

# **Concept of Peace in Peace Studies: A Short Historical Sketch**

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## **Abstract**

This paper attempts to trace the development of the concept of peace in peace studies, by an examination of studies on the peace concept and definitions of peace by peace researchers, from two perspectives of peace value and peace sphere. It shows that the concept of peace employed in peace studies has been expanded both in peace value and peace sphere to include more than one peace value and peace sphere.

## **Introduction**

In the present paper, I would like to attempt, as it were, a “peace study” on “peace discourse” or more precisely on “discourse on peace in peace studies.” As Johan Galtung once argued, “an important task in peace research has always been and always be the exploration of the concept of peace” (Galtung 1981: 183). In spite of Galtung’s appeal, there seem to have been few studies on peace concept worthy of note<sup>1)</sup>. The present paper is intended to be a small step along the path proposed by Galtung.

What I attempt is to trace the development of the concept of peace employed in peace studies since its birth around 1960. More specifically, I will examine how peace has been conceptualized and defined in peace studies, and what concept of peace has been employed, and then, on the basis of the examination, show that the concept of peace has been expanded into a more complex concept both in its content and in its scope. In the examination, two perspectives of peace value and peace sphere are introduced and employed as key criteria to analyze the conceptualization of peace and measure the complexity of the concept of peace.

In studies on peace concept or peace image, two facets of the concept of peace have come to be distinguished, though not always explicitly. These are what are called “peace value” and “peace sphere” (or sphere of peace). The distinction was first explicitly proposed by Matsuo (1984) and Matsuo (1985), though several previous studies hinted at the distinction. The former, “peace value,” refers to the content or substance of peace. It can be viewed as the component of peace. In contrast, the latter, “peace sphere,” which was, as we will see shortly below, proposed first by Johan

Galtung, refers to the logical or cognitive, and frequently the only, space where peace exists, whatever the substance may be.

In the first section, I will examine the development of the concept of peace from the perspective of peace value. In the second section, an examination in terms of peace sphere will be conducted.

## **1 Peace Values**

### **1.1 Peace Values: Studies on “Peace Image”**

In the earlier days of peace studies, there were various studies on peace concept, though the term “peace image” was more frequently used instead of “peace concept.” These studies on “peace image,” perhaps pioneered by Peter Cooper and followed by Trond Ålvik, Leif Rosell, Magnus Haavelsrud, J.A.E.A. Ehly, Glenn D. Hook and others, concentrated on children’s image of peace<sup>2)</sup>. To our concern here, they adopted a rather specific assumption on the nature of peace concept. Most of them basically assumed that the peace concept of any particular child falls into one and only one of the four or five (or any number) of apparently discrete categories and never takes a complex structure where two or more categories coexist. For example, Cooper classifies peace images (actually, children’s responses or verbal associations to “peace”) into the four categories; “inactivity,” “respite,” “sociable activity,” and “reconciliation” (Cooper 1965: 4). The peace image was assumed to be a variable which takes only one of any finite number of values.

It is Takeshi Ishida who first adopted a multi-value approach in the study of peace concepts (Ishida 1969). His study was clearly multivariate unlike those of Cooper and others. In his study, peace concept has a complex structure and can theoretically take more than one (peace) value at the same time. Needless to say, Ishida’s approach is much nearer to the real nature of the peace image. From this, it is obvious that the peace image of any culture or group should be regarded as consisting of possibly more than one component and should be examined and described accordingly. It is true of whatever human group it may be or even to an individual.

Ishida was probably also the first to attempt at the comparative study of peace concepts upon this assumption. As is shown in Table 1 below, in the comparison of peace concepts of various ancient civilizations, he first assumed that any peace concept

can be seen as a set of components of peace, “peace values” or “peace substances” in our terminology. He implicitly demonstrated that any peace concept is not a whole which cannot be analyzed, but a configuration of components or peace values, and that each component is accorded different importance or emphasis depending upon a human collectivity such as civilization, culture, nation, society and so forth. Table 1 shows the summary of his comparison.

**Table 1 Concept of Peace among Different Cultures**

source: Ishida (1969), 135

	will of God justice	prosperity	order	tranquility of mind
Ancient Judaism	Shâlôm			
Greece		Eirene		
Rome			Pax	
China(Japan)			ho p'ing/p'ing ho(heiwa)	
India				Ŝânti

The table compares the words of each civilization which correspond to the English word “peace” and shows the peace values which are emphasized or fostered in the civilization concerned. For example, in the ancient Judaism, “will of God or justice” and “prosperity” were the most important elements of peace, though such elements as “order” or “tranquility of mind” were not absent.

It seems that four or five peace values are sufficient to highlight the differences among the civilizations compared here, but, needless to say, peace values are not limited to these. For example, obviously the absence of war (and armed conflict) should be included. And some peace students would argue for the inclusion of the preservation of environment as one of the most important peace values in our world.<sup>3)</sup>

It is worth noting here that, though not very explicit, Ishida’s attempt contains a differentiation of peace spheres as well. If we compare peace values in the table such as prosperity and tranquility of mind, it is clear that the cognitive or perceptual space in which (economic) prosperity exists and that in which tranquility of mind exists are different. Prosperity is said of a state, society, or city, town and so on, while tranquility of mind is usually of the individual. This difference in peace sphere will be taken up in the next section.

In this way, the range of peace values has been extended by the addition of new

peace values to the earlier (single member) set of peace values. The same process can be seen in the development of the peace concept (or the definition of peace) embraced in peace studies.

## **1.2 Peace Values: Conceptualization of Peace in Peace Studies**

In the early years of peace studies, it was assumed that peace is the opposite of war. Peace was defined as *the absence of war*, partially because the early peace studies was strongly motivated by the reflection on the tragedies of the Second World War and by a sense of crisis of human survival caused by the danger of a total nuclear war between the two superpowers (Matsuo 2005: 19). From our perspective, it can be said that the peace concept at the time consisted of only one peace value, that is, the absence of war.

In retrospect and generally speaking, peace studies at the time had two tacit assumptions about the concept of war which further narrowed down the narrow scope of the single peace value, that is, the absence of war. First, “war” was implicitly assumed to be fought by major powers or at least only by states. This assumption left two important research areas almost completely out of consideration: developing countries and local and internal conflicts (Matsuo 2005: 45-47). For instance, internal conflicts were left completely out of consideration by the famous Correlates of War Project, launched at the University of Michigan (Small and Singer 1985: 8). One recent summary of the academic achievements of the project still maintains this narrow definition of war (Geller and Singer 1998: 12). One consequence of this was the fact that systematic studies on local and internal wars were virtually neglected until the seminal works of Istvan Kende (1971, 1978) appeared in the 1970s.

Secondly, war was assumed to be symmetric, that is, fought by states or alliances of states with roughly equal power. According to this assumption, the Vietnam War and other guerilla warfare were obvious anomalies, in addition to the fact that these involved non-state warring parties. For these reasons, the narrow definition of war became less and less employed.

In the conceptualization of peace as the absence of war, if there is a war, there is no peace, and if there is no war, there is peace, however war may be defined. Peace and war are, as it were, in the “zero-sum” relationship. This formulation of the relationship between peace and war soon came to be perceived as too narrow and

inflexible, because it did not allow of the possibility of a “grey zone.” Accordingly, attempts were made by such researchers as Kenneth Boulding (Boulding 1978: 43) and Geoffrey Darnton (Darnton 1973: 113) to extend the relationship a little, making it a little closer to reality. Instead of the dichotomy, both Darnton and Boulding admitted of the “gray zone” between peace and war. But, in spite of these attempts at modification, the essence of the definition of peace as the absence of war remained the same, because, even in these modified formulation, the degree of peace always depended on the degree of war, in what way it may be determined.

A real change in the peace concept occurred around 1970. The concept of peace embraced by peace studies underwent a radical change at that time. From 1945 to the 1960s, there were no major wars contrary to the fear of researchers, though there were many local wars. But, on the other hand, the so-called “North-South problem” emerged, or more precisely, came to be perceived, as an urgent issue facing the whole world. The recognition of the North-South problem awakened peace studies to tragic and miserable situations in developing countries manifested in famines, poverty, underdevelopment, and gross human rights violations. It is against this background that many peace researchers began to ask whether the absence of war really meant peace. The question can, from our perspective, be rephrased into the question whether peace consists of only one value or whether the absence of war is the only peace value<sup>4)</sup>.

It was Sugata Dasgupta who first went far beyond the absence of war and proposed a new concept of peace. He proposed the notion of “peacelessness,” which refers to the situations, especially in developing countries, where, in spite of the absence of war, human beings are suffering just as much from poverty, malnutrition, disease, illiteracy, discrimination, oppression and so on, as from war (Dasgupta 1968).

It is obvious that, in Dasgupta’s conceptualization of peace, new peace values such as economic prosperity (or rather its absence or lack) and physical health are incorporated into the proposed concept of peace as necessary components or conditions of peace. It was a clear break from the previous concept of peace with the only one component, the absence of war. Accordingly, once this definition of peace was accepted, the absence of interstate war would not be the only one sufficient condition of peace.

Note here that Dasgupta’s new definition of peace involves the issue of peace sphere as well. If it is assumed that the only sphere of peace that matters is the

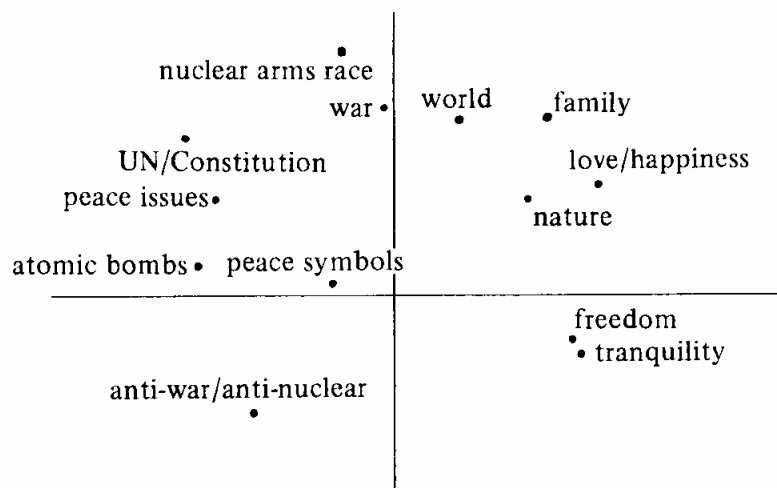
international or interstate system, or, more precisely, the system of which the only relevant unit is the sovereign independent state, peace can be defined as the absence of war between or among states or alliances of states. Under this assumption, the traditional definition of peace would be quite appropriate because peace could be predicated only on the relationship between states or groups of states. As we saw above, however, Dasgupta's definition of peace contains such peace values as (the absence of) poverty or underdevelopment, (the absence of) famine, (the absence of) insufficient education (opportunities) and so on. It is clear that poverty and underdevelopment cannot be a relation of sovereign independent state, much less famine and insufficient education. Generally speaking, these peace values can only be realized at the level of a domestic society or group within a state. Therefore, to be sure, Dasgupta's concept involved addition or incorporation of new spheres of peace as well, but we will postpone the discussion of the peace sphere to the next section.

Efforts in peace studies to cope with the new global situation by elaborating the concept of peace culminated in the epoch-making concept of peace based upon that of "violence" proposed by Johan Galtung in a now classical article (Galtung 1969). To be precise, it was not the concept of "structural violence" proper, as is often popularized, but a new concept of peace and violence that Galtung advanced. The term "structural violence" has, however, now become firmly established beyond any historical or academic correction. Galtung forwarded a broader theoretical framework which could deal not only with the issue of war, but also issues of poverty, disease and human rights violations. The key to his proposal of a new definition of peace was a new concept of violence. Galtung defined peace as the absence of violence, and not as the absence of war (Galtung 1969: 167). Of course, the usefulness and validity of the definition depends solely upon the definition of violence. What, then, is violence? According to Galtung, violence is everything which prevents the full realization of innate somatic and mental human potentials. To put it in a little different way, violence is anything which produces a gap between the physical and mental potentials of human beings and their actual conditions (Galtung 1969: 168). From this perspective of violence, poverty, underdevelopment, oppression and other social ills afflicting billions of people largely in developing countries can be seen as manifestations of violence, and, from our perspective, their elimination should be viewed as important peace values or necessary

conditions of peace. Now, components of peace became large in number. Galtung was successful, through his definition of violence, in establishing a comprehensive (or, some may say, all-inclusive) concept of peace. To be sure, Galtung's proposal involved the incorporation of new peace spheres as in the case of Dasgupta, the issue will be taken up in the next section.

After Galtung's proposal, one could no longer argue that a peace concept consisted of only one component. Any peace concept is theoretically composed of two or more elements which we call peace values. And, as suggested in Ishida's comparison above, we can now think of the peace concept of a particular human collectivity as a subset of peace values. There remains, however, one interesting issue unresolved. How are peace values related to each other? What is the overall mutual relationship of peace values? Up until today, few studies have pursued this line of investigation. Matsuo (1983) may be one among the few. Adopting the method of association experiment, he reported 13 peace values (Matsuo 1983: 16-20) and attempted to show the relationships of the 13 peace values as is shown in Figure 1.

**Fig 1 Structure of Peace Image of Japanese People**  
Source: Matsuo(1985), 10



In this figure again, we can recognize the relevance of peace spheres as well. For example, take note of the appearance of such elements as “world,” “family,” and “nature” in the figure above. This issue of peace sphere is our next topic.

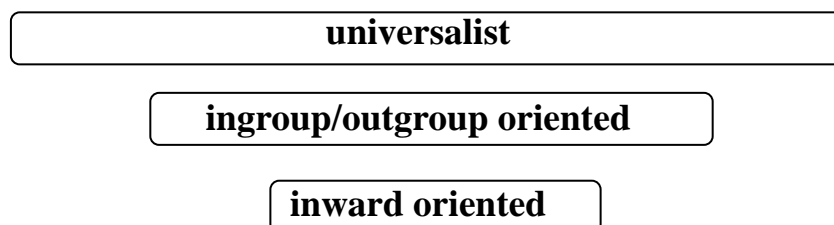
## 2 Peace Spheres

Peace concept is, as we saw above, multivariate, or made up of more than one component or peace value. But, peace concept can and should be studied from a different perspective as well. As we suggested several times in the previous section, peace concept involves another dimension, that is, the dimension of peace sphere.

This problem of the multidimensionality of the peace image was first suggested by Glenn D. Hook (Hook 1978-79). Though he did not use the term nor raise the issue quite explicitly, he stressed the importance of dimension other than peace value, arguing that, in dealing with children's peace "images," it is very important to examine who they think makes peace. This dimension can be referred to as the *agent* dimension (Hook 1978-79: 85).

But it was Johan Galtung who was the first to explicitly point out the importance of sphere of peace. He classified various spheres of peace the world into three types; that is, universalist, ingroup/outgroup oriented, and inward-oriented spheres of peace as is shown in Figure 2 (Galtung 1981).

**Figure 2 Three Spheres of Peace**  
source: adapted from Galtung (1981)



The "universalist" concept sees the whole world as one, and thinks that only the peace of the whole world is meaningful. The Roman concept of "pax" is the representative of this concept. The "in-group-oriented" peace sphere first divides the world into two parts: that is, its own group and other groups (out-group) or more generally "self" and "others." The criterion of distinction can be political, economic, geographical, cultural or religious, or any combination of these. The concept is interested only in the peace of the in-group or the peace within the group, and pays little attention to outside groups. The third, "inward oriented concept of peace" emphasizes the tranquility of the mind of individuals. It emphasizes the importance of the peace of the mind.



Through this proposal, the concept of peace became multivariate or multi-layered in peace sphere as well. In retrospect, it was quite natural that the notion of peace sphere (or some such notion) should be introduced. As was suggested above, the (proposal of) introduction of new peace values in the conceptualization of peace necessitated the introduction of new peace spheres as well. Despite Galtung's proposal of three peace spheres, studies on peace spheres have been few. The following table, Table 2, shows one of the few such attempts. It shows the nine major peace spheres in the Japanese peace concept in terms of the relative quantitative importance. The results given in the table were obtained by means of a kind of content analysis based on the samples of the Japanese word "heiwa" ("peace") taken from Japanese paperback fictions. Since the size of the samples is not large, the result is of course tentative. But it will be sufficient to obtain a general idea of major peace sphere of the Japanese people.

In addition, Table 2 also lists peace values which are strongly related to each of the peace spheres. It was because these pairs of peace spheres and peace values showed a high degree of cooccurrence of contingency within the samples. This naturally raises an interesting question about the mutual relationship between peace values and peace spheres. Probably, as we hinted above, a particular peace value may have a close connection with a particular peace sphere, or vice versa. But the exploration of the issue is, at present, our future task.

**Table 2 Major Spheres of Peace for Japanese People**

source: adapted from Matsuo 1984, 62 and 68

Sphere Japanese (English)	Strongly related "peace value"
jinrui (human race)	happiness
sekai (world)	quarrel/trouble, hope
kuni (country)	war prosperity
shudan (group)	tranquility
machi (town/city)	war quarrel/trouble
mura (village)	war quarrel/trouble tranquility sense of security prosperity
katei (family)	war sense of security
kojin (individual)	war quarrel/trouble tranquility
shizen (nature)	prosperity sense of security

In this way, the peace concept has now come to be seen as composed of two or more peace values and peace spheres, or as multi-valued and multi-layered.

## **Conclusion**

The present paper briefly described the development of the concept of peace in peace studies. It was traced in two respects: first, what kind of conceptualization of peace has been employed in studies on the concept of peace, and, secondly, how peace itself has been defined in peace studies. We began this short history of the concept of peace with two assumptions. The first assumption was that any peace concept should be considered to consist of possibly more than one peace values. The other one was that any peace concept should be viewed as containing possibly more than one peace spheres. As we have shown, both in studies on the peace concept and in the definition of peace itself, the concept of peace in peace studies was extended from a single value concept to a multi-value one, and from a one dimensional concept to a multi-dimensional one with the introduction of the notion of peace sphere.

In this connection, we should point out the recent similar extension of the concept of security in security studies (Buzan et al 1998: 2), as in peace studies (Wiberg 1992: 492, note 5). The concept of security has been broadened to include not only military sources of threat armed conflict but also such non-military sources as environmental degradation (global warming, scarcity of renewable and non-renewable resources and the like), damages upon domestic economy caused by international capital, organized crimes like drug traffics, massive human rights violations, population explosions, refugees and uncontrolled population migration, infectious diseases etc, etc. (Patman 1999: 4). Consequently, the concept of security now includes many issues as is illustrated in Table 3<sup>5</sup>).

As the table shows, the concept of security has been expanded from the traditional national security of state both in “referents” and “sources of threat” to security. Referents (those whose security should be guaranteed) now include not only states but also societies, internal groups and individuals. At the same time, sources of threat have come to include non-military threats like environment and economy.

**Table 3 Security: Referents and Sources of Threat**

source: based on Paris (2001), 98

		sources of threat	
		Military	military, nonmilitary or both
referents	states	<b>national security</b> conventional realist approach to security studies	<b>redefined security</b> e.g., environmental and economic security
	societies, groups and individuals	<b>intrastate security</b> e.g., civil war, ethnic conflict, and democide	<b>human security</b> e.g., environmental and economic threats to the survival of societies, groups and individuals

In this table, the expansion of the concept of security is explained in terms of “referents” and “sources of threat.” The notions of “source of threat” and “referent” are largely, if not completely, equivalent to our notions of peace value and peace sphere, respectively. Thus, the development of the concept of security corresponds to that of the concept of peace described above.

The expansion of the concept of security has now culminated in the concept of “human security.” The concept of “human security” was first explicitly proposed in 1994 by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in its annual report. It emphasizes changes: (1) “from territorial [or state] security to people’s security,” and (2) “from security through armaments to security through sustainable human development” (UNDP 1994: 24). The first change is the same as the expansion in referents from state to people (as a group or an individual) in table 3. The second corresponds to the expansion in the sources of threats. The threats to human security listed by UNDP range from economic, food, health, environment, political to personal bodily integrity and community security (UNDP 1994: 24-25)<sup>6</sup>.

Judging from the development of the concept of security sketched above, two tentative conclusions can be drawn. First, as a result of parallel development, peace and security studies are now converging (Kriesberg 2002: 587), or we should say, the concepts of peace and security have become very close to each other. For example,

recent peace studies anthologies increasingly emphasize the issue of security, pointing out the changes in nature and scope of security, or in sources of insecurity (Balász 1993: 8, Boulding 1992: 3-4). Secondly, not only our assumptions about multi-valued, multi-dimensional property of the concept of peace can be valid in other cases, but the employment of the two categories of peace value and peace sphere have also been validated to some extent.

The present paper attempted at the explanation of the development of the concept of peace in peace studies. It raises new questions or puzzles as well. Among them, following questions seem worth exploring, though the answers will show a great variability depending upon the human groups in consideration.

In a particular peace concept of a given human group or in the generalized peace concept, how are constituent peace values related to each other? This is a question of the internal structure of the concept of peace in terms of the mutual relationship of the relevant peace values as units.

How are peace values and peace spheres related with each other?

## NOTES

- 1) Perhaps, Kende (1989) and Rinehart (1993) may be among a few exceptions.
- 2) These works have been followed by Hall (1993), Hakvoort and Oppenheimer (1993) and so on. They focus mainly on children.
- 3) For example, see Kegley (1997), Pirages (1991), Wenden (1995: 14) etc.
- 4) Historically speaking, the idea that peace is more than the absence of war appeared as early as in the 16th century (Kende 1989: 236-237).
- 5) The extension of the concept of security and its implications to peace studies are discussed in some detail in Matsuo (2005: 173-177).
- 6) Of course, there have been criticisms against the expansion or “overexpansion” of the concept of security just as against the expansion of the concept of peace. Many have argued like “[Peace studies had now become] “a black hole” [absorbing every social problem and like after the fall of] “the tower of Babel” (Wiberg 1993: 10-11), “[i]f human security is all these things, what it is *not*?” (Paris 2001: 90-92), or “if everything that causes a decline in human well-being is labeled security threat, the term loses any analytical usefulness” (Deudney 1991: 24).

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