

## Chapter 3

# Culture of Peace and Terrorism: Towards the Reconstruction and Restoration of Public Order\*

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**Abstract:** This chapter starts with an analysis of the concepts of *culture of peace* and *terrorism*, exploring their differences and similarities. Based on their characteristics, it suggests that a culture of peace, despite its differences from terrorism, can serve as a strategic tool for preventing violence and restoring public order in situations where terrorism has caused chaos. The chapter provides an initial reflection on the idea of *public order*, seen as a key element in managing social coexistence and the exercise of state authority. Building on this, it develops the conceptual frameworks of a culture of peace and terrorism to examine their theoretical bases, practical aspects, and application contexts. Afterwards, a comparative analysis of both approaches is presented, aiming to identify not only their structural differences but also potential points of convergence, allowing us to view a culture of peace as a tool for terrorism prevention and restoring order in violence-affected scenarios.

**Keywords:** Culture of peace; terrorism; conflict; peace

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## CULTURE OF PEACE: REFLECTIONS DRAWN FROM THE NOTION OF SECURITY

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## Introduction

Discussing a culture of peace and terrorism in the same document is no easy task. Each of these topics, considered separately, encompasses a series of dimensions and characteristics that could give rise to extensive and complex treatises.

The effort to understand the need for a culture of peace in a world where conflicts seem relentless points, at the same time, to a historical paradox: humanity has repeatedly resorted to war to preserve order and advance towards the consolidation of certain social groups or states. Historically, war has not only functioned as an instrument for imposing interests and ensuring cultural survival, but also as a lens through which to interpret the evolution of societies and the global order. This dual dimension—destructive and formative—urges us to reconsider the potential of a culture of peace as a sustainable and legitimate alternative to the persistence of violence as a mechanism for conflict resolution.

From this perspective, understanding the dimensions and implications of war requires applying *polemology*, an approach that enables a broader, more interdisciplinary understanding of warfare. This approach allows us to detach—at least partially—war from a strictly military conception (Llantén-Quiroz, 2021).

However, with human and social progress, both war and its forms of execution have undergone profound, accelerated transformation. The ways in which current conflicts are waged are very different from those employed in antiquity or in different cultural traditions. Today, conflicts are fought through complex strategies that integrate cutting-edge technologies and the deployment of actions in new arenas, such as social media and, more generally, cyberspace.

Under these circumstances, peacebuilding acquires an undeniable centrality and increasing relevance. Its objective is not only to achieve peace in the abstract, but to chart a concrete course for restoring order in societies affected by conflict.

Thus, peacebuilding is configured as a fundamental tool for societies—and the international community—by contributing to the prevention of human suffering and the reconstruction of social cohesion. However, recognizing the vital nature of this process implies accepting that its implementation requires a firm and sustained commitment from the actors involved in the conflict.

For the purposes of this document, it is crucial to understand that terrorism is perceptibly, albeit tangentially, intertwined with the phenomena of war and peace. While terrorism is not a recent phenomenon, since the 9/11 attacks in New York and Washington, studies on the subject have proliferated globally. The objective has been to offer explanations, from diverse perspectives and contexts, that allow us to address and mitigate the effects of terrorist acts (Cardona-Orozco et al., 2022).

While some key elements have already been addressed, it is important to emphasize that a culture of peace and terrorism represent diametrically opposed visions of how individuals and societies confront conflict and seek coexistence. A culture of peace promotes the peaceful resolution of disputes, respect for human rights, and the building of inclusive societies; terrorism resorts to violence, fear, and destruction to impose a political, social, or religious agenda.

Given the above, countless questions could be raised about the relationship between terrorism and peacebuilding. However, for the purposes of this paper, the following question is addressed: How can peacebuilding contribute to restoring order in areas where terrorism has been a central factor in violence?

The initial answer is that peacebuilding and its tools must lead, clearly and decisively, to the restoration of order in those areas where terrorism has been the primary cause of violence. In this regard, if this objective is not achieved, any peacebuilding effort will lack sustainable long-term results, which could perpetuate terrorist acts.

Public order is defined as the condition of social peace, sustained by the full and effective functioning of the legal system, which guarantees peaceful coexistence, citizen security, and the institutional development of the community.

To develop this proposal, the chapter will be organized into three sections. The first will be conceptual, addressing the definitions of *peacebuilding* and *terrorism*, their main characteristics, and their implications. In the second part, the elements underlying these concepts will be contrasted, with reference to specific cases in which it is possible to identify paths toward the restoration of order. Finally, the third section will present the general conclusions on the topic, integrating the findings and reflections derived from the analysis.

From a methodological point of view, this chapter adopts a qualitative, analytical-descriptive approach, based on a literature review of the topics addressed. This methodological perspective allows for an in-depth approach to the central concepts, favoring, from an inductive logic, the transition from the general to the particular. Thus, it seeks to identify specific elements that demonstrate the relationship between these concepts, with a view to establishing general patterns or explaining the singularities of a given reality (Hernández et al., 2014).

## Theoretical Framework

In line with the general approach, this section aims to elaborate on the concepts of a *culture of peace* and *terrorism*, which are central to the analysis.

### *Culture of Peace*

A culture of peace is an approach that promotes peaceful, constructive coexistence among individuals and communities. It is based on fundamental values such as respect for human rights, gender equality, tolerance, non-violence, and social justice. From this perspective, it promotes dialogue, peaceful conflict resolution, and the building of inclusive and equitable societies. More than an abstract ideal, a culture of peace represents a concrete commitment to building communities capable of coping with conflict situations and protecting the rights of individuals, regardless of their creed, race, or political ideology (United Nations, 1999).

To complement this and offer a broader understanding of the concept, the notion of a culture of peace will be broken down into its two fundamental components: culture and peace. In this regard, *culture* is understood as the set of symbolic elements that guide human behavior, especially within social groups or collectives, and that define a particular lifestyle (Muñoz & Molina, 2010). The concept of peace, whose etymology derives from the Latin term *pax*, is conceived as the set of human actions aimed at preserving well-being, both individually and collectively.

To understand the objectives of a culture of peace, it is essential to analyze the concept of *peace*. A deep understanding of this term not only clarifies the central purpose of this approach but also provides the necessary foundation for interpreting and formulating strategies more effectively aimed at its construction and maintenance.

In this respect, it is necessary to understand peace holistically, enabling us to reflect on the type of peace we desire, its fundamental characteristics, and the challenges inherent in achieving it. Therefore, it is pertinent to consider two

essential concepts of peace studies (the discipline dedicated to the study of peace): positive peace and negative peace.

Positive peace can be defined as a situation in which cooperative relationships are consolidated among different actors—both state and non-state—in order to build a stable, lasting peace. This form of peace is not imposed through the use of force, but rather built through dialogue, the identification of common goals, and shared benefits among the parties involved (David, 2008). Negative peace, on the other hand, is conceived as the absence of direct violence between states or other actors. Its main focus is eliminating the factors that fuel armed conflicts, prioritizing violence prevention, and achieving security among the warring parties (David, 2008).

From the above, it is possible to infer that a culture of peace is oriented toward the consolidation of positive peace. This serves a dual purpose: on the one hand, it acts preventively by addressing the structural causes that generate and perpetuate violence; on the other, it enables a broad framework for intervention focused on the management and peaceful resolution of conflicts.

However, this approach involves multiple levels of complexity, given that promoting a culture of peace does not guarantee the formation of fully secure or conflict-free societies. Nevertheless, it can become a fundamental pillar of peacebuilding<sup>1</sup> by providing normative, pedagogical, and ethical frameworks to transform the factors that fuel violence. In this context, a culture of peace contributes significantly to overcoming conflicts and restoring social, political, and institutional order.

## *Terrorism*

When addressing the phenomenon of terrorism, it is impossible not to recall the 9/11 attacks in New York and Washington, followed by other episodes that shook the international community, such as those in London, Madrid, Paris, Brussels, and Tunis. At the beginning of the 21st century, terrorism became established as one of the most complex phenomena and one of the main threats to international security.

However, while acts associated with terrorism continue to cause fear and uncertainty, a significant difficulty persists: the absence of a universally accepted

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<sup>1</sup> The concept of peacebuilding refers to a set of strategic actions aimed at preventing the resurgence of armed or violent conflicts by strengthening the institutional capacities of the State. The objective is to restore order and create conditions that allow for the consolidation of sustainable peace. These actions include political, social, economic, and transitional justice interventions designed to address the root causes of violence and to promote reconciliation and social cohesion (United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office, 2010).

definition of the term. This lack of consensus worries both security agencies and the academic community, as it hinders the development of coherent strategies to prevent and combat it.

When attempting to define the concept of *terrorism*, the existence of multiple theoretical approaches becomes evident. These have sought to identify a series of elements and characteristics that allow for the construction of a sufficiently broad definition, free from ideological biases or political influences (Bruce, 2013; Richards, 2014). In this regard, several academics, including Laqueur (1977), Schmid (2012), and Schmid and Jongman (1988), have addressed the phenomenon from different perspectives, and their contributions have been fundamental to the development of the academic debate.

However, one of the most significant contributions in this area is Schmid's (2012) systematic and exhaustive review of the specialized literature, aimed at establishing an academically rigorous definition of terrorism. Based on this work, the author identified 12 key elements that could serve as the basis for an operational definition acceptable internationally.

1. A doctrine presumed to be effective as a tactic for instilling fear, exerting political coercion, and carrying out violent actions in a calculated and demonstrative manner, frequently through conspiratorial strategies.
2. Terrorism can manifest itself in three distinct ways: i) as a form of repression illegally exercised by the State; (ii) as a propaganda agitation strategy used by non-state actors for ideological or political purposes; (iii) as an illicit tactic employed in the context of irregular armed conflicts.
3. Physical violence can take various forms: from lethal acts (bombings or armed assaults) to actions that seek to generate fear without causing immediate deaths (kidnapping or hostage-taking). It can also include systematic sequences of violence, such as enforced disappearances, torture, and murder.
4. Victimization is framed within a communicative process through which perpetrators issue demands directed at individuals, groups, or states, with the aim of exerting pressure, influencing decision-making, or supporting causes of an ethnic, political, or religious nature.
5. The term *terrorism* derives from the concept of *terror*, which refers to intense states of anxiety, panic, or fear. These states not only affect the direct victims of violent acts, but also spread among individuals or groups who share characteristics or affinities with them.

6. A distinctive characteristic of terrorism is the intentional selection of victims who, generally, do not belong to military forces or security agencies. They are primarily civilians or non-combatant personnel.
7. The direct victims of terrorist acts are not an end in themselves, but rather serve as a means to transmit a message of mass reach.
8. Terrorist acts can be perpetrated by a wide variety of actors, ranging from isolated individuals and small groups to decentralized transnational networks. Furthermore, in some cases, these acts may be sponsored, either directly or indirectly, by states or carried out by state agents.
9. The violence exercised in terrorist acts is political in nature.
10. The immediate objective of a terrorist act is to induce terror and intimidation, destabilize a community or group, and coerce and demoralize its members. Through these actions, the perpetrators seek to provoke specific reactions that allow them to consolidate or secure power that favors their political, ideological, or social interests and objectives.
11. The motivations behind terrorism are diverse, including political, ideological, and religious factors.
12. Terrorist acts should not be understood as isolated events, but as integral components of deliberate and sustained campaigns of violence. These campaigns seek to establish a prolonged climate of uncertainty and widespread fear, with the strategic purpose of influencing political, social, and cultural processes.

While the elements formulated by Schmid are of great importance, they do not exhaust the perspectives necessary to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. In this respect, it is appropriate to complement the analysis with the definition proposed by De la Corte (2006):

A succession of violent and intimidating acts perpetrated against a non-combatant population and designed to psychologically influence a number of people far greater than their direct victims, and thus achieve some objective, almost always of a political nature (as cited in Cardona-Orozco et al., 2022)

A conceptual distinction between classical terrorism and contemporary or post-9/11 terrorism is necessary. While both are similar, the terrorism that emerged after the September 11 attacks incorporates additional dimensions. One of these is its transnational character, which implies that the demands transcend national borders; that is, they are not limited to a single group or country. Furthermore, the

integration of technology in a globalized context not only amplifies the dissemination of these claims through the media but also enables the actors involved to operate covertly. Finally, a convergence with other actors and forms of criminal activity is observed (Montero-Moncada & Cancelado-Franco, 2022).

Regarding terrorism, the multiplicity of existing definitions should not impede the recognition of its essential elements. Taking the aspects listed in Table 1 as a reference, any conceptual approach should be grounded in these elements, as they synthesize the central characteristics of the phenomenon and can serve as a common basis for academics, politicians, jurists, and other relevant actors. This facilitates the construction of analytical and strategic frameworks aimed at its understanding, prevention, and the formulation of effective public policies.

**Table 1.** *Main Characteristics of Terrorism for a Definition*

|    | Element                                                                       | Frecuency % |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1  | Violence, force                                                               | 83.5        |
| 2  | Political                                                                     | 65          |
| 3  | Fear, terror emphasised                                                       | 51          |
| 4  | Threat                                                                        | 47          |
| 5  | (Psychological) effects and (anticipated) reactions                           | 41.5        |
| 6  | Victim - target differentiation                                               | 37.5        |
| 7  | Purposive, planned, systematic, organised action                              | 32          |
| 8  | Method of vombat, strategy, tactic                                            | 30.5        |
| 9  | Extranormality, in breach of accepted rules, without humanitarian constraints | 30          |
| 10 | Ciercion, extortion, induction of compliance                                  | 28          |
| 11 | Publicity aspect                                                              | 21.5        |
| 12 | Arbitrariness; impresonal, random character; indiscrimination                 | 21          |
| 13 | Civilians, noncombatants, neutrals, outsiders as victims                      | 17.5        |
| 14 | Intimidation                                                                  | 17          |
| 15 | Innocence of victims emphasised                                               | 15.5        |
| 16 | Group, movement, organisation as perpetrator                                  | 14          |
| 17 | Symbolic aspect, demonstration to others                                      | 13.5        |
| 18 | Incalculability, unpredictability, unexpectedness of occurrence of violence   | 9           |
| 19 | Clandestine, covert nature                                                    | 9           |
| 20 | Repetitiveness; serial or campaign character of violence                      | 7           |
| 21 | Criminal                                                                      | 6           |
| 22 | Demands made on third parties                                                 | 4           |

**Fuente.** Tomado de Bruce (2013).

Lastly, it is important to point out that terrorist acts, however media-covered, dramatic, and impactful they may be, do not in themselves constitute a threat capable of dismantling the political, legal, or social order of a state. While they can trigger episodes of destabilization and social upheaval, their effects are usually temporary and do not compromise the state's *status quo*. However, when a systematic and sustained campaign of terrorist acts takes shape, the impact is different: it produces a direct alteration of the established order, erodes trust in institutions, and increases perceptions of vulnerability, paving the way for prolonged periods of uncertainty, state weakening, and governance crises.

### *Culture of Peace and Terrorism*

After examining the key definitions of the concepts that underpin this analysis, it is pertinent to delve deeper into the elements surrounding both the culture of peace and terrorism. The purpose of this exploration is to identify the points of tension and divergence between these two notions.

As a starting point, and based on the United Nations Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, it is recognized that a culture of peace is built on a set of principles and components that enable its development and consolidation. These elements form a normative and guiding framework that States can adopt as a common reference point to promote social environments grounded in non-violence, respect for human rights, justice, and international cooperation.

The first element highlighted is respect for life, the eradication of violence, and the active promotion of non-violence through education, dialogue, and cooperation. This component encompasses a set of factors and actions essential for the genuine and sustainable development of a culture of peace. Thus, the following key aspects are identified:

- A culture of peace promotes education oriented toward acquiring skills for the peaceful resolution of conflicts, the promotion of non-violence, and respect for diversity. Within this framework, peace education is based on the transmission of fundamental values and principles, such as justice, democracy, coexistence, respect, and cooperation. These values are integrated throughout the educational process, contributing to the holistic and integral development of the human being (Acevedo & Báez, 2018).
- Cooperation acquires special relevance in this context. While the document does not delve into its development, it can be conceptualized as the process by which different state entities coordinate to promote non-violence. Furthermore, this concept encompasses collaboration between states and international agencies.

The second element—or, more precisely, the set of aspects addressed in Resolution 53/243—focuses on respect for the rights of individuals and social groups (see c, f, g, and h)—is key. Within this framework, a culture of peace is based on the protection and promotion of fundamental rights, aiming to guarantee equality, dignity, and freedom for all people, regardless of their race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation. From a broader perspective, its ultimate goal is to ensure full respect for these rights, emphasizing essential values such as equality, human dignity, freedom of expression, and integral development.

The third element is based on Article 1(c) and is subsequently reiterated in Article 3(d), which advocates for the peaceful settlement of disputes through mechanisms such as negotiation, dialogue, and consensus (United Nations, 1999). This perspective is essential to a culture of peace, as it underscores that one of its guiding principles is to establish pathways and alternatives that allow for the peaceful resolution of conflicts. In this regard, a culture of peace categorically rejects any form of violence as an instrument or means to achieve objectives, regardless of the party involved in the conflict.

In contrast, examining the main elements underlying terrorism, both theoretically and in practice, reveals a complex landscape that is difficult to understand. In this context, it is pertinent to revisit the characteristics outlined in Table 1. This analysis shows that terrorist acts are closely linked to violence and the intensity with which it manifests. Put differently, these acts constitute a spectrum of violence ranging from assaults to extreme and inhumane acts, such as beheadings and attacks with explosives.

Following this line of analysis, it is crucial to recognize that terrorism cannot be reduced to a single form of violence driven solely by political intentions. Rather, it is a multifaceted phenomenon that arises from diverse causes and motivations. Contrary to the widespread belief that associates contemporary terrorism with religious motivations—especially those linked to fundamentalist Islamic groups such as ISIS, Al-Qaeda, and Boko Haram—empirical and theoretical evidence reveals a plurality of origins in the genesis of terrorist groups. These can be related to left-wing ideologies, nationalisms, and other complex sociopolitical agendas, which underscores the heterogeneity of the terrorist phenomenon (Europol, 2021; Rapoport, 2002).

In this regard, terrorism serves diverse purposes and follows diverse logics, making it inappropriate to characterize it homogeneously. According to De la Corte (2006), drawing on Merari (1993), it is possible to identify at least four underlying logics of terrorist acts: propaganda by the deed, intimidation, provocation, the cultivation of chaos, and wars of attrition.

The first logic aims to transmit a message or spread a specific ideology and draws on the anarchist model developed by Kropotkin at the end of the 19th century. The second logic directs terrorist acts toward varied objectives, specific sectors, or concrete social groups, thereby configuring attacks against selective targets. The third seeks to provoke a popular reaction against the State, attributing to it actions or omissions in the face of the terrorist group's actions. Finally, the fourth logic seeks to create a scenario of chaos by demonstrating the State's and its institutions' incapacity to maintain order, which can lead to a change of government or to excessive support for the terrorist group's cause.

In short, terrorism is configured as a strategy within an irregular war, whose purpose is to create a sociopolitical situation so complex that both society and the State end up yielding to the demands of the terrorist group (De la Corte, 2006).

## Divergences and Convergences between a Culture of Peace and Terrorism

Up to this point, a detailed analysis of the two central themes structuring this chapter has been presented. This section aims to examine the tensions and dissonances existing between them, as well as to identify possible areas of complementarity or conceptual dialogue. Within this framework, and based on the elements previously discussed, it is possible to point out a series of dimensions in which the culture of peace and terrorism occupy antagonistic and mutually exclusive positions:

- The culture of peace, as promoted by the UN, is based on principles such as peaceful coexistence, mutual respect, and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. This approach contrasts radically with the logic of terrorism, which is based on the systematic use of violence as its central instrument of action and as a means to achieve political, ideological, or religious ends.
- A culture of peace actively promotes the construction of inclusive societies, based on tolerance and the creation of spaces for dialogue among the various sectors of society. In contrast, terrorism—and those who perpetrate it—operates from a logic that restricts the possibilities for dialogue and participation. Its actions are based, in many cases, on the exacerbation of differences—whether political, religious, ideological, or ethnic—which are exploited to justify exclusion, polarization, and, ultimately, the use of violence.
- Education is a fundamental pillar in building a culture of peace by contributing to the formation of citizens committed to non-violence,

respect for human rights, and democratic coexistence. In contrast, from the perspective of terrorism, peace education represents a direct threat to its aims, as it promotes values that counteract radicalization, intolerance, and the justification of violence. In this context, peace-oriented education becomes an obstacle to the objectives of terrorist groups, which often attack or discredit its principles and platforms for dissemination.

- The logic of a culture of peace is oriented toward conflict prevention and resolution through peaceful means, promoting social environments that guarantee the full exercise of fundamental rights. This approach prioritizes institutional strengthening, dialogue, and social justice as pillars of coexistence. In contrast, terrorism responds to diverse motivations—political, ideological, social, or religious—and resorts to violence as a mechanism to achieve particular objectives, openly defying the principles of coexistence, legality, and respect for human rights.

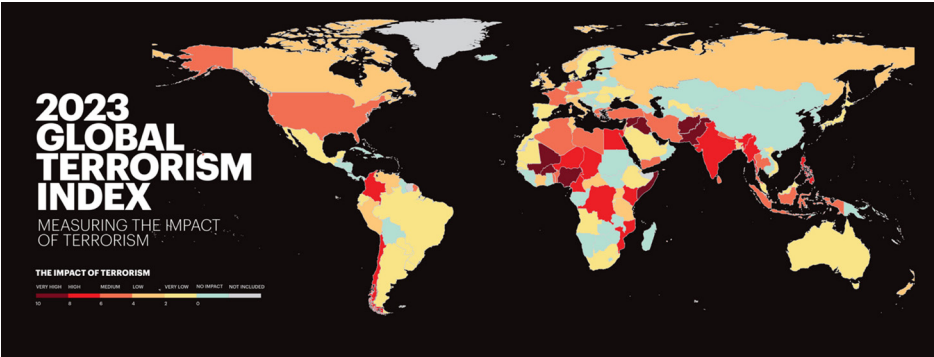
Now, it is pertinent to analyze certain elements that show a possible convergence between a culture of peace and terrorism. The analysis focuses on how a culture of peace can play a strategic role both in preventing the formation of terrorist groups and in containing and transforming contexts marked by extremist violence. From this perspective, a culture of peace not only acts as a preventive mechanism, aimed at strengthening social cohesion and reducing the structural conditions that favor radicalization, but also as a tool that can facilitate the reconstruction of the social fabric and the search for sustainable solutions in scenarios where terrorist actions have led to protracted conflicts.

In this vein, and considering a first scenario, it is important to recognize that a culture of peace—based on the peaceful resolution of conflicts, the promotion and protection of human rights, and the reduction of social factors that can lead to violent acts—constitutes a strategic tool for States.

From this perspective, a culture of peace should be conceived as a structural commitment of the State, whose promotion and consolidation require systematic and cross-cutting integration at all levels of education. This educational approach cannot be separated from the strengthening of a legitimate and democratic legal order that guarantees the full exercise of human rights and citizen participation under conditions of equity and justice. In this sense, both the rule of law and the strength of democratic institutions are fundamental pillars for shaping societies capable of reaching consensus, fostering environments of peaceful coexistence, promoting mutual respect, and driving social integration.

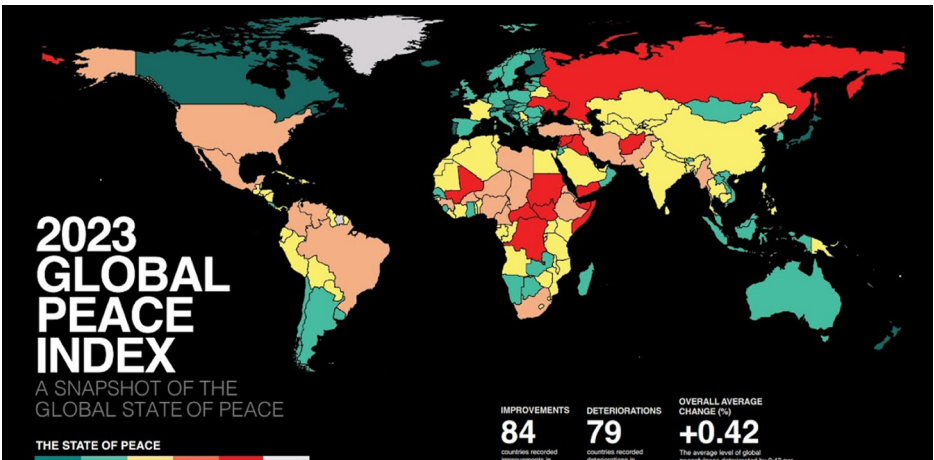
While the centrality of the State as a key agent in promoting a culture of peace is highlighted, it is necessary to recognize that it is not the only relevant actor in this process. Building a sustainable and authentic peace requires the participation of a wide variety of actors, including non-governmental organizations, social movements, political parties, public institutions, and citizens. In this network of collective efforts, the international community also plays a fundamental role, both through technical and financial cooperation and by promoting global normative standards on human rights, justice, and democratic governance.

Figure 1. Global Terrorism Index



Source. Taken from the Institute for Economics & Peace (2023).

Figure 2. Global Peace Index



Source. Taken from the Institute for Economics & Peace (2023).

Furthermore, based on Figures 1 and 2, a correlation can be established between territories with the highest levels of impact from terrorist acts and those with the lowest levels of peace, as measured by the Global Peace Index indicators. This relationship is especially relevant because it demonstrates that, although a culture of peace and terrorism represent antagonistic conceptions of social organization and human coexistence, their empirical link reveals that, in contexts where this culture is weak or incipient, the probability of terrorist acts tends to increase substantially. In contrast, societies that have managed to consolidate environments of sustained peace—where a culture of peace constitutes a structural component—exhibit a significantly lower incidence of extreme violence.

Continuing the analysis, given that a culture of peace is based on a preventive approach and the peaceful resolution of conflicts, it is relevant to highlight its role in contexts where terrorist groups have operated. In these scenarios, strengthening peace and building a culture of peace are consolidated as key strategies for understanding the transition from environments devastated by violence to others where institutional order has been restored, and lasting peace agreements have been established.

This approach not only allows us to address strategies aimed at overcoming armed conflict, but also the structural conditions necessary for peaceful and lasting coexistence. This is especially relevant in societies that have been affected by the actions of armed or terrorist groups. The specialized literature documents illustrative examples of this dynamic, such as the peace process in Northern Ireland, the Good Friday Agreement, the dissolution of ETA in Spain, and the agreements reached in countries like Guatemala and the Central African Republic (Clubb, 2016; David, 2008; Dyrstad et al., 2021).

To understand the relationship between a culture of peace and terrorism, it is essential to begin by defining the structural elements that differentiate them. A rigorous analytical approach requires recognizing that, beyond any points of convergence in post-conflict contexts, both notions stem from diametrically opposed worldviews. After examining their theoretical and practical implications, it becomes clear that the dichotomy between a culture of peace and terrorism is based primarily on the acceptance or rejection of violence as an instrument of action.

In this respect, a culture of peace seeks to develop mechanisms—based on education, culture, and diplomacy—to prevent or avoid the use of violence as a means of political action. Conversely, terrorism makes violence the core of its actions.

It follows that a culture of peace not only contributes to maintaining order but also, in turbulent contexts marked by violence, fosters conditions conducive to its restoration. On the other hand, terrorism is, by definition, an agent that undermines institutional stability and weakens the frameworks of democratic coexistence. This makes it one of the main obstacles to building a lasting peace and to the viability of agreements aimed at restoring political and social order.

## Conclusions

Throughout this document, we have sought to define and delve into the concepts of culture of peace and terrorism, with the aim of analyzing their relationship from a critical perspective. This analysis has not only allowed us to identify the substantive differences between the two concepts but also to recognize elements that enable their integration as useful analytical frameworks for understanding contexts of transition. In particular, we have explored how these concepts can contribute to the interpretation of transformation processes in societies marked by dynamics of violence, facilitating the path towards scenarios of sustainable peace, characterized by the restoration of institutional order and the rebuilding of the social fabric.

In this regard, the analysis of the concept of culture of peace reveals that it is more than a mere abstract ideal. It encompasses, in fact, a set of principles, actions, and strategies aimed at both preventing violence and transforming conflictive contexts into peaceful scenarios. On the one hand, it creates conditions that inhibit the occurrence of violent acts; on the other, it promotes processes that facilitate the transition from contexts marked by violence to peaceful, sustainable environments. In this respect, a culture of peace is not only a desirable objective but also a concrete tool and a normative mandate supported by international agencies, especially the UN, which has established legal frameworks to promote societies grounded in democratic coexistence, mutual respect, and justice.

A fundamental component of a culture of peace is the strategic role attributed to education as an engine of social transformation. Educational processes are recognized as essential for strengthening values such as tolerance, empathy, respect for diversity, and intercultural dialogue—all indispensable for conflict prevention and the promotion of harmonious coexistence.

To this axiological dimension must be added an education oriented toward the knowledge, understanding, and effective exercise of human rights, enabling

the formation of conscious, critical citizens committed to social justice. From this perspective, education is not only a tool for transmitting knowledge but also an essential means of coordinating institutional and community efforts in building peaceful, inclusive, and democratic societies.

A culture of peace and terrorism are diametrically opposed visions for managing conflict and promoting harmonious coexistence. While a culture of peace is based on the peaceful resolution of conflicts, respect for human rights, and the building of inclusive and democratic societies, terrorism is based on the deliberate use of violence, fear, and coercion as means to achieve political, ideological, or religious objectives.

From this perspective, an initial conceptual approach suggests that there are no points of convergence between the two terms, leading to the conclusion that their joint analysis within a single frame is unfeasible.

Based on the analysis developed in this chapter and after considering various interpretive scenarios, it is concluded that a point of convergence exists between a culture of peace and terrorism. It is recognized that a culture of peace can play a key role in preventing terrorism by promoting values oriented toward peaceful coexistence, fostering education in and for peace, and promoting inclusion and social equity. Building societies based on mutual respect, tolerance, and justice helps reduce the structural conditions that, in many cases, facilitate the emergence and radicalization of terrorist groups.

However, for this preventative potential to materialize, sustained political and social will is essential, as is the commitment of the various actors involved in formulating real and effective agreements. This task, however, is far from simple and faces multiple challenges, both locally and globally.

Another finding aligns with the convergence between these two concepts, especially in contexts where terrorism has significantly impacted the established order. From this perspective, a culture of peace becomes a “toolbox” that the State can use to address and mitigate the factors underlying the formation and persistence of terrorist groups.

Clearly, this approach transcends mere prevention and moves into concrete action. In this context, a culture of peace plays a fundamental role in rebuilding spaces for coexistence, based on respect for human rights and the promotion of peaceful coexistence. It is also vital for restoring and re-establishing public order, which has been severely affected by prolonged and sustained acts of terrorism.

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