

Local Zones of Peace as a Form of Institutionalized Conflict: Some Introductory Thoughts

Presentation Outline

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1. Institutionalizing Conflicts

Principle underlying ZoPs an old one;

How to limit the destructive effects of conflict between armed and violent parties by establishing rules for conduct of the conflict?

Hence, the principles underlying ZoPs are part of the whole effort to construct a system of conflict within rules. In the case of a ZoP, the idea is to create, either on the basis of custom or agreement, a zone within which certain things are not permitted [which are permitted outside the zone] and/or other things encouraged.

ZoPs themselves are usually conceptualized as being territorially based - a weapons-free area, or a corridor for medical supplies. More unusually, they can also be visualized as personally based in the sense that certain categories of persons are immune from particular forms of [forbidden] behavior being directed towards them. [It is rather as though certain categories of individual were carrying round with them their own "mini-zone" of peace on the territory they temporarily occupied.]¹

2. "Conflict Within Rules": Common Features

Like any form of institutionalized or [regulated] conflict, it is helpful to try to analyze the establishment and functions of different types of ZoPs by asking some basic questions about what they are, how they come into being and what effects they have.

We would suggest the following as useful analytical questions to be asked about the various types of ZoP [discussed below];

1. Did the ZoP arise because of a more or less general consensus regarding its utility, shared by the local community and/or the combatant parties?
2. What are the nature, extent and degree of normalization of the rules regarding the ZOP, and how [and by whom] was the ZoP created?
3. What is the legitimacy and general level of acceptance of the ZoP and the rules regarding its operation [i.e. does it have local, regional or country wide acceptance, and how is this expressed]
4. How and by whom are the rules for the ZoP interpreted and differences resolved?
5. How and by whom are the rules for the ZoP enforced in cases of non-compliance, and what are the sanctions for breaking the existing rules? [The latter can run from the sanction of the complete breakdown of the ZoP to punitive sanctions imposed by some outside party.]
6. Can the rules for the ZoP be changed to meet new political and social circumstances, and how is this accomplished?

¹Originally, we thought of distinguishing between ZoPs and Conflict Limiting Practices [CLPs] regarding categories of immune persons, but finally collapsed two concepts by conceptualizing "personal space" as the functional equivalent of an area

The record of other examples of "conflict within rules" suggests some common patterns of "rule content" that might well be observed within a Zone of Peace. Commonly, rules for conflict are concerned with:

- Permitted behavior
- Prohibited behavior
- Targets of violence, both prohibited and permitted
- Time and locale for permitted behaviors
- Monitoring and supervision procedures
- Third parties; nature, behaviors, powers and legitimate purposes [umpires, adjudicators, sanctioners]

3. Historical Examples of "Zones" of Peace

The conception of peace zones, where fighting should not take place, or of agreed personal immunity from attack [or other concomitants of being "at war"] has a long history in world and western traditions.

For example, the idea of sanctuaries - or places where individuals and groups or communities are immune from arrest, attack and other forms of violence - goes back to Egyptian civilization, then on through classical times to Medieval Christendom and thence to recent examples of efforts by the U.N. to establish safe places where the inhabitants are immune from attack.

Much of the Medieval chivalric code was concerned with the "proper" conduct of warfare, and with limits on who might and might not be legitimate targets for military operations; and where might or might not be appropriate arenas in which to fight. From this arose the whole conception of "rules of conduct during a war", which, under the title of "Jus in Bello", became the subject of legal exegesis during the 16th Century onwards, culminating in late 19th and 20th Century efforts to codify military conduct, not merely in cases of interstate conflict but - with much greater difficulty - in cases of armed insurgency.

However, it should not be forgotten that all societies seem to have developed rules of conduct during conflicts, both for conflicts between members of the society and, often, for conflicts with outsiders. Many of these "rule systems" involved provisions which clearly established different forms of "peace zones", both territorial and personal².

Lewis, for example, discusses the traditional waging of inter-clan conflict in Morocco and points out that generally accepted rules of conduct forbade the molestation of women in places for prayer, a limitation which neatly exhibits two characteristics of peace zones - a safe place and an "innocent" - and, hence, protected - category of individuals.

Anthropological scholarship has also indicated that many societies have rules of conflict which clearly deal with concepts akin to one of our suggested types of Zones of Peace. The range of such rules is large. It starts, at one extreme, with the idea of an agreed and limited "battleground" where and only where violence will take place, as in the case of conflicts between the Dani peoples of highland New Guinea [Heider 1970]. At the other, it ends with the idea of a specific and limited area or zone which is agreed to be immune from violence, as with the Moroccan prohibition on violence in market places [Lewis; 1961]

² We considered another, temporal form of "peace zone", namely one consisting of an accepted period of time during which all forms of combat were prohibited across a wide range of territorial arenas or "fronts". [An example from the classical world would be the period in the 5th Century B.C. when the Olympic Games were held in Greece, during which all warfare ceased.] However, the conception of a temporal "zone" seemed somewhat bizarre, even for us, although it is clearly the case that efforts to limit the times at which certain conflict behaviors can take place are a recognized form of institutionalization - of putting conflict "within rules" in order to ameliorate its effects.

The question that arises from this long history of efforts to put limitation on the conduct of conflict is what might be applicable in the changing circumstances of conflict -especially intra-national conflict between communities and collectivities - at the end of the 20th Century; and what lessons might be learned from historical as well as contemporary efforts to establish and maintain viable Zones of Peace.

To answer such questions, however, we need to say what is meant by a Zone of Peace and what types of Zones of Peace have been attempted in contemporary conflict situations, locally, intra-nationally and internationally.

4. Defining a "Zone of Peace"

Consider for a moment a working definition of Zone of Peace, to which we will return shortly, and which we may revise by Sunday. A Zone of Peace is an attempt to establish norms which limit the destructive effects of violent conflict within a particular area. or during a particular time period- or with regard to a particular category of people.

5. Diverse Zones and Diverse Peaces

In the context of both the preceding discussion of Zones of Peace as a form of institutionalizing rules for waging violent conflict, and the working definition, it is immediately clear that there are many social structures which might be considered Zones of Peace or which at least resemble zones of peace in significant aspects. (See Table 1.)

Table 1. Examples of Zones of Peace

safe havens and sanctuaries	hospital zones civilian safe areas university campuses prisons (where ICRC visitation makes prisons safer than freedom) ollinu stations (with election monitoring norms)
personal ZoPs	protective accompaniment nonviolent action observers, monitors refugee escort
material exclusion zones	safe and drug free school zones demilitarized zones nuclear free zones weapons free zones
interpositioning	buffer zones jointly policed/patrolled zones peacekeeping operations/ green lines nonviolent inte ositionin T
humanitarian relief corridors	

There are no doubt other examples which are not listed here, some of which may be discussed throughout the conference. As discussed above, Zones of Peace differ according to many characteristics central to our definition of the concept. These characteristics emerge from concepts inherent in the working definition of Zone of Peace, which include: attempt, limit, destructive effect, violent conflict, establish, and norm. Depending on how far and in what directions these key concepts are stretched, various phenomena might be considered Zones of Peace. Individuals committed to nonviolence could be considered unilaterally declared individual mobile zones of peace where ever they go. Indeed, if what we are doing here today and this

weekend is part of an attempt to limit the destruction of violent conflict generally in this world, this conference is a sort of zone of peace.

Without allowing the concept to entirely lose its coherence, let us note variables by which Zones of Peace differ from one another. In addition to the variety evident in Table 1, many of the peace zones listed there may be created in a variety of forms by a variety of actors. For example, local peace constituencies may declare a neighborhood or town to be a nuclear weapons free zone, and state governments may declare entire states free of nuclear weapons.

Basic variables distinguishing Zones of Peace are shown in Table 2. These variables emerge from the key concepts in the working definition and from an examination of past, present and future imaginable Zones of Peace.

Table 2. Basic Variables Distinguishing Zones of Peace

Creation	Initiators, supporters Purposes Context
Nature	Rules Shape <u>Monitoring, enforcement</u>
Dynamics	Permanence Expansion Contraction Collapse Institutionalization Adaptability
Effects	

Examining each of these variables in turn shows an extensive variety of Zones of Peace. The variables may be seen as related primarily to the creation, nature, dynamics, and effects or impact of the ZoP, as reflected by the four groups of variables in the table. Through comparing various ZoPs at the conference, we may find suggestions that certain contexts and ZoP natures lend themselves more towards adaptability and effects in the direction of certain purposes. The impact and effects of the zone are dependent on all of these basic variables and also on other circumstances which may become clear during the conference.

6. Coherence of the Zone of Peace Concept

Although we have just dwelt on the variety encompassed by the Zone of Peace concept, there are core common traits of Zones of Peace which lend the concept some degree of coherence, and perhaps hold promise for some interesting findings through our discussions. While Zones of Peace differ in the ways in which they institutionalize limits to violent conflict, they all do institutionalize some such limits. Furthermore, the variety of zones of peace may reflect a variety of forms each appropriate to particular contexts and conflict roles.

Recall the working definition of Zone of Peace: an attempt to, establish norms which limit the destructive effects of violent conflict within a particular area, or during a particular time period, or with regard to a particular category of people.

It should not be surprising that different actors in different contexts pursue different limits on the destructive effects of violent conflict through different norms it differently shaped zones. In ballet, differently shaped toes on differently shaped feet must work in different ways to point a foot, and the resulting point is different for each unique foot. As dancers can learn from each other's attempts to strengthen their feet, so we may be able to learn from diverse attempts at shaping peace.

The Zone of Peace concept is useful to the extent that we can learn through using it. If we can learn something about what sorts of shapes, rules, and enforcement is most successful when used by what sorts of actors, towards what sorts of purposes, and in what sorts of contexts, then the concept is useful.

7. Questions to Explore in the Conference

Each of us here come with some degree of direct practical experience with one or more zones of peace- city school zones, humanitarian relief corridors, and nonviolent accompaniment mobile zones - as well as familiarity with related literature. We look forward to learning from this group as we explore the many questions surrounding Zones of Peace. For example, how can conflict limiting mechanisms such as Zones of Peace affect eventual conflict resolution? As we hear about different Zones of Peace, we might consider the basic variables listed in Table 2, the analytical questions outlined above, as well as: the advantages and risks perceived in establishing the zone; the advantages and limitations of outside support for the zone; the impact of the zone on adversaries, the conflict, overall social system, and any outsiders; and "how to" lessons for other Zones of Peace or Conflict Limiting Practices. The "Guidelines for Individual Presentations" which we previously sent presenters may serve as a starting point, and are attached as an appendix.

Appendix

"Guidelines" for Individual Presentations.

1. What - briefly - was the background against which this Zone of Peace [ZoP]/Conflict Limiting Practice [CLP] was established ?
2. What were the objectives and aspirations underlying its establishment; and what were the perceived advantages and risks to those who had agreed to participate in the ZoP ?
3. What was the process by which it was established ?
Insider/outsider initiatives ?
Request by combatants ?
4. Were there any sources of outside support sought/available to those organizing the ZOP/CLP ?
What advantages and limitations did these place on the ZoP/CLP and those within it ?
5. What specific items, personnel, activities, strategies were forbidden within the ZoP and which mandated ?
6. What did the ZoP attempt to prevent/keep out ? How was the boundary drawn, marked and maintained ?
7. Who monitored and maintained the ZoP ? By what means ?
8. Were there any aspirations or proposals to extend the ZoP/CLP [spatially, in time or to cover more people] and were these successfully implemented ? If not, why not ?
9. What problems and obstacles did those managing and maintaining the ZoP encounter, and from what sources ? How were these dealt with, and how successfully ?
10. What [if anything] brought the ZoP/CLP to an end, and why?
11. What impact did the ZoP have on those who lived within it; on the adversaries: the conflict; the overall social system; any outsiders involved ?
12. What general lessons might this suggest for establishing successful ZoPs or employing effective CLPs ?