

INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH IN PEACE STUDIES

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Abstract

In this paper we analyze the link between knowledge from scientific and non-scientific sources for peace, as well as criteria that have to be taken into consideration in the process of education of peace studies' students. We address integration of philosophical, psychological, sociological, legal and pedagogical knowledge in the education on peace. Given intense integration of knowledge, we focus on conceptual distinctions between multidisciplinary, interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity. With the integration of perceptions on peace we conclude that this issue is still in phase of definition and problem analysis, while the meaning of these perceptions is of great importance. In the process of utilization of these methods there are important specialized methods that are used in compliance with the competencies of the professionals in the area of peace. We will analyze the principles that need to be respected in the process of introduction of heterogenous perceptions: the principles of the profession, the limited competencies towards other disciplines, familiarity with the objectives for utilization of knowledge, interests and the characteristics of the students and the critical opinion. The integration of knowledge in peace education enables elaboration of the profession from its foundation, development of educational programmes and education of the students.

Keywords: interdisciplinary approach, peace studies, education and students.

Introduction

The conventional wisdom says that the world is getting "smaller". Information flows are getting extremely fast. In times of networking growth, teaching materials and

curriculums all over the world become available to everyone. One could even say that they influence each another (even when it seems completely impossible). It becomes impossible to plan development or progress within one's own garden, city or state with no influences from the surrounding.

Development of peace education is becoming an object of vivid debates and it is not pure coincidence. Looking for new paradigms is a step forward in the overall efforts for finding solutions in complex social environments and situations in the modern world. At the same time these solutions could be found only through an interdisciplinary approach to the complex problems. Every problem may have many different explanations - thus there is usually more than just one solution. Each quest for exclusivity risks becoming ideology. The sociological value of the interdisciplinary approach lies in the fact that there are different perceptions and reasoning integrated in the peace science.

Interdisciplinarity Features

The interdisciplinary approach refers to an interactive relation of two or more academic disciplines that may create a unity on a higher epistemological level. Synthesis is usually does not have to do exactly with the subject of knowledge but rather with the concepts and methods. Even more, it refers to the principles and axioms, which in turn result in integration of information, data, techniques, perspectives, concepts and theories of two or more scholarly disciplines. Interdisciplinarity promotes dialogue and cooperation between disciplines. On the other hand, transdisciplinarity means overarching differences, i.e. it calls for unification of differences in one common ground. Multidisciplinarity urges contact; interdisciplinarity promotes disciplines, while transdisciplinarity represents a combination of multidisciplinarity and interdisciplinarity.

Relevant theoretical literature suggests that interdisciplinarity is a concept that symbolizes a specific approach to scientific research. The word *interdisciplinary* consists of two parts: *inter* and *disciplinary*. The prefix *inter* means "between, among, in the midst," or "derived from two or more." *Disciplinary* means "of or relating to a particular field of study" or specialization. Repko speaks about an "area of dispute" (Repko 2008, 6). The issue or case that is "disputed" does not belong only to one scholarly discipline but to at least two or more disciplines, despite the fact that one may define them as monodisciplinary "tensions" with regard to a specific issue or dispute.

The so-called "dispute" indicates complexity of an issue and possibility of maintaining a few different standpoints on it (Repko, *ibid.*). The prefix "inter" also refers to

the creation of a new domain of knowledge that is being shaped between/among disciplines through a process of integration of the respective knowledge. Thus interdisciplinarity does not completely justify the existing scholarly disciplines; it rather strives towards expansion of knowledge through creation of new domains.

The term interdisciplinarity was for the first time coined in *Interdisciplinarity: Problems of Teaching and Research in Universities* (1972), and its author is Leo Apostel (Apostel and Vanlandschoot 1994, 9). Interdisciplinarity is understood as:

- (1) Research technique in terms of utilization of different opportunities in order to achieve specific results;
- (2) Method, that is, modality to approach specific concepts that are being explored or studied;
- (3) Type of organization of conducting research and education and form of cooperation among scientific disciplines that observe common research tasks (Šeparović and Jušić, 1982: 10).

The integration recognizes and links knowledge, data and information from different established disciplines and creates new knowledge, and quite frequently new scientific disciplines (Repko 2008: 19). The exploration of integration as “way of thinking” or type of approaching the research and resolution which enables understanding different theoretical approaches from different scientific disciplines in regard to their approach towards the research and problem resolution, enables the interdisciplinary research to be adequately complied with the theoretical approach. Usually there are three basic forms of interdisciplinarity that shape the different concepts of approaches in the research and teaching peace studies: 1) Instrumental interdisciplinarity refers to practical resolving of concrete problems where due to pragmatic reasons, different knowledge and different disciplinary methods are used which are integrated in the process for purpose of more efficient resolving of the problem; 2) conceptual interdisciplinarity directed towards integration of knowledge from different disciplines for purpose of reasoning and analysis of problems that do not belong exclusively to one scientific discipline; and 3) vertical interdisciplinarity that serves for reappraisal of the existing structure of knowledge and education and issues regarding values and objectives in peace science (Repko, 2008: 17–18).

Development of Peace Studies

Seen through a chronological prism, the peace studies have appeared as a distinctive academic discipline after the World War II, in the 1950s of the twentieth century. Their objective is promoted with abolition of war and reduction of violence with peaceful means - i.e. the principles embedded in the UN Charter.

Actually, the prehistory of this discipline gives a different perspective. Namely, the first footsteps towards peace studies were made indirectly thanks to the international relations within which study of war and peace became a central issue right after the end of the World War I. The birth of international relations as a discipline of the political sciences provided an initial base for studying peace. As a result of a number of initiatives some institutions were founded in that period (such as the German International Peace Academy in 1930 and establishment of the first chair of peace research at the University of Lyons in 1931).

The development of peace studies to great extent was a result of the activism of the modern peace movements with transnational character. They aimed to institutionalize the institutions for peace and the newspapers. The consolidation and expansion of the peace studies was done through peace education concepts, peace journalism and cultural opinion guidance. There was an evident need for provision of good information to peace study students on theories about human needs, identity, the concept of peace, structural violence, alternative economic and ecologic systems, etc.

Interdisciplinarity was one of the basic characteristics of the peace studies due to the research conducted in the first half of the 20th century. The strong influence of the technological and natural sciences was evident in the area of learning about the destructive power of weapons after the World War I, which was called "war of the chemists", (due to the use of atomic weapons the World War II was named the "war of the physicists"). At the same time, medicine became more and more important in terms of study of mental and physical consequences of war on the individual and society. Eventually, "the methodology of work" typical of medicine (diagnosis - prognosis - therapy) has been taken over by peace researchers. Most notably Johan Galtung has promoted this methodology in his research.

In addition, the social psychology and psychological research in general significantly contributed for the development of peace studies. Dollard's research (1939) of frustration and aggression is the base for Gurr's work (1970); namely, he has formulated the theory of relative deprivation that relates the appearance of violent conflicts with the

psychological characteristics of individual. This concept also made impact on Burton's views on the human needs (1990). The research of Lewin (1948) on the importance of the psychological factors in conflict with different groups had significant impact on other theoreticians (Tajfel 1970; Turner 1975) and contributed for the development of the theory for inter-group conflicts in framework of peace studies.

Finally, the political research such as the one of Brinton (1938) on the political revolution, had significant impact on theoreticians such as Dahrendorf (1957) and Tilly (1978) whose findings are later incorporated in the peace studies (Ramsbotham, 2011: 38).

Disastrous consequences of the World War II emphasized the need for a new scientific discipline which would deal exclusively with the causes of war and the assumptions for peace. The institutionalization of the peace research and the consequent creation of peace science are particularly related to the period of 1945-1965, when the informal meetings of the scientists started which subsequently resulted with formation of journal for researching peace and conflicts and formation of institute. The first more significant breakthrough happened in 1957 when a group of researchers gathered around Kenneth E. Boulding, Anatol Rapaport, Herbert Kelman, Robert Ejdzel and Dejvid Singer. They launched the Journal of Conflict Resolution. A section for Conflict and Peace Research was formed at the Institute for Social Research in Oslo.

Peace studies have spreaded throughout Europe thanks to the Programme for data on conflicts at the Uppsala University. It was followed by foundation of one more peace research institution - the Peace Research Institute at the University of Copenhagen. The Institute for Peace Research was formed in Stockholm which represented the ultimate peak of the institutionalization process. The first international association for peace research was IPRA. Johan Galtung (1964) issued the Editorial "Journal of Peace Research" and afterwards formed a Section for Conflict and Peace Research (at the Institute for Research PRIO.). Other countries also showed interest for peace research and opened adequate institutes. During the Cold war, the researchers tended to remain objective and to show that nonviolent conflict resolution is more effective than resolving conflicts with violent methods.

The peace research in regard to the chronology was initiated by Kenet Boulding, economist who dealt with preventions of war, who gave significant contribution in the area of typology of power which contributed for building the concept of stabile peace. Johan Galtung is known as a "father of peace studies" particularly because of his influence on institutionalization and development of peace research (Ramsbotham, et al 2011:44). John

Barton gave his particular contribution in the peace research with the introduction of theories about the human needs and the concept for deep rooted conflicts, prevention of conflicts and conflict resolution. From the very beginning, the peace studies rely more on individuals and groups as reference objects (Ejdys, 2012), that is, primarily relying on: social psychology, sociology or political anthropology.

The most important concept of the peace studies is linked with covering human needs, which is foremost linked with psychology, which represents an important evidence for the interdisciplinary nature of the peace studies. Besides many additions and modifications of the theory of needs of Maslow, it represents the key link between the psychology and the peace studies.

Interdisciplinarity is the destiny of all who deal with peace studies. The peace studies are defined as interdisciplinary approach that deals with searching modalities for elimination and avoiding violence.

Reasons for Interdisciplinarity

The main question behind interdisciplinarity today is why interdisciplinarity becomes more dominant scientific approach? Several scientific factors may be recognized which have impact in this regard, such as: great scientific discoveries, globalization process, application of research work and the business on the science.

Big scientific discoveries may not be approached strictly in a monodisciplinary way, but they require interdisciplinary approach. The second reason is the globalization process, which has growing impact on the peace science and the work of the academic community in the world. In this sense there are intensive communication contacts and cooperation among scientists from all over the world. The consequence of that is bringing scientific disciplines closer –interdisciplinary scientific approach. The third reason for interdisciplinarity is the need for applied science. Šeparović and Jušić point out that the development and the need for interdisciplinarity depends on the increasing of the number of scientific disciplines, and the need of applied science. It develops as a result of the need for organizing and managing scientific activity towards specific social objective through coordination of two scientific areas towards higher level of abstraction (Šeparović and Jušić 1982: 12).

The integration of knowledge in peace science is a process which follows every aspect of the profession, from the beginning of the professional work until the shaping in educational and scientific basis. The integration represents a process that assumes at least two parts or elements that are combined in a way which functions well (Hornby 2005, 807),

namely linking the parts enables creation of one unity (Webster's new encyclopedic dictionary, 1993.:523; Anicand Goldstein, 1999.:598; Barker, 1999.:244).

The integration of knowledge may be observed on two levels. The first level is comprised of knowledge "*external*", *heterogenic sources*, special scientific disciplines. Most frequently we speak about the concept of interdisciplinarity which in broad sense refers to parts of different areas of knowledge or (scientific) disciplines, or any dialogue in the broad sense of meaning, established between the disciplines (Moran 2002; Hornby 2005.:809) in the area of scientific research, projecting or practical action (Anic and Goldstein, 1999.:600).

The second possible level for integration of knowledge is in frames of the peace science that incorporates a number of areas of work, and different theoretical schools without single framework that unites them (Martinović 1987; Payne 2001; Howe 2003). In this context we use the term eclectism taken from philosophical discussions. Eclectism is a conceptual approach that does not hold rigidly to a single paradigm or set of assumptions, but instead draws upon multiple theories, styles, or ideas to gain complementary insights into a subject, or applies different theories in particular cases.

The negatively colored approach would mean uncreative and uncritical utilization of different ideas without creation of new elements or authentic concepts (Martinović, 1987.; Anic и Goldstein, 1999.:355; Howe, 2003.), while the *positive challenge* is used for utilization of ideas and methods which can be from any source in order to do something in the best way or in context of peace science, the most useful ones for specific intervention (Barker 1999, 146) in a concrete specific situation (Rosen 1988; Payne 2001.).The integration will be of heterogenic sources in corpus of the peace science which follows the profession from the very beginning.

Interdisciplinarity is criticized because it represents an approach towards the highest level of abstraction because it integrates theory and concept on higher levels than the individual disciplines and therefore interdisciplinarity may be linked with globalization process which has impact on linking and reshaping the knowledge, with criticism that interdisciplinarity is a form of colonization.

But interdisciplinarity is positive effort and challenge for future development of the science, and the development of social and humanistic disciplines.In essence there is a need for expansion and promotion of the existing domains of knowledge which is considered as positive etymologic value. Interdisciplinarity develops due to the perception that traditional work may not be done in isolation for purpose of resolving key problems. Scientists believe

that problems in the society may be resolved with utilization of the interdisciplinary approach.

There is evident and continuous integration of knowledge in the peace science studies. Little or insufficient attention has been paid on integration of knowledge and providing answers to the following questions: What is the objective of the separate knowledge, what sources of knowledge are relevant for the peace science? When and how is possible to integrate knowledge in peace science? What are the consequences on the profession, its efficiency, identity, practical specialization and education of the future professionals? What are the criteria for integration of knowledge?

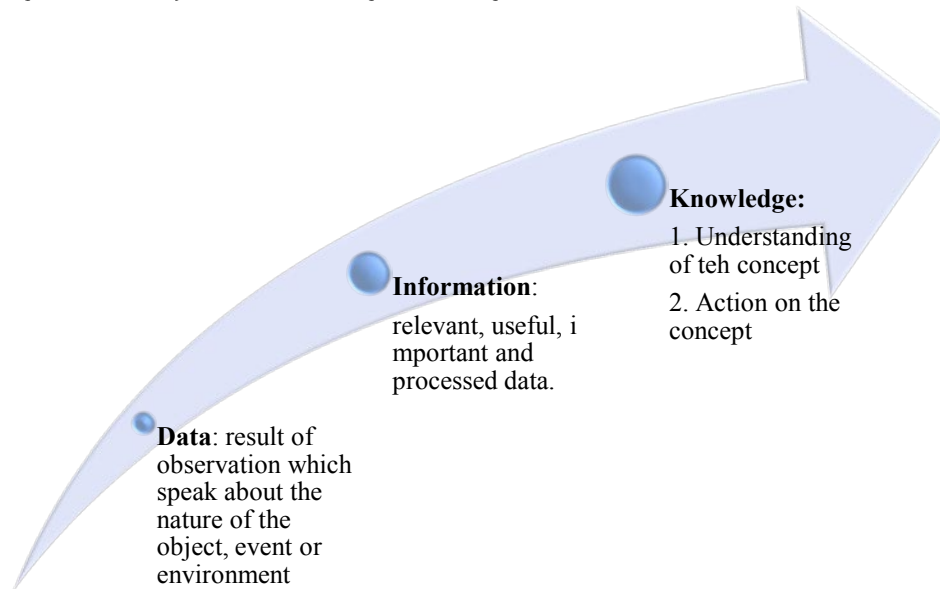
What is Interdisciplinary Approach in Peace Teaching?

The interdisciplinary approach in the peace teaching enables linking contents from different disciplines (subjects) in logical whole organized around a single problem or topic which unites knowledge from different disciplines which is used to throw light on a specific problem or topic which is being researched.

The interdisciplinary teaching is always thematic because it links and organizes thematic contents which are similar or common in different disciplines. Thematic teaching: links content in one whole with utilization of different methods, communication of representatives of different disciplines which are logically best understood a whole.

The development of the knowledge in sciences today is seen as a result of gradation which starts with data, develops in information inferred from data and from system of information it turns in two dimensions – knowledge: understanding and action on the concept (Fricke, 2009).

Figure 1. Development of knowledge according to Fricke, (2009: 132-133).



Peace students are educated about these two levels of knowledge utilization, which are recognized also in the peace science, offering them a third one which emphasizes the ethical dimension (Gambrill, 2006).

The students of peace studies are introduced to theories for peace, as follows:

Theories that analyze the man in general, the genesis of the problem, the general theory of the social system (Compton and Galaway, 1989.) theories **on peace**, and scientific areas that explain concepts that are subject of interest for peace science.

Theories that understand the nature of the profession: theories for **peace** that explain the nature and the role, theories for peace that explain and describe the profession, the objectives and effects, that is the relevance of the profession, theories and methods and practicing peace and standards for quality professional attitude.

Heteronomic knowledge may be implemented in the domain of knowledge on peace whether if it's about understanding a concept or process which is substance of interest for the profession, or adoption of skills, techniques and methods for work or ethical principles of the profession. In the process of education, the students are introduced to the fact that sometimes there is knowledge which is not easy to be accepted. Sometimes it can be stated that it is uncritical undertaking different ideas and their collection in incoherent base of

data on peace, and on the other hand it represents a creative process which enhances the competencies of the students.

The introduction of individual elements from different intellectual areas has impact on the professional development of the students, and the development of sensitiveness and creative utilization. It enables development of creative thinking and active adoption of knowledge which contributes for building standards which is the main tendency of the peace science. The students have critical perception on the implications of different theories in order to overcome fads and "inevitable acceptance".

In regard to setting the desired objectives of the profession itself, it is necessary to be in the boundaries of the competencies of the own profession, when we speak about sub-specialization and knowing the available resources and methods, techniques and skills that can be used in the area of peace science, as well as the ones that can be taken from other scientific disciplines which are useful for accomplishing the set objectives.

Utilization of Knowledge in Peace Science

In modern scientific theories on interdisciplinarity today we speak about it as well developed area for scientific research. We say that this is widely acceptable model of knowledge evolution, instead of the past model of specialization of knowledge which contributes for better efficiency in terms of practical utilization of knowledge. Today we speak about interdisciplinary cooperation, increased social responsibility with emphasis on the context and dependency on concrete utilization of knowledge.

In order to be able to understand the frames in which the knowledge is integrated, we will try to explain the knowledge in peace science. Knowledge means all skills that are gained in the education or the experience in the wider context. Knowledge is comprised of all information, understanding or experience (Hornby, 2005.:854), that is, understanding and possessing information about something).

In the information science most frequently there is hierarchical structure where at the bottom of the pyramid is the processing of data (at the lowest level) where the main product is characteristics of the object, events and the immediate environment, and above them you find information which is relevant, useful, important and processed data (Fricke, 2009.:132-133). The second standpoint is focused on the objective of the knowledge: to understand the concept (to know it) and to determine possibility for undertaking action for this purpose (know-how) (Fricke, 2009) as the philosopher Francis Bacon claims that the knowledge is power (according to Kalin, 2003).

Peace students will learn to recognize the risks and problems that people encounter having in mind the deep and complex structure. What is a human being – there can be philosophical or theological answer (it is a human being which is free), naturally – scientific (it is a complex network of chemical reactions), culturally –historically (homo homini lupus or "a man is a wolf to another man"), socially-politically (human being politician) etc. None of the answers is absolute. All the answers contribute to learn more about a human being. So from aspect of interdisciplinarity it is to determine which discipline serves as best source to obtain information about the issue/problem. The interdisciplinary education of students on peace contains the following elements in the programme:

- Politics, philosophy, military science, history, sociology, economy, technical science, moral and science on international relations, conflict and the elements of peace;
- Psychology (development psychology, types of communication with persons at risk)
- Pedagogy (social pedagogy, pedagogical communication or communication skills, recognition of defection ...).
- Psychiatry (recognition of psychologically traumatized person) and
- Law (family law, process and material law, different judicial and extrajudicial procedures where the person can appear in different roles, punishment and violations of material law).

The interdisciplinarity in education of peace students means leaving the framework of one scientific discipline, and the peace students have the opportunity to obtain knowledge from different scientific disciplines that ensure multidisciplinary approach. The integration and the upgrading of the knowledge will enable capacity building of the students, and understanding of the mutual implications and links, understanding of the topics which are of importance for enhancing interpersonal interpretation and cooperation.

At the end, when we have elaborated a possibility for rational understanding of the relationship between the peace science and other sources of knowledge, we propose several criteria that need to be taken in consideration when we use knowledge from external sources outside the profession:

1. Specific standards for the peace science;
2. The rationale for using the knowledge.

3. The clear base of the primary discipline in regard to the subject of interest or the boundaries between them.
4. Characteristics of the professionalsthat have access to the knowledge and their relationship.
5. Values and importance of active learning and critical opinion in take over and utilization of knowledge.

The interdisciplinary approach is present in the education for peace students. There are strong bonds with pedagogy, psychology, sociology, social work, law, economy and philosophy. The interdisciplinary research is more evident when we study characteristics of development research. The economic research, is the start of the development research, is complimented with the research of sociological types of the development, and today we frequently come across social-psychological research of development.

The curriculum of the Institute for Security, Defense and Peace Studies (which is an integral part of the Faculty of Philosophy in Skopje) is grounded on the interdisciplinary approach. The courses and syllabuses obviously aim at analyzing economic, societal, political and cultural development on one hand, and the limiting factors affecting peace and progress - on the other. As an illustration, one could point out the following features: in terms of demographic trends, particular attention is paid migratory movements and their impact on peace and conflict both on a national level and internationally. The protection of cultural heritage and management of possible threats take also significant part of the study program. Religion is studied from a specific peace prism and through the idea of inter-feith dialogue and interculturalism. When it comes to the natural habitat, students of this Institute are introduced to management of natural resources in the line of sustainable development. In addition to the study of theories of peace, peaceful conflict resolution, international law, the students are offered a range of electives, such as humanitarian interventions, global security threats and international and regional security, but also syllabuses on identity and conflict and transitional justice.

The analysis of the curriculum shows that the fundamental academic disciplines that are central for these studies are the following ones: international relations, political science, social psychology, law and to some degree natural sciences (such as mathematics, statistics and IT). Students acquire knowledge, skills and capabilities that would enable them to share international standards characteristic for peace studies in the most prestigious universities.

Higher education in the field of peace studies is a novelty for post-conflict and transitional states, such as Macedonia. In this case, it has been a lucky circumstance that the peace studies are established on undergraduate, graduate and PhD level at a Faculty of Philosophy that by its nature represents a mini-university and cherishes interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches. Thus there is almost inevitable interaction between the students and professors from various institutes. Education of young people in the field of peace studies provides a solid ground for further development of research and academic work beyond academia. The graduate students may give active contribution and get professionally engaged in the civil society, local self-government, media and state institutions. However, there are still no peace research institutes in the country. Research teams could work on eradication of any form of structural or cultural violence and on creation of positive peace.

Conclusion

This paper attempts to define the concept of interdisciplinarity as a specific scientific approach aimed towards integration of knowledge from different disciplines, for purpose of resolving specific problems and tasks. This problem is set in the context of peace studies with special emphasis on the peace studies in the Republic of Macedonia.

Since its beginnings peace studies have been opened to other scientific fields and disciplines. As a result they have gone through a significant academic development. The openness to other disciplines and knowledge they provide together with the joint cooperation are essential conditions for critical thinking and creative research. It is the best way to develop methodology and theory through expansion of the academic boundaries and promotion of new positive epistemological values.

We also recognized and pointed out specific factors which were considered as main causes for wide expansion and popularity of this approach in the academic and research community. Peace studies are simultaneously research-oriented and devoted to teaching. As such they represent a continuous activity directed towards obtaining knowledge in different intellectual areas for the sake of promotion of positive peace and sustainable development.

The integration process needs to be systematic and detailed as elaborated in this paper. It is the only way to provide answers to a vast range of unanswered questions, such as: What are the possibilities for integration of knowledge in the peace education? How knowledge in different areas can contribute for improvement of competencies of the

students in peace studies? What is the process of integration of knowledge on peace in other fields of social sciences? The contributions and knowledge in the area of peace have impact on other scientific and intellectual areas.

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