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# **New developments of peace research**

The impact of recent campaigns  
on disarmament and human security

Javier Alcalde and Rafael Grasa

**INSTITUT  
CATALÀ  
INTERNACIONAL**

**PER LA PAU**

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disarmament and human security

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**Institut Català Internacional per la Pau**  
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## ABSTRACT

The present text, based on previous work done by the authors on peace research (Grasa 1990 and 2010) and the disarmament campaigns linked to Human Security (Alcalde 2009 and 2010), has two objectives. First, to present a new agenda for peace research, based on the resolution/transformation of conflicts and the promotion of collective action in furtherance of human security and human development. Second, to focus specifically on collective action and on a positive reading of some of the campaigns that have taken place during the last decades in order to see how the experiences of such will affect the future agenda for peace research and action for peace.

**Keywords:** Peace research, human security, disarmament, social movement, peace movement

## RESUM

Aquest text, basat en els treballs realitzats pels autors sobre recerca per la pau (Grasa 1990 i 2010) i sobre les campanyes de desarmament i seguretat humana (Alcalde 2009 i 2010), té dos objectius principals. El primer, presentar una nova proposta d'agenda en l'àmbit de la recerca per la pau, basada en la resolució/transformació dels conflictes i en la promoció de l'acció col·lectiva per al foment de la seguretat humana i el desenvolupament humà. El segon es concentra específicament en l'acció col·lectiva i en la lectura en positiu d'algunes de les campanyes que han tingut lloc en les últimes dècades amb l'objectiu d'analitzar com les seves experiències poden afectar l'agenda futura de la recerca i l'acció per la pau.

**Paraules clau:** Investigació per la pau, seguretat humana, desarmament, moviment social, moviment pacifista

## RESUMEN

Este texto, basado en los trabajos realizados por los autores sobre investigación para la paz (Grasa 1990 y 2010) y sobre las campañas de desarme y seguridad humana (Alcalde 2009 y 2010), tiene dos objetivos principales. El primero, presentar una nueva propuesta de agenda en el ámbito de la investigación para la paz, basada en la resolución / transformación de los conflictos y en la promoción de la acción colectiva para el fomento de la seguridad humana y el desarrollo humano. El segundo se concentra específicamente en la acción colectiva y en la lectura en positivo de algunas de las campañas que han tenido lugar en las últimas décadas con el objetivo de analizar cómo sus experiencias pueden afectar la agenda de futura de la investigación y la acción por la paz.

**Palabras clave:** Investigación por la paz, seguridad humana, desarme, movimiento social, movimiento pacifista

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# 1. ASSESSMENT AND PROPOSALS FOR THE FUTURE AFTER FIFTY YEARS OF LIFE

More than fifty years of peace research, though the name of the field has varied since the establishment of the *Journal of Conflict Resolution* in the 1950s, calls for assessment and, according to the perspective which we will take, for the examination of which mistakes have been made throughout its history. This is to be done from the *a priori* position that: peace research is not, has never been, and will never be a discipline in the sociological sense, but should rather be conceived of as a bias, a way of viewing things, an approach to research, and as a means of establishing that which is known as the “context for discovery” (Grasa 1990; Grasa 2010).

This first section will be divided into three parts. First, six general theses taking a macro analytic perspective will be stated, in which peace research and the work that has been done in the past forty years is characterized. Second, we will dedicate a special place to the genuine and hard nucleus of peace research: research on the causes of war and the ways to achieve peace, while carefully proposing a series of provisional conclusions based on the obtained results and regarding the question of why such little success has been achieved. Third, we will elaborate upon a new agenda, recovering, paradoxically, some classic “old” themes from the peace research agenda.

## 1.1. SIX THESES ON PEACE RESEARCH FROM A MICROANALYSIS PERSPECTIVE

### 1.1.1. THE INFLUENCE OF THE CONTEXT OF EMERGENCE

The first matter that must be taken into account is that the impact of the context from which peace research emerged was so strong, that



the field has, to a large extent, continued to be burdened by the themes that were central during its formative first years. This emergent context can be characterized by three themes: behaviorism in social sciences, the threat of nuclear holocaust, and a concern with the future of human beings, either from a Christian perspective and/or from one of simple moral commitment (Grasa 2010)

These three elements contributed to a perspective which (a) considers peace to be an absolute value; b) explains that peace research strives to help transform international society, proposing that the best way to avoid war is by helping to convert international society into an international community, a *polis global*, which implies the strong democratization of such from the outset; and (c) understands why some of the founding fathers, linked by confession, (Boulding, Rapoport, among others) follow the example of their confessions from the nineteen thirties onwards, elaborating on some of the rules and norms of conduct established within their own communities and extending their application to the outside world (the kingdom of God is possible, on this Earth, now, and for *all* people, not solely for “brothers” or “friends”).

Be as it would, the largest burden that this context of emergence has placed on peace research is the dominantly held conception that war is an evildoing or is a pathological, scientifically classifiable, element: war being conceived of as something running contrary to human nature, something that should not exist. From this perspective, the task at hand would consist of looking for a means of “curing” this sickness and pathological trait.

In sum, the convergence of a particular optimist understanding, coming from science, with a quasi-religious vision of commitment, gave birth to a powerful idea: science, the most compelling perspective and method to emerge from human day to day life in centuries, should be used to deal with the most important problem at hand and in history: the need to avoid a nuclear holocaust.

### 1.1.2. PEACE RESEARCH AS A BIAS

Peace Research has never been an area of specific knowledge or discipline, in the full sense of the word. It is, simply put, a “syndrome”, a set of traits that characterize a task. And this is, in reality, a lot. These traits are deeply reactive, which explains why, when looking back on more than fifty years of peace research, we observe both an evolutionary process that has taken place globally, and a magmatic inter and transdisciplinary perspective, with a constant idealist emphasis. In sum: with a line of reasoning which could be summarized in one phrase “things are not as good as they could be; that’s why it is our duty, as specialists in the various fields of peace research, to dedicate ourselves to their betterment”. In this way, peace research will be shaped by the evolution and transformation of social reality and, in being so, by international relations (now understood as ‘international reality’), as well as by social sciences, and the diverse images and conflicting cosmovisions of reality.

### 1.1.3. INITIAL STAGE. A REFORMIST IDEAL

Peace research, in the aforementioned context and conceptualized as a bias and syndrome, can be characterized as a reformist ideal epitomized by a diverse set of traits:

- a) A strong normative concern and moral fervor, without falling into, at least at the beginning, naturalistic fallacy;
- b) An optimistic conception of human nature, and consequently, of the possibility of improvement upon its principle product: society. As such, there is a belief in the possibility of perpetual peace, in the idea of working towards this everlasting peace and, logically, there is also the belief that war does not form part of human nature.
- c) The conviction that the causes of war and the conditions of peace are comprehensible, which reconceptualizes them as problems to be dealt with intellectually and to be studied and understood academically.
- d) Alignment with a particular naturalist, behaviorist, and even quasi-positivist perspective;

- e) An obsession with applicability, based on the old Socratic fallacy: “to know the causes of things is enough to keep them from happening.” Insofar as it is difficult to act as a consultant to the courts, or as an advisor to the prince, the young and most dedicated researchers of the mid nineteen-seventies engaged in a rebellion, which resulted in the enlargement of the concept of peace and in the formulation of theses on the relationship between research, education and action;
- f) An interest in doing research on the military sector; and correspondingly, on the militarization and militarism which prevailed in society before the Second World War; and
- g) The explicit rejection of tradition; a negative trait which, fortunately, has lost relevance with time. This meant that, with the exception of the founding fathers Pitrim Sorokin, Quincy Wright, Lewis Fry Richardson and Karl Deutsch, many other valid scholars were undervalued and their worth, underestimated.

#### 1.1.4. EVOLUTION AND COLLAPSE OF THE REFORMIST IDEAL

By the end of the nineteen-seventies the failure of the mission of peace research, understood to be social engineering, seemed obvious: the collapse of the reformist ideal. This not only spread puzzlement amongst many peace researchers in not having discovered the pill with which to “cure” war, it is something of greater import. Supposing that such a pill could be found, there are doubts as to who the person in charge of administering it would be, or how its consumption would be guaranteed.

There do not appear to be “princes” willing to buy this product, nor even buyers for the product of decolonization: the States of the (still) Third World countries. This means confronting a dilemma that continues to be relevant in the present day: What is more important? To gain reliable knowledge on the causes of war and the conditions of peace, or to search for who will administer such knowledge once it has been obtained? It is from here that the two concluding theses are derived.

### 1.1.5. FIGHT FOR INSTITUTIONALIZATION

The evolution of peace research, which is very complex, can be reconceptualized as a fight for its institutionalization (a fight in which names such as Bert Röling, K. Boulding or Johan Galtung stand out). This fight, however, starts to be problematic from the end of the seventies and beginning of the eighties onward, during which the convergence of peace research with the increasingly predominant heterodox (but already defiant) views in International Relations takes place: studies on security, on the analysis and the resolution of conflicts, et cetera, raise doubts in regards to the interest in continuing to be (conceived of as) different. This questioning pushed for greater specificity and the *leap in the dark* of peace research.

### 1.1.6. ASSESSMENT OF PEACE RESEARCH (1950-2010)

Finally, the assessment of peace research in these last five decades can be characterized by the existence of three basic topics of disagreement:

- a) What is the nature of war and up until what point has it changed? Is it pathology or, according to Rapoport, a social institution that has demonstrated its viability throughout the course of history and in many different places;
- b) What is the nature of conflict, how should it be analyzed and be resolved/transformed accordingly? A topic on which much is being written, and with a high level of criticism regarding that which has taken place in the last six or seven years; and
- c) What is the most appropriate methodology for analyzing the two aforementioned points of disagreement, and for finding a means of overcoming differences and reaching consensus? Profound disagreement on key issues regarding the purpose of peace research has been revived in the last years. It would be enough, for example, to focus (solely) on the debate surrounding new international conflicts, or on the traditional critical approximations to conflict resolution, including the evolution of Adam Curle's classic work since the end of the nineties, or the contributions of John Paul Lederach;

What is more, this involves a constant broadening and widening of the agenda to include topics that are susceptible to being investigated, a process led by Galtung, and the 'ad infinitum' use of the idea of positive peace, which absorbs all human dreams to be fulfilled, making all a potential component of the all-inclusive conception of peace.<sup>1</sup> In this way, peace becomes a process and, the fight against the direct, structural and symbolic violence present in our unequal and multicultural societies becomes the unreachable objective.<sup>23</sup>

Considering the fact that a large portion of research has been done using secondary sources, or to put it differently, on the basis of work coming from specific disciplines which, in many cases, does not share the bias that should be characteristic of peace research, it seems to be necessary to bring certain topics into focus and define them more carefully, a process which has begun in the post cold war period, and to make observations and do direct research on primary data.

Finally, we observe a recurrent tendency to confuse explanation with taxonomy or, in other cases, of the affirmation of specific theses without plausible proof of their validity. Classification as a means of generating inquiry is useful, and even essential, but without the attribution of refutable causality there cannot be scientific knowledge. Not with taxonomies, nor in other fields that are today the object of abuse, do statistic correlations imply causal explanation *per se*.

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1. This is not to take away from the great importance of the concept of positive peace, which is key and currently totally accepted: it is one thing to accept that peace does not only mean an absence of armed conflict, of wars, or of direct violence; and another thing to accept that the 'plus' should include all the positive values that stem from utopias and programs of change thought of for humanity.
  2. The extreme would be a kind of peace research which includes any research somehow related to violence and not only to war or direct violence. this were to be done with an attribution of causality, it would not be too problematic: the roles that structural and cultural violence play in the breaking out of direct violence, for example, a chain of causality which has implications for how to work in order to avoid or diminish outbreaks of direct violence (diminishing/ transforming the situation of cultural and/ or structural violence). The problem is when all things are considered equal...and eliminating cultural violence is the objective.

## 1.2. PEACE RESEARCH AND THE EXPLANATION OF THE CAUSES OF WAR: EXPLANATION OF A PARTIAL FAILURE

With things as they are, what is it that has sustained peace research that can give us insight as to what its main theoretical challenge was, and help us identify the causes of war and the conditions of peace?

In our opinion, not many things until the mid eighties because, and most probably resulting from its origins in behavioralism, generally speaking peace research departed from a debatable *a priori* assumption: the idea that war is a uniform causal category, or rather, the belief that all wars have relatively similar causes, which implies that research can isolate the necessary causes: the pre-requisites present in any conflict.

Peace research has attempted to identify these necessary causes or prerequisites by answering three partially interconnected and overlapping questions:

First: What are the conditions in the absence of which war would break out in some way?

This is something about which, in times in which proposals for preventative diplomacy and early warning are frequent, both of which demand an understanding of these conditions in order to develop indicators that are more reliable than those currently in use, a clear response still does not exist.

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Second: Under which circumstances have wars taken place or occurred with greater frequency? Something which quantitative analysis has attempted to answer by establishing extensive databases and statistic correlations between conflicts, but which have not, however, resulted in any particularly conclusive ideas.

Third: In which way, and for what reason or reasons, did a concrete particular war foment, break out or take place? This is the question that has probably received the most and best answers in peace research. To put it provocatively, we are not too sure that the bulk of the research has gone much further than what Wilhelm von Humboldt said a long time ago: “Behind war there is always a combination of three phenomena: the nature of things (material factors and inequalities in our discourse), human action (intentionally explanatory from a political or territorial perspective), and triggering factors (immediate, necessary and sufficient causes).” This in spite of the fact that, assuming an optimist air, we can say almost the same thing of the research done in general: research that has not assumed, at least explicitly, the bias and the commitment inherent in peace research.

As such, we can conclude that we continue to need more and better research because, contrary to what the founding text of UNESCO says, wars do not begin solely in the minds of human beings. Or, to use popular terms, maybe the trigger of wars, and their legitimation to an even greater extent, are constructed, but between the deep causes and the amongst accelerators of war, there are catalysts that are more than mere ideas or constructions.

From this it can be gathered that it is necessary to look for explanatory factors that allow for understanding the reasons for such little success. Specifically, we believe that this failure can be explained by the combined impact of:

- a) The exaggerated emphasis on being a discipline, on being different: to summarize, in not having worked in the transdisciplinary fashion that peace research calls for. It was enough- is enough- to demand the bias, the particular vision, the perspective with which to explain something similar to a commitment or oath.
- b) The tendency not only to broaden the agenda of the discipline, but also to broaden its concepts and analytical tools, absorbing different notions and making them all inclusive. What better describes a particular type of asymmetrical relations- for example North-South relations- speaking generically of structural violence or going straight to detail and speaking of exploitation, pillaging, the impoverish-

ment of resources, unequal exchange...? In moving the argument to the conceptual sphere, many controversies are not being resolved in the genuine theoretical sphere, which better explains particular phenomena, and with the necessary simplicity and parsimony.

- c) The fact of having accepted what Rapoport classified the ‘cataclysmic conception of war’: an aberrant phenomenon that takes place in a recurrent fashion. It would be better to depart from the proposal made by Rapoport himself: “wars have been, at least until now, viable social institutions”, which explains their persistence. Along these lines, if we want to understand their causes and find out the ways to prevent them, the fundamental job at hand is to examine the mechanisms and institutions which are induced to plan, direct and/or justify their occurrence. The approach proposed by Rapoport at the beginning of the seventies, and which we are trying to recover, is a genuinely radical one, being that it gets directly at the roots of war: studying the war-making institutions, attempting to gain an understanding as to why they have prospered, by undermining traditions of obedience and loyalty, to the point where the familiarity that hides the malignant character of such society to nourish them with their own essence. To understand this would enable us to design strategies to make fighting these war-making institutions possible.
- d) The confusion that stems from the ancient vice of trying to trace political and ideological demarcation in theory. From the position of adjusted rationalism in which we epistemologically situate ourselves, one thing is the political compromise, the civil fight and the precision of our proposals, accepting the inexistence of neutrality in the context of discovery of the scientific task at hand; and, another, to renounce the fundamental ideal, due to its unattainability, of the search for scientific objectivity. The cleavages do not affect the comprehension of the causes of war, as demonstrated by the fact that authors such as Van Crevald, Kaldor, Holti or Vasquez ended up making similar conclusions about non-clausewitzian and non-Trinitarian wars in the post cold war period, even though they came from distinct points of departure.



- e) Put differently, the confusion between moral neutrality and scientific objectivity, and the abandonment of the second due to the nonexistence of the first, an error attributable- at least in its generalization to Galtung. It is one thing not to be neutral, to commit oneself, to explain the starting points in the name of honesty and in order to avoid naturalist fallacy; and another thing to think about the “critical” or emancipatory motives that go above and beyond the meta theory.
- f) The exaggerated interest in abstract utopias, in the radical and round alternative, in the global project, without thinking about the actual possibilities of the project at hand ( as done with Marx and Hegel’s critical approach, or from the severe standpoint of Kant): the ‘must be’ should be linked to the empirical possibilities of reality. This does not mean renouncing utopia, but rather thinking about strategies for/of (de) transition, in how to achieve that which is most difficult: to be able to move from the reality which is to be transformed, to that reality which is longed/strived for as the ultimate objective.
- g) To prioritize, before knowing whether the dignified knowledge that needs to be transferred and applied can be accounted for, political action must come first; in other words, the time and place in which the project should become a reality. Peace research should not *do* politics, but it should take into consideration the fact that, in not being able to opt to be an advisor to the courts, it should have an influence on the battle of ideas and actions necessary to implement the models of change and social transformation.

### 1.3. SO, WHAT SHOULD BE DONE? SUGGESTIONS FOR A NEW AGENDA

It seems necessary to propose a new agenda, as (it) would be even if the changes stemming from the alteration of the international system and the occurrences of the two decades of the post-cold war period had never taken place. A new agenda which, as will be seen, means recovering part of the old agenda and, specifically, part of that which was clarified/stated by precedents that have long since been forgotten

or ignored. This agenda should be coherently constructed around the following proposals:

- a) The idea of bias, of a different point of view, and to clarify what the distinguishing characteristics of the peace researcher are: their committed and critical vision, which attempts to go above and beyond conventional language, and which recovers the normative perspective, but in the same fashion used in the economy of the welfare state; in other words, constructing a whole out of the path between what should be done, is being attempted, and the current/present situation. The idea of bias should be materialize on the basis of four proposals. First, the need to question the reasons behind the obvious, to not accept things as being set in stone, and to not take anything for granted; second, the need to challenge dominant thought, at least as a mental experiment; third, the need to innovate, to have a different approach, within the (same) discipline; and fourth, the will to be a frontier researcher, capable of breaching different subjects.
- b) Settling the score with the past, to recover a limited conception of positive peace in every sense of the word, and to prepare for peace. This means focusing on preventing the destructive behavior present in prolonged social conflicts. To focus on topics such as ethno political conflicts and methods for their political resolution: for example, the relationship between types of decentralized governance (and, therefore, the study of new actors and non-conventional forms of politics) and the prevention of violent behavior.  
This also means avoiding leaps in the dark and accepting that peace is essentially an indirect product which cannot be obtained any other way but indirectly: while pursuing other things and which, furthermore, will only result from social action, not from education.
- c) To restrict and go into depth in the research agenda, establishing priorities and collaborating on other endeavors, something which facilitates the convergence of agendas in the international sphere, as has been the case with sustainable human development and human security, or the resolution and transformation of conflicts.
- d) To recover scientific objectivity, make the *commitment bias* explicit

and clear, not to promise more than can be granted, and to establish a routine for the purpose of more and better knowledge, by comparing and contrasting projects, etc..

- e) To accept the intellectual “reality”, which is morally denied when treated as if it were inevitable and a means of dirtying ones hands: to think about strategies of transition, about agents of change, and not only about preferred conceptions of the world/ how to get closer to an idealized conception of what the world should be .
- f) In sum, to combine three verbs: know the causes of war and the conditions of peace, expose a false conscience, and to look for commitment (made individually, though susceptible to being articulated collectively)

Therefore, the paradox stems from accepting that, without greater and better knowledge, wars will continue to take place: and without action, in spite of having good knowledge, they will also continue. Knowledge is a necessary condition for action, and can be its sufficient cause.

To say it with two quotes, one inspired by Rapoport and his “war against war”, there is a simple aim: to dispel all superstitions in order to demonstrate that “all the arguments that sustain the continued existence of war as a social institution can currently be proven to be simple superstitions. The discrediting of a superstition is an irreversible process, a question of time. In other words, we can sustain the strong affirmation that peace is an idea whose time has come.”<sup>3</sup>

Now, this time which appears to have come will be an impossibility if we do not take care to remember the wise advice of Einstein, who said - in a homage to W. Rathenau, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Weimar- that he trusted a certain person for having been an idealist, but an idealist that had not worked in the field of contemplation, but rather that he had committed himself, in the best sense of the word, to working with the stench of reality.

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3 Anatol Rapoport, *Peace. An Idea Whose Time Has Come*, Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan Press. 1992: 199.

To return to the old agenda, incorporating some new themes into it and seeking collaboration with endeavors that serve the same ends. This means putting an end to promises and vague remarks and returning to the old 'stench of reality': that there continue to be wars and many of these, in spite of being non-clausewitzian (and challenging the old dichotomies of modernity, public/private, interior/international, combatant/civilian, limited/total...), continue to be driven by material motives and, particularly, the search for hegemony. In this way, two concrete developments end up being of special importance in the post-cold war period: (1) the current state of peace studies, the practice of conflict resolution and transformation; and (2) the role that social movements and non-conventional politics play in the formulation of public policies in favor of peace. We will leave the current state of conflict resolution and transformation aside (see Grasa 2010), so that we may focus on the study of social movements.

Put differently, the old relationship between investigation, education and action has become more demanding from the perspective of collective action. Collective action becomes key, particularly in the field of international relations- the kingdom of anarchy, the lack of a legitimate central authority that is accepted by all actors- since it lacks a division of powers, doesn't have an Executive branch, has a Legislative one but which has partial and limited powers (the UN), and counts with a Judicial branch where rulings are not binding if they haven't been accepted by the States before hand (the International Court of Justice). This dynamic necessitates pressure towards collective action, through lobbying and incentives, i.e. carrots and sticks. From this comes the key role of studying how civil society, new social movements and campaigns, can make changing the international order the fundamental task at hand, twenty years after the end of the Cold War. It is specifically this question to which we dedicate the rest of this paper.

## 2. NEW THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL INSTRUMENTS: THE ROLE OF CITIZENS AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

### 2.1. SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN THE POST-COLD WAR PERIOD

In a context in which States do not seem to be very inclined to changing international relations in any radical way, in spite of these relations having evolved with greater order having been achieved since 1648, it becomes important to pay attention to the logic behind collective action, to the increasingly important role of social movements, both in practice and in the academic field, and to the relationship between the public and private spheres, in particular.

The appearance, decline and reappearance of social movements is a phenomenon which analysts and theorists have always considered to be cyclical by nature (Melucci, 1987; Norris, 2002; Tarrow, 1995), and the decade of the 90s and the first half of 2000 have coincided with a clear phase of growth of these movements, both on a global and regional level, with clear occurrences on the Asian Continent, in the Americas and in Europe. In fact, these years can be characterized as being a time of abundance for social movements: as the period in which the initial appearance of what has been called a “global civil society” has taken place. In this sense, axiologically motivated transnational networks that are prepared to affect the formulation or reformulation of public policies have flourished. What is more, these social movements and civil society organizations are present, both regionally and sub regionally, in numbers without precedence in the past.

And they have, furthermore, had notorious success, at least in the short term. To cite four cases, social movements and/or civil coalitions designed to achieve specific results have succeeded in: making governments fall or win elections (as in Ecuador or Bolivia); they have

stopped agreements from passing (as done in Seattle, delaying the start of the World Trade Organization's Millennium Round); they have led to the signature of treaties that limit and control arms (as with the Treaty of Ottawa, for the elimination or prohibition of anti-personal mines, and the subsequent ban on cluster bombs); and have also succeeded in organizing the largest simultaneous and generalized anti-war protests in history (such as the that which took place on the 15th of February in 2003, in protest against the budding intervention of the United States in Iraq). As if that was little, ever since Seattle, global meetings (G-8, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, World Trade Organization, European Council, and etcetera) always have a counterpart: an alternative forum.

All of this has generated a wave of long-term research programs (such as those done by UNRISD or the European University Institute in Florence, Italy), symposiums and meetings, special issues of magazines, and, naturally, articles, books and academic debates, including an annual newsletter on global civil society. What is certain is that the list of research topics associated with these new social movements, civil society and its relationship with the State, the market and, consequently, with both the political and institutional spheres, is extensive and almost without end. Among the topics on the list, we can highlight:

- a) The conceptual nature of these phenomena: the increase in, and plethora of, social non-governmental organizations; the divergent conceptions of civil society held by different cultures; and the part that the import/export of civil society through globalization plays.
- b) The transnational networks, the bases of the global social movements, and their role in the political struggle. This has been particularly developed as a result of the success had in Seattle, the interest in the experience of Porto Alegre, and the emergence of social forums, on both the regional and global levels.
- c) The characteristics that these transnational social movements have in common, particularly in respect to their genesis and the contexts out of which they have emerged, their focus, resources and strategies.

- d) The relationship between social movements and more traditional means of expressing political and social interests (unions, political parties, and the like), and the relationship between these and new forms of non-conventional politics, including the management of the conflict which results from the use of these new methods.
- e) The association of grassroots and popular movements, with political activism (in general) and social development, in particular.
- f) The links between civil society and political action, either in the case of processes of transition and democratization (or, more generally, of political change); or in situations in which the political system is seen to be discredited, causing disaffection towards the system in general, or towards one of its parts, such as the political party system.
- g) The empirical analysis being done on regional and sub regional levels, with important work in the field dedicated to analyzing the social bases of these movements, their formulas for organizing, and strategies for the forms their struggle is to take, and/or dedicated to looking at their agendas and their political programs. A subcategory that is particularly fruitful in this respect is comparative studies.
- h) The studies focusing on specific campaigns and proposals; those linked to the peace movement, human rights movements, movements for development, or for human security.

It is important to note that, although it is true that each movement or network has a specific mandate and a concrete area in which it acts, precise analysis allows one to apprehend numerous resemblances between movements in respect to their origins, means of expression, organizational structure, *modus operandi*, and, furthermore, their strategies and action. Specifically, and following Ghimire (2005: 9-10) who studies five of those social movements, the following defining traits can be discerned, among others:

First, a strong axiological component, to the point of being moved and guided by values and antagonist values, and a focus on social justice and, consequently, the changing nature of international institutions. Second, a concern for generating public solidarity for, and a strong interest in, the domains and specific arenas in which such

movements act, which, in parallel to increasing disaffection towards political parties and unions, provides them with a considerable dosis of legitimacy and popular and social support. Third, in regards to the organization, a bid for the creation of networks and diverse coalitions, which lack a central body of command or a clearly established and stable hierarchy. Fourth, a type of leadership which tends to emerge from the middle class societies of Northern countries, as exemplified by the movements of the nineteen eighties. Fifth, the conscious use of new information technologies in mass, especially the internet: types of technology used to have a hand in the media and in the public realm. Alongside these, however, traditional forms of lobbying, advocacy and, naturally, types of civic disobedience, also continue to be used. Fifth, a strong propositional and normative character: not only is that which is considered to be wrong criticized and protested against, but alternatives are also proposed, with the objective of instigating changes in common practice and in the institutions.

These movements have had, and still have, a very visible role in, and great impact on, the life of the citizens of both Old Europe, and the Ex-European colonies that were first to become independent (Canada, the United States, New Zealand and Australia). This has been done by guaranteeing governance and good government, by facilitating social and political interaction, and by mobilizing groups and diverse sectors, often in a very critical way, so that they participate in different social, economic and political activities.<sup>4</sup> The State, on its part, should guarantee and nourish a suitable legal and political environment,

4. In this sense, it is important to note the difference between “government”, a concept that always presupposes the existence of some sort of central authority (often that which we call the State, having public administration in a particular place) and “governance”, mechanisms of order (sometimes including the capacity to distribute resources which allow for the use of political, economic and administrative authority- and, therefore, the management of all basic levels of the social life of a country- but which do not necessarily function due to the existence of a formal centralized authority, but rather due to the presence of institutions, in the aforementioned sociological sense. To put it differently, when we speak of ‘governance’ we allude to a set of mechanisms, processes, institutions and even shared values through which citizens and social groups express their interests, mediate their differences and, finally, make the practicing of their rights and legal obligations possible. Governance is, hence, a pre-requisite for good government, a necessary but insufficient condition for such.



while the lucrative private sector should generate employment, investment and economic activity.

Because every sector has both strong points and limitations, good government and governance require that there is constructive interaction between the three. The government on its own is not enough, nor is civil society, to speak solely of the two sectors on which we have focused in this text. Without civic commitment, without condemnation and mobilization, and without social capital, the great public goods necessary in all societies, *democracy* and *development*, become impossible. Without resources, public policies, and the State, and in the absence of administration, civil society cannot carry out its mission either. And this mission is not easy, because it implies re-thinking the roles of each player and, above all else, respecting them.

A good example of this are the recent campaigns done by transnational networks of various NGOs and other actors on an international scale, especially those within the disarmament sector and human security. The following section applies the aforementioned ideas onto a specific case: the study of the disarmament and human security campaigns that have taken place in the last years.

## 2.2. THE INTERNATIONAL DISARMAMENT AND HUMAN SECURITY CAMPAIGNS

Security issues are a fundamental prerogative of states and are generally deemed particularly resistant to civil society pressures towards disarmament. Nevertheless, some recent campaigns have managed to draw attention to the humanitarian consequences of specific weapons - such as landmines, cluster munitions, small arms - and to the use of child soldiers. In several cases, the pressure generated by public opinion has led to international conferences addressing such issues and has resulted in new types of disarmament treaties. There are examples of successful cases (for example, landmines and cluster munitions, which both achieved a treaty) and cases that can be considered unsuccessful (for ex. the campaign against small arms). How it is possible that a coalition of activists could defeat the strong interests represent-

ed by powerful States and achieve international treaties in the field of human security?

In this section the factors leading to the success and failure of these steps towards disarmament are investigated, considering the types of mobilization within civil society, the interactions between campaigns and government policymakers, and the international dynamics of negotiations on treaties.<sup>5</sup>

In the first case – on landmines – the international efforts under review were fostered by the Ottawa Treaty in 1997, which prohibits the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel landmines. This unprecedented achievement gained by civil society represented an example of successful humanitarian advocacy in several ways, including the stigmatization of the weapon. Other coalitions, particularly those fighting against cluster bombs and small arms have tried to follow the ‘landmines model’, applying different lessons learned, and each has had different degrees of success.

Second, the arms control campaign is a very complex case, because it is involved in several international processes at the same time. The two most important processes are (a) the Program of Action on small arms and light weapons (SALW), adopted in 2001 and reviewed in the summer of 2006, which is not legally binding; and (b) the negotiations aiming for a (conventional) arms trade treaty, which achieved its first success on the political level at the end of 2006, with a resolution that was approved in the UN General Assembly, officially starting the negotiations phase.

Third, the cluster munitions process resembles the landmines process in that both are examples of open, multilateral negotiation processes and of new diplomacy, with NGOs (along with international institutions, such as UN agencies) participating as full partners. The

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5 This section is a summary of the PhD research “Changing the World. Explaining Successes and Failures of International Campaigns by NGOs in the Field of Human Security” defended on 14 September 2009 at the European University Institute (EUI, Florence) before a Jury composed by Donatella Della Porta (EUI) (Supervisor), Rafael Grasa (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona), Mario Pianta (Università di Urbino) and Pascal Vennesson (EUI/Robert Schumann Center of Advanced Studies).

leadership of a group of individuals who represent countries and international organizations that share certain ideas and interests gives impetus to alternative bargaining processes, which serve to overcome the paralysis of traditional disarmament forums, a paralysis which, in many cases, results from the unanimous rule required in decision-making.

Fourth, the child soldiers coalition was created in a situation where a great number of children under-18 were recruited in many parts of the world; then, the Optional Protocol to the Convention of the Rights of the Child rose the age of combatants from 15 to 18 years old. This helped to stigmatize this problem, but only to a certain point, and this work continues to be done, currently being in the third phase of the campaign (the implementation of the treaty).

### 2.2.1. FACTORS OF SUCCESS AND FAILURE

Two different groups of explanatory factors can be identified: a) On the one hand, those (internal) elements that are (to some extent) controlled by the actors who form the coalition: their organizational features, including their resources and their strategic choices; and (b), the (external) factors grouped in the political opportunity structure, which is multileveled, national and international. The external factors also include contingent factors, such as international conflicts or crisis. In between these internal and external elements, there are some individuals who form part of the controlled resources (individuals who act as activists) and others of who pertain to the contextual variables (individuals playing other roles). Finally, the rules of the game have an influence on this whole process, as they either facilitate the activists' influence, or make it more difficult. These two factors (an individual's agency and the rules of the game), however, are not given, but are endogenous: they are shaped by the participating actors. In other words, activists and diplomats struggle to create a setting that is favorable to negotiation, while also trying to push individuals into a position in which they direct their agency towards the pursuit of shared aims and claims.

Thus, one of the main findings is that individuals have the capacity to affect change on various levels. There are many examples of the potential of individual agency in different contexts: within NGO leadership, governmental delegations, and UN agencies, by holding bureaucratic ad-hoc positions (such as being President of the conference, chair of a committee), the media (with like-minded journalists), and so on. This suggests that the actors participating in these processes should not be conceived of as unitary entities, but rather as being composed of individuals who can exert high levels of agency. This is one of the clearest lessons of the pioneer landmines campaign, and has been learned and shared by subsequent campaigns.

In respect to social and political changes, they can take place at different stages in the international political cycle, starting with the creation of a transnational coalition, accomplishing outcomes by agenda-setting, improving participatory and transparent procedures (including access to institutions), achieving changes in the legal framework and, finally, shaping the implementation of policies.

Each campaign aims at achieving a treaty and, thus, revolves around the achievement of this legally binding document. The whole process begins when, in the first phase, several organizations that are concerned about a global problem, which is not given attention by the media and is absent from the international political agenda, decide to campaign for a future global treaty, creating awareness for the problem in different parts of the world and at the same time. This phase includes the first attempts to negotiate the issue, normally in the framework of an official formal process.

Afterwards comes the phase in which concrete and real negotiations of the treaty take place. This may sometimes imply the commencement of a completely new process where the main actors are, by definition, States, particularly in UN-based contexts, and in which NGOs may sometimes gain partnership status. In any case, activists need the help of like-minded States that take the lead among diplomats. This partnership is a necessary condition for the success of such campaigns.

Once the treaty is signed and ratified, the objectives of the coalitions expand in the third phase. On the one hand, these coalitions need to

be sure that the treaty will be effectively implemented (that States will finance it, and work will be done in the field, most of the time by the NGOs that form part of the coalition). On the other hand, there is the need to keep on campaigning for the issues that were not included in the final version of the text. Moreover, these coalitions work towards a long-term aim: the cultural stigmatization of the (use of the) weapon.

It is not possible to totally predict the success of new campaigns. Events that are not under the activists' control, such as governmental changes, terrorist attacks or an economic crisis, could potentially play a role, making the predictability of the final result more difficult. Yet, every new campaign develops around the three phases identified previously, and will be affected by the factors examined in this research.

### 2.2.2. CIVIL SOCIETY MOBILIZATION ON HUMAN SECURITY ISSUES

Activists engaged in such campaigns belong to the peace movement, but not the traditional anti-war movement, which based its actions in mass protests. This new peace movement is more sophisticated, uses a variety of strategies and resources, focuses on concrete security issues, has a lower profile, and is arguably more successful than its precedents.

Having the double aim of first, setting an issue into the agenda, and second, campaigning for a binding global treaty, the third parallel aspect is working on access and procedures. Achieving access to the negotiating room is crucial for shaping the result of the negotiations. There, the coalition focuses on facilitating the agreement and, when possible, making a good treaty out of it. After the signature and ratification of the treaty, the objective becomes its implementation and, in the long term, to achieve the stigmatization of the weapon.

In regards to the repertoire of actions and the strategic choices utilized by the coalition, protest activities are used when spectacular actions are needed in order to gain the attention of the media, international public opinion, and the political agenda. Once the negotiating process has begun, lobbying strategies used by NGO experts to convince official ambassadors take priority and, depending on the proce-

dures of the process, they can even participate in the negotiations. However, they still use other strategies, such as naming and shaming (the use of international public opinion to make opponent governments publicly ashamed of their political positions) in order to make countries reluctant to sign or ratify the treaty do so.

Framing is also crucial for each campaign. Transnational activists try to frame disarmament issues in terms of humanitarian crisis. These frames are more successful when they are used in order to bridge different positions, including those based on hard security concerns (most diplomats) and those representing the workers in the field (most activists). Arguably, the best illustration of this fact is the concept of human security, which aims to bridge the gap between the human rights and international security sectors. The idea of human security provides a coherent intellectual framework for framing issues and negotiating content in these contexts, enabling shared analysis between donor and affected countries to develop and, consequently, generate money and resources.

At the beginning, financial resources are limited by definition. As the campaign gains popularity and allies, it obtains more resources. In the negotiating phase, governments also discuss how much they are going to spend on the issue in the future. This fact affects the capacities of the coalitions, which can increment their resources in the third phase.

The relevance that transnational activists give to research and production of new scientific knowledge is very high in all the cases, as they know that it is very difficult for diplomats to face a rigorous report on a human security issue. Moreover, coalitions' reports might be more rigorous and neutral than those made by UN agencies, because they do not have to confront the political pressures and limitations that international institutions must face.

On their organizational level, two different actors within the coalition can normally be identified: (a) an international committee in charge of coordinating the organization and the high-level lobbying to be done; and (b) the NGOs and grassroots groups which function on the national and local levels. As the network grows, and the process

becomes more complex, the network tends to professionalize and decentralize, to be able to deal with the new resources. Such organizational form needs to deal with conflictive interests among the actors, and between larger professionalized organizations and those that are smaller and more locally based. In the end, successful coalitions need to find a way to satisfy both demands: effective coordination and decentralized participation.

### 2.2.3. THE INTERACTIONS BETWEEN CAMPAIGNS AND POLICY MAKERS

Where activists have achieved high levels of success are in the processes that have been characterized by an effective partnership between NGOs and some States (usually organized in a group of like-minded middle and small States). This can even be envisioned as a necessary condition in order to have a real bargaining process. Once the negotiations start, States become the main players, those who can agree or disagree on each of the points being discussed, those who can vote, and those who can decide. However, activists will remain present in a secondary role, ensuring that States will neither cut nor veto the proposed text. Once the treaty is signed, the States' role becomes to focus on financing NGOs (and UN agencies) and their respective activities (demobilization and re-integration of former child soldiers, cleaning mined zones, or recollection of small arms). Therefore, in practical terms, NGOs take the lead again.

The relevance of alliances made between distinct organizations that share common objectives and use very different dynamics has also been demonstrated. In the case of child soldiers, some of the main members of the international coalition are organizations dedicated to development, which, because of their presence on the field, have neither the facility to, nor an interest in, making public some data that could put their activities within some countries in danger. The transnational coalition, coordinated partially by human rights organizations, carries out a crucial role in bringing this information to the public and generating public opinion.

However, beyond the collaboration between NGOs from different sectors inside a single coalition, a topic not yet well developed, is the potential for synergy between different networks on interrelated topics. In other words, effective coordination between international campaigns sharing common objectives is missing. For instance, regular information exchanges, participation in acts together, or the exchange of effective strategies. In order for such coordination to be possible, it would be necessary to overcome defensive attitudes and distrust.

In addition, some of the UN agencies are beginning to understand that many of these issues belong to the same group of problems. At the same time, some organizations in the field are trying to expand their initial objectives in order obtain financing from international donors. Indeed, the same people who act on the field have carried out lobbying tasks for several issues for which there are no mechanisms of international coordination.<sup>6</sup>

The ultimate goal of the peace and human rights movement, however, is to improve the situation on the ground. From the activists' point of view, success means the implementation of the treaties. The problem, in this sense, is that it is difficult to affirm if the current situation is better than it was before the campaign was carried out. From an analytical point of view, in order to measure if a campaign has been effective, the key point is not necessarily to describe certain parameters depending on the final goal (for example, that there are no more child soldiers in the world), but has to do with much more concrete matters, like the introduction of a new international instrument that allows for improvement on the legal work on this subject.

In regards to the implementation of the treaties, not all have been equally successful. For example, in the case of child soldiers, the figure of 300.000 has remained constant in the three global reports issued

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6 Because the different issues on the field are so closely related, a treaty about a concrete issue can have implications on another, by facilitating the accountability of governments. This can be monitored transversally through the campaigns. The corollary of this idea is the following: if the success of a campaign has positive effects on other campaigns done by the same sector, strategies should be designed to facilitate cooperation among networks that share related objectives.



by the coalition to stop the use and recruitment of child soldiers. On the other hand, there have been major successes in the implementation of other treaties, e.g. the mine ban treaty: (a) The production of anti-personnel mines has declined considerably and their trade has practically ended (in 2007, mines were only known to have been used by Russia and Myanmar- neither of which are member States of the Convention - and non-state armed actors in 9 countries); (b) many stockpiled mines have been destroyed; (c) large areas of land have been cleared of mines and prepared for productive use (122 km<sup>2</sup> were cleared around the world in 2007); (d) internationally, there are less and less victims of mines; (e) the use of mines has ended in countries where it was once very common, such as in Angola and Sri Lanka; and (f) the treaty has been reinforced by the inclusion of new countries, and even non-signatory states (including the US). Furthermore, non-state armed actors are responding to international pressure and behaving in accordance with the spirit of the treaty.

#### 2.2.4. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE 'RULES OF THE GAME'

The set of rules and procedures used during the whole process is one of the determinants of the success of these campaigns. In brief, processes characterized by flexible rules, allowing decision-making by majority vote, and participatory procedures that include the activists as partners will be more permeable to the influence of NGOs, thus strengthening their partnership with the group of like-minded states. Coalitions will normally first try to use the established official channels through international institutions, such as the UN. In a situation where there is no progress, and the activists already have important allies on the governmental side, then a new and alternative process will be discussed and could eventually take place, running parallel to the official one. The success of this new process will shape the way the issue will be dealt with in the future. If the alternative process is successful, it will affect the official one, and the new set of flexible and participatory rules will be dominant even after the treaty is signed.

An interesting thing to note is the fact that the networks under study are made up of hundreds of organizations, but that their impact is consequence of the transnational relationships between a group of activists and diplomats. This community of practice interacts together on certain initiatives in which civil society can take the lead in the international political process. A sector of activists share time, experiences, and practices with some diplomats in places such as New York and Geneva. Occasionally, the same individual who is part of an NGO lobbies the diplomats, is working for their government on this issue two years later, and is representing UNICEF or another UN agency in this topic two years afterwards. These individuals, who form the community of practice, are the ones who carry out most of the real negotiations in the bargaining process.

This could contradict the essential grassroots aspect of the networks. Maybe communities of practice are the only way things can work in the complex international world transnational activists must face. They can realize the potential of concepts created in the humanitarian sector in the disarmament field, which could serve as a broker between different political alignments and different conceptions of security. Having understood such dynamics, they could try to move these ideas forward in a coalition with other diplomats and lobbyists who share similar opinions. Diplomats with a humanitarian background are often part of several communities at the same time, and have the possibility to play the roles of brokers effectively. In the end, inherited structures and working methods are as important as attitudes, style and the personal opinions of the participants who engage in such negotiations. All of these will shape the final result of the bargaining process through their iterative dynamics.

Another debate, regarding the democratic features of these processes, tackles the advantages and disadvantages of negotiating inside or outside the United Nations. On the one hand, the UN is a way of dealing with global problems from a multilateral point of view. However, due to the traditional policy of big countries blocking international negotiations within the UN, activists usually face the dilemma of pushing to negotiate in a faster and more efficient process outside

the UN, even if that means risking the image and legitimacy the UN has for dealing with disarmament and international security issues.

### 2.2.5. THE INTERACTIONS BETWEEN STATES IN THE TREATIES NEGOTIATIONS

In regards to the interactions that take place between States during the negotiation of treaties, unanimity rule has been frequently addressed. The point under examination was frequently the power to veto, or the ‘tyranny of consensus’ exercised by certain countries at different points of the processes. The alternative and creative procedures of the Ottawa Process in the landmines case, and the Oslo Process in the case of cluster munitions, were specifically designed to overcome the blocking nature of the traditional forums of disarmament, especially the Convention of Certain Weapons. In the child soldiers’ negotiation, the threat of voting was also crucial in the reaching of a successful agreement among the players. And it was exactly the voting that allowed the arms trade treaty process to move forward in the UN.

The study of these campaigns demonstrates that learning processes have taken place. The last Biennial Meeting of States (BMS) Parties to the Program of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons (July 2008) was a crucial test for formulating the conditions that facilitate negotiation and an innovative idea of consensus. First, the organizers conducted informal meetings in order for the community of practice of arms control negotiators to facilitate interaction between the (participating) States, along with civil society and industry experts. Second, States engaged in an in-depth, substantive interactive debate on the focus/target issues, avoiding the unfocused national statements that had taken up so much valuable time at the previous meetings. Third, the substantive discussions had been prepared before the meeting by States designated by the Chair. Each consulted (what?) before the meeting took place and prepared discussion papers. Finally, NGO experts introduced the discussions with overviews of the problems, and a draft of the outcome document, based on these discussions, was posted on the meeting’s website every morning.

These innovations can be interpreted as the result of the creative and alternative processes on landmines and cluster munitions that were negotiated outside the UN. The idea held by the organizers was to learn from these processes, but to keep the negotiations inside the UN, which provides them with additional resources and legitimacy, also having the flexibility and effectiveness of the new diplomacy procedures. In the end, Iran made its opposition to the new procedures and to the outcome document public. For this reason, the only option left open to the Chair was to proceed to the voting procedures - a first for the UN small arms process: in the end, Zimbabwe joined Iran in abstaining. All the other participating 134 States voted in favor of adopting the outcome document as an integral part of the meeting's report.

Was there consensus on how to move forward with global efforts to curb illicit trade in small arms and light weapons? If we accept that the concept of consensus encompasses the possibility of disagreement (a situation where almost all parties agree), one of the unintended consequences of the success of the Oslo Process may have been that the restrictive interpretation of consensus that is/ would now be reconsidered, as illustrated by the vote that took place at the end of the third BMS on small arms. If this new way of working becomes applied to disarmament and arms control negotiations more often, more progress will probably take place.

Both the Oslo Process on cluster munitions and the Ottawa Process on anti-personnel mines showed a significant group of States losing patience with inadequate progress on humanitarian issues and deciding to go outside of the framework of the UN in order to achieve human security goals. The success of these processes has affected disarmament diplomats, who have felt uncomfortable with having to move outside of UN structures in order to achieve results. It would, therefore, seem that these experiences have made many countries more committed to making progress on disarmament and arms control within UN structures. As we have seen, in order to convert this commitment into real progress, the role of international civil society and their transnational campaigns will be crucial.

### 3. CONCLUSION

The study of recent disarmament campaigns that were carried out by civil society demonstrates how an investigation for peace can overcome the limits and vices that have often been characteristic of peace research in the past. First, this is done from a perspective that is half way between international relations and the sociology of social movements, but which has a strong bias towards peace research. Second, it focuses on a reasonably limited conception of peace, analyzing disarmament treaties that have both a clear human security dimension, and an element of the search for a means of guaranteeing that human rights are respected. All of this is carried out from a perspective committed to pacifism, though not exempt from the scientific objectivity that is both tangible and necessary in placing a critical eye on the acts done by the coalitions of NGOs, which were not as effective or as efficient as they could have been. This study, therefore, demonstrates that it is (indeed) possible to change (our) international reality, even in cases in which such change is *a priori* highly unlikely, such as those which have to do with international security. In conclusion, synergy between research and action is possible, and even desirable, but one must take care to keep their own role clear in respect to the three aforementioned realms of: research, knowledge and action.

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