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Peacebuilding–Development Nexus

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Synonyms

Development = economic growth; Peacebuilding
= consolidating peace, constructing peace

Definition

Peacebuilding and development intersections in
scholarship and practice span disciplines, time
and space, worldviews, and policy agendas and
practice areas. This reflection examines the
"nexus" through various paradigms of
peacebuilding and development that have domi-
nated scholarly thinking and international policy
and practice, exploring the ways that they inter-
sect with one another. Unsurprisingly, it reveals
that the nature of the nexus is profoundly shaped
by the orientation of each peacebuilding, or devel-
opment, paradigm in focus. Specific paradigms
depicting the nexus and orienting policy and prac-
tice are then discussed that frame actual and emer-
gent areas of consensus and action in international
politics.

Introduction

There are many ways to frame a discussion about
the peacebuilding–development nexus. At the
most basic level, one can look at how
peacebuilding intersects with or impacts develop-
ment, and alternatively, how development inter-
sects with or impacts peacebuilding. Paradigmatic
perspectives inform how these intersections are
understood and resultingly, guide action.

Peacebuilding and development have, since
the 1990s, been explicitly aligned in scholarship
and practice. This alignment has been referred to
as an evolving disciplinary field, drawing upon
two interdisciplinary scholarly fields
(McCandless and Abu-Nimer 2012) and as a sub-
discipline of peace studies (McCandless 2007,
p. 59). There is also a strong movement by devel-
opment practitioners to examine the nexus in
practice, as the work of Oxfam, Cordaid, Overseas
Development Institute, and many other interna-
tional development and aid organizations and
government agencies reveal. In practice, the
well-known quote by Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for-
mer United Nations (UN) secretary general in the
1992 *Agenda for Peace,* "[t]here can be no peace
without economic and social development, just as

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development is not possible in the absence of peace" provided early recognition of this nexus. However, operationalizing these linkages has proven more difficult (McCandless and Abu-Nimer 2012). This undoubtedly has much to do with the paradigmatic assumptions and debates underpinning both fields, challenging agreement around the core meaning and orientation of the nexus.

Acknowledging that there are many conceptualizations of both peacebuilding and development, the following concepts are offered, drawing on considerable scholarly and policy consensus, with a critical orientation. Peacebuilding can be understood as a process aimed at facilitating the sustaining of peace and the prevention of the recurrence of violence and conflict by addressing root causes and effects of conflict, through reconciliation, political and economic transformation, and the forging of a common vision of society that takes all segments of the population into account. This conceptualization draws upon the 2016 UN Security Council and General Assembly resolutions on preventing violent conflict and sustaining peace (A/RES/70/262 and S/RES/2282). It is worth highlighting that after decades of circling and debate on meaning, in particular around whether or not addressing root causes is involved (McCandless 2020b), policy consensus is settling in a more holistic notion that does recognize this imperative as part of sustaining peace.

Equally acknowledging the many rich conceptualizing efforts of development, the notion that "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs," as expressed in *Our Common Future* (Brundtland Commission 1992) gets at the heart of the challenge. The Agenda for Sustainable Development (Agenda 2030) – adopted by all UN member states sets out a universal agreement and agenda to "create conditions for sustainable, inclusive growth" and shared prosperity, to end poverty in all its dimensions, combat inequality within and among countries, and to build peaceful, just, and inclusive societies. It reinforces (as did the Agenda for Development

1997) the interlocking nature of economic, social, and environmental dimensions and the need for critical awareness around the "conscious choices in terms of the trade-offs, synergies, and spin offs" created by any intervention (2015, p. 1).

The evolution and orientations of these concepts reveal their drive to ever-greater holism where each is moving to further encompass the other. While on the one hand, this suggests their synergy, and the very basis and need for the study and practice of the nexus; on the other hand, it potentially undermines the ability to maintain critical thinking and engagement about the relationship between, and impacts each agenda has on the other.

Paradigmatic Approaches to Peacebuilding and Development

This section explores the nexus through the framing of paradigms in both peacebuilding and development – how they have been theoretically conceptualized and how they have played out in policy and practice. First, peacebuilding paradigms are discussed, and their relationship to development explored. Then, development paradigms are discussed, and their relationship to peacebuilding explored. The sections consider both dominant paradigms, and the emergent, resistant ones.

Peacebuilding Paradigms and the Development Nexus

Key paradigms that have framed peacebuilding thought and practice come from structural and liberal traditions. This section starts by considering these two paradigms, and their intersections with development. It then turns to discuss innovations emerging over the last decade. Resistance to liberal peacebuilding in particular has fueled innovation, pushing the paradigmatic boundaries in new and important directions. (This section builds upon the framework developed by McCandless and Donais (2020) that lays out "generations of thought" in peacebuilding policy and practice.) It also draws from a review of peacebuilding and economic recovery linkages McCandless (2009).

Structural and Liberal Peacebuilding

According to McCandless (2020b), structural perspectives on peacebuilding have focused over the decades on understanding and framing conflict as rooted in asymmetrical power relations and uneven processes of development, and peacebuilding as a process of transforming systems and structures accordingly. (Others have used the term structural peacebuilding not as a body of thought, but nonetheless in consistent ways – to describe, i.e., as a transformative process "of changing structures of violence to structures of peace." (Montiel 2001, p. 1), generally engaging Galtung's work on structural violence, the absence of which is structural peace (Galtung 1969).) A stream of thinkers shaping peace studies in the twentieth century – including Johan Galtung, Elise Boulding, Adam Curle, and Ed Azar –broadly sought to frame peace in this way, with concerted attention to issues of equitable development and distributive justice as deeply relevant for transforming conflict at its roots. Global South scholars have tended to support this line of thought. Hansen (1988) argued that dominant conceptions rooted in minimalist concerns such as the absence of physical violence did not serve Africa. For most scholars he suggested, the peace and development problematic are deeply intertwined; peace involves transforming national and international social systems to address the structural legacies and ongoing policies driven by Northern institutions driving inequalities between the North–South relations (See chapter "▶ Socioeconomic Justice and Peacebuilding").

The 1990s saw a resurgence of structuralist-oriented theories through literatures on the political economy of conflict, and war economies. These engaged issues of motives in war, i.e., greed or grievance (Collier and Hoeffler 2004), criminality and profiting from peace, power asymmetries within and across societies, and the natural resource dimensions of war (Pugh 2005; Ballentine and Nitzschke 2005; Duffield 1998; Keen 1997).

Liberal peacebuilding proffers a much different perspective on its relationship with development. This agenda, from its origins in liberalism itself, assumes that broadening and deepening of liberalization of the economy (i.e., through rapid marketization) and politics (elections) provides a consummate pathway to peace. With roots in classical philosophy, liberal peacebuilding arose with and through liberal triumphalism that accompanied the fall of the Soviet Union. At the same time, it was shaped by wider neoliberal trends dominating international financial institution policy interventions, resulting in lack of attention to the state and its institutions and an undermining of fragile local economies (Brückner and Ciccone 2010; Castillejo 2014). This was eventually acknowledged: countries emerging from conflict and fragility require robust institutions to drive and achieve development (Paris 2004). More widely, as observed by critical scholars, liberal peacebuilding did not achieve intended results of forging a pathway to sustaining peace and inclusive development. This was due to its framing around Western models and assumptions about what development and recovery should look like, which did not take root naturally in fragile post-conflict settings and did not foster a nationally owned vision (Mac Ginty and Richmond 2013; Pugh 2005; Paris 2004).

Innovations in Peacebuilding Paradigms

There are other paradigmatic perspectives, or "generations of thought" (McCandless 2020b) emerging in the peacebuilding discipline that engage with development less directly, yet they potentially offer transformative directions for the peacebuilding–development nexus. The "local turn" in peacebuilding that has arisen in the wake of disillusionment with liberal peacebuilding and its outcomes orients attention towards local people, dynamics, contexts, and narratives (Mac Ginty and Richmond 2013) (See chapters "▶ Local Peacebuilding" and "▶ Everyday Peace"). This "turn" is important for achieving a more context-relevant, demand-driven peace that serves development, and conversely, development that serves peace. Hybridity as a paradigmatic lens through which to orient peacebuilding efforts has also gained traction, addressing weaknesses in liberal peacebuilding by its focus on understanding how the heterogeneity within

society manifests through competing claims to authority, legitimacy, and power (See chapter "▶ Hybrid Political Orders and Hybrid Peace"). A hybridity lens in peacebuilding offers means to explore development in ways that organically and endogenously arise and exist within particular settings, and the multidirectional means for such interaction (Mac Ginty and Sanghera 2012).

Despite a host of critiques oriented towards liberal peacebuilding, this agenda still forms the core of a dominant policy approach – though one combining liberalism with more concerted attention to addressing its uneven impacts on people and the environment. This is reflected perhaps most clearly in the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Development Paradigms and the Peacebuilding Nexus

Development paradigms similarly generate and illustrate great debate. There is a tendency to conflate economic growth with development, arguably due to uncritical assumptions driving policy and thought – that the former will simply result in the latter. As Amartya Sen (1988, p. 13) suggests, "there are many other variables that also influence the living conditions, and the concept of development cannot ignore the role of these other variables."

Liberalism and Marxism

Development paradigms and related policy agendas over time, as with the peacebuilding terrain, have broadly revealed a Marxist/liberal divide, with paradigms reflecting one, the other, or an effort to chart a middle path. On the liberal side, global development agendas came into practice through post-World War II reconstruction, which sought to ensure macroeconomist stability, though with a Marshall Plan which cushioned adverse effects on vulnerable populations and helped to support the building of needed infrastructure to catalyze development. Modernization in the 1950s–60s followed, steeped in uncritical assumptions about the supremacy of Western capitalism, suggesting that traditionalism impeded economic investment and growth. "Growth with

Equity" in the 1970s recognized the structural marginalization of large population segments around the world, sought to balance modernization with benefit – and technology – sharing, promoting decentralization, and participation.

This did not last long; in the 1980s–1990s a more conservative strand of economic liberalism – neoliberalism – came fully to fruition. A "Washington Consensus" informed ideology drove a change in international financial institution (IFI) policy and practice. The new structural adjustments programs (SAPS) sought full liberalization of market and finance in the spirit of unbridled capitalism. Assuming this policy approach would ensure wealth, would "trickle down" and correct social service–related deficiencies in the long run, the outcomes proved opposite. Not only did the policies, implemented widely across Africa and Latin America in particular, increase poverty and inequality across settings, they did not even achieve their main policy goal: economic growth (See chapter "▶ Conflict and Hunger"). These policies and their impacts also undermined civil and political liberties and national ownership of development, fueling social discontent, violence, and conflict (McCandless and Karbo 2011; Cheru 2002; Walton and Seddon 1994).

Marxism and Marxist-inspired critical theories grew in parallel to their liberal counterparts over the twentieth century to inform development paradigms in the Soviet Union and China, followed by Cuba, North Korea, Laos, and Vietnam, among others. Originating from mid nineteenth century work of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, Marxists view the development problem as following from the exploitative class relations arising from the contradictions at the point of production within capitalism, which tend to result in extreme inequality and uneven geographical development. In this framework, social conflict is structurally embedded within the divergent ownership of the means of production and the social relations of production and reproduction.

The solution is class struggle and other forms of anti-capitalist activism (i.e., women's rights, radical ecology, anti-racism, anti-imperialism) to

achieve socialism – the social ownership of the means of production and erosion of profit as a core logic. This struggle, once successful, would generate what was often referred to as "socialist harmony." For Marxists, underlying economic conditions – usually divided into the process of capital accumulation and the class structure – "determine the quality and the life of ideology, philosophy, culture, and psychology" or what is known as the superstructures (Lumumba-Kasongo 2017, p. 39). Marxism as an umbrella theory of all radical leftist theories has an ideology of organizing a new society (a just society according to the exploited, oppressed, and dominated people's and ecologies). To get there, a the "progressive methodology" (Lumumba-Kasongo 2017, p. 39) for attaining peace would encompass unifying anti-capitalist struggles from below linking up, led by the working class, but unifying with other fractions.

While Marxism was employed as a political and developmental paradigm in various countries and regions in the twentieth century, a critical variant – dependency theory – grew among third-world intellectuals in the 1960s–80s, especially in Latin America, and as a critique of modernization theory. Proponents saw conflict and crisis in Marxist terms around the contradictions in capitalism and exploitative class relations occurring globally and underdevelopment occurring as a result (De Santo et al. 1990). The development problem for dependency theorists lies in the underdevelopment of developing countries (Rodney 1972) – a result of resources flowing from the periphery of poor states or regions to wealthier ones. This a critical development paradigm, and informed development planning in Brazil, for example, under Lula, while import substitution policies (ISIs), at the heart of theories prescriptions, were pursued in countries around the world. These theories are consistent with Global South peace scholars of the structural peacebuilding tradition, i.e., Hansen above, who insist that achieving peace necessitates addressing the structural legacies and ongoing policies driven in and through global institutions dominated by select Northern governments.

Human Development, Sustainable Development, and Other Innovations

Efforts at innovation or finding new paradigmatic pathways have flourished in recent decades, often veering towards development placing humans (human development) or the environment (sustainable development) at the core – and invariably drawing on liberal and Marxist/critical paradigms to chart a middle path.

Human development as conceived by its founder Mahbub ul Haq (2003) is the idea of enlarging all human choices, be they social, cultural, economic, or political. This paradigm emerged in the 1980s, offering an alternative to the dominant (neo)liberal economic growth paradigm. With roots in the teachings of Aristotle, Immanuel Kant, Adam Smith, and Karl Marx, it is a holistic and integrated paradigm expanding the notion and measure of well-being. It seeks to combine economic concerns of growth with those of distribution, access to livelihoods, and equality on the one hand, with political concerns, including personal freedoms and rights, and democratic governance, peace, and security on the other (UNDP 2006).

Human development was promoted by others including Amartya Sen and Paul Streeten and was adopted by UNDP in the 1990s to inform its development strategy and programming. The human development index (HDI) was created to enlarge the way well-being is measured, challenging the dominant growth–focused measure of well-being, the World Bank's gross domestic product (GDP). The paradigm can be seen informing various UN development agendas that followed, including the Agenda for Development in 1994, and even the current Agenda for Sustainable Development. Within these development frameworks the links to peace and peacebuilding have become increasingly evident, while the holistic conception itself shares much with structural approaches to peacebuilding, and the conception of positive peace.

While human development did not attain wider appeal per se, the rising awareness of the failure of SAPS instigated some movements within the IFIs towards more human-centered capitalism, while simultaneously movements were growing within and outside these institutions for greater attention

to the environment. Pro-poor development (Battaglia et al. 2011) and associated IFI Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) took over from SAPS – the preparation of which served as a new form of aid conditionality. They did not, however, address the macroeconomic framework in play, which critics have viewed as the obstacle to transformation (Cheru 2002).

Similar concerns have been shared about the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – adopted by all United Nations member states in 2015 (McCandless 2016). While there are critics aplenty of the SDGs – especially coming from critical schools of thought and practice in relation to each substantive goal area, this framework undoubtedly goes farther than any globally agreed framework before to address issues at the heart of societal and global transformation. Drawing from other environmentally oriented development paradigms, it endeavors to bridge the divide between human and sustainable development approaches. This 2030 Agenda also places peace as a key priority area cutting across the framework identified in the preamble, while also featuring SDG 16 – a goal to foster peaceful, just, and inclusive societies. Goal 16 is also broadly viewed as an enabler of all the other goals.

Other innovations and approaches that may constitute emerging or past paradigms of development on the one hand and peacebuilding on the other undoubtedly exist, suggesting the complexity and breadth of the nexus in theory and in practice. Presently, for example, we are seeing rising discussion around the role of rising powers, including the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), in peacebuilding (Call and de Coning 2016). The approaches of these countries in general, like Global South scholars as discussed above, tend to view peacebuilding as much more part and parcel of development, effectively assuming that inclusive development will foster peace.

The Nexus in Practice

In an opening issue of a journal devoted to exploring this nexus, the journal of *Peacebuilding and Development,* Peter Uvin (2002) outlined seven "paradigmatic shifts" in the relationship of the two enterprises. Representing a scale of status quo to more radical efforts, these were identified as: development (in the form of economic growth) axiomatically reduces conflict; conditionality; post-conflict assistance; do no harm; conflict prevention; human security; and global system reform. Uvin argued, fitting with the period, that the development industry was primarily operating from the paradigms of post-conflict assistance and do no harm. This was consistent with the expansion of peacekeeping operations at the time, where United Nations multidimensional missions were taking on a wealth of responsibilities across security, political, rule of law, human rights, protection of civilians, and other areas, becoming cognizant that achieving intended results was far more difficult than anticipated. Some more progressive agencies, he argued, were moving into conflict prevention and human security, while global system reform was generally limited in the development sector – with the exception of concerted attention to the Kimberly process. A key conclusion, he found, was that attempts to put the nexus into practice were limited by the weak knowledge base and ethical foundations upon which the work rests.

Coming on two decades later, this nexus analysis retains considerable cogency, although there are adaptations within each, and arguably new emergent paradigms defining this nexus. It is also the case that they all vary in value depending on the actor concerned. With the rising acceptance of the changed face of conflict and its links with fragility and violence (United Nations – World Bank 2018; OECD 2016; McCandless 2020a), there is more policy consensus on the need to reprioritize conflict prevention. The push for this has gained traction on the basis of awareness within the multilateral system that fighting endless and intractable wars is too costly (United Nations – World Bank 2018). While there is an acknowledgment that addressing exclusion – a key driver of violence and conflict – is paramount – finding consensus among member states to act on issues at the core of conflict prevention will remain profoundly challenging (McCandless

2020b) (See chapter "▶ R2P and Prevention"). Global system reform remains strong, focused increasingly on climate change, while issues of food sovereignty, debt cancellation, natural resource justice, and generally reforming the global trade and finance architecture that drives uneven development hold continuing prominence. Over this period, there have also been the momentous nonviolent revolutions brought by social movements through the "Arab Spring." These movements were driven by a people rising up against oppressive regimes and failing development. While it is clear that concerted attention is required to economic issues of global system reform to ensure these transitions to democracy are sustainable, international attention remains squarely on supporting a move to political liberalism within these countries.

Other paradigms engaging this nexus that have arisen include peacebuilding in development policy frameworks (illustrated by Agenda 2030, and numerous prior efforts within the UN and bi- or multilateral efforts), inclusion, as an increasingly adopted norm in peacebuilding, development, and vis-à-vis the nexus, statebuilding, a policy approach oriented towards building the capacity of the state, which grew in part as a counterbalance to liberal peacebuilding (McCandless 2014), and fourthly the humanitarian-development-peace nexus (HDP). This last paradigm, while not new, is gaining concerted traction with the global COVID-19 pandemic. It arises out of the awareness that responding to the nature and scale of crises today requires an ever-deeper commitment to understanding and addressing these linkages (See chapter "▶ Intersection of Natural Disaster and Conflict").

Summary

The peacebuilding–development nexus constitutes a profoundly rich area of thought and varied practices. While the importance of this nexus has been acknowledged at the highest policy levels, there remain significant challenges in forging coherence around agreed meaning of this nexus, given the dynamic, contested terrains between paradigms in peacebuilding, development, and the nexus. Peacebuilding and development are ultimately constructivist endeavors (Donais and McCandless 2017); they need to respond to the historical circumstances and needs of particular populations in space and time.

While there are no one-size-fits-all formulas for understanding and supporting this nexus, structural engagement and intervention is needed to address root causes of conflict and fragility across societies. These more often than not stem not only from internal causes but from structural legacies, i.e., colonialism and slavery, and ongoing marginalizing tendencies of globalization, war, climate change, and disaster, among others, which do not observe borders and tend to hit the most vulnerable the hardest. As such, peacebuilding scholars can and should continue to shape this nexus in ways that raise evidence-based awareness about the interconnections, and that provide insight into approaches that hold greater promise for inclusive peace and development outcomes.

Cross-References

▶ Conflict and Hunger
▶ Everyday Peace
▶ Hybrid Political Orders and Hybrid Peace
▶ Intersection of Natural Disasters and Conflict
▶ Local Peacebuilding
▶ R2P and Prevention
▶ Socioeconomic Justice and Peacebuilding

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