries. The narrative method, however, only partially met its demands. Analysed inquiries included narrativeness, apart from the already mentioned Walter’s study, but the structural examination did not bring any staggering results out of the empirical material. To be precise, because there is less narrativeness in scientific inquiries, the structural analysis left the interpretation rather shallow. That is, structural analysis did not provide means to go deeper into the empirical material. Hence, although scientific inquiries incorporate narrativeness and it is possible to study them with this
point of view, I do not find that the narrative perspective is the best choice when studying scientific texts. In other words, narrative analysis did not bring any interesting insights out of the empirical material.

The chosen empirical material presented a comprehensive picture on how the Aceh conflict has been interpreted in scientific literature. The material further illustrated how the field continues to be very fragmented. However, some stories that would have presented differing interpretations were excluded according to the set criteria for the choice of the empirical material. Furthermore, the choice of language, also, influenced the narratives’ interpretations as well as the chosen perspectives. Regarding the research question, the fourth analysed narrative (chapter 5.5.) did not meet with the research question since it constructed a universal perspective of conflicts rather than concentrating on the Aceh conflict. However, it was possible to interpret the study’s findings to the Aceh conflict.

The two other criteria for choosing these narratives were that they encompassed altering perspectives and that they were in a dialogue with each other. I consider that the narratives in this respect were appropriately chosen. Each analysed narrative utilised different perspective in order to explain the conflict. The first narrative presented a historical analysis, second was based on greed-grievances paradigm, third followed a wide array of Social Constructivist literature, fourth examined a positivist perspective and finally fifth gave an anthropological perspective. Consequently, the final criterion was, also, met since each analysed narrative was followed by another that challenged the previous study’s views or interpretations. The leap from social constructivist perspective to positivist perspective, though, constructed a gap in this respect. However, the following anthropological position presented a complete opposite picture of the conflict with regards to the positivist study.

Regarding the questions of possible future studies, I consider that Rortyan pragmatism is not adequate choice for constructing a case-study inquiry on how a certain conflict emerged. Most of Rorty’s work is philosophical jargon that does not specifically help analysing nor coping with conflicts. In other words, it is better suited for theoretical studies. The language-game within which Rorty writes is miles apart from practical case-studies. However, Rorty’s arguments might be valuable for any peace researcher who stumbles in the post-modern morass of nihilism and relativism. I will clarify this point in the following part.

I find that the most interesting element of the inquiry was to locate the story with other stories and
how they connect with each other. Perhaps a discourse analysis would have brought more fascinating interpretations and results. How, for instance, scientific discourses of conflict reflect or represent the dominant conflict discourses that are constructed by the protagonists. This idea was already pointed out by Aspinall in his narrative. (See chapter 5.4.) Aspinall remarked how many interpretations of the Aceh conflict tend to reflect the dominant grievance narrative produced by GAM. The question was not, however, studied. Additionally, a rhetorical inquiry might also bring interesting results. That is, to study what precise ways peace researchers use in order to persuade their audience. The study would, thus, also focus on the recipient side as well as on the narrative’s internal logic and construction. The immanent problem with rhetorical inquiry could be that the analysis would be very facile, thus, only explaining the structural surface of the analysed narratives. Additionally, a problem with both of these approaches, discourse analysis and rhetorical analysis, is that the field is very fragmented. On the one hand, due to the fragmentation, there are so many discourses that it is difficult to give a comprehensive picture of the field or locate the analysed text within the field. On the other hand, an inquiry into the question how persuasive certain study is in one language-game might be utterly unconvincing in another.

Another element would be to research how theory meets praxis in peace researcher’s action. This might be conducted through interviewing peace researchers and their experiences in dealing with protracted conflicts. It would be interesting to find if their knowledge has enhanced the resolution of conflicts? This type of studies has already been made by Conflict Resolution scholars who have been actively involved in peace processes but there still could be many interesting fields to cover in this respect. It would be intriguing to know how peace researchers conceive the prevailing traditions in the field of peace and conflict studies; whether they see them restricting or enabling their own work.

6.2. All these theories yet the bodies keep piling up

There are numerous narratives on Aceh conflict produced by scholars and research centres. The research found that these narratives do not differ significantly from each other. A simple question arises from this observation: What is the rationale for constructing yet another interpretation of the Aceh conflict if there already are plenty of studies of that conflict? One prevailing tradition in peace studies has been to enhance our knowledge of conflicts. The analysis showed how even the most recent scientific narratives did not provide any valuable new insights to the conflict. It would be

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637 Title is borrowed from Marysia Zalewski’s article; see Zalewski 1996.
presumptuous to claim for the utter insignificance of these studies but I would like to question the practical usability of them. In other words, instead of describing the conflict ever more clearly or attempting to find the truth of the matters, the focus could lay on the pragmatic questions. That is, not what the truth is but what the truth ought to be and how this can be achieved through offering functional solutions.

This discussion leads to the second research question: What tools do the narratives propose in resolving the conflict? The analysis showed that none of the presented narratives offered any precise means to solve the conflict. There is a persistent tradition within peace studies to connect the theory with praxis. Nonetheless, the problem with the current peace studies is that many studies concentrate on explaining the conflict without clearly giving particular solutions for it. Obviously a true and correct explanation is often seen as a mapping the picture for resolution, that is, how to achieve peace. This line of thought is inherent in Johan Galtung’s view of peace researchers as doctors. Like the medic who searches for an answer to heal an illness, a peace researcher searches for an answer to end the violence. However, both of them come to a similar solution whereas the medic offers you an ibuprofen, the peace researcher, with equal lack of imagination, serves the Liberal peace. What is clearly lacking in these suggestions is the Rortyan utopia; a clear and practical vision of a better future world.

I am not suggesting that there would be something wrong with Liberal peace. On the contrary, from Rortyan perspective, one should work within one’s ethnocentric premises. For instance, Rorty for his part strongly advocates Liberal democracy. Thus, from a Rortyan perspective Galtung’s famous phrase of the tradition of internationality within peace research receives a new form: Peace researcher has a fatherland and his or her aim is to extend it, through unforced agreement, to the whole world. In other words, while Liberal peace might be seen as the only reasonable and functional solution for many contemporary conflicts, one should, nonetheless, present arguments in order to support it. In the analysed narratives, there were only small remarks on how Liberal peace might enhance the resolution of the Aceh conflict. In addition, these observations did not provide precise or feasible arguments.

My reading or understanding of Rorty’s work is probably the less common one, but I find his work to provide a sharp relief of the current post-modern condition. Probably, as many other international relations students, I have been reading our text books consequently forming an immensely critical stance towards the positivist approaches. Although I still think that from a pragmatist perspective these theories are silly and useless, I now found them to be as silly and useless as some of the
contemporary post-modern studies as well. My interpretation of Rorty’s work is that he’s purpose has never been to debunk the current academic or, to be more precise, philosophical research but rather to re-direct the discipline into the direction of conducting practical studies whatever kind of they might be, of some problematic issue or another. In other words, all studies are equally valid and important, some studies however, make more sense to me, than they make, for instance, to you. More importantly, in conflict studies the story is not necessarily just for us but also for the others; we should always remember to whom are our stories written for.
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