PEACE IN LATIN AMERICA

SHIFTING PARADIGMS IN THE STUDIES OF CULTURE, SOCIETY AND POLITICS

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Routledge

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Introduction
Shifting the Paradigm from Violence to Peace in Latin America

How do Latin American and Caribbean societies resolve crises? This overarching question is the central concept of the Maria Sibylla Merian Center for Advanced Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences in Latin America (CALAS), which has existed as a German-Latin American Center for Advanced Studies since 2017.[1] Since then, in close exchange with German and European scholars, it has developed into an extensive multidisciplinary academic network in Latin America and the Caribbean. From the very beginning, this project has experienced the need to see and analyse Latin America and the Caribbean not as a region of constant and successive multiple crises, but as a region whose societies are capable of overcoming crises on their own, developing a variety of strategies and innovative approaches to solving them. This is also based on the conviction of recognizing and overcoming colonial and post-colonial–hierarchical and discriminatory–mindsets, leaving behind paradigms of development and modernity shaped in Europe or North America, and understanding Latin America and the Caribbean from inside out. It also means debating Eurocentric knowledge productions, organizing them horizontally, and relocating them to Latin America and the Caribbean on an inter- and trans-disciplinary level.

CALAS represents a scholarly position that shifts paradigms, challenges conventional views, and involves a change of perspective. The participants of CALAS consider this as a task to be accomplished by Latin American and Caribbean scholars and by researchers from other parts of the world through joint interdisciplinary research, intensifying and expanding existing academic networks. A special feature of CALAS is the close transatlantic collaboration and exchange between Latin American and European academics, benefiting from the knowledge of Latin American and Caribbean colleagues. Together, we develop hypotheses, theories, and methodologies that are nourished by these deep and well-grounded internal views, while at the same time benefiting from the academic distance and the variety of academic cultures that colleagues from different regions bring to the table. In this way, we have committed ourselves to a paradigm shift in the production of knowledge towards a generation of knowledge that is horizontal and

transdisciplinary and is characterized by a dialogue that always includes civil society actors' perspectives. This book is a product of this transatlantic, inter- and transdisciplinary, and Inter-American academic dialogue.

CALAS is based on four researching axes–dealing with violence, resolving conflicts/confronting social inequality/coping with environmental crises/strategic identities and crises—all of them composed of a "Laboratory of Knowledge." This book's authors coordinated the research on multiple crises of violence and how to deal with them from a Laboratory we called "Visions of Peace: Transitions between Violence and Peace in Latin America" which took place from May 2019 to May 2021 and was carried out in collaboration with thirteen distinguished scholars and six Ph.D. students from different disciplines (Social and Political Sciences, History, Literary and Cultural Studies, Linguistics, Anthropology, Law Studies) and different countries (Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Chile, Costa Rica, Germany, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Spain, and the USA).

In our Laboratory, we worked in a variety of formats, mainly through regular group meetings and colloquia, but also by organizing international congresses and workshops of various sizes with different participants and target groups. These took place mainly at the CALAS headquarters in Guadalajara, but also at the CALAS Regional Center for Central America and the Caribbean in San José (Costa Rica) and in Germany. As a matter of fact, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, most of them were carried out virtually. Many scholars from Latin America, the Caribbean, Germany, Europe, and other continents participated in these activities and enriched the Laboratory with their perspectives and contributions. In addition to the academic interest, our activities included close exchanges with civil society actors and actors from the political field, with the aim of establishing a horizontal exchange of knowledge and discussing concrete strategies to solve the problems addressed, and were able to better incorporate the plurality of phenomena and the very different concepts, perceptions and strategies for dealing with them.

On the one hand, the individual research projects of the senior and junior fellows within the framework of the Laboratory of Knowledge were case studies, such as memorials for persons that were (and still are) "disappeared" during the ongoing drug war in Mexico, civil society initiatives against criminal violence on the US-Mexico border, Afro-Colombian internally displaced persons, violence by security forces in Brazil, to name just a few. On the other hand, there were conceptual studies on the historical roots of gender violence in Latin America, on the role of constructions of masculinity in the civil wars in Central America, on the role of civil society strategies to pressure for peace plans in 1980s Central America, on testimonies of participants of the *caravanas* of Central American migrants towards the north, and on the relations between conservative and far-right thinking in

South America, among others. Another line of research includes studies on the aesthetics of literary and cinematographic narrations of violence and peace in Latin America, as well as linguistic discourse analyses about the overcoming of the military dictatorship in Argentina and on the Colombian peace process. Most of these individual projects have been published as working papers and can be consulted in the CIHAC-CALAS series *Avances de Investigación* (http://www.calas.lat/publicaciones/list/231).

However, the Laboratory's production of knowledge did not stop at scientific formats; rather, it also included transdisciplinary forms of communication based on cinematographic narrations. The renowned Guatemalan documentary filmmaker Anaïs Taracena shot the documentary *Tras la vida (In Search of Life)* (2023) that pictures the Honduran human rights activist Ana Enamorado, the mother of a young man who was disappeared in 2010 in Mexico after he left Honduras in search of a more peaceful life in the United States. Through her tireless search for her son, Enamorado has become one of the most prominent *buscadoras* of Central American migrants who were disappeared in Mexico, and her fate is mirrored by thousands of mothers and relatives from Central America and Mexico whose family members were disappeared while migrating to the North. Another highlight of the work of our Knowledge Laboratory was the launch of a short film contest for young people from all over Latin America and the Caribbean, who were invited to present their own vision of peace in short films. Of the more than 120 submissions, ten reels were awarded, and another ten received an honourable mention. The selected short films were presented publicly during the Pandemic in June 2020, before the presence of the young directors (http://www.calas.lat/en/node/1668). The Laboratory of Knowledge also promoted artivist interventions for peace. For instance, it participated in the installation our *Zapatos Rojos* by Elina Chávez, a protest action against feminicide and gender-based violence in Mexico and worldwide, presented for the first time in 2009. In addition to other publications based on a selection of our congresses and workshops, we also built the documentation center CENDO-PAZ at the CALAS Regional Center for Central America and the Caribbean, which is affiliated to the Center for Historical Research of Central America (CIHAC) at the University of Costa Rica. CENDO-PAZ is a repository of processes, activities and approaches related to peace in Latin America and beyond the subcontinent (https://cendoc-paz.cihac-calas.fcs.ucr.ac.cr/en).

All these activities have reinforced the paradigm shift from violence studies to peace studies in Latin America and the Caribbean. These epistemological processes led to the conclusion that successful research on peace processes and initiatives in Latin America and the Caribbean can only transform our knowledge through interdisciplinary research, that is, the incorporation of historical, literary, and cultural approaches. For example, we found that many of the peace processes and

initiatives we studied were characterized by the use of cultural means to implement their peace work, whether in literary works, artistic or cultural initiatives that created public spaces for discussion, and especially where political means failed.

From Studies of Violence to Studies of Peace in Latin America

Based on global comparisons, Latin America and the Caribbean are regularly identified as among the most violent regions in the world, with the highest homicide rates and a significant incidence of urban violence, kidnappings, lynching and other forms of vigilantism, and violent environmental conflicts. These statements are based on concrete data (Lissardy, 2019; Rettberg, 2020), but this violence-focused view ignores the ongoing peacebuilding efforts and internal strategies to consolidate peaceful coexistence that have been developed in the region for centuries. In contrast, our research project is not about analysing and replicating all these different forms of violence but about studying peace processes and conflict resolution efforts, as well as the transitions between violence and peace in Latin America and the Caribbean, from a historical, interdisciplinary, and transregional approach, based on a new perspective on the entangled relationship between violence and peace. This implies a different perspective on Latin American and Caribbean societies, their history, and their political, social, economic, and cultural structures.

This was precisely the epistemological challenge of our project, assuming that violence and peace are not mutually exclusive but historically entangled. In this view, peace cannot eliminate all violence, which means that some kind of violence necessarily coexists with peace. Therefore, we started from the thesis that neither violence prevails in its totality nor peace occurs in a fully comprehensive condition, but that there are forms of peace in violence, that peace is not established absolutely without leaving some form of violence. Moreover, we assumed that the conditions of peace and violence are profoundly configurated and determined by hegemonic processes. For us, the focus was on investigating the complex entanglement between the two antagonistic realities of violence and peace. As the tensions between violence and peace are necessarily unstable and as, under certain circumstances, not only armed conflicts might be transformed into peaceful ways of resolving conflicts, but also as non-violent conviviality may give way to aggression and belligerence, our research centred on the shifts which lead to turning points and significant moments when one side or the other gains an advantage. These transitional processes might go in one direction or in the other, and they are well-known as peacebuilding and peacekeeping as well as outbreaks of violence. In our understanding, a variety of factors intervene in these processes, ranging from state

politics to economic interests and structures, to social mobilizations and to cultural attitudes and cognitive inclinations. Therefore, an interdisciplinary approach was essential to study specific socio-political, socio-economic, and cultural dynamics and initiatives that produce these transitions in Latin American and Caribbean societies.

One of the pioneers in the development of peace research as an academic discipline was the Norwegian mathematician, sociologist, and political scientist Johan Galtung, who founded the International Peace Research Institute in Oslo in 1960. Our research followed Galtung's line of peace and conflict studies, which assumes a close relationship between peace and violence. In order to understand the complexity of what is called peace, it was essential for us to work with an expanded concept of violence that includes forms of "personal violence" that are direct and overt, as well as forms of "structural violence" that are indirect and latent (Galtung 1969). The Laboratory, nevertheless, went beyond Galtung's concept of peace since it does not consider peace as the absence of violence. As mentioned above, to study the historical constellations in question, we have assumed that what is or has been understood as peace does not mean that violence is or has been absent in any way. Consequently, Galtung's distinction between "positive peace" and "negative peace" does not have the status of an axiom guiding the research. On the contrary, the complex interplay between peace and violence has become the subject of our interdisciplinary research because, according to Galtung, what counts as a "positive condition" and what counts as a "negative condition" also depends on the historical moment. The goal of peace activists and advocates, on the other hand, is to develop more effective ways of resolving disputes without violent means and to identify and change the conditions that cause war and violence. As Galtung already pointed out, peace, in this sense, is also the maintenance of an orderly and just society: orderly because it protects people from violence or extortion by aggressors and just because it protects individuals from exploitation and abuse by the more powerful (Cortright, 2008, 8).

The premise of the ambivalent coexistence of peace and violence, or rather the notion of complex entanglements of peace and violence, allows a new approach to both the problem of violence and the phenomenon of peace. Based on the hypothesis of the relationality of peace and violence, we reconsidered both concepts, the phenomena and causes of violence and struggle, and the starting points for peace initiatives as transitional processes: peace already occurs when violence is confronted and resisted and when it is therefore restrained and limited. Therefore, we understand transitions as complex processes in which violent forms of social interactions are transformed into more peaceful ones. The notion of historical transitions thus refers to the search for very different forms of conflict management, rather than exclusively to regime change. These transitional processes from armed conflict to peace are thus included in the concept of

transitional justice but are not exhausted by it. Transitional justice is usually understood as an approach to justice that considers the stages of transition from a past of gross human rights violations as a result of dictatorial regimes or armed conflict to a present (or future) of peaceful and democratic order. However, the concept of transitional processes used in our research also includes reverse transitions, such as the failure of conflict resolution and violence outbreaks. We conceptualized transitions not only in a positive sense (from violence to peace), but also in a negative sense (from peace to violence). In this way, we go beyond a concept of transition coined primarily in political science, which reduces it to a linear determination of transitions to democracy and as part of the so-called recent wave of democratization, that is, as part of the trend toward democratization through transitional processes that have taken place from the 1970s to the present, first in Southern Europe and then throughout Latin America and Eastern Europe.

Thus, our interdisciplinary work process has contributed to overcoming these "model" conceptualizations based on a broad historical, cultural, and social science or anthropological analysis, taking different examples of Latin American and Caribbean regions and countries as our starting point. The Laboratory "Visions of Peace" studied not only present peace transitions and their obstacles and risks but also socio-political constellations and processes in the past. We also questioned the concepts of peace that are determinant in such historical configurations, including their definitions and semantics, their ideas, representations, and imaginaries of peacebuilding. During the project, our interest shifted more and more to the phenomenon of peace processes and initiatives, which we will discuss in more detail below.

Methodology and Interdisciplinarity

As mentioned above, transitional processes between forms of social relations in which either violence or peace prevail, were the transversal axis of our research. We have studied these phenomena in an interdisciplinary and even transdisciplinary manner, both synchronically and diachronically, from the perspective of the social sciences, historical analysis, anthropological approaches, literary and cultural studies, linguistics and, last but not least, philosophical reflections. In doing so, we have always engaged in dialogue with activists and social actors to learn from their practical experiences and incorporate them into our theoretical reflections. Not only this transdisciplinary approach is a novelty in peace and conflict research, but also the interdisciplinary proposition based on social sciences as well as on humanities, including historiography but also linguistic, literary, and cultural studies. In addition, we have placed special emphasis on the inclusion of gender-based perspectives of inquiry, and gender-based violence has

been a cross-cutting task of our research. Thus, our goal is to shift paradigms in order to elaborate interdisciplinary peace studies concerning Latin America and the Caribbean.

Regarding the transitions between violence and peace in their historical contexts and in the present, we analysed the interactions of institutions, systems, and structures on the one hand and the struggles and organizational processes of collective and individual actors on the other. Using historical approaches, we examined the origins of various forms of political, social, and symbolic violence, as well as the peacebuilding processes in the 20th century and in the present, integrating their long-term perspectives. The historical perspective gave us a deep insight into the processuality of social change and the agency of actors, considering the contexts in which they took place. In addition, we have taken into account the historical memory of violent processes, their expressions, their consequences, and their aspirations for justice.

Using approaches from social and cultural anthropology, we examined the multiple strategies, representations, and symbolisms of actors in their efforts to live together peacefully in the midst of violent conditions, as well as their social procedures and cultural practices of peaceful resistance to violent actors and resilience in Latin American and Caribbean societies marked by violence. Taking a literary and cultural studies approach, we analysed socio-cultural reflections of historical and contemporary processes of violence and peace, but we also studied in what way factual and fictional discourses may intervene in collective and individual perceptions and actions. We tried to understand how cultural, artistic, and literary strategies impact on the relation between violence and peace. We examined the extent to which aesthetics promote conflict as forms of cultural violence or the extent to which they generate ambivalence and ultimately promote peace. In this context, we have reflected on the possibilities of peace, looking at epistemologies and aesthetics of peace in literature and film, in order to go beyond the "negativity" of peace (as just the opposite of violence) and to elaborate on possible conceptions of "affirmative peace" understanding it as a broadening horizon of life. The linguistic approach reflects our interest in historical semantics, in the analysis of discourses on violence and peace, as well as of the uses of related concepts and terms in a given historical present. We consider language and cultural production of meaning in general as determining factors for individual and collective attitudes towards peace or violence.

To approach the complexity of different peace processes, it is necessary to identify the multiple actors involved. Our research approach identified and distinguished different actors, such as institutional actors (empires, powers, states, security forces, public institutions, ministries, communities, reductions, etc.), economic actors

(social classes, internal and external economic actors, marginalized and excluded groups, etc.), actors that also create networks, social actors (groups, men, women, other identities, children, adults, elderly), cultural actors (ethnic groups, minorities, communities, collectives, artists, intellectuals, cultural workers), or regional actors (centre-periphery), among others, in order to make visible the complex relationship between these actors and peace processes in a historical perspective.

Peace Perspectives and Peace Studies in Latin America

The concern for peace is as old in the West as in other regions of the world (Shogimen & Spencer, 2014; Francis, 2008; Pamela & Chester A, 2017). In the Middle Ages, the concept of peace pointed to two possibilities: a peace of the Christian world under the auspices of the Pope and a peace of the Christian world led and protected by an Emperor. This approach changed with the Renaissance, with the Protestant Reformation, and, most importantly, for the study of the entanglements of peace and violence in Latin America, with the controversy over the Spanish conquest of the "Indies." The debate on the legitimacy of the Spanish wars and possessions overseas demonstrates that extreme forms of violence in Latin America laid the ground for what can be called histories of violence and domination but also brought about actions and movements of resistance and contestation against the use of violence. As examples may serve the defence of the natural freedom of the indigenous population of Bartolomé de Las Casas (Clayton, 2012, 342–386) and the elaboration of a legal framework to restrict war (the law of the people) by the School of Salamanca (Johnson 1984, 172–179). Even if these and many other efforts could not stop the devastation, they eventually formed traditions of peace as well as memories of resistance that might inspire present struggles against violence.

With the expansion of European empires, the concept of peace shifted to include not only Christianity, but the state of humanity as a whole, which in turn implied colonial regimes of pacification that meant war and destruction for the people that opposed the European rule. As a matter of fact, the phenomenon of colonialism and imperialism may be considered as one of the three "cataclysmic occurrences" that shaped modern history and produced long-term consequences. The other modern processes responsible for the formation of the conditions that have been determining the relations between violence and peace up to the present are nationalism and the rise of nation-states, as well as the industrial revolution with the emergence of capitalist societies. In the case of nation-states, the question of peace was threefold: it concerned the possibilities of peace between nations, within a nation and despite them (Adolf, 2009, 10). The limitation of war based on the elaboration of international law in the 17th century led to the Peace of Westphalia

(1648) as the model of peace based on the nation-state. States were supposed to form an international society ruled not by warfare but by laws and agreements. As early as in the Renaissance, peace became a constitutive quality of humanity and true human life was considered to be peaceful. Already at this stage, peace meant more than the absence of war: it meant the improvement of life, social justice and freedom, among others (Kende, 1989, 236). At the latest in the Enlightenment, peace ceases to depend on the ruler of the state and can only be achieved by society itself. Immanuel Kant's "To Perpetual Peace" (1795), for instance, postulates the creation of a federation of free states which convene not to use force against each other and which are republics that guarantee the civil rights of their citizens as "citizens of the world" (ibidem: 240). As a consequence of the levée en masse of the French Revolution, war became a matter of concern for every citizen, but, as one could argue, also peace. The emergence of peace societies at the beginning of the nineteenth century represents the shift in the understanding of peace (ibidem: 240–241). Industrialism, however, also brought about the rise of the working class movements that ultimately aimed at the establishment of a peaceful society. As a result, two movements pursued peace, of which one was bourgeois and capitalist and the other working class and socialist. Whereas one aimed at replacing war with trade and economic development based on private property, the other engaged in a revolutionary struggle to eliminate private ownership and social classes in order to accomplish peace (Adolf, 2009, 10). In the view of exploitation and domination within society, social structures became a major cause of violence in the 19th and 20th centuries, and their reorganization was a prominent perspective of peace. Wars between states intensified as a result of imperialist rivalry between nation-states but also due to competing social regimes.

However, after the World Wars, the idea of an international union or federation of states, which originated in the Enlightenment, was resumed, first as the League of Nations (founded in 1920), then as the United Nations Organization founded in 1945 (Cortright, 2008, 52–66; 109–117). Pacifist movements developed into global movements against the Vietnam War in the 1960s and, more recently, against the war in Iraq (ibidem: 155–179). It should not be overlooked, however, that one of the most important peace movements emerged in India through Mahatma Gandhi, who built a new way of confronting European imperial violence on the basis of peace. In-depth studies and research on peace did not begin until after World War II. As peace scholar David Cortright points out, peace remains a demand for a just, equal, and free society. Socialism and feminism expanded the peace agenda to include economic injustice and patriarchy. In his opinion, "unresolved political grievances" as well as "a lack of economic development" still fuel armed conflicts (ibidem: 3).

In Latin America and the Caribbean, peace is a changing condition (Arnson, 1999; Mares, 2017). The region is fully integrated into cycles that determine the relation

between violence and peace in modern times, which are colonial expansion, nation-states and industrialism. As the periphery of the establishing "world system," it bore the heaviest burden of colonial violence, exploitation, and racism (Quijano & Wallerstein, 1992). As mentioned above, during the conquest, peace was linked to legitimacy. Bartolomé de las Casas called for an end to the destruction of indigenous societies and the violence of conquest. Later, peace was understood as a condition for ethnic separation, embodied in the concept of "pueblos de indios" and "pueblos de españoles," while the struggle against indigenous societies, whose survivors remained on the margins of the colonial empire, continued. In the nineteenth century, war permeated the processes of state formation, and the slogan of liberal "progress" implied a war against the indigenous peoples who remained on the margins of the nation (Fowler & Lambert, 2015). After independence and as nation-states, the coloniality of power persisted as well as a social order based on diverse modalities of inequality and oppression; in some countries, even slavery was maintained for several decades. Compared to Europe, in the era of nation-states there were relatively few interstate wars, but violence and armed conflicts within the societies have been intense up to the present. Peace, therefore, has been primarily related to social justice and equality. During the Mexican Revolution, Emiliano Zapata linked peace and social justice in his "Plan of Ayala," coining the lemma: "If there is no justice for the people, there is no peace for the government" (Brunk, 1995). The Cold War, which culminated in the Cuban Revolution, led to several waves of armed confrontations within Latin American societies, characterized by military dictatorships and their clashes with guerrilla movements (Field et al., 2020). It is in the context of these social and political struggles and their external and internal influences that the civil wars in Central America must be interpreted (Grandin, 2004, 2010, 2013; Hall & Pérez Brignoli, 2003). Here, the concept of the peace process took on new contours, such as the need to put a political end to the armed conflicts in the region. This process, which was successful in some respects and problematic in others, developed internally during a very difficult period for the region and under pressure from the United States in particular. The experience of the Central American peace processes is important for the entire continent. These peace processes and their Central and Latin American actors—politicians and civil society—have opened up new ways of understanding the concept of peace and the role of geopolitics (Díaz Arias & Hatzky, 2019). Likewise, the social negotiation processes of the last decade around the signing of the peace agreement in Colombia have shown a different Latin American way of overcoming violence and have highlighted alternative institutional paths for historical conflicts.

In this very brief historical *tour de force* through the various concepts of peace that have emerged in Latin America and the Caribbean, the concept of "firmeza permanente" ("relentless persistence") is of particular importance. Coined by the

Brazilian liberation theology (Arns, 1977), it refers to "active non-violence" in the struggles against social oppression and exploitation in the middle of the military dictatorship of Brazil. The path that this concept follows is bottom-up: It is a commitment that starts from the lower classes and aims to change the structures of domination and violence of the exploiting classes in Latin America, because Latin America and the Caribbean are not only regions with the highest levels of violence, but also with the greatest social inequality. The term thus embraces the peace movements of the dispossessed and underscores their conviction that communities can only be rebuilt through charity, love, solidarity, and a determined commitment to active and nonviolent struggle for justice and reparation. The commitment to nonviolence of the Argentinean peace activist Adolfo Pérez Esquivel (Nobel Peace Prize, 1980) also stems from the concept of peace of liberation theology. The Christian approach to the liberation of the oppressed was first formulated in Latin America and became one of the most influential Catholic Church movements of the 20th century worldwide. It inspired theologians far beyond Latin America and the Caribbean. Comparable theological revival movements arose in Asia and Africa, each with its own profile, as well as in Europe and North America. An intense interreligious dialogue inspired similar movements in Islam, Judaism, and Buddhism.

"Relentless persistence" repudiates the use of violence in general, even against the oppressors. Leonardo Boff understands it as a "historic power" that emerges with the oppressed who liberates himself and, ultimately, society. It emerges from a change of consciousness that leads not only to a fraternal attitude towards the other but also to a "tenderness for all beings" (Boff, 1991). In the context of the Laboratory of Knowledge "Visions of Peace," one could speak of cultural peace insofar as it is a belief in the urgency of non-violent conviviality. Following the sociologist Elise Boulding, who has made a significant contribution to the development of academic peace and conflict studies, we believe that a culture of peace is essential, "a culture that promotes peaceful diversity" (Boulding, 2000, 1). This culture of peace includes "lifeways, patterns of belief, values, behaviours, and accompanying institutional arrangements that promote mutual caring and well-being, as well as an equality that includes an appreciation of difference, stewardship, and equitable sharing of the earth's resources among its members and with all living beings" (ibidem). In line with what was mentioned above, we consider that the concept of peace is also informed by issues of ethnicity, gender, social class, and sexual identity, and that its approach must, therefore, include all these dimensions. In this sense, we understand peace and the culture of peace as historically evolving concepts in Latin American and Caribbean societies (as well as elsewhere), which are struggling and in different stages of development, without this development being understood in terms of linear progress, but rather with advances and setbacks, ruptures and continuities.

This is why we understand peace as something in the making and never as something fully achieved.

As Istvan Kende comments, the history of peace is "certainly not a success story" (Kende, 1989, 245). He also remembers, however, that it was and will always be the object of hope for humanity (ibidem). According to the "principle of hope" (Bloch), it is indispensable to hope for peace. In this sense, hope does not mean the expectation that peace will arrive one day. It rather is the confidence that it can be built. Peace does not mean that humanity will get rid of violence once and for all, but that efforts of mankind can restrain violence. Peace is entangled with violence; it cannot eliminate it. There is a nexus between law and violence, for instance. If the law is at the same time indispensable for peace (e.g., in the case of peace treaties) and for the regulation of peaceful conflict resolution processes, then it becomes clear that there is hardly peace without law. At the same time, however, peace cannot escape the tensions that the law creates. Walter Benjamin pointed out that law not only contains violence but that it also codifies it. He reminds us that peace treaties not only guarantee the armistice but also the prerogatives of the victor (Benjamin, 1965, 38–39). Related to the ambivalence of legal orders, Bernhard Waldenfels explains that violence and order are not mutually exclusive, since one can be at the service of the other (e.g., in the case of "just wars"). In this phenomenological perspective, any order—the precondition for peaceful coexistence—excludes something "extra-ordinary" that is not accepted. Consequently, the order is accompanied by its own negation, which appears as violent. In this sense, violence lacks its own essence, since it always depends on what it destroys. In the case of Latin America and the Caribbean, the idea of "legal pluralism" is also fundamental as an alternative vision of law in its classical form, since it challenges the state as the sole bearer of law by giving force to the conception of law held by ethnic groups such as indigenous communities and dissident groups.

Presentation of the Different Chapters

Chapter one, written by Sebastián Martínez Fernández and Joachim Michael, discusses the epistemological bases to conceive peace. First of all, it detects a certain reluctance and even skepticism with regard to the notion of peace used in current studies that focus on violence. In contrast to this view, this chapter pledges for the pertinence and urgency of the idea of peace as inevitable resistance against violence. The chapter reviews peace and conflict studies as established after World War II in Europe and elaborates on the conceptual framework of what could be peace studies in Latin America. It emphasizes the irreducible entanglements between peace and violence. Consequently, if peace does not mean a complete absence of violence, it cannot be understood as a condition to achieve but must be

envisioned as a never-ending process. Therefore, peace has a transitional character that cannot be entirely imposed but is to be permanently sought. As the debate highlights, peace is roughly to be understood as diverse modalities of engagement against violence, so, as an object of study, peace necessarily assumes not only an analytical attitude, but also an ethical disposition, which, in turn, requires a critical debate. Of particular importance—not only for Latin America—is the paradox of security and peace, which demands a critical reflection on security in the sense that not all reduction of violence can be understood as peace. Negativity of peace (as the negation of violence) appears to be insufficient for integral peace studies, so affirmative concepts of peace have to be developed and discussed. Those concepts promote the value of life and the *élan vital* (Bergson) that leave the destructivity of violence behind. In this sense, the groundwork for a possible phenomenology of peace is to be elaborated. From a critical perspective, this chapter strives to shift the focus from violence to peace and presents itself a conceptual basis for the research line addressed in the following chapters.

Chapter two, written by Werner Mackenbach and Joachim Michael, analyses culture in general and narrative arts in particular in the face of violence in Latin America. This chapter reviews studies on violence on the subcontinent in the field of culture and arts by posing research on this topic. Its objective is to put into dialogue the CALAS research projects with the state of the art in this field, to interrelate the research projects themselves, and to highlight its innovative approaches for the research on violence and peace. This part is organized in two sections: (1) "Towards a Culture of Peace"; (2) "Culture and the Narrative Arts as Systems of Signification that Oppose Violence." The first section reviews the "paradox of peace" of Latin America after the Cold War, when most dictatorships and civil wars on the subcontinent ended, yet when democratization did not bring less but even more violence. As this new form of violence appeared not as political as during the Cold War but "diffuse," widely disseminated in society and even normalized, the term of "cultures of violence" became relevant to address the phenomenon. In peace and conflict studies, culture consequently gained increasing relevance because it establishes the cognitive conditions due to which violence is accepted and justified. Perhaps the colonial paradigm of bringing "civilization" to people to be colonized might serve as a prominent example of the power of cultural violence and may demonstrate the relevance of the Americas in the historical debate about peace and violence since early modern times. This section then discusses examples of cultural peace in Latin America. It shows that since the Conquest, cultural violence was contested by propositions of peace cultures.

The second section analyses narrative culture and arts (especially literature and film) as systems of signification that are opposed to violence, as well as from an epistemological point of view of the aesthetics of peace from an analysis of

numerous examples of representations of violence and peace in literature and film, its functions, perception, and effects. This means a paradigm change concerning literary and film studies, as these disciplines have shown great interest in the representations of violence but paid little attention to reflections on peace. In case studies, this section highlights how fictional narratives of violence operate and how they are challenged by peace-oriented literature and films. It also underscores the contribution of literary and filmic constructions (among others) of memory of victimizations to a culture of peaceful conviviality. Of particular relevance are the filmic narratives produced in the context of the project "Visions of Peace," such as the short films awarded in the contest "Quiero paz" ("I want peace") and Anaïs Tarracena's documentary *Tras la vida* (*In Search of Life*). At last, the section discusses the possible contours of an aesthetics of peace that pledges for relational subjectivities. In a case study it shows how such a "poetics of friendship" involves the reader and questions him about his or her own attitudes towards violence.

Chapter three, written by David Díaz Arias, explores violence, civil war, and peace in Central America during the 1980s by focusing on the crucial role that Costa Rica's politicians and intellectuals played at that moment. First, this chapter shows how Costa Rica became a very important country for U.S. President Ronald Reagan to denigrate and confront the Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua. Then, by working with a printed press of the early 1980s, this chapter reconstructs public discussions in Costa Rica about democracy, socialism, peace, and war in a period of time between 1982 and 1985 in an attempt to demonstrate the strong division in the public opinion inside Costa Rica produced by Reagan's hostility acts against Nicaragua. Civil society actions against war are analysed, too. It also studies the constitution of public opinion about the war in Nicaragua between 1986 and 1987, Costa Rica's foreign policies toward the war, and about Ronald Reagan's imperialist policies in Central America. It analyses op-ed articles written by Costa Rican intellectuals on Oscar Arias' peace plan (1987) to argue that intellectuals invented Arias as a national, regional, and almost world hero by uncritically supporting his peace plan. This chapter allows us to go deeper into strategies for peace negotiations, political manoeuvers to confront imperialism with diplomacy, the construction of peace policies to avoid conservative attempts to reconstruct standing armies, and the pivotal role that intellectuals play in the creation of an argument of peace over war.

Chapter four, written by Christine Hatzky and Hinnerk Onken, focuses on civil society actors and initiatives and their strategies for dealing with violence. As discussed in the previous chapters, civil society initiatives are a key element in deciphering the relationality between violence and peace processes. They illustrate what we have defined as transition processes from violence to peace: peace begins where conflicts are resolved non-violently, and violent processes begin where this

potential for resolution fails. The analysis of these case studies, therefore, focuses on the "potentials of peace" (Borsò, 2022) in the midst of violent processes. The attention is not so much on the structures, actors, and processes of violence, but on those who deal with the challenge of violence, the processes of peace, the structures of peace, and the actors of peace. All four examples illustrate the constant efforts of civil society actors to achieve a more peaceful conviviality, emphasizing creativity and very different strategies to relentlessly take action against violent situations and perpetrators. The case studies examine resistance to *feminicidios*, support for the *caravanas* of Central American migrants heading to the United States, civil society responses to the Ayoztinapa case, and the background and discussions surrounding the Escazú Accords, a Latin American transnational agreement to protect environmental activists. The examples open up a more practical and concrete perspective on the double movement in the relationship between violence and peace, the latent violence in a state of peace and the latency of peace in a state of violence and its underlying topography, the zones of indeterminacy (Borsò, 2021, 468). They are understood as studies of "peace as a constant becoming, an ongoing project," as the philosopher, literary and cultural scholar Vittoria Borsò (2021, 448) puts it in the context of our research line.

Note

1. For further information on CALAS see http://www.calas.lat/en.