

Article

Friendship and Positive Peace: Conceptualising Friendship in Politics and International Relations

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Abstract

In recent years, the study of friendship has gained traction in political science. The aim of this article is threefold: (1) to offer an overview of the status of friendship studies and how it relates to the emotional turn in international relations, (2) to present a wide variety of different approaches to studying friendship, and (3) to highlight the contribution that a friendship perspective can make to other fields, such as Peace and Conflict Studies. From Aristotle and Plato onwards, we trace the development of the concept of friendship, and present several theoretical conceptualisations and methodological approaches that can be readily applied when making sense of friendship, both on a personal level between elite actors, and on the international level between states. We end by drawing attention to the merit of the study of friendship specifically for the field of Peace and Conflict Studies, where it helps to address the lacuna of research on positive peace.

Keywords

affect; emotions; friendship; international relations; Johan Galtung; peace and conflict studies; peace research; politics; positive peace; state leaders

Issue

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1. Introduction

The language of friendship is ubiquitous in contemporary politics. In the past decade, historians and political scientists have made great progress in what has traditionally been a neglected field: the study of friendship. In this article, we follow Brent E. Sasley’s definition of affect as ‘general valence feelings toward something’ (2010, p. 689) when speaking of emotional/affective ties, be they between states or persons. Following Graham M. Smith (2011b, p. 25), rather than offering a single definitive conceptualisation of friendship, we consider ‘friendship as a family of related phenomena’, highlighting the affective side of friendship in politics.

The aim of this article is threefold: (1) to offer an overview of the status of friendship studies and how it re-

lates to the emotional turn in international relations (IR), (2) to present a wide variety of different approaches to studying friendship, and (3) to highlight the contribution that a friendship perspective can make to other fields. This is illustrated with the case of positive peace in Peace and Conflict Studies.

In what follows, the arguments are organised in three parts. The next section, Section 2, reviews the concept of friendship in a long historical perspective. It discusses the question of affect and emotions, and offers several pathways to the study of friendship, especially on the interpersonal level between political actors. Section 3 maps the multiple ways in which the IR literature has approached the issue of friendship, a field that has done much to further our understanding of friendship at the international level. Building on these two sections, Sec-

tion 4 explores the overlap between conceptualisations of friendship and positive peace. It argues that studying friendship specifically is a fruitful way to address the lacuna of research on positive peace in Peace and Conflict Studies. The conclusions summarise the main claims made in this article, including the contributions that a friendship approach can make to peace research via the concept of positive peace, and highlight that friendship, with its transformative capacity, has the potential to contribute further to other main areas of IR.

2. Conceptualising Friendship

In this section, the development of the concept of friendship is traced through an affective lens. The red thread is formed by Sasley's (2010, p. 3) definition of affect, which places the positive affect actors have for each other, whether they be states or politicians, at the centre of analysis. What follows is an overview of the concept within political philosophy, starting with the works of Plato and Aristotle, ending with a discussion of the link between contemporary conceptions of friendship and the 'emotional turn' in IR.

In political philosophy, the study of political friendship has been long and rich. The key imprint was left by Aristotle, following on the works of Plato. That friendship took centre stage to Greek political thought is no accident: relations of friendship, *philia*, pervaded Greek society: family members, both immediate and extended, in-laws and other groups of kin and friends were all considered *philia*. To the Greeks, friendship brought with it the reciprocal obligation to help one's friends and to hurt one's enemies (Baltzly & Eliopoulos, 2014, pp. 28–30). From the Greeks onwards, friendship scholars have always been beholden to Aristotle and Plato.

Illustrative of the centrality of friendship in Greek society is the meeting between Diomedes and Glaucus in the Iliad. In Homer's work, the Trojan Glaucus and the Greek Diomedes find themselves on opposing sides and, before joining battle, they both proudly declare their lineages. Upon this, Diomedes hails Glaucus as a friend: their fathers once hosted each other, and that guest-friendship still extends to them to that day. Both resolve to fight away from each other, and to exchange their armour (Homer, 1924, Book 6, pp. 215–230). Guest-friendship, *xenia*, was a formal and ritualised relationship between two members of different communities, in contrast to *philia*, which existed between members of the same community. The above example illustrates the responsibilities that a bond of guest-friendship holds: the Greek *xenia* is a precursor of friendship in the international arena. Both *philia* and *xenia* showcase that Greek concepts of friendship are firmly rooted in practicality.

Drawing upon Greek praxis, Plato and Aristotle offer conceptualisations that simultaneously are different and overlapping. To Plato, befriending someone means falling in love with them, because you glimpse something which is reminiscent of the true Form of Beauty in the

friend. Vlastos (2000, p. 160) summarises it succinctly: 'what we are to love in persons is the 'image' of the Idea in them. We are to love the persons in so far, and only in so far, as they are good and beautiful'. Plato never goes as far as Aristotle in conceptualising friendship: his best-known treatise on friendship, *Lysis*, famously ends with the admission that he has not succeeded in discovering what exactly friendship is, but that in the process of the discovery he has become friends with his students (Plato, 1925, pp. 71, 223).

Nonetheless, authors such as Sheffield (2011) have been able to distil a model of friendship from Plato's works. Following Plato, Sheffield differentiates between three forms of friendship: pleasure-based, honour-based, and virtue-based, each linked to an actor's dominant desire. The pleasure-based and virtue-based friendships are opposites of each other. In a pleasure-based relationship, friends are only interested in deriving pleasure from each other. In contrast, virtue-based friendship is the highest form of friendship. It helps the philosopher to see true Beauty (Sheffield, 2011, pp. 258–259). The honour-based friendship sits in the middle. Friends take oaths, exchange benefits, and recognise something of beauty in the other, but because they are not governed by reason, they occasionally let the dark horse get the better of them. Though they have fallen to their desires, Plato still considers these honour-friends to be on the right path towards eventual enlightenment (Plato, 1914, pp. 255–256, 499–503). Their bond, though, remains inferior to that of the philosopher.

In his *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle (2003, Books VIII and IX) builds upon Plato's concept of friendship. In contrast to Plato, the central value of friendship for Aristotle is affection for the other, wishing the other good 'for that other's sake' (Aristotle, 2003, bk. 9 IV, p. 533; Schwarzenbach, 1996, p. 97). According to Cooper (1977, p. 621), this means 'doing well by someone for his own sake, out of concern for him (and not, or not merely, out of concern for oneself)'. Aristotle, too, discerns between three kinds of friendship. The lowest form is *utility* (or *advantage*) *friendship*, where the friendship is focused upon the concrete mutual benefit offered to each other, and ends when one of the friends no longer delivers the utility they did before. Aristotle rates *pleasure-friendship* slightly higher where the love is not directed towards the other person, but rather towards the specific pleasure that person offers. While in both the other is still loved for the other's sake, the reason for the friendship is tied to one specific element of advantage or pleasure (Cooper, 1980).

The highest form of friendship is *virtue-friendship*. Here, the 'other's whole (or near whole) character is loved' (Schwarzenbach, 1992, p. 253), rather than one particular aspect of it. This friendship is based on a mutual recognition of *good* character: the friends strive towards a common good, and in doing this together they strengthen each other. Although reciprocal, virtue-friendship is not egoistic; it is based upon good character

rather than pleasure. Virtue-friends have an obligation to help each other strive towards the good and to correct each other when they make mistakes. In its reciprocity, virtue-friendship is altruistic. The friends love each other's qualities, not just the advantage or pleasure they find in the other, and the friendship ends when one of them no longer pursues the good, because then they no longer share the same purpose of spreading goodness (Aristotle, 2003, VIII.iii., pp. 1–9; Stern-Gillet, 1995, pp. 49–50).

By and large, the rich philosophical tradition that followed stayed within the lines that Aristotle drew. For instance, Michel de Montaigne (1627) championed the altruism of the virtue-friendship, which in its extremity meant self-sacrifice, while Francis Bacon (1627) idealised the economic benefits of the utility-friendship. Søren Kierkegaard (2013) focused on friendship's reciprocity as an inherently egoistic bond: you only love because you want to be loved in return. C. S. Lewis (1960) argued that there is a clear spiritual side to a powerful bond between two people, and that friends do not only raise each other up towards goodness, but they can also bring each other down in evilness.

For Carl Schmitt (2007a, pp. 29–30) the distinction between friend and enemy brings politics into existence. By studying the Spanish Civil War, Schmitt concluded that there were two kinds of friendship: utilitarian and existential. Spanish rebels formed utilitarian bonds with international supporters that sent them supplies, while at the same time they enjoyed an existential bond with fellow fighters (2007b, pp. 77–78). Schmitt's theories have recently been brought back into IR, where they have proven insightful for the study of the relations between states (Slomp, 2007, 2009; Smith, 2011a, 2011b). Note, too, how very reminiscent of Aristotle's first demarcation Schmitt's definitions are.

Following from the philosophers, it becomes possible to distinguish between two very diverse bonds: a *quid pro quo* business-like partnership, and something very different, friendship (Van Hoef, 2014, pp. 66–67). Apart from affect, several key elements of friendship come to the fore in the analysis above. These include equality, which, according to Kirby (2017), means no individual is under the natural authority of another. There also exists something very different from a partnership's *quid pro qui* reciprocity: an altruistic reciprocity. This quality of friendship means that friends act for the sake of the friendship itself, rather than some reward that might come in return. Friends also impose moral obligations upon each other. The meeting of these moral obligations strengthens a relationship, while failure to meet them might mark the beginning of the end. Finally, in the vein of Aristotle's virtue-friendship, political friendships are concerned with a project: a shared vision (Van Hoef, 2018a, p. 55). This element of shared world-building is also observed in friendship between states in IR:

Because friends are embedded in a larger social environment—an international society—their world-

building efforts not only create an exclusionary space that seals friends from criticism and creates bias, but also promote an idea of international order that affects others. (Berenskoetter, 2014, p. 67)

Approaching friendship through the concept of affect allows it to be studied at an intermediate level, taking the power of elite actors as reflective active agents into account (Vogler, 2016, p. 77). Affect and emotions are not new in IR, but scholars have tended to rely on them implicitly rather than explicitly (Clément & Sangar, 2018, p. 4), and most probably without realising that they were doing so. Friendship scholars within IR, in contrast, have been more receptive to the idea that affect plays a crucial role both between individuals and between states (Eznack, 2011, p. 241; Eznack & Koschut, 2014). It is the affective element of friendship that makes it such a powerful bond (Van Hoef, 2018b). This can be readily observed both on an individual and a state level. Thus, while 'state intentions are individual intentions since it is individuals who create them' (Byman & Pollack, 2001, p. 114; Holmes, 2018, p. 28), studying friendship through affect also allows one to study friendship between states because 'affect is not a property of an individual but a capacity of a body that brings it into some specific social relation, such as a nation or political movement' (Ross, 2006, p. 212).

Traditionally, as far as IR scholars have relied (implicitly) on emotions, it has mostly been on negative emotions (Sasley, 2011, p. 456). Through approaching friendship as an affective emotional bond between actors, friendship offers a more sophisticated alternative to traditional realist notions of self-interest (Berenskoetter & Van Hoef, 2017). Emotions are one of the most revealing aspects of friendship and they are a powerful motor behind political change (Brader, 2005; Huddy & Gunthorsdottir, 2000). They are also a possible danger to political relationships: actors that are attached to each other can make decisions that run counter to the interests of their own states (Wheeler, 2018). States can also employ emotions as a diplomatic strategy to achieve concrete results (Hall, 2015), which can even include political self-sacrifice (Fierke, 2014). Sasley (2010, p. 693) has demonstrated that 'affective attachments...order priorities for leaders'. The challenge of studying emotions lies in the fact that scholars use the concepts of affect, emotions, and feeling, interchangeably and do not agree on the conceptualisations of these definitions.

Following Sasley, a study of friendship concentrates on the positive affect political actors hold for each other, and the extent to which this positive valence influences their policies. This allows us to include several further aspects when studying emotions, which is in line with Jonathan Mercer (2014, p. 516), who proposed to treat emotions and feelings as synonymous, as well as Hutchinson and Bleiker (2014, p. 502), who pointed out that these 'can be seen as intrinsically linked, for affective states are subconscious factors that can frame and influ-

ence our more conscious emotional evaluations of the social world'. As Crawford (2000, p. 156) has argued, research on affect 'may lead to a fundamental reconceptualisation of agents and agency in world politics' because 'humans make decisions that are always both classically self-interested and emotional'.

In sum, the development within political philosophy of the concept of friendship can be seen through an affective lens. The wide variety of contemporary conceptions of friendship, and the role these give to affect, are ultimately closely related and indebted to the works of Plato and Aristotle. Affect in friendship aptly allows us to link political philosophy with the 'emotional turn' in IR, and review the role that affect plays in the latter discipline.

3. Friendship in IR

This section sets out to trace the directions in which the IR literature on international friendship has developed. This literature has only become substantive in relatively recent years, given that for decades the term 'friendship' in international politics was either dismissed by IR specialists as utopian, disregarded because it was seen as 'cheap talk', or used lightly as synonymous with 'good relations'.

Indeed, in contrast to political theory's long tradition of thinking about and studying friendship, in the field of IR there has been reluctance to engage with questions of friendship in the international system. It is not that the term 'friendship' has been absent from IR studies, discourse, and diplomacy. However, for the most part it has been used rather loosely in empirical work to refer to non-confrontational or harmonious interstate relations without receiving proper IR theoretical attention¹.

This can be explained by the dominance of realist and neorealist theory, and its unquestioned assumption of systemic anarchy. Under the condition of anarchy, states—the most important actors in the international system—cannot rely upon other states for their own security and survival. Instead, they should accumulate power for defensive and deterrence purposes (Waltz, 1979). The security dilemma which ensues from all states following this behaviour rules out the emergence of trust and ultimately friendship. This particular understanding of the nature of the international system, though not unchallenged, prevailed throughout the cold war (and arguably beyond), with the consequence that the images and concept of 'enemy' made up a substantial part of the IR literature, whereas the images and concept of 'friend' remained undertheorised (Wendt, 1999, p. 298).

There is, though, little reason for this. Over the centuries 'the terminology of "friendship" has been applied to the various treaties and contracts on peace, trade, military assistance and colonisation' (Devere & Smith, 2010, p. 347), from the Greeks and the Romans, who used

treaties of *philia* or *amicitia*, to the original populations in the South Pacific before the arrival of the Europeans, to the rulers of medieval Europe.

In 2007, Felix Berenskoetter (2007, p. 642) called for the inclusion of "'friendship" into the reading of international relations, a conception which has so far remained outside the analytical focus of IR theorists'. Since then, the number of studies specifically dealing with friendship in IR has grown to form a modest but decent body of literature.

To many authors contributing to this literature, Arnold Wolfers' classic essay 'Amity and Enmity among Nations' published in his 1962 *Discord and Collaboration: Essays on International Politics* has proven an inspiring intellectual trigger. Wolfers (1962, pp. 25–35) explains that while some states prefer 'to go it alone', other states decide to 'go it with others' by seeking cooperation and integration. Motivations for 'going it with others' are two-fold. In some cases, it is the outcome of an arrangement based on mutual assistance against an external threat ('outward-looking friendship'). Yet in other cases, cooperation is the result of a desire to improve relationships with others ('inward-directed friendship'). Despite introducing the language of friendship, Wolfers (1962, p. 27) warns that outward-looking cooperation—'predicated on the continuance of the threat'—is much stronger an incentive.

In more recent years, an understanding of friendship 'as a site and tool for analysis both within the state (as a means to identify the connective tissue between communities, citizens and the nation) and between states (in the realm of international politics)' (Devere & Smith, 2010, p. 347) emerged. Since then, international friendship has increasingly become the focus of more rigorous and systematic research. The remainder of this section concentrates on the interstate dimension of friendship, whereas the next section explores the potential of incorporating friendship into the study of emotions in peacemaking in the context of positive peace².

The field of international friendship has been advanced through several debates at national and international conference panels, which have often resulted in collective research projects and outputs, such as King and Smith (2007), Oelsner and Vion (2011), and Koschut and Oelsner (2014). In addition to the articles and chapters included in these collections, individual journal articles and book chapters have also added to the literature (among them, see Berenskoetter, 2007; Berenskoetter & Giegerich, 2010; Devere & Smith, 2009b, 2010; Digeser, 2009a, 2013; Eznack, 2011; Keller, 2009; Kupchan, 2010; Roshchin, 2006, 2008), and in 2016, in *Friendship Reconsidered: What it Means and How It Matters in Politics*, P. E. Digeser (2016) devotes the entire third part of her book to international friendship.

¹ See, for instance, Chambers (2005), Dobson (1995), Druks (2001), Farinella (1997), Fung and Mackerras (1985), Haigh et al. (1985), Jha (1994), Joo (2001), Kaim (2003), Krammer (1974), Kupchan (2010), Guchang (2006), Mahmud (2001, 2007), Meier (1970), Mukerjee (1975), Rouwhorst (1990), Wolfers (1962), Woodward (1993), Zahniser (1975).

² We would like to thank one of the reviewers for suggesting the connection of emotions and peacemaking with friendship.

A review of the research on friendship between states shows the parallel development of three clusters³. Firstly, there has been a preoccupation with epistemological and ontological issues. Scholars working in this area have demonstrated the existence of an epistemological and ontological space for friendship in international politics as well as IR theory ‘by providing a rationale for why it exists, what its characteristics are, and how it structures international politics’ (Berenskoetter, 2007, p. 648; see also Digeser, 2009a, 2009b; Lu, 2009; Schwarzenbach, 2011; Smith, 2011b).

Secondly, documentary and archival research has looked into how the term ‘friendship’ has been employed in official international documents, such as international peace treaties, military pacts, and agreements of trade and colonisation, as well as international and diplomatic events such as peace and friendship youth festivals held by the USSR. Using discourse analysis, research has revealed the rhetorical and largely instrumental role of friendship in international politics across different regions, cultures and historical periods (Devere & Smith, 2010; Devere et al., 2011; Roshchin, 2006, 2011).

Finally, a third strand within the literature has focused on international friendship as an analytical category of international political practice. Case studies have covered various levels of analysis, ranging from the interpersonal to the transnational and the interstate level. In terms of the interpersonal level, Constantin (2011) and Patsias and Deschenes (2011) have studied the political impact of personal relationships between leaders and networks, while Van Hoef (2018a, 2018b) focuses on friendship between state leaders, present at the intermediary level of IR. In terms of cooperation and trust building at the levels of intergovernmental relations and relations between civil societies, Oelsner and Vion (2011, p. 136) have argued that their institutionalisation through an accumulation of friendship speech acts and institutional facts represents ‘a process of friendship,’ which can be linked to notions of deep-rooted peace (Oelsner, 2007; Vion, 2007).

Bearing in mind the multiple areas of enquiry that have emerged, it is useful to view international friendship not as an essential concept with a defined content, but rather as ‘a group of features that friendship can be said to share in a plural world’ (Smith, 2011b, p. 19). Thus, following Wittgenstein (1963), we can understand international friendship as bearing a ‘family resemblance’ with all other forms of friendship. This is the approach taken by Smith (2011b), Digeser (2013), and Oelsner and Koschut (2014). Choosing this path allows for approaching international friendship as an ongoing site of phenomena which can take place at multiple levels—be it within, between, and beyond states (Smith, 2011b, p. 10).

This would imply shelving the pursuit of a *definitional* account of friendship. Instead of posing the question ‘what *is* friendship?’, the issue can be approached

from a *functional* perspective, thus changing the question to ‘what does friendship *do*?’. In a functional approach, friendship involves a particular set of connections, relations, and affects. As Smith (2014, p. 47) argues, in IR, groups and hierarchies such as states and nations ‘are not simply animated by an impersonal power or mechanical laws. They are brought to life by the feeling of mutual identification, reciprocation, concern, and togetherness of their members.’ In this reading, friendship creates the nation and the state, thus rendering them a deeper and more generalised ontology in IR, as they become particular instances of friendship.

For Evgeny Roshchin (2007), friendship and the use of the friendship language in international politics contribute to maintaining international order. He demonstrates that this is done through four main mechanisms: (1) the invocation of friendship during political crises or periods of transformation of the social order, (2) the constitution of sovereignty through friendship treaties, (3) the contractual nature of the treaties, and (4) the maintenance of state security.

Felix Berenskoetter (2007, 2014) also proposes a functional approach to friendship. He argues that international friendship provides friends with ontological security in a context in which states seek to control anxiety produced by anarchy and the security dilemma. In turn, this empowers states by shaping and reinforcing their identities, and allowing them to engage in a joint process of ‘world-building’ that can affect the two states involved, but can affect other states outside the friendship too.

Yet another approach is to ask: ‘*how* is friendship enacted?’. In this instance, we are less concerned with what friendship *is* or what it is *for*. Instead, friendship can be interpreted as a ‘family of practices’ (Digeser, 2013), where the focus is on the *how*, rather than the *what* or the *why* friends do certain things. Digeser calls this the adverbial character of practices. Because there is no single and substantive definition of friendship, and consequently no preferred level at which friendship occurs, there is also no single set of adverbial features to perform or practise friendship.

To view international friendship as a practice, as social action guided by the logic of practicality (Pouliot, 2008), is not the same as arguing that friendship involves automatic or irrational action. It does imply, though, that its enactments are less meditated. For instance, calling a newly built bridge that crosses over a river separating two states ‘Friendship Bridge’ is not necessarily a sign of international friendship. Actually, as with friendship treaties, this is more likely to be an indication of the absence of friendship (see Devere, 2014; Devere et al., 2011; Roshchin, 2006, 2008, 2011, 2014). Instead, states go on reproducing their friendship in *the way* they do their bilateral business; a way that appears to be less of a reflected-upon choice and more as natural, intuitive, and spontaneous interaction.

³ The next few paragraphs build on Oelsner and Koschut (2014).

The logic of practicality highlights that friendships are produced and reproduced almost without the actors taking full notice of it, given that they enact the practice through their bilateral interaction. This will take place not only at the level of heads of governments, but can occur throughout all levels of bureaucracy and civil society (for illustrations, see Oelsner & Vion, 2011).

Finally, authors such as Oelsner and Koschut (2014) have differentiated between strategic and normative international friendship, which somewhat resembles Wolfers' inward-directed and outward-looking cooperation. For these authors, normative international friendship has more transformative capacity, given that it represents a thicker or denser type of relations among actors 'who share high levels of ideational and emotional bonds that permit mutual identification and trust' (Oelsner & Koschut, 2014, p. 14). As such, international friendship can become a 'catalyst for change in international politics by transforming the nature of interstate relations' (Koschut & Oelsner, 2014, p. 201).

This brief overview has highlighted the multiple dimensions that research on friendship in IR has engaged in. Scholars have explored it from descriptive, normative, and analytical angles. They have studied it from theoretical and empirical perspectives. They have relied on historical evidence as well as on contemporary cases. They have investigated it by using definitional, functional and practical approaches. All these different ways of studying international friendship should not be seen in exclusive terms, but rather as a larger conversation that seeks to draw attention to the presence, importance, and constitutive capacity of friendship in international politics.

4. Friendship as Positive Peace

Man surrounds himself with a sphere of amity and mutual aid. (Galtung, 1964, p. 1)

The growing presence of friendship in the IR literature has not been echoed by Peace Research. Yet judging by recent developments within Peace Research, which place emphasis on the role of emotions in peacemaking (Brewer, 2011) and in 'cultures of peace' (De Rivera & Páez, 2007), the insights from the debate on friendship within IR could enrich the debate, especially in what concerns Galtung's notion of positive peace. In turn, this can further contribute to the IR debate, which focus on negative peace has tended to obstruct any thinking on the concept of positive peace⁴. In this section, we make the case that friendship is a form of positive peace, and that studying friendship in the international arena therefore addresses the lacuna of research on positive peace.

In the inaugural issue of the *Journal of Peace Research* (JPR) editor and founder Johan Galtung (1964, p. 2) defined the two central concepts of Peace Research, negative peace and positive peace, as 'the absence of violence, absence of war' and 'the integration of

human society' respectively. Though not unchallenged (Evangelista, 2005, pp. 2–3; Gleditsch, Nordkvelle, & Strand, 2014, pp. 149–150), these definitions have remained central to Peace and Conflict Studies since its foundation, as Gleditsch et al. (2014) show in their analysis of 50 years of the JPR.

The attention they have received, nonetheless, has been unbalanced. Already in 1981, when reviewing the first 17 volumes of the JPR, Håkan Wiberg (1981, p. 113) noted that only one out of approximately 400 articles had been devoted to positive peace. In their 2014 quantitative analysis of 50 years of the JPR, Gleditsch et al. (2014, p. 152) found that articles that address positive peace do so only to the extent that they 'now contribute to research on how to overcome negative peace'. This leads to the sobering conclusion that '[a]lthough there have been changes over time in the use of terms such as "peace", "war", "violence", and "conflict", there was no "golden age" of peace research which focused more clearly on peace' (Gleditsch et al., 2014, p. 155).

This is perhaps unsurprising, because positive peace has proven a particularly hard subject to grapple with. Disagreement over the definition of positive peace in the early years of the JPR led Galtung (1969) to introduce the idea of differentiating between personal and structural violence, equating the absence of personal violence with negative peace, and the absence of structural violence with positive peace.

For Gleditsch et al. (2014, p. 155), though, Galtung's redefinition of positive peace as the reversal of structural violence had not stood the test of time, and disappeared from the JPR after a decade. Since then, negative peace has become the central focus of the JPR and Peace and Conflict Studies in general. Early attempts by Galtung and Wiberg (Galtung, 1969; Gleditsch et al., 2014; Wiberg, 1981) to offer an agenda for studying positive peace have been unsuccessful.

Yet for a concept that has proven elusive, Galtung has offered several concrete indications as to what positive peace should entail. In fact, his early conceptualisation of positive peace comes very close to the definition of friendship discussed in the previous section, and therefore re-focusing more explicitly on emotions and friendship can offer a promising avenue to approach positive peace.

Galtung (1964, p. 1) points out that humans are social beings 'capable of empathy and solidarity', living in a group that values 'a norm of reciprocity' and where cooperation is a 'dominant mode of interaction'. From this, human integration naturally follows, because humans surround themselves 'with a sphere of amity and mutual aid'. Note here the overlap with the importance of the emotion of hope in peacemaking, highlighted by Brewer (2011). Hope, both in the sense of 'the *act of imagining* a future desirable state' and of 'the *emotion* aroused by the end state that is being envisioned' (Brewer, 2011, p. 304), is more likely to result from, and conduce to a positive emotional climate (De Rivera & Páez, 2007). The

⁴ We thank the reviewers' comments highlighting this.

development of such positive emotional climate can be substantiated by the diffusion of friendship as a social practice made up of strong gestures, symbolic political acts, repetitive practices, and other speech acts and institutional facts.

Positive peace, Galtung (1964, p. 3) emphasises repeatedly, concerns human integration, and can cover an extensive list of subjects, ranging from ‘functional cooperation between groups or nations through technical and cultural cooperation or trade policies, to institutional fusion with superordinate bureaucracies, police forces, courts and governments till the world state is reached’. Galtung’s primordial vision of positive peace closely echoes the historical process of Franco-German cooperation in the twentieth century (cf. Vion, 2014). The social practices of friendship emanating from and within these areas of cooperation can help flesh out a normative, substantive concept of positive peace and peaceful culture.

5. Conclusions

This article set out to give an overview of different theoretical and methodological approaches to studying friendship in political philosophy and political science, in particular zooming into how friendship scholars currently make sense of friendship, both between individual political actors and between nations.

Drawing upon political philosophy through Sasley’s affective lens, we pinpointed five characteristics of friendship: (1) affect (2) a shared project (3) altruistic reciprocity (4) moral obligations and (5) equality. By doing this, friendship becomes less elusive. Affect makes friendship observable both on an individual and on a state level, and allows friendship in IR to be studied at an intermediate level: between elite political actors such as state leaders. Nonetheless, while in political philosophy there has been an effort to define and give substantive content to friendship, many IR approaches to friendship tend to understand it as a family of concepts and a family of practices, where they see ‘family resemblances’.

Current IR research approaches the issue of friendship from multiple dimensions (descriptive, normative, and analytical). Here, following Graham M. Smith (2011b, p. 25), we propose to consider ‘friendship as a family of related phenomena’, which means that all the different ways of studying international friendship should be considered as complementing—rather than competing with—each other. Doing so leaves more space to see that friendship as a process might be ‘a catalyst of change in its own right’ (Koschut & Oelsner, 2014, p. 202), transforming the quality of regional and national relations.

Some authors within Peace and Conflict have started to explore the potential impact of positive emotions on peacemaking. A more in-depth engagement with the study of friendship would address the lacuna left in positive peace research. Connecting positive peace with notions of positive emotions informed by hope and

friendship allows for fleshing out an otherwise normative concept. Friendship as social practice ‘normalises’ behaviour, attitudes and gestures and helps to construct a positive culture of positive peace.

Ultimately, this article has sought to offer a deeper understanding of the history of the concept of friendship, of the many possible methodological and theoretical approaches to studying friendship, and finally, to several fruitful avenues of future research. In particular, we propose that the under-explored concept of positive peace can benefit from using and further developing a practice approach to friendship.

While this task could inform the next positive peace research agenda, the potential is still larger, multidimensional, and crosses several levels. As much as power and interest have been brought into every area of IR research, to keep leaving friendship out of its main research agenda can only be IR’s own loss.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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