The aim of this paper is to describe a set of philosophical underpinnings and thereby to suggest a foundation for Peace Studies or Peace and Conflict Studies programs. To develop and understand this position fully, we suggest two intellectual tools. The first is a list of peace definitions rooted in ethical values. On the basis of these definitions, we discuss several proposals for Peace Studies curricula, with particular attention to that of Johan Galtung. The second tool is Galtung’s notion of four models of development, which we define in structural terms through their two originating options of social organisation and social development. This notion points to the heart of the matter in this study, namely, the intrinsic pluralism of peace education. These two tools suggest at least a quartet of disciplines that characterize Peace Studies in each model of development. The result is a pluralist Peace Studies curriculum based on the multiple meanings we attribute to peace.

INTRODUCTION

In 1948 the first course on Peace Studies was introduced at Manchester College, a small liberal arts college in North Manchester, Indiana, USA. There was a subsequent proliferation of such courses, with the number reaching some hundreds in the United States and Northern Europe. Celebrated intellectuals such as Johan Galtung, Kenneth Boulding, and Anatol Rapoport improved upon this academic innovation. However, most academics saw its introduction more as an emotional reaction by students and scholars to crucial war events such as the Vietnam War than as a legitimate program.