*Aleksandar PAVLESKI*

# THE CONCEPT OF PEACE IN THE THEORY OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

**Abstract:**

*The development of the peace concept is closely related to the development of the concept of the state and hence to the efforts for elimination of war as an instrument for resolving disputes between states. In that context, war and peace are traditionally treated as mutually exclusive concepts, i.e., war implies violence, while peace, non-violence. So, the end of war marks the beginning of peace and vice versa. Therefore, both concepts simultaneously represent the inevitable outcomes of the continuous and dynamic nature of social interaction in the international system, foreshadowing future war for nations and states that are currently at peace and, on the other hand, foreshadowing peace for nations and states that are currently at war. Starting from the indicated traditional understanding of the concepts of peace and war, as well as from the fact that the establishment of peace research begins during the 80s of the XX century, the focus in the paper is specifically placed on the analysis of the peace concept through the prism of the theory of international relationships. Namely, it is indisputable that until the establishment of peace and security research and studies, issues of peace and security are generally considered and interpreted within the framework of the various theoretical approaches for international relations. Hence, the paper more specifically explores the evolutionary character of the perceptions and understanding of the peace concept, especially from the perspective of: federalism, neorealism, liberalism and functionalism. The main goal is to give an answer to the question - What is peace and how can it be achieved, according to the indicated theoretical approaches?*

*Keywords: peace, federalism, neorealism, liberalism, functionalism*

**Introduction**

Regarding the emergence of the peace concept after the Treaty of Westphalia (1648) and the birth of Europe as a continent of sovereign states, Michael Howard pointed out that it is an issue about periods of peace that replacing periods of war (Howard, 1983). From this aspect, it follows that peace refers to the external arena and the international environment in which violence occurs between the borders of states. Hence, the question of how to establish peace between states is a serious challenge for almost all theoretical approaches that explain international relations. In addition, researching the concept of peace represents a serious challenge for peace research itself, the affirmation of which especially increased during the 80s of the last century, as a result of the growing concern of the international community about the threat of nuclear war and scepticism regarding the applicability of traditional, national security approaches in the nuclear age.

In their essence, peace and security represent two ambitious concepts that, cause serious scientific and political debates, especially after the end of the Cold War, the contradictions that arose from these debates represent a continuation of the traditional debate between representatives of the realist and idealist schools. Namely, while within the framework of the science of international relations (and the realist interpretation), peace is usually posited as a consequence of security, within the framework of peace studies (and the idealistic interpretation), the concept of peace overcomes the elements of the traditional (negative) understanding of security. More specifically, peace is interpreted as a prerequisite for security, not as its consequence. In fact, the concept of peace absorbs security and is conceptualized to include broader societal values.

In this regard, peace research is increasingly perceived as a value-oriented, multidisciplinary approach and thinking about peace (Georgieva, 2007). Actually, peace researchers increasingly emphasize the positive values and aspects of peace, which go beyond the traditional interpretation of peace just as the "absence of war" (which especially prevails in realist theory of international relations). Therefore, peace is increasingly analysed and interpreted in terms of social justice, positive interpersonal and interstate relations, democratic values, sustainable development, etc. This means that the dimensions of peace studies are expanding beyond direct, physical violence and include the forms of psychological, structural as well as violence against nature. In this context, Johan Galtung, talks about "negative peace" understood only as the absence of direct violence, i.e., absence of war and about "positive peace", understood as the absence of structural violence (Galtung, 1969). The term "structural violence", is introduced as a result of the fact that violence and injustice can also arise from structural inequalities in societies and states. Hence, positive peace is a synonym for the appropriate conception of the so-called "good society", i.e., a society that is just and in which people can realize their true potential (Mack, 1991).

Contrary to such indicated interpretations about peace within the framework of peace research as "positive peace" and "negative peace", the

question of peace and its meaning occupy a significant place within the theory of international relations. In fact, before the emergence of peace research and studies, such question was mainly analysed within this theory, and hence, in the following section, the attention of the paper is directed to researching the interpretation of peace from the perspective of several different theoretical approaches for international relations explanation.

**Federalism and the concept of peace**

The German philosopher, Johannes Althusius, as one of the first theorists according to which the federal agreement is a basic factor for the creation of a broad (peaceful) community, advocates the thesis that the power of the higher centres must be an expression of the power of the lower centres, i.e., that it is constituted "from below" to "above", and neither as a result of help from a certain centralized force "from above" (Elazar, 1990). However, during such contractual unification, Althusius, emphasizes the need for establishing a mechanism for limiting and preventing the power concentration in one power centre. Hence, he connects sovereignty with the concept of the people, considering that there is no need to talk about state sovereignty because the state represents a general people's union in the framework of which the supreme, indivisible and inalienable power belongs only to the people (Elazar, 1990).

Within this theoretical approach, Charles Montesquieu, analyses the peace and security issues from the perspective of the very forms of state organization. Actually, according to him the spirit of war and territorial expansion is characteristic of the monarchy, while the spirit of peace and moderation is characteristic of the republic (Monteskije, 1989).

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, promotes the idea of a political association of states, i.e., according to him, after the end of absolutism, a period of eternal peace will occur as a result of the formation of a European state with a European assembly and a certain type of international court (Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy). The idea of eternal peace is elaborated more specifically by the German philosopher Immanuel Kant, who points out the following as necessary prerequisites for the final and thorough establishment of world peace: advanced/ progressive civil constitutions ("the civil constitution in every state should be republican"); federalism through the unification of free states in an alliance of peace ("international law must be based on the federalism of free states"); and international hospitality ("world civil law needs to be based on the federalism of free states").

Kant, actually proposed the creation of a supranational federation of sovereign states that would have the power to regulate international relations and thereby, prevent war and maintain peace (David, 1998). However, until the realization of eternal peace, humanity, according to Kant, will continuously be either in a state of war or in a state of military truce (or the so-called negative peace from the aspect of peace research), so for the states in their mutual relations there is only one acceptable, reasonable approach to overcome such a situation,

and that is the formation of an "international state" (civitas genitum), which will expand until it includes all the nations of the world (Kant, 1936). Through the prism of federalism, Kant actually tried to establish the foundations about the establishment of a world order based on law, in the essence would be the "categorical imperative" that war must no longer be waged. It is characteristic of the indicated period, that the peaceful world order is understood unitarily, because in it the states lose their sovereignty, i.e., own autonomy. Hence, long before the formation of the League of Nations and the UN, Kant advocated the establishment of alliances between nations, as the only institutions that can preserve them from eternal military conflicts. At the same time, for the peace that cannot be achieved without an international agreement, Kant proposed the formation of a special, so-called "union of peace" (Kant, 1936).

In sum, the idea about eternal peace, Kant, does not perceive it as a problem of rulers, but as a problem of peoples and in that context, he points out three basic instruments against war:

- *Trade* - the commercial spirit of each of the nations, regardless of the time period in which it is intensified, is incompatible with war. Hence, the development of trade will produce the elimination of wars, whereby according to Kant, pacifism is the highest stage of capitalism;

- *Democratic morality* - peace, according to Kant, represents a great power, but not the power of the rulers, but of the peoples, hence monarchical regimes represent a threat to peace;

- *The public* - secret negotiations facilitate wars, while democratic regimes strengthen peace. Therefore, according to Kant, energy must be directed towards the development of democracy among all nations of the world (Kant, 1936).

Contrary to Kant's views on thewars overcoming and the establishment of (eternal) peace through the unification of peoples and states, during the period of the 18th and 19th centuries, there are also other characteristic ideas about federal unification. Namely, the English philosopher, Jeremy Bentham, based his idea of a European federation on two key components: the reduction of weapons and the emancipation of the dependent territories from the colonial powers. On the other hand, the idea of Pierre Joseph Proudhon, was aimed at establishing a universal federation of states, based on the law of social contracts. Actually, the federal contract, according to him, represents a system in which there is not only a mutual and bilateral obligation between the participants, but simultaneously with its formation, they (the participants) provide more rights, freedoms and authority in contrast to the one they give. In doing so, he emphasizes that the federal principle has a universal scope, i.e., that the federal system is applicable to all nations and ages (Proudhon, 1863). In this context, reconciliation between peoples must be two-dimensional, i.e., on: the economic level - through mutual connection and on the political level - through the establishment of a federation. In order to achieve that, according to Proudhon,

it is necessary that the authority of the federal government is always less than the authority that the constituent parts keep for themselves.

In general, within the framework of the idea of federalism, peace is interpreted through the prism of the integration of states in the form of an international association, which initiates their concessions to the plan of their national sovereignty, in favour of an international creation with a federal character (Axford et all, 1997). In fact, federalism implies the creation of federal institutions that would facilitate the process of unification of different peoples, the strengthening of their common attitudes and the development of a sense of community (including military and political forces), as well as the establishment of a common legal system as the best method for uniting people who already have certain common characteristics (such as culture or culture), but also a common geographical environment, even though they live in separate countries (De Vree, 1972). In fact, the ultimate goal is the creation of a single whole and a single government from previously separated parts, i.e., subjects, which means that the achievement of peace is possible only through unification.

**Neorealism and the concept of peace**

Kenneth Waltz, as one of the most influential neorealism advocates, in the war and peace explanation and understanding, uses three images, i.e., representations of international relations: man, the state and the systemic level of states. Therefore, from the aspect of the first representation, Waltz, detects the causes of war and peace in human nature, while, from the aspect of the second representation, in the character of individual states, and from the aspect of the third representation, he points out that individuals and states are immediate and the causes of war and peace arise from the systemic level of the states. Regarding the first representation, the American political theorist, Alexander Hamilton, points out that man is by nature an egoistic being with naturally developed hostile tendencies towards neighbouring subjects and states, and hence, states that respect moral norms in international relations are necessarily destined to "sacrifice" their own interests. According to the Italian sociologist and political theorist, Wilferdo Pareto, all human and state values are reduced to material goods, power and authority, and in that direction, the rest of the values represent only striving for their achievement (Pareto, 1967).

According to Waltz, the international relations explanation only through the prism of the first and the second representation is reductionist because the immediate causes of war are variable (different types of states and statesmen), while the outcome (war) is a constant feature of international relations (Waltz, 1979).

Hence, by distinguishing the three indicated representations, the elements for distinguishing the classical, i.e., traditional and new realism have been established. According to classical realists (H. Morgenthau, R. Aron), the basic cause of conflicts and war stems from the innate human desire for power and dominance, and therefore, international relations are explained through

the prism of foreign policy and relations of individual states and statesmen (Morgenthau, 1978). Namely, according to Morgenthau, the pursuit of power is a basic characteristic of international politics, therefore, like any other politics, this politics necessarily represents the so-called "politics of force".As a result, strategy and diplomacy in the foreign relations of states, represent only two types of aspirations/struggles that complement each other in achieving the greatest possible capacity of power. At the same time, a balance of power is established between the national states that strive to increase their power, which is the only realistic way to maintain peace. According to Morgenthau, international law and principles have no influence in international relations in such conditions (Morgentau, 1978).

Despiteto the first and second, in international relations explanation, Waltz starts from the third representation. Specifically, according to him, international politics is a system consisting of two levels that interact, namely: structural level (set of limiting conditions) and level of basic system units (states). At the same time, the action of the system structure on the units of the system is the subject of interest of international politics, while the behaviour of the units as a response to structural influences is the subject of interest of foreign policy (Waltz, 1979).

Moreover, anarchy in Waltz's theory does not imply chaos, continuous violence and destruction, but the absence of formally ordered relations of superiority and subordination, as well as the absence of a central authority with a monopoly on the use of force. The qualitative difference between the internal, i.e., national and international politics, does not arise as a result of the use or non-use of force, but above all, from the existence of different organizational models of response to the use of force. Therefore, according to Waltz, national politics is a hierarchical, vertical, centralized, heterogeneous, directed and deliberate area of power, administration and laws, while international politics is an anarchic, horizontal, decentralized, homogeneous, undirected and mutually adaptive area of power, struggle and adjustment (Waltz, 1979).

According to neo-realists, it is difficult to establish and realize international cooperation and it is even more difficult to maintain it. The anarchic structure of international politics initiates two basic problems for states that decide to engage in cooperative engagement: 1) the problem of the so-called nonfulfillment of cooperative obligations; and 2) the problem of the so-called „relative gain", or the need to compare the gains of participants in a cooperative engagement. Hence, Waltz points out that it couldn't be speak about automatic harmony in anarchic international relations, because the tendency towards individual interest exceeds the common interest of actors in cooperative engagement.

The problem that refers to the inevitable comparison of the relative profit from participation in cooperative engagement, Waltz also explains through the prism of survival, i.e., security, peace and development. Namely, in the system of self-help, each of the actors invests a part of their efforts, in

addition to the promotion of their own goods, to provide means of protection from others. Therefore, the states pay special attention to the way in which the inequality of the distribution of profits from international cooperation will affect the state of their peace and security. In fact, when faced with the possibility of cooperation for mutual benefit, those states that feel insecure must know how the "profit" itself will be distributed. Therefore, their focus of interest is the question – Who will get more of the profit distribution? This is because even the possibility of a total large profit for both parties will not produce cooperation, if each of the parties is afraid of the way the profit will be used, i.e., for the so-called "increased ability" on the other side. So, the uncertainty regarding the future intentions and activities of other subjects negatively affects cooperation between states (Waltz, 1979).

As a result of the above mentioned, international institutions haven't, or can have limited influence on the behaviour of states in international relations, within this theoretical approach. It is especially characteristic of the behaviour of powerful states that, guided by their own interests, can ignore the rules of conduct or change the forms of the agreement itself, if it does not meet (their) expected results or gains. Therefore, neorealist point out that international institutions are a reflection of the distribution of power and that in fact the great powers dominate alliances and institutions. It means that the great powers will be attached to the institutions only if they can realize their national interests. Otherwise, they can reduce their participation or can reject their obligations within the institutions.

Regarding the changes that occurred after the Cold War, the representatives of such theoretical approach, point out that nothing specific has changed in international relations because the struggle for power and influence is still present. Moreover, according to them, the state, which is traditionally perceived as the central and cohesive unit of the international system, still has a dominant position. It determines its relations with the outside world based on its national interests and therefore protects and defends its sovereignty against possible negative external activities of the other states. The possibility about cooperation in such conditions is limited, because military and defence issues take centre stage. In this regard, one of the most exposed neorealists at the beginning of the 90's of the 20th century, John Mearsheimer, points out that anarchic international relations are extremely dangerous for states, and therefore they should rely on their own defence capabilities (Mearsheimer, 1990).

**Liberalism and the concept of peace**

Contrary to the realists, whose approach in international relationsexplanation is based on the issue of power and strength, liberal theorists highlight the importance of international institutions in this sphere. In fact, for liberal theory as well, the power issue cannot be completely omitted in theinternational relations explanation, but unlike realists who stand firmly on this issue, the attention of liberal theorists is primarily directed to international

institutions, still not as a way of eliminating the problem of distribution of power, but as a way to efficient management implementation and direction of that distribution.

According to Anthony McGrew, within the theory of international relations, liberalism is associated with the philosophy of liberalism and internationalism, in terms of the promotion of transnational activities, the realization of global solidarity and the development of the global management system (McGrew, 2002). Liberalism as a political philosophy and liberal institutionalism as a theory of international relations are only related if human freedoms are perceived as a universal value, since one does not necessarily imply the other, i.e., not all liberals are internationalists at the same time, nor are all internationalists' liberals. Within the theory of international relations, McGrew, explains liberal internationalism through the example of the so-called concentric circles, i.e., with the thesis that trough the mutual promotion of the dynamics of transnational economic integrations, trough the spread of liberal democracy and trough the development of the international management system, war can be overcome as an instrument of international politics (McGrew, 2002). Hence, it follows that the effects of the anarchic structure can be overcome through the spread of: capitalist economy, liberal democracy and international institutions.

Within the framework of liberal institutionalism, several key discourses have been developed, such as: the theory of democratic peace, liberal reformism and liberal cosmopolitanism. Characteristic of the first discourse, is the understanding that liberal democracies do not go to war with each other and that the spread of democracy contributes to world peace (Waltz, 2000). The focus of liberal reformism is placed on the idea of global government through the prism of networks of multilateral institutions with the UN as a central institution, while liberal cosmopolitanism directs a radical critique of the existing world order and in that context explores the possibilities of achieving global, social justice aimed at towards the welfare of individuals. Among other things,with such approach, a broader picture of peace is created, not only as the absence of war, but moreover its perception through the prism of social justice.

Regarding the issue about the cooperation effects on the promotion of mutual trust as one of the aspects of peace, Duncan Snidal points out that increasing the number of states in the cooperative system, reduces the interest in relative profit, because in such context, arises the possibility about own protection through the formation of coalitions. Namely, according to him, the relative profit is significant in situations where there are only two actors in the system or when there are significant asymmetries in the system with more actors (Snidal, 1991).

This points to the conclusion that, similar to the realists, the idea that cooperation between states is possible only if they have certain common interests is accepted among institutionalists. However, institutionalists identify many more interests of states for cooperation, which are motivated on the one hand

by achieving common, absolute profit, as well as by eliminating the necessary need to compare it, on the other hand.

Regarding the emerging international environment in the post-Cold War period, Francis Fukuyama points out that the numerous Western European economic and security institutions that are based on the principles of liberal democracy are actually the main subjects/actors that have initiated the transformation of international relations (Fukuyama, 1992). Hence, according to the institutionalists, security and peace in international relations do not consist solely in the maintenance of military power and the balance of forces, but more specifically in the integrative processes between states that create high interdependence between them, while the principle of sovereignty (which is dominant among neorealists), loses its inviolability. In this context, Queensley Wright points out that the balance of power as an instrument for maintaining peace is unacceptable because states do not approach it with sincere intentions. On the contrary, the purpose of such an approach derives solely from the possibility that they may increase their power and, having achieved this, change the balance in their own favour (Wright, 1953). Therefore, according to him, it is necessary to form institutions that will be based on the principles of humanity and human rights and, in this regard, to eliminate from international relations those institutions that threaten the indicated principles.

In this context, institutionalists propose the development of security regimes into security communities so that, they can effectively respond to security challenges, such as: conflicts, migrations, crime, etc., as well as to advance human rights, social justice and democracy (Georgieva, 2007).

**Functionalism and the concept of peace**

The functionalist theory focus is placed on the technique of integrations and their institutionalization, in order to ensure a horizontal connection between the people and the state. In that context, the essence of functionalist integration of sovereign states is integration by sectors, i.e., in different areas of common action and common interests. At the same time, the process of functional integration should take place gradually, with the ultimate goal of connecting all sectors of joint action into one whole. Within this theoretical approach, the conception of international integration is based on the pursuit of common satisfaction of needs and interests on a supranational basis, by expanding the areas of international cooperation and ensuring peace by overcoming traditional sovereignty. Actually, according to the functionaliststhe international systemin this context, represents a set of relations between a certain numbers of functions that are realized by a certain number of international actors.

One of the most famous functionalist theorists, David Mitrani, in his international relations explanation, starts from the position that it is necessary to replace the previous system of relations, which produced conflicts, with a new system of peaceful relations, while the main challenge is in finding common activities for its establishment (Mitrany, 1996). Hence, he directs his attention to

non-political connections and relations that are established through functional cooperation, first of all, in the economic and social sphere. Starting from such aspect, a stable world peace in the best way can be maintained and promoted, only if states engage themselves around common functional needs (Braillard, 1974).

According to Mitrany, issues related to: traffic, health, scientific cooperation, cultural activities and trade, represent alternative areas that offer acceptable opportunities for relatively easy states unification as well as about their direction towards joint cooperation (Mitrany, 1996). The basic idea of functionalism is that cooperation in social relations should be preferred over conflicts and that people can control their own destiny through evolutionary actions and steps that will lead to a more peaceful and better ordered world.

In fact, taking into account the absence of effective supranational political entities, the functional unity in the realization of the traffic, health, cultural, trade or other goals, would gradually produce the realization of the common goals in a series of other areas, since the results of the cooperation will have a positive impact on the efforts to maintain the general peace. Moreover, after the initial positive results and the further strengthening of cooperation in several spheres, the states will approach the transfer of their powers to the coordinators and holders of such cooperation, i.e., of specialized international organizations, which, in addition will improve world peace, and will also create opportunities for better understanding and eventual realization of higher forms of international cooperation. Specifically, by solving the basic challenges of the world development, such as: underdevelopment, poverty and inequality between nations, a fully functional international society will be created according to the functionalists, within the framework, instead of around the territories, the basic units will unite around the functions. Such a union between actors regarding functional issues and problems should ultimately produce greater mutual trust and union between politicians as well, i.e., between the policies of states (Mitrany, 1996).

So, areas for efficient functional cooperation, Mitrani locates in the sphere of the so-called "low policies" of economic and social life. Therefore, prosperity achieved through global economic integration is perceived as a significant prerequisite for a stable and peaceful international system, since economic union can finally initiate a political union.

However, in relation to the mentioned approach, it is inevitably present the dilemma whether the strengthening of cooperation around individual functions necessarily produces and removal of all differences between countries, as well as, whether the development of cooperation in certain areas automatically initiates the development of general cooperation in all fields. Additionally, it is no doubt that it is difficult to separate the political from the economic spherein the contemporary international relations, as a result of the simple reason that political problems are present in almost all areas of human activity.

**Conclusion**

The paper analysis, confirms the complex nature of the peace concept which, among other things, is due to the different interpretations of this concept, both within the peace research itself as well, within the theory of international relations. However, from today's perspective, the paper analysis additionally confirms that the different interpretations of the peace concept within international relations theory approaches on the one hand, can be correlated with the interpretations of positive and negative peace within the peace research on the other hand. Actually, as a result of all above mentioned, there is no doubt that the interpretation of peace within the framework of realist theory can be correlated with the interpretation of negative peace, while the federalism, liberalism and functionalism interpretations are more compatible with the interpretation of positive peace within peace research.

Moreover, the paper analysis notes that the realist approach offers the so-called "elite" and negative peace, based on inherent and balance of power between the personal interests of the states. The assumption of the realist theory is that human nature is violent and therefore it is necessary that it be well designed and institutionalized within the states as the basic subjects of the international system. At the same time, threats to peace and securityaccording to realists arise from war, which in turn is the result of anarchic international relations and the behaviour of states in such an environment, and therefore a solution for dealing with and deterring threats is seen in the establishment of a system of balance of forces, or in nuclear deterrence. Hence, realists believe that peace can only be established by the winner in anarchic international relations, which means that it is a version of peace that is a privileged concept for powerful states, which will be implemented, if they have an interest about it.

On the other hand, the idea of federalism implies the integration of states in the form of an international association, which initiates their concessions on the plan of their national sovereignty in favour of an international subject, with a federal character. So, against the previous realistic, necessary competition between the states based on the strong connection with their sovereignty and national interests, the representatives of federalism seek and propose the solution for establishing more peaceful international relations in the unification of the states, which will initiate the strengthening of their common attitudes and the development of the sense of community (including military and political forces), which in turn complemented by the establishment of a common legal system, should enable effective dealing and overcoming of the peace risks and threats.

Moreover, contrary to the "negative" realistic peace interpretation, the representatives of liberalism, especially liberal institutionalism, see the international relation problems solution in the transnational economic integrationsadvancement, as well as in spreading of liberal democracy and in the development of universal international management system. In this context, the cooperation between the states within the framework of the international

management system, will initiate the development of their mutual trust, which should ultimately enable the peaceful resolution of disputes and problems in international relations. In ensuring this, at the core of liberal interpretations, lie the ideas of emancipating people by providing them with freedoms that they can then use reasonably, in the management and organization of society. Namely, if societies are organized in a transparent manner and with management systems that provide opportunities for progress and access to public goods, then social harmony and peace will be achievable. From such point, the peace interpretation is additionally expanded with the social justice concept aspects.

The idea of achieving peace by overcoming traditional sovereignty is additionally present in functionalist theory. Namely, as the paper analysis presents, within thefunctionalist approach framework, the conception of international integration is based on the aspiration for joint satisfaction of needs and interests on a supranational basis, through the gradual expansion of the areas of international cooperation. In fact, the prosperity achieved through global economic integration is perceived by functionalists as a significant prerequisite for a stable and peaceful international system, since economic integration should ultimately produce political integration between states. In this context, the peace concept is additionally connected and associated with the economic and sustainable developmentconcepts.

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