

DOI 10.31558/2519-2949.2025.1.12

УДК 339.9:327]”362/364”

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-1180-9784>

**Parchevska V., Department of International Cooperation and Regional Development, Vinnytsia Regional Military Administration**

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6639-6218>

**Panina I., Vasyl' Stus Donetsk National University**

## FRAGILITY IS REQUIRED: PEACEBUILDING THEORY BRIEF OVERVIEW

*A state or territory emerging from an armed conflict undergoes a process of constructing a new reality. The peacebuilding process involves a broad range of measures focused not only on rebuilding territories affected by armed conflict but, more importantly, on identifying and strengthening institutions dedicated to fostering peace and preventing the recurrence of conflict. This article attempts to outline the main theoretical approaches and perspectives in peacebuilding research and its implementation. This study examines the perception of peacebuilding through conflict resolution as a key multidisciplinary approach. The conceptual analysis highlighted distinctive features of peacebuilding compared to related interconnected terms, such as conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peacemaking, postwar reconstruction, statebuilding, nation building, and reconciliation. A structural-functional analysis made it possible to differentiate theoretical approaches to peacebuilding activities involvement. The differences between peacebuilding from above (top-down approach) and peacebuilding from below (bottom-up approach) are analyzed. The essence of the hierarchical approach through the liberal paradigm is revealed in contrast to the idea of a hybrid peace. An exceptional impact of the transformative approach on peacebuilding is highlighted. The current trend of cosmopolitan conflict resolution is described. Emphasis is placed on the prevailing perception of peacebuilding as a viable endeavor during the fragile phase of post-conflict interaction and the state of conflict actors, particularly concerning the capacity for flexibility and adaptability to evolving circumstances and changes. This article does not strive to comprehensively present all existing theoretical frameworks to peacebuilding. Instead, it aims to delineate its distinctive attributes and to serve as a catalyst for further scholarly inquiry in this domain.*

**Ключові слова:** conflict resolution, peacebuilding, peace and conflict studies, liberal peace, a top-down approach to peacebuilding, a bottom-up approach to peacebuilding, hybrid peace, fragile states.

**Statement of the problem.** Today, there are various interpretations of the essence of peacebuilding. In light of this, it is important to identify the main ways to understand this phenomenon from different perspectives. These distinct viewpoints often reflect the complexities of conflict and the unique contexts in which peacebuilding occurs. By examining these interpretations, it is possible to gain deeper insights into the effectiveness and challenges of peacebuilding initiatives. Eventually, understanding the multifaceted nature of peacebuilding is crucial for fostering sustainable solutions in the conflict resolution field.

The article is devoted to addressing the complexities and ambiguities surrounding the concept of peacebuilding and its application in diverse contexts through main theoretical perspectives. **The purpose of the article** is to present a structured theoretical overview of peacebuilding as a significant part of conflict resolution, and peace and conflict studies.

**Analysis of the latest research.** The latest publications on peacebuilding are mostly focused on specific cases of its applications. Thus, a popular direction of research is peacebuilding through environmental aspects (T. Ide, C. Bruch, A. Carius, K. Conca, G. D. Dabelko, R. Matthew, E. Weinthal) [1]. For a long time remains relevant the topic of the role of civil society in conflict resolution (N. Annan, M. Beseng, G. Crawford, J. K. Kewir) [2]. T. Paffenholz examined peacebuilding as an ever-developing process manifested in a series of (re-)negotiations through the «perpetual peacebuilding» paradigm [3]. Another significant dimension is peacebuilding implementation considered through the prism of urban studies by D. Simangan [4].

The literature review indicates that researchers and practitioners are making significant efforts to expand

the concept of peacebuilding to encompass the complexities of the practical elements involved in fostering peace. Nevertheless, the lack of examination of the feasible environment for peacebuilding and the peculiarities of conditions for its implementation has emerged.

**Main provisions.** There is often confusion around conflict resolution terminology. It is essential to clarify definitions and interpretations from the outset. This is partly because conflict is a universal feature of conflict society. Therefore, by «conflict» we do not exclusively refer to armed conflict, whether international or non-international. For instance, peacemaking encompasses the use of negotiations to resolve intricate economic challenges, a practice that is frequently employed in various contexts. The authors of this article will not enter the discussion on conflict definition here, giving preference to a broad understanding of this phenomenon as characterised by pursuing disparate goals in the interaction between conflictants. This definition can be applied to any political conflict, whether it is endeavoured by peaceful means or by the use of force. However, in the context of peacebuilding, it mainly refers to a narrower category of armed conflict – a conflict where parties on both sides resort to the use of force. Violent conflict, or deadly conflict, is similar to armed conflict but also includes one-sided violence such as genocides against unarmed civilians and violence associated with domestic and international criminality [5]. In this article, the terms conflict, war and armed conflict are used as interchangeable categories. This is defined specifically to avoid terminological confusion and facilitate the perception of theoretical material.

While conflict prevention can be used at any stage of the conflict, peacekeeping is typically associated with the deployment of international forces or observers to maintain peace and security in post-conflict areas, and peacemaking involves efforts to resolve disputes and conflicts through negotiation and diplomacy, reconciliation focuses on healing relationships and learning to live non-violently with radical differences, peacebuilding underpins the work of peacemaking and peacekeeping and refers to a long-term process of addressing structural issues and relationships between conflictants. Peacebuilding has been at the core of conflict resolution studies. It embraces the activities from the moment when a peace agreement is reached to post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation.

Post-conflict reconstruction (postwar reconstruction) is a part of peacebuilding efforts aimed at rebuilding and rehabilitating a state in different fields (social, economic, political, security, and cultural) following the end of a conflict (war). This concept is interrelated with so-called postwar peace operations.

Statebuilding is interrelated with postwar reconstruction and refers to the attempt to (re)build self-sustaining institutions of governance capable of delivering the essential public goods required to underpin perceived legitimacy and what it is hoped will eventually become an enduring peace. Stable and lasting peace certainly requires state functions adequate to the needs of the population (effective governance) but also consultation and participation with all stakeholders (legitimate governance). So, the concept of statebuilding, turns out after all to be inseparable from wider issues of peacebuilding, despite the tensions between them.

Nation building as a term was widely used during the period of decolonization to refer mainly to the enterprise of forging national identity out of the diverse populations that made up many of the newer states so that citizenship would transcend subordinate loyalties.

We increasingly discuss peacebuilding in terms of negative and positive peace [6]. Negative peace is that peace is distinguished from violence by the absence of violence. Negative peace means the absence of violence and therefore in that narrower definition peacebuilding is devoted to a set of questions around how to prevent violence from reasserting itself. Positive peace seeks to understand the root causes of the conflict in terms of what gave rise to it, and peacebuilding in that understanding is devoted to addressing the root causes of conflict or violence. Given this, a related idea due to Johan Galtung [7] is the distinction between direct violence (aggression that results in physical injury or death), structural violence (embedded in social structures and institutions, resulting in harm by preventing individuals or groups from meeting their basic needs: systemic inequality, poverty, discrimination, and social injustice), and cultural violence (beliefs, values, and norms that justify or legitimise direct and structural violence).

Considering the aforementioned, several theoretical approaches to implementing peacebuilding have been proposed by researchers. Some of these approaches are interconnected and complement one another, so we aim to clarify any confusion surrounding them.

Peacebuilding from above (top-down approach) is the kind of peacebuilding where international institutions or regional actors are engaged for the most part [8]. Liberal peace and the top-down peacebuilding approach are closely interconnected. Both emphasize the establishment of formal institutions and governance as essential for sustainable peace. Liberal peace advocates for democracy, human rights, and economic development as foundational elements. Similarly, top-down peacebuilding often involves interventions led

by state or international actors focusing on strengthening governance structures. Both approaches prioritise stability in post-conflict societies. They frequently rely on international norms and engage political elites to foster legitimacy. However, this can lead to the marginalisation of grassroots voices and local practices. Critics highlight that elite-driven processes may overlook the needs of local communities. Despite their shared goals, the emphasis on external solutions raises important questions about inclusivity. Ultimately, both concepts underscore the complex dynamics of achieving lasting peace. The United Nations has actively promoted liberal peace through various initiatives and peacekeeping missions. For instance, the UN's efforts in post-conflict countries like Liberia (UNMIL) and Kosovo (UNMIK) exemplify this approach.

The discussion surrounding liberal peace is closely linked to what is known as the democratic peace thesis. While the two concepts are sometimes conflated, they are distinct in significant ways. The liberal peace thesis is broader, encompassing the promotion of liberal values and institutions across various contexts. In contrast, the democratic peace thesis is more specific and originates from Kantian republicanism. It stands out as one of the few empirical theories within peace and conflict studies, based on the proposition that democratic states do not engage in war with one another.

On the contrary, peacebuilding from below (bottom-up approach) emphasises the importance of grassroots participation, local agency, and community involvement in the peacebuilding process. A significant contributor to this concept is John Paul Lederach, who advocated for strategies that empower local actors and foster sustainable peace from the ground up, contrasting with top-down approaches that often overlook community involvement [9]. Peacebuilding from below focuses on grassroots involvement and local ownership, often integrating aspects of both civil society and people-to-people initiatives. All three variants are essential for a comprehensive peacebuilding strategy, each addressing different aspects of conflict and contributing uniquely to sustainable peace. The Civil Society approach tends to be more organised and structured, focusing on advocacy and capacity-building, while people-to-people initiatives prioritise interpersonal relationships and direct dialogue. By involving local actors, the bottom-up approach aims to create more sustainable and contextually relevant peace initiatives. For instance, in Guatemala, indigenous people do not regard the capital city as «their» country, given it represents the dominance of an elite and an international ideology of peacebuilding not commensurate with local approaches. From the Solomon Islands, Timor, Mozambique, to Liberia there have been local attempts to bring customary forms of governance and law into the international blueprint for peacebuilding [10].

There is increasing concern about the inability of the liberal peace experiment in the post-Cold War era to effectively engage with its intended populations. Instead, these populations have begun to reshape the liberal peace model to meet their own local needs. The contradictions inherent in liberal peace have generated numerous tensions, leading to the emergence of a range of previously underexplored local and contextual peacebuilding agencies. These agencies actively renegotiate both the local context and the liberal peace framework, resulting in a hybrid form of peace that integrates local and liberal elements, often referred to as post-liberal peace [11]. The term hybrid peace was notably popularised by Oliver P. Richmond. His research highlights the complexities of peace processes that integrate both traditional practices and modern governance structures, reflecting the evolving landscape of peacebuilding in post-conflict contexts [11]. The idea of hybrid peace highlighted the blend of local and international practices in peacebuilding processes. By integrating local practices and perspectives with international efforts, hybrid peacebuilding aims to create more sustainable and contextually relevant solutions, fostering deeper societal change and resilience in post-conflict environments. Richmond's analysis emphasises how these hybrid approaches can contribute to more sustainable peace by incorporating local governance structures and cultural contexts alongside external interventions.

A significant contribution to peacebuilding theory development is a transformative approach, rooted in conflict transformation theory, whose conceptual foundations can be found in Johan Galtung's theory of violence and peacebuilding [12], and Edward Azar's work on analysis and management of protracted social conflict [13]. This perspective emphasises the importance of addressing the underlying social, political, and economic dynamics of conflict rather than merely seeking to manage or resolve it. According to John Paul Lederach, peacebuilding is a long-term multi-track transformative contribution to social change, helping to create a just and sustainable peace beyond the narrow definition of a post-conflict period [14]. He argues that liberal peacebuilding is primarily preoccupied with the situation of stabilisation; it does not go beyond that to talk about the engagement of the long term in bringing about societal transformation. In addition, the sorts of things that you might want to engage in when talking about elites and peacebuilding are not necessarily the same that you talk about when engaging the grassroots.

Thus, hybrid peace refers to peacebuilding processes that combine local and international approaches, integrating traditional and modern methods of conflict resolution. It often reflects a blend of local practices and global norms, whereas transformative peace focuses on addressing the root causes of conflict and fostering deep societal changes. It aims to create a just and equitable society where relationships are healed, and structural inequalities are dismantled. A peculiar combination of these two approaches is the model of transformative and cosmopolitan peacebuilding, which seeks to privilege local capacity-building while recognizing the necessity of negotiating between local and international actors [5].

Most recent research introduced the cosmopolitan conflict resolution concept [5]. This term indicates the need for an approach that promotes constructive means of handling conflict at local to global levels in the interests of humanity. The concept arose as a counterpart of transnational conflict, which has emerged as a developed extension of Azar's protracted social conflict and has considered global changes that have occurred since the end of the Cold War and the regionalization of conflict that has resulted [5]. From this point of view, peacebuilding and postwar reconstruction concepts become more than a sum of action to create lasting peace. Ultimately, they tend to reflect a global agenda via the proactive promotion of certain values against any sort of violence (direct, structural or cultural).

It could be summarised that the main significant feature for the start of peacebuilding (post-conflict reconstruction) activities is its feasibility during the fragile stage of the post-conflict state of conflictants and the breakable interaction between them when the war ends but the peace is not yet secure. This context requires an acute awareness of the complex interplay between stability and volatility, where the capacity for flexibility and adaptability becomes crucial. Moreover, it is important to be included in the context, directing efforts to transform its foundations, and not to resolve current manifestations as a result of fundamental contradictions.

Fragility, according to the OECD, is the combination of exposure to risk and insufficient coping capacities of the state, system and/or communities to manage, absorb or mitigate those risks. It occurs in a spectrum of intensity across six dimensions: economic, environmental, human, political, security and societal [15]. Since 2015, The States of Fragility reports by OECD have aimed to deepen the understanding of how fragility affects international stability and development, while also examining trends in resource and financial flows that address its underlying causes [16]. Corresponding to the aforementioned analysis of protracted social conflict, addressing fragility as a driver of instability requires a more robust understanding of fragility, seeing it as a deeply political issue centred on the social contract between the state and society, as well as greater consideration of the role of stress factors (internal and external) [17].

The Fragile States Index Annual Report 2023 by The Fund for Peace [18], illustrates that fragility remains a significant global concern, challenging the notion that it is solely a threat arising from poorer countries. Recent events have demonstrated a reverse contagion effect, wherein conflict in Europe has exacerbated inflation, fuel riots, and food insecurity in vulnerable nations worldwide. Additionally, this situation reveals that powers such as China, Russia, and Western democracies may be more susceptible to fragility than previously understood, necessitating a comprehensive approach to addressing this pervasive challenge.

Peacebuilding efforts must account for the fluid nature of conflict environments, recognizing that the needs and motivations of stakeholders may shift rapidly. This adaptability enables peacebuilding initiatives to stay relevant and effective, addressing new challenges and opportunities as they emerge. Furthermore, this dynamic approach fosters greater resilience among local communities, empowering them to navigate the uncertainties inherent in post-conflict settings. Consequently, the integration of adaptive strategies within peacebuilding frameworks enhances the likelihood of achieving sustainable peace.

**Conclusions.** Conflict resolution approaches to peacebuilding are developing over time in the direction of complementing each other to create new meanings. The linkage between liberal peace and peacebuilding from above (top-down) illustrates a shared focus on formal institutions and international norms, but it also raises important questions about inclusivity and the role of local agencies in achieving sustainable peace. Reflection on this is presented by peacebuilding from below (bottom-up). The concept of hybrid peacebuilding is linked to a transformative approach and emphasises the integration of local and international practices in peacebuilding processes. Current theoretical approaches to peacebuilding and post-war reconstruction as its essential part collectively contribute to a holistic understanding of peacebuilding. Recent research has introduced the concept of cosmopolitan conflict resolution across local and global levels in the interest of humanity. This perspective positions peacebuilding as a global agenda embodiment that actively promotes certain values against various forms of violence. The perception of peacebuilding as a viable

endeavour holds particular significance during the fragile phase of post-conflict interactions and the evolving dynamics among conflict actors.

### **References/Бібліографічний список:**

1. The past and future(s) of environmental peacebuilding (2021). T. Ide et al. *International Affairs*. Vol. 97(1). P. 1-16.
2. Civil society, peacebuilding from below and shrinking civic space: the case of Cameroon's «Anglophone» conflict (2021). N. Annan N. et al. *Conflict, Security & Development*. No.21(6). P. 697-725.
3. Paffenholz T. (2021). Perpetual Peacebuilding: A New Paradigm to Move Beyond the Linearity of Liberal Peacebuilding. *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*. No.15(3). P. 367-385.
4. Simangan D. (2024). Challenges and Prospects for Urban Peacebuilding in Post-Siege Marawi City, Philippines: People, Places, and Practices. *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*. Vol.43(3). DOI: 10.1177/18681034241251864.
5. Ramsbotham O., Woodhouse T., Miall H. (2016). *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*. 4th edition (fully revised and updated). Cambridge: Polity Press. 604 p.
6. Galtung J. (1976). Three Approaches to Peace: Peacekeeping, Peacemaking, and Peacebuilding. *Peace, War and Defense: Essays in Peace Research*. Copenhagen: Christian Ejlertsen. P. 282-302.
7. Galtung J. (1990). Cultural violence. *Journal of Peace Research*. No.27(3). P. 291-305.
8. Richmond O.P. (2006). The problem of peace: understanding the «liberal peace». *Conflict, Security & Development*. No.3. P. 291-314.
9. Lederach J.P. (1997). *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*. Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace Press. 197 p.
10. States Emerging from Hybrid Political Orders – Pacific Experiences / V. Boege et al. The Australian Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies (ACPACS) Occasional Papers Series. September 2008. 41 p. URL: <https://surl.li/tsxgyd>.
11. Richmond O.P. (2011). *A Post-Liberal Peace*. London: Routledge. 288 p.
12. Galtung J. (1969). Violence, Peace and Peace Research. *Journal of Peace Research*. P. 167-191.
13. Azar E. (1991). *The Analysis and Management of Protracted Social Conflict. The Psychodynamics of International Relationships*. Vol.2. Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath. P. 93-120. URL: <https://www.bbau.ac.in/dept/dps/TM/Edward%20Azar.pdf>.
14. Lederach J.P., Appleby S. (2010). *Strategic Peacebuilding: An Overview. Strategies of Peace: Transforming Conflict in a Violent World* / Ed. by D. Philpott and G. F. Powers. New York: Oxford University Press. P. 19-44.
15. What is Fragility? OECD. URL: <https://www.oecd.org/en/blogs/2022/09/what-is-fragility.html>.
16. The States of Fragility. OECD. URL: <https://surl.li/nucgym>.
17. *Fragile States 2013: Resource Flows and Trends in a Shifting World*. DAC (Development Assistance Committee). Paris: OECD, 2014. 105 p. URL: <https://surl.li/skxeza>.
18. *Fragile States Index Annual Report 2023*. The Fund for Peace. URL: [https://fragilestatesindex.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/FSI-2023-Report\\_final.pdf](https://fragilestatesindex.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/FSI-2023-Report_final.pdf).

### **Парчевська В. В., Паніна І. Г. Потрібна крихкість: короткий огляд теорії миробудування**

*Держава або територія після збройного конфлікту є новою реальністю, що конструюється. Процес миробудівництва охоплює велику кількість заходів, спрямованих не лише на відновлення територій, які постраждали внаслідок збройного конфлікту, а й, насамперед, визначення та укріплення структур, діяльність яких спрямована на посилення та консолідацію мирних зусиль і унеможливлення повторення конфлікту. У цій статті здійснено спробу окреслення основних теоретичних підходів і перспектив у дослідженні та реалізації миробудівництва. Ключовим міждисциплінарним дослідницьким підходом до розуміння зазначеного процесу є його сприйняття через врегулювання конфліктів, що представлено у цій статті. Концептуальний аналіз висвітлив відмінні риси розбудови миру порівняно з дотичними взаємопов'язаними термінами, такими як превенція конфліктів, підтримання миру, встановлення миру, післявоєнна відбудова, державотворення, націєтворення та примирення. Структурно-функціональний аналіз дав змогу диференціювати теоретичні підходи щодо залучення до миротворчої діяльності. Проаналізовано відмінності між розбудовою миру зверху вниз і знизу вгору. Розкрито сутність ієрархічного підходу через ліберальну парадигму на противагу ідеї гібридного миру. Підкреслено винятковий вплив трансформаційного підходу на миробудівництво. Описано сучасну тенденцію вирішення космополітичних конфліктів. Наголошено на переважному сприйнятті розбудови миру як життєздатного заходу під час нестабільної фази постконфліктної взаємодії й такого ж стану учасників конфлікту, особливо в контексті здатності до гнучкості та адаптації до мінливих обставин і змін. У цій статті авторки не прагнуть вичерпно представити всі наявні теоретичні*

*засади розбудови миру; радше, метою є окреслення відмінних рис миробудівництва, а також сприяння подальшим науковим розвідкам у цій галузі.*

**Ключові слова:** *врегулювання конфліктів, розбудова миру, дослідження миру та конфліктів, ліберальний мир, підхід до миробудівництва зверху вниз, підхід до миробудівництва знизу вгору, гібридний мир, крихкі держави.*