

(IN)FORMING CONFLICT PREVENTION,
RESPONSE AND RESOLUTION:



THE ROLE OF MEDIA
IN VIOLENT CONFLICT

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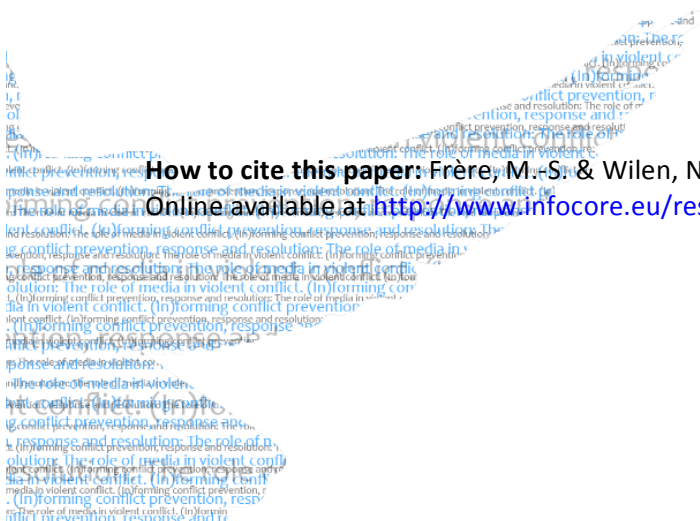


INFOCORE Definitions

Peacebuilding

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INFOCORE DEFINITIONS**PEACEBUILDING**

Peacebuilding is a term, which started to attract interest in the beginning of the 1990s in circles of international organizations. The former UN Secretary-General, Boutros-Boutros Ghali, put it firmly on the UN's agenda by including it in the document "Agenda for Peace" which came out in 1992 (Boutros Boutros-Ghali, 1992). In it, Ghali, who responded to a demand from the UN Security Council on how to improve peacekeeping and peace-enforcement, identified peacebuilding as postconflict social and political reconstruction activities, which are aimed at preventing a relapse into conflict.

The term is distinguished from peacekeeping and peacemaking by its insistence on society-wide reconciliation in combination with statebuilding (Call & Cook, 2003, p.235). In 2000, the UN's Brahimi report confirmed this definition of peacebuilding as a more profound and long-term activity than its predecessors peacekeeping and peacemaking, by stating that peacebuilding "involves activities undertaken on the far side of conflict to reassemble the foundations of peace and provide the tools for building on those foundations something that is more than just the absence of war" (Brahimi, 2000, p.3)

UN's definition of peacebuilding builds on the peace researcher Johan Galtung's work on positive peace as something more than just the absence of violence. Galtung's idea of peacebuilding as a profound change in the structures of society to address the root causes of violent conflict clearly lays as the basis for UN's understanding of peacebuilding today. However, while the mere existence of the UN implies that this sort of peace should emanate from activities by external peacebuilding missions, hence top-down, Galtung's work emphasizes conflict prevention and resolution initiatives beyond or below the state-level, clearly privileging a bottom-up approach on a local or community level.

A third strand of literature on peacebuilding groups it together with the terms peacekeeping and peacemaking, without clearly demarcating the terms from each other.

In sum, peacebuilding refers to conflict prevention or resolution activities performed by either external actors such as the UN or other international organizations, or local actors on a community level, with the common aim of establishing a sustainable peace corresponding to more than just an absence of violence, incorporating a structural transformation of a conflictual society to a positive peace available for all.

References:

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