Peace Building: Theories and Practice

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Abstract:
The paper examined peace and peace building theories. Peace is the absence of war. Even though, the researcher acknowledged the inadequacy of this definition, he argued that this does not satisfy the condition for understanding peace in its totality. Pacifist theory was adopted. He went on to explain that there could be peace because there is no war, and there could be war because there is no peace; He also said, peace exist independent of war and he cited the example of the position of Palestinians and the Israelis who though in war situation, are able to accept peacefully to use water from the same source. What this implies is, even though there is war between two parties over specific issues yet, there can be peace on certain bilateral matters. The researcher used both primary and secondary sources.

Keywords: Peace, peace building

1. Introduction
Peace is a common and very important term that has gained much prominence in the scheme of human life in the world. But its application generally, and definition has remained a contextual issue as a field of study in the social science. The contextual nature of this term has posed enormous challenges in terms of definition to several scholars. In this paper, therefore, we will make an attempt to first, justify that peace can be defined just like any other term. Second, we will try to identify those challenges that scholars encounter in defining peace. Third, we have also offered answer to the question in respect of whether peace can be studied at all. The variables and statements in this paper are Peace and peace building.

By way of giving this paper a direction, we have decided to focus discussion on the following questions:

- What is peace?
- What is peace building?
- Are there contending issues or difficulties in defining peace?

We expect at the end of this discourse, we will also examine theories of peace building.

2. Conceptualizing Peace
Borrowing from the words of Ronald Reagan one-time president of the United States of America, 'peace is not absence of conflict, it is the ability to handle conflict by peaceful means'. According to (Oke, 2006), peace is the absence of war. Even though, he acknowledged the inadequacy of this definition, he argued that this does not satisfy the condition for understanding peace in its totality. He went on to explain that there could be peace because there is no war, and there could be war because there is no peace; He also said, peace exist independent of war and he cited the example of the position of Palestinians and the Israelis who though in war situation, are able to accept peacefully to use water from the same source. What this implies is, even though there is war between two parties over specific issues yet, there can be peace on certain bilateral matters. This explains the inadequacy of the three words definition of peace (absence of war) after all war is only one out of many forms of violence or conflicts. The three words definition even though is seen as not adequate, has gained acceptability worldwide and is always incorporated into the wider definitions. Whatever it is, the wider definitions of peace may be considered as not only the absence of war but also the absence of fear, conflict, anxiety, and suffering and about peaceful coexistence (Francis, 2006). Generally six meanings of peace have been coined and agreed on by many peace researchers and this is what they consider peace to be:

- Peace as the absence of war (absence of direct violent)
- Peace as justice and development.
- Peace as Gaia (balance in and with the ecosphere).
- Inner peace (spiritual peace).
- Peace as wholesome and making whole.

Another way of thinking about peace is to have it defined in negative and positive terms. Peace as mere absence of war is what Woolman(1985) referred to as negative peace. This definition is based on Johan Galtung’s ideas of peace. For Galtung, negative peace is a state requiring a set of social structures that could provide security and protection from acts of direct physical violence committed by individuals, groups, or nations. The emphasis here is, having appropriate control mechanism in place against violence. In this case, government legal instruments, laws and justice, and military or security
apparatus. Peace has also been considered as that period of break from hostilities of some sort (intertlude) aimed at allowing for brokering of peace between the factions in conflict. This is normally followed by dialogue, mediation peace talks or some forms of mediation or intervention of some sort.

In our understanding, peace is basically a state of harmony, a state of agreement or accord, a state of absence of war, conflict, violence, rancor, a state of presence of security, justice, respect for human rights and sustained development.

2.1. Prospects of Defining Peace

The possibility of defining peace has its foundation in the concept of past philosophers such as the works of St. Augustine of Hippo, Thomas Hobbes, John Jacques Rousseau, Karl Marx, Max Weber, G. Hegel, etc. They worked hard in their times to give the definition of peace some forms of meaning and direction. Here are some concepts of peace by the past philosophers.

St. Augustine of Hippo, distinguished between 'two cities' namely the city of God founded on perfect heavenly peace and spiritual salvation, and the earthly city of man, which is founded on appetitive 'and possessive impulses that in corrupt and tom by strife and violence, a great man could be murdered in his sleep or overw1t1eled by large numbers. At that period, life was brutish nasty and short. The solution was to give up their right to self-defense to a Leviathan through a social contract, which was a powerful force above all which they were subject to. Through this social contract they obtained a more peaceful and orderly life.

Other philosophers like Hedonists and Utilitarian had their views (concept) that human beings instinctively seek happiness and avoid pain, therefore naturally prefer peace to war and violence (Best, 2006).

The prospect of defining peace has been through the efforts of past philosophers. Scholars of our time are defining Peace on the foundation already laid by past philosophers who could not address the social context of peace beyond the state of nature which is presently addressed by sociologist. Sociologically peace is defined or referred to as a condition of social harmony where there are no social antagonisms. Peace is perceived as a condition where there is no social conflict, individuals and groups are able to meet their needs and expectations. This is achieved through two broad sociological ways known as structural functionalist and dialectical material responses.

Politically, peace is defined or conceptualized as a political condition that makes justice possible. Samuel P. Huntington addressed in his work of institutionalization which means that political structures acquire values, stability and provide 'appropriate'. Despite various definitions by different scholars peace is simply and widely referred to as ‘absence of war'. (Best, 2006).

2.2. The Challenges of Defining Peace

The challenges of defining peace resides in the different cultural and civilizations and the different interpretations and conceptions of peace. For example, Islam talks about 'Salaam' meaning peace, the Jews say Shalom, the Indians or Gandians- Ahimsa and in the Swahili (African tradition) - Ubuntu. Each country and community determines their perceptions of peace on the context of their historical and political structures and tradition. No any country and community have the same political structure or history, and so there is bound to be differences in the way things are done and perceived.

In this regard, the way people may perceive their situations and circumstances is also bound to be different. The challenges in defining peace therefore, lie in the way different countries and communities perceive peace. The African (Ubuntu) definition of peace for example, is not only the absence of war, but also the absence of unequal and unjust structures and cultural practices, about security, democratic participation, and respect for human rights, development, social progress and justice.

3. Can Peace Be Studied?

Without much ado, we want to say, peace can be studied. The practical and physical example that is immediately available, is ourselves who are currently students of conflict management and peace studies of the University of Jos. In addition to this evidence, history has it that the foundations of peace studies were laid in Europe in the 1950s and 1960s with the founding of several peace research institutes. Some of the oldest and most prestigious ones include:

- Peace Research Institute of Oslo.
- The Department of Peace and Conflict Research at Uppsala University in Sweden.
- The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, to mention but a few.

The first colleges in the USA to offer peace studies were associated with historic peace and mostly from ancient church organizations such as: the Quaker, the Mennonite and the Brethren. This means the church was the foundation of peace and peace studies, a perfect emulation of Jesus Christ who came into the world and preached peace and salvation. Mohammedism of the ancient time was also peace, love unity based.

The end of the Vietnam war generated an increase on the number of academic programmes in peace studies, and this grew substantially particularly in North America and this was necessitated by the need to develop a capacity to deal with the threat of nuclear arm- build-up of the 20th century.

Basically, peace studies are an inter-disciplinary academic field that has connection or roots to political science, sociology, philosophy, theology, and other fields. Its interdisciplinary nature gave the students of peace studies then, the advantage of understanding the causes of armed conflicts as well as insight into ways of preventing and resolving wars, genocide, terrorism, gross human rights violation.
3.1. Pacifist Theory of Peace

It has become a common understanding that most conflicts in the world are largely seen to have violent picture, having military involvement where arms are freely used.

Through peace studies and research; some scholars are able to embrace the pacifists ideology (opposing the use of military force in all circumstances). To a great extent this is an issue of conscience rather than academic orientation factor. For example a religionist will consider the 'tradition of non-military option in conflict situations. This is a conception of peace that is built on freedom 'and justice as propounded by Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr, Albert Luthuli, Stev Biko, etc. Whatever it is, we would know probably, that scholars and peace builders may not be united by ideology but by commitment to finding non-violent solutions rooted in justice. Many also maybe it the other way, encouraging or favoring the practice of war. But peace studies are not antimilitary in any way whatsoever. Importantly conversation with the military will always produce a picture of the military supporting peace studies as well as peaceful resolution of conflicts.

3.2. Prospects and Careers in Peace Studies

As the world society is becoming globalized and complex, the chances of vulnerability is also growing and increasing in very dangerous dimensions. The indicators are therefore clear that capacities for peace building must be given special attention by various governments and institutions of the world. The UN, AU, EU, etc. have great responsibility to encourage and build institutions that could facilitate peace education and research among their member states. There are also ample opportunities for NGOs and community groups to support peace research activities across regional boundaries.

In the area of careers, peace studies education prepares students, or, scholars for a wide range of life long careers. Graduates become researchers, educators, negotiators, mediators, government officials, business people, activists, and professionals in organizations focused on human rights, dispute resolution specialists, environmental protection advocates, international law and human and economic development consultants, etc.

3.3. Peace Studies as Research Activity

Peace research activities started during the time of Immanuel Kant, a philosopher when he recognized the centrality of peace (perpetual peace) in the fifties and its emergence as an academic discipline came with its own research tools, a specialized set of concepts and forms of discussion, such as journals and conferences. Also by 1959, with the founding of the Peace Research Institute Oslo, more numbers of research institutes were established and this was through the support of Johan Galtung.

In 1963, Walter Izard, the principal founder of Regional science assembled a group of scholars in Malmo, Sweden, for the purpose of establishing the Peace Research society. The initial group members included Kenneth Boulding and Amatol Report in 1973, this group became the peace science society. Peace science was viewed as an interdisciplinary and international effort to develop a special set of concepts, techniques and data to better understand and mitigate conflict. Peace Science attempts to use the quantitative techniques developed in economics and political science, especially 'the game theory and economics techniques' even though the technique is seldom used by researchers in peace studies. Also, there is the peace science society website that hosts the second edition of the correlates of war, and are of the most well-known collections of data on international conflicts.

The society apart from the annual conference they organize, they also publish journals of conflict resolution and conflict management and peace science on regular basis.

3.3.1. Peacebuilding

Bliss S. (2010) has defined peace building as a term within the international development community used to describe the processes and activities involved in resolving violent conflicts and establishing a sustainable peace. It includes conflict transformation, restorative justice, trauma healing, reconciliation, development and leadership. She pointed out that it is similar to conflict resolution but goes beyond seeking a sustainable social and economic development. More importantly, it is about prevention of future wars and violence.

Gaulden P. (2004) refers to peace building as the process of making sure that a country or society creates a condition for sustainable peace. Such conditions can be created when a country is already in a state of being peaceful. In such situation, the conditions are created in order to prevent conflict from erupting and therefore peace is sustained. The conditions can also be created in post conflict situations.

This is done after a conflict must have been put to an end through a conflict resolution mechanism. Under such a situation the process of peace building begins with the transition period. The various processes of implementing aspects of peace agreement become the process of peace building. He further states that the process of peace building is a continuous one as it entails taking various measures which include transformation of state organs, socio-economic development, democratization and regional integration.

In his contribution, David J. (2006) refers to peace building as efforts and interventions aimed at overcoming the root causes of conflicts. According to him, peace building aims at overcoming the structural, relational and cultural contradictions which are at the root of conflict in order to underpin the processes of peacemaking and peacekeeping.

Norwegian sociologist Johan Galtung first created the term peace building in the 1970s, through his promotion of systems that would create sustainable peace. Such systems needed to address the root causes of conflict and support local capacity for peace management and conflict resolution. Galtung's work emphasized a bottom-up approach that decentralized social and economic structures, amounting to a call for a societal shift from structures of coercion and
violence to a culture of peace. American sociologist John Paul Lederach (1997:75) proposed a different concept of peace building as engaging grassroots, local, Non-Governmental Organization, international and other actors to create a sustainable peace process.

Peace building has since expanded to include many different dimensions, such as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and rebuilding governmental, economic and civil society institutions. The concept was popularized in the international community through a one-time UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali’s January 31, 1992 report: An Agenda for Peace. At the 2005 World Summit, the United Nations began creating a peace building architecture based on Kofi Annan’s proposals. The proposal called for three organizations: the UN Peace building Commission, which was founded in 2005; the UN Peace building Fund, founded in 2006; and the UN Peace building Support Office, which was created in 2005. These three organizations enable the Secretary-General to coordinate the UN’s peace building efforts.

National governments’ interest in the topic has also increased due to fears that failed states serve as breeding grounds for conflict and extremism and thus threaten international security. Some states have begun to view peace building as a way to demonstrate their relevance. However, peace building activities continue to account for small percentages of states’ budgets. Reyucher (2001:18) noted that there is obvious awareness today that a great deal of human suffering is linked to violent conflicts, political instability, or unjust policies and practices. Short-term humanitarian relief and crisis intervention, while important, are not enough in conflict or post-conflict societies. There is greater increasing awareness of the need for proactive measures to nip violent conflicts in the bud, and where violence has erupted, pursue post-armed-conflict reconciliation, development of capacity for conflict resolution and management, and the building of sustainable peace.

Peace building theory addresses the underlying causes of violent conflict so that they become less likely in the future. In the available literature, peace-building is recognized as dynamic, having something to contribute in every phase of a conflict, and always moving or changing in response to the situation and the stage of the peacemaking efforts (Lederach, 1990). More recently, it has been discovered recognizing that conflicts do not end and that they are seldom resolved. It may not be desirable to 'stop' a conflict if it is at the expense of justice, and the best way to guarantee the durability of any agreement is to be proactive and allow for higher mutual participation by the conflict groups (Carolyn Nordstrom, 1995).

Lederach (1997:75) supports this position and opines that it is generally agreed that the central task of peace building is to create positive peace, a ‘stable social equilibrium in which the surfacing of new disputes does not escalate into violence and war.’ Sustainable peace is characterized by the absence of physical and structural violence, the elimination of discrimination, and self-sustainability. Moving towards this sort of environment goes beyond problem solving or conflict management. Peace building initiatives try to fix the core problems that underline the conflict and change the patterns of interaction of the involved parties. They aim to move a given population from a condition of extreme vulnerability and dependency to one of self-sufficiency and well-being.

In particular, four major areas of activity were identified, namely: preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peace keeping and post-conflict peace building. Preventive diplomacy is ‘action to prevent disputes from arising between parties, to prevent existing disputes from escalating into conflict and to limit the spread of the latter when they occur’ (Boutros-Ghali 1992: 20). Peacemaking is ‘action to bring hostile parties to agreement, essentially through such peaceful means as those foreseen in Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations.’

Peacekeeping is the deployment of a United Nations presence with the consent of the parties concerned, and with restraint on the use of force except in self-defense. Peace building refers to efforts in the medium to long-term process of rebuilding war-affected communities. This includes the process of rebuilding the political, security, social and economic dimensions of a society emerging from a conflict. It also includes addressing the root causes of the conflict and promoting social and economic justice as well as putting in place political structures of governance and the rule of law which will consolidate peace building, reconciliation and development.

It is evident therefore that there are numerous challenges to promoting peace in Africa. What do we mean when we refer to building peace? We need to consider that, broadly defined; there are two ways to understand the nature of peace. For most analysts there is a distinction between a condition of negative peace and a condition of positive peace (Lund 2001). Negative peace is the condition that most people refer to when they are discussing issues to do with peace and conflict: it is the condition in which peace is based on the absence of violence. We need to work more towards the notion of positive peace, which means a peace that promotes reconciliation and coexistence on the basis of human rights, social, economic and political justice.

In this context, therefore, when we talk about peace-building we are referring to the process whereby the goal is to strengthen the capacity of societies to promote a positive peace. Within most of the peace-building and development actors and agencies there is increasingly a focus on the importance of promoting positive peace. An integral part of the process of achieving positive peace is the need to promote social solidarity and sustainable peace building.

In an important sense, peace is not just the absence of violence, but the presence of social solidarity. Achieving sustainable peace building means that members of the society once again begin to recognize each other as fellow human beings and begin to share a concern in the common welfare and well being of each other. Social solidarity makes sense because only by ensuring the security, safety and well-being of other people can we hope to secure our own security, safety and well-being. To emphasize the need to foster sustainable peace building is to recognize the inter-connectedness of each human being. Later on this paper will argue that only through the promotion of Pan-African social solidarity can African countries achieve development.

Colonialism did not only destroy the basis upon which Africans could define themselves, but where it could, it also co-opted the indigenous structures and mechanisms of governance and dispute resolution to serve the interests of the
colonial administration. Indigenous traditions with regard to governing and resolving disputes in African societies were therefore corrupted by the centralizing power of colonialism. Africa is not a monolithic continent, there is a multiplicity of ethnic, cultural and linguistic groups, so we cannot generalize the extent to which cultural traditions do or do not have progressive norms and principles which can inform our approaches to building peace and social solidarity. We do have to be careful not to romanticize indigenous approaches to resolving disputes in particular. This is because as with the rest of humanity African indigenous structures were for the most part exclusionary on the basis of gender. The majority of indigenous women were not included in the primary structures of decision making.

This is why we need to combine present notions of gender equality with progressive indigenous norms and principles to create something that is uniquely African. We have to create a framework that is a hybrid between indigenous African traditions and modern principles to ensure the human dignity and inclusion of all members of society - women, men, girls and boys.

Culture plays an important role in enabling people to resolve their disputes and to strengthen the ties that bind them together. People derive their sense of meaning from their culture. What does it mean to be human? What is or ought to be -the nature of human relations? These notions feed into the attitudes and values that we choose to embrace, which in turn determine how we interact with each other. Cultural attitudes and values, therefore, provide the foundation for the social norms by which people live (Malan 1997, Abu-Nimer 2000 and Avruch 1998). Through internalizing and sharing these cultural attitudes and values with their fellow community members, and by handing them down to future generations, societies can - and do - re-construct themselves on the basis of a particular cultural image.

In order to re-establish sustainable peace building in war-affected communities, a key step would be to find a way for members of these communities to re-inform' themselves with a cultural logic that emphasizes sharing and equitable resource distribution. This, in effect, means emphasizing the importance of reviving progressive cultural attitudes and values that can foster a climate within which peace can flourish.

Interestingly enough we find that in Africa there are indigenous traditions for peace building that can teach us a lot about healing and reconciliation, which create the basis for re-establishing social solidarity (Zartman 2000). The challenge today is for us to find ways of learning lessons from the local cultural approaches to peace building. In the post-conflict era in Mozambique, traditional healing and reconciliation practices were used to enable combatants, particularly child soldiers, to be re-integrated into their communities. In Chad, Niger and Ghana, traditional institutions have been used in the past in order to address the low intensity conflicts that affected these countries.

For example, in Northern Somalia, also known as Somaliland, traditional leadership institutions and methods for resolving disputes were used to bring together the clans and create a legislature and government. By drawing upon Somali tradition and combining these traditional structures with modern institutions of governance like the parliament, Somaliland, with its capital in Hargeisa, has succeeded in, maintaining a degree of relative peace and stability, the self-declared Republic of Somaliland is celebrating its fifteenth year since it declared independence from Somalia. In December 2005, President Dahir Rayale Kahin of Somaliland has made representations to the African Union (AU) for recognition and observer status, and this matter is currently being considered (International Crisis Group 2006).

Some have argued that Somaliland might be the first genuine African nation state because it was created using indigenous cultural norms of governance. In this sense, it emerged from the efforts and desire of Somali clans to unify into a state. This is the exact opposite of virtually all of Africa’s post-colonial states which were created and established by former European colonial powers, arbitrarily dividing ethnic groups and causing the problems and pathologies that exist today.

Also currently in Rwanda, the government is making use of the traditional justice and reconciliation system known as gacaca to enable it to try and judge some of those who are accused of having been among the perpetrators of the genocide in 1994. The interesting lesson to learn from this gacaca system is that it is largely organized on the basis of local community involvement. The local community is involved in encouraging the perpetrators to acknowledge what they have done and the victims are involved in determining what reparations need to be made so that the perpetrator can be re-integrated into the community. There have been criticisms of the way that gacacatr ibunals have been implemented.

This is bound to happen because the use of indigenous traditional approaches to administer justice in a modern nation state is uncharted ground. But the fact that the Rwandese government has resorted to using the gacacaapproach is the most clear illustration that there is a role for African indigenous approaches in efforts to consolidate peace and restore Achieving sustainable peace building.

Peace building as a concept is quite complex. In spite of its different definitions, the underlying fact remains that peace building is basically targeted towards the realization of atmosphere of positive peace, love and tranquility that is best for human existence which will enable man achieve the best life can bring (Okoye S., 2014).

4. Conclusion

During this exercise, we were able to lay our hands on several research articles, books and other materials in which we found several definitions of peace. Indeed, these materials gave us a lift in accomplishing this work. The concepts in peace and peace building are quite numerous and vary from cultures to cultures and communities to communities particularly the different traditions and the different environments of the world.

We have however discovered that, the different cultures, traditions and environments are never a hindrance to the definition of peace. Rather, such many and different definitions have helped in enriching the pool of knowledge in peace studies and peace research. Finally, the researcher is in total agreement that, there is much convergence and universality in the definition of peace and that peace building theory.
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