



10 Peace, Peacebuilding, Peacemaking

The beauty of peace is in trying to find solutions together.

Dekha Ibrahim Abdi

Can peace be defined? In debates about peace definitions, the distinction between negative and positive peace put forward by Johan Galtung has gained broad acceptance. Negative peace describes peace as the absence of war or direct physical violence. A positive notion of peace also includes the increase in social justice and the creation of a culture of peace among people within and across societies. A frequent criticism of positive peace is that it lacks conceptual clarity. Nonetheless, most scholars agree that peace is a complex, long-term and multi-layered process. In such a process, it is possible to identify steps towards peace and meas-

ure the decrease of violence and increase of justice. That this is multi-layered means that peace is not only a matter for diplomats but is an ongoing task for stakeholders at all levels of society.

Working for peace requires at least three fundamental steps: First, a vision of peace must be defined. Peace on an individual level obviously differs from international peace; researchers, politicians and artists all use the term “peace” in different ways, and interpretations vary according to culture. In some societies the word “peace” might even cause resentment due to experiences of oppression inflicted in the name of peace. Peace definitions are therefore context-specific. Developing common peace visions is an important aspect of peace work.

Second, it is crucial to specify the conditions for peace in or between societies, with a view to establishing these conditions. In his analysis of the historical emergence of peace within western societies, Dieter Senghaas identified six crucial conditions: power monopoly, rule of law, interdependence and affect control, democratic participation, social justice and a constructive culture of conflict (“civilisatory hexagon”, → peace education

Peacemaking usually refers to diplomatic efforts to end violence between conflict parties and to achieve a peace agreement. International or national peace agreements may contain demobilisation commitments or regulations on the future status of conflict parties. As stated in the United Nations Charter, peacemaking strategies range from negotiation, mediation and conciliation, to arbitration and judicial settlement. Sometimes economic sanctions or even military interventions to end the use of force in a conflict are considered as part of peacemaking. Civil society organisations involved in peacemaking mostly rely on non-violent strategies such as negotiation and mediation.

– principles). It must be carefully assessed whether or to what extent these conditions could be useful for transformation processes in non-western societies. Peace also tends to be fragile. Even in western societies, there is no guarantee that there will never be any recourse to war. Peace therefore needs ongoing attention and support.

Third, comparing the current realities in a given society with the peace vision is essential to find out what is lacking. A wide range of strategies and methods are used to make, keep or build peace on different actor levels.

According to John Paul Lederach, these actors can be grouped into three tracks. The top leadership comprises military, political and religious leaders with high visibility (Track 1). Track 2 involves middle-range leaders such as academics, intellectuals or religious figures. Their close links to government officials allow them to influence political decisions. With their reputation, they are also respected on the grass-roots level. Track 3 includes local community or indigenous leaders, who are most familiar with the effects of violent conflicts on the population at large.

The term *peacekeeping* in the traditional sense describes the deployment of armed forces to intervene as a buffer zone between adversaries, to enforce a ceasefire agreement and monitor peace processes in post-war societies. Most common are the peacekeeping operations undertaken by the United Nations. The activities mandated under the peacekeeping label have constantly been enlarged and nowadays also contain various post-war peacebuilding measures. Some civil society organisations practise unarmed “civilian peacekeeping” as a counterpart to military peacekeeping by monitoring ceasefire agreements or providing protective accompaniment.

The population itself is sometimes considered as an actor on a fourth level. Peace efforts can be undertaken by actors on all levels and across several tracks.

Peacebuilding

In *An Agenda for Peace* by former UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali (1992), peacebuilding is described as a major instrument for securing peace in post-war situations. More generally, as a preventive measure, it can be applied in all stages of conflict and also in relatively peaceful societies. Peacebuilding covers all activities aimed at promoting peace and overcoming violence in a society. Although most activities on Track 2 and 3 are carried out by civil society actors, the establishment of links to Track 1 is considered essential for sustainable transformation of societies. While external agents can facilitate and support peacebuilding, ultimately it must be driven by internal actors, often called agents of peaceful change. It cannot be imposed from the outside. Some peacebuilding work done by international or western organisations is criticised for being too bureaucratic, short-termist, and financially dependent on governmental → donors and therefore accountable to them but not to the people on the ground. It thus seems to reinforce the status quo instead of calling for a deep transformation of structural injustices; this is highlighted, for example, by the discussions in *Berghof Handbook Dialogue Series No. 7*. Transformative peacebuilding thus needs to address social justice issues and should respect the principles of partnership, multi-partiality and inclusiveness. Peacebuilding is based on the conviction that violent conflicts do not automatically end with the signing of a peace accord or the deployment of peacekeeping forces. It is not a rapid response tool but a long-term process of ongoing work in the following three dimensions:

Altering structural contradictions is widely regarded as essential for lasting peace. Important elements are state-building and democratisation measures, the reform of structures that reproduce

Peacebuilding



Source: Berghof Foundation

the conflict (e. g. the education system), economic and sustainable development, social justice and human rights, empowerment of civil society and constructive journalism.

Improving relations between the conflict parties is an integral part of peacebuilding to reduce the effects of war-related hostilities and disrupted communication between the conflict parties. Programmes of reconciliation, trust-building and dealing with the past aim to transform damaged relationships (→ transitional justice). They deal with the non-material effects of violent conflict.

Changing individual attitudes and behaviour is the third dimension of peacebuilding. It means strengthening individual peace

capacities, breaking stereotypes, empowering formerly disadvantaged groups, and healing trauma and psychological wounds of war. One frequently used measure for strengthening individual peace capacities is training people in non-violent action and conflict resolution. Many peacebuilding measures seek to have a greater impact by combining strategies which encompass all three dimensions (e. g. bringing former conflict parties together to work on improving their economic situation and thus changing individual attitudes).

However, peacebuilding actors and organisations are still struggling to make their work more effective so that it truly “adds up” to peace on the societal level (the “Peace Writ Large” described by Mary Anderson and her colleagues). Given the wide variety of peacebuilding approaches, it is therefore important to identify, cluster and publish best-practice examples to create learning opportunities for all present and future peacebuilders.

References and Further Reading

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