SOCIAL PEACE AND SOCIAL DIALOGUE: THEIR ROLE ON PEACEBUILDING AGENDA

PACEA SOCIALĂ ȘI DIALOGUL SOCIAL: ROLUL LOR ÎN AGENDA CONSOLIDĂRII PĂCII

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The scientific research started recognizing the importance of non-security topics on the peacebuilding agenda and exploring more on socio-economic consequences of peace at the beginning of 20th century when first scholars realized that military peace is not exhaustive while talking about sustainable peace and social reconciliation, peace needs to tackle socio-economic aspects important for the society. Moreover, social peace provides for such an environment when people can resolve their issues and defend their rights in a peaceful manner. This can be achieved when different groups of population have trustful two-way relationships with the state and other social groups.

To analyse this topic further, it would be good to outline the definitions, what social peace as a concept implies and what does not imply. Social peace, as a concept, does not set its main goal to eradicate differences in a particular society or among social groups, neither it pursues the goal of finding a consensus on issues of disagreement or disputes. Social peace implies more effective management in conflict situations where different layers of society or groups have different interests and needs. Social peace means that people do not need to resort to violence to resolve their issues and defend their rights. Social peace is achieved when people have strong trusting two-way relationships with the state and other social groups. They have confidence that decisions taken at the state level are made fairly and for the benefit of the society, even if the group itself does not receive direct certain benefits from these decisions.

The concept of the social peace is also analysed from the perspective of its role and priority on peacebuilding agenda. Even though social aspects of peace are being explored and highlighted as an integral part of any peace process, the formal peace agreements still focus on security agenda from the perspective of peace agreement provisions and implementation priorities [1, pp. 491-512]. The data from the Peace Accords Matrix (PAM) also support this statement and brings evidence that at least in thirty-three comprehensive peace agreements signed within 1989-2012 there is not enough attention paid to social features of the settlement process, rather the questions related to security were in focus [2, pp. 256-274]. The nature of peace agreements reached as a result of the negotiation process has a strong tendency for *the securitization of peace, and the consequent lesser emphasis on the social aspects of peace* [3, pp.763-83].

Historically the security aspects were prioritized during peace negotiations, as a number of urgent steps were needed to stop violent conflicts, for instance, *securing boundaries, disarming combatants, ensuring a monopoly of violence, and withdrawing foreign military forces* (Ibd.) Some social aspects were also taken into account and included in these agreements, such as rehabilitation and reconstruction of socially important infrastructure facilities or administration of civilian areas, however, being managed by military people in majority of cases would not focus on social dimension as such and ensuring peace would also be 'militarized'.

Continuing the development of the notion of social peace, in the late 1990s there was a shift in the peacebuilding efforts from predominantly security issues on the agenda to more social dimension of peace agreements, and as such the notion of social peace began gaining its value. The peace processes since then, started including socio-economic aspects of peace settlement exploring far beyond purely security arrangements, territorial issues and emergency relief.

The major international organizations started refocusing their peacebuilding efforts on various social, cultural and economic issues, such as local community development, economic prosperity, social reconciliation, primary education, child protection, gender issues, and sustainable development in order to ensure more durable peace. Consequently, as the roles of these sub-state actors became more prominent in the 2000s, the scope of peacebuilding significantly expanded. Peace as a notion became more inclusive and has attempted to reflect a wide range of non-security issues, incorporating social peace into negotiation agenda [3, pp. 763-83].

At the level of the society, one can argue there are some tools and instruments in achieving social peace, one of those being *social dialogue* happening between the state and the society as being one of those most efficient tools. Social dialogue is also considered as one of the most important systemic and functional characteristics of a developed society [4, pp. 101-105]. Different levels of social dialogue could be distinguished with the most essential for the well-being of a society being a dialogue between the society and the state. Social dialogue at this level also outlines social expectations and social attitudes, which are expressed in public opinion and characterize fluctuations of its dynamics.

Social dialogue between a state and society in a mature democracy implicates the state partially delegating its powers to the civil society, alienating itself from the constant exercise of power functions and developing various forms of civil self-governance. The degree of development, openness, and equality of social dialogue characterizes the maturity level of social relations. Efficient social dialogue in this regard produces social order and social peace.

Social dialogue is the most important factor in the balance of the entire social system as a whole, which is expressed in the equal participation of the subjects of social dialogue, which makes the social system stable, while unequal participation makes the social system unstable. The most obvious and important result of evolved social dialogue is social consensus in the decisions-making process, which takes into

account social experience and values of each of the social groups participating in the social dialogue.

Thus, the need for social dialogue and also its role in achieving social peace in the society is unquestionably vital. Some scholars also try to identify a direct cause-and-effect connection between the two: *the main objective of social dialogue remains social peace, and the main source of social peace remains social dialogue* [5, pp. 492-511]. At the same time, social dialogue is not an exclusive instrument to achieve social peace, as there are many other factors equally important in contributing to the social peace in a well-governed state. However, in order to make social dialogue more efficient, the social dialogue needs to be institutionalized, it will thus become irreversible state mechanism to promote trust and transparency in the decision-making process.

To conclude, even though social peace was not among the priorities of peacebuilding agenda over decades, and not enough attention was paid to social features of the settlement process, there has been recently gradual shift to incorporate social aspects in order to ensure an efficient and durable peace settlements. The peace processes started including socio-economic aspects of peace settlement exploring far beyond purely security arrangements, territorial issues and emergency relief. Social peace provides for more effective management in conflict situations where different layers of society or groups have different interests and needs, providing such an environment where people do not need to resort to violence to resolve their issues and defend their rights with one of the key prerequisites being strong trusting two-way relationships with the state and other social groups, which is social dialogue.

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