



Peace and Conflict Studies

Volume 9 | Number 1

Article 2

5-1-2002

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Recommended Citation

Reyhler, Luc (2002) "Peace Architecture," *Peace and Conflict Studies*: Vol. 9: No. 1, Article 2.
Available at: <http://nsuworks.nova.edu/pcs/vol9/iss1/2>

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PEACE BUILDING ARCHITECTURE

Luc Reyhler

Peace Re-Search

In the sixties the green and the peace movements alerted the international community of the deterioration of the environment and of the danger of nuclear conflicts. Since then, the green movement has been transformed into political parties, departments, jobs, environmental impact assessments and several international regimes. The first publication of the Club of Rome in 1972, *Limits of Growth*, had a catalyzing effect for raising life and death questions that confront mankind and claiming that planetary planning was the most important business on earth (Meadows 1972). The peace movement, on the other hand, evolved differently. There were some peak moments such as the peace marches in the eighties, but the impacts were weaker and less decisive. One explanation is that the peace movement had to cope with the strong bureaucracies of foreign offices and of defense departments that claimed the expertise. Another explanation is that a great deal of the peace movement does not define peace as a collective good. Being removed from the embedded conflict gives a false sense of apartness making some conflicts seem irrelevant to societies at peace. The possibility of cruise missiles hitting peaceful countries caused huge peace marches; the snipers in Sarajevo did not. A third reason is that costs of violence continue to be underestimated because of inadequate estimates of the price of failed conflict prevention (Reyhler 1999a).

The last explanation concerns the state of peace research. Despite a great deal of progress and creativity, the field remains hampered by three weaknesses (Reyhler 1992, pp. 89-96). First, there is a lack of field experience or close cooperation between professionals in the field and peace researchers. A synergy between the *speculari* and *operari* ('thinkers' and 'doers') would enhance the peace building business considerably. Second, there is a one-dimensional quality of peace building; the negative side effects of many well-intentioned projects have been documented.¹ Finally, there is a 'toolbox approach' to peace building. The result is that too many conflicted countries end up with piles of peace building stones, and no sustainable peace building.

Despite all this, peace research is quickly reducing the gap with the green movement. The prevention of violent conflicts has become a major point on the agendas of foreign offices not only in the U.S. and in Europe, but also of major international organizations such as the United Nations (UN), the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the European Union (EU) and the Organization of African Unity (OAU).² The driving forces were not of moral or legal nature, but cost-benefit considerations. Once a conflict crosses the threshold of violence it becomes much more difficult and costly to manage it. Political, social, cultural, ecological,

psychological and spiritual costs join the already considerable costs of humanitarian suffering or economic destruction (Reychler 1999b). The human costs of failed conflict prevention or transitional aid are very high. The process of transition in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, for example, had huge development costs, many of which are still unabated (UNDP 1999). Human costs refer to the loss of lives, the high levels of disease, poverty, socio-economic disparity, rising gender inequality, educational decline, unemployment and many less tangible costs. It has become clear that proactive conflict prevention (that is, efforts made before a conflict has escalated) is more cost effective than reactive conflict prevention (that is, efforts made after a conflict has become violent to contain and reduce the intensity, duration and the possibility of geographic spill over) (Brown and Rosecrance 1999). There is a growing perception that there are limits to the level of violence the world can permit. It has become clear that sustainable development is impossible without sustainable peace building. This paper tackles one of the challenges of the international community in this decade; namely, making the world safe from conflicts or creating a more effective system to prevent violence.

Peace Architecture

A major part of this challenge is the development of better peace architecture through more cost effective ways to create sustainable peace building processes. Strategists, designers and planners are also concerned with combining means and time efficiently. I found, for example, nearly one hundred peace plans drafted before the Second World War. There is a great deal of flexibility and overlapping in the meaning of the terms *strategy*, *design*, *planning* and *architecture*. The term *strategy* continues to be strongly associated with states or their alliances which are designed to focus on security, enemies and threats through the use of military force and command. The term *peace plan* is also quite restrictive. Most peace plans are legal blueprints for the creation of world peace or are too abstract in context. The term *design* has more appeal, but it is associated with the construction of conflict management systems or with business (for example, practice oriented towards the development of products, tools, components and processes) (Magolin and Buchanan, 1998).³

I prefer to use the metaphor 'peace architecture' because (a) it draws attention to the architectural principles/considerations that have to be addressed in sustainable peace building processes; (b) it emphasizes the need to identify the necessary pre-conditions or building blocks for different types of conflicts; (c) it could shorten the learning curve by providing a methodology for comparative analysis and evaluation of conflict transformation; and (d) it could contribute to greater attention paid to the vital role of peace architects.

Architectural Considerations and Principles

The image of peace architecture suggests that peace building is not only a science but also an art, where imagination and creativity are an essential part of the

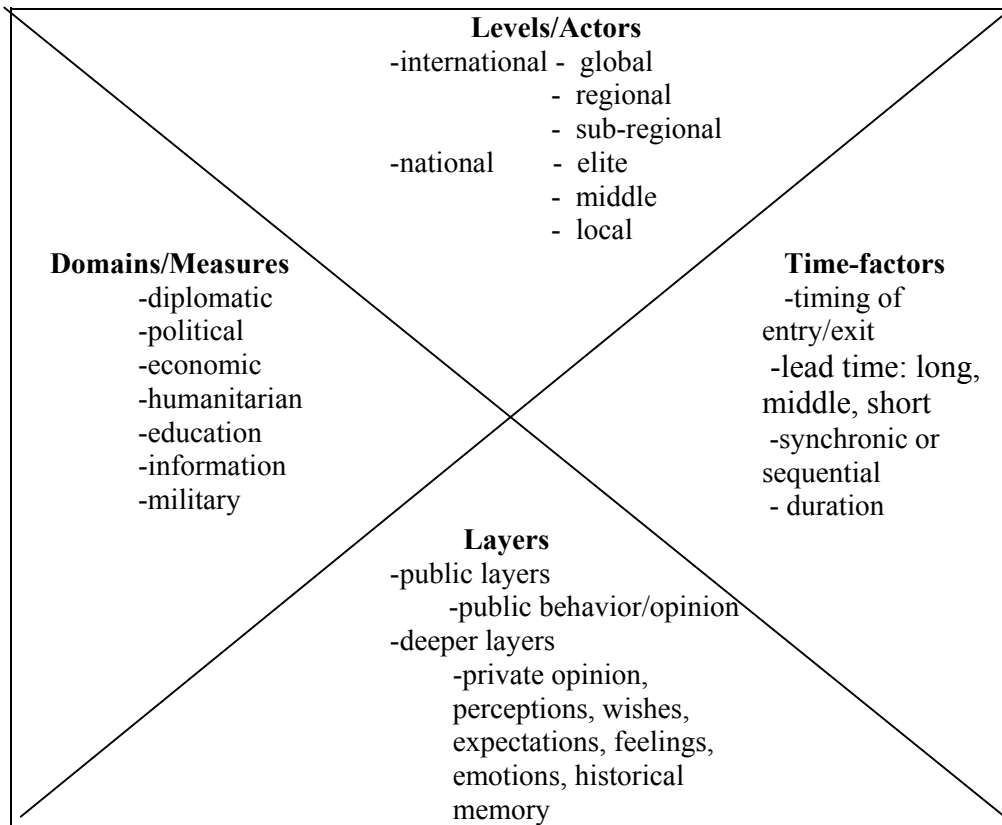
building process. This conveys the need for professional peace architects and architectural teams, and it draws attention to the key principles of the architecture process. Following are six principles that should guide the design of peace building processes.

1. A clear and compelling definition of the peace to be built. This requires a reconciling of the competing needs of the owners and the concerns of the stakeholders who will have to share the same fate; imaging a more attractive future; and an estimation of the costs.

2. A contextual and comprehensive assessment of the available peace building capacity with appreciative inquiry and of what still needs to be done to build a sustainable peace building process.

3. The development of a coherent peace plan. Coherence refers to the achievement of good time management and of a synergy between peace building efforts in diverse domains, at different system-levels and layers of the conflict.

Table 1: Coherence between Domains, Levels, Time-factors and Layers of a Conflict



4. An effective implementation of the peace plan. This involves not only the commitment of sufficient time and means to build the sustainable peace process, but also coordination and effective leadership.

5. The involvement/inclusion of the people who commissioned the peace building (the owners) and the stakeholders in the whole process.

6. An identification and dismantling of the 'senti-mental walls'⁴ that inhibit the peace building process.

Building Blocks of Violence and Peace

Another challenge of architectural analysis is the classification of different types of violence, peace and the identification of their causal antecedents or necessary preconditions. From a comparative study of the architecture of the genocides in Bosnia, Rwanda and Burundi, seven building blocks of genocide were distilled (Reychler 2000):

Table 2. Building Blocks of Genocide

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A country in transition with high levels of political, economic and cultural insecurity and frustration. • An authoritarian government that attributes the responsibility of the problems to a particular group. • A small group of fanatical leaders and a pliable majority. • A systematic dehumanization of the victimized group(s). • A plan for ethnic cleansing. • A relatively powerless victimized group. • An international community that disapproves morally of the genocidal behavior, but does not take effective measures to prevent or stop the massacres. |
|---|

Table 3: Building Blocks of Sustainable Peace Building

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|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An effective system of communication, consultation and negotiation at different levels. • Political and economic peace enhancing structures (consolidated democracy and social free market system). • An objective and subjective security system. • An integrative moral political climate, characterized by the expectation of an attractive future resulting from cooperation, a replacement of exclusive nationalism with multiple loyalties, reconciliation and dismantlement of senti-mental walls. • Political, economic and security cooperation at a multilateral level. • A critical mass of internal and external peace building leadership. |
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Comparative Analysis and Evaluation of Peace Architectures

Another challenge of architectural research is the development of ways and means to improve sustainable peace building processes. A comparative analysis and evaluation of successful and less successful peace building efforts could shorten the learning curve significantly. In such a comparative study, three phases could be distinguished. In the first phase an analysis and evaluation is made of the conflict to be transformed. This gives an indication of the problems to be solved and the degree of difficulty to be expected. The second phase involves an assessment of the results or the output of the peace building efforts, while the third phase focuses on the process.

Phase 1: Analysis and Evaluation of the Conflict to Be Transformed

In this part a diagnosis would be made of the actors, the issues, the opportunity structure, the strategic approaches of the parties involved and of the conflict dynamics. This gives us an idea of the type of conflict one is confronted with, and also allows us to estimate the costs and difficulty of the conflict transformation efforts. The latter implies additional data gathering and analysis of the peace building efforts, such as: the actors included or excluded in the peace process (levels/internal-external); the prescriptive or indicative nature of the process; the operational definition of peace; the issues addressed; the tools selected; the levels on which the peace efforts were focused; the layers of the conflict addressed; the time management; the commitment of time and means and the coordination of efforts.

Phase 2: Evaluation of the Outcomes/Results of the Peace Building Efforts

Here we focus on two criteria of effectiveness: the nature of the outcome and the durability. The nature of the outcome is assessed by checking how and to what extent the above-mentioned criteria of sustainable peace are satisfied. The durability is assessed by studying the installation and consolidation of the necessary preconditions of sustainable peace.

Phase 3: Evaluation of the Peace Building Process

This is the most difficult part of the comparative study because it requires a thorough understanding of what is needed to build an effective, efficient and satisfactory peace building process. In the second phase, the effectiveness was assessed by looking at the nature of the outcome and the durability. To assess the efficiency one uses direct and indirect sets of measures. The first set of direct measures assesses the tangible and intangible costs of the transition such as the human, economic, social, psychological, cultural, ecological, political and spiritual costs; the amount of time wasted and missed opportunities and the impact of the transition on the nature of the relations between the conflicting parties.

Table 4. Evaluation of Peace Building Architecture

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Measurement</i>
Effectiveness	Nature of outcome: characteristics sustainable peace Durability: installation and consolidation of building blocks
Efficiency	Direct measures: costs/time/relations Indirect measures of factors that are assumed to enhance efficiency, such as inclusiveness of the process, early warning of threats and opportunities, effective negotiation and mediation efforts, etc.
Satisfaction	With the process With the relationship With the outcome

The second set of indirect measures studies the series of factors that tend to enhance or inhibit transition processes. The efficiency of the peace building process influences several variables below.

The involvement of the people who view themselves as deeply affected by the peace building process. The inclusion or exclusion of the owners and stakeholders makes the difference between failure and success. The people who see their interest as deeply affected should be at the heart of the decision making process. Others who should be included, consulted or informed are: those who could hinder the successful implementation; those whose advise or assistance is needed; and those whose approval will be required to enable the project to proceed (Kraybill, 1995).

Effective communication, consultation, negotiation and mediation process. This implies an evocative rather than a prescriptive approach and an acquaintance with effective negotiation and mediation methods that tend to enhance win-win agreements with low transaction costs, good relations and durable outcomes.

*A contextual and comprehensive analysis of the problems which are responsible for the conflict.*⁵ Special attention should be directed to the components of sustainable peace that need to be absent, installed or consolidated.

An appreciative inquiry of the strengths and the peace potential in the conflict ridden zone. In contrast to the problem-oriented approach — which focuses on the past, the problems, and the weaknesses — an appreciative inquiry turns the attention to the future and the strengths on which peace could be built.

A clear and compelling definition of peace. The conflict behavior of the parties is strongly influenced by their respective expectations about the future. Therefore, the projection of a clear and attractive future could catalyze the conflict transition process significantly. Peace architects such as Jean Monnet, succeeded in convincing the Europeans that cooperation would bring them not only security, but also freedom and affluence. In other cases, the parties will have to negotiate a better future by reconciling competing values.

The battery of tools used in the conflict transformation process. (For example, European Community). These tools should be related to the specific peace building needs in the conflict zone.

The coherence of the peace building plan. Here we look at the synergy or the interaction of actions such that the total effect is greater than the sum of the individual effects. Attention is paid to the cross impact of the efforts in different *domains* (political, diplomatic, military, humanitarian, economic, etc.); at different *levels* (internal and external – elite/middle/local); on different *layers* (public behavior, opinions, perceptions, feelings) and time-factors. The purpose is to enhance the positive and synergetic impact of the peace building efforts and prevent and/or reduce the negative effects (Reychler 1999c, 144-162). The installation of an effective conflict impact assessment system (CIAS) would help considerably (Davis 1996; Gardner 1993).

The use of time. Time is one of the vital and nonrenewable resources that continue to be wasted. Time is money, but it also makes the difference between life and death. Many violent conflicts are examples of missed opportunities. More research should be undertaken about the role of time and timing in conflict transformation. On the agenda are issues such as: attitudes towards time (proactive versus reactive); the relative importance paid to the past, present and future in the design of a reconciliation process, (for example; the lead-time of projects); the preference of short-, middle- and long-term programs; the duration of the intervention; when to enter and exit; how to schedule the interventions (consequentially or simultaneously).

Other questions should be considered, including: Can elections be organized when there is no agreement about power-sharing? Is there something like an economic threshold below which efforts for democratization are a waste of time? How should political democratization and economic privatization be linked?

Intelligent early warning. An intelligent early warning system tries not only to anticipate threats and the risk of violent escalation, but also pays attention to the opportunities to intervene proactively; to the costs of different conflict transformation policies and the impact of planned policies, and programs or projects about the dynamics of the conflict. The development and installation of an effective conflict impact assessment system would increase the chances of a conflict prevention system considerably.

Effective implementation of a peace building plan. This implies not only the commitment of sufficient time and means but also leadership and a good coordination of the peace building activities of the parties involved.

Unlearning and dismantling of 'senti-mental walls'. Peace building is not only about construction, but also about deconstruction. To analyze and transform conflicts, more attention needs to be paid to political-psychological variables. In particular, efforts should be made to identify and dismantle 'senti-mental walls'. This term refers to concepts, theories, dogmas, attitudes, habits, emotions and inclinations that inhibit democratic transition and constructive transformation of conflicts. The existence of senti-mental walls increases the chances of misperceiving the situation and of miscalculating the interests at stake; they lower the motivation to act on an opportunity and hinder the development of the necessary

skills and know-how to overcome conflicts. The hyphenation of sentiment and mental to 'senti-mental' is done to make people aware of the emotional roots. In a comparative study of genocide, it became clear that the behavior of all actors was distorted: the victims by despair, pluralistic ignorance and political inefficacy; the offenders by historical falsification, stereotyping, dehumanization, distrust and indifference; the third parties by neutralism/passivity/non-intervention, cultural arrogance, moral-legal approach and the preference to wait until the conflict is 'ripe'; the analysts by one-dimensional analysis, the use of invalid theories, pseudo-scientific doctrines/myths/taboo, elitist analysis, wrong assessment of future developments, etc.

A critical mass of peace building leadership. Without a critical mass of external and internal leadership, who motivates, guides and commits people to the peace building process, the chances of successful peace building are very low. Could a leader make a difference in bringing people together? Do unfortunate countries lack leadership or is the level of conflict sometimes too powerful for any leader to overcome (Lederach 1997)? The premise is that an essential ingredient of sustainable peace building is a critical mass of leadership that can raise hope, generate ways and means to reach the goals, and commit people to the peace building process. The critical mass of leadership needed depends on the specific conflict context. It could include internal and external leadership; some conflicts can be transformed successfully with internal leadership, others necessitate external leadership to support the process.

The internal leadership to be involved could be situated at different levels. The top level comprises the key political and military leaders in the conflict (Monnet 1976). These people are the highest representative leaders of the government and opposition movements or present themselves as such. The middle range leadership is not necessarily connected to or controlled by the authority or structures of the formal or major opposition movements. They could be highly respected individuals or persons who occupy formal positions of leadership in sectors such as education, business, religion, agriculture, health or humanitarian organizations. The grassroots leadership includes people who are involved in local communities, members of indigenous non-governmental organizations carrying out relief projects for local populations, health officials and refugee camp leaders.

Process

The overall aim is *to create a win-win situation* or a mutually benefiting sense of interdependence between all the parties involved and *to embed the peace building into institutions* that reinforce and sustain the process. Jean Monnet stressed repeatedly the importance of helping the Europeans to see their common interests (*leur intérêt commun*). He also pleaded for the creation of 'supranational' institutions (such as the European commission), which could facilitate the cooperation process (Kraybill 1995). Sustainable peace is seen (a) as the result of a *reconciliation of competing values, interests and needs*, such as freedom, justice, affluence, security, truth, mercy and dignity, and (b) as flourishing best in a

consolidated democratic environment. A great deal of effort is spent on the development of a good process (Bennis and Nanus 1985, p. 224).

The process is *inclusive*. Monnet insisted on talking to all participants (government, business, unions, etc.) to engage all the stakeholders in the peace building process. The assumption is that parties to a conflict will work more effectively at a resolution if they have personal stakes in the successful outcome of the process (Global Excellence Management 1999).

There is the belief that nothing positive can be expected from a peace plan build on unequal grounds rules. Monnet insisted on negotiating on the basis of *equality* and did not accept the idea of *primus inter pares*.

In order to build confidence, the process is made *transparent*. All plans Monnet proposed were clear and simple. He believed trust could be achieved by presenting unambiguous plans that would substantiate the peace process through mutually beneficial goals. When initially some negotiators were suspicious, little by little, they saw that there was nothing to hide.

The problem solving approach is enriched with an *appreciative inquiry* (Monnet 1976, p. 273). Appreciative inquiry is a far more complex process than the simple positive thinking approach with which it is sometimes confused. It involves challenging the status quo by *envisioning a preferred future* and *identifying the existing peace building potential*. Both the identification of the strengths and the articulation of a realistic and attractive future, a condition that is in some important ways better than what now exist, can accelerate the conflict transformation considerably.

Another characteristic of peace builders is their *proactive mindset*. Monnet was a mover, not a care-taker. He not only envisioned a European Union, but he also tried to assess the impact of policy alternatives proactively.

Characteristic is the *open-minded search for alternative means* to build peace in an efficient way. Peace builders are not orators who instinctively know the solution. Peace builders make a distinction between interests and positions and search actively for formulas that satisfy all conflicting parties. In some cases, this could mean integrative solutions (such as the creation of a European Union, the new South Africa or the unification of East and West Germany) or a disintegrative solution, such as the relatively peaceful dissolution of the Soviet Empire or the smooth divorce of the Slovak and Czech people. A great deal of time is taken out to search for and develop alternative solutions.

Decisions are not made on the basis of pressures or emotions, but on their merit. Essential is the use of *fair and objective standards and procedures* for evaluating alternative policy options. To convey the costs and benefits of alternative futures Monnet made ample use of balance sheets.

It is important to engage and network with the leaders of different domains and at different levels in the process. Monnet did not perform as a *prima donna*, but preferred to give the limelight to the politicians: "Since they take the risks, they should have the laurels" (Europa Notities 1996, p. 400).⁶

Conclusion

To research more systematically the characteristics of peace architects such as Jean Monnet would significantly contribute to more effective peace building. It would not only help to identify and strengthen the peace building potential, but also to track and weaken the spoilers in the peace building process. It could also eliminate some of the stereotypical images of peace builders, such as the image of passive pacifists. They do not only construct, but also need to deconstruct. They cut through dogmas, taboos, doctrines, etiquette, cynicism and others sentimental obstacles on the way to progress. Monnet challenged the ideas of political prestige and economic protectionism; he pleaded for supra-nationalism and questioned the belief in ‘archenemies’ or the existence of a politically independent economic sphere. He was a professional with a cause.

Endnotes

1. Since the publication of Mary Anderson’s, *Do No Harm: Supporting Capacities for Peace through Aid*, many studies have highlighted the negative impact of uni-dimensional well-intentioned efforts (humanitarian and structural aid, peace keeping, democratization, etc) on the peace building process. The work done by Peter Uvin has been remarkable.
2. For the European Union, see for example Conflict Prevention Network (1999).
3. See also K. Slaikeu and R. H. Hasson (1998); C. A. Constantino and C. S. Merchant (1996); and W. L. Ury, J. M. Breet and S. Goldberg (1988).
4. See page 31 for a description of ‘senti-mental walls’.
5. A useful typology of impact can be found in M. A. Max-Neef (1991). He distinguishes destroying – impact, pseudo-impact, inhibiting impact, singular impact, synergic impact and exogenous and endogenous impacts.
6. See also M. Kohnstamm (1981) and Jean Monnet (1976).

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