Peace in perspective: the historical development of Peace Studies and the Bahá'í concept

Paz en perspectiva: el desarrollo histórico de la Investigación para la Paz y el concepto bahá'í

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Abstract: This article has as objective to discuss how the peace concept evolved along with the history, and subsequently, to examine how this concept dialogue with the perspective provided by Bahá'í Faith according to authoritative texts and experts. Aiming to provide an overview for a discussion of a term in flux, this exploratory analysis was conducted aiming to respond to the following question: which are the interfaces between the discussion on peace developed by Peace Studies and the conceptual framework provided also on peace by Bahá'í Faith? The research shows that there are intersections both in concepts of peace and violence. Moreover, Bahá'í Faith brings an additional contribution to Peace Studies, which is a unique discussion on human nature and the principle of the oneness of mankind.
Keywords: Peace; Violence; Bahá'í; Religion; Peace Studies.

Resumen: Este artículo tiene como objetivo discutir cómo evolucionó el concepto de paz a lo largo de la historia y, posteriormente, examinar cómo este concepto dialoga con la perspectiva proporcionada por la Fé Bahá'í según sus textos autorizados y expertos. Con el objetivo de proporcionar una descripción general para una discusión en desarrollo, este análisis exploratorio se realizó con el objetivo de responder a la siguiente pregunta: ¿cuáles son las interfaces entre la discusión sobre la paz desarrollada por Peace Studies (Investigación para la Paz) y el marco conceptual proporcionado también sobre la paz por la Fé Bahá'í? La investigación muestra que existen intersecciones tanto en los conceptos de paz como de violencia. Además, la Fé Bahá'í aporta una contribución adicional a los Estudios de la Paz, que es una discusión única sobre la naturaleza humana y el principio de unidad de la humanidad.
Palabras clave: Paz; Violencia; Bahá'í; Religión; Investigación para la Paz.

1. INTRODUCTION[1]

The quest for peace has been for a long time a permanent issue in human history. Philosophers have written thousands of pages indicating the path for individuals and society to reach peace. Founders of religions from time to time bring the light of the Holy Writings to understand how we can live in a peaceful world. These discussions go beyond religion, and also activists, academics, social entrepreneurs, and politicians—like Mahatma Gandhi, Muhammad Yunus, Paulo Freire, Martin Luther King Jr, and others—work put in practice processes leading to peace in different approaches.

Aiming to provide an overview for a discussion of a term in flux, this article has as objective to discuss how the peace concept evolved along with the history, and subsequently, to examine how this concept dialogue with the perspective provided by Bahá'í Faith authoritative texts. This exploratory analysis was conducted aiming to respond to the following question: which are the interfaces between the discussion on peace developed by Peace Studies and the conceptual framework provided also on peace by Bahá'í Faith? The research shows that there are intersections both in concepts of peace and violence. Moreover, Bahá'í Faith brings an additional contribution to Peace Studies, which is a unique discussion on human nature and the principle of the oneness of mankind.

The article is divided into six parts. The first section after this introduction is provided a historical overview contextualizing how peace evolved from ancient religious traditions until the social engagement of Mohandas Gandhi and his influence. In the subsequent section, it is discussed the development of an academic field on peace, the so-called "Peace Studies" (or "Peace Research"), providing an overview of its origins, ontology, and epistemology. Following, it is discussed the core concepts of peace and violence, innovative development in Peace Studies. Finally, before the conclusion, we explore the conceptual framework on peace provided by Bahá'í Faith, showing that bring fresh developments to Peace Studies, in particular the discussion on human nature and the principle of the oneness of humankind.

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[1] The three initial sections are a revised and abridged version of a previous published chapter in Portuguese, see Ferreira (2019).

2. PEACE THROUGHOUT HISTORY: FROM THE WESTERN VIEW TO MOHANDAS GANDHI INFLUENCE

According to a historical overview about peace traditions developed by Nigel Youngs, editor of the seminal book *The Oxford International Encyclopedia of Peace*,

> "[…] Thanks to a century of developments in civil society, the meaning of peace has broadened to include a wide spectrum of positive issues. In areas such as civil and human rights, disarmament, gender, global poverty, development, and the environment, the influence of various social movements has been immense. With these influences has come a wider concept of peace— a peace involving a peaceful methodology of action" (Youngs, 2013, p. 157).

These evolutions of peace concept claim more than simply study of conflict. As mentioned by the one important scholar in Peace Research, Charles Webel, "peace is both a historical ideal and a term whose meaning is in flux, sometimes seemingly constant (as 'inner peace of mind') but also noteworthy for its relative absence on the field of history (as in 'world peace')" (Webel, 2007, p.7).

The construction of the very idea of peace is not linear and it's difficult to talk about a universal agreement on peace. However, looking from East and West traditions, our understanding can evolve for a comprehensive framework, open to different perspectives that can serve as foundations for social transformation.

When we look throughout the history of peace concept, soon will be noticed its richness as well as its connection with spiritual values. Ho-Won Jeong introduces how this development evolved:

> "[…] The search for inner and communal peace derives from the ideal sought in the spiritual life. From the early period of human thinking, there has been a clear understanding that war is neither a natural phenomenon nor the irreversible will of the gods. A peaceful world belongs to a society where people can work and live together in harmony and friendship. The domination of one group over another is a major obstacle to peace (Jeong, 2000, p. 7)."

This derivation from spiritual life can be seen in several religious denominations around the world. Eastern religions and philosophies – like Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism – emphasized links between spiritual

life and justice connecting material and spiritual realms. Native American and African tribal cultures bring the necessity of human beings to be in peace with the planet, respecting the environment and their kingdoms. Thus, one must avoid generalizations that religion brings war or just peace, given each context need to be taken into account when we discuss religion, peace and conflict (Ferreira and Nogueira, 2019).

In the West, Greek philosophy suggested that a peaceful world means a lack of civil disturbances based on the moral substance of humanity. Such behavior could underlie a principle of world citizenship. As explained by Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy:

> "Notice, for example, the way Plato has the Sophist Hippias address the motley crew of Athenians and foreigners present at Callias' house in Plato's Protagoras (337c7-d3):
> *Gentlemen present ... I regard you all as kinsmen, familiars, and fellow-citizens — by nature and not by convention; for like is by nature akin to like, while convention, which is a tyrant over human beings, forces many things contrary to nature.*
> Socrates, too, it can be argued, was sensitive to this more cosmopolitan identification with human beings as such. At least as Plato characterizes him, Socrates avoids traditional political engagement as much as he can, in favor of an extraordinary career of examining himself and others, and he insists that these examinations are both genuinely political […] and extended to all, Athenians and foreigners alike (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2013)."

In the medieval period, a series of peace approaches and proposals were made in Europe to build peace, in a period known as *Peace of God.* Led by the medieval church and civil authorities, the main goal was to protect ecclesiastical property and women, priests, pilgrims, merchants, and other noncombatants from violence from the 10th to the 12th century. Many other initiatives were made by the Catholic Church in order to maintain peace or, at least, direct violence towards the East and far from Europe (Heyn, 1990)[2].

Later, the debate about durable peace in Europe advances through kings like George of Kunštát and Poděbrady in century 15th. King of Bohemia (1458–1471) and leader of the Hussites, Poděbrady proposed the *Tractatus pacis toti Christianitati fiendae*, or Treaty on the Establishment of Peace

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[2] I am grateful here for the insightful comment made by one of the anonymous revisor of this article.

throughout Christendom among all Christian powers. The treaty invited Germany (then including Bohemia), France, Italy, and its princes and Hispanic powers to settle all differences by peaceful means, including a common parliament and other common institutions and supranational insignia. George couched the proposal in Christian terms as a way to stop the advance of Islam and Turks who had conquered Constantinople in 1453. George hoped that the treaty would come into effect in 1464. It is seen as one of the historical visions of European unity forgoing the European Union (Smith, 1992).

Joyce Silva (2019) offers insightful reflections on this role of Christianism in the very idea of peace. She demonstrates that the promotion of peace is in the essence of Christianism, a philosophy that can labeled as just peace, grounded in the teachings of New Testament. This approach is seen today with the initiatives of Pope Francis towards peace dialogue, as well as in Christian branches like Menonites and Quakers.

Looking back to medieval period, interpretations based on particular interests by rulers of Europe made emerge wars in name of the religion, despite the despite the contradiction that this implies if we regard the New Testament (see Silva, 2019). Reflections to address the implications of these wars gained momentum after a long period of war labeled the Thirty Years' War. This war involved all of Europe in different conflicts related to religious disagreements, the rivalry between countries and/or feuds, and economic interests. In the end, in 1648, the so-called Peace of Westphalia emerged as a peace agreement, creating a groundwork for self-determination and the possibility of coexistence of sovereign states. While the Peace of Westphalia did not create a complete peace between rival political groups in Europe, it had its importance in the historical moment to determine the self-determination of peoples and allow boundaries to avoid new fratricide wars in Europe, as were usual for decades and decades before. It converged with the same period of an important philosophical movement in human history, the age of Enlightenment.

Violence and conflict have been seen as the greatest evil in history by political philosophers of Enlightenment humanism like John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, but it was the French philosopher Charles-Irénée Castel, or Abbé de Saint-Pierre, that suggested for the first time in his work *Project for a Perpetual Peace* the signing of a treaty binding all the nations of Europe in a "Grand Alliance" and the establishment of a European Assembly in a "City of Peace". He also proposed the setting up of a European army to guard the Continent's frontiers (Saint-Pierre, 2008).

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However, his ideas became famous only after another important key philosopher in Western history, Immanuel Kant, generalize Saint-Pierre's ideas to include all people in a cosmopolitan and universal peace through a large array of international agreements and institutions. This proposal outlined in his book *Perpetual Peace* was based on the "assumption that achieving peace would be easy by defining the rights of sovereign states in an international system and preventing one state from intervening with the government of another state" (Jeong, 2000, p. 8). *Perpetual Peace* is structured in two parts, which the first describes the steps that should be taken immediately, including respect to treaties, non-intervention in another state, abolition of armies, among others (see Kant, 1975). In the second part, the Three Definitive Articles would provide not merely a cessation of hostilities, but a foundation on which to build peace:

1.   "The civil constitution of every state should be republican"
2.   "The law of nations shall be founded on a federation of free states"
3.   "The law of world citizenship shall be limited to conditions of universal hospitality" (Kant, 1795)

Kant's work resembles in several ways modern and contemporary political science and politics in general. First, Kantian ideas were translated into socialist ideals for a peaceful society without class. Second, the conception of republicanism as the foundation for peace gave room for the so-called democratic peace theory, which posits that democracies are hesitant to engage in armed conflict with other identified democracies. Thirdly, his ideas also influenced liberal internationalism, which argues that liberal states should intervene (direct or indirectly) in other sovereign states to pursue liberal objectives—an idea strongly disseminated in the current debate on West countries' foreign policies (see Ferreira, 2020). And finally, inspired by Kantian ideas, another important work on the role of commerce to promote peace came to debate in 1909, when is published *The Great Illusion*, authored by Norman Angell. The author suggests that modern commerce made war unprofitable, even for the victorious country, given that war between industrial countries was futile because conquest is never profitable, and then, the possibility of successful war is *the great illusion.*

Additionally to Enlightenment humanism and cosmopolitan rationalism discourse, innovations on peace concept emerged in the West and another important approach in India in the 20th century. The explanation of Nigel Youngs is very instructive on the issue:

[…]A third tradition, one that survived the war but was drastically changed in the more secular and pessimistic age following 1918 was that of the religious peace movements, which included radical Protestants and other remnants of left-wing Puritanism, such as the Quakers and the other prophetic minorities who had maintained several centuries of witness against war as an ungodly institution. Although at its core this was a tradition encompassing tens of thousands— or at most hundreds of thousands, rather than millions— its importance for peace was far in excess of its size. The peace churches, and those institutions with similar beliefs, were small; but both in peace movements and in a wide range of humanitarian projects they constituted a powerful lobby, with influence even on state policy. For example, the expansion of conscientious objection to military service as a human right was part of this legacy. These three peace traditions were essentially Western: European, North American, and from the English-speaking diaspora of the Commonwealth. But a fourth was emerging by 1918 that, while it included these Western influences, brought non-Western values into a global dialogue. First and foremost, after Gandhi's arrival in India from South Africa in 1917, the growing impact of his theory and practice of nonviolent action (satyagraha) was felt beyond both countries. Hindu as well as other elements (for example, Sikh) were added to a blend of Tolstoyan and Quaker Christianity. So were elements of Thoreauean civil disobedience, and a humanist socialism. This blend of utopianism and pragmatism was fused in a philosophy that rooted "truth" in social action" (Youngs, 2003, p. 159).

The action for peace lead by Gandhi had an impact around the world, incorporating pacifists from all continents. Remarkably, Gandhian methods are admittedly inspired in Krishna, a Manifestation of God also according to Bahá'í Faith. As mentioned by David Barash and Charles Webel (2002, p.5):

"In what is now India, the Buddhist monarch Asoka (third century B.C.E.) was renowned for abandoning his successful military campaigns in the mid-career, and he devoted himself to the religious conversion of his adversaries by non-violent means of persuasion. The great Indian text, the Hindu epic *Mahabharata* (written about 200 B.C.E.), contains as perhaps its most important segment the *Bhagavad Gita*. This is a mythic account of a vicious civil war in ancient India, in which one of the principal warriors, Arjuna, is reluctant to fight because many of his friends and relatives are on the opposite side. Arjuna is ultimately persuaded to engage in combat by the God Krishna, who convinces Arjuna that he must fight, not out of hatred or hope for personal gain, but out of selfless duty. Although the *Gita* can and has been interpreted as supporting caste loyalty and the obligation to kill when bidden by a superior party to do so, it also

inspired the great 20th-century Indian leader Mohandas Gandhi as an allegory for de-emphasis of individual self in the pursuit of higher goals […]"

Barash and Weber add more information about the Gandhi worldview (*Weltanschauung*) that inspired scholar and activists after the 1920s:

> "Central to Gandhi's worldview was the search for truth, and indeed, he titled his autobiography *My Experiments With Truth*. Gandhi considered that nonviolent love (*ahimsa*, in Sanskrit) was achievable only through compassion and tolerance for other people; moreover, it required continual testing, experimentation, occasional errors, and constant, unstinting effort. His teachings emphasized courage, directness, friendly civility, absolute honesty, nonviolence, and adherence to the truth. Perhaps the most important Gandhian concept is *satiagraha*, literally translated as "soul-force" or "soul-truth". *Satiagraha* requires a clearheaded adherence to goals of love, and mutual respect, and it demands a willingness to suffer, if need be, to achieve these goals" (Barash and Webel, 2002, p. 513).

The life of Gandhi inspired subsequently academics studying peace issues, as well as activists and personalities like Martin Luther King Jr, Desmond Tutu, and Nelson Mandela. Founded on Gandhian *Weltanschauung,* the 20th century had seen new movements for civil rights, for the end of oppression through non-violent action, and a struggle against colonialism. As summarized by Nigel Youngs, "the worldwide range of peace and social transformation projects that have adopted such methods is a tribute to its [Gandhi] power and relevance" (Youngs, 2013, p. 160).

3. ORIGINS, ONTOLOGY AND EPISTEMOLOGY OF PEACE STUDIES/RESEARCH

Throughout history, it was not only the search for a social transformation by people like Gandhi that inspired the evolution of the peace concept. The ideological division witnessed after two World Wars politicized the conception of peace, in which both capitalist and socialist worldviews claimed that its vision of peace would be accurate enough to promote a structural change in the world.

As we know, the ideological division diminished significantly after different political processes carried on at the end the of 20th Century. Furthermore, even with the Fall of Iron Curtain and the loss of influence of Socialism, the liberal world did fulfill the promise of a more peaceful world.

Instead, we continue to see a world plagued by civil wars, forced displacements that result in millions of refugees, human rights abuses—just to mention some of the afflictions of a still conflicted world.

While in the 1930s and 1940s we could see works published by eminent scholars concerned to study systematically the matter of war and peace[3], it was the representation of the world since the end of II World War that has motivated a new generation of scholars in different research centers around the world to examine scientifically the question of peace. Systematizing a new field of studies focused on how to promote peace, avoid violence and promote a peaceful world, a sort of sociologists, economists, political scientists, psychologists, and others organizing new centers and forums to discuss peace.

The emergence of Peace Research/Studies institutes contrasted the dominant theories in International Relations. Researchers such as Johan Galtung in Norway, Anatol Rapoport at the University of Michigan, and Elise and Kenneth Boulding at Stanford University, offered sane alternatives to the "Dr. Strangelove"[4] approach of mutually assured destruction (MAD). From this engagement seen in North America and Europe, a new field called Peace Research/Studies emerged. The Peace Research Institute of Oslo (PRIO), led by Johan Galtung, the first institution to use the term[5].

In a bipolar world, divided into two powers of influence with different views of the world threatening mutual destruction, peace researchers focused

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[3] Among these works, two are important in the evolution of peace studies: 1) Sorokin, Pitirim A (1937) *Social and Cultural Dynamics. Volume Three. Fluctuations of Social Relationships, War and Revolution*, New York: American Book Company; 2) Wright, Quincy (1942) *A Study of War*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

[4] "*Dr. Strangelove, Or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (1964) is producer/director Stanley Kubrick's satirical, provocative black comedy/fantasy regarding doomsday and Cold War politics that features an accidental, inadvertent, pre-emptive nuclear attack". See more in: Filmsite Movie Review (2015) *Dr. Strangelove, Or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb.* Available in: http://www.filmsite.org/drst.html. Access: May 17th, 2021.

[5] According with Johan Galtung, "the International Peace Research Institute, Oslo, got its fledgling start in January 1959 when the present author was given a grant by Institute for Social Research in Oslo to draft a research program in the field of peace studies." Together with Johan Galtung, the team in the beginnings of PRIO consisted of more five researchers: the psychologist Otto Klinberg, the sociologist Ingrid Eide, the political scientist Mari Holmboe Ruge, the anthropologist Arne Martin Klausen and the historian Sivert Langholm – which shows the multidisciplinary of the field since its first years (Galtung, 1985).

not only on the dangerous game of influences among powers but also on the social and economic factors commonly neglected in violence and peace discussions. The aim of this new field of social science is well explained by one of the most eminent scholars in Peace Research since the 1970s, Peter Wallensteen (2001, p. 3):

> The aim of peace research is to understand the causes of violence and find ways to reduce and remove violence. Peace research, thus, incorporates topical research, university-level teaching and practical applications. Peace research is also sensitive to historical changes and local circumstances, though it certainly should and can retain its autonomy and core direction. Sometimes, societal changes constitute challenges to existing paradigms of peace research and lead to new fields of inquiry. At other times, historical developments confirm the existing agenda. Either way, the dialogue with the realities of peace and unrest remains formative and affects the growth of peace research. It takes on a different profile under different circumstances. Global historical changes (world wars, the Cold War, the end of the Soviet era, global terrorism) will, of course, affect a discipline devoted to the study of war. It will also be exposed to the changes of methodology in sciences. Regional foci will differ, as regions have different priorities relating to conflict and conflict resolution. Research milieus will appear divergent, although they are united in the same basic concern. Together these influences lead to a varied impact of peace research on societies.

This new wave of institutes and scholars studying peace during the Cold War challenged the branch of social sciences studying transnational issues under a predominantly state-centered bias—especially by Political Science and International Relations. As a field distinct from the traditional area of strategic/military studies, peace research/studies is also distinct from peace activism or advocacy but help "to build bridges in society, thereby enhancing a necessary but often absent element for global integration" (Wallensteen, 2001, p. 11). According to prominent peace researcher Johan Galtung, one cannot study only the possibilities of peace focusing on an international conflict or a struggle between two states. For him, "there are many borderlines cross-cutting mankind, creating steep gradients in degree of integration and willingness to use violence. Only some of these borders are national borderlines" (Galtung, 1964, p. 2).

This perspective contributed to an ontology linking the scientific study on the peace process with the interests of the entire society independently of national borders. This makes the field not looking only for the political challenges to achieve peace, but also for issues like violence, inequality,

justice, reconciliation, and conflict resolution. While the unit of analysis often remains at the level of the state, the field has predominantly regarded social issues and its advancement towards peace – differently from a non-normative field as International Relations. In addition, as stated by Nigerian peace researcher Demola Akinyoade (2012),

> "[…] scholarship, research and practice in Peace and Conflict Studies focus on certain core issues, which define the ontology and from which epistemological, methodological and theoretical issues in the field flow. The most basic of these are what peace is; the nature, causes, outbreak, and dynamics of conflict; and the means for resolving conflict; and building sustainable peace [...]. The core issues constitute the broad areas of inquiry, spawning a range of concepts in the field. Some of the key concepts germane to the field are armed conflict, armed group, conflict, conflict resolution, peace, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, peacemaking, violence, and war [...]. It is about these key concepts and their variants that the field of Peace and Conflict Studies makes its ontological claims.

With a normative approach, Peace Research/Studies can be regarded as a value-oriented field with three epistemological branches:

> *Empirical peace studies*, based on empiricism: the systematic comparison of theories with empirical reality (data), revising theories if they do not agree with data — data being stronger than theory.
> *Critical peace studies*, based on criticism: the systematic comparison of empirical reality (data) with values, trying, in words and/or in action, to change reality if it does not agree with the values – values being stronger than data.
> *Constructive peace studies*, based on constructivism: the systematic comparison of theories with values, trying to adjust theories to values, producing visions of a new reality – values being stronger than theory (Galtung, 1996, p. 9-10).

In the philosophical theory of Galtung, those branches shall work jointly, connecting data, theory, and values. There are explicit relationships among the three in his definition.

Peace Research's epistemology founded in Galtung's proposals – that has influenced strongly all the field of peace research, and even conflict resolution – demands a multidisciplinary approach not commonly found in the field. Unfortunately, in the end, few generalists are combining the three corners (values, theory, and data). However, some changes are seen, as in the recent

researches developed in the Centro de Estudos Sociais of Universidade de Coimbra (Portugal), University of Manchester, Durham University, Dublin City University and also by experts engaged in Rede de Pesquisas sobre Paz, Conflitos e Estudos Críticos de Segurança (Rede PCECS, Brazil).

Thus, as said by Peter Wallensteen, "from a small beginning, peace research has become a large and established enterprise" (Wallensteen, 2001, p. 4), with a developed and evolving discourse gathering a large epistemic community around the world.

4. CORE CONCEPTS IN PEACE STUDIES/RESEARCH: VIOLENCE AND PEACE

Within their ontological and epistemological claims, Peace Research/Studies brought along last decades a large array of ideas, concepts, and constructs helping us to reflect on peace. Such conception supported the systematization for scientific exploration of the condition of peace and conflict in the world. In this section, we will introduce two core concepts working as foundations of Peace Research: peace and violence.

Johan Galtung innovated on how social sciences interpret peace in his essay published in 1969, "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research". The essay brings the foundations of what peace research is engaged to investigate. Firstly, he defines the idea of peace based on three principles:

> "the term peace' shall be used for social goals at least verbally agreed to by many, if not necessarily by most; these social goals may be complex and difficult, but not impossible, to attain; the statement peace is absence of violence shall be retained as valid" (Galtung, 1969, p. 167).

Thus, science to understand peace is connected with a normative approach which believes that peace is attainable. Different from International Relations and Political Science scholars who understood peace simply as the absence of war, for Galtung peace means the *absence/reduction of violence of all kinds as well as nonviolent and creative conflict transformation* (Galtung, 1969, p. 167). Consequently, the idea of peace expands for a comprehensive concept that moves away from the idea of peace as opposite from war. Being peace as opposite of violence, peace research differs itself from International Relations or Political Science – as previously introduced – and moves towards a multidisciplinary approach seeking to investigate peace in multiple dimensions. With such a perspective, a peace researcher will not

be engaged to understand only the war, but also other violent processes present in our society.

This paper will come back later for specific explanations about the peace concept but firstly is key for our purposes to define what means violence – another concept refined by the Norwegian scholar. For him, "if peace now is regarded as the absence of violence, then thinking about peace (and consequently peace research and peace action) will be structured the same way as thinking about violence" (Galtung, 1969, p. 172). Then,

> Violence is here defined as the cause of the difference between the potential and the actual, between what could have been and what is. Violence is that which increases the distance between the potential and the actual, and that which impedes the decrease of this distance. Thus, if a person died from tuberculosis in the eighteenth century it would be hard to conceive of this as violence since it might have been quite unavoidable, but if he dies from it today, despite all the medical resources in the world, then violence is present according to our definition (Galtung, 1969, p. 168-169).

He continues to clarify later what he means when say about the potential level of realization, making a distinction between direct and indirect violence:

> Thus, the potential level of realization is that which is possible with a given level of insight and resources. If insight and/or resources are *monopolized* by a group or class or are *used for other purposes*, then the actual level falls below the potential level, and violence is present in the system. In addition to these types of *indirect* violence there is also the *direct* violence where means of realization are not withheld, but directly destroyed. Thus, when a war is fought there is direct violence since killing or hurting a person certainly puts his 'actual somatic realization' below his 'potential somatic realization'. But there is also indirect violence insofar as insight and resources are channeled away from constructive efforts to bring the actual closer to the potential (Galtung, 1969, p. 169).

As can be noticed, this definition of violence claims two subdivisions: direct/personal and indirect/structural violence. Later Johan Galtung explained that

> Whereas the focus on *direct* violence would lead to analysis of capabilities and motivations of international and intranational actors, with efforts to create *institutions* that can prevent them from exercising direct violence (for instance

by punishing those who do), the focus on *structural* violence will lead to a critical analysis of structures pregnant with violence into less violent ones (Galtung, 1985, p. 146)

From these quotes, can be regarded that violence for Galtung is not only the use of a tool or the own body by individuals or groups to hurt somebody, as common sense believes to mean violence and what he labels direct/personal violence. The idea of structural violence is an important development in Peace Research introduced by Galtung to understand the foundations of indirect violence in a path for the end of human suffering as a result of conflicts. It is also important to note that the structural violence concept goes together with an expanded notion of conflict. According to Grotten and Jansen (1981), "conflict (...) indicates a situation within a social system in which irreconcilable aims each strive for dominion over one another. This shows that conflicts originate from opposing interests in intra-societal or inter-societal systems" (Grotten and Jansen, 1981, p. 175-181).

The measurement of social injustice allows us to identify this form of violence that often goes unnoticed, but that victimize thousands of people daily. In a setting of inequality, Galtung suggests that the researcher should ask: what factors, other than direct violence or the threat thereof, tends to support a condition of inequality and avoid humankind development? Faced with this question, to understand structural violence the researcher must know the fundamentals of sciences that explain social structures, as is seen similarly in the military and state-centric perspective in the study of direct violence. Furthermore, it is not enough to measure violence from the number of deaths, but also from other important indicators such as how much the life expectancy decreases when structural violence is present (Köhler and Alcock, 1976).

While could be measured by differences in life expectancy, structural violence has archetypal exploitation as the centerpiece. There are some 'topdogs' – using Galtung's term – that get much more out of interaction in the structure than others, the underdogs. "The underdogs may be so disadvantaged that they die (starve, waste away from diseases) from it: explotation[…]. Or they may be left in a permanent, unwanted state of misery, usually including malnutrition and illness[…]" (Galtung, 1990, p. 293).

Further, Johan Galtung also added a third subdivision on his construct about violence as opposed to peace: cultural violence. According to him,

By 'cultural violence' we mean those aspects of culture, the symbolic sphere of our existence – exemplified by religion and ideology, language and art,

empirical science and formal science (logic, mathematics) – *that can be used to justify or legitimize direct or structural violence*. Stars, crosses and crescents; flags, anthems and military parades; the ubiquitous portrait of the Leader; inflammatory speeches and posters – all these come to mind (Galtung, 1990, p. 291)[6].

Put together with direct and structural violence, the cultural violence would be the third corner of a "(vicious) violence triangle" as an image. In other words, Galtung suggests that the three types of violence can be represented by the three corners of a violence triangle that are causally connected to each other. However, there are differences in the "time relation of three concepts of violence. Direct violence is an *event*, structural violence is a *process* with ups and downs; cultural violence is an *invariant,* a 'permanence'" (Galtung, 1990, p. 294). To struggle for overcoming the 'permanence' – in quotes because is expected to break this permanence – of cultural violence is challenging, but necessary. Distinctions based on gender, race, or nation justifying or legitimizing structural and direct violence are some examples of these challenges that shall be changed throughout the time towards a peaceful society[7].

Until here, this section unfolded mainly the concept of violence and its three types. Let us now reflect on the very concept of peace from Peace Studies. It can be affirmed that "an extended concept of violence leads to an extended concept of peace. Just as a coin has two sides, one side alone being only one aspect of the coin, not the complete coin, peace also has two sides: absence of personal violence, and absence of structural violence" (Galtung, 1969, p.183). Galtung refers to them respectively as negative peace and positive peace.

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[6] My emphasis. Similar idea is developed by the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu in his concept of *symbolic violence.* However, the concept in comparison of cultural violence differs in applicability and field. Galtung is concerned exclusively to explain the violence as a challenge to reach the peace, while Bourdieu is regarding in general the question of power in the society. See Bourdieu (1989).

[7] Despite the criticisms related to an expanded concept of violence difficult to operationalize in research and its normative approach (Boulding, 1977), it enlarges the view on peace moving from simply a state-centric perspective, opening an investigation of others social actors and social forces and calling attention for particular historical settings. Also, the concept leads to a discussion of social transformation and actions to eliminate structural violence, making also clear the links between social justice and peace (see Weigert, 1999).

He asserts that negative peace is simply the absence of direct violence (ideological or resource-based). Since the absence of direct violence can be performed by the imposition of political or non-state actors through forms of economic and political oppression, it becomes important to define the concept of positive peace. While a complete positive peace can be difficult to achieve, society can always advance to be near a positive peace. This undertakes the absence of structural violence and a constant search for quality of life, personal growth, freedom, social equality, economic equity, solidarity, autonomy, and participation (Galtung, 1973).

This concept of peace makes peace theory intimately connected not only with conflict theory (and the field of Conflict Resolution) but also with development theory. It enlarges the idea of peace to investigate ways to control and reduce the use of violence –like wars, genocide and so on– (negative peace) but also investigates how to promote development and social justice in an unequal world (positive peace).

Attention to negative peace usually brings an emphasis on peacekeeping or peace restoring in zones of war or conflict. Still, positive peace focuses on peacebuilding, the establishment of non-exploitative social structures, and "a determination to work toward that goal even when a war is not ongoing or imminent". Then, negative peace is thus a more conservative goal, as it seeks to only reach to keep things the same if a war is not taking place, whereas "positive peace is more active and bolder, implying the creation of something that does not currently exist" (Barash and Webel, 2002, p.8).

5. BAHÁ'Í CONCEPT ON PEACE AND ITS CONNECTIONS WITH PEACE STUDIES CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

While Galtung systematized the concept, the history of philosophy and religion brings several examples of perceptions of peace closer to positive peace. As explained by Ho-Won Jeong,

> For thousand years, […] vision of peace from religious traditions to modern philosophical ideas encouraged a lifestyle based on nonviolence and communal living. In modern thinking, peace is no longer simply a utopia to be realized by abstract religious moral codes or principles. Rather it is a goal that can be obtained by conscious efforts to build a harmonious social order (Jeong, 2000, p.9).

In addition, Charles Webel and David Barash affirm:

Despite the prevalence of structural violence, many cultural and spiritual traditions have identified political and social goals that are closer to positive peace than negative peace. The ancient Greek concept of *eireinei* (English irenic) denotes harmony and justice as well as peace. Similarly, the Arabic *salaam* and the Hebrew *shalom* connote not only the absence of violence but also the presence of well-being, wholeness, and harmony within oneself, a community, and among all nations and peoples. The Sanskrit word *shanti* refers not only to peace but also to spiritual tranquility, an integration of outward and inward models of being, just as Chinese noun *ping* denotes harmony and achievement of unity from diversity. In Russian, the word *mir* means peace, a village community, and the entire world (Barash and Webel, 2002, p.8).

Both for Jeong (2000) and Barash & Webel's (2002) works, historically the positive peace concept is connected with some cultural and spiritual traditions. But in Bahá'í Faith, can be found connections with the idea of negative and positive peace and with its conceptual framework offered by the Holy Writings or authoritative texts?

With a similar perspective to the seminal work of Galtung (1969) who stated that peace is a social goal "at least verbally agreed to by many if not necessarily by most" that is attainable, Bahá'í teachings see peace as not only possible but also a divine promise for mankind. There are several passages from Bahá'u'lláh, Prophet-Founder of Bahá'í Faith, which mentions peace as the final stage of human development. In one of these passages, He says

That all nations should become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men should be strengthened; that diversity of religion should cease, and differences of race are annulled—what harm is there in this?… Yet so it shall be; these fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the 'Most Great Peace' shall come…. Yet do We see your kings and rulers lavishing their treasures more freely on means for the destruction of the human race than on that which would conduce to the happiness of mankind…. These strifes and this bloodshed and discord must cease, and all men be as one kindred and one family…. Let not a man glory in this, that he loves his country; let him rather glory in this, that he loves his kind (Bahá'u'lláh, 1978, p.xi)

Also, Abdu'l- Bahá, son of Bahá'u'lláh, head of Bahá'í Faith from 1893-1921, and legitimate interpreter of Writings according to Bahá'í theology, wrote that

> A few, unaware of the power latent in human endeavor, consider this matter as highly impracticable, nay even beyond the scope of man's utmost efforts. Such is not the case, however. On the contrary, thanks to the unfailing grace of God, the loving-kindness of His favored ones, the unrivaled endeavors of wise and capable souls, and the thoughts and ideas of the peerless leaders of this age, nothing whatsoever can be regarded as unattainable. Endeavor, ceaseless endeavor, is required. Nothing short of an indomitable determination can possibly achieve it. Many a cause which past ages have regarded as purely visionary, yet in this day has become most easy and practicable. Why should this most great and lofty Cause—the daystar of the firmament of true civilization and the cause of the glory, the advancement, the well-being and the success of all humanity—be regarded as impossible of achievement? Surely the day will come when its beauteous light shall shed illumination upon the assemblage of man.

As seen in the Abdu'l-Bahá quote, this peace cannot be attained without "ceaseless endeavor" and "indomitable determination". This includes the support to promote collective security which later was translated into the commitment of Bahá'í Faith to the development of international organizations like the League of Nations and United Nations. Currently, the Bahá'í International Community is represented in United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), having an active role in contemporary issues like the environment, gender equality, human rights, youth, and development, among others (see more Sabet, 2004).

Conceptually and theologically, at all levels, the Bahá'í view on peace is grounded in a "spiritual reality of human nature" that must be integrated into an effective long-term approach to social change and overcome violence (Farhoumand-Sims and Lerche, 2004, p.22). This aspect is explained in a recent publication on war, peace, and Bahá'í Faith. Ferreira and Karlberg (2016) recall that a major source of conflict and war is the materialistic conception embedded in contemporary social norms and institutions. In a social order "premised on the view that humans are motivated primarily by egoistic, self-interested, and competitive instincts", violence and war are often viewed as a deterministic expression of human nature. In this regard, Bahá'í perspective goes beyond the classical framework of Peace Studies, asserting

that "human nature is characterized by the dual capacities for egoism and altruism, competition and cooperation—and the extent to which either develops is a function of one's education, cultural environment, and will" (Ferreira and Karlberg, 2016).

Accordingly, the development of altruistic service to the betterment of society is key in Bahá'í perspective on peace (Ferreira and Karlberg, 2016; Farhoumand-Sims and Lerche, 2004). This service is grounded in educational processes to overcome cultural violence embedded in the materialistic perspective of human nature. In summary, while recognizing the materialistic aspect of human nature, Bahá'í Faith also asserts that there is also another aspect, altruistic, that can be developed through educational processes grounded in spiritual values like generosity, kindness, love, justice, and unity.

Furthermore, this perspective must grasp the recognition of oneness of humanity, a necessary step to build a social order founded on the principle of justice. About this topic, it is understood in Bahá'í Faith that the principle of the oneness of mankind can govern the social organization. According to the Institute for Studies in Global Prosperity, a bahá'í-inspired international NGO,

> The principle that governs the functioning of the human body is unity in diversity. It is possible to conceive of human society similarly. Society is composed of myriads of individuals and groups who have various affiliations and secondary identities but who also have a primary identity, rooted in the spiritual nature that they share with the rest of humanity. This identity that reflects the reality of all human beings forms the basis of their collective efforts to advance the common good (Institute for Studies in Global Prosperity, 2009).

Citing the Universal House of Justice—the international governing council of the Bahá'í Faith, in which its creation was ordained by Bahá'u'lláh—the expert on human rights Aaron Emmel adds that this service for peace grounded in a recognition of the oneness of humankind is an antidote to social challenges like racism. Also, an 'unbridled nationalism' must be eclipsed by a sane and legitimate patriotism. Finally, replacement of religious strife and emancipation of women is key in the process of building a sustainable peace (Universal House of Justice *apud* Emmel, 2012, p.173-4)

These elements show an alignment with Peace Studies classical approaches regarding the need to overcome one of the vertices of violence, in this case, cultural violence. As we saw earlier, cultural violence is connected

with the symbolic sphere of our existence—exemplified by religion and ideology, and others—that legitimize or facilitate violent behavior. Now, in recognizing the importance that to build peace it is necessary to overcome racial and religious prejudice, gender inequality, and nationalism through an awareness of oneness of humankind, the Bahá'í Faith recognizes—as done in Peace Studies—that peace is not only achieved with the stoppage of direct violence. A change in values, structures, and ideas is also necessary.

Furthermore, there is also a clear dialogue between Bahá'í Faith and the very concept of structural violence. As seen previously in this paper, to build a positive peace not only are necessary to overcome direct violence (war, conflict, violent criminality) to build peace. As indicated by Galtung (1969, 1990, 1973) and Weigert (1999), structural violence is a process in which inequality, social injustices, and power asymmetry avoid reaching positive peace. Ferreira and Karlberg (2016) affirm that these oppressive social ills "are among the root causes of instability, conflict, and war in the world today".

Even more important, the legitimate governing council of Bahá'í Faith endorses the necessity to overcome structural violence to reach peace. In this regard, the Universal House of Justice also recognizes the document *The Promise of World Peace* that peace demands addressing the inordinate disparity between rich and poor that 'keeps the world in a state of instability' (Universal House of Justice *apud* Emmel, 2012, p.174).

As seen earlier, Peace Studies aims to be a constructive science that adjusts theories to values to produce visions of a new reality (Galtung, 1996, p.10). The same is seen in the Bahá'í perspective, in which the focus must be directed to unifying approaches to deep social transformation. For this transformation, the education directed to build peace is central according to Bahá'í Faith Writings and guidance. According to the Universal House of Justice,

> The cause of universal education, which has already enlisted in its service an army of dedicated people from every faith and nation, deserves the utmost support that the governments of the world can lend it. For ignorance is indisputably the principal reason for the decline and fall of peoples and the perpetuation of prejudice. No nation can achieve success unless education is accorded to all its citizens. Lack of resources limits the ability of many nations to fulfill this necessity, imposing a certain ordering of priorities (Universal House of Justice, 1985).

Consequently, "these approaches are pursued through constructive processes of community building, nonadversarial forms of social action" (Ferreira and Karlberg, 2016). Despite the importance of collective security, the efforts to build peace must be addressed through education at all levels, including the grassroots of the society (Ferreira and Karlberg, 2016; see also Farhoumand-Sims and Lerche, 2004, p.36). Because that, the promotion of education to all ages (children, youth, and adults) bringing awareness on multiple issues pressing human development (oneness of humanity, social justice, gender equality, racism, among others) is a central task that Bahá'ís are currently engaged to overcome violence and to build a lasting positive peace.

6. FINAL REMARKS

In the previous section a question was raised: regarding the Bahá'í approach to peace, are there connections with the idea of negative and positive peace and with its conceptual framework offered by the Holy Writings or authoritative texts?

After examining the authoritative Texts from Bahá'í Faith and analysis from experts, several connections are clear on the discussions on peace. Both in the Bahá'í Faith and in the development of the central concepts that underlie Peace Studies, it is clear that peace is not just the absence of wars. Overcoming violence in its three corners (cultural, structural, and direct) is central to the construction of a positive peace that allows integral human development. This is especially evident in the position of the Universal House of Justice in a document published in 1985 on world peace.

Nevertheless, there are two central aspects that the Bahá'í Faith adds that can be central to the developments on peace. First, even though Peace Studies put peace as attainable, the Bahá'í writings indicate the fundamental importance of understanding human nature as dual, being materialistic by one hand, but also on the other hand can develop an altruistic character capable of building a reality that overcomes violence. Consequently, it is central to develop educational activities that foster this altruistic mindset.

Second and connected to the first, Bahá'í Faith raises the importance of raising awareness of the principle of oneness of humankind. This principle can govern the social organization, given that a common identity reflects a reality that all human beings form the basis of their collective efforts to advance the common good (International Studies in Global Prosperity, 2009).

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In conclusion, the advancement of knowledge about peace has generated a valuable body of knowledge for both theoretical and practical reflections. Among them, we can enumerate concepts such as: collective security, non-violence, violence, and its subdivisions (direct, structural, and cultural), negative and positive peace. In addition, the *Bahá'í Faith writings also bring two central elements to the contemporary debate on peace: human nature as dual (and with altruistic potential), and the principle of the oneness of humanity*.

Lastly, this paper is far to be a definitive work explaining the history of the peace concept, as well as of the Peace Research field and the Bahá'í concept on the same topic. It is hoped that it opens new discussions to advance knowledge about peace and how Bahá'í Faith can help to advance this discussion. In this matter, new topics for future research can be explored by experts in the near future, especially the learning generated by educational programs conducted by Bahá'í Faith on building sustainable peace grounded in a principle of oneness of mankind and with a unique approach towards human nature.

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