

Structural/Cultural/Direct Violence

Cultural and structural violence cause direct violence. Direct violence reinforces structural and cultural violence. Direct violence, physical and/or verbal, is visible as behaviour. But this action does not come out of nowhere; its roots are cultural and structural.



Direct Violence

Violence can take many forms. In its classic form, it involves the use of physical force, like killing or torture, rape and sexual assault, and beatings. Verbal violence, such as humiliation or put downs, is also becoming more widely recognised as violence. Peace and conflict studies scholar Johan Galtung describes direct violence as the 'avoidable impairment of fundamental human needs or life which makes it impossible or difficult for people to meet their needs or achieve their full potential. Threat to use force is also recognised as violence.'

Cultural Violence

Cultural violence is the prevailing attitudes and beliefs that we have been taught since childhood and that surround us in daily life about the power and necessity of violence. Consider the telling of history which glorifies, records and reports wars and military victories rather than people's nonviolent rebellions or the triumphs of connections and collaboration. Nearly all cultures recognise that killing a person is murder, but killing tens, hundreds or thousands during a declared conflict is called 'war'.

Structural Violence

Structural violence exists when some groups, classes, genders, nationalities, etc are assumed to have, and in fact do have, more access to goods, resources, and opportunities than other groups, classes, genders, nationalities, etc, and this unequal advantage is built into the very social, political and economic systems that govern societies, states and the world. These tendencies may be overt such as Apartheid or more subtle such as traditions or tendency to award some groups privileges over another.

Violence

In sum, violence is any physical, emotional, verbal, institutional, structural or spiritual behaviour, attitude, policy or condition that diminishes, dominates or destroys ourselves and others.