

Full Length Research

Johan Galtung's Concept of Positive and Negative Peace in the Contemporary Ethiopia: an Appraisal

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Despite the optimistic socio-political and economic changes achieved in the contemporary Ethiopia, seen in light of Galtung's notions of peace, what the country has been able to achieve partially so far is negative peace. This is because intrastate latent and manifest violent conflicts are not totally absent. Moreover, given the volatility and vulnerability of the region and stalemate in its conflict with Eritrea and engagement in Somalia, Ethiopia is subtly and indirectly at interstate war. The writer argues, this does not only postpone the realization of positive peace, but also makes it daunting, complex, and time taking endeavour thereof. Hence, the vision for positive peace in Ethiopia should begin by immediate end of intermittent small and large scale latent and manifest direct violent conflicts and sustainable and comprehensive effort of building harmonious and just society. Thus, the writer concludes, the venture to end direct violence and bringing "absolute negative peace" in the short term and bridging it with addressing structural and cultural violence in the long run requires the uninterrupted furtherance of the status quo relative negative peace. Moreover, besides avoiding lapse and relapse to violent conflicts, the country needs to build and sustain socio-economic and political values and institutions of positive peace.

Keywords: Positive Peace, Negative Peace, Structural Violence, Cultural Violence, Direct Violence

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INTRODUCTION

Johan Galtung, a prominent founder of peace thinking, in the 1964th founding edition of the *Journal of Peace Research*, came up with two typologies of peace- Positive and negative peace. He, conceived "[...] negative peace [as] the absence of violence, absence of war - and positive peace [as] the integration of human

society" (Galtung, 1964: 2). In relation to that, he also introduced typologies of violence: Direct, structural and cultural violence. As to him, negative peace is the absence of organized direct violence whereas positive peace is the absence of structural and cultural violence and prevalence of justice, harmony and equality. Since

then, Galtung himself and many other writers and institutions¹ have used these typologies of peace to evaluate peace at societal, national and international level.

This article, hence, attempts to evaluate peace in contemporary Ethiopia in line with Galtung's typologies of peace. In doing so, the writer explored the meaning and dimensions of peace, national values and peace perspectives, institutional frameworks, manifestations of positive and negative peace in the country. The article also assessed the IEP's GPI report on Ethiopia in relation to positive and negative peace and presented empirical facts and figures on positive and negative peace in today's Ethiopia.

A Glance at Galtung's Negative and Positive Peace Dichotomy

To begin with, for Galtung, there are different conceptions of peace, first "peace as a synonym for stability or equilibrium. This conception of peace also refers to internal states of a human being, the person who is at peace with himself" (Galtung, 1967: 12), and there is the second idea of peace as "the absence of organized collective violence [...] between major human groups; particularly nations, but also between classes, racial and ethnic groups [...]. [He] refer this type of peace as negative peace" (Ibid). There is also the third concept of peace- "peace as a synonym for all other good things in the world community, particularly cooperation and integration between human groups, with less emphasis on the absence of violence. [He] refer to it as positive peace" (Galtung, 1967:14).

Galtung also simulated peace studies with health studies and used medical concepts of diagnosis-prognosis-therapy. Hence, diagnosis involves analysis of violence and their conditions, followed by prognosis that involves checking the system's ability for self-restoration or needs intervention followed by therapy. In a system that a state is so ill to restore itself we need curative therapy-negative peace and in a symptom with a capacity to self restoration we need preventive therapy-positive peace (Galtung, 1996:1).

Grewel (2003), summarizing Galtungs classification of peace, states that, negative peace: is pessimistic, curative, peace not always by peaceful means. Positive peace is structural integration, optimistic, preventive, peace by peaceful means (p.4). Grewel further argues that, what Galtung in most of his work has sought to project was and still is positive peace as a higher ideal

¹ The Institute of Economics and Peace/IEP/ and its annual Global Peace Index/GPI/ is famous and credible measurement of peace at country level. The IEP, in its assessment, uses positive and negative peace typologies of Galtung.

than negative peace. Hence, as to Galtung, cited by Grewal, peace research should not merely deal with the narrow vision of ending or reducing violence at a direct or structural level but seeks to understand conditions for preventing violence (Ibid).

Hence, Barash and Webel (2014), defined positive peace as

[...]a social condition in which exploitation is minimized or eliminated and in which there is neither overt violence nor the more subtle phenomenon of underlying structural violence. It denotes the continuing presence of an equitable and just social order as well as ecological harmony (p. 7).

For Galtung, structural violence, that is built in to the very nature of social, cultural and economic institutions, has an effect of denying peoples important rights, such as economic wellbeing, social, political and sexual equality, a sense of personal fulfillment and self-worth and is expressed with the existence of hunger, political repression, and psychological alienation. By contrast, direct violence generally works much faster and is more visible and dramatic (Ibid). According to Galtung, behind structural violence is cultural violence which legitimizes it through language, art, science, law, media and education (Galtung, 1996:2).

On the other hand, Galtung argued that

...[s]ince the search for peace is concerned with the relations between groups; it obviously divides into a negative and a positive part: the search for the conditions for the absence of negative relations, and the search for conditions that facilitate the presence of positive relations (Galtung, 1967:14).

Hence, he associated positive peace with the existence of ten values of positive relations at national and international level: presence of cooperation, freedom from fear, freedom from want, economic growth and development, absence of exploitation, equality, justice, freedom of action, pluralism, dynamism (Ibid: 14).

Galtung further argues that,

...[a]ll these values can be discussed at the intra-national level of individuals as well as at the international level of nations. One can talk about individuals exploiting each other and nations exploiting each other, about individuals living in fear and anxiety and nations doing so, about individuals having a wide range of actions open to themselves so that they can live "rich lives"

and individuals that have a very narrow spectrum of actions from which they can choose, and one may talk about nations in the same way (Ibid: 14).

As such, this article endeavored to explore and examine the existence of some of these core values of positive peace in Ethiopia.

Brief Overview of Peace Lexicon, Perspectives and Institutions in Ethiopia

Peace: The Lexical Definition

Ethiopia, for long time in its history, has been plagued by assorted wars. Hence, peace has been and is a key value demanded but not totally achieved by its people. As a background to discuss peace in the contemporary Ethiopia, this part of the paper briefly looks at the meaning, perspectives and institutions of peace in Ethiopia. Let us begin from the lexical definition.

The Amharic the term “*selam*”² for instance is connoted with words as wellness, security, health, rest, tranquillity, love, unity, blessing (Kidanewold, 1970: 1178). Though the lexical definition in this and all other dictionaries seem to imply both negative and positive peace, the oral definition by the common men and dominant usage by the media still is tilted towards negative peace. In the interview made with randomly selected citizens in Addis Ababa, the response of more than 60% of the interviewee, for the question what is peace for you? lies in Galtung’s negative peace³. However, a broad definition of the concept peace that include values of positive peace is given in the peace values building training book developed by the Inter-Religious Council of Ethiopia/IRCE/ in 2014.⁴ Hence, in a nutshell, it is safe to conclude that the peace lexicon in Ethiopia recognize both positive and negative peace ideals of Galtung.

Peace as a Constitutional Vision and National Interest

In all the previous and existing constitutions⁵ of Ethiopia, peace is taken to be one of the national visions of the

² Taken from the Arabic “*sala’am*” which in turn is derived from Hebrew “*Shalom*”

³ Out of 20 respondents, 12, 6, and 2 of the respondent’s definition is negative peace, positive peace and mixed one respectively.

⁴ Inter-Religious Council of Ethiopia/IRCE/, established in 2010, with a core vision of seeing religious institutions stand together for peace, justice, human dignity, mutual respect, tolerance, etc.

⁵ Ethiopia’s four written constitutions are: the 1931 Imperial constitution, the 1955 revised imperial constitution, the 1987 socialist constitution, the 1995 federal constitution.

people. However, the types of peace envisioned vary significantly. For instance, the 1931 constitution states that “[...] the right of declaring war and *concluding peace* is legally reserved to the Emperor”⁶. On the other hand, the military regime’s constitution under its preamble stipulated that the constitution is approved among other things to “[...] make [...] due contribution to *world peace*, justice, democracy and social progress”⁷. The current FDRE constitution, that makes reference to the concept peace nine times⁸, inter alia, under its preamble stipulated that “...peoples of Ethiopia are strongly committed to building a political community founded on the rule of law and capable of ensuring a *lasting peace*, guaranteeing a democratic order, and advancing [the] economic and social development”(FDRE Constitution, 1995).

Peace as a Foreign Policy Agenda

The incumbent FDRE constitution provides the principles upon which the foreign policy of the country is built.⁹ To that end, the foreign and security policy document of the country declares that the foundation of Ethiopians foreign and security policy are domestic economic growth and development, because threat to Ethiopia’s national interests and survival are poverty, backwardness and lack of good governance (FDRE, 2002: 34). It further argues that,

[...]It is a given that, external threats are extensions of the national or domestic challenges that [Ethiopia] face. External threats are either coupled with domestic challenges or they exploit [local] vulnerabilities.... A historical examination of acts of aggression against Ethiopia proves this to be the case (Ibid).

Hence, the foreign and security policy of Ethiopia recognizes the causes for direct, structural and cultural violence in Ethiopia to be of domestic origins because of lack of justice, equality, human rights, and the likes which are elements positive peace. On the other hand, Ethiopia’s unreserved and central role in peace keeping and peace-building efforts in the region also is a positive credential of Ethiopia’s foreign policy in practice. However, its unresolved conflict with Eritrea, and

⁶ The 1931 constitution, article 12.

⁷ The 1987 Constitution has 119 articles and it has made a reference to the term peace six times.

⁸ The FDRE constitution has 106 articles, out of these the term peace is mentioned, two times in the preamble, article 26(3), article 27(5), two times under article 30(1), article 52(2)(g), article 86(6), article 93(4)(a)

⁹ See Article 86 of the FDRE Constitution

longstanding enmity with Somalia is one of the core cause for lack of peace in the Horn of Africa.

Peace Institutions in Ethiopia

Currently governmental institutions constitutionally responsible to issues of peace and conflict in Ethiopia include *Ministry of Federal Affairs* which is given task of preventing and coordinating resolution of violent conflicts. In accordance with its mandate, the Ministry has undertaken capacity building supports for the regions, peace education, mass conferences and reconciliation sessions as well as management of violence in collaboration with the regions (UNDP, 2012: 10). The *House of Federation*: The constitution remits it with responsibility for conflict mitigation.¹⁰ The House has launched a national conflict analysis, mapping and strategy development initiative. *Ministry of Foreign Affairs*: In line with the Foreign Affairs and National Security Policy and Strategy, the Ministry is deploying external efforts to address internal challenges and vulnerability to threats that have negative impacts on Ethiopian development and peace-building (Ibid). Moreover, the formal justice system, defense, police and regional governments also are responsible institutions for peace in Ethiopia.

On the other hand, EIIPD¹¹, IPSS¹², IRCE and Peace and security clubs at schools and universities are also stake holders on issues of peace. In addition, the UNDP policy recommendation include the need for introducing Peace Education for

...building social capital through a culture of peace and [design] and [implement] activities that generate knowledge, enhance leadership skills and inculcate attitudes that can create social conditions conducive to peace (UNDP, 2012: 13).

However, in Ethiopia formal peace education is not introduced yet. But, a training book for peace values building in Ethiopia, published by IRCE in 2014 could serve as a foundation towards formal peace education in the future.

¹⁰ See article 62(6) of the FDRE Constitution

¹¹ Ethiopian International Institute for peace and development/EIIPD/ is an institute established in 1996 to undertake research and training that can contribute to the prevalence of peace, democracy and development in Ethiopia.

¹² The Institute for Peace and Security Studies was established at Addis Ababa University in 2007 with a vision to be the premier institute for education, research, and policy dialogue on peace and security in Africa.

Nature of Peace in the Contemporary Ethiopia

Positive and Negative Peace: Manifestations

As discussed above, what we mean by negative peace, for Galtung, is the absence of direct violence and positive peace on the other hand is absence of structural and cultural violence. Structural violence could be expressed in the existence of various forms of political repression and economic exploitation (Galtung, 1996: 2). In light of that, according to the UNDP report, the types and causes for conflict and violence in the contemporary Ethiopia are both multidimensional and complex. For instance, competition for resources such as land, pasture, and water; clashes due to livelihoods competition between sedentary farmers and pastoralists; heightened awareness of ethnic identity; and political issues such as language rights and perceptions of disenfranchisement, and arguments on border delineation between regions and ethnicities are some of them (UNDP, 2012: 7).

Examples of inter communal resource based conflicts include the Silte- Gurage conflict, the Wagagoda language conflict, the Sheko-Megengir conflict, the Anuak-Nuer conflict, the Berta-Gumuz conflict, the Gedeo-Guji conflict, Sidama-Oromo conflict, the Oromo-Amhara conflict, the Borana-Gerri conflict, and the Oromo-Somali conflict (Ibid). Moreover, religious radicalism because of deepening mistrust within and between communities is also a source of conflict in Ethiopia (Ibid). Sporadic Muslim-Christian conflicts, and the resultant extremism in both and confrontation with the government are examples of religion based conflicts in Ethiopia. Moreover, the polarized and aggressive relations between and among political parties in the country is also a potential source of radicalization and conflict.

There are also ongoing direct violent conflicts between the government and armed opposition forces: Oromo Liberation Front/OLF/, Ethiopian People Patriotic Front/EPPF/, Ginbot 7, Ogaden National Liberation Front/ONLF/, Tigray People democratic Movement/TPDM/, Sidama Liberation Movement/SLM/, Afar Revolutionary Democratic Unity Front (ARDUF) most of which are based in Eritrea. These armed groups claim that the government is authoritarian and oppressive and there is lack of democracy, justice, liberty and freedom in the country. As a result, they claim that they are fighting for political power to bring democracy, justice and peace. On the other hand, the unresolved conflict with Eritrea, involvement in the Somali crisis, engagement in the global war on terror, conflict over Nile with Egypt are also current and potential sources of conflict and violence in Ethiopia.

Hence, though the country is registering impressive economic growth, which could potentially bring positive peace in the long-term, all those active and potential

Ethiopia - Global Peace Index		
Date	Global Peace Ranking	Global Peace Index
2014	139 ^o	2.502
2013	146 ^o	2.630
2012	139 ^o	2.572
2011	131 ^o	2.520
2010	126 ^o	2.517
2009	130 ^o	2.635
2008	122 ^o	2.463

Figure 1. Source: IEP website

ethnic, political and socio-economic conflicts in Ethiopia manifest that the peace in contemporary Ethiopia mostly qualify Galtung's negative peace even a lack of it at times. The GPI assessment of peace in Ethiopia, which is discussed below also supports that conclusion.

Ethiopia under GPI and Implications

Though, the concept of peace is difficult to define, still it is possible to identify the social structures and political institutions that create and maintain peace. The IEP's GPI, which offers factors correlate with peaceful versus non-peaceful societies is a step in this direction. Toward this end, the GPI examined countries using qualitative and quantitative indicators that reflect three broad themes: levels of internal safety and security, involvement in domestic or international conflict, and degree of militarization which gauge the absence of violence or the fear of violence, hence; measure the degree of negative peace in a country (GPI, 2014: 7).

This study has made a brief look at the status of Ethiopia in GPI reports. To begin with, in the 2014 GPI report Ethiopia is ranked 139th (out of 162) and 35th (out of 45) countries in the world and in African respectively (GPI, 2014: 6-10). Ethiopia's status in the previous consecutive years, as shown in the table below, also shows that it is found at the bottom. This implies that Ethiopia is among the countries with no or very little negative peace. Figure 1

Moreover, the IEP has also developed a composite measure of Positive Peace-The Positive Peace Index (PPI) which is a measure of the strength of the attitudes, institutions, and structures to determine their capacity to create and maintain a peaceful society (GPI, 2014: 67). The table below shows the GPI indicators of Positive Peace, which have certain communalities with the ten positive peace values of Galtung presented earlier in this

study.¹³ Figure 2

In the positive peace index of 2014, measured with those eight key pillars, as shown in the table below, Ethiopia is classified among the countries which are more violent and vulnerable. Figure 3

However, as to the report, "[...] many other countries also saw a worsening in the political terror scale score, although it should be noted that a large number also improved. Countries that performed better in 2014 included Cote d'Ivoire, Burundi, Madagascar and Ethiopia" (Ibid: 10). Moreover, the number of deaths from organised external conflict has improved slightly due to positive changes in only three countries: Cambodia, Ethiopia and France. For Ethiopia, as to the report, it is because of fewer deaths in the conflict between government and the OLF (Ibid: 16).

According to the GPI study, all the Pillars of Positive Peace are strongly associated with *Societal Safety and Security*, with the strongest single correlation being with low levels of corruption. Corruption is the pillar most closely associated with *Ongoing Conflict*. Studies has identified a relation between peace and corruption, which suggests that beyond a certain point small increases in corruption can lead to large decreases in peace(GPI, 2014: 53). In that connection, though it still needs an independent research to make a valid correlation, Ethiopia's consistent ranking at the bottom of the ladder in the Corruption Perception Index/CPI/¹⁴ has its direct connection with the consistent lower rank in GPI.

The GPI also makes country risk assessment which pertains to violence, conflict and instability. This was borne out by successful statistical analysis on a number of risk and probability models developed by IEP (GPI, 2014: 55). To that end, the 2014 GPI report finding confirms that,

¹³ See page four, paragraph two.

¹⁴ Ethiopia is ranked 110th, 111th, 113th, 111th, 120th, 116th in the 2014, 2013, 2012,2011, 2010 CPI report respectively.<
<http://www.transparency.org/cpi2014/results>>

TABLE 3.8 POSITIVE PEACE INDEX INDICATORS

PILLAR	INDICATOR	SOURCE
WELL-FUNCTIONING GOVERNMENT	Government Effectiveness	World Governance Indicators, World Bank
	Rule of Law	World Governance Indicators, World Bank
	Political Culture	Sub-Index, Democracy Index, EU
SOUND BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT	Ease of Doing Business	Ease of Doing Business Index, World Bank
	Economic Freedom	Heritage Foundation
	GDP per Capita	World Bank
EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF RESOURCES	Life Expectancy Index Loss	Human Development Report, UNDP
	Gini Coefficient	EU
	Population living below \$2/day	World Bank, IEP
ACCEPTANCE OF THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS	Hostility to Foreigners	Economist Intelligence Unit
	Empowerment Index	Cignarelli-Richards Human Rights Dataset
	Gender Inequality	Human Development Report, UNDP
GOOD RELATIONS WITH NEIGHBOURS	Satisfaction with Community	Human Development Report, UNDP
	Regional Integration	Economist Intelligence Unit
	Intergroup Cohesion	Indices for Social Development, International Institute for Social Studies
FREE FLOW OF INFORMATION	Freedom of the Press Index	Freedom House
	World Press Freedom Index	Reporters without Borders
	Mobile Phones Subs. per 1000	International Telecommunications Union
HIGH LEVELS OF HUMAN CAPITAL	Youth Development Index	Commonwealth Secretariat
	Non Income Human Development Index	Human Development Report, UNDP
	Number of Scientific Publications	World Bank and UNDP
LOW LEVELS OF CORRUPTION	Control of Corruption	World Governance Indicators, World Bank
	Factionalised Elites	Fund for Peace
	Perceptions of Corruption	Transparency International

Figure 2. Source: GPI 2014 report

[...]sixteen countries over 500 million people, live in countries with risk score of more than 50, indicating a high chance of experiencing a deterioration in peace over the next two years. Of those 500 million people at risk, around 200 million live on less than \$2 per day, making them highly vulnerable if deteriorations in peace do occur (Ibid: 56).

As to the report, historically, "...from the 30 countries [of which Ethiopia was one] with the largest Positive Peace deficits in 2008 only three¹⁵ had not deteriorated in peace by 2014" (Ibid: 56), leading to a conclusion that the risk assessment has a near to perfect scenario for countries

like Ethiopia in the future too.

The other positive peace indicator of the GPI is good relations with neighbours, inter alia, manifested in the existence and growth of regional integration. In that direction Ethiopia's status seems to be more positive than negative. The trust and good neighbourliness and infrastructural development with Djibouti, Sudan, South Sudan, Kenya, hence, are contributing for positive peace in the region. However, Ethiopia's relation with Eritrea and Somalia has never been and will never be an input for positive peace in the foreseeable future.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Contemporary Ethiopia, of course has codified great constitution with a vision of creating one strong, peaceful,

¹⁵ Iran, Laos and Uzbekistan.

institutions in the world to fight poverty and backwardness in Ethiopia.

The writer, therefore, makes the following recommendations to that end,

 The government of Ethiopia and citizens alike should protect and sustain the relative negative peace achieved so far. Hence,

 The government should give focused, immediate and *grass root level response* to the ethnic and religious conflicts & should take a step ahead to *negotiate* with armed dissident groups inside and outside the country so that the country averts the danger of direct violence.

 The government of Ethiopia should come up with short, medium and long term peace plan to end the no war and no peace situation with Eritrea and work towards *peaceful relations*;

 Ethiopia should continue to play a pivotal role in the peace and security efforts in the region, hence should keep up its support for regional and international *peace keeping and building* endeavours under the UN and AU,

 The government of Ethiopia and citizens alike should also, enhance and promote positive peace values. To that end,

 The government of Ethiopia should continue the developmental zeal and assure sustainable, inclusive, *equitable human development*. In doing so the government should address all the potential root causes of structural violence in the country.

 The government of Ethiopia, as recommended by the UNDP, should come up with a comprehensive *peace-building policy and strategy* and mainstream conflict sensitivity in development planning.

 The media, schools, civil societies and religious institutions should promote *peace culture* that encompasses the broadening of understanding of peace and fight against structural and cultural violence in Ethiopia.

 The government of Ethiopia should assure *justice, freedom of action, pluralism, dynamism, transparency* and should take strict measure against

corruption.



The government should introduce *peace education* as a standalone course or integrate it in the already existing Civics and Ethical Education at all levels. Moreover, interfaith peace dialogue must be promoted and enhanced.



Ethiopia should continue to be committed and promote *regional economic integration* efforts in the Horn of Africa



The *international community* should continue supporting Ethiopia in its endeavour of socio-economic and political development.

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