



LOCAL AUTHORITIES AS PEACE FACTORS/ACTORS/ WORKERS

Johan Galtung

I. WHAT ELSE IS THERE IN THE WORLD?

The world is a system, meaning inter-connected, with inter-connections among the inter-connections. But what are the inter-connected, related components, units, elements, in this set? Obviously they are the triad of modernity: states, corporations, civil societies, and their projections on the world scene, that is, the intergovernmental organizations, the transnational corporations, and the nongovernmental organizations (international civil society). Thoughtful students would ask, how about us, humans? The more ecologically minded will add non-human nature. But when prodded, "what else is there in the world?" very few come up with a rather obvious answer: the local authorities. And they are numerous, in the low millions, ranging from the megalopolis down to the smallest little municipality wherever.

The focus here will be on their peace-building capability. We know only too well that the states as we know them, and particularly the state system in the West ushered by the Treaty of Westphalia in Osnabrueck-Muenster 350 years ago has been a catastrophe since the right to wage war for such a long time was seen as their birthright (but so did the city-states before that). The Treaty of Westphalia is the classical case of solving one problem, the Thirty Years' War, presumably over how to conceive of Christianity, at the expense of introducing a new and much worse problem, the state system. *Un*

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train peut en cacher un autre, as the French say, one train may conceal another. So let us have a look at the possibilities if there could be more city-logic and less state-logic in the world.

II. MOTIVATIONS, CAPABILITIES AND POSSIBLE PEACE ROLES

Motivations

1. Local Authorities generally do not possess arms. Arms are state monopoly. "For he who has a hammer the world looks like a nail"; LAs would be less inclined to see problems as military problems, and less concerned with "speaking with one voice." Many municipalities even became nuclear free zones.
2. Municipalities are generally less pathological than states, not serving as depositories of national traumas and myths, such as the idea of being "chosen" to be above everything else.
3. Towns/cities derive their sustenance from exchange with rural municipalities and with other towns/cities; it is in their interest that the exchanges are not only preserved but improved. The victims of war/maldevelopment/eco-breakdown are local, not in secret governmental bunkers. The real struggle for peace, including peace with nature (environment) and against structural violence (maldevelopment) also has to be concrete, meaning local.

Capabilities

4. World exchanges are mainly inter-city exchanges across borders, and social exchanges are mainly inter-municipal exchanges within borders. Civil society is meaningless without the municipal framework; this is where people meet and interact, within and among municipalities. The "sister cities" trend is an excellent and visible example of international civil society.
5. Even many small municipalities are today mirrors of society at large, with both genders, all generations, most classes (with their interests), often several cultures (religions, languages) and many, if not all, professions. In this they are superior to international people's organizations ("NGOs") that tend to be more monochromatic on any one or several of these dimensions.

6. Municipalities have administrations, "local authorities," used to handling problems of considerable complexity. That administrative capacity could be enhanced by having a Peace Councillor in charge of municipal peace activities.

Peace Roles

7. Before any violence: Resolution, being sites of conferences, seminars, dialogues, moving diverse nations within and between borders toward more symbiotic relations. Municipal peace and conflict research institutes would be useful.
8. During violence: Reconstruction, using multi-professional teams for assistance, *Gemeinde gemeinsam*, *Causes communes*, team across borders to adopt a municipality in distress; helping displaced persons, political refugees, conscientious objectors.
9. After violence: Reconciliation, bringing conflicting groups together, trying to heal wounds, giving new hope and meaning.
10. As foci for world politics for a safer world, helping, even recognizing not only municipalities but also nations struggling for independence, and planning local, non-military defense.

To give more meaning to these points we need reflections on the world system and its components, particularly contrasting states/countries and cities. We should also ask the fruitful question: where do states and cities come from? What kind of culture/structure can be found in their historical baggage?

III. WORLD SYSTEM COMPONENTS, HISTORICAL ORIGINS AND WAR/PEACE

In the Constitución de la Republica Española (9 December 1931) there was this very remarkable Article 6: *España renuncia a la guerra como instrumento de política nacional* (Spain renounces on war as an instrument of national policy). Read with the eyes of the Spanish military at the time (their leader: Francisco Franco, notorious from the colonial wars in Morocco in the 1920s, Director of La Academia General Militar in Zaragoza), and the Civil War that started 18 July 1936 takes shape. Spain is a state, and the right of war was and still is the prerogative of states. One day all countries will have such articles in their constitutions, like today Article 9 in the

Japanese Constitution; but there is still a distance to go.

The world system is all interaction patterns across state borders; the social system is all patterns within.

Components:

Territorial: states, nations, cities/towns, other municipalities. Non-territorial: capital, people's organizations, people, nature. States are organizations forming bilateral and multilateral inter-state systems (diplomacy; intergovernmental organizations). Nations are groups of people with sacred points in space and claims on territory; forming the inter-nation system.

And: inter-city, inter-municipal, inter-corporate, inter-people's organization, inter-people and inter-nature systems.

Rough orders of magnitude: 200 states, 2,000 nations, 20,000 cities, 200,000 towns, 2,000,000 municipalities.

Capital (and other production factors) are transformed by corporations into goods and services; their interaction field is the market; transnational corporations interact across borders. People's organizations inside societies are known as civil society and across societies as international civil society (also known as NGOs as if governments were non-people's organizations, NPOs). Then there are people, close to 6 billion, of different kinds. And life in general. And nature in general.

The key peace research question is the extent to which these components are carriers of violence or peace; and what kind of violence, what kind of peace. Of course, the answers to such questions cannot be that clear-cut. But one way of exploring the problem is genetic: let us look at their historical origins.

And one way of doing that would be to use, for Europe, the traditional six-layer organization of European society from the early the Middle Ages, using revolution/secularization/modernization in the USA (1770s-90s) and France (1780s-90s) as a turning point. Roughly speaking what happened to a basically rural society was:

[1] The Clergy was side-tracked by aristocracy/state through separation doctrines; many became intellectuals/professionals.

[2] The Aristocracy went to the state, to the foreign and war/defense

ministries and the army; apart from land-owners and those who went to the seminary and became clergy. Hence the Spanish *poderes facticos*: militares, latifundistas, cleros.

[3] Burghers/Merchants stayed/went to the cities, shaping capital, corporations and economic activity in general.

[4] Common people organized themselves. Gradually, in people's organizations of all kinds beyond kinship: guilds, trade unions and political parties; any organization of affinity and vicinity.

[5] Marginal people, non-dominant nations, "nomads" (Moros, Jews, Gypsies), deviants of all kinds, women, the children and the aged, remained marginal, or were made even more so.

[6] Nature was squeezed, and then was exploited worse than ever.

We could now formulate some hypotheses about violence. The general social flow of violence is downward: from [1]+[2]+[3] to [4]+[5]+[6]. But there is also a division of labor among them, with [2] specializing in direct violence, [3] in structural violence (including making arms for direct violence), and [1] in the cultural violence legitimizing the other two. Intellectuals and professionals learned how to do so without reference to God.

But there is also counter-violence flowing upward, against the social violence gradient. Starting at the bottom: nature's violence, from "wild" animals, poisonous plants, micro-organisms to earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes. "Marginal people" can be violent, a very important deviant group being violent criminals. Women engage in verbal violence more than the physical variety. And "common people" are not always innocent: they join armies; as nations they organize in highly violent activities. "Common people" may also be violent against "marginal people" inside families (men against women, adults against children and the aged) and in society. But generally violence flows with social gravity; what common/marginal people do is to defend themselves.

Does this also hold at the world system level? The six levels have world system counterparts: international religious and professional organizations; the inter-state system with the inter-nation system; the inter-city/inter-municipal system with the inter-corporate system, the international civil society, people in general, nature all over. By and large they relate as above, violence emanates from the first three and hits the other three; with the

state-system functioning like aristocrats and the city-system with the corporations like the burghers. *Grosso modo*.

IV. THE INTER-STATE AND INTER-NATION SYSTEMS AS PEACE CARRIERS

The terms “international system,” defined in “international Law,” IL, and explored in “international relations,” IR, confound the inter-state and inter-nation components.

The state is an organization with ultimate power over the territory within its borders, the country. Force is considered the ultimate power, so the state has monopoly over the ultimate forms of force (the *ultima ratio*). The state needs Ministries of external and internal (justice) affairs, with military and police for the execution of external and internal violence; to maintain law and order. The traditional European country had Emperor-King/Court/Aristocracy/Subjects; and the modern European country Head-of-State/Cabinet/Bureaucracy/Citizens. “Government” is ambiguous, meaning cabinet in Europe and bureaucracy in the USA. “Bureaucracy” includes the military and the police.

The nation is a group of people with sacred points in time and space, usually related to the activities of kings/aristocrats (battles won or lost, independence) and their latter-day successors, meaning top politicians/lawyers (constitutions).

The country is a piece of land organized by the state, and peopled by one or more nations. A uni-national country is called a nation-state (about 20). In a multi-national country the power-distribution may be symmetric, with no nation dominant, or asymmetric, with one nation dominant and the others known as “minorities.” If a minority nation is a dominant nation in some other country, then that country is often referred to as the mother country. A country can neither act nor interact, hence there is no inter-country system. States and nations act, with one voice.

A metaphor: the state may be compared with a car and the (dominant) nation with the driver; the state-nation system being the traffic. There are traffic rules. And there are collisions, shocks, some of them very bad, with dead and wounded and material damage, some of them quite light. There is the constant fear of collisions/shocks. The quality of the traffic obviously depends on the cars, on the drivers and on the traffic rules, including their internalization and institutionalization.

Worst case image of the state-nation system: the car is a tank, capable of destroying whatever comes in its way, good at moving forward and bad at backing; the driver is worse than drunk, essentially a case of psychopathology, suffering from megalomania and paranoia; the traffic rules favor military vehicles and crazy drivers, and in addition are neither internalized nor institutionalized.

Best case image of the state-nation system: the car is like a Tivoli car with rubber bumpers all around, with limited speed and limited capacity to inflict any damage on Self or Other; the driver is mature, capable of Golden Rule action and its modification in case of different values, and of compassion should something go wrong. The traffic rules are equal to all and to a large extent internalized and institutionalized.

The worst image models the system of big states, especially the Big-Great-Grand Powers system and the superpowers as well; and the best image may model the system of smaller countries, among other reasons because they have no choice. Exceptions could be numerous on both ends of the continuum. And the mental status of states and nations should not be confused with their leaders.

Basic hypotheses for a theory of the state/nation-system:

- [1] The President/Cabinet system is successor to the King/Court system, in the abstract sense of performing the same functions related to monopoly on ultimate violence, and in the concrete sense that aristocrats became leaders in the parts relating to the exercise of violence across borders: armies, foreign offices.
- [2] Aspects of the structure/culture of the medieval aristocrats:
 - serving/submitting to God/King; repressing/exploiting downward
 - the disrespectful to be severely punished and/or eliminated
 - monopoly on violence and possession of arms as status criterion
 - high on mastery of weapons, low on mastery of symbolic culture
 - the courage to kill and the courage to be killed taught early
 - tournaments for training, duels and battles for real violence
 - only aristocrats/warrior caste permitted to duel and fight wars
 - warrior/macho values: courage, honor, dignity, status
 - conflicts not to be solved but to be processed into such values
 - easily offended/insulted; honor regained through violence
 - conflicts are terminated when duels/battles produce more status

[3] The state system continued the aristocrat structure/culture, being founded by them as a new way of financing their armies, with tournaments=maneuvers, wars=wars, but without duels (too much taxing on the elites) and less courage to be killed (too risky, hence bunkers). The result is a violence-prone system, using insults as casus belli, serving/submitting to the Head of State and the Head of the Alliance, repressing/exploiting downward, sacrificing common people, eliminating marginal people and lower states and nations (imperialism), jealously guarding the monopoly on violence against "terrorism." Political rationality "with all necessary means" substitutes for courage/honor/dignity.

[4] The warrior aristocrat/state system survived democracy well,

- by being the structure/culture of the state system that others, like the common people in North America had to imitate/adjust to;
- by defining the right to carry and use arms ("for defense") as the criterion of being free, sovereign as people and individuals;
- by excepting foreign and security politics from democratic control through secrecy and controlled access (to higher status committees for reliable politicians and ministries, for men);
- by vesting the values worth killing and being killed for in the nation/patria rather than in God/King (*gratia dei*); defining the nation through the deeds of the warrior caste (and successors).

[5] The aristocrat/warrior caste and the successor state-system exhibit psycho-pathological traits like narcissism and paranoia.

[6] The state system tends to select, and engender, dominant nations with compatible traits, like chosenness, myths, traumas.

[7] When states/governments meet they recognize these traits in each other, defining them as normal, thereby reinforcing them.

[8] The successors to clergy are IL/IR intellectuals justifying the irrational by deducing it from Ratio; their name for God.

The state/nation system as we know it today is no peace system and will not become one: state/nation systems and peace systems are incompatible. But that statement immediately has to be modified and moderated, as there

are at least seven ways of making the state/nation-systems more peaceful:

[1] Curing nations of their psycho-pathologies, lifting national narratives into the daylight, exposing them, critiquing them; substituting new values, codes, programs. The problem with this approach is that we do not know how to do it.

[2] Emphasizing peace-oriented values. Each nation also has values like respect for life/humanity/world/human rights that could be propagated and given higher status in value hierarchies.

[3] Giving more state power to less psycho-pathological nations. But we do not know how traumas suffered by non-dominant nations will be enacted when they get state power; and the state system has very compelling logic.

[4] Giving more state power to less psycho-pathological groups, such as middle and working classes, and women. But these classes gave us the wars after the American and the French revolutions, and women may also be corrupted by the logic of state power.

[5] More multi-national states: being less able to speak with one voice they may speak less, or neutralize each other, like for Switzerland. But multi-national states tend to be unstable.

[6] Subdividing the states into smaller states. The hypothesis would be that a world of 2,000 smaller bullies is better than one with 200 bigger bullies, leaving behind a world with 20 super-bullies ("regional actors" that easily become super-states).

[7] Disarming the states. If they are bullies, then at least without weapons, even armies, like about 30 small countries today.

Returning to the car/driver metaphor, above the first five approaches are driver-oriented, the fifth in the sense of leaving the driving to several drivers who partially cancel each other. The last two approaches are car-oriented: smaller cars that make smaller collisions with less damage to drivers and cars; and cars that are not armored nation carriers, but regular passenger cars.

But then there is another more promising approach: playing down the state/nation systems and playing up the other systems.

V. THE OTHER COMPONENTS IN THE WORLD SYSTEM AS PEACE CARRIERS

Going back to the historical origins in the European Middle Ages we can now examine the other layers or castes in the system for their peace potentials, not necessarily assuming that because the state/nation system is “bad” then the others by definition have to be “good.”

So we return to the list of layers:

[1] Clergy. The separation of state and church, held to be a pillar of secularization/modernity, in principle liberates the churches from their old tasks as legitimizers of the pursuits of the aristocracy, including their boss, the Emperor/King. They have been very late in understanding this. On the other hand, what we experience now is an increasing peace consciousness in the established churches (the Pope during the Gulf war, parts of the Catholic Church, the World Church Council, some Protestant churches, the Deutsche Kirchentag, the Catholics and the Methodists in the USA in the 1980s), countless individuals. More problematic are IL/IR intellectuals taking over the role as legitimizers of violence; i.e., as carriers of cultural violence.

[2] Aristocracy who went to the State: not a promising case.

[3] Burghers/merchants who went to the Cities; a promising case where direct violence is concerned, but replete with structural violence as major centers of the global market-place, exploiting all kinds of peripheries. But cities have several advantages:

- having no armies, less inclined to see problems as military;
- having capital, goods and services, more inclined toward deals;
- cities have more pragmatic, accommodating attitudes to conflict;
- cities usually do not claim to be “ueber alles in der Welt”;
- cities need each other for exchange of goods and services. Of course, the city-states in Northern Italy, the Low countries and elsewhere were violent, but then as states more than cities. What is badly needed is to find active peace roles for the cities beyond their present non-war roles, and more particularly for capital in general and the transnational corporations in general.

[4] Common people can be used as soldiers, but increasingly object. Common people create international people’s organizations that are usually both inter-state and inter-nation, for peace, human rights, development, environment. They do not have arms and have not been around long enough to accumulate compelling narratives with myths and traumas. That may come later.

[5] Marginal people have been victimized, but now they emerge with dignity as possible peace actors, particularly the women (and the gypsies). But they have been around long enough, accumulating considerable traumas. The question is how that could be enacted with access to state power, like when Jews got the Jewish state.

Conclusion: churches, cities, IPOs/NGOs and new groups of people.

VI. BACK TO THE CITIES: SOME CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

As to the motivations of local authorities: the first two are negative: local authorities do not possess armies and are generally less pathological. “Ours is a city above all others” may be acceptable as public relations. But if they start enacting that type of slogan in power relations, then the first reaction will be a smile, then shoulder-shrugging, and then preference for other cities. The inter-city logic is supposed to be symmetric and pragmatic, based on normative (cultural) and contractual (economic) rather than coercive (military) power. A city starting to behave like a city-state will have to refer to itself as that, as a state. This is the basis of the inter-city system as a peace system, assuming they do not harbor secret armies under pretexts of being “safe havens”, “open cities” or become too narcissistic.

However, the relation to the hinterland of rural local authorities is different. City-village relations were usually strained, with power, cultural-economic-military and political, rooted in the cities, and basic needs met from the villages. Only democracy, and only as long as the majority was still rural, defined terms of exchange more favorable to the villages than feudalism and early capitalism.

Rural communities are less substitutable than cities, yet they are treated as city peripheries in inter-state relations. Of course, given today’s trade patterns the citizen gets from the supermarket foodstuffs from a broad spectrum of countries, not only from his own hinterland. But the sender

is anonymous, unfortunately. The village product carries no name, no face; unlike knives from Sheffield and Solingen.

Rural communities should show their potential power by making their own inter-state and inter-nation networks. Their common interest in better terms of exchange, against the structural violence they are traditionally exposed to, is obvious. A clear international presence of rural communities, not only of farmers, would articulate the world structure better.

As to the capabilities of local authorities: we all, however cosmopolitan, however addicted to Internet, ultimately live in a local community. The proportion of the total time budget, the depth of the immersion will certainly vary. But all our major body, mental and spiritual functions, all important kairos points in our life-cycle, are, or can be, acted out locally; if not the human race would have disappeared long ago. The famous civil society, a major source of peace as opposed to state and capital, has addresses in some local community, including in the country's capital, which may exhibit some of the state arrogance described above. Thus, any local authority can accumulate incredible amounts of power by serving as hosts and coordinators of the local civil society. Put the city hall at their disposal, the maison des associations, casa de cultura, dom kultura. If you don't have it, build it. Serve civil society.

On top of this: the Peace Councillor, for each municipality. Municipalities have councillors for youth, sports, employment and garbage etc., corresponding to departments and ministers at the national level. At that level Departments of Peace encounter the jealousies of Departments of Foreign Affairs and Defense/War. At the municipal level this should be simpler. The task would be to organize the population for peace roles, as spelled out below.

As to the peace roles of local authorities: violence is ubiquitous, arising out of old conflict formations like nationalisms, and out of such emerging conflict formations as the global marketplace. They are, during and after "violence," not to be confused with "conflict" which is a much broader category with creative and potentially destructive (violent) aspects. The local community, coordinated by the local authority, has important roles to play in all three phases, for resolution, reconstruction, reconciliation, and already does so.

As sites of conferences, seminars, dialogues, parties can meet in a less demanding atmosphere. Meet in Geneva and the name is already an agenda. Meet in Kiel and it is more open; even if some will talk of 1812, and of the expansion of the city with the naval presence that guaranteed its ultimate destruction. Cities may compete to get their names attached to successful peace efforts: like Oslo in 1993 (in 1996 it is more clear who were left out: the peace movement, and less moderate Arabs/Jews). This applies to efforts at resolution as well as reconciliation.

Reconstruction demands a vast register of activities—like rehabilitation, rebuilding, restructuring, reculturation—and should start even when violence is going on, refusing to play destructive roles. There is the need for a home for political refugees/COs, displaced persons, the wounded in body and soul.

And finally: if municipalities can twin, triple etc. across state borders, and join together adopting municipalities in war-torn societies, why couldn't they also have their diplomatic networks? Gathering information? Extending recognition? And even plan a strictly non-military defense? The sky is the limit.