Thematic Section: Guest Editor R. I. Lohmann

Ending War and Sustaining Peace in Pacific Societies

Investigating the Causes of Peace to End War: An Introduction

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Abstract: Peace is an active, productive political process rather than the mere absence of war. This introduction to the thematic section, "Ending War and Sustaining Peace in Pacific Societies / Mettre fin à la guerre et assurer la paix dans les sociétés du Pacifique" presents evaluative summaries of the contributing articles. It argues that anthropology can assist in achieving a lasting peace among the world's peoples by documenting the forms peace takes and how it works cross-culturally and over time. This information aids in design and implementation of peace-maintaining strategies that are both tailored to particular cultural settings and more effective, lasting and adaptable across cultural divides.

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Anthropology is in a position to fulfil some of the prerequisites to world peace if we direct research and communication efforts accordingly. If we wish to stop war and establish peace locally or universally, temporarily or indefinitely, we need to answer several questions of the sort that anthropologists, using the perspectives, data and tools of all four subfields—most effectively when these are integrated—are well positioned to address: What conditions motivate people to resort to organized violence between polities and how can these conditions be manipulated to diffuse conflicts before they escalate? Is peace established and maintained only and ironically through the threat of violence, or can a foundation of non-violent ideology be laid and kept up and, if so, how? Under which conditions are people able to make peace an actively maintained and indefinitely sustainable condition and not just the temporary cessation of warfare? The essays that make up this thematic section address these questions and more by way of documenting and analyzing a series of cases, showing ways that peace has been advocated and supported, with greater and lesser success and longevity, in a range of material, social and cultural contexts.

The case studies presented here illustrate that cultural variation in what people consider desirable and possible must be taken into account to answer these broad questions for humankind as a whole. The very notions that warfare should be abolished and that peace should be indefinitely sustained are cultural and therefore arbitrary creations, neither universally held nor facts of nature, however much we might be tempted to naturalize them. Similarly, the view that warfare is inevitable because it is an immutable part of human nature is also a cultural convention masquerading as fact (Sahlins 2008). Hating and loving, violence and nonviolence, are courses always open to human beings, not instincts that trump all enculturation and agency. Nevertheless, people decide on values and courses of action based only in part on imaginations running free while more or less channeled by the imaginative careers of their cultural predecessors. Human thoughts, behaviours and artifacts are also constrained by the physical conditions of reality that give rise to consciousness and agency itself, which direct both warlike and peaceful endeavours.

Sorting out the big patterns is a first step. Anthropologists can, for example, ascertain how the imagination and its contrivances have real-world consequences for making war and peace (Strathern and Stewart 2011), how scale and political complexity change the kinds of organized violence and peace maintenance that are possible (Fry 2005; Kelly 2000), how ecological and economic conditions influence phases and cycling of war and peace (e.g., Rappaport 1984), how beliefs and values promote war and peace (Sponsel and Gregor 1994) and how perceived cost-benefit calculations convince people to dovish and hawkish responses to perturbations (Helbling 2006). A second step is to determine how the specific goals and perspectives of would-be peace-retainers or combatants are at play in any given moment—including those that are outside of agents' awareness (Anderson and Wallace 2012). Understanding the unique constellation of such conditions at any given place and time is necessary in order to determine what actions can make a vibrant peace possible at that juncture. Such information is also needed to design a method of peace-maintenance that is sustainable and capable of diffusing across cultural boundaries. By taking into account what anthropologists know about cultural dynamics, peacekeeping recipes can be designed to enable a high enough fidelity of transmission and reception to help prevent them from being degraded or lost.

As an historical science, the multidisciplinary study of humankind deals with particular decisions, minds, events and cultural situations that, though constrained by the laws of nature, cannot be predicted and engineered precisely. Herein lies the challenge; but the technological and social achievements of our species over its long past provide ample evidence that goals that once seemed impossible—like politically uniting millions of people, flying to the moon or establishing lasting world peace—not only are worth working toward but also can prove to be possible, if we apply ourselves.

So, what is peace? Defining something is necessary if we are to avoid talking past one another, as I have pointed out in discussing the anthropology of supernaturalism (Lohmann 2003). As Brian Ferguson (2008:46–47) points out, "peace is more than the absence of war." This collection is part of a recurrent move in anthropology to explore phenomena that have been, in our tradition, implicitly defined as opposites or absences of things that have held our attention and received sustained study. Allow me a short digression to illustrate this pattern with three other examples. First, feminist anthropology arose by making women central subjects for a field that had been defined as the science of "man," which implicitly made male-kind the central object of gaze to which the opposite female-kind stood as an adjunct at best or an excluded opposite at worst, that easily escaped notice in the background (Rosaldo and Lamphere 1974). By shifting perspective only slightly, *humankind* explicitly including females rather than the unintentionally exclusionary *mankind*, with its male prototype, became the protagonists of anthropology's accounts. The result was an improved understanding, not only of women but also of men. Similarly, anthropologists have often implicitly written off sleep as the absence of consciousness and sociality when, in fact, sleep is best understood not as a lack of waking life but, rather, as a phase of consciousness with its own distinct qualities. Until recently, this dismissive definition of sleep caused a dearth of research making sleep and the interaction of sleeping and waking life its object (Glaskin and Chenhall 2013). Just the same, atheism is only beginning to be addressed anthropologically (Lanman 2010), neglected in part because of our long habit of defining it as the lack of faith in the supernatural rather than the presence of a naturalist belief system that changes with the advancement of science.

Peace, too, shimmers as though it were a mirage into invisibility as a topic of study, insofar as we allow ourselves to define it merely as a condition when no violence is happening. When we direct our attention to peace as the presence of effective non-violent conflict management within or among polities, rather than the temporary absence of a supposedly normative or inevitably returning state of war, peace becomes visible and a legitimate object of study in its own right, with distinctive forms and dynamics (Galtung 1996). Certainly, we cannot fully understand peace without reference to that which it counters, but just as war is not merely the lack of peace, peace is not merely the lack of war; nor does the evidence support the Hobbesian notion that war, selfish greed or violence is the normative, default setting for the human mind in all places and times. Once peace rather than war is our point of reference, we suddenly see it everywhere and recognize its significance for humankind to be much greater than just a pale reflection of war. As Douglas Fry (2013:103) has recently observed, "we may be at the threshold of an evolutionary paradigm shift, which emphasizes that cooperation, sharing, helping, reconciliation and restraint against aggression ... have solid evolutionary bases." When we look at peace from a general anthropological perspective, inclusive of the four subfields and other disciplines, we find that it is neither a boring period when nothing exciting is happening, nor impossible as a lasting condition. Rather, peace comes in many forms and styles and has a life of its own that is richly variable and worth documenting (see Gregor 1996b).

The present effort is not so wide-ranging as the admirable works cited earlier, being mostly limited to ethnographic, historical and linguistic research among our contemporary peoples in Oceania. Breadth is made up for with depth, as we describe how particular peoples face actual or threatened organized violence from within or without and have succeeded in reaching an end to war. These ends of war are themselves variable in their nature and degree of success. Just as it is tempting to stereotype war as an ultimate evil, the common inclination to idealize peace as a perfect good works against our understanding. A peace without a sense of justice (Na'puti, Webb-Gannon) or one hemmed in by fear of ongoing magical attacks (Kuehling) or one dependent on preparation for war (Petersen), or one in which war is replaced with crime (Roscoe) is not complete or ideal, but has been achieved in multiple cases. Similarly, a peace that comes at the expense of reliance on supernatural beliefs (Lohmann, Schwoerer) is not tenable where such beliefs are different, or where supernaturalism does not hold sway, but it can and does happen repeatedly in the ethnographic and historical records. These cases thus enable readers to attain a more sophisticated understanding of the forms peace can take and the conditions under which they arise.

Our descriptions and analyses have been improved by the participants' three-year engagement at annual meetings of the Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania. These commenced with an informal session in Alexandria, VA, in 2010, continued with a working session in Honolulu, HI, in 2011, and concluded at a symposium in Portland, OR, in 2012 titled "Ends of War: Causes of Peace in the Pacific." I organized these sessions in response to a challenge by my late father, Ivar Lohman, in our friendly conversations; he pointed out that warfare is a human tragedy and anthropologists should be in a position to discover how it can be prevented and ended. So we should. The sharp-eyed reader will have noticed that my father's name was spelled with one "n" while I spell mine with two. As it happens, the difference is the result of a war—in fact of World War I, which began a hundred years ago this year. As a result of resentment of the German Empire's attacks on the United States during the war, my German-American grandfather dropped the second "n" from the family name so that it sounded less German. As a teenager with interest in my German ancestry, I restored the original spelling. This little story illustrates one of the trivial yet far-reaching consequences of war and intergenerational reconciliation that appear to us in droves when we look for them.

In the first essay of this collection, "The Converted War Canoe: Cannibal Raiders, Missionaries and *Pax Britannica* on Dobu Island, Papua New Guinea," Susanne Kuehling shows how different players in a colonial encounter understood military efficacy and pacification differently in a moment celebrated as the point when the people were converted and tribal warfare ended. A war leader's canoe, laboriously prepared for a revenge expedition, was touched by the missionary wife, leading the people to regard it as magically impotent through female contact. The owner, seeing his hope for status through revenge destroyed, rededicated the canoe from military to missionary journeys in hope of receiving "cargo"—spiritually provided material rewards—as a consolation for the loss.

Kuehling points out that magical violence between communities continued with the abolition of physical warfare. For them, the state of lasting peace that their missionary imagined Christianity had ushered in did not characterize Dobu Islanders' sense of intercommunity relations. Not only their belief in magic but also their concept of peace is incompatible with an ideal of a permanent pacification: Dobuans' term for *peace* extends the notion of a calm sea to human relations, implying both a temporary condition and dangers that may lurk below the surface of a friendly face. Despite their idealism of creating a bit of heaven on earth, the missionaries would probably recognize this pessimistic view of peace filled with contradictions waiting to burst a momentary calm as the earthly condition, which they imagine will be overcome only in the post-earth afterworld.

My own contribution, "A Cultural Mechanism to Sustain Peace: How the Asabano Made and Ended War," begins with a description of endemic warfare, its causes and horrific outcomes in the Om and Fu River valleys of central New Guinea. As I thread my way through the oral history and ethnography of war and peace between the Asabano and their neighbours, I reach the story of how war was more sustainably ended than ever before. A decade after the Australian colonial government temporarily repressed payback raids, Baptist missionaries introduced a belief system and ritual technique that enabled people to renounce violent revenge and entrust mediation to an imaginary agent—

God. In the 40 years that this ideological patch has been deployed, there have been no further wars between the Asabano and their neighbours.

I argue that the government-enforced peace was not sustainable because the state is unable to intervene when needed in remote areas, as resurgence of tribal wars in other parts of Papua New Guinea shows. The diffused and now enculturated belief that the Christian god forbids fighting and holds the sole right to revenge, combined with a ritual to pray to God to justly settle scores rather than initiating violent expeditions, has been successful in stemming warfare for these peoples because its prophylactic powers are internally available to all parties at all times as a result of being enculturated and accepted rather than externally imposed and enforced.

This case suggests that cultural scripts can promote either war or peace when they are appropriately tailored to existing cultural contexts. World peace that is not contradictorily enforced by threat of violence, therefore, is possible in theory; however, there is no one-size-fits-all cultural mechanism for ending war and indefinitely maintaining peace. To succeed, we must continually engineer and enculturate peace in every individual across all cultures in diverse and dynamic manners.

In "On Speaking the Language of Peace: Chamoru Resistance and Rhetoric in Guåhan's Self-Determination Movement," Tiara Na'puti analyzes the non-violent, rhetorical use of language among Chamorro activists countering undemocratic imposition of military installations on the people of Guam by the United States. She points out that, by using phrases in the Chamorro vernacular to bracket testimonies at the United Nations, these activists simultaneously express unity and distinction. They manifest feelings of sovereignty in opposition to the American state's colonial domination and use of Guam and its people as pawns to maintain its own sovereignty vis-à-vis other states.

Na'puti demonstrates the use of counterpublic theory in her analysis of testimonial texts to suggest its value for the study of people engaging in protest and conflict without engaging in violent struggle. When using warfare as a political means is untenable because of political, military or ideological imbalances between opponents, campaigners attract people to their cause by building common identity and agreement with core policies among those of their party, and by shaming contrary actions taken by the opposing party. Rhetoric with words and actions is equally important in war and peace relations.

Moving from the island of Guam to the broader region of Micronesia of which it is a part, Glenn Petersen presents "The Possibilities of Violence and the Skills to Avoid It: On Warfare and Its Absence in Traditional Micronesia." Petersen makes the case that the long-standing strategy of relations among the peoples of Micronesia has been neither one of peace nor one of war, in any pure sense. Rather, Petersen argues that by preparing for warfare, while recognizing it as an undesirable condition that is best avoided, the frequency and severity of warlike acts were suppressed. Instead of characterizing traditional Micronesian societies as either warlike or peaceful in some overarching sense, Petersen says they were both at once.

With their small islands, most of which are low-lying and subject to devastating storms, Micronesians have a long history of mutual reliance for assistance in times of need, enhancing the premium on making and maintaining good relations. On the other hand, meteorological disasters can provide opportunities for violent conquest. Petersen examines the evidence and concludes that an attitude of "peace through strength," to borrow former U.S. president Ronald Reagan's cold war phrase, dominated Micronesian foreign relations though the centuries.

In "The End of War in Papua New Guinea: 'Crime' and 'Tribal Warfare' in Post-Colonial States," Paul Roscoe reminds us that *war* is between polities and an expression of sovereignty, while *crime* is within a polity and a challenge to its authority, but classifying an act of aggression into one or the other of these ideal types depends on which polity or scale of polity one is using as the point of reference. Classification is further complicated because environmental factors can influence the form of aggressive acts. While there has been a resurgence of tribal warfare in the Papua New Guinea highlands that takes a similar form to pre-colonial battles, no such battles have arisen in the lowlands. Roscoe argues that the resurgence of warfare has also taken place in the lowlands, but it is described as crime rather than war because of its relatively small scale. His Yangoru informants in the lowlands consider today's attacks by criminals a contemporary expression of war rather than crime, because the attacks are directed at outsiders. Unlike in the highlands, pre-contact warfare in the lowlands consisted mainly of small-scale raids; hence the resurgence of "warfare" there manifests the traditional form of interpolity conflict in this region.

Roscoe brings a materialist perspective of physical geography into the equation, showing that, because of the heavy vegetation of the lowlands, pre-colonial warfare comprised individual attacks and raids rather than highly organized battles, which dominated in the open highlands. A lesson here is that peace maintenance faces different challenges and opportunities depending on geographic as well as social factors.

Tobias Schwoerer considers the role of incentives and perceived benefits of choosing war or peace in "The Red Flag of Peace: Colonial Pacification, Cargo Cults and the End of War among the South Fore." He reports that the South Fore regarded warfare as a defining activity for their own group as well as enemy groups, in which any member of an alleged wrongdoer's group could be killed in retribution. These tendencies in themselves, which recur in somewhat different forms cross-culturally, go a long way to explaining why people go to war as often as they do. Schwoerer draws our attention to the fact that people decide whether to pursue war only when they come to the conclusion that it is likely to improve or preserve their situation.

Incentives are also taken into account in choosing peace. Schwoerer's informants told him that the South Fore decided to pursue peace in the 1950s because they thought it was in their best interest. At a feast, a leader tied a red cloth to an unstrung bow and announced that if, in place of fighting wars, people would look at the red cloth, soon wonderful goods—cargo—would come. Wishing to receive these things was sufficient motivation to end war and maintain peace for decades.

Finally, Camellia Webb-Gannon considers the case of "*Merdeka* in West Papua: Peace, Justice and Political Independence." Merdeka is an Indonesian word used as a rallying call by campaigners for the independence of West Papua, the half of New Guinea controlled by Indonesia. Webb-Gannon considers its meanings, focusing on self-determination as a form of peace with justice. Echoing the passion of her many activist informants, she seems to place self-determination as the highest of human rights without reference to the fact that "rights" and their hierarchies are cultural inventions and conventions and moreover, that West Papuans can be considered "a people" or a "self" only in opposition to the Indonesian state and as a group in opposition to all others. Such a view does not recognize that the Melanesian population of West Papua is made up of hundreds of polities and cultures that predate colonial domination, first from the Netherlands and now from Indonesia. When all these were independent of any state not so long ago, this did not result in a peace with justice as current activists conceive of it.

What does become clear in Webb-Gannon's presentation is that peace in any political relationship between peoples or polities is easier to maintain when most people on all sides have a sense of justice or legitimate authority and order. These will not necessarily be defined in the same way, because they are enmeshed in diverse cultural contexts. West Papuan independence activists and representatives of the Indonesian state have both used peaceful and warlike strategies to resolve the conflict between them. Webb-Gannon demonstrates that an agreement between groups of people achieved by force of violence or threatened violence is fragile unless it is backed up or replaced by a peace that all interacting parties regard as sufficiently just.

So where does all this leave us in trying to define war and peace in order simply to understand them or to maximize the latter's prevalence? Douglas Fry (2007:16) directs us to two useful definitions of war, which capture his point that war is not an individual matter but one requiring a certain degree of political complexity to exist (tribal societies having the minimum level of organization to be able to undertake war, as opposed to individual violence, which is the sole form of violent intergroup exchange in bands). With increasing political and technological complexity, more expansive and destructive warfare becomes possible, though he argues convincingly that this is not a sufficient condition for warfare to exist. Capturing this, Keith Otterbein (1970:140–141) defines war as "armed combat between political communities." Roy Prosterman (1972:140) expands on this with his definition of war as

> a group activity, carried on by members of one community against members of another community, in which it is the primary purpose to inflict serious injury or death on multiple nonspecified members of that other community or, in which the primary purpose makes it highly likely that serious injury or death will be inflicted on multiple nonspecified members of that community in the accomplishment of that primary purpose.

If this is war, then for our purposes, peace can be defined as a group activity, carried on by members of one community toward members of another community, in which the primary purpose is to maintain mutual benefit by successfully deploying means for enhancing productive political relations and preventing violence, by either directing contacts with goodwill or avoiding one another with an attitude of acceptance. This positive definition of what peace is rather than what peace is not avoids the pitfall of negative definitions, which lead us to think of peace as the absence or opposite of war. As I have pointed out, negative definitions lead to a diminution of interest, attention and understanding in science and the humanities; it is therefore best that we avoid them. Another advantage of this definition is that it is compatible with the fact that peace is an active social process that creates an ambiance of favourable attitudes between communities, manages or transforms the conflicts that nevertheless arise to restore goodwill, and can include strategies of engagement or separation to achieve these ends or, in Gregor's (1996a:xvii) terms, sociative, restorative and separative forms of peace. Both war and peace are political activities that set rules and strategies for engagement (including non-interaction) among polities in contact with one another. By learning and communicating what peace is, in all its variety in the ethnographic, historical and archaeological records, anthropologists can meaningfully contribute to ending war and sustaining peace as members of pacific societies within and beyond Pacific Oceania.

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