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UNDERSTANDING CONFLICT RESOLUTION

FOURTH EDITION

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1.1 Peacemaking as a New Experience

Since the Cold War ended there have been more peace agreements than in any period after the termination of the Second World War. Many of these accords curtailed violence successfully and transformed conflicts into more constructive relations between states, peoples and groups. Others failed utterly and remained signatures on paper with no effect in the lives of human beings exposed to the dangers of warfare. There is, consequently, a need to understand conflict resolution in a new way. It is not enough for the outside world to ask for negotiations and contacts between warring parties. There is also a need to suggest what the parties should discuss, how they may agree, how agreements can be turned into reality and, not least, how settlements can be made durable and freeing new generations from repeating bitter war experiences. It is, furthermore, important to ask what can be learned for effective conflict prevention, allowing for just aspirations to develop without systematic and deliberate violence.

In the early 1990s knowledge in conflict resolution for war conditions was limited. There was considerable insight in negotiations in domestic political affairs and in the art of deal-making. Understanding was generated from societies and conditions, which involved little violence and war. It referred to situations of shared values and norms, where few cultural borders were transgressed. However, conflict resolution takes on an entirely different dimension when parties have been trying to kill each other. In the management of conflict between employers and employees there is the threat of strikes and lockouts. This is not the same as when negotiators, their families, relatives, friends and colleagues have been under armed attack by the other side. Involving issues of life and death, war is a qualitatively different form of conflict. Negotiation and

peacemaking in ending wars can learn from other experiences but face unique problems. The issues at hand – the incompatibilities – are central to such an analysis and are likely to concern major questions of society and its direction. Also crucial are the ways to end the fighting. This has to be done without inviting a repetition of war. It also has to meet standards of justice and, at the same time, provide physical security for the opposing sides. There is a need to compensate for sufferings that cannot be compensated or redressed. Norms of human relations have been violently broken, leaving the difficult task of finding sufficiently shared grounds on which to build a new relationship. There is the requirement that the opposing sides be equally committed to viewing an agreement as *theirs*, and to taking responsibility for implementing it under conditions which may be novel to the society. Thus, there are reasons for analysts to believe that peacemaking after war is a losing proposition. Still, it takes place and it seems to be working. How this is possible is what this book is all about.

Only in the early 1990s did the world start seriously to attend to peacemaking after war. During the Cold War, negotiations and agreements on issues that involved the use of weapons were few and limited. There was a peace agreement on Indochina in 1954, but, like its successor in 1973, it was quickly undermined. There were also settlements between India and Pakistan after the 1965 and 1971 wars, achieving a reduction in tension, but not an end to the incompatibility. The emphasis in the major power confrontation of the time, the Cold War, was victory, not compromise. The ideological components and the historical record made the Cold War an existential battle. It was waged between right and wrong, democracy and dictatorship, capitalism and socialism, liberation and imperialism. Compromise was seen as morally questionable. The same attitude was reflected in other disputes of the period, whether related to the Cold War or not.

There were reasons for this aversion to negotiated resolution. The memory of the flawed and failed agreement at Munich in September 1938 haunted some of the actors. At that time, the democratic countries (Britain and France) agreed with a totalitarian one (Nazi Germany) on the dissolution, rather than the protection, of a small, democratic country, Czechoslovakia. Even so, Hitler chose not to honour the agreement. It became part of a rapid series of developments towards major war. To Western leaders it showed the futility of compromising with dictatorships. Appeasement became a synonym for negotiations. The Soviet leadership may have drawn similar conclusions from its deal with Nazi Germany in August 1939, the agreement that made the Second World War inevitable. Although it aimed at preventing a war between the two – by dividing influence in Eastern Europe and the Baltic region – Germany attacked the Soviet Union less than two years later. Thus, both sides in the Cold War that followed the joint defeat of Nazi Germany could agree on the dangers of making peace with an opponent. For both, the conclusion was that lasting peace required solid victory. Consequently, there were few agreements on political issues in armed conflicts in the decades that followed.

It is, then, remarkable to find that negotiations were still possible in a particular sphere: arms control and disarmament. There were agreements banning nuclear weapons tests, restricting the production of missiles, and even eliminating whole categories of weaponry. These negotiations aimed to reduce the risk of inadvertent

war between the major powers, without settling their fundamental incompatibilities. This was an effort at conflict management, making sure the relationships between the major powers would not unintentionally get out of hand. In spite of this, the Cold War continually led to new crises. Basic distrust and confrontation, though contained from becoming nuclear conflict, guided the leaderships. All other types of conflict were allowed: wars were waged by proxy, in secret, as interventions. The danger of local conflicts escalating into nuclear war was an element of most serious analysis. An important Cold War lesson is that the reduction of weaponry has limited value in conflict resolution. After all, the 'political' issues involved in forming the conflict are primary, and weapons are used to pursue such interests. Conflict management can help to reduce the dangers of crisis, creating some confidence and lessening (potential or actual) suffering. Conflict resolution is more ambitious as it tries to affect the basic issues, the incompatibilities that direct the conflicting parties. This book is devoted to this difficult and delicate material.

1.2 Peace Research and Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution is approached on the basis of the insights generated in contemporary peace research. This means drawing conclusions from the study of causes of war, issues of disarmament and arms control, and conflict dynamics. This involves quantitative and qualitative studies. Although conflict resolution in armed conflict has been part of the peace research agenda, it has yet to develop a consistent set of research-based propositions. The methodological approach taken by many scholars today is comparative. History-oriented methods have dominated. Systematic quantitative research has begun to emerge. The basis for this book is, consequently, not a consolidated set of insights about which strategies work or why agreements endure. Rather, it brings together plausible understandings which, it is hoped, help to highlight policy dilemmas and stimulate more study.

Peace research, like any other field of inquiry that deals with societal affairs, is, of course, coloured by major historical changes and events. Peace research, with its ambition to understand the causes of violence and to find ways to reduce/remove violence, has been sensitive to such changes. Sometimes they have constituted challenges to the existing research paradigms, thus leading to new fields of inquiry. At other times, the historical developments have confirmed the importance of the existing agenda. Either way, the dialogue with realities remains a constant feature. As can be seen from Table 1.1, peace research has developed agendas resting on the traumatic experiences of the past century, but also from hopeful developments that are integral to the flow of events (Wallensteen 2011a, 2011b).

Table 1.1 identifies 18 major themes that have served to enlarge the agenda of what was originally a limited topic. Peace research arose as a field devoted to understanding the causes of war by systematic analyses of the historical experiences of war. Pioneering studies integrated many dimensions, notably the works of Pitirim A.

Sorokin (1937) and Quincy Wright (1942). The causes of war remain, to this day, fundamental questions for peace research. The solution to the problem of the origins of war has since then been enlarged to involve a vast array of analytical questions. Table 1.1 indicates how such issues have come to take a central role.

Table 1.1   Traumas and hopes forming the agenda of peace research

Event		Understanding of event	Peace research topics
First World War	Trauma	Loss of crisis control, 1914	History, causes of war
League of Nations	Hope	Aggression, need for rules	International law
Second World War	Trauma	Again, lost control	Strategic study v. peace research
Hiroshima	Trauma	Science used for war	Disarmament, arms control
Gandhi in India	Hope	Use of non-violent means	History, cases of non-violence
United Nations	Hope	International cooperation	International organization
Holocaust	Trauma	Genocide, ethnic violence	Human and collective rights
Cold War	Trauma	Danger of polarization, escalation	Conflict theory, gaming
European Unity	Hope	Overcoming enmity	Integration and democracy theory
Vietnam War	Trauma	Dependence, imperialism	Structural violence
Dissidence	Hope	Popular moves for democracy	NGOs, popular attitudes
Détente	Hope	Confidence-building	Cooperation, common themes
Environmental threats	Trauma	Hope or cause of conflict	Scarcity, conflict and cooperation
Bosnia	Trauma	Ethnic identities as element	Ethnic security dilemmas
Peacemaking	Hope	Ending of wars	Conflict resolution and peacebuilding
Emancipation	Hope	Gender and peace	Gender as variable/ paradigm
September 11, 2001	Trauma	Terrorism	Pre-emption v. human security
Arab Spring	Hope/ Trauma	Popular revolts met with repression	Non-violence, social media

There are almost equal numbers of traumatic, negative experiences, and hopes, creative events that point to new possibilities. The *traumas* are connected with human suffering on a large scale affecting many, also outside the scene of action. The same is true for the *hopes*, which are not only isolated events, but also developments that have drawn global attention. The common feature of traumas and hopes is that they challenge conventional wisdom and, thus, result in breaks in trends, or

even paradigm shifts. The traumas suggest limits to established thinking that clearly have to be overcome, and where research can play a role in the process. The hopes suggest that reality offers many surprises. Some of them stem from theoretical thoughts of 'utopian' character, which unexpectedly take material forms. This closeness of reality to research is a feature of social science in general but, in peace research, a culture of openness and willingness to challenge one's assumptions has been particularly central.

Certainly, none of the topics mentioned in Table 1.1 is exclusive to peace research. In spite of a vigorous development, peace research *per se* continues to be organizationally distinct and a financially limited field of the full study of war and peace, international relations, foreign policy, sociology, economics, international law, etc. Many of the topics mentioned as subjects for peace research are administratively and intellectually embraced in other disciplines. The debate during the Cold War, positing strategic studies against peace research, subsided, but re-emerged in revised forms following September 11, 2001. More comprehensive concepts of security are common on both sides, and their shared understanding has increased to the point where there is today little necessity to draw a sharp line. If there is one, however, it has to do with the close connection to political decision-making in leading countries and views of the use of force. The calculated use of violence remains, as a strategy, alien to peace research. The idea is instead to search, as far as is possible, for 'peace with peaceful means' (Galtung 1996). War-fighting strategies are not likely to be developed at peace research institutions. Even so, the ideas of an international responsibility to protect populations exposed to the risk of genocide or ethnic persecution are debated in peace research institutions, but without the formulation of practical strategies for such operations. This fits, however, with the broader concern of human security as a means of reducing the risk of future terrorism.

Conflict resolution, as Table 1.1 makes clear, is a more recent concept. It certainly has roots, as evidenced by the reference to international law, conflict theory, cooperation and integration. During the 1990s it has taken on a new, more significant and central meaning. Systematic study is found only from the middle of the 1980s, and the literature has grown in recent years. There certainly are – as will be seen throughout this book – mixed experiences in the field. Collecting such lessons, systematizing and making them explicit, is a way to move forward. This book aims at understanding when peace agreements are likely to become durable settlements. This requires an analysis of different types of conflict. Agreements, it will be argued, are particularly dependent on the central issues of contention, the incompatibilities. Furthermore, emphasis will be given to the significance of the ways agreements are derived, as the processes themselves can explain some of the agreements, but also are important for assessing their durability. In addition, it is important to observe the interconnections between conflicts in the same region and the role of the international community. The analysis builds on the conflict resolution agreements concluded after the Cold War but also draws on general theories of conflict, negotiation and mediation. It is a book reporting on a record, in a way which hopefully will stimulate practice as well as research in the field.

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1.3 Defining Conflict Resolution

Before we can proceed further, there is a need to establish a preliminary definition of conflict resolution. The definition will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2. The distinction between conflict management and conflict resolution has already been introduced. We have also mentioned the recent phenomenon of peace agreements. They are an integral part of conflict resolution. Without some form of agreement among the conflicting parties, it is hard to talk about conflict resolution. However, an agreement, even if implemented, may not be sufficient to establish a durable peace. Peace requires more than a deal among the parties. The peace accord is, however, a necessary step to a lasting arrangement. Thus, we can preliminarily define conflict resolution as a situation *where the conflicting parties enter into an agreement that solves their central incompatibilities, accept each other's continued existence as parties and cease all violent action against each other*. This means, of course, that conflict resolution is something that necessarily comes 'after' conflict. It means that we first need to have concepts and tools for the analysis of conflict. This is what conflict theory is all about. Conflict resolution in the context of conflict theory is the theme of Chapter 2.

Let us scrutinize key elements in this definition. The *agreement* is normally a formal understanding, a document signed under more or less solemn conditions. However, there can be more informal, implicit understandings worked out between the parties. Such agreements may exist in secret documents, for instance, a crucial promise made as a precondition for the formal arrangements, or as deals about which the parties have been more or less explicit. Many cases are likely to see as much dispute around such informal understandings as over the formalized documents. Furthermore, such informal pacts require considerable trust between the parties. They are not likely without a formal arrangement. Thus, the agreed document is important for any peace process.

The definition talks about the parties accepting *each other's continued existence as parties*. This is an important element as it distinguishes a peace accord from agreed capitulation. An agreement of capitulation is the strongest consent to victory and defeat. It means that one side lays down its weapons, dissolves its organization, departs from the disputed territory and, in short, ceases to be an actor of influence and significance. An example is a withdrawal agreement. This is an arrangement where one side agrees to remove its troops from an area of dispute and where this is the only matter the agreement regulates. The withdrawing party is not likely, however, to see it as a matter of capitulation, although the essence of the agreement is to end that party's participation in the conflict. An example is the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan that was agreed in 1988 and implemented by 1989. It ended the dominant role of the Soviet Union in internal Afghan affairs. Another example is the resignation of a party leader from the government, where he/she also leaves the country. This was the case with the departure of Charles Taylor from Liberia in 2003, thus ending a civil war and opening a chance for long-term peacebuilding in the war-torn country. Lately, there have also been victories without agreements or acts

of capitulation. The USA declared the defeat of Iraq to be 'one victory in a war on terror', on May 1, 2003. The government of Sri Lanka won over the Tamil Tigers in May 2009, without a formal consent (i.e., capitulation) from the losing party. The Gaddafi regime in Libya ended with the death of the leader in 2011.

However, the conflict resolution agreements of interest here are more complex. They refer to documents in which the fighting parties accept each other also as parties in future dealings with one another. It means that nobody wins all that there is to win, but no one loses all that there is to lose. Such arrangements are more difficult to maintain, no doubt, but they are more frequent than perhaps recognized at first. Of course, the word 'accept' in the definition does not imply that the parties agree to everything or that they 'like' each other. It only means that they accept the other as much as they need for the agreement to be implemented by the opposing sides.

The formulation that the parties *cease all violent action against each other* is most important. Many times it is part of the same treaty but it can be done as a separate undertaking. Often the cessation of violence is made public at about the same time as the peace agreement is concluded. To the public at large, it means that the war ends and the dangers of being killed are reduced. Sometimes, however, cease-fire agreements can precede the actual conclusion of the agreement regulating the incompatibilities between the parties. There is debate whether cease-fires should precede, be simultaneous with, or come after the more political agreements. There are a number of truce agreements that have lasted a long time, without resulting in peace accords. The armistice lines drawn in 1949 separating Israel from its Arab neighbours were used in the agreements with Egypt 30 years later. The same territorial divisions are relevant for a final agreement between Israel and Palestine. The lines have now existed for more than 65 years. The separation lines between Korea's two states in 1953 will soon reach a similarly venerable age. Perhaps an agreement will be achieved earlier on Cyprus, where the territorial divisions that are the references for today's discussions date from the war in 1974. The line separating Georgia from South Ossetia today dates to the cease-fire of 1992. Cease-fire agreements, in other words, are closer to conflict management, a way of freezing a military status quo, and do not necessarily result in peace efforts. It is safe to conclude that a peace agreement, solving the central incompatibilities between the parties, which does not include a simultaneous undertaking to cease fighting, is not likely to be credible. Thus, the agreements included as conflict resolution measures are those which both solve incompatibilities and end fighting.

1.4 Limits of Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution is not necessarily identical with peace. There is considerable overlap, however, as most notions of peace are based on the *absence or ending of war*. A conflict, we have just made clear, is not resolved if it does not include an end to armed struggle. At the same time, it is not sufficient that it *only* contains the ending

of fighting. Conflict resolution is more than the limited definition of peace. It is more than the absence of war. The parties are agreeing to respect each other and prepare for living together with one another. However, there are broader under-standings of what peace is, such as the presence of cooperation, justice and integra-tion. Conflict resolution may or may not include such larger values. It will depend on the situation. The preferred definition does not, a priori, include such elements. The definition is dependent on what the parties want or can agree to include. Conflict resolution may, or may not, contain broader aspects.

In the worst of circumstances, a peace agreement may negate widely held values. The accords studied here have been concluded between parties with arms. They are militarily stronger than other parties in their societies. Thus, there is a danger that the agreed form of conflict resolution will contain *privileges for the armed par-ties*, at the expense of other interests in the society. There are many examples of this, even where persons who have been responsible for considerable destruction take up government positions, thus becoming legal powerholders. Such develop-ments create fear in parts of society. From a conflict resolution perspective, it is necessary to warn against such arrangements. They may contain the seeds of renewed conflict or initiate entirely new conflict dynamics. The deal, from the population's point of view, is that granting privileges will stop a war. The hope may be that these privileges can be challenged by a stronger civil society once the war is over. The conditions of peace may require new types of leadership, and thus, the hope may be borne out. A minimum conclusion is to ensure that the peace agreement does not prevent such developments; a better position is that it actually encourages it.

A question that has gained increased importance is the issue of *crimes* committed during a war, as part of the fighting or under the protection of the war. The interna-tional war crimes tribunal was set up in 1993 for the conflict in former Yugoslavia, followed by a similar tribunal for Rwanda a year later. By the summer of 1998 a fully-fledged International Criminal Court (ICC) was created through an interna-tional treaty. With enough ratifications by 2004, the ICC became operational (although the USA chose to remain outside and initially tried to reduce its interna-tional reach). The ICC is a dramatic new development. After the Second World War, war crime tribunals were set up for the responsible actors in Germany and Japan. They were not permanent institutions and war crimes were seldom pursued interna-tionally in the following decades. The only consistent effort taken up by some coun-tries and some non-governmental organizations was to bring to trial those involved in the Holocaust. The Cold War precluded an international consensus on the pursuit of war crimes.

Thus, only after the Cold War could a shared understanding again develop on war crimes, necessary procedures and punishments. Nevertheless, there are recent peace agreements which include different forms of amnesty to leaders and decision-makers. Amnesty has been seen as necessary by negotiators for any agreement at all to be concluded. Leaders could, in other words, protect themselves from legal procedures, the opposing sides and the legitimate anger of their own populations. Developments during the 1990s make such agreements increasingly unlikely. They are not easily

accepted internationally. In that sense, conflict resolution today has become more demanding than it was immediately after the Cold War. The first indictment from the ICC concerned the leader of a rebellion in Uganda, at the same time making further negotiations for an end to the civil war more complicated. Thus, the effects of the focus on war crimes can be discussed. Some argue that it threatens to prolong conflict, as parties fearing to be brought to trial have little incentive to make agreements which endanger their own means of control. Others argue that it deters parties from getting into war in the first place, as the ICC increases the likelihood that war crimes will be legally pursued, thus, in the long run, preventing new wars.

Finally, we should also note that conflict resolution is not the same as complete *disarmament*. The agreement may allow the parties to retain a certain arsenal. It is likely, however, that this will be lower than what has been put to use in the war itself. The parties may, nevertheless, maintain that they need special protection. Clearly, the higher the level of protection required and agreed, the more likely it is that this creates renewed insecurity in a society. Thus, it is probable that peace agreements will only be durable if they result in some disarmament, as well as changes in all security sectors towards transparency, integrity and a professionalism that includes human rights. Particularly, disarming and demobilization need to be coupled with reintegration and rehabilitation of soldiers, not the least child soldiers. In recent years, such disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes have become central efforts in peacebuilding following the ending of wars.

There are also other aspects of peace. Conflict resolution finds itself at a bridge between a very narrow concept of peace (no war) and a very broad one (justice). By leaving conflict resolution as a concept defined by the parties, it may become difficult to compare one situation to another. However, the fact is that there are increasingly established norms for the content of internationally acceptable peace agreements. International law has set some standards for conflict resolution between states. The end of the Cold War has also led to signposts for the settlement of internal conflicts: principles of democracy, human rights, criminal justice, reconciliation and economic cooperation are part of this. In this sense, an international understanding of conflict resolution is developing. It contributes to pushing the concept further in the direction of justice, or what could be termed quality peace, not simply cessation of violence.

1.5 Outlining this Book

The existing peace agreements are important inputs in this work. The analysis, however, has to start with the phenomenon that precedes any peace agreement and may eventually replace it: conflict. It requires some tools for understanding the extent of armed conflict and types of outcome. This is covered in Chapter 2, which gives information on patterns of conflict and peacemaking. Then we will go into

the theoretical underpinnings, to review some of the elements of contemporary conflict theory that are relevant for peacemaking (Chapter 3). From this, we proceed to the necessary instruments for basic conflict analysis. This is done in Chapter 4, which presents three types of prevalent conflict, the trichotomy of conflict, which requires different types of agreement. This completes Part One. In Part Two, the peace agreements since the end of the Cold War, as well as previous experiences, are married to this structure to show how the distinctions serve to highlight features for durable agreements (Chapters 5, 6 and 7). Part Three examines particularly complex issues in conflict analysis. These relate to the linkages between different conflicts into conflict complexes, within regions, with or without major power involvement (Chapter 8). In Chapter 9, the roles of the United Nations and regional organizations in conflict resolution are assessed. Chapters 10 and 11 focus on tools used in peacemaking and, finally, in Chapter 12, the new challenges to conflict resolution are discussed.

Further Readings

Go to the *Understanding Conflict Resolution* web page at https://study.sagepub.com/wallensteen4e for free access to journal articles listed.

On the Concept of Peace

Journal of Peace Research 1964. 'An Editorial', *Journal of Peace Research,* 1 (1): 1–4.

This is a classical text that made the dichotomy of negative and positive peace well known to the research community. Although not signed it is commonly agreed that it was written by the editor of the Journal, Johan Galtung, the founder and first editor of the Journal.

Galtung, J. 1969. 'Violence, Peace and Peace Research', *Journal of Peace Research*, 6 (3): 167–91.

In this article Galtung elaborates on the meaning of positive peace by introducing a new concept, 'structural violence', largely in response to a critique of peace research as being too focused on 'direct violence', i.e. wars, conflicts and violence. The concept of structural violence has since then been used in peace research but also in other disciplines.

Höglund, K. and Söderberg Kovacs, M. 2010. 'Beyond the Absence of War: The Diversity of Peace in Post-Settlement Societies', *Review of International Studies,* 36 (2): 367–90.

These two authors return to the issue of positive peace by elaborating on a set of other possible notions of peace. It was part of a new discussion on 'peace',

in particular in relation to the conditions after a protracted war. What kind of peace is to be built?

Regan, P.M. 2014. 'Bringing Peace Back in: Presidential address to the Peace Science Society', 2013. *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 31 (4): 345–356.

In the continued discussion on positive peace, Regan, as president of the Peace Science Society, poses the challenge to the research community to put 'peace' in the forefront of research, thus making scholarly sense of 'positive peace'. He also demonstrates that the dichotomy of negative and positive peace was used already in the 1950s, thus giving it a history.

Peace and Peace Research

Wallensteen, P. 2011a. 'The Origins of Contemporary Peace Research', in K. Höglund and M. Öberg (eds), *Understanding Peace Research*. London: Routledge. pp. 14–32.

Wallensteen, P. 2011b. *Peace Research: Theory and Practice*. London: Routledge. pp. 4–20.

These two publications elaborate on the effect the choice of peace concept has on the forming of a research agenda. The first one shows how 'traumas' and 'hopes' have formed the present agenda. The second one shows that 'peace' is researchable, gives the arguments for its pursuit within universities as an autonomous activity, and discusses ethical aspects of research results.

The Philosophical Underpinnings of Peace Research

Organized peace research is, of course, not the originator of a discussion on 'peace'. Through time, this has been an important concern by many writers. Three important texts are the following:

Kant, I. 1795. *Perpetual Peace*: *A Philosophical Sketch*.
The renowned philosopher outlines his approach to a lasting international peace arrangement emphasizing matters such as republican rule, international federations and arms control. These visionary ideas were widely read during the 1800s. It influenced the formation of international organizations in the 1900s and sparked a modern research approach, referred to as the Kantian Peace.

Machiavelli, N. 1532. *The Prince*.
This text from the sixteenth century was published after the death of Machiavelli. It gives advice to the political leader who wants to retain power in turbulent times. It is a classical reading for a 'realist' approach emphasizing the importance of power. It has also sparked an ongoing discussion on moral and power.

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More, T. 1516. *Utopia.*

The work on *Utopia* is contemporary to Machiavelli and can be seen as a critique of the power struggles that went on in Europe at the time. It does so by outlining a vision of a different society, 'Utopia'. The concept is firmly entrenched in European thinking, and has also led to new derivations, such as 'dystopia' as a negative vision on a future society.