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Dieter Senghaas

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## Pioneer of Peace and Development Research



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Pioneer of Peace and Development Research



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# Preface

Peace among nations, the wealth of nations, and the music of the great European composers are the major themes in the work of Dieter Senghaas. If someone covers peace, wealth, and music and offers deeply innovative and seminal contributions to each of them, then we can speak of a great intellectual. Dieter Senghaas is one. He belongs to a breed whose members drove intellectual life in Europe for centuries, but are becoming increasingly rare in the twenty-first century.

I got to know Dieter Senghaas when I was a young member of a research group on international regimes in East-West relations in the late 1980s. When we had produced our first results, Volker Rittberger, who directed the research group, invited Dieter Senghaas. To see him acting in this role was a real experience for me. I met an unquestionably famous political scientist with an enormous reputation who was interested in just one thing: the one that we wanted to talk about. He has always remained a role model in terms of intellectual curiosity and constructive criticism for me.

I consider it good fortune that our paths crossed more than once. Only two years after this meeting, the Berlin Wall came down. After months of surprise, the debates on what this meant for peace and politics and for the future of Europe started. We held a number of debates on this, for instance at the Academy in Loccum in meetings organized by Dieter Senghaas' close friend Jörg Calließ. While Dieter Senghaas indicated the opportunities for democracy, the rule of law, and the extension of the European Union, I emphasized the conflicts which would come now into the open after the dominant East-West cleavage lost its importance. I hope that in the end, history will be on his side.

Most importantly, we had spent almost ten years next door to each other at the *Institute of Intercultural and International Studies* (INIIS), University of Bremen, which we co-directed together with Bernhard Peters from the mid 1990s onwards. It would take too long to describe all of the common activities at this time. It suffices to mention two things: first, a colloquium of the Institute that brought together all the perspectives represented in the Institute. The colloquium always was crowded and for many participants, it is still today considered legendary. Dieter Senghaas of course was at the centre of all debates. Second, those ten years were intellectually my most productive time—thanks to this wonderful environment.

After Dieter Senghaas was emerited and I moved to Berlin, we always kept in contact. I am happy to be able to say that it is friendship that connects this eminent scholar and wonderful human being to me.

In my view, one can distinguish five foci or phases in the work of Dieter Senghaas. While there is certainly a lot of work to be mentioned which lies outside these research areas, these five themes can be seen as the major topics in Dieter Senghaas' oeuvre. The phrase 'foci or phases' will indicate that there is on the one hand indeed a certain chronology, but on the other hand phases overlap and some of the themes dealt with in the earlier years have been picked up again later. One can label these phases "Pathologies and Deterrence", "List and Development", "Political Order and Peace", "Macrodevelopments and World Politics", and "Music and Peace".

The roots of Dieter Senghaas' work on "Pathologies and Deterrence" lie in his joint publications with Karl W. Deutsch. On the basis of theories of learning pathologies, Dieter Senghaas formulated a crushing critique of the dominant discourse about deterrence in strategic studies. He showed that deterrence and military efforts at best partially reflected a process of interaction between the executive bodies of the USA and the Soviet Union. It rather reflected two more or less unrelated systems that were producing systemic pathologies leading to armament dynamics. Dieter Senghaas coined the wonderful term "organized peacelessness" to encapsulate this autistic dynamic. These studies received enormous public attention. They were also extremely influential in organizational terms. It is no exaggeration to see these studies as the founding moment of German Peace and Conflict Research, including the creation of specific institutes and foundations in Frankfurt (PRIO), Hamburg (IFSH), and Berlin (Berghof-Foundation).

"List and development" asked about the conditions under which nations and their economies were able to enter a path of self-sustaining growth and development. The starting point of this work was a critique of classical economic approaches to modernization. Dieter Senghaas therefore closely interacted with leading Latin American theorists of dependencia as well as with Samir Amin and helped enormously to make dependencia theory and the theory of peripheral capitalism well known in Europe. The notions of autocratic development and selective dissociation guided his analyses for a limited period of time. In order to move development theory forward, he then engaged in historically enormously rich studies on development paths in Europe, using the work of the nineteenth-century economist Friedrich List (who lived not far away from the little village in Swabia where Dieter Senghaas was born) as a starting point. His masterly "The European Experience" is a classic in development theory and my favourite Senghaas book. It is this part of Dieter Senghaas' work which has probably been cited most often in academic circles.

There are very few leading scholars in International Relations who have made major contributions to both peace and development. Besides Dieter Senghaas, other great minds of this sort were Karl W. Deutsch and Johan Galtung. Dieter Senghaas is unique in bringing these strands of his thinking together in his contributions on the political order of peace. His most recent Suhrkamp book

“Weltordnung in einer zerklüfteten Welt” (World Order in a Fragmented World) is just another proof of this. This book, which I hope will be translated very soon, is a masterly integration of some of Dieter Senghaas’ most important concepts and insights. The most famous contribution to this branch is of course his “Civilizational Hexagon”, which demonstrates the conditions for both constructive peace and successful development. At the least in the German context, the hexagon, broadly developed in his book “On Perpetual Peace”, has become synonymous with Senghaasian thinking.

Especially from the latter half of 1990s onwards, Dieter Senghaas also contributed to the analyses of broader developments in world politics. “Konfliktformationen im internationalen System” (Conflict Formations in International System), “Wohin driftet die Welt?” (Whereabouts is the World Drifting?), and “Friedensprojekt Europa” (Peace Project Europe) are important book publications in this branch. All of them illustrate what the philosophical term “understanding”, as opposed to “explaining”, can mean. All of them draw a picture of world politics which is deep, sophisticated, and crystal clear. In this area, a fourth Suhrkamp book is my favourite: “The Clash within Civilizations”.

Last but not least, Dieter Senghaas’ books on peace and music are legendary. They give such a deep insight into the role of peace and war in European music and they show at the same time the change in the meaning of peace even within the history of compositions. Though his critique of deterrence and his work on development theory may have been more influential, these recent contributions are the most enjoyable contributions to his enormous oeuvre.

It is obvious that Dieter Senghaas is a master thinker, a founder of critical peace research and critical development theory, and the best known and most important representative of International Relations research in Germany of his generation and beyond.

Michael Zürn

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**Part I**  
**On Dieter Senghaas**

# Chapter 1

## The Author's Biographical Notes

In the first half of the 1960s I studied political science, philosophy and sociology at German and American universities. Among the academics who influenced me most as a student were Iring Fetscher, Ralf Dahrendorf, Max Horkheimer, Theodor W. Adorno, Jürgen Habermas, Anatol Rapoport and especially Karl W. Deutsch. A lasting intellectual impact, though from a distance, came from Samir Amin, in my opinion a most important academic intellectual in the southern hemisphere. These names represent the theoretical and political influences that have characterized my later work: critical assessment of ideologies and critical theory, combined with social science understood as scientific effort based on empirical evidence. These are the foci of the various fields I have worked in since the mid-1960s, reflected in different analytical approaches and determined to a large extent by specific issues.<sup>1</sup>

At the start of my scientific work my interest was in a systematic analysis of international politics and international relations—subjects that were not analysed in the Federal Republic of Germany of the 1960s from the standpoint of a political economy of international society or of the international system. This gap was my starting point for the analysis of international politics as one of the special areas of political science. I entered this research area by reading strategic studies and development studies during my first visit to the USA in 1962/1963, made possible by a Fulbright scholarship. During this time I began to address those research areas that were taught in the USA within political science as international relations, including approaches that were influenced by systems theories. My

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<sup>1</sup> This text is available (in German) at my institutional website as “Wissenschaftsbiographische Notizen”; at: <<http://www.iniis.uni-bremen.de/homepages/senghaas/notizen.php?USER=senghaas&SPRACHE=de>>. The author is grateful to Hans Günter Brauch, the editor of this series of books, who translated this text into English and to Mr Mike Headon of Colwyn Bay, Wales, UK who carefully language-edited this translation.

first academic articles then focused on a critical reception of this research area, including systems theory and social cybernetics.<sup>2</sup> I was interested in systematizing these American contributions from the vantage point of a critical assessment of ideologies.

My early own original work was determined by a critical assessment of the military strategic debate in the USA. This was triggered by Henry Kissinger's publications in the late 1950s and early 1960s, especially when I read his book *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy*, which motivated me to apply for a Fulbright scholarship. A side effect of the study of military strategy was my introduction to peace research and conflict resolution, fields that had emerged in the USA in the mid-1950s. In the second half of the 1960s, during a first phase of analysis and bibliographical overview of the international literature on peace research, I wrote several academic and political articles campaigning for the establishment of this new scientific field of peace research in the Federal Republic of Germany.

However, since 1964 my primary research focus was a critical assessment of the military strategic literature published since 1955 and that had had a significant political influence. From this critical work emerged the Ph.D. thesis I submitted during the winter semester of 1966/1967, as well as a more advanced study critically examining deterrence theory and published in 1969. These studies addressed the Clausewitzian problems of the relationship between politics and violence as well as the role and function of the politics of threat in the international politics of those years. In these early studies, I critically examined the strategy of deterrence as an attempt to maintain and restore the conventional understanding of politics and force in international relations in a situation of intensified demonization of political enemies and historically unprecedented destructive potential. In this context I introduced the concept of an organized lack of peace, arguing that such a restoration during the then prevailing conditions (East–West Conflict or Cold War) required a concerted effort by political leadership, economy, military and science (see my book *Abschreckung und Frieden. Studien zur Kritik organisierter Friedlosigkeit* [Deterrence and Peace. Studies in the Criticism of Organized Peacelessness] (1969)).

This laid the groundwork for my subsequent investigations into armaments dynamics, the role of the military-industrial-scientific-bureaucratic complex (MIC) and the study of the function of arms control (see especially *Rüstung und Militarismus*<sup>3</sup> [Armament and Militarism], 1972; *Aufrüstung durch Rüstungskontrolle* [Rearmament through Arms Control], 1972). The theory that the different systems of deterrence operating since the 1960s between East and West could be interpreted as a bipolar autistic structure launched a critical academic and

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<sup>2</sup> A collection of all my publications since 1963 has been archived in a deposit at the *Archives of Social Democracy* of the Friedrich-Ebert Foundation in Bonn (Germany).

<sup>3</sup> This book was published in Spanish as: *Armamento y Militarismo* (Mexico, D.F.: Siglo Veintiuno, 1974).

policy debate. This theory stated that within armament dynamics, the proliferation of doctrines of deterrence and armament potentials could be interpreted as primarily internally determined and far less driven by international processes of action and reaction what was then usually claimed. I called this tendency armament autism.<sup>4</sup>

The autism theory that I had developed in regard to systems of deterrence was also important for me in a different respect: deterrence under the conditions of an extreme situation (credible management of a graduated threat of potential extermination) permitted general insights into a structurally determined autistic tendency or into the pathologies of learning in international politics. In such a context, a critical assessment of reality, e.g. reality testing, is far more difficult for politics and science than in domestic fields of politics. Therefore, there is a persistent danger in international politics of falling into an autistic trap. During the East–West conflict this danger was particularly pressing. Even peace research itself did not completely escape it. [For my early work, see [Chap. 3](#) in this book.]

The concept I had offered of a critique of deterrence and the subsequent analysis of armament dynamics and arms control became the starting point of a call for critical peace research. Later, in the late 1960s and early 1970s I developed this proposition as part of a critical analysis of conflict research as then prevailing in the USA, where it was primarily determined by behaviourist and systems-analytical approaches. In this critique, I deliberately focused on the ahistorical aspect, the lack of sensitivity to sociological approaches to systems of rule and the absence of criticism of ideological assumptions in those approaches (today some would say from a deconstructivist perspective). The wide thematic scope and the potential for critical peace research was shown for example in *Aggressivität und kollektive Gewalt* [Aggressiveness and Collective Violence] (1971), and the scope for research into the causes of war was particularly elaborated in *Gewalt—Konflikt—Frieden* [Violence—Conflict—Peace] (1974).

During this period I was also actively involved in the establishment of the Institute for Peace Research, the *Hessische Stiftung Friedens- und Konfliktforschung* or *Peace Research Institute Frankfurt* (PRIF) as it is known internationally. I, too, worked in an advisory capacity in two research funding organizations for peace and conflict research: the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Friedens- und Konfliktforschung* [German Society for Peace and Conflict Research] (DGFK) and the private *Berghof-Stiftung für Konfliktforschung* [Berghof Foundation for Conflict Research] (I still work with the latter). Outside of the Federal Republic of Germany my work was discussed in the framework of the Pugwash Movement, the International Peace Research Association, the International Political Science Association and in meetings of academics from East and West in the *Institut für den Frieden* [Institute for Peace] in Vienna.

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<sup>4</sup> My reply to the extensive critical assessments of my early studies may be found in the prefaces to the second and third editions of my book on deterrence: *Abschreckung und Frieden* [Deterrence and Peace], Frankfurt a.M. <sup>3</sup>1981: 7ff. and 23ff.

The studies mentioned above focused on the analysis of the East–West conflict. But they did not push my earlier interest in a systematic theory of international relations into the background. A study on *Konfliktformationen in der internationalen Gesellschaft* [Conflict Formations in International Society] (1973) rekindled this interest. This marked a shift of focus to the analysis of the world economy and development, and thus to the conflict between North and South. In the early 1970s, my starting point was the study of Latin American theories of *dependencia*, which then provided the only concrete contribution towards an empirical theory of international stratification and its implications for development theory. Out of this intensive study emerged two edited volumes with contributions from the international discussion on *dependencia* (dependent reproduction) and peripheral capitalism (1992/1994) that have significantly influenced the discussion of development theory and policy in the Federal Republic of Germany.

Thereafter my research interests primarily focused on four major themes. First, a curricular project with teachers with which an attempt was made to translate these new insights into teaching materials that could be used in schools. Second, a publication that emerged from a study group I then chaired on the effects of the activities of multinational corporations in the Third World. Third, from the mid-1970s research into development theory became politically more relevant, especially through the debate over a *New International Economic Order* (NIEO). My own contribution to this discussion was a plea for dissociation in *Weltwirtschaftsordnung und Entwicklungspolitik* [World Economy and Development Policy] (1977). In this book I argued that the traditional-style integration of the Third World into the present world international economic order would be unable to solve its fundamental development problems. Rather, I argued that the revival of List's programme of a selective decoupling (dissociation) for a certain period would require a simultaneous focus on autocentric development to allow societies in third-world countries to develop local resources to satisfy the needs of their own population in a coherent way. [See for my work on development policy [Chap. 4](#) in this book.]

This plea—often misunderstood as a plea for autarky—brought about an extensive discussion that went on for several years between supporters of the dominant integration and free trade hypothesis and those who defended the dissociation hypothesis. Retrospectively, it may be noted that the supporters of the dissociation thesis who were motivated by concerns for development policies mostly argued one-dimensionally for a 'decoupling', while my concept that triggered this controversy has always been multidimensional (selective dissociation for a certain time period, autocentric development, and collective self-reliance) (Fig. 1.1).

Fourth, since the mid 1970s I was involved in a research project with a wide empirical scope and with the goal of exploring this concept further for several high-profile examples of extreme dissociative development. In a comparative study four socialist developing countries were analysed: Albania, China, Cuba and North Korea. This project, which I conducted with a group of Ph.D. students from Frankfurt, resulted in several country monographs and a systematic contribution