

6 Positive and negative peace

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Any concept of peace includes the absence of direct violence between states, engaged in by military and others in general; and the absence of massive killing of categories of humans in particular. All these absences of types of violence add up to negative peace; as by mutual isolation, unrelated by any structure and culture. This situation is better than violence, but it is not fully peaceful, because positive peace is missing in this conceptualization. Indeed, peace would be a strange concept if it did not include relations between genders, races, classes and families; and did not also include absence of structural violence, the non-intended slow, massive suffering caused by economic and political structures of exploitation and repression (Galtung, 1985); and if it excluded the absence of the cultural violence that legitimizes direct and/or structural violence (Galtung, 1990). Table 1 shows an overview of key terms about positive and negative peace.

This gives us six peace tasks: eliminating the direct violence that causes suffering; eliminating the structures that cause suffering through economic inequity, or, say, walls once placing Jews, now Palestinians, in ghettos; and eliminating cultural themes that justify one or the other. The task known as ceasefire is only one-sixth of a complete peace process.

But then come the three tasks of building direct, structural and cultural peace. The parties exchange goods, not 'bads', not violence. The structural version of that builds cooperation and sustainability into the structure, with equity for the economy, and equality for the polity.

The goal is to build a structure based on reciprocity, equal rights, benefits and dignity, 'what you want for yourself you should also be willing to give the Other'; and a culture of peace, confirming and stimulating an equitable economy and an equal polity. Economic equity stands as a very weak, undeveloped field, in economic theory and practice, with the

Table 1 Matrix of key terms about positive and negative peace

VIOLENCE	DIRECT VIOLENCE = intended harming, hurting	STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE = unintended harming, hurting	CULTURAL VIOLENCE = intended or unintended justifying violence
NEGATIVE PEACE	[1] absence of = ceasefire	[2] absence of = no exploitation; or no structure = atomic	[3] absence of = no justification; or no culture = anomic
POSITIVE PEACE	[4] presence of = cooperation	[5] presence of = equity, equality	[6] presence of = culture of peace, and dialogue
PEACE	negative + positive	negative + positive	negative + positive

social, economic and cultural rights of the 16 December 1966 Human Rights Convention being an effort, but not yet ratified by a leading state in the state system, the United States. Political equality covers issues of democracy (one person one vote) and human rights, not only within countries, but also among them. Political scientists have been far ahead of economists in giving meaning to equity.

Applying the concepts of positive and negative peace to a couple: violence can be physical, like wife-battering, or verbal, bad-mouthing; negative peace is the absence of all that, passive co-existence; positive peace is active love, the union of body, mind and spirit. Thus, negative peace is like a point, neither violence, nor positive peace. Violence is a region of actors exchanging 'bads', and positive peace another region of actors exchanging 'goodies'.

This idea can be developed further, with two actors, X and Y, avoiding suffering, *dukkha* (Sanskrit) and pursuing fulfilment, *sukha* (Sanskrit). X and Y can now relate to each other in three ways: they go up or down the *dukkha-sukha* gradient together; when one goes up the other goes down, and vice versa; or there is no relation between X and Y. In other words, high positive correlation, high negative correlation, or little or no correlation. The correlations are diachronic, not synchronic, identifying trajectories; or symbiosis, antibiosis, abiosis.

Figure 1 presents a diagram with an X-axis and Y-axis, each axis running from -9, extreme suffering (I want to leave this life) to +9, extreme fulfilment (I want to stay here forever), cutting each other in the origin of neither-nor.

The diagram has a main diagonal from -9, -9 through the origin to +9, +9 where the two parties enjoy maximum fulfilment, singly, or jointly in positive harmony (in Quadrant I), and maximum suffering, singly or jointly in negative harmony (in Quadrant III). 'Harmony', then, does not mean joy, happiness, but 'swinging in tact', 'attuned', for good as also for bad.

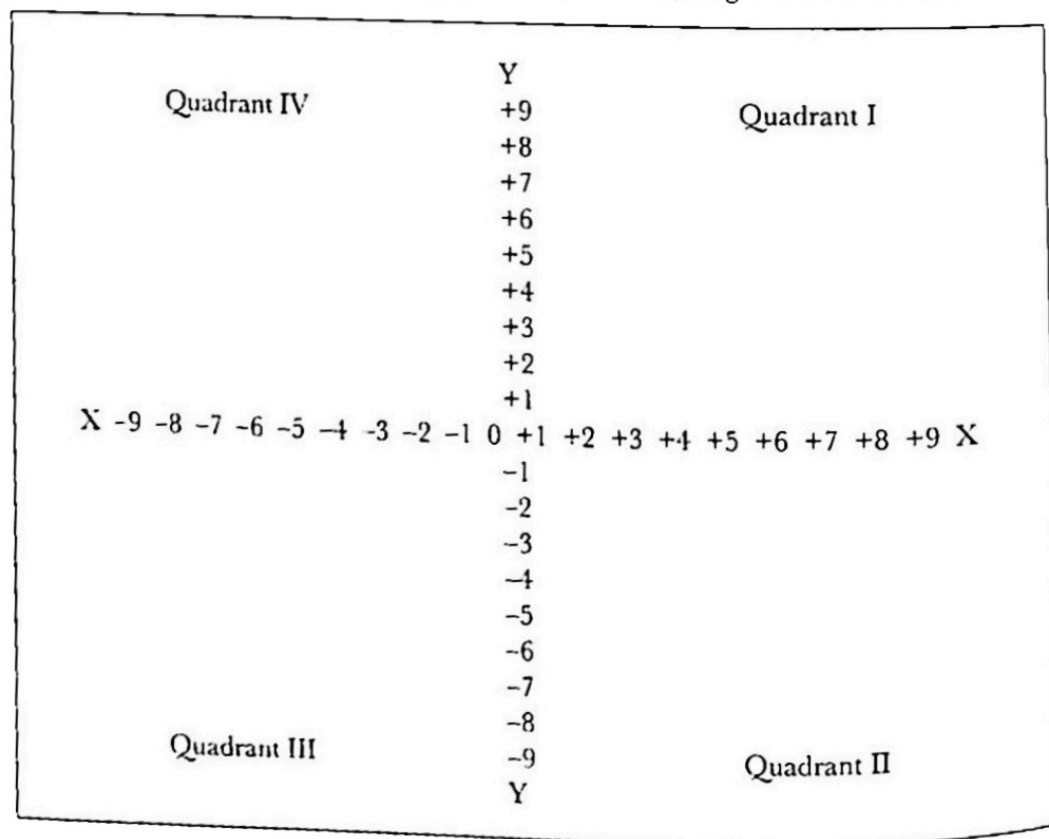


Figure 1 Reference diagram on which to map the concepts of coupling, decoupling, recoupling

But, on the diagram's bi-diagonal, from $-9, +9$ in Quadrant IV to $+9, -9$ in Quadrant II, the dyad, singly or jointly, experiences the disharmony of fulfilment for one and suffering for the other, with origin as neither-nor.

Let us now tilt the diagonals toward the X axis, starting with the main diagonal. They still grow or suffer together. But a great gain for X is now a small gain for Y; and a great loss for X a small loss for Y. There is asymmetry, inequity, parasitism. For the bi-diagonal, a great gain for X is only a small loss for Y, and vice versa. So also for Quadrant III: tilting links a great suffering increase for one to a small one for the other, and in the asymmetric Quadrants II and IV even more so.

If we focus on the main diagonal in Quadrant I we get the 'peace diagonal' in the transcend method, with 0,0 as negative transcendence (neither-nor), passing through compromises to $+9, +9$, positive transcendence (both/and in terms of goal-fulfilment). The bi-diagonal in Quadrant I is the 'war diagonal' of the either/or: at $+9, 0$ X prevails, at $0, +9$ Y prevails, with stalemate in the middle, on the peace diagonal known as compromise. To this can then be added curvilinear trajectories telling more complex stories. In short, this intellectual space can accommodate 'grand' peace theory, and *dukkha/sukha* enables us to identify and locate its components.

But we need a concept bridging the singly versus jointly divided above; coupling, showing up as diachronic correlation, X and Y tracing a trajectory in this diagram jointly, like a couple, in harmony or not. High covariation means strong coupling, low means weak and zero/no coupling. Decoupling is the process from high to no coupling, the reverse process is recoupling; like a married couple separating, divorcing and then remarrying.

A couple breaking up decouples, explicitly or implicitly, telling each other that 'my *sukha*/*dukkha* is now mine, yours is yours, should they coincide it is by chance only'. They may delude themselves and each other, and in the despair over their inability to produce joint fulfilment produce joint suffering, negative instead of positive harmony. Alternatively, they may recouple, or hope for a better coupling to come with the help of 'time'. But 'time' is no substitute for hard work on the relationship. An adolescent leaving the parental home 'to go his/her own way' is obviously decoupling. This may last forever, but with sufficient maturity on both sides, recoupling at higher levels may happen.

Here is one image of coupling, not only in marriage, from Daoism: 'Share in the suffering of others. Delight in the joy of others. . . . View the good fortune of others as your good fortune. View the losses of others as your own loss.' Another is in the Zulu *ubuntu*, 'I am in you, you are in me, we are in each other'. Both tap definitions of a strong spiritual coupling in a we-culture. The unit of suffering and joy is a we, not two I's.

Compare this to the Golden Rule, positive (or negative): 'Do (not do) unto others what you (do not) want them to do unto you.' The subject for *sukha*, and for *dukkha* avoidance, is an individual, 'you'. The rule is ego-centric, an ethical device for self-satisfaction, highly compatible with Abrahamic individualism. The ethical budget is individual, I-culture, not collective, we-culture oriented. It may not even be very smart; as G. B. Shaw pointed out: 'their tastes may be different'.

Something of the same applies to the Kantian dictum, *Handle so dass die Maxime deines Willens jederzeit zugleich als Prinzip eines allgemeinen Gesetzgebung gelten könne* ('Always act so that the thesis underlying your will could serve as a general law'). What Kant introduces here is not a we-culture but a traffic rule for individualist co-existence: the validity of an act is linked to its generalizability. Kant wants a multilateral normative umbrella: the Golden Rule is more bilateral. That rule may be useful, if attention is paid to individual and cultural differences, for positive co-existence in an I-culture, but does not produce the *sui generis* union of a we-culture in the Daoist sense above, as exemplified in the definition of love.

So far we have degree of coupling, strong versus weak, as illustrated by the perfect versus worn-out clutch, and positive versus negative coupling. But how does coupling come about? Using the pillars of peace studies – nature, culture and structure – there are three types of answers. Nature produces coupling, the extreme case being Siamese twins, or one-egged twins in general, and siblings; in short, genetic sharing. Being of the same species is already a (weak) coupling. Culture produces coupling as internalized harmony, like in friendship and love. Primary relations (family, school) produce stronger internalization, but also stronger disharmony 'when things go wrong'. Structure produces coupling as institutionalized cooperation, in secondary relations (school, at work), and in tertiary relations (belonging to the same category, gender, generation, race, class, nation, territory).

Thus, there are inner versus outer couplings, steering us from within by good and bad conscience, and from without by reward and punishment. We-cultures would produce very strong inner couplings. But I-cultures, guided by the Golden Rule and/or Kantianism, also produce inner couplings, only of a different nature. Love is based on inner we- and I-cultures, and a marriage on an outer social pact, triggering sanctions from all kinds of structures. If one fails, the other coupling devices may still be there.

We can now reap the harvest of all this by linking the concepts of positive and negative peace to the idea of coupling, using the quadrants in Figure 1. Quadrant I is positive peace when there is coupling, positive harmony and symbiosis; and more symmetric, equitable, the closer to the diagonal. Quadrant III is violence when there is coupling, negative harmony and symbiosis; and more symmetric, equitable, the closer to the main diagonal. Quadrants II and IV are fulfilment for one and suffering for the other, negative coupling, disharmony, antibiosis; and more asymmetric, inequitable, the closer to the bi-diagonal, a good illustration of structural violence. The origin is negative peace with both X and Y at the 'no peace, no war' point of no coupling-indifference-abiosis.

Quadrant I accommodates not only direct, intended, but also structural, institutionalized peace. Quadrant IV accommodates direct and structural violence. In Quadrants II and IV there must be something strong on the side of the party extracting benefit: structural violence. But the structural elements in Quadrants I and III should not be underestimated: a ritualized marriage may be good for both; wars may be institutionalized like vendettas.

From this we can already draw some conclusions. Positive peace and violence-war are similar in having positive inner or outer (or both) couplings in common, in other words a joint project like a European community, or a world (meaning European) war. Conflict and structural violence are similar in having negative inner or outer (or both) couplings in common, in other words a joint anti-project. Negative peace, like a ceasefire, is a limited and limiting category suitable for dualist minds: violence versus its absence. Thus, the road from war to positive peace may not be that difficult to travel. Joint projects buoyed by passion are in both; only the content has to be changed. But in negative peace there is little passion, abstention from any joint project, and withdrawal into mutual indifference.

Peace theory and practice are about getting out of Quadrant III direct violence, of Quadrants II and IV structural violence, and into Quadrant I, direct and structural, positive peace, beyond bland, negative peace. But how? Gandhi's answer: by decoupling in Quadrants III and II-IV, using nonviolence instead of violence in Quadrant II; using non-cooperation, even civil disobedience, in Quadrants II and IV; using constructive action, recoupling, building peace, for Quadrant I.

Gandhi's theory and practice went far beyond Western security theory and practice with clearly paranoid features. To Gandhi, the level of coupling was the key variable as opposed to praising peace, and blaming violence. The work for positive, or as a minimum negative,

peace implies changing interaction relations more than actor attributes, and that is exactly what decoupling and recoupling are about. Great. A genius.

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PART 1 PEACE STUDIES, PEACE EDUCATION, PEACE RESEARCH AND PEACE

Suggestions for further reading

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- Journal of Peace Research (JPR)*: <http://jpr.sagepub.com/>
Peace and Change: <http://www.wiley.com/bw/journal.asp?ref=0149-0508>
Peace Review: <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/10402659.asp>

Websites

- PUGWASH: <http://www.pugwash.org/>
 Stockholm International Peace Research Institute: <http://www.sipri.org/>
 Transcend International: <http://www.transcend.org/>