



THE PALESTINIAN CONFLICT FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE TRIALOGUE OF THE ABRAHAMIC FAITHS: AN ANALYSIS OF PEACE AND RECONCILIATION EFFORTS

Ayub Rohadi

Islamic Studies University of Haji Agus Salim Bekasi, West Java, Indonesia
ayub.rohadi81@gmail.com

Abstract

The Palestinian conflict is a protracted conflict with intertwined political, historical, national identity, and religious dimensions. Various attempts to resolve the conflict through political diplomacy have not yet fully resulted in sustainable peace. Therefore, an alternative approach is needed that can build trust, reconciliation, and cooperation across communities. This study aims to analyze the Palestinian conflict through the perspective of the Trialogue of the Abrahamic Faiths as a conceptual framework to support peace and reconciliation efforts. The study used library research with a qualitative-descriptive approach. Data were obtained from books, scientific journal articles, international organization documents, and literature on interfaith dialogue, conflict resolution, and peace studies. The analysis was conducted using content analysis techniques to identify the relationship between the shared values of the Abrahamic faiths—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—and the process of conflict transformation. The results show that the Trialogue of the Abrahamic Faiths offers an ethical foundation based on the values of human dignity, justice, compassion, and peace as prerequisites for social reconciliation. This approach is not intended to replace a political solution, but rather to complement it by strengthening theological dialogue, humanitarian cooperation, and interfaith diplomacy that can reduce prejudice, build trust, and strengthen social cohesion. This study proposes a conceptual model that integrates theological foundations, interfaith dialogue, social relations transformation, and peacebuilding as a contribution to the development of conflict resolution and interfaith dialogue studies. This model is expected to serve as an analytical framework for efforts to achieve a just, inclusive, and sustainable peace in Palestine.

Keywords: Palestinian conflict; Trialogue of the Abrahamic Faiths; interfaith dialogue; conflict resolution; reconciliation; peacebuilding.

Introduction

The Palestinian conflict is one of the most complex and protracted in the history of contemporary international relations. This complexity stems not only from territorial disputes and political interests, but also from the close interconnectedness of national identity, colonial history, and religious dimensions (Said, 1992; Pappé, 2006). Various attempts to resolve the conflict through bilateral negotiations,

international mediation, and global organizational initiatives have been undertaken over the decades, including the Oslo process and various United Nations resolutions. However, the conflict persists and continues to give rise to humanitarian crises and regional instability (Falk, 2017). This situation demonstrates that political and security approaches alone are insufficient to achieve sustainable peace.

In academic studies, the Palestinian conflict is generally analyzed through the perspectives of geopolitics, international law, and security studies. These approaches make important contributions to explaining the structure of the conflict, but tend to underemphasize the dimensions of social reconciliation and the role of religion as a source of peace ethics (Galtung, 1996). Yet, religion not only functions as an identity factor that can reinforce polarization, but also contains normative values such as justice, compassion, and human dignity that have the potential to form the basis for reconciliation (Appleby, 2000; Gopin, 2000). Therefore, an approach is needed that can view religion not merely as a source of conflict, but also as social and moral capital in peacebuilding.

One emerging approach to interfaith dialogue is the Trialogue of the Abrahamic Faiths, which emphasizes equal dialogue between Judaism, Christianity, and Islam as traditions that share spiritual roots through the figure of the Prophet Abraham (Küng, 1993; Swidler, 2014). This approach emphasizes the importance of dialogue that is not only theological, but also practical in the form of social and humanitarian cooperation. From this perspective, interfaith dialogue is understood as an instrument for transforming social relations that can reduce prejudice, build trust, and strengthen a culture of peace.

In the context of the Palestinian conflict, the Trialogue of the Abrahamic Faiths approach holds significant relevance. All three Abrahamic religions share a historical and spiritual attachment to the same territory, particularly Jerusalem as the holy city (Armstrong, 2005). Divergent religious narratives are often part of the conflict dynamics, but at the same time, they also hold the potential to build reconciliation through the recognition of shared universal values. This approach aligns with the concept of positive peace, which emphasizes the importance of social justice, cooperation, and institutions that support peace (Galtung, 1969). Thus, the trialogue can be a complementary approach to existing political resolution efforts.

Although numerous studies have been conducted on the Palestinian conflict and interfaith dialogue, research specifically integrating the Trialogue of the Abrahamic Faiths perspective into the analysis of Palestinian conflict resolution remains relatively limited. Most of the literature focuses on political diplomacy, international law, or bilateral interfaith dialogue (Abu-Nimer, 2001; Lederach, 1997). This gap highlights the need to develop a conceptual framework that connects the shared theological values of the three Abrahamic faiths with theories of conflict transformation and peacebuilding.

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the Palestinian conflict through the perspective of the Trialogue of the Abrahamic Faiths and examine its contribution to peace and reconciliation efforts. This study uses library research

with a qualitative-descriptive approach through content analysis of literature related to the Palestinian conflict, interfaith dialogue, and peace studies.

This article offers a conceptual contribution in the form of a Trialogue of the Abrahamic Faiths model for resolving the Palestinian conflict, integrating theological values, interfaith dialogue, social relations transformation, and peacebuilding as a unified process. Thus, this research is expected to enrich the study of religion and conflict resolution and provide an alternative perspective for understanding peace efforts in Palestine.

Literature review

The Palestinian Conflict from the Perspective of Conflict Studies and International Relations

The Palestinian conflict is one of the most widely studied conflicts in international relations studies due to its complexity, involving dimensions of politics, history, international law, and identity. Edward W. Said emphasized that this conflict cannot be understood solely as a territorial dispute, but also as a colonial narrative and identity struggle shaped by global power relations (Said, 1992). Ilan Pappé also showed that the dynamics of modern conflict are rooted in processes of state formation and forced migration that produce long-term structural tensions (Pappé, 2006).

From a peace studies perspective, Johan Galtung distinguishes between negative peace (the absence of direct violence) and positive peace (social justice and peaceful structures). In the Palestinian context, many diplomatic efforts have only achieved negative peace, while structural injustice persists, resulting in recurring conflicts (Galtung, 1969; 1996). This demonstrates that traditional security approaches have not been able to comprehensively address the root causes of the conflict.

Religion in Conflict and Peace

In the literature on religion and conflict studies, religion is understood as a two-sided phenomenon: it can be both a source of violence and a source of peace. R. Scott Appleby explains the concept of the ambivalence of the sacred, namely that religion can be used to legitimize violence, but also holds great potential for reconciliation (Appleby, 2000). Marc Gopin adds that religious traditions possess ethical resources that can be used to build peace if interpreted inclusively (Gopin, 2000).

John Paul Lederach also emphasized that conflict transformation requires a long-term approach involving social actors, including religious communities, in building trust and reconciliation (Lederach, 1997). Thus, religion cannot be ignored in conflict analysis, especially in the context of a conflict with an identity dimension such as Palestine.

Interfaith Dialogue and Abrahamic Faiths Discourse

Interreligious dialogue developed in response to identity-based conflicts and increasing global polarization. Hans Küng proposed a global ethic based on universal values across the Abrahamic religions such as justice, humanity, and peace (Küng, 1993). Leonard Swidler emphasized that interreligious dialogue must

be transformational, not just an exchange of theological information but also practical cooperation in social life (Swidler, 2014).

In the context of the Abrahamic traditions, the three religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—share historical roots through the figure of Abraham. Karen Armstrong points out that Jerusalem is a crucial symbolic space for all three traditions, simultaneously a point of conflict and potential for reconciliation (Armstrong, 2005). Therefore, trilateral dialogue (trialogue) is considered more comprehensive than bilateral dialogue because it involves all major parties to the symbolic conflict.

Trialogue of the Abrahamic Faiths as a Conflict Resolution Approach

The concept of the Trialogue of the Abrahamic Faiths developed from the broader idea of interfaith dialogue, focusing on the three Abrahamic traditions simultaneously. This approach emphasizes equal dialogue, recognition of shared suffering, and the search for universal ethical values as a basis for cooperation (Swidler, 2014).

From a conflict resolution perspective, this approach aligns with track two diplomacy, which involves non-state actors such as religious leaders and civil society in peace processes. Abu-Nimer demonstrates that faith-based dialogue can contribute to trust-building and conflict transformation in polarized societies (Abu-Nimer, 2001).

However, most of the literature still focuses on bilateral dialogue or general interfaith approaches, while studies specifically integrating trialogue into the analysis of the Palestinian conflict are limited. This suggests room for theoretical development in linking Abrahamic dialogue with conflict transformation studies.

Previous Studies and Research Gaps

Previous studies have largely addressed the Palestinian conflict from the perspectives of politics (Said, 1992; Pappé, 2006), international law, and regional security. Meanwhile, studies on religion have focused more on the potential for conflict or bilateral interfaith dialogue (Appleby, 2000; Gopin, 2000). On the other hand, the literature on interfaith dialogue, as presented by Küng (1993) and Swidler (2014), has not specifically developed a conceptual model that systematically links the three Abrahamic traditions to the resolution of the Palestinian conflict.

Thus, there is a research gap in the integration of conflict studies, peace studies, and the Abrahamic trilateral dialogue. This study seeks to fill this gap by developing a conceptual model of the Trialogue of the Abrahamic Faiths in Palestinian conflict resolution that connects the theological, social, and political-ethical dimensions.

Research methods

This research is library research, which involves reviewing various written sources relevant to the Palestinian conflict, interfaith dialogue, and peace studies. It does not involve direct field data collection but instead focuses on analyzing available academic and documentary literature.

The approach used in this research is qualitative-descriptive. This approach aims

to understand, explain, and analyze the phenomenon of the Palestinian conflict through the perspective of the Trialogue of the Abrahamic Faiths. An in-depth analysis of the concepts, theories, and ideas contained in the relevant literature was conducted, resulting in a comprehensive understanding of the potential of interfaith dialogue in peace and reconciliation efforts.

The data sources in this study are divided into two categories, namely primary and secondary data sources.

Data collection technique

The data collection technique used was a documentary study, which involved collecting, reviewing, and examining various written documents relevant to the research object. These documents were analyzed to identify concepts, patterns, and relationships relevant to the study's focus.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis in this study uses two main approaches, namely:

a. Content Analysis (Content Analysis)

Content analysis was used to identify, classify, and interpret the content of various literary sources related to the Palestinian conflict and the Trialogue of the Abrahamic Faiths. This technique helps in discovering conceptual patterns and relationships between ideas in the text.

b. Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to group data based on key themes, such as multidimensional conflict, Abrahamic values, interfaith dialogue, conflict transformation, and peacebuilding. Through this analysis, researchers were able to develop a systematic conceptual framework regarding the role of the Trialogue of the Abrahamic Faiths in resolving the Palestinian conflict.

2. Data Validation Techniques (Optional but Recommended for Journals)

To maintain the credibility of the research results, source triangulation was carried out, namely comparing various literature from books, scientific journals, and official documents to ensure consistency of information and interpretation.

I. Results and Discussion

A. The Palestinian Conflict as a Multidimensional Conflict

The analysis shows that the Palestinian conflict cannot be reduced to a purely religious conflict, but rather is a multidimensional conflict that simultaneously involves political, historical, territorial, national identity, and religious aspects. Politically, this conflict is related to the struggle for sovereignty, territorial control, and state legitimacy, which are contested by the parties involved. From a historical perspective, the roots of the conflict can be traced to the processes of colonialism, migration, and the formation of the modern state, which have given rise to prolonged structural tensions (Said, 1992; Pappé, 2006).

Furthermore, territorial aspects are central due to historical and strategic ties to the same land. National identity also plays a crucial role in shaping collective narratives for both Palestinians and Israelis. In this context, religion often serves as a component of identity, strengthening the legitimacy of each party's struggle. However, these findings emphasize that reducing the Palestinian conflict to a purely religious basis is insufficient to explain its complexities. Rather, it represents a complex interaction between various structural and cultural dimensions.

B. The meaning of the Trialogue of the Abrahamic Faiths

The study's findings indicate that the Trialogue of the Abrahamic Faiths is an interfaith dialogue approach that focuses on three main traditions—Judaism,

Christianity, and Islam—which share spiritual roots through the figure of the Prophet Abraham. This spiritual commonality serves as an important foundation for building an inclusive and equal dialogue space (Küng, 1993).

In addition to historical similarities, the three religions also share universal human values such as justice, compassion, and respect for human dignity. These values serve as an ethical foundation for building dialogue that is not only theological but also social and practical. From this perspective, dialogue is understood as a means of building interfaith trust and reducing prejudice and stereotypes that develop as a result of prolonged conflict (Swidler, 2014).

Thus, trialogue not only functions as a forum for interfaith communication, but also as an ethical instrument in building more harmonious social relations.

C. Analysis of the Palestinian Conflict through the Trialogue Perspective

1. Recognition of Human Dignity

Analysis shows that one of the key contributions of the trialogue approach is its emphasis on the principle of human dignity as a universal value. This principle encompasses the right to life, the right to religion, and the right to security for all parties involved in the conflict. In the context of the Palestinian conflict, disregard for human dignity often exacerbates the cycle of violence. Therefore, strengthening this value is an essential foundation for reconciliation efforts.

2. Acknowledgment of the Suffering of All Parties

The trialogue approach also emphasizes the importance of recognizing the suffering of all parties without exception. In the Palestinian conflict, both Palestinians and Israelis experience different forms of suffering, including violence, loss, and collective trauma. Acknowledging this suffering is the first step in the reconciliation process because it opens up space for empathy and the restoration of social relations (Lederach, 1997).

3. Dialogue as an Instrument of Peace

The analysis shows that dialogue is the primary instrument in the trialogue approach. Religious dialogue allows for a more inclusive exchange of theological understanding, while religious diplomacy can play a role in promoting peaceful resolution at the social and political levels. In the context of peacebuilding, dialogue serves as a bridge to build trust, reduce tensions, and create a space for cooperation between previously conflicting communities (Abu-Nimer, 2001).

D. Challenges of Trialogue Implementation

Despite its significant potential, implementing the Trialogue of the Abrahamic

Faiths in the context of the Palestinian conflict faces several challenges. First, strong identity politics often reinforces exclusivism and hinders interfaith dialogue. Second, the rise of radicalism in some groups narrows the space for compromise and dialogue.

Third, the geopolitical interests of international actors influence the dynamics of the conflict, complicating community-based reconciliation. Fourth, long-standing religious polarization reinforces the narrative of mutual suspicion between communities. Fifth, a lack of trust between parties is a major obstacle to building sustainable dialogue.

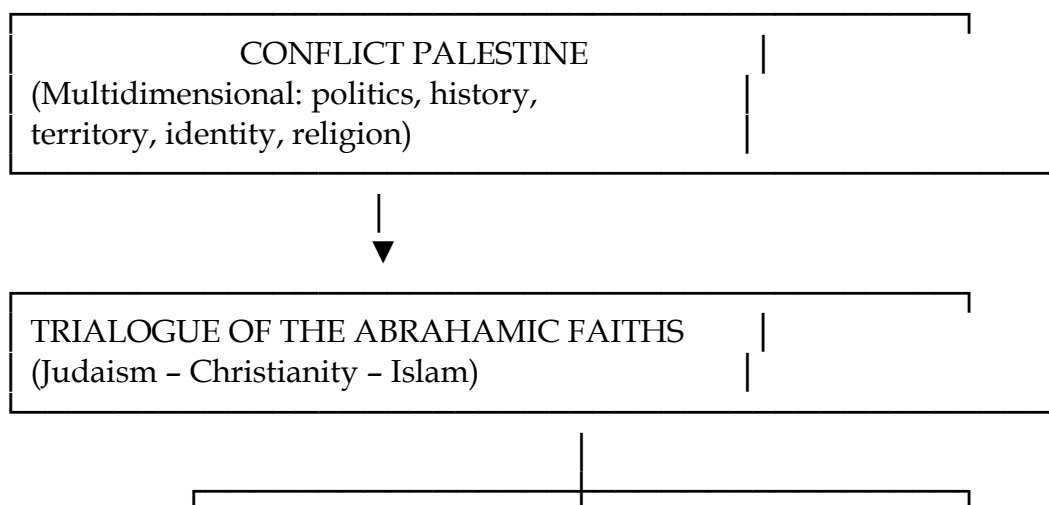
E. Trialogue's Contribution to Reconciliation

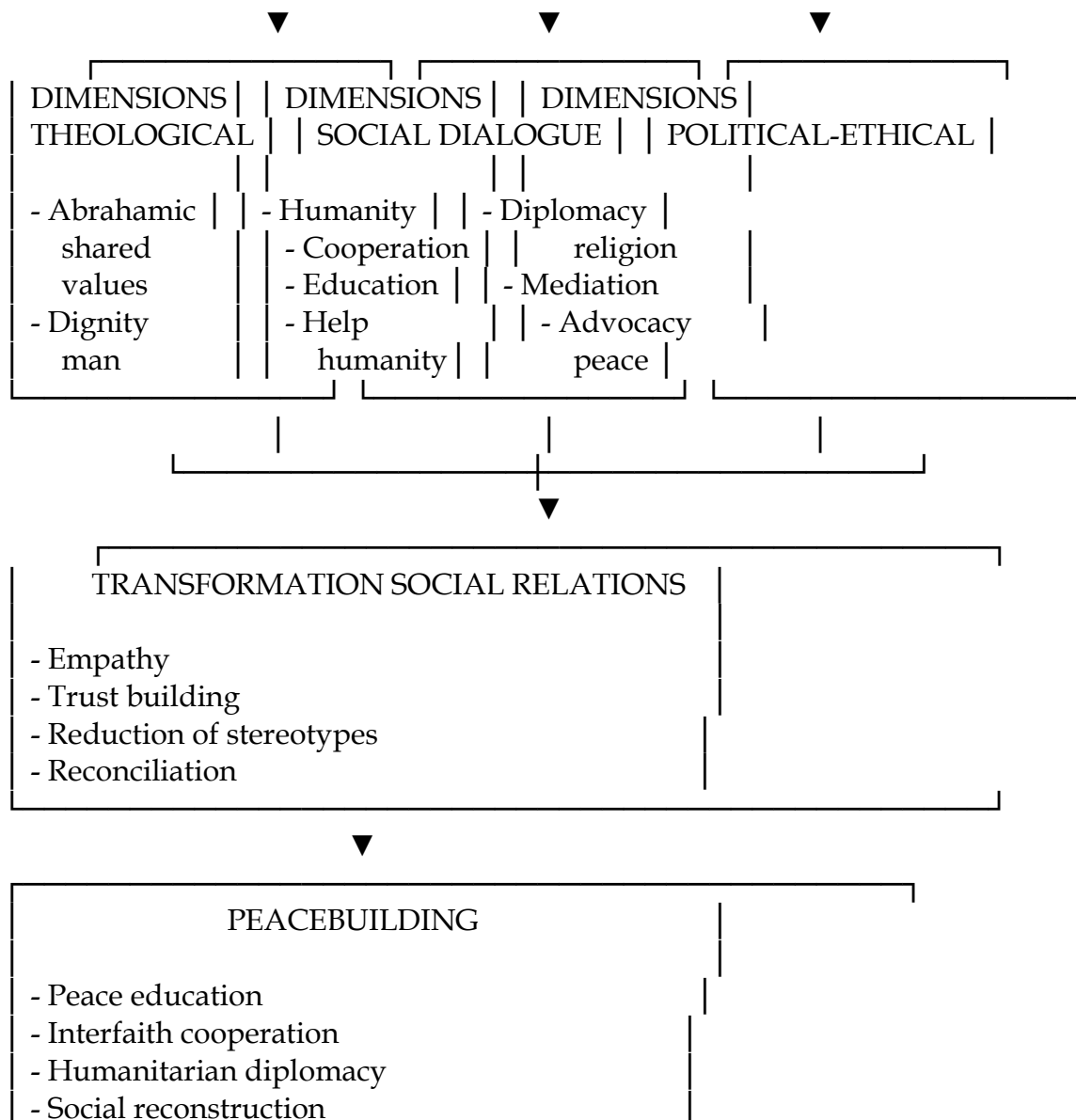
The research results show that the Trialogue of the Abrahamic Faiths has a significant contribution to the reconciliation process. First, this approach can build empathy between communities by emphasizing shared human values. Second, it helps reduce negative stereotypes that have developed due to the prolonged conflict.

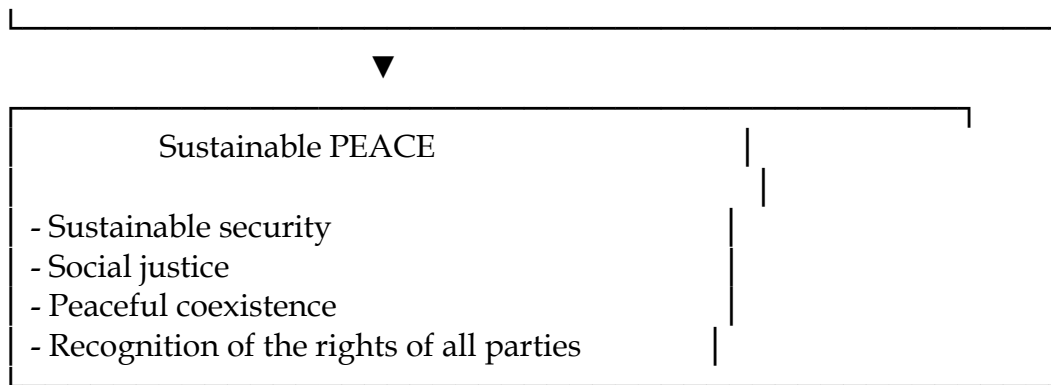
Third, this approach encourages peace education that instills the values of tolerance and coexistence from an early age. Fourth, trialogue strengthens interfaith cooperation in social and humanitarian fields. Fifth, this approach supports the creation of sustainable peace that relies not only on political agreements but also on social and cultural transformation within society (Galtung, 1996; Lederach, 1997).

Thus, the Trialogue of the Abrahamic Faiths serves not only as a theoretical approach, but also as a practical instrument in supporting the process of reconciliation and long-term peacebuilding in conflict areas.

Trialogue of the Abrahamic Faiths in the Resolution of the Palestinian Conflict







Conclusion

Based on the analysis and discussion, this study demonstrates that the Palestinian conflict is multidimensional. It is influenced not only by political and territorial factors, but also by intertwined historical aspects, national identity, and religious dimensions. This complexity demonstrates that a single approach, particularly one focused solely on political and security aspects, is incapable of comprehensively resolving the conflict.

This research also found that the Trialogue of the Abrahamic Faiths offers an important ethical and humanitarian perspective in understanding and responding to the Palestinian conflict. This approach emphasizes the universal values shared by the three Abrahamic religious traditions, such as human dignity, justice, and peace, which can serve as a normative basis for building interfaith dialogue.

Furthermore, the research findings indicate that interfaith dialogue is not intended to replace political resolution processes, but rather serves as a complement that strengthens social reconciliation processes. In this context, dialogue plays a role in building trust, reducing prejudice, and creating a more inclusive communication space between conflicting communities.

Ultimately, this study confirms that sustainable peace in Palestine can only be achieved through synergy between interfaith dialogue, the pursuit of justice, and a just political settlement. These three elements must operate in parallel to produce peace that is not merely temporary but also structural and sustainable.

Based on the research results, several suggestions that can be put forward are as follows: First, it is necessary to strengthen interfaith dialogue involving Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in a more inclusive and equal manner, in order to build shared understanding and reduce religious polarization.

Second, international institutions such as the United Nations and humanitarian organizations need to provide stronger support for grassroots peacebuilding initiatives, including those involving religious actors. Third, peace education needs to be strengthened in both formal and non-formal education systems to instill the values of tolerance, empathy, and coexistence from an early age. Fourth, further research is needed on the role of religious diplomacy in international conflicts, particularly those related to identity-based conflicts such as the Palestinian conflict, to enrich theoretical and practical studies in peace studies.

REFERENCES

- Abu-Nimer, M. (2001). Conflict resolution, culture, and religion: Toward a training model of interreligious peacebuilding. *Journal of Peace Research*, 38(6), 685–704.
- Appleby, R. S. (2000). *The ambivalence of the sacred: Religion, violence, and reconciliation*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Armstrong, K. (2005). *Jerusalem: One city, three faiths*. Ballantine Books.
- Falk, R. (2017). *Humanitarian intervention and legitimacy wars: Seeking peace and justice in the 21st century*. Routledge.
- Galtung, J. (1969). Violence, peace, and peace research. *Journal of Peace Research*, 6(3), 167–191.
- Galtung, J. (1996). *Peace by peaceful means: Peace and conflict, development and civilization*. Sage Publications.
- Gopin, M. (2000). *Between Eden and Armageddon: The future of world religions, violence, and peacemaking*. Oxford University Press.
- Küng, H. (1993). *Global responsibility: In search of a new world ethic*. SCM Press.
- Lederach, J. P. (1997). *Building peace: Sustainable reconciliation in divided societies*. United States Institute of Peace Press.
- Pappé, I. (2006). *The ethnic cleansing of Palestine*. Oneworld Publications. Said, E. W. (1992). *The question of Palestine*. Vintage Books.
- Swidler, L. (2014). *Dialogue for interreligious understanding*. Palgrave Macmillan