

PEACE AND SECURITY

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Summary

This article addresses the topics of peace and security in the context of human development and explores their various meanings and manifestations at the national and international levels. First, it defines the concept of peace, suggesting that peace is not simply the absence of violence (negative peace) but includes the structural conditions that create positive peace in a society. Next, the article examines the concept of security from various perspectives, namely state-focused definitions of security and interactive or human-focused definitions, and then briefly addresses peace and security at a domestic level before moving to the linkages between international development assistance and security. Lastly, the article proposes peacebuilding as a way of linking peace, security, development and human rights in order to create a more peaceful world.

1. Introduction

The twentieth century was the most destructive in the history of humankind. Humans invented the awesome destructive power of the nuclear bomb, witnessed and implemented technological changes in the mechanisms of warfare, killed each other in record numbers, and destroyed increasing portions of our natural environment. Toward the end of the century, approximately 90 per cent of casualties in war were civilians, as opposed to just 10 per cent at the beginning of the twentieth century. Although the century was a violent one, technological advances brought humans closer together in previously unimaginable ways. One has only to look to the increase in air travel or the contact of people from all corners of the world over the Internet for proof of this phenomenon. In addition, human development has progressed, with advances in medical treatments and vaccinations for disease, progress in literacy campaigns, and the development of international mechanisms that monitor and protect human rights.

Nevertheless, the quality of life for many humans remains dismal. Poverty, environmental degradation, and disease inhibit the ability of many around the world to take advantage of the opportunities present for the minority of privileged people around the globe. Conflict, often violent, further hampers individuals' attempts to learn, interact, raise families, or participate in a local, regional, or global economy. Although conflict is a natural part of life, it can either act as a positive motivator for social change, or a destructive force that disrupts or even shreds the social fabric of a society. The destructive power of violence and conflict has afflicted countries such as Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, Colombia, Korea, the Balkans, and elsewhere during the latter part of the twentieth century. Consequently, violent conflict is both a public health and a security challenge. It incurs enormous costs and touches all members of a society in terms of loss of life, physical injuries, disabilities, mental or emotional trauma, displacement, and social and economic dysfunction. The human resource implications and consequences of violence are numerous and interrelated, and remain an impediment to sustainable development in many regions. Furthermore, peace and security will remain elusive for those living in contexts of violence or conflict between groups.

The phrase “peace and security” is an oft-used one in common parlance. It implies a synergy, a complementary state that is not present when violence and conflict pervade a society or country. Both peace and security are means to other ends, and means in themselves. This article explores the concepts of peace and security in the context of human development and their various meanings and manifestations at the national and international levels.

2. Peace

As an academic discipline, Peace Studies has existed for several decades but only gained relative prominence in the past ten or 15 years. Peace Studies has various focus areas, including alternative world orders, peace education, and (nuclear) disarmament, and emphasizes peace as a means and an end. The field itself is interdisciplinary, meaning it draws upon insights from a variety of traditional academic disciplines for some of its insights, research, and theory. Accordingly, the pioneers in this field were and are scholars trained in economics, sociology, psychology, and political science. These pioneers include Kenneth Boulding, Elise Boulding, Adam Curle, Johan Galtung, Betty Reardon, Peter Wallenstein, and activists like Martin Luther King Jr., Mohandas Gandhi, as well as others. In the last 25 years, numerous graduate and undergraduate academic programs throughout the world have begun to offer degrees in peace studies, governments have funded independent institutes dedicated to peace research (e.g., the United States Institute of Peace), and private institutes conduct research on peace issues and publish academic journals addressing these issues. For example, the Norwegian Peace Research Institute in Oslo (PRIO) publishes *Security Dialogue*, and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) publishes an authoritative annual update on (dis)armament, defense, and security issues. Consequently, over time, Peace Studies has become a separate field of theory and research in itself.

The term “peace” is often equated with harmony and lack of conflict or violence. In common usage, it is generally regarded as a state toward which humans should strive. Despite an assumed shared understanding of the word, peace usually embraces different

connotations depending upon the context in which it is used and the person using the term. In order to clarify some of this conceptual confusion, Johan Galtung, a prominent peace researcher, identified a distinction between positive peace and negative peace, where negative peace means simply an absence of war or direct physical violence. Positive peace is necessarily more complicated. If negative peace is a peace defined by the absence of (direct) violence, positive peace denotes the presence of conditions for political equality and social and economic justice. Positive peace acknowledges and challenges the structural conditions in society that inhibit the ability of individuals or groups to achieve their potential. Thus, Galtung's concept of positive peace highlights a more holistic analysis of peace.

In addition, Galtung expanded the definition of violence. He emphasized that violence is not only direct, physical and visible, but also structural or cultural and therefore hidden. Structural and cultural violence refer to the conditions that fuel or cause inequality and injustice in a community, a society, or a country. This expanded definition of violence thereby enlarges the concept of peace. To achieve negative peace is to have warring parties sign a cease-fire agreement, or to have peacekeepers figuratively stand between conflicting parties in order to prevent further violence, as United Nations peacekeepers have done on the island of Cyprus for many years. In order to achieve a state of positive peace, social injustices (such as poverty) must be eliminated. This is obviously much more difficult to achieve. Galtung's contributions to the field of Peace Studies are numerous and seminal. In part due to his various writings, researchers, theorists, and policy makers have gained an awareness of the need to analyze direct and visible violence and conditions as well the connections between violence and the distribution of resources, access to opportunity, or economic and social development.

Because the definitions of peace vary, the paths to achieve peace are numerous and diverse. Military means of achieving peace are legitimate and achievable in a negative peace paradigm, but positive peace enthusiasts would argue that it is only achievable via nonviolent means. Although scholars and practitioners differ on the means to achieve peace, peace as an end state is generally accepted and embraced. However, differing definitions mean that peace continues to be both a utopian ideal and a minimalist state of existence in which violence or war cease to plague a society and the world. In spite of this definitional difference, peace as a utopian idea is a state toward which humans continue to aspire.

3. Security

The word "security" appears in daily conversations, in our newspaper stories about events at home and around the world, and in official discourse about national interests and priorities. Within academia, "national security," "world security," "international security," and other terms pervade the writings of scholars in the fields of international relations, political science, conflict resolution, and other disciplines. In a manner reminiscent of the broadening of the term peace to encompass the structural and cultural conditions that create peace, more recent understandings of security have similarly expanded beyond a military-focused concept.

Despite its multiple meanings, security is a central concept in a variety of academic and policy literatures. The reference point for security may range from individuals to states, but the majority of the literature focuses on the State and relegates individual security under that of State security. This military-dominated concept of security falls within a classical understanding of the term. However, more recent scholarship acknowledges the multiple spheres (e.g., military, political, economic) of security studies.

In contrast to much of the existing literature that focuses upon the macro dimensions of security, the *Oxford Dictionary* contains five definitions of security, ranging from “a secure [meaning “untroubled by danger or fear”] condition or feeling” to “the safety of a State, company, etc., against espionage, theft, or other danger” to economic notions of providing security. These multiple definitions and the everyday usage of the word indicate that security also refers to various levels of systems and analysis, from an individual to an institutional (i.e., State, organization), to an international level. An earlier section of this volume entitled “*Global Interdependence and Biosocial Systems*” also refers to multiple levels and the interdependence that exists between these levels. As a consequence of these competing elements, no generally accepted consensus about the meaning of the term “security” exists, much like the term peace.

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Biographical Sketch

Larissa Fast is presently an Assistant Professor in Peace and Conflict Studies at Conrad Grebel University College, affiliated with the University of Waterloo, and a program associate at Project Ploughshares, both in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. She received her PhD in Conflict Analysis and Resolution from the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University in Fairfax, VA (August 2002). Her dissertation focused on micro- and macro-level factors contributing to non-governmental organization insecurity in three countries. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in History from Bethel College (Kansas) in 1992. After spending several years working with political refugees in Montréal, Québec, she earned her Master of Arts degree in International Peace Studies from the University of Notre Dame in 1995. Since that time, she has worked for a number of international development agencies as a consultant and project manager. Her forthcoming and recent publications include a book chapter on security for peacebuilders in *A Handbook of International Peacebuilding*, (Jossey-Bass, 2002), an article on the boundaries of the field of conflict resolution (*Peace and Change*, October 2002), a co-edited textbook on conflict resolution (Continuum Publishers, forthcoming 2002), and co-authored articles on evaluation (*Negotiation Journal*, April 2001) and on ethics in conflict intervention (*International Negotiation*, forthcoming 2002).