Rethinking Peace as Sustainable
Development Goal

Peacebuilding in ‘Apparently Peaceful’ Societies

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Introduction

More often than not, international relations concerns *interstate* peace and security, because domestic affairs barely matter at the system level analysis of the causes of war and the conditions for peace. This inclination discounts what happens within the confines of the states. According to some historians such as John Lewis Gaddis, human civilization is passing through the most peaceful time since the World Wars, as evidenced by the declining number of wars between states. This era has been termed the ‘long peace’. Because of this preoccupation with war and regarding peace as merely an ‘inverse mirror image’ of war, the international community’s
efforts have been confined to maintaining, what Johan Galtung calls, 'negative peace'. Most efforts of the United Nations (UN) peace-related activities, such as those under peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations, are limited to ensuring negative peace. The global consensus required for the collective promotion of 'positive peace' has been hard to implement. Nevertheless, there has been a significant departure from this trend through the inception of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Fundamentally different from their predecessor Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the new goals are universal—to be pursued by developed, developing and the least developed countries alike. While the MDGs perpetuated a top-down approach of global governance mechanism where the developed countries determined the standards of life, education, employment and so forth for the relatively poorer nations, the SDGs rectified this fundamental shortcoming and the targets are to be achieved by all nations regardless of their developmental status.

Among the 17 goals of sustainable development, SDG 16 particularly aims to "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels". It acknowledges that the necessity of peace is no longer limited to post-conflict situations, instead, peace has an increasing and significant role in all societies to ensure inclusiveness, transparency, and accountability. Several goals of sustainable development agenda touches upon peace, e.g., social justice, institution building as a prerequisite for sustainability. That said, it is interesting to note that despite peace being a major goal, SDGs do not explicitly mention 'peacebuilding' as a means to achieve peace-related development targets.

Perhaps, this is because peacebuilding evokes images of war-torn societies ravaged by protracted conflicts. Any discussion on peacebuilding thus virtually conjures up non-Western, underdeveloped countries in the Global South. Also, it makes more sense to conceive the task of peacebuilding when there are identifiable groups with grievances. Two lines of arguments further explain this worldview. On the one hand, Roland Paris likened conventional peacebuilding to highly-debated mission civilisatrice or civilizing missions whereby the Western colonizing powers justified colonization in 'culturally and intellectually inferior' non-Western
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On the other hand, the liberal peace theory claims that democratic countries do not go to war with each other because of internal decision-making mechanisms, such as accountability and transparency that prevent conflicts. If this argument is extrapolated to within the democratic societies, it implies that democracies are inherently peaceful. As such, speaking of peacebuilding for 'already peaceful' societies is an anachronism. The intersection between building peace in post-war states and in 'seemingly peaceful' countries, where various kinds of inter-group tension are surfacing, remains unclear. Now that the SDGs talk about universal promotion of peace as a global agenda, should peacebuilding still be conceived as exclusively applicable for the countries undergoing post-conflict reconstruction?

This chapter questions the validity and usefulness of such claims, and investigates whether peacebuilding should be regarded only as a post-conflict phenomenon. While the other chapters in the volume address peacebuilding in the conventional sense, i.e., under the UN leadership and the role of international cooperation, this chapter presents some evidence as to why a narrow understanding and application of peacebuilding fail to consider a rapidly changing nature of violence and conflict, mounting tensions between and among different racial, ethnic and religious groups in the Western societies which are traditionally deemed peaceful. A growing number of 'illiberal democracies', rise of populism, persistent attacks on neoliberal values, widening global inequality demand revisiting the idea of peace and peacebuilding. Considering the newly-devised SDGs, this chapter shows that a 'soft peacebuilding' is required for the seemingly peaceful societies too, which the SDGs miss out. It concludes that peacebuilding should not be decoupled from the new development agenda.

The arguments are developed in five sections. After this introduction, the second section explores extant scholarship on peace and peacebuilding. Nexus and disconnect between the two ideas emanating from a neoliberal agenda are explored. This discussion is followed by an exposition of how peace and peacebuilding are conceived in the UN sustainable development agenda in the third section. The fourth section presents evidence as to why there has been a remarkable change in the global trend of violence which aggravates societal tensions, fuelled by rising inequality, anti-immigration
attitudes, identity crisis, the rise of populism and mounting violence linked to right-wing and religious extremism, and lone-wolf terrorism. This emerging body of evidence speaks volume to the need for revisiting peacebuilding in seemingly peaceful places. Based on the discussion, the chapter draws conclusions in the fifth section.

**Nexus and Disconnect between Peace and Peacebuilding**

Peace and peacebuilding share the same philosophical foundations, but it is the practice of the two that has led to two very different connotations. Peace has diverse social, cultural as well as political meanings that widely vary across cultures. In the academic vernacular, peace refers to the ‘absence of war’ and ‘presence of justice’ in society. Johan Galtung calls the former ‘negative peace’ and the latter ‘positive peace’. Peace as an opposite of war is easily recognized; however, it is peace as the prevalence of justice that is harder to achieve. In this section, the chapter discusses why, despite having shared philosophical tradition, the current practice of peacebuilding as neoliberal agenda points to a disconnect with ‘positive peace’.

Some epistemological traditions view peace in terms of the process through which it is achieved. Oliver Richmond discusses three types of peace in International Relations (IR) traditions, namely, victor’s peace, institutional peace, constitutional peace. Some theories of IR hold that peace is too ambitious a goal to be realistically achieved in an anarchic international system. Realist scholars who instinctively embrace a rather pessimistic view of global politics argue in favour of ‘victor’s peace’—attained when one party annihilates the other. This ‘victor’s peace’ argument also justifies the necessity of a hegemon for international stability. The prevailing world order is often labelled *Pax Americana* (literally, ‘American peace’ in Latin) where the United States (US), as the sole superpower, defines the rules of engagement to sustain international order. Conversely, the ‘institutional peace’ is influenced by neoliberal-institutionalism which believes in the ideational power of norms and institutions. The United Nations was founded on this philosophy of institutional peace. The third strand of peace in IR is ‘constitutional peace’ based on Kantian pacifism. Immanuel Kant believed that peace depended
upon democracy, free trade and market economy. Unlike the institutionalists, however, this tradition of peace is individual-centric.

The concept of peacebuilding ought to be discussed from two different, albeit not mutually exclusive, perspectives. The first is the theoretical roots of the idea. It is the ‘institutional peace’ that guides UN peace operations. Peacebuilding has been part of the neoliberal agenda. Now, one should turn to peacebuilding to understand the disconnect. International peacebuilding efforts under the auspices of the UN is comparable to the promotion of ‘negative peace’ at best. But it is crucial to explain what peacebuilding denotes. One is the practical connotation of the idea as implemented by the United Nations. Indeed, the utterance of peacebuilding brings to imagination the UN peacekeeping missions in war-shattered countries in the wake of civil wars.

The practice of peacebuilding cannot be understood independent of UN peacemaking and peacekeeping missions. It evolved from the international community’s engagement in conflict resolution in the Global South. While peacemaking normally involves negotiation and mediation by a third-party such as the UN, peacekeeping or sometimes peace enforcement entails intervention with the consent of warring parties. UN peacebuilding missions are deployed in post-conflict countries where peace accords have been agreed upon, but state apparatus is arguably too weak to sustain peace and prevent the recurrence of war. In this sense, peacebuilding closely resembles state-building. It is assumed that strong state institutions make it harder for the conflicting groups to relapse into war. This practice-oriented and UN experience-based understanding of peacebuilding, however, limits the scope of peacebuilding, and as this chapter argues, underestimates its power to transform societies.

Peacebuilding was included in the UN mandate in 2005 and was considered complementary to the UN’s peacemaking and peacekeeping operations. Hence, it is a ‘post-conflict’ phenomenon in post-civil war societies. The idea of peacebuilding, especially its application as a neoliberal agenda, is relatively new which gained traction through a 1992 UN document *An Agenda for Peace* by the then UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali.8 Much of the focus on peacebuilding centred on what the international community believed a logical course of action posterior to peacemaking and peacekeeping under the auspices of the UN
systems. Due to rapid decolonization, ethnic conflicts and civil wars erupted in Africa and East Europe. The UN was not only involved in mediating conflicts, but also began to help in state-building projects.

The other perspective, however, relates to the theoretical foundations of the idea, such as those explained by Galtung and others. This development of peacebuilding as an extension to peacekeeping and peacemaking was the philosophical underpinning of peace. Johan Galtung’s original idea of peacebuilding was a self-sustaining structure built into the society that is able to tackle conflicts as they occur. Unlike peacekeeping and peace-making, it is not ad hoc or third-party dependent. It is also naturally regenerative like antibodies, not a temporary administration of medicine. Peacebuilding, as it is currently understood from practical context, is an ad hoc solution that is not internally generated. However, peacebuilding is not an end in itself, and peacemaking cannot ensure that positive peace will prevail. This is a key argument of Madhav Joshi and Peter Wallensteen’s groundbreaking work on ‘quality peace’, in which they examine what ‘quality peace’ entails by looking at the end of the conflict and the durability of ensuing peace. Quality peace is also closely related to ‘sustainable peace’ espoused in SDG 16. Despite this, there is a disproportionate focus on post-war societies as zones for peacebuilding. Tobias Denskus’ highly critical article Peacebuilding Does Not Build Peace paints a cynical picture of peacebuilding. He points out that despite its well-intended purposes, peacebuilding cannot break free from its Western intellectual values and rationale. This leads to a failure to look at internal and emerging problems in Western societies. It is evident that these missions of liberal peacebuilding, despite their well-intentioned effort, preserved ‘mission civilisatrice’.

Contemporary peacebuilding missions are deployed in the wake of civil wars after comprehensive peace agreements are reached. Thus, civil wars are a common factor in UN peacebuilding operations. Wallensteen and Sollnenberg found that 94 per cent of the armed conflicts between 1989-2000 involved civil wars. Not to mention, from 2011 to 2015 there has been a six-fold increase in battle deaths in major civil wars, which in 2015 stood at 90,000 making 2014 and 2015 the deadliest years on the battlefield since the end of the Cold War. Violent extremism-related death
is much lower in number compared to those that occur in civil wars. Violent extremism and terrorism are considered a serious threat to peace and security in the twenty-first century. According to Global Terrorism Index, due to terrorism there were 18,814 deaths in 2017; 25,673 deaths in 2016 and 29,376 deaths in 2015. However, deaths caused by terrorism decreased by 27 per cent from 2016 to 2017. But statistically, one is more likely to die from diseases than in a suicide bombing. What is it, then, that makes violent extremism so grave a threat to peace? It is the uncertainty and randomness that make terrorism-related civilian death gruesome. The individuals killed in a terrorist attack does not have anything to do with the perpetrators’ grievances; they are the carrier of the message terrorists want to relay to the rest of the world.

**Peace as a Sustainable Development Goal**

The conception of SDGs in 2015 following the success of the MDGs was one of the most ambitious global agendas in recent human history. What sets the SDGs apart from other similar initiatives is its universality. This is because both the developing and the developed nations now have shared responsibilities to incorporate the targets in their respective national plans. The SDGs generated much debate as to how best to translate the goals into actionable targets and deliverables; it simultaneously brought together governments and non-government entities to collaborate and combine efforts to reach the targets by 2030. The inclusion of peace among the 17 sustainable development goals is a governance milestone for the international community. More than one goals touch upon peace in one way or another. The SDG 16 specifically underscores the need for ‘peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development’. Societal inclusiveness, good and functional state institutions, and the presence of justice, i.e., positive peace, will now receive equal importance in stable countries or ‘apparently peaceful’ societies as much as post-conflict states because of its universality clause.

It is necessary to clarify what this chapter denotes by ‘apparently peaceful’ societies. Finding a universally acceptable definition of a ‘peaceful country’ alone is challenging enough; it is indeed nearly impossible to define an ‘apparently’ or ‘seemingly’ peaceful place without
stirring debates. Because different forms of governments exist in the world, and every culture has its own way of operationalizing peace in their own context. Peaceful societies can be defined in terms of traits and functions: economic affluence, effectiveness of the state apparatus, mechanisms for resolving internal conflicts and so forth. Due to international norms, acceptance of human rights as the inviolable standard of life and widespread recognition of democracy as the best form of human political organization, many peaceful societies are found in the Western countries. There are countries elsewhere in the world, such as Singapore and South Korea in Asia, that follow the Western model of governance and market economy. However, it cannot be claimed that all democracies are naturally peaceful. But then again, there are peaceful societies that do not necessarily have democracy as a form of government. Bhutan—a constitutional monarchy—is one of the happiest countries in the world. It devised its own Gross Happiness Index to measure peace within its society. Given these varieties, it is fair to conclude that ‘peaceful societies’ have more than merely the presence of democracy. This peacefulness is frequently manifested in and measured by freedom from insecurity and existence of good institutions, or broadly speaking, the idea of positive peace proposed by Johan Galtung. This is how apparently peaceful societies can be loosely defined and understood: They are mostly located in the Western hemisphere or the Global North, but also found in other parts of the globe where state institutions are properly functional and effective, and national economies follow the philosophies of Laissez-faire or the free market. These affluent countries are also leading exporters of global norms. This chapter contends that these traditional zones of peace, despite the existence of accountable and transparent institutions, are gradually becoming prone to violence. This is due to a lack of conflict resolution mechanism within those societies. Hence, they are ‘apparently’ or ‘seemingly’ peaceful.

Now, it is imperative to examine how peace is understood in the sustainable development agenda. It is difficult to find a unanimously agreed upon definition of peace. The task becomes more arduous when there is also a mechanism to be determined through which all nations are expected to track its implementation by 2030. Keeping the challenges of universalizing peace in view, there are certain ways peace is envisaged as
a sustainable development goal. First, the purpose of peace in SDGs is to help create conducive institutions that can sustain peace. It is widely accepted that strengthening accountable, transparent and inclusive state apparatus can ensure the rule of law and access to justice, thereby reducing the scope for fault lines. Roland Paris believes that institutionalization is more important than liberalization i.e., holding elections for transition to democracy.\textsuperscript{16} However, having proper institutions in place does not necessarily mean that they will function as expected and result in lasting peace. Furthermore, well-functioning institutions can also not guarantee that the conflict is resolved. These two arguments are explained in further details in the next section of this chapter.

Second, with the SDGs, the focus has been shifted to the people. SDGs are people-centric because by design they follow right-based approach and are centred around ensuring the rights of people. However, rights can hardly be discussed in isolation from responsibilities. Whose ‘responsibility’ is it to provide peace? If it is the state, then it raises further questions as to how this service is delivered to the people. The bottom line is SDGs are not completely independent from state-centrism.

Third, one should acknowledge the disparities among and between states in terms of the strength of existing institutions and their capacity for mitigating societal tensions. One of the defining characteristics of SDGs is common reporting mechanisms for all countries. This poses some challenges for a uniformed mechanism for reporting and tracking progress because it was not easy to find common and relevant targets. From this point of view, SDG 16 was one of the most controversial goals since the discussion began on how to measure progress.\textsuperscript{17}

Fourth, despite it being claimed to be universal in nature, SDGs consider peace as something exclusively, if not solely, applicable for the developing countries. For example, Target 16.A of the goal aims to “Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries [emphasis by the authors], to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime”.\textsuperscript{18} Thus, in contradistinction to the universality principle of the goals, it singles out the developing countries as the locus of violence and terrorism. Further, the measurement mechanism for
effective institutions is the presence of independent national human rights oversight bodies to prevent violent extremism and terrorism. However, neither violent extremism nor terrorism is linked to a lack of oversight or absence of human rights ombudsman. It is caused by other factors that may exist within democratic and peaceful societies as much as they are found in conflict zones. What national human rights institutions can perform at best is to deliver justice after the peace has been violated.

Fifth, and more importantly, sustainable development goals talk about peace without mentioning peacebuilding. As this chapter has argued earlier, this is due to a disconnect between the idea of peace in general, and how peacebuilding was conceived in the aftermath of the Cold War. It is associated, as the practice goes, mostly with the UN peace operations that involve peacemaking, peace enforcement, and peacekeeping. In recent times, peacebuilding has been increasingly used as a post-war reconstruction measure akin to state-building. The relevance of peacebuilding as a part of SDGs deserves some explanation. If positive peace can be promoted by creating a conducive environment, is it an anomaly to try to bring the practice of peacebuilding in the implementation of SDGs? Sustainable peace aims to create inclusive societies by building strong institutions, ensuring accountability and transparency. But it is debatable whether institutions alone can mitigate marginalization and alienation among citizens. In the following section, this issue has been dealt in greater detail.

Perhaps, there is a need for differentiating between ‘hard’ versus ‘soft’ peacebuilding—one that takes into consideration the realities of post-conflict countries, and the other for democratic or relatively peaceful countries. There is an increasing necessity for soft peacebuilding approaches in conjunction with post-conflict hard peacebuilding. Along the similar lines, Johan Galtung advocated for multiple ‘interaction channels’ in peacebuilding efforts. It is imperative to delve further into what might constitute soft and hard peacebuilding. Hard peacebuilding approaches can be likened to what UN peace operations aim to achieve. This is done mostly in post-conflict nations after negotiated peace settlements and resolution of conflicts. This is comparable to state-building projects where state machinery is either completely missing or significantly weak due to a lack of central authority. It, thus, provides a
single channel of interaction. Soft peacebuilding, conversely, is required in places where there are already functioning state apparatus. Therefore, building institutions is of less importance. It should provide several channels for mitigating grievances other than strengthening justice delivery mechanisms, ensuring transparency and accountability. The way this chapter views peacebuilding is making a clear distinction between international versus national peacebuilding. Hard peacebuilding, because of its origins in neoliberal peace and focus on institutions, is interventionist. It requires legitimate third-party involvement. Conversely, soft peacebuilding is completely internal and non-interventionist in nature.

This clarifies that peace in relation to sustainable development goal has taken a step from ‘negative peace’ to promote ‘positive peace’ in the society. It stresses the need for institution building to deliver positive peace. Nevertheless, the existence of good institution alone cannot make sure that the institutions will be able to forestall grievances and tensions between different social, religious and racial groups.

**Peacebuilding in ‘Apparently Peaceful’ Societies**

The preceding discussions explained why ‘national’ or ‘soft’ peacebuilding deserves some consideration in countries that seem peaceful on the surface, but tension is very likely brewing beneath the calm veneer of the society. Following the end of the Cold War, the triumphant liberal order promised to deliver on justice and human rights, and the Western democracies were the role models for the rest of the world. However, since the beginning of this millennium, a few watershed events dictated the direction of liberalism’s progression. The backlash against the globalization process manifested in the global recession of 2008, the rise of international terrorism and violent extremism, intensified large-scale refugee problem and the rise of the far-right that all have contributed to a general decline of global peace. Conventional wisdom suggests that by the virtue of their liberal institutions, well-established democracies will withstand this storm, but institution alone could not extinguish hatred and unexpressed societal tension. The following section provides some evidence to support this claim.
The UN was founded to avert human tragedies such as the great wars and establish a collective mechanism to promote universal norms, and common ethos of peace and cooperation. With the end of the Cold War, there was a wind of optimism for peace as Francis Fukuyama wrote his famous article *The End of History?* in which he claimed that mankind’s ideological evolution had completed and the triumph of Western liberal democracy signalled the final form of human government. Democratic peace theory had already vindicated democracy as the most peaceful form of government. As such, the last decade of the previous millennium was anticipated to be an era of transition towards a more peaceful world. During this time, not only did democracy flourish as a governance system, but it was also bolstered by its cousin capitalism which guided state-market relations. Among many other facets of globalization, market liberalization opened new prospects for investment, manufacturing and labour mobility. But the global financial crisis of 2008 severely undermined popular trust in globalization. The liberal democratic order and capitalism stumbled to deliver on their promise for peace.

Since 2008, global peace has exhibited a generally negative trend. According to a survey by the Sydney-based Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), global peacefulness has declined on average by 2.38 per cent. This trend can be explained by ongoing conflicts in the Middle East, political instability and heightened international terrorism. However, the world’s most peaceful regions, namely Europe, North America and Asia-Pacific, considered to be flag-bearers for liberal democracies, also experienced deterioration in peace in 2018 in relation to their previous score. Europe, which used to be the most peaceful region in the world in terms of ‘positive peace’, has witnessed deterioration for the third consecutive year since 2015. The Global Peace Index 2018 found that decline of peacefulness in Europe was caused by “political instability due to the rise of alternative [populist] political parties and anti-EU sentiment, increased terrorism impact, and increased perceptions of criminality”. Although these regions are still more peaceful than other geographical areas surveyed in the study, they reveal a persistently negative social trend triggered by societal conflicts and discontent. This decline in peacefulness is the outcome of deeper problems in Western societies.
Global Inequality and Conflict

Rising economic uncertainties lie at the heart of discontent. The alarming rate of growing global inequality has been demonstrated by Branko Milanovic. He provides compelling evidence to argue that inequality has increased at three levels: national, international and global. This implies that income gap has increased manifold not only between any two countries being compared, but it has also multiplied between individuals within the same country, as well as between individuals of two different nations. As a result, while the ultra-rich earn more and more, relatively poor people keep losing their basic income relative to their counterparts at all these three levels. While this troubling phenomenon has many far-reaching consequences, its immediate manifestations are political instability and a sense of loss of security in traditionally affluent societies.

This deepening social strife and grievances in the Global North can be traced back to the trend of growing inequality. The impact of the global financial crisis of 2008 exposed the gulf in income and inequality among individuals and countries. The crisis led to a sharp rise in unemployment, retrenchment of the state welfare system, concurrently instigating deep distrust between and among different social groups. The Western welfare states are gradually coming under pressure from the growing numbers of workers claiming better social protection. A few examples would clarify the looming consequences of inequality. Since the beginning of the recession, France has experienced a steady rise in unemployment touching 10 per cent in 2016. Conversely, the unemployment rate has seen a gradual slowdown in Germany since 2005, reaching 4.6 per cent from 11 per cent in 2015. The Netherlands and the United Kingdom (UK) lie in between these two opposite trends, with a rise since 2008 and experiencing a sharp drop since 2016 to reach well below the European Union (EU) average. In the US, on the other hand, middle-skilled jobs have been on the decline resulting partly from outsourcing, thanks to globalization and technological innovation. This trend is expected to sustain, given further developments in robotics and artificial intelligence, stealing mostly low-skilled jobs in the advanced economies.

Although global inequality is neither a direct cause nor an outcome of peace, it is becoming a common feature of the global society with the
likelihood of further widening income gaps. It has been shown by other studies that there is a positive correlation between inequality and the occurrence of conflict since in “highly unequal societies, both rich and poor groups fight more often than those groups whose wealth lies closer to the country average”. The rising inequality in the Global North may not result in civil wars, nonetheless, this is likely to augment the chances of conflicts. The following discussion on anti-immigrant attitude and the rise of populist political parties reveal how global income inequality, either directly or indirectly, fuels them.

Refugee Crisis and Making of ‘the Other’

One of the undesirable outcomes of the US interventionist democratization and regime change in the Middle East was that it cracked open the Pandora’s box triggering a mass exodus of refugees. The US intervention in Iraq and Libya, and the inception of the Syrian civil war in 2014 displaced millions of people. To escape wars, refugees turned towards Europe due to geographical proximity and promise of safety. Turkey became the single largest refugee host country sheltering 3.5 million, while Germany hosted about a million—the highest among the Western countries. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) data shows by the end of 2017, the global number of forcibly displaced people stood at 68.5 million, nearly 3.1 million of whom were asylum seekers. The number of refugees stood at 25.4 million—the highest since the establishment of UNHCR in 1950 following the end of the Second World War. Refugees and immigrants are nonetheless not new phenomena in human history. There are countries in the world, such as the US itself, that are made up mostly of the immigrant population. What is unique, however, is the West’s existing social and economic conditions that lead to unwelcoming and negative attitudes towards incoming refugees.

Immigration continues to dwell on the minds of the Europeans. A public opinion survey by Standard Eurobarometer has found that 38 per cent of the respondents think immigration is the leading concern that the European Union (EU) faces today, followed by terrorism at the second place with a 29 per cent response. As a result, there has been a growing
public opinion, both against the immigration and the EU policy on refugees as European citizens believe that the Union's ability to control and manage immigration is limited. The lack of public faith in the ability of the EU and national institutions to find solutions revealed by opinion surveys, first and foremost, cast doubt over the whole European project. Several other European countries that include the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia also resisted mandatory refugee quotas by the EU. When the United Kingdom was asked to share more burden of the refugees, former British Prime Minister David Cameron followed the popular sentiment within the British society and said "we can't take anymore". The German AfD (Alternative für Deutschland) party gained significant popularity on the back of its populist and anti-refugee agenda by promoting the slogan: 'Es reicht!' or 'It's enough!' Identity politics is inherently antithesis to liberal democracy because it promotes group interest, while the latter is based on individual liberty.

This growing attitude has resulted in direct violence and clashes between groups. This resentment is often expressed violently. In Poland, there were rallies and counter-rallies over the question of accepting asylum seekers, after the EU wanted to reallocate the burden of 120,000 of them among member states. There have been reports of both migrants clashing with the police to forcibly enter European countries and anti-migrant movements attacking migrants. Following a UN agreement over a non-binding global compact on migration in December 2018 in Morocco, about 5,500 members of Belgian far-right party Vlaams Belang marched in front of the EU headquarters where the police were compelled to disperse them by force. The Pegida (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the Occident) has been organizing many a movement across Germany.

With the mass exodus of immigrants and refugees, national and EU immigration policies are trapped between xenophobia and the normative responsibility incurred by liberalism. This response is explained by a loss of economic security. Radical right-wing parties were able to link the relative weakening of the welfare state with the influx of immigrants who were portrayed as welfare parasites and unwanted competitors in an already-tight labour market. The Hungarian and Slovakian defiance to accept refugees stranded in Budapest in disregard of EU resolutions adds
more evidence to this trend.\textsuperscript{31} The Danish government preempted further arrival of refugees by putting anti-immigrant advertisements in Lebanese newspapers as refugee crisis began. This was accompanied by reducing social benefits for asylum seekers at home.\textsuperscript{32} Denmark passed controversial legislation of an asylum austerity to allow Danish authorities to seize valuables and money from the refugees in order to support their resettlement.

It would be wrong to assume that these are isolated incidents and unique to countries unwilling to accept foreigners. Indeed, no country would open its doors to more refugees and immigrants than their social welfare system can support. But the actual problems are more than just the sudden arrival of an unprecedented number of migrants. These resentments towards refugees turned into movements such as the formation of Pegida in Germany in 2014 against a perceived threat from Muslim immigrants. As the movement's name suggests, there is a prevailing perception in Western societies that people of different identities are overrunning them. On the contrary, there are Muslims who have been living in Europe for generations. In the home of Pegida movement, there are about five million German citizens of Turkish origin in a country of 82 million people. It makes more sense if these incidents are interpreted in light of conflict resolution. Such resentment is not addressed by the mere existence of good institutions. Nor is the conflict so serious that it will require intervention by a third party.

\textit{Rise of the Far-Right}

Many European nations are multiethnic and multicultural in nature as they embrace social, political, religious, racial and cultural diversity. This is one of the predominant features of liberal democracies. Yet, the influx of refugees at the shores of Europe has caused a significant sociopolitical tension. This has rekindled debates regarding refugees, their alleged pressure on the social welfare system and unemployment, lack of integration, as well as immigration policies within European societies. Many fringe far-right and populist parties tapped into these resentments and grievances over immigration and refugee question, the dark side of globalization, stagnating wages and violent extremism across the Global
North in order to get into the mainstream political domain. Jan-Werner Müller identifies populism as a distinct challenge to democratic norms, which is supposedly anti-elitist and anti-pluralist since it claims to represent 'the mass' in an exclusive and absolute sense. Populists capitalize on the fear of 'the other' and the impending clash of culture. The rift between the governments and far-right ideologies has been mounting pressure on the EU itself.

Fuelled by the EU refugee policy, the rise of populist parties such as the AfD in Germany and Marine Le Pen in France brought them from the periphery of the political spectrum to mainstream political landscape. Thorsten Brenner notes, "the AfD has revitalized some of the themes advanced by proto-fascists of the interwar period, whom the historian Fritz Stern labelled 'conservative revolutionaries' for their potent mixture of traditionalism with anti-establishment rage". On the other side of the Atlantic, the US witnessed President Donald Trump's taking over of the Oval Office on the back of his populist election campaign that exploited and shored up the fear of the 'other'. During his election campaign, President Trump focused on the building of a wall on the southern border of the US with Mexico. Trump stated during his Republican nomination acceptance speech, "We are going to build a great border wall to stop illegal immigration, to stop the gangs and the violence, and to stop the drugs from pouring into our communities". After taking over the office, he banned seven, mostly Muslim, countries from travelling to the US through an executive order. These pieces of evidence point to a deep-rooted belief among a substantial portion of the Western societies and policymakers that immigrants steal jobs, do not integrate well in the host society and are more prone to violence.

In contradistinction to the populist claim, immigrants experience substantially higher unemployment rates compared to native-born citizens. For example, according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) statistics in 2015, the employment rate gap between native-born and immigrants in Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden exceeded by 11 points. The disparity between immigrant and non-immigrant unemployment rates is noticeable in countries like Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland, where the immigrant unemployment accounts for more than
double than that of the native-born citizens. The success of far-right parties in the Western hemisphere speaks to successful politicization and securitization of immigration without fact-based evidence. This may have been politically profitable for some parties, but more importantly, it shows an ideational tension and polarization within the Western societies.

Three Sources of Terrorism-related Fear

Sometimes the reactions to these perceived threats of ‘the other’ turn into violent extremism and terrorism. Terrorism in relation to Western societies can be discussed under three broad categories. First, how the religious terrorist wave, i.e., al-Qaeda and the Islamic State, is perceived in the West as far as cultural clash is concerned; second, rise of homegrown religious violent extremism as a reaction to Western policies elsewhere; and third, far-right terrorism perpetrated by native Europeans radicalized by white supremacists or neo-Nazis who are not necessarily Muslims. Although the source of the first kind is external, the second and the third are reactions to societal tension as discussed earlier.

First, the social anxiety over the possibility that religious extremists and returnee foreign terrorist fighters might be hiding among refugees gripped the imagination of the public and may have fuelled some of these political reactions, e.g., increasing support base for far-right parties. This apprehension has turned into fear which was further substantiated by a series of terrorist attacks in Europe since 2004. These attacks helped securitize Muslim immigration and the perception that religious terrorism is a weapon in the existentialist battle between Islam and the West. Such conspiracy theory is strikingly similar to that of late 19th century anti-Semitic notion that Jews were scheming to take over the world. The same is now exploited to legitimize anti-Muslim behaviour and discourses. The belief that Muslims are unable or unwilling to adhere to the core values of Western liberal democracies because they hide their ‘true nature’ in order to take over these societies has stoked xenophobia. This Islamophobic and radical right-wing rhetoric by many populist political parties is similar in nature to the anti-Semitic propaganda that the Jewish people would control the world.
The only difference between anti-Semitism and radical right-wing rhetoric is that Jews were held responsible for conspiring to rule via the press and financial institutions, whereas Muslims are feared to introduce their norms and legal principles, known as the ‘Shariah’, gradually through increased immigration and higher fertility against ‘naive’ European multiculturalism. This very argument led US President Donald Trump to propose a complete ban on immigration from some Muslim countries, including Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq. Although this measure was found unconstitutional by the Supreme Court, it demonstrates once again how closely refugees and terrorists are linked to the populist discourse.

Second, recent terrorist violence in the West has mostly been perpetrated by second-generation immigrants who by then should have been well-integrated into their societies. A lack thereof only suggests that national integration and assimilation mechanisms are not working. European-born citizens of Muslim background have travelled to the Middle East to join the Islamic State. Some were radicalized through clandestine networks and planned to attack civilians on the European soil. The Madrid train bombings in 2004 and the London bombings in the following year brought attention to the phenomenon of homegrown terrorism—extremists who were radicalized by religious ideologies but are not necessarily foreigners. The wave of terrorist attacks started with murders of twelve journalists of the Charlie Hebdo weekly in January 2015 and multiple attacks at the Bataclan concert hall in Paris in November 2015, killing 130. The attackers, in the first instance, were two Parisian siblings Saïd Kouachi and Chérif Kouachi. Most Bataclan attackers were second-generation immigrants from Muslim countries, but they had either French or Belgian citizenship. This suggests that source of the threat of terrorism to the West is more internal than external.

Third, there is also a diametrical opposite trend of far-right or white supremacist extremism in the West. This kind of violent extremism is fanned by xenophobia. There have been several ‘lone wolf’ terrorist attacks inspired by far-right ideologies. Six Muslim worshippers were killed and 19 others were injured on 29 January 2017 when a student of Laval University, Alexandre Bissonnette, shot them in Canada’s French-speaking Quebec province. He was motivated by the belief that immigrants were threats to his family. But his victims were francophone
immigrants who had emigrated to Quebec from former French colonies. In another incident in Norway, Anders Behring Breivik killed 77 people, most of whom were children. His acts were inspired by Islamophobia even though his victims were fellow Norwegians.

David Rapoport argues that the world is witnessing the ‘fourth wave’ of international terrorism motivated by religious ideologies. The threats emanating from al-Qaeda and the Islamic State far outweigh than those posed by ‘far-right terrorism’. Hence, this chapter does not argue that terrorism and violence committed by religious terrorists should be of lesser importance. Instead, the perpetrators of attacks are also Westerners and motivated by both religious and non-religious ideologies. It is deep-rooted hatred that acts as the primary motivating factor for far-right terrorism.

**Institutions and Peace**

The preceding evidence demonstrates that perfectly functioning democratic institutions and social justice system alone do not necessarily guarantee that peace will prevail in the society, unless there are mechanisms in place to ensure reconciliation when required. One example is the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement in the US instigated by police brutality against people of African descent. Started in 2013, it has spread to most US states and inspired similar movements elsewhere around the globe. Williamson et al. showed that “[f]rom August 2014 to August 2015, at least 780 BLM protests occurred in 44 states and 223 localities”. These movements are not manifestations of the absence of proper institutions that ensure social justice. More than the weakness of justice delivery mechanism, they point to a long-standing suspicion, lack of respect and a deep sense of grievances among races and social classes. The problem has been exacerbated by a rather distressing worldwide trend of populism that uses racial, religious and class differences to gain political advantage. Politics based on fear and hatred seems to have yielded short-term dividends to some politicians.

This trend is also correlated with the growing appeal of right-wing populism. While it is difficult to define what populism entails, other than what it is symptomatic of, populist propaganda thrives on the image of ‘the other’. More than anything else, this phenomenon suggests that there
is a widening rift between and among different sections of people in the West. The right-wing populist parties have exploited this rift to offer a binary understanding to their support base that the rising numbers of asylum seekers in particular and immigration in general endanger the societal cohesion and dilute the cultural purity of the natives. This sense of grievances has long been ignored by the cosmopolitan neoliberal elites from Western societies. As such, the radical right was particularly inclined to exploit immigration as a scapegoat to shore up the feelings of insecurity and erosion of the welfare state.

**Concluding Remarks**

The arguments presented in the chapter demonstrate the need for revisiting the nexus between peace and peacebuilding. Notwithstanding their commonalities, peace and peacebuilding have different connotations, implications and prescriptions. The former is associated with social justice and often manifested in the presence of functional and vibrant institutions, while the latter has been mainly used as an instrument of the UN-sponsored liberal interventionist enterprise in post-war countries. In broader terms, one is associated with ‘positive peace’ and the other, ‘negative peace’. UN peacebuilding operations have evolved based on decades of experience in peacekeeping and peace enforcement. Despite significant improvements, a Western and non-Western dichotomy in peacebuilding is visible.

Hence, the chapter argues that there should be a differentiation between ‘hard peacebuilding’ such as those overseen by UN Peace Support Operations aimed at addressing negative peace or ending violence in post-war countries, at the same time, ‘soft peacebuilding’ in societies where functional state institutions are present but their existence does not often translate into grievances of ethnic communities or social classes being mitigated. Many relatively peaceful societies are already talking about incorporating peacebuilding approaches to supplement counterterrorism measures such as preventing/countering violent extremism (PVE/CVE). However, given that peace is now an integral part of the sustainable development agenda, there ought to be a recognition of the usefulness of peacebuilding as an effective tool for addressing emerging social conflicts.
The complexities of building peace in mostly-homogenous societies are compounded by another crucial factor. In post-conflict and post-negotiated settlement situations, it is relatively easier to take up peacebuilding measures as the communities with grievances are identifiable. But in the developed nations, it is often harder to understand which individuals and groups have a sense of marginalization because they are considered already peaceful.

Several recent social phenomena justify this case as well. First, along with its many benefits, globalization has also led to an increasing global and local inequality which in turn is fuelling racial and cultural tensions. The rise of populist parties testifies to this fact. This is also strongly correlated with the rise of violent extremism, terrorism, especially its ‘lone wolf’ variant. The perpetrators are not always foreigners; rather citizens of the countries concerned. Two conclusions can be deducted from this trend. First, perfectly functioning state institutions do not guarantee that peace will prevail in the society. And second, even if they are functional that does not imply that grievances are properly addressed. This makes a strong case for using soft peacebuilding policies in societies where there exists a state institution. Even though this approach can be called ‘soft’, but it is harder to implement because in ‘apparently peaceful’ societies, it will be difficult to locate individuals with grievances. The problems are mounting tension. In the coming days, they will be the defining characteristics of conflict resolution.

SDG 16 is potentially a radical departure from the traditional ‘top-down’, one-way traffic for peacebuilding as the goal is universal in nature. Therefore, failed and fragile states located in the developing South are not the only threat to global peace. Rather peace in the Western countries is also battered by rising populism—both right-wing and religious kind—violence, growing inequality and their own homegrown violent extremism fuelled by xenophobia. There is a need to understand the factors that contributed to the relative decline of liberal peace in the Western societies and eventually the need for conflict resolution and peacebuilding across in apparently calm societies.


7 ‘Kantian peace’, also known as ‘perpetual peace’, is named after German philosopher Immanuel Kant whose ideas greatly influence liberalism, democratic peace theory as well as many guiding principles of modern neoliberal states. See, Michael W. Doyle, op. cit.


10 Ibid., p. 298.


13 Roland Paris, op. cit.


Ibid., p. 6.


38 Ibid.


