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Strategic Approaches to Instrumentalizing
Global Peace

Edited by James Patrick Welch



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Meet the editor



Dr. James P. Welch, a native of Texas, USA, has over a decade of extensive teaching experience in policing, security, and intelligence at Rabdan Academy in the UAE. With a background in military service, including 20 years of service in the US Marine Corps and roles with NATO and the Belgian Federal Police, Dr. Welch brings a wealth of knowledge to his security and criminal justice teaching. Dr. Welch holds a Ph.D. from Leiden University in the Netherlands and multiple master's degrees in Intelligence Studies. He is married to Knarik Abrahamyan and has three children. Dr. Welch resides in Belgium, Armenia, and the UAE and enjoys travelling, hiking, reading, writing, and learning new languages. His research has been internationally recognized, particularly for its applicability in military and policing operations. His Ph.D. work on the ethical use of drones has influenced both academic and strategic military discussions. Collaborations with NATO, U.S. defence agencies, and international policing organizations further demonstrate the broader impact of his research beyond academia.

Contents

Preface	XI
Section 1	
Cultural Approaches	1
Chapter 1	3
Dual Identity as a New Identity Model in Peacebuilding: On the Context of Afghanistan Case <i>by Safiye Ateş Burç</i>	
Chapter 2	17
Emerging Multilateral Cooperation and Reshaping Alliances in East Asia since the Late 1960s <i>by Junghoon Lee</i>	
Chapter 3	35
Hearts of Courage, Faces of Peace: Rebuilding and Resistance in Post-Dictatorship Honduras <i>by Matt Bereza</i>	
Chapter 4	53
Peace Promotion through Restorative Community Design: Five Case Studies in Latin America <i>by Ignacio Cardona, María Izquier, Norelys Lucena, Lore Labropoulos and Martin La Roche</i>	
Chapter 5	71
Perspective Chapter: Traditional Reconciliation Method in Java <i>by Sidik Puryanto</i>	
Chapter 6	85
Sustainable Social Reconciliation Process and Approaches in Divided Societies: The Case of the Ali-Saaïd Conflict <i>by Hamdi I. Abdulahi</i>	

Section 2	
Theoretical Approches	101
Chapter 7	103
Peace beyond the Absence of War: Three Trends in the Study of Positive Peace <i>by Gijsbert M. van Iterson Scholten</i>	
Chapter 8	121
Perspective Chapter: Evolving Education – In Search of a Model for Being Well <i>by Karyn A. Cooper and Robert E. White</i>	
Chapter 9	139
Perspective Chapter: The Primacy of Freedom over Equality as a Condition for Peace from Jean-Jacques Rousseau to Pope John Paul II <i>by Zdzisław Kieliszek</i>	
Chapter 10	165
Perspective Chapter: A Difficult Peace <i>by James Rowe</i>	
Section 3	
Analytical Approaches	179
Chapter 11	181
Between a Rock and a Hard Place: The Drivers of Violent Conflict and the Elusive Quest for Global Peace <i>by James Patrick Welch</i>	
Chapter 12	203
Genocide: The Mother of All Crimes <i>by Frederik Harhoff</i>	
Chapter 13	227
Perspective Chapter: Basic Rules of Air Supremacy in the Last Thirty Years <i>by Artsrun Hovhannisyan</i>	

Preface

One of humanity's greatest challenges is the pursuit of enduring global peace. Despite ongoing efforts, conflicts continue to erupt worldwide, and peaceful international relations seem more elusive than ever. This volume brings together the work of distinguished authors who have accepted the task of analyzing this persistent issue, offering their insights, knowledge, and strategies for understanding and addressing this complex enigma.

The book is organized into three sections, adopting a constructivist framework and counterfactual models to understand conflict resolution strategies. Authors consider "what if" scenarios, drawing on alternative possibilities that have worked in smaller-scale situations but are not widely adopted today. These counterfactual analyses involve imagining different outcomes by altering key events, decisions, or historical approaches, providing insights into how these changes could have led to different results in existing conflicts. This approach helps to illuminate the causes of conflict, the significance of certain events, and the critical decision-making processes that can facilitate conflict resolution.

Author Safiye Ateş Burç, in his chapter, explores the topic of *Dual Identity as a New Identity Model in Peacebuilding: On the Context of Afghanistan Case* as a case study, focusing on Afghanistan and its potential evolution as a result of common in-group identity. The second contribution, by author Junghoon Lee, *Emerging Multilateral Cooperation and Reshaping Alliances in East Asia since the Late 1960s* addresses issues surrounding the fragility of alliances, challenges concerning military détente, foreign policy issues, and multilateral policy concerns. Matt Bereza, in his probing chapter *Hearts of Courage, Faces of Peace: Rebuilding and Resistance in Post-Dictatorship Honduras*, addresses post-dictatorship Honduras and issues of resilience and reconciliation in the wake of violence, conflict, and social upheaval. This exploration touches on the topics of historical trauma and its transmission through epigenetics, as well as the instrumentalization of restorative justice in peacebuilding. Ignacio Cardona, María Izquier, Norelys Lucena, Lore Labropoulos and Martin La Roche, expand our understanding of Latin American peace initiatives with their contribution *Peace Promotion through Restorative Community Design: Five Case Studies in Latin America*. The framework underscoring their analysis is restorative community design. Core concepts such as democracy and justice are further broken down into their constituent elements. The fifth chapter, *Perspective Chapter: Traditional Reconciliation Method in Java*, by author Sidik Puryanto, is a cross-cultural examination of sociopolitical and anthropological significance. The exploration of traditional Javanese conflict resolution is presented as a possible alternative framework worthy of expansion and adoption in the quest for peaceful international relations. Instruments such as the Javanese and Sundanese Wisdoms, musyawarah based upon consensus, and gotong royong or mutual cooperation are proposed. The theme of reconciliation is also core to this analysis. The final chapter in this section, by author Hamdi I. Abdulahi, *Sustainable Social Reconciliation Process and Approaches in Divided Societies: The Case*

of the *Ali-Saaïd Conflict*, is based upon a case study which explores approaches to facilitating reconciliation in broken and divided societies. Central to this particular analysis is the exploration of the role of community elders and the central position they exercise in the process of community reconciliation and the establishment of good governance.

In section two, the chapter, *Peace beyond the Absence of War: Three Trends in the Study of Positive Peace* by author Gijsbert M. van Iterson Scholten, explores three approaches related to positive peace that researchers have previously adopted. The author provides three useful suggestions by analyzing the best elements of the three models. The author emphasizes that peace should be considered a pluralistic concept and not considered in isolation, and one that goes beyond simple absence of conflict, or negative peace. The author cogently proposes that academics should look beyond the Global West for existing ideas about peace, as reflected in the first section of this volume. Finally, van Iterson Scholten emphasizes that the logic of conflict resolution, based on differences and peacebuilding based on commonality, are inherently inverse. Authors Karyn A. Cooper and Robert E. White, in their chapter, *Perspective Chapter: Evolving Education – In Search of a Model for Being Well*, consider the effects and influences of education systems in the development and evolution of peaceful relations and peace education. This research focuses on the concepts of wellness, wellbeing and an exploration of the neoliberal model. The authors address the relations and interactions between administrators, teachers, and students and the importance of this tripartite relationship. The next chapter, *Perspective Chapter: The Primacy of Freedom over Equality as a Condition for Peace from Jean-Jacques Rousseau to Pope John Paul II*, addresses the important insights and contributions made by the former widely admired and distinguished Pope Jean Paul II. The author compares and contrasts the concepts of freedom and equality through the writings of Pope Jean Paul II and Jean Jaques Rousseau within the context of establishing and maintaining human freedom and peaceful relations. In his chapter entitled, *Perspective Chapter: A Difficult Peace*, author James Adam Rowe presents a very in-depth analysis of democratic peace theory, market-based economies, and liberal peace theory. The chapter argues that conflict avoidance is only possible if the issues or stakes involved are insignificant for at least one of the actors. Without such conditions, negotiations fail, and violent conflict is likely.

In the section three chapter, *Between a Rock and a Hard Place: The Drivers of Violent Conflict and the Elusive Quest for Global Peace*, Dr. James Welch adopts a negative peace approach. The author asserts that the lack of a coherent definition of global peace contributes to the complexities of seeking a meaningful resolution. Global peace, according to the author, when defined as the total absence of conflict, is a utopian concept in light of its complexity and the well-entrenched history of human aggression. To achieve meaningful peace, both the term itself and the goal being sought must be accurately redefined. The chapter *Genocide: The Mother of All Crimes*, by author Frederik Harhoff, addresses the legal dimensions of recent conflicts between Russia and Ukraine and Israel and Palestine. The author begins by elucidating the legal definition of what constitutes genocide. This important chapter empirically addresses the elements of genocide under international humanitarian law and its

application in the current conflicts. Artsrun Hovhannisyan presents the final chapter, *Perspective Chapter: Basic Rules of Air Supremacy in the Last Thirty Years*, in which the author examines the six rules for breaking air defences. Strategic evaluation is provided for periods ranging from the Cold War to the Gulf War, and it measures the strategic capabilities of Russian, U.S., Syrian, Iraqi, and Ukrainian missiles and defence systems.

The editor wishes to extend his sincere thanks for the tireless efforts and assistance afforded to him by Ms. Antonija Grgeč, the Publishing Process Manager, who provided outstanding expert support throughout the process.

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Section 1

Cultural Approaches

Chapter 1

Dual Identity as a New Identity Model in Peacebuilding: On the Context of Afghanistan Case

Safiye Ateş Burç

Abstract

Based on an interdisciplinary synthesis of the literature in political science and social psychology, this chapter emphasises that the issue of identity is critical in the pursuit of peace. The chapter attempts to discuss dual identities, which in the case of Afghanistan allow for both singular identities and a new overarching identity (to be formed in the peace process). The question of how to transform conflicts peacefully is the common point of intersection between theory and practice in the field of peace studies. If conflict, as a never-ending phenomenon, can be transformed into a peaceful perspective, then peace has a chance of becoming permanent on the ground and in the minds. In this regard, the issue of identity occupies an important place in the context of sustainable peace. Because identity affects almost all peace processes in a heard or unheard tone. This chapter will examine the identity issues within the framework of Afghanistan over the social identity theory and the common in-group identity model. Using the example(s) of Afghanistan (in addition Northern Ireland and South Africa), this chapter argues that a new and inclusive identity that does not assimilate individual identities (dual identity) has the capacity to enable sustainable peace.

Keywords: ethnic identity, peacebuilding, social identity theory, Afghanistan, conflict

1. Introduction

Today, as both international and intra-national conflicts continue in various dimensions and shape world politics, the socialisation and sustainable peace is at a critical juncture. The question of how to transform conflicts by peaceful means is the common point of intersection between theory and practice in the field of peace studies. If conflict, as a never-ending phenomenon, can be transformed into a peaceful perspective, then peace has a chance of becoming permanent on the ground and in the minds. In this sense, discussing transformative paradigms beyond the traditional models of conflict resolution makes it possible to produce alternative knowledge. This text examines the issue of identity, which has an important place in the context of sustainable peace and which is discussed in almost all peace processes, whether in a heard or unheard tone. Clancy and Nagle [1] argue that in ethno-nationalist and divided societies, such as Northern Ireland, efforts to create a shared public identity

across all political divides is an unrealistic goal, at least in the medium to short term (pp. 78–79). They challenge the premise that binary identities can be reformulated in a new and shared formulation. They argue that the focus should shift from social transformationalist approaches, which aim to create an inclusive public identity that includes others, to consensualism, which places dual or multiple public identities on an equal footing in politics. However, consensualism institutionalises the existence of ethnic differences ([1], p. 84). Yes, consensualism emphasises co-identity rather than shared identity, but it always runs the risk of reinforcing the power of ethnic extremism.

Moreover, when we consider the politics of recognition in the context of peace processes, it is possible to see that constitutional recognition itself can, over time, become a peace-breaking condition. Indeed, this is one of the main criticisms of the Good Friday Agreement. That is to say, the acceptance of multiple public identities through a peace agreement or macro-legal text does more than merely reconcile the groups concerned because it provides the conflicting groups of the past with a hard ground on which they can always hold on and return to the conflict situation at any time. This may not be the case in all cases of reconciliation, but the discourse itself is an obstacle to peacebuilding. So how should the relationship between peacebuilding and identity be discussed in the axis of Afghanistan? In this chapter, which will focus on this question, I aim to elaborate and discuss the relationship between identity and peacebuilding using social psychological perspectives and theoretical approaches. By focusing on Afghanistan, which officially entered a reconciliation process with a peace agreement signed in Doha in 2020, but still has not achieved an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace, this chapter will produce a critical discourse on Afghan identity and the notion of peace.

As a result of the political analysis of the relevant examples, the main suggestion of this chapter, which will enable the socialisation of peace and the dampening of identity conflicts, is the following: Neither the social transformationalist perspective, which is based on the reformulation of pre-existing identities on a common and new axis, nor the consensualist perspective, which recognises the co-legitimacy of multiple identities. Rather, the creation of a new, peacebuilding, inclusive identity (dual identity) that inspires hope and partnership, formulated in light of the common intragroup identity model (CIIM) and agreed upon on the basis of social consensus during formal peace negotiations. This political identity is superior to ethnic or religious identities and includes but does not destroy them. As suggested by CIIM, it is a search for an identity that enables a ‘we’ rather than an ‘us’ and a ‘them’. In this model, both sub-identities continue to exist and a higher identity is created. And these two identities are activated simultaneously, as in the case of Korean Americans. To repeat, dual identity emphasises a new inclusive collective unity, but this unity does not exclude individual identities. Accordingly, the first part of the text analyses social identity theory, inclusive identity and the CIIM in the context of the links between peace, identity and conflict. This will provide the theoretical framework of the chapter. In the next part, this chapter will present the relationship between the peace process and identity in the case of Afghanistan.

1.1 Identity, peace and conflict: Why social identity theory and the common in-group identity model?

Psycho-political confrontations in conflict and peace processes are characterised by practices such as forgiveness, revenge and the venting of anger. Who the parties

are, which group they feel they belong to and the extent to which they identify with the group are very critical. This is because the nature and frequency of conflicts created, sustained or characterised by different identities (such as religious, ethnic or national identities) are closely related to whether they are strong, harsh or rigid. Identity politics, whether through recognition or denial, determines or changes the politics of both conflict and peacebuilding. As can be seen in many processes around the world, the reconciling parties are members of two or more strong political identities. At the end of the peacebuilding process, we either witness the recognition of both identities, as in Northern Ireland, or we witness an attempt to create an inclusive identity through identity transformation, as in the period between 1994 and 1999 in South Africa. In other words, we encounter either multiple identities or inclusive identities at different levels.

Indeed, with the emergence of postmodern thought, phenomena, such as the subject, the centre and history, have been reconsidered, seriously questioned and consequently deconstructed. Therefore, the concept of identity, which assigns a visible value to the subject and the self and is based on the subject's experience, has also been critically examined ([2], p. 127; [3], p. 6). However, regardless of the direction and axis of the debates, identity, or rather how or what we define ourselves as, has always remained valid. Connolly [4] supports this idea as follows: 'it is probably both impossible and certainly undesirable to be human without being grounded in some identity' (p. 26). This is because identity itself, identity politics or identity claims cut across social life as well as, or even more so, political life. Fukuyama [5], for example, argues that identity politics is the main lens through which politics breaks down in the US (p. 108). Again, along the lines of conflict in world politics, we witness the struggle of different political identities. As with other identities, politicised ones are constructed in relation to some socially recognised difference. In other words, the existence of difference is constitutive of identity. The consolidation of identity is realised through the construction of otherness. However, how identity is lived and how it is defined through the consideration of other identities can become a problematic situation ([4], p. 26).

The relationship between difference and identity established by Connolly has been theorised by social psychologists within the framework of group categorisation and social identity theory. Social identity theory and self-categorisation theory, developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner on the basis of various empirical studies, argue that social identity arises from cognitive and motivational differentiators. The theory posits that individuals define, evaluate and classify themselves in terms of the social group to which they belong, and as a result of this classification, they identify strongly with the group. Identification forms social identity. In other words, social identity theory emphasises group membership and states that individuals create a negative or positive social identity for themselves by comparing the group to which they belong with other groups. In many of their studies, Tajfel and his colleagues agree on the following idea: The mere existence of belonging to two different groups (in-group and out-group), that is social categorisation in itself, is sufficient to trigger intergroup discrimination in favour of the in-group ([6], p. 59; [7], pp. 5–6). In-group favouritism and intergroup discrimination persist even if the categorisation or classification, however trivial and temporary, is clearly based on an arbitrary basis ([8], p. 49). This is referred to as the *minimal group paradigm* and corresponds to one of the most important components of social identity theory. In in-group favouritism, the maximum difference is more important to members than maximum in-group gain. Therefore, group members prefer to compare their group with the out-group

and compete with them rather than engage in activities that will increase the profit of other members ([6], pp. 56–57; [8], pp. 27–30). Comparison is the only tool for individuals to grasp the meaning and value of the group to which they feel they belong ([9], p. 189). Members of the in-group make comparisons with similar others ([6], p. 60). Both the above theories attribute the causes of intergroup conflict to unrealistic reasons. For example, according to Tajfel's minimal group paradigm, even if the in-group member does not know the out-group members, he/she will take a position through the group to which he/she belongs. As has already been pointed out, in this theory group membership alone is sufficient for out-group discrimination.

Although social identity theory provides critical explanations of issues such as group formation, group membership and social comparison, it has not received sufficient attention in both political science and conflict resolution literature for many years. In fact, it can be argued that political psychology has been somewhat distant from this theory, despite the fact that identity politics and identity-related policies are defining, changing and transforming the political sphere in the contemporary world ([2], p. 128). Although it uses a framework largely determined by modernity such as the empirical study of groups and their dynamics, the production of knowledge in this context and the explanation of identities as fluid and situationally changeable structures, this theory is well suited to understanding conflict and its cognitive and psychological causes. Studies that refer to this theory when investigating peace and conflict point out that in-group members feel good about themselves and strive to enhance their social identity (at the expense of excluding out-group members) ([10], p. 496; [11], p. 137). When negative social identities are revealed or reinforced as a result of comparison, the level and intensity of intergroup conflict and disagreement may increase.

For many years, contemporary conflict resolution literature has assumed that conflicts between macro-actors can be resolved by tactical and strategic means. However, peace refers to socio-political and psycho-political situations. Therefore, understanding the cultural, social and political identities of the conflicting groups, or their culture as a whole, and being able to read the dynamics of the groups is indispensable for effective peacebuilding. In this way, it is possible to analyse the conflict well. In fact, the identities held by the conflicting groups, their efforts to recognise or deny each other and the policies they produce in this direction remind us that the issue of identity should be treated meticulously in peace studies. In this sense, it is important to understand the theory of social identity and to include it in analyses. The fact that the modern mind visualises identities as a phenomenon that can be chosen or acquired ([2], pp. 137–138) explains the presentation of social identities as fluid, situational and socially constructed structures. However, ethnic and religious (and similar) identities, which are largely inherited, that is ascribed and therefore taken for granted, are described as fixed, resistant to change, rigid and strong identities. The picture that emerges from peace processes is that the recognition of singular group identities potentially keeps the cause or possibility of conflict alive. Therefore, social change and social mobility, that is the fluidity of identity emphasised by social identity theory, may be difficult for identities with a challenging character. Although transitions between identities may not be easy in the establishment of a common identity that is created with an inclusive and new consensus, it may be possible to create a new identity that does not destroy but transcends them. So what is the contribution of reading the construction of this inclusive collective identity through the *common in-group identity model*? As emphasised earlier, the first and most important reason for considering social identity theory as one of the approaches to conflict resolution

is that this theory (along with social comparison theory) allows us to explain conflict, its source and its causes from an alternative perspective. However, CIIM, which can be loosely described as a critical reading of social identity theory, will mean looking at the relationship between identity and peace from a different perspective. Here, there is a vision of an inclusive collective identity.

1.2 A new theoretical framework for peacebuilding: the common in-group identity model

When we talk about macro-conflicts, including the case of this chapter, we are largely referring to ethnic, religious or similar political identities with sharp boundaries, hard and difficult to penetrate shells. Insisting on these identities as the main actors in peace processes (recognition) or ignoring existing political identities and presenting the constitutional identity as the collective identity are some of the effective barriers to sustainable peace. Instead, actions, such as breaking down prejudices, revealing or creating partnerships that contribute to coexistence, and increasing the number of spaces for encounters, are indispensable for the contact between identities or the creation of a new and commonly accepted identity. Of course, it is not easy for groups that have had an antagonistic relationship with negative emotions during the period of conflict to make a new and inclusive 'we' possible. However, when we read the peace literature with the theoretical underpinning of social psychology, we find alternatives that can make this possible.

The model on which this chapter is based is the common in-group identity model, which defends an inclusive identity beyond multiple identities. This model aims to evolve group perceptions of 'us' and 'them' towards a more inclusive and new 'we' ([12]: p. 3; [13]: p. 5). This model was developed using social categorisation and social identity theory. CIIM is a model that provides a theoretical framework for reducing intergroup prejudice and improving intergroup relations. It is well known that social categorisation divides groups into in-groups and out-groups or us and them [7, 8]. As a result, group members have more positive feelings towards members of their own group and develop prejudices or stereotypes towards the out-group ([14], p. 5). Prejudice arising from categorisation represents a pro-ingroup orientation rather than an anti-outgroup orientation. That is, prejudice is not necessarily characterised by contempt, hostility or aggression ([12], p. 3), so both out-groups and in-groups can be viewed positively. However, because the in-group is treated more favourably, in-group favouritism inevitably leads to intergroup discrimination. In several studies, Dovidio et al. argue that for prejudice to change or disappear, the social categorisation that enables it must be rethought.

The strategy in CIIM is *recategorisation*, not *categorisation* based on social identity and social comparison, or *decategorisation* that emphasises individual qualities. This means that instead of different group members coding themselves as two separate groups, they see themselves as a single inclusive superordinate identity. The aim of this model is to reduce prejudice by redefining who is an in-group member ([14], p. 6). Gaertner et al. [12] evaluate this recategorisation in terms of political identities and argue, for example, that the component that should be targeted in order to eliminate highly visible black-white racism is 'white favouritism'. This is because, according to them, the divergence and prejudice between the two races does not stem from whites developing anti-black attitudes but from whites adopting pro-white attitudes. Therefore, this categorisation needs to be reformulated (p. 6). The creation of a single group representation to resolve intergroup conflict has been supported by empirical

research in social psychology. However, it is at this point that important criticisms of this model should be voiced. The first and strongest criticism is as follows: The creation of inclusive shared identities as a result of interventions may produce unstable super-identities or identities that fail and exacerbate intergroup conflict. Another criticism can be expressed as follows: Singular inclusive identities can threaten group members' need to see themselves as unique and different from others ([14], pp. 6–7). These criticisms led the CIIM researchers to propose a new type of recategorisation. Dovidio calls this a new type as *dual identity*. *Dual identity* involves the simultaneous activation of existing subgroup identities and a common in-group identity, for example Korean American. In clinical studies conducted by Dovidio et al. [14], it was found that members of ethnic and racial groups who identified with dual identities had more positive attitudes and behaviours towards other similar groups than those who identified with subgroup identities only (p. 7).

1.3 Afghan, Afghani and Peshun: Different identity models and peacebuilding in Afghanistan

As in many examples around the world, identity crises run parallel in deeply divided societies such as Northern Ireland, South Africa and Afghanistan. Intra-ethnic and inter-ethnic divisions are the two main categories in which these crises can be read. In Northern Ireland, for example, there is an ongoing division between unionists (Protestants/British) and nationalists (Catholics/Irish), which allows for a ethno-religious differentiation of identity, and the internal cliquing and factionalisation of these two groups. A similar situation (centered on race and ethnicity) exists between and within the two groups of blacks and whites, the main dividing line in South Africa. In Afghanistan, on the other hand, there is a different kind of division from the other two examples. In this case, where ethnic identity crowds out national identity, there are many ethnic groups that are in major and minor conflict with each other. There is also an Afghan identity that is trying to assert itself as the supreme identity, but which does not correspond to the 'we' identity meant by the CIIM. In fact, the main line of conflict in Afghanistan is between Pashtuns and other ethnic groups. Therefore, the Afghan identity, which is equated with the Pashtun¹, is not an inclusive identity. In addition, there are different tribes in Afghanistan that define themselves by belonging to the same ethnic groups. The struggles and conflicts between them have a significant impact on the social and political sphere. So how is it possible to work out multiple ethnic identities, an inclusive Afghan identity and a new identity that can be presented from the perspective of CIIM in peacebuilding in Afghanistan?

Ethno-political divisions are the main axis of the intra-Afghan conflict, which has turned Afghanistan, founded by Ahmad Shah Durrani in 1747 who unified the Pashtun tribes, into a place of conflict and has its roots in resistance to colonialism. Pashtunism, encoded in the founding of the state, is the main factor deepening this internal conflict. In addition to the Pashtuns, there are many other ethnic groups, large and small, living in the country, notably Tajiks, Uzbeks and Hazaras. Within almost every ethnic group, there are tribes and clans of varying influence and size. This tribal and ethnic structure is accompanied by linguistic diversity. As a result, loyalty to tribe, clan or ethnic identity is more prevalent in Afghanistan than loyalty to

¹ The Durand Line, drawn by the British colonial state between Afghanistan and Pakistan in 1893, also divided the Pashtuns. It left about 14 million Pashtuns on the Pakistani side and about 13 million on the Afghan side. They live in an area of about 2,400 km on the border between the two states ([15], p. 7).

the state. In this context, ethnic rather than national consciousness grows, and groups that rebel or claim to resist the state rely on certain ethnic groups. Almost all legal or illegal organisations survive with the support of an ethnic group. This has been going on for many years. For example, after Dawood Khan's failed coup in 1975, the Muslim Youth organisation split into two, with the Pashtuns forming the Hizb-e-Islami organisation led by Gulbuddin Hekmetyar and the Tajiks forming the Jamat-e-Islami organisation led by Burhaneddin Rabbani [16–18]. The Taliban movement, one of the parties to the recent Afghan-led and Afghan-own negotiations, is also one of the organisations supported by the Pashtuns.

The Afghan conflict is multi-actor, multi-faceted, complex and fragile. It is simultaneously a drug, ethnic, religious (to a lesser extent), regional and international conflict. The intra-state conflict revolves around two issues: *Who has the right to govern the state* and *how to ensure equal political representation*. To put it more succinctly, the fundamental issue(s) that characterise the Afghan conflict are political representation and the distribution of power in governance. This also corresponds to the question of which ethnic group should control the state administration. Parallel with many assumptions of social identity theory, ethnic identities can continue to exist here without changing or disintegrating. But it is precisely for this reason that they are too rigid, sensitive and inflexible. In-group favouritism and out-group discrimination are visible and violent because belonging to an ethnic group is more important than any other personal, individual or even national identity.

Afghanistan's religiously, linguistically and ethnically heterogeneous society has been in a state of conflict for many years. There are many large and small ethnic communities living in the country, as well as Shia and Sunni Muslims (the vast majority are Hanafi) as well as small Hindu and Christian communities. Although some scholars argue that religious identity (Islam) can be the unifying identity of the communities, in fact, religious identity is much weaker here. Although there is occasional friction between Shia and Sunni groups, the main line of conflict is between ethnic groups. The Hazaras, for example, are predominantly Shia (although a small number are Sunni) and face severe persecution, particularly from the Pashtuns, because of this identity, but members of this group identify themselves by ethnicity rather than sect ([19], p. 670). In other words, this group does not identify itself as Shia or Sunni, but only as Hazara ([18], p. 9). Similar to the conflict period, where ethnic identity dominates both national and religious identities, the peace process has also been based on ethnicity in Afghanistan. More specifically, in all efforts since the Murree peace talks, one side has been represented by the Taliban (i.e. Pashtuns) and the other by the government, but all discussions have been based on the position and rights of ethnic groups. In fact, the main axis of the Afghan conflict is not politico-religious, but ethno-political (ethnic structures).

In Afghanistan, ethnic differences have a structure that divides and, in some cases, pits social groups against each other. The multiplicity of ethnicities and the hostility of each ethnic element towards the others have made the conflict in this geography sustainable and prevented the formation of a national consciousness. The weak authority of the state has not been able to erode ethnic identities. As a result, national identity does not have a meaningful place in Afghanistan as an inclusive identity. While ethnic attachment is very strong, there are also claims that national identity is shaped around religion (here meaning Islam) and that religious identity can be seen as the basis for legitimising state identity. However, according to Ehsan [20], such competing comparisons of ethnic and national identity are leaving deep scars on the nation-building process in Afghanistan (p. 119).

According to the UN, the total population of Afghanistan in 2024 will be 43,372,950.² The proportion of ethnic groups in this population (as there is no regular census, different data can be found in different sources) is approximately 42% Pashtun, 27% Tajik, 9% Uzbek, 9% Hazara, 4% Aimak, 3% Turkmen, 2% Baluchi and 4% other. It is possible to find different figures in different studies on both the population and ethnic groups of Afghanistan. While William Maley mentions the existence of at least 55 ethnic groups, the Afghan constitution lists 14 ethnic groups. The ethnic groups listed in the constitution are Pashtun, Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek, Turkmen, Baluch, Pachaie, Nuristani, Aymaq (Aimak/Oymak), Arab, Qirghiz, Kizilbash, Gujur, Brahwi and other tribes³ [23]. The country's Muslim population is 99.7% (84.7–89.7% Sunni, 10–15% Shia), with the remaining 0.3% ([18], p. 9). The country's ethnic differences are accompanied by linguistic differences. In addition to Dari or Afghan Persian, Pashto, Uzbek, Turkmen, English, Arabic, etc., are spoken. These linguistic and ethnic differences, which nourish ethnic identity, are among the reasons for the disruption of the nation-state structure ([24], p. 381).

In Afghanistan, which has been the scene of various conflicts since its inception (since 1747), the struggles of groups in the political arena are closely linked to ethnicity. Although Islamic religious identity seems to be a unifying super-identity, the main identity that determines, influences and changes the sociology and political sphere of this society is ethnic identity. The Pashtuns, the most powerful of the dominant ethnic groups, consist of a large tribal group (the largest tribes being Ghilzali and Durrani) and are distinguished from other Afghan ethnic groups by their *Pashto* language and *Pashtunwali* lifestyle (a culture based on Islamic traditions and values) ([15], pp. 9–10). As a powerful ethnic group, they also dominate political life. For almost two centuries, a significant proportion of Afghanistan's rulers have been Pashtuns. Not only the ruling elite of the state but also, for example, almost all the representatives of the Afghan government and the Taliban, who are expected to negotiate an Afghan-led peace deal, are Pashtuns [25]. On 15 August 2021, the Taliban regained control of Afghanistan and the interim government, which is expected to be formed on a more inclusive basis, is also Pashtun. When it came to the possibility of a complete US withdrawal from the region as a result of the peace agreement, representatives of other ethnic groups in parliament were concerned that the post-withdrawal distribution of political power would favour the Taliban and indeed the Pashtuns. After all, today it is known that in Afghanistan, both women and other ethnic groups do not participate in the social and political spheres, and there are even serious restrictions, especially on women [26]. When the Taliban announced the representatives of the interim government in August 2021, the US expressed serious concerns about inclusiveness [27]. However, the fact that the term 'Afghan', which has never been inclusive of other ethnic groups, means 'Pashtun' ([20], p. 122), that Afghanistan is referred to as 'Pashtun homeland/land' rather than 'Afghan homeland' ([18], p. 8; [16], p. 24), and that the ethnic group on which the Taliban are based is Pashtun, explains the current policies, bans, Taliban in-group prejudices and out-group discrimination.

Because of this association (Pashtun equals Afghan), non-Pashtuns do not want the word Afghan to be used for all citizens of the country. In the pre-2001 period, ethnic identities became too rigid and sensitive due to the hostile relations that developed, and the Taliban equated being Afghan or being Pashtun. Some of the

² For further information see, Ref. [21].

³ Ref. [22].

new and unifying terms proposed by representatives of different ethnic groups in the Afghan parliament, which was active before the Taliban's return to power, include 'Afghani' or 'Afghanistani' ([16], p. 24). This new common ground refers to the recategorisation of the CIIM. This would create a common in-group identity and a more egalitarian ground where no one feels under Pashtun domination. Such a new common and inclusive identity could also open a new door in the formation of national consciousness. If you ask an Afghan who he is, the first identity that comes to mind is his ethnic identity; therefore, if you ask him who he is, he will tell you his ethnic identity, not his national identity. However, a shared identity (e.g. Afghan) that is produced in an environment where things are discussed on an equal basis, such as a peace process, and with a common consensus, can, over time, produce a change in social perception, as it creates a new 'we'. In fact, the fourth article of the Afghan constitution defines citizenship, or national identity, as inclusive: 'National sovereignty in Afghanistan belongs to the nation, manifested directly and through its elected representatives. The nation of Afghanistan consists of all those who hold Afghan citizenship. The word Afghan includes all citizens of Afghanistan. No one from the nation of Afghanistan can be deprived of citizenship' [22]. In other words, in a commonisation based on citizenship, Afghan, according to the constitution, meant a citizen of Afghanistan. But Pashtun hegemony is also at work in the new era of the Taliban. It is obvious that, in the recent period, the distance between society and the state is short for Pashtuns, but too long for other ethnic groups. According to Chris Johnson and Jolyon Leslie [28], who have conducted research on Afghanistan, the fact that ethnic groups in Afghanistan (with the exception of the Hazaras) continue to see themselves as Afghans and do not settle in other states, even though they have the opportunity to join their compatriots in neighbouring countries, is an important indication of the existence of a national consciousness (p. 135). So, the term Afghan has the potential to be a common identity that encompasses all citizens. However, these researchers also found in their studies that adherence to the term they proposed was not strong in all parts of the country. Moreover, according to Ali Balçi [24], the official Afghan state does not imply the integration of the state and the nation (p. 380). During the Taliban period, we encounter a relatively harsh rule. While this group runs the state, it does so according to Sharia law and under Pashtun rule. This eliminates the public visibility of many ethnic and religious identities. Although it tried to impose discipline through legal rules and religious punishments, the Taliban could not develop a sense of nationhood because it was based on a particular ethnic group. However, in the period Balçi refers to, between 2001 and 2020, the state was too weak to even use the apparatus of violence. Therefore, there was no favourable ground for national identity and consciousness to prevail.

2. Conclusion

Clancy and Nagle [1], working on the creation of a shared public identity in divided societies, note that the effort to create a society that has succeeded in unity corresponds to the effort to create a society of shared values. In order to build a sustainable peace, it is necessary to create a shared society. In such a society of shared values, the public sphere becomes a space where conflict can be peacefully transformed if it is possible to unite the whole society around a higher political identity, even if its members have different ethnic or national identities (p. 79).

Conversely, Amartya Sen, in *Identity and Violence: Illusions of Destiny*, argues that when plural identities are ignored and singular identities are preferred, this unique and seemingly unchanging identity (illusion of identity) feeds and perpetuates conflict and violence in the world. One of the main sources of conflict potential is the assumption that people can be grouped into unique categories based on religion and culture. 'The sense of identification with one group of people can, with appropriate provocation, become a powerful weapon for brutalising another group' ([29], p. 15). In the relationship that the thinker establishes between identity and violence, one does not exclude the other. In other words, the condition for peace does not exist without an identity-free attitude. Sen mentions that identities can sometimes be very effective unifiers, enriching the space in which they exist. Therefore, he states that the idea that we are different from each other in various ways is more plausible than the belief that we are all very similar to each other. According to him [29], 'the hope for peace in today's world is not to be found in confining ourselves to small boxes, but rather in recognising the plurality of belonging and using our reason as common inhabitants of a larger world' (p. 17).

These two lines are the axes on which identity debates are based in the literature on peacebuilding and conflict resolution. However, as it has been argued above, and as the example of Afghanistan will demonstrate, both singular identities representing the conflictual state of the past (such as Afghan identity) and multiple identities based on the legitimacy of individual ethnic identities (such as Pashtun, Hazara, Uzbek, etc., identities) are not identities that reduce or eliminate intergroup prejudice and discrimination in peacemaking. It is only through the simultaneous activation of a new and inclusive overarching identity such as Afghani, as proposed by non-Pashtuns during the peace process, and its associated sub-identities, that a new Afghan-led and Afghan-own peace, which will hopefully begin in Afghanistan in the future, can be a crucial element in the peace process. An inclusive identity based on *dual identity* can also break down or soften the more rigid and sensitive political intergroup conflicts and prejudices. Moreover, such an identity has a theoretical framework that can serve to make peace sustainable.

However, if the theory of Dovidio and Gaertner in the axis of peace between macro-actors is considered, it is necessary to add the following: The sub-identities that the dual identity model prefers to protect are conflicting identities that are in conflict with each other or that take positions according to the distinction between us and them, and yes, a super-identity that assimilates or denies them can make groups insecure and lead to various conflicts in the future. Therefore, it makes sense to protect and recognise these identities. However, the super-identity that is expected to be activated simultaneously with these sub-identities should not be one of the super-identity constructs of the conflict period. This is because identities are also powerful symbols as linguistic expressions and the conflict period accumulates many meanings in the baggage of these symbols. It is very difficult to eliminate these meanings, which are associated with negative emotions, with a peace agreement alone. This is because culture and cultural units are formed over time, transformed into mental constructs and thought of in relational terms. The construct of peace, however, needs a completely new super-identity that does not allow the in-group favouritism and out-group prejudice of the conflict period to be felt. For this reason, the dual identity is based on a new super-identity created in the peace process and with a common consensus.

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Chapter 2

Emerging Multilateral Cooperation and Reshaping Alliances in East Asia since the Late 1960s

Junghoon Lee

Abstract

Since the late 1960s, the East Asian allies of the United States (U.S.) have prioritized security strategies based on the principles of “self-reliance” or “self-help.” Although the Republic of Korea (ROK, or South Korea), which was threatened by conventional arms from the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (North Korea), the context of “self-reliance” basically implies that nations are responsible for their own security requirements unless they are confronted with a potential nuclear threat. This was triggered by the Nixon shock of 1969, which resulted in a reduction of U.S. troops stationed in South Korea; however, nuclear weapons continued to be deployed. These U.S. troop reductions also occurred in Japan, but the changes in U.S. troop deployment differed. Several years after the Nixon administration, the U.S. government removed all troops and nuclear weapons from the Republic of China (ROC, or Taiwan). These adjustments were part of Nixon’s broader aim of global détente, leading to enhanced relations between the U.S. and the People’s Republic of China (China). Under these circumstances, each country pursued its national interests in different ways while striving for “self-reliance,” which sometimes included the development of its own nuclear weapons programs. Additionally, South Korea attempted to establish a framework for multilateral cooperation but was unsuccessful in achieving a multilateral security agreement. This chapter explores the transformation of bilateral alliances and multilateral cooperation in response to changes in the regional security environment. It utilizes previous studies and documents on the Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) and links them to the following examination of the historicity of multilateralism in East Asia.

Keywords: alliances, foreign policy, military détente, multilateral cooperation, self-reliance

1. Introduction

From its earliest days, the Nixon administration advocated for a policy of global détente, which involved disengagement from the Vietnam War and its related issues. During President Nixon’s visit to Guam, he articulated that “as far as the problems of military defense, except for the threat of a major power involving nuclear weapons, that the U.S. is going to encourage and has a right to expect that this problem will

be handled by, and responsibility for it taken by, the Asian nations themselves [1].” While there were differing interpretations of Nixon’s stance, it should be clarified that it did not signify a complete withdrawal of the U.S. Rather, it signified an intention to reduce costs and risks in the region while urging Asian allies to bolster their own self-reliance or self-help capabilities.

The reduction in U.S. military forces and nuclear deployments was accompanied by the promotion of each country’s self-reliance efforts in bilateral relations. Notwithstanding, every nation pursued its individual national interests in unique ways, striving for “self-reliance.” For instance, South Korea and Taiwan’s efforts to enhance their relations with China faced challenges, while Japan and the U.S. seemed to have counterproductive results in this regard. China’s “One-China” policy could have made it difficult for Taiwan to welcome any progress in the relationship between the U.S. and China or Japan and China, implying that it may have been challenging for Taiwan to accept any such improvements. In contrast, South Korea had the option of coordinating with Japan and the U.S. in dealing with China while maintaining hostile relations with the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (North Korea). Uniquely, South Korea has been active in the construction of a multilateral security framework that is inclusive of non-communist countries.

In the following section, we discuss the transformation in the security landscape driven by the U.S., including the reduction of U.S. forces stationed in East Asia’s Allied countries of Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan, changes in the deployment of nuclear weapons, and the establishment of a regional framework for multilateral cooperation in Asia, influenced by South Korean initiatives in the 1960s. As we assess the regional developments from the latter part of that decade onwards, we will analyze the responses of the involved countries from diverse angles. The methods used to develop this chapter were informed by a variety of literature sources and government reports in order to provide a thorough and qualitative analysis.

2. The ongoing relationship hidden from public view

In August and September 1948, two separate governments were established on the Korean Peninsula. By December 1949, Chiang Kai-shek’s government had relocated the capital of the Republic of China to Taipei. This event marked the beginning of the Cold War confrontation with East Asia; It is noteworthy, however, that no U.S. combat troops were stationed in Taiwan at the time. When the Korean War broke out, Taiwan expressed its desire to participate but ultimately opted not to intervene directly. During the war, the U.S. deployed the Seventh Fleet to the Taiwan Strait, to prevent further escalation of the conflict, and utilized the region for logistical support. Taiwan played a supportive role by assisting UN forces and accommodating some Chinese prisoners of war due to Chinese involvement in the conflict. In addition, “the U.S. established a defense command in Taipei and sent a Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) to Taiwan under the command of a two-star general [2].” For a period following this, U.S. forces remained stationed in Taiwan, albeit with a limited number of troops.

According to the Global U.S. Troop Deployment, 1950–2005 by Tim Kane,

America positioned thousands of troops in Hong Kong and Taiwan, starting abruptly in 1954. At their peak in 1957, there were 4539 American soldiers in Hong Kong, which were quickly drawn down to levels of 290 and then 26 over the next 2 years.

The situation was similar in Taiwan, with a sudden buildup from 811 to 4174 troops in 1954, with levels peaking in 1958 at 19,000 and then stabilizing between 4000 and 10,000 until 1977 [3].

When compared to the 1954 Taiwan Strait Crisis, it becomes apparent that a larger number of U.S. troops were deployed during the 1958 crisis. However, following the resolution of the crisis, the number of U.S. troops stationed in Taiwan decreased. This trend extends beyond Taiwan and aligns with the overall decrease in the number of U.S. troops deployed overseas.

The number of U.S. troops stationed overseas witnessed fluctuations, notably with a surge during a large-scale U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War, followed by a reduction due to policy shifts by the Nixon administration. Based on data from David Coleman’s “U.S. Military Personnel 1954–2014,” also depicted in **Figure 1**, the highest number of U.S. troops was recorded in 1968 at 3,547,902. However, this number began to decline when the Nixon administration implemented an exit strategy during the Vietnam War. The number of U.S. troops decreased to 2,081,910, with the most significant personnel reduction occurring in the Army, which decreased from 1,570,343 in 1968 to 779,417 in 1976 during the Nixon administration. During the same period, the Navy decreased from 765,457 to 524,678, the Marine Corps decreased from 307,252 to 192,399, and the Air Force decreased from 904,850 to 585,416. These changes occurred at the end of the Vietnam War and continued after [4].

In January 1979, the U.S. formally recognized the People’s Republic of China as the legitimate government and terminated official diplomatic relations with Taiwan [5]. This decision has had significant implications for U.S.-Taiwan military ties. The United States Taiwan Defense Command (USTDC) “formally lowered its flag on April 26, 1979. One year after the break in diplomatic relations, the Carter administration terminated the U.S.-ROC Mutual Defense Treaty” [6]. Maintenance of unofficial relations with Taiwan and the U.S. was ensured when Congress passed the *Taiwan Relations Act of 1979*. The act emphasized the U.S. commitment to assist Taiwan in maintaining its self-defense capabilities, which became a cornerstone of U.S.-Taiwan relations. As part of this commitment, arms were provided [7]. It is worthy of consideration, that the U.S. maintains unofficial relations with Taiwan, and there is no

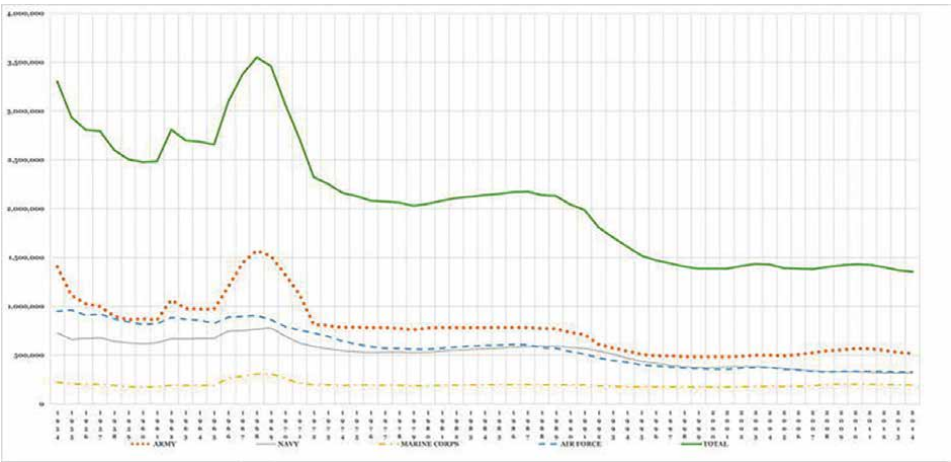


Figure 1.
U.S. military personnel 1954–2014.

permanent U.S. military presence on the island [8]. Therefore, “all American forces were pulled out in 1979, in a withdrawal that clearly began in 1973, after President Richard Nixon’s diplomatic opening with the People’s Republic of China” [3]. U.S. policy toward Taiwan has evolved over the years, reflecting changes in the geopolitical landscape and the dynamics of U.S.-China relations.

With reference to nuclear weapons in Taiwan, the U.S. government announced that nuclear weapons could be used during the first Taiwan Strait Crisis in early March 1955 [9]. However, “the Eisenhower administration considered many options, ranging from convincing Chiang Kai-shek to giving up the Islands to employing nuclear weapons against the PRC. To ease tensions, concern about [sic] the very real possibility of war with the U.S., or changes in internal politics” [10]. The decision to use nuclear weapons is complex and influenced by various factors, including the global geopolitical situation and the potential consequences of nuclear escalation. The U.S. likely refrained from using nuclear weapons to avoid conflict with China and the Soviet Union and to prevent nuclear war. Diplomacy and conventional military measures were prioritized, to deal with the situation, without resorting to nuclear escalation.

During the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis, when Kinmen (also known as Quemoy) was under attack by China, the U.S. explored the option of utilizing nuclear weapons. Richard D. Fisher, Jr. writes, “in response to the 1958 Taiwan Strait crisis, which included massive Chinese artillery shelling and aerial combat, the U.S. Air Force briefly deployed 20 kiloton nuclear warhead armed with MGM-1 Matador cruise missiles to Taiwan” [11]. However, the decision not to use nuclear weapons during the second crisis was influenced by several factors. The mutual assured destruction in the Cold War context, between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, as the two superpowers, instilled caution in both sides when it came to provoking a nuclear conflict. The use of nuclear weapons had the potential to escalate tensions and result in widespread, catastrophic wars. The U.S. responded to the crisis using diplomatic efforts and conventional military means, avoiding the use of nuclear weapons, to maintain stability and prevent a more extensive global conflict.

There is currently no widely accepted evidence to support the claim that the U.S. deployed a nuclear arsenal in Taiwan. However, as per Hans Kristensen’s study, it has been suggested that nuclear bombs were present in the region from January 1960 until July 1974 [12]. Contrastingly, Taiwan made serious efforts to develop its own nuclear weapons, mainly due to China’s nuclear test in October 1964. In a recent study, it was found that “around 1966, President Chiang directed Taiwan’s Chungshan Science Research Institute (or Chungshan Institute), under the Ministry of Defense, to draw up a specific plan for nuclear weapons development, which was titled “Plan Hsin Chu” or “Hsinchu Project” [13].

With reference to Taiwan’s nuclear weapons project, in 1974, the “CIA concluded that Taiwan was working toward a nuclear weapon capability and would be capable of producing a nuclear weapon within 5 years” [14]. The nation signed the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in July 1968, which was ratified by the government 2 years later [15]. In January 1979, with the normalization of diplomatic relations between the U.S. and China, all military presence in Taiwan, including nuclear weapons, was withdrawn. Taiwan’s “self-reliance” efforts may have also grown, especially regarding the nuclear project [16]. However, “there is no evidence that Taiwan has pursued a nuclear weapons capability since the U.S. shut down its program in 1988 (or even thought about pursuing one);” [17] according to a recent study, Taiwan cooperated with the U.S. for denuclearization in 1998. Additionally, “a U.S. team of specialists arrived in Taipei to implement and verify the denuclearization” in

1988. Work was well underway toward denuclearization, and Taiwan finally decided to dismantle its nuclear weapons program as “irreversible” [13]. The usefulness of the U.S. nuclear umbrella, however, remains unclear. Taiwan’s future security is closely tied to the trajectory of U.S.-China relations. Additionally, as of 2023, there have been reports of approximately 200 U.S. military advisors present in Taiwan, although the government has not officially confirmed this information [18].

Prior to Taiwan’s efforts toward complete denuclearization, a significant exchange occurred between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. The Reykjavik Summit was held on October 11–12, 1986, when US President Ronald Reagan and Soviet Communist Party General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev met in Reykjavik, Iceland. The U.S. intended to discuss human rights and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan during the talks, while the Soviet Union primarily focused on arms control. Unfortunately, the conversation broke down at the last minute. Although the Reykjavik meeting did not achieve its ultimate goal, it retained its place among the most significant historical events. Following the meeting, the U.S. and the Soviet Union signed crucial agreements that marked the end of the Cold War. The first was the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF), which mandated the liquidation of all nuclear weapons by both sides 1 year after the Reykjavik talks. The Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), signed during the presidency of H.W. Bush, prohibited the deployment of 6000 nuclear warheads, 1600 intercontinental ballistic missiles, and bombers [19]. Cooperation in nuclear disarmament between the U.S. and the Soviet Union had a significant impact on the situation on the Korean Peninsula, as will be discussed later.

3. United States primary alliances

The history of U.S. military presence in Japan is both lengthy and complex, primarily because of the aftermath of World War II and the U.S. occupation and security regime in Japan. General Douglas MacArthur served as the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP), also known as the General Headquarters (GHQ) in Japan and played a crucial role in shaping postwar Japan [20]. By the end of 1945, approximately 430,000 American soldiers were stationed throughout the country [21]. As the Cold War confrontation in East Asia took shape, there was a shift in U.S. policy toward Japan. In September 1951, with the exception of a few countries, the allies signed the Treaty of Peace with Japan, which officially ended Allied occupation and restored Japan’s sovereignty. According to data from the Japan Defense Agency (JDA) in 1982, approximately 26,000 U.S. troops were present in Japan during the post-war occupation by the GHQ when the treaty took effect in April 1952 [22]. In 2007, the JDA was officially changed to the Ministry of Defense. In addition, the Korean War resulted in the establishment of the Police Reserve Corps, in August 1950, which later became the Self-Defense Force in July 1954.

Throughout the Cold War, Japan played a pivotal role in the U.S. defense strategy within the Asia-Pacific region. The U.S. military maintained a significant presence in Japan, encompassing its bases and facilities, as part of its commitment to regional security. In particular, U.S. troops were stationed in Okinawa, which remained occupied despite the peace treaty and served as a significant hub for U.S. military personnel and bases. The presence of the U.S. military in Okinawa has been a source of tension in U.S.-Japan relations. This has resulted in various agreements and negotiations over the years, to address the concerns of the local population. During negotiations regarding the Okinawa reversion, the Nixon administration accomplished its

primary objective of reaching an agreement on the future status of Okinawa. This alleviated the concerns of both the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who were apprehensive about Okinawa returning to Japanese control. It is important to consider the potential cost of the U.S. capacity to fulfill its political and military commitments in East Asia, as well as the concerns of the Japanese public. The Japanese people hold strong sentiments against militarization, nuclear weapons, and the U.S. presence, and it is crucial to acknowledge and address these concerns. As expected, the primary documentation of Okinawa's reversion to the U.S. was produced by government departments specializing in national security and foreign policy. Simultaneously with the ongoing negotiations, in 1969, the U.S. military presence in Japan was primarily composed of marines, comprising roughly half of the total U.S. military presence [22].

As the Nixon administration changed its foreign policy and actively promoted it, the number of troops stationed in the country dropped to approximately 26,500 in 1971, marking its lowest level historically. Among the East Asian Alliance countries, Japan has consistently hosted the largest number of U.S. troops for many decades. As of 2019, there were approximately 56,100 U.S. forces stationed in Japan, including approximately 20,500 marines [23]. U.S. troops continue to be stationed in Japan as part of the U.S.-Japan security alliance. The number and distribution of U.S. troops in Japan may be subject to adjustments and negotiations between the two countries.

The atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 has been a significant event in US-Japan relations. In 1948, during the escalation of the U.S.-Soviet conflict, the U.S. provided Britain with a weapons system that was capable of carrying nuclear weapons. This marked the first time the U.S. deployed a nuclear weapons system outside the country [24]. Shortly after the onset of the Korean War, on July 1, 1950, the Truman administration decided to deploy non-nuclear components to Guam, with the potential capability to incorporate nuclear warheads [25]. In 1954, the U.S. deployed its first nuclear weapons in Japan, although this was never officially confirmed or documented. The Federation of American Scientists (FAS) report states that between 1954 and 1972, Okinawa hosted 19 different types of nuclear weapons, with the bulk of them stored at the Henoko Ordnance Ammunition Depot adjacent to Camp Schwab and the Kadena Ammunition Storage Area. From 1954 to 1972 [26]. During the Cold War, the U.S. extended its nuclear umbrella to its allies, including Japan, to deter potential adversaries in the Asia-Pacific region, notably the Soviet Union and China [27]. The U.S. implemented a “nuclear sharing” arrangement that involved placing American nuclear weapons at various bases in Japan, including Okinawa and mainland Japan. These weapons were intended for use by the U.S. and Allied forces in the event of a conflict, or to deter nuclear war. The details of the number and types of nuclear weapons, as well as their specific locations in Japan, were kept secret, and the U.S. maintained a policy of neither confirming nor denying the presence of such weapons [28].

In the late 1960s, as mentioned above, Taiwan, stimulated by China's nuclear test, began to develop its own nuclear weapons. Japan also began the development of nuclear weapons when it was certain that there would be a regime change in the U.S. Green and Furukawa reported that, between the late 1960s and the early 1970s, two groups studied the possibility of Japan becoming a nuclear weapons state [14]. Furthermore, as the Nixon administration's détente policy progressed, the number of U.S. nuclear weapons within its East Asian allies' territories also saw a significant reduction. As shown in **Figure 2**, “By 1977, it had fallen to about 1200 warheads. Politically charged warheads were withdrawn from Japan, and the Philippines was denuclearized virtually in secret. The Strategic Air Command (SAC) reduced its presence in the Pacific, and U.S. warheads were withdrawn from Okinawa soon after

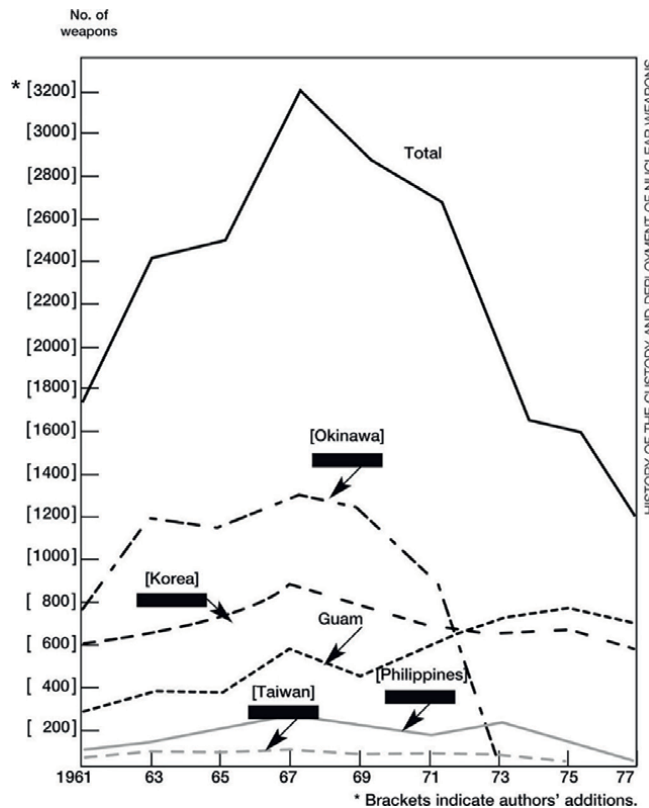


Figure 2.
Pacific deployments on shore.

reverting to Japan in 1972. By the end of the 1970s, only South Korea remained as a forward base for U.S. nuclear weapons” [25].

The issue of U.S. nuclear weapons in Japan has been a topic of public alarm and has led to protests due to concerns about safety and environmental implications. It is worth noting that the details and scope of these deployments have been the subject of historical research and declassification efforts. “At the height of the Vietnam War, approximately 1200 nuclear weapons were stored in Okinawa alone. A document published in 2017 shows that, in 1969, Japan officially consented to the U.S. bringing nuclear weapons to Okinawa” [26]. However, in 1993, Kei Wakaizumi published a book uncovering the truth behind the 1969 secret agreement, which ensured Okinawa’s return to Japanese jurisdiction in 1972. It was revealed that U.S. nuclear weapons could have been brought to Okinawa without being deployed [29]. The presence of nuclear weapons in Japan was not a permanent condition; rather, it was influenced by geopolitical factors and shifting U.S. defense policies.

4. Responding actively to “self-reliance” (partially due to geopolitical background)

The decrease in U.S. troops stationed overseas has been especially noticeable in South Korea. The presence of U.S. troops in South Korea has fluctuated since the end

of the Korean War, which has had a significant impact on the country. According to the report by Tim Kane, “Only 510 servicemen were based in South Korea in 1950, before the attack. U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) records show that 326,863 troops were deployed in South Korea in 1953, a number that stabilized between 50,000 and 60,000 in the 1960s and the 1970s” [3]. As previously stated, the decrease in the deployment of U.S. troops overseas coincided with the escalation of the Cold War.

The Nixon administration’s goal of ending the Vietnam War led to a reduction in the number of U.S. troops, which had increased as a result of the intervention. During this process, discussions also included a reduction in U.S. forces in South Korea. Despite complex negotiations, South Korea ultimately agreed to the reduction of U.S. forces. The U.S. and South Korea continued to negotiate regarding the reduction of U.S. troops, even after the Nixon administration took office. Ultimately, they agreed to reduce the number of South Korean troops to 20,000. Since 1973, “U.S. troop levels in South Korea have remained relatively constant at roughly 35,000 to 40,000” [30]. According to the World Bank, Japan’s population in 2022 was 125,124,989, while South Korea’s was 51,628,117 [31]. Considering the population of those countries, it can be inferred that the presence of U.S. troops in South Korea since the end of the Cold War has been maintained due to the country’s strategic importance. As an alternative to reducing its U.S. troop presence, South Korea requested further U.S. military assistance. Although the Nixon administration was open to considering this option, the U.S. government never fully supported a military build-up for South Korea. Nixon’s administration may have believed that the presence of some U.S. military and nuclear weapons would function as a deterrent against a potential invasion by North Korea.

During the Korean War, there was a debate about the use of nuclear weapons, indicating that the U.S. government was considering this option. President Truman’s response to a reporter’s question was, “That includes every weapon that we have,” to a reporter’s question, “Will that include the atomic bomb?” This indicates that the administration considered this option during the war [32]. While the possibility of the Korean War escalating into a nuclear conflict increased, due to the U.S. use of nuclear weapons [33], it has never come to that point, and nuclear weapons have not been used in a war since the bombing of Japan.

Meanwhile, in Korea, according to Kristensen and Norris, in “January 1958, the U.S. deployed four (or possibly five) nuclear weapon systems with approximately 150 warheads” [34]. Although the objective of preventing a second Korean War resulting from South Korea’s continued confrontation with North Korea cannot be denied, it is more appropriate to consider the placement of U.S. nuclear weapons in South Korea as a factor in the deepening Cold War confrontation. This could be further exacerbated by nuclear cooperation between China and the Soviet Union—in other words, the U.S.-China conflict in East Asia. The U.S. deployed nuclear weapons in South Korea, as part of its extended deterrence policy, to provide a nuclear umbrella for its allies in the region. These weapons were relatively small and low-yield, designed for battlefield use, and included artillery shells and short-range missiles.

This decision was influenced by the expansion of tactical and operational possibilities, as well as the timing of international political détente, including the U.S.-China and Japan-China approach at the time. South Korea’s self-reliance efforts have led to the development of its own nuclear weapons program and even caused conflicts with the U.S. Although South Korea continued to receive military and economic aid from the U.S., it aimed to increase the independence of its defense capabilities by developing its domestic defense industry. South Korea’s self-defense policy includes training military personnel, improving equipment and weapons, building a reserve

force, and developing nuclear weapons [35]. Regarding the latter, the U.S. maintained its nuclear umbrella policy. In 1972, President Park Chung-Hee secretly advanced a nuclear weapons program, which was eventually halted in 1977 due to President Carter's threat to terminate it [36]. During this period, South Korea did not ratify the NPT until April 1975 [37].

However, in an effort to improve relations with China, the U.S. began reducing nuclear weapons housed with its East Asian allies. "The number of U.S. tactical nuclear weapons in South Korea declined from approximately 640 in 1974 to 150 in 1982, a significant reduction for which there are different explanations" [33]. Notably, this reduction was not solely due to the expansion of tactical operational possibilities. In the realm of international politics, it is possible to consider the period of international political détente, such as the approaches taken by the U.S. toward China and Japan. As a result of broader geopolitical changes after the end of the Cold War, the removal of nuclear weapons from South Korea was completed in 1991. In the early 1990s, global efforts to reduce the number of nuclear weapons followed agreements between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, such as the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty of 1987 and the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I) of 1991 [38]. In 1991, President George H. W. Bush announced the withdrawal of all U.S. tactical nuclear weapons deployed abroad, including those in South Korea. This was considered a confidence-building measure and a step toward the promotion of denuclearization and stability in the Korean Peninsula [39].

5. An ambitious framework for collective security

As mentioned previously, South Korea's efforts toward self-reliance, which began prior to the Nixon administration's policy shift, were overshadowed by a different approach: multilateral cooperation among Asia-Pacific countries. In 1964, the South Korean Government proposed the establishment of the Asian and Pacific Council (ASPAC) to promote regional cooperation and unity between the Asian and Pacific nations. Through the establishment of ASPAC, the proposal sought to strengthen regional cooperation and solidarity between the Asian and Pacific nations. Former South Korean foreign minister Lee Tong Won proposed this idea during his tour of the Republic of China, the Philippines, Thailand, South Vietnam, Malaysia, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan. A preliminary meeting was held in Bangkok in March 1965, with the participation of ambassadors from these countries.

A year later, the first ASPAC ministerial meeting took place on June 14, 1966, in Seoul. Foreign ministers from Australia, the Republic of China, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Thailand, and South Vietnam attended the meeting, along with an observer from Laos [40]. Nine non-communist Asian and Pacific nations declared their determination to preserve their integrity and sovereignty in the face of external threats. The council invited other countries to join the newly formed ASPAC [41]. Their objectives were not limited to fostering development and mutual cooperation among the participating countries; they also included preventing the expansion of communist forces into East and Southeast Asia. This included providing support for South Vietnam during the Vietnam War.

ASPAC's discussions focused on its initial objectives for the period following its establishment. For example, during the second session of the ASPAC ministerial meeting held in Bangkok from July 5–7, 1967, members decided to establish a cultural and social Center for the Asian and Pacific Regions [42]. At the same time, in August

1967, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand founded the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which aimed to promote peace and security in Southeast Asia while fostering economic growth, social progress, and cultural development [43]. This may have encouraged South Korea to take further initiatives toward collective security cooperation. The fourth meeting of the council took place in Kawana in June 1969, following the third meeting of ASPAC, held in Canberra in August 1968. Members discussed security-related topics as South Korea had hoped. The most pressing security-related topics included the threat situation on the Korean Peninsula, the threat posed by China, the Vietnam War, the Soviet advancement into Southeast Asia, the implementation of U.S. defense policy, and regional security issues [44].

However, at the fourth ministerial meeting of ASPAC held in Japan, South Korea's position was not endorsed, except for a statement opposing "aggressive acts" toward the ROK. South Korea "was less successful in its efforts to promote a PATO" (Pacific Area Treaty Organization) on the lines of NATO" [45]. During the U.S.-South Korea talks prior to the fourth ASPAC meeting, it was predicted that the collective security initiative proposed by the South Korean government and other Asian countries would not be effective. When Ambassador Kim Dong Jo, Secretary of State, met with William P. Rogers as Nixon's Secretary of State on March 19, 1969, in Washington, Kim said, "There had been discussions among his colleagues about possibly extending an invitation to the U.S. to join [Asian and Pacific Council]. He wondered what the Secretary's reaction might be to such a thought. The Secretary said that he did not think it was wise to consider this possibility. He felt that the Congressional reaction to further engagement, even of this sort, would be negative" [46].

Since then, the U.S. has consistently taken a negative stance toward any efforts by South Korea to engage in multilateral security cooperation, even involving the U.S. For example, the December 1970 National Intelligence Estimate stated that South Korea would continue to press for every opportunity to form a regional security alliance. The report also added that "in the past, it has tried such approaches as a PATO" modeled on NATO (which some South Koreans seem to believe commits the U.S. to automatic response in West Europe's defense), an ABM system with the U.S. providing the weaponry and the countries within the range of Chinese missiles the real estate, a security system among the countries contributing troops to the Allied side in Vietnam, or expansion of ASPAC into a military alliance.¹ However, at the time, stated, that they "believe the central South Korean aim—is not so much to improve cooperation with Asian neighbors as to get the U.S. ever more securely bound to South Korea's defense" [47].

The background of U.S. reluctance, and even a negative attitude, toward the Korean collective security concept stemmed from the Nixon administration's endeavors to enhance U.S.-China relations. As relations between China and the Soviet Union deteriorated, the expansion of Soviet influence, not only in Southeast Asian countries but also in Taiwan, could not be ruled out. Henry Kissinger, the President's National Security Advisor at the time, wrote: "The Soviet Union sought to expand its contacts with non-Communist Asian nations; feelers were even extended to Taiwan. In a campaign to thwart any Chinese effort to break out of its isolation, Soviet diplomats hinted that to isolate China better, the Soviet Union was prepared to avoid complicating relations with the U.S." [48].

¹ The quote included the phrase "the real estate [sic]," but its meaning was not immediately clear in context. Given that, I've included the original sentence.

This U.S. position was also manifested in relations between Japan and the U.S. For example, during the meeting between the U.S. and Japan on June 2, 1969, the memorandum of conversation stated:

Aichi agreed absolutely that Japan should cooperate with the U.S. in the context of the relationship of mutual trust to contribute to peace and stability in Asia. On June 8, the foreign ministers of the ASPAC nations met in Kawana, Japan, to promote regional cooperation further. However, as the president knew, Japan's Constitution was unique with respect to defense; it severely restricted overseas military cooperation by Japan. He [Kiichi Aichi served as the Minister for Foreign Affairs at the time] also hoped that the president would consider Japan's unique views on nuclear weapons, which were derived from the fact that Japan was the only country to have suffered from their use [49].

When the possibility of U.S. troop withdrawal became a reality, with the announcement of the Nixon Doctrine, South Korea was still considering cooperation with Japan, in intelligence and military exercises, and a mutual defense treaty to fill the security vacuum. Japan's efforts to strengthen its military and expand its security policy were met with flexibility by President Park. In his 1971 New Year's address, President Park stated: "Japan is not a threat to Korea, and Korea does not object to Japan's military expansion in the Asia-Pacific region" [50].

Upon closer examination, it appears that, while the APAC organization holds a common stance against communism, there may be varying perspectives within the group that warrant additional investigation. According to studies by Kei Koga, "although the image of the institution was strongly associated with anti-communist [sic] due to its membership structure and the strong anti-communist stance of ROK which proposed its establishment, several members including Australia and Japan avoided being stigmatized as such and promoted political dialogs as well as socio-economic functional cooperation only, rather than military cooperation" [51]. These efforts by Korea, along with essential changes in the regional situation, particularly the multilateral security concept, came to a standstill. Efforts to improve relations with China were initiated by the Nixon administration's August 1971 declaration. However, Japan acted more promptly than South Korea.

In December 1971, Japan and China opened trade liaison offices to discuss the possibility of restoring diplomatic and commercial relations. In February 1972, Nixon and his delegation visited China, bringing relations closer to improving. In the same year, Park expressed his commitment to enhancing collective security [52]. However, in May 1972, North Korean journalists were authorized to enter Japan, raising concerns about the détente in Asia. In September 1972, the newly appointed Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka visited China for a Japan-China summit meeting and signed a joint statement. The joint statement normalized diplomatic relations between Japan and China. Japan acknowledged its responsibility for the enormous damage caused to the Chinese people during World War II, and China renounced its claim for war reparations from Japan. It supported the "One-China" policy, as expressed in the Shanghai Communiqué between the U.S. and China, which states that Taiwan is an inalienable part of China's territory [53]. Soon after the communiqué was issued, the Taiwan's Foreign Minister, "Chow Shu-kal likens the communiqué that marked the end of President Nixon's visit to the mainland to typhoon of the kind that smacks Taiwan every summer," and he stated that "a storm has hit us" [54]. The economic relations between the two countries developed rapidly after the Vietnam War ended

with the withdrawal of U.S. troops in March 1973. Subsequently, the ASPAC meetings were suspended in June 1973, “when recognition of China and withdrawal of representation to Taiwan led to the withdrawal of Malaysia and Australia; but some organizations set up continue to function” [55].

6. Conclusion

Following the Nixon administration’s shift in foreign policy, it took nearly a decade to establish formal diplomatic relations with China. The end of the Vietnam War and progress in U.S.-Soviet nuclear disarmament negotiations were among the positive developments during this period. The renewed Sino-Soviet rivalry and the Sino-Vietnamese war were among the negative developments. As the regional situation changed, South Korea opposed U.S. troop reductions. It did not support U.S. and Japanese efforts to improve relations with China. Similarly, Taiwan did not support the improvement of its relations with China. Consequently, as the Nixon administration moved forward with policy changes, its East Asian allies became increasingly anxious and dissatisfied with their security. In response, the countries explored the option of developing nuclear weapons and initiated programs toward that goal. As previously mentioned, South Korea downsized one-third of its U.S. forces, and Taiwan eventually withdrew all U.S. combat troops. In view of these circumstances, it is possible that South Korea and Taiwan may have a greater tendency to develop nuclear weapons than Japan. This of course portends badly for hoped of advancing the cause of global peace.

Japan, as the only country in East Asia to do so, expressed support for the U.S. objective of improving relations with China. As a result, Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei visited China in September 1972, met with Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai, and established diplomatic relations with the People’s Republic of China. Diplomatic relations with the Republic of China were severed as a result of this decision. On December 15, 1978, the U.S. and China jointly announced the establishment of diplomatic relations, effective January 1, 1979 [56]. Throughout the 1970s, Japan, the U.S., and China established multilateral relations in East Asia. This cooperation continued into the 1980s, with both the U.S. and Japan rapidly developing relations with China. South Korea sought to establish a multilateral East Asian security community with Japan, the U.S., and Korea at its core. Despite efforts, however, this goal was not achieved.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991, the Cold War came to an end. The relations between North and South Korea developed rapidly between 1991 and 1992. China and South Korea normalized their relationships in August 1992. However, unlike the situation at the end of the Cold War in Europe, the regional situation in East Asia remained complex. Potential tensions and conflicts still exist between China and Taiwan and between North and South Korea. It is debatable whether stable multilateralism can be achieved in East Asia, given China’s adherence to a socialist system and North Korea’s unabashed advocacy of socialism. Although the U.S. and China both disapprove of the emergence of hegemonic powers in the region, China has become the second-largest economic power after the U.S., both in name and reality. China is also making further efforts on the military front. Multilateralism has undoubtedly expanded since the Nixon administration; however, whether further expansion is feasible remains a matter of debate.

The geopolitical situation in East Asia during the 2020s has become increasingly tense. A traditional Cold War-type confrontation structure is advancing further, with

Japan, the U.S., and South Korea in conflict with China, Russia, and North Korea [57]. It can be said that the maintenance of the U.S.-led world order since the end of the Cold War is coming to an end, and conflicts in various regions are becoming more prominent. In 2022, conflict erupted in Ukraine due to Russian aggression, and the entire European region became more closely aligned with NATO's sphere of influence. From the following year, significant changes took place in the Middle East. In East Asia, tensions between China and Taiwan are on the rise, and the situation on the Korean Peninsula is also becoming more increasingly tense. Furthermore, there have been simmering tensions between China and Southeast Asian countries. The self-reliance or self-help movements promoted by the countries of the East Asian alliance are ending, and multilateralism is now leading to conflict among various powers. During periods of regional deterioration, establishing a framework that unites more countries is crucial. This will benefit not only the region but also contribute to global peace.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Chapter 3

Hearts of Courage, Faces of Peace: Rebuilding and Resistance in Post-Dictatorship Honduras

Matt Bereza

Abstract

This chapter explores and describes the complex tapestry of peace and the challenges that have emerged in Honduras following the era of dictatorship. It aims to shed light on the nation's path towards the establishment of democratic institutions amid a backdrop of political and economic turmoil. The research is based on an investigative journey through Honduras, exploring four distinct regions, each with its unique story and struggle. In the Aguán Valley, the focus is on the community's fight against extractive corporations, highlighting the campesinos' defense of their land from the encroachment of palm oil magnates. The Island of Roatán offers insights into the Garifuna's efforts to safeguard their territories from the ambitions of developers. Meanwhile, Choloma serves as a view into the textile workers' challenges, encompassing their labor difficulties. Lastly, the capital city, Tegucigalpa, provides a stage for engaging with a beverage union, and discussions with the US and Canadian embassies and governmental representatives surrounding the Castro presidency and progress. Through this comprehensive examination, the chapter endeavors to present an overarching view of Honduras' continued struggle for peace, sovereignty, and justice in the aftermath of dictatorial governance.

Keywords: local restoration, trauma, community psychology, prevention, nonviolence

1. Introduction

Upon arrival in Honduras, the landscape that greeted this researcher was one of striking contrasts. The first visual marvel was the mountainous terrain; some peaks were enshrouded in mist and rain, while others stood clear against the sky. Their towering presence was both unexpected and majestic, cloaked in lush greenery, yet marred by noticeable areas of deforestation. After acclimating to these breathtaking sights, another aspect of the country made itself known: the air was heavy with pollution. A dense amalgamation of gasoline fumes, construction dust, and chemical odors permeated the environment, signaling a nation in flux, yet hampered by inadequate infrastructure. The roads, poorly maintained and frequently interrupted by unexpected speed bumps, were bustling with life. Pedestrians navigated the narrow

margins of these thoroughfares, engaging in daily activities—eating, walking, selling goods at traffic signals—amidst the chaos of congested traffic and the oppressive heat. However, venturing beyond the urban sprawl revealed a landscape of indescribable beauty. The early Spanish explorers, believing they had stumbled upon Eden itself, were captivated by the lush vegetation, fertile soil, and abundance of tropical fruits and vegetables. The warmth and openness of the Honduran people further contributed to this paradisiacal impression. Yet, beneath this idyllic veneer lies a tumultuous history of dictatorship, political violence, foreign intervention, and coups d'état. This raises critical questions: How did a nation so richly endowed descend into such turmoil? And who are the actors striving towards the creation and sustenance of a, both physically and psychologically, healthier Honduras?

In 2009, a significant shift occurred with Juan Orlando Hernandez, commonly referred to as “JOH,” and his National Party’s rise to power, marking the beginning of an authoritarian regime. This transition, precipitated by a coup that ousted the democratically elected President Manuel Zelaya, cast a long shadow over the subsequent years, fueling resentment towards the United States for its support of the coup. From 2009 to 2016, the U.S. funneled nearly 200 million dollars into Honduras, backing the JOH presidency [1, 2]. However, as JOH’s rule increasingly mirrored a dictatorship rather than a democratic governance, the United States recalibrated its stance towards the nation. Presently, while the U.S. aims to curb migration from Central America, it also endeavors to back democratic regimes, highlighting a complex geopolitical balancing act [3]. The duration of the dictatorship saw a spike in criminal activity, innovative gang strategies, and a surge in economic and environmental migration. Today, under the leadership of Xiomara Castro, the country’s democratically elected president, Honduras faces a daunting path towards rehabilitation. With nearly 10% of its populace living abroad and an estimated 25–40% of the country’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) stemming from remittances sent by expatriates [4], the nation stands at a critical juncture. This chapter investigates the impact of Honduras’s tumultuous history and recent electoral shifts, the potential for establishing peaceful institutions, and the ongoing effects of historical trauma transmission.

1.1 Purpose and scope

“This is the American dream,” the host said, seated under the intense sun of coastal Honduras. Across diverse landscapes, from Honduras to Ecuador, and even in the United States, the sentiment echoes uniformly. A place called home; a sanctuary not to be abandoned. The collective aspiration is for improvement, for peace, and for prosperity. Indeed, this pursuit of well-being and tranquility forms the very essence of the American dream, a vision of peace that transcends borders.

This chapter endeavors to detail how Honduras aligns with the principles of peace psychology and exemplifies the application of community psychological concepts to forge a more harmonious society. The narrative is anchored in research conducted during comprehensive travel across Honduras in 2024, engaging with community leaders and politicians from the bustling capital to the serene coastal islands. The primary objective of these travels was to amass data on the pivotal shift from an era of dictatorship to the nurturing of a nascent democracy. Additionally, it aimed to uncover the frameworks established to cement these emergent democratic practices. A critical aspect of this exploration was to assess the prevalence of generational trauma, a legacy of prolonged exploitation and terror, spanning from Spanish colonization, through economic imperialism by northern powers, to the recent dictatorship.

This chapter, enriched by in situ insights from Honduras, is poised to demonstrate that despite profound economic and political turmoil, the indomitable spirit of the Honduran people prevails. Through a comprehensive review of Honduran history, juxtaposed with the findings from 2024, this narrative will showcase a people embodying the core values of community psychology. It emphasizes prevention and addresses the most acute challenges of contemporary society [5]. In essence, this chapter will shed light on the rich cultural tapestry and historical complexities of Honduras, unraveling the intricate web of factors that have culminated in pervasive violence. It will highlight the voices of those the researcher met across Honduras. The chapter will also be housed in three psychological principles: Liberation Psychology, Community Psychology, and Historical Trauma Transmission. As this text is designed to explore and promote peace psychology, the chapter will amplify how these three traditions, highlighted below, speak to peace in psychological development of communities.

1.2 Liberation psychology

At the heart of the movement for peace in Honduras is the influence of Liberation Psychology. This psychological approach, closely associated with the work of Ignacio Martín-Baró, emphasizes understanding and addressing the most pressing problems faced by communities from their perspective, rather than imposing external viewpoints. Rather than dissecting the motivations for power abuse or rights denial through a traditional psychological lens, groups in Honduras utilizing liberation psychology principles focus on community-based strategies to mitigate these issues [6]. A key feature of this approach is its methodological flexibility, allowing for the adaptation and evolution of tactics based on their effectiveness in real-world scenarios. This adaptability has been crucial in enabling Honduran organizations to navigate the complex socio-political landscape and effect meaningful change.

1.3 Community psychology

Parallel to the liberatory efforts is the application of Community Psychology, an approach that promotes preventive measures against societal issues while fostering positive developments within communities. This psychology branch advocates for a proactive stance in understanding past events and preempting their recurrence [5]. It empowers communities to leverage various resources and strategies to deter negative influences while enhancing positive outcomes. The subsequent sections of this chapter will illuminate the endeavors of distinct groups within Honduras that embody this principle. These segments will categorize the organizations based on their primary focus areas: community resistance and resilience, labor rights advocacy, and the pursuit of political reforms and international engagements.

1.4 Historical trauma transmission

While not formally recognized as a distinct psychological tradition like liberation and community psychology, it has garnered significant interest from the American Psychological Association. Currently under consideration but not yet officially classified as a diagnosis, this concept is being debated for potential inclusion in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. Historical Trauma Transmission is understood as a series of events that trigger adverse reactions within

individuals and communities, with these reactions potentially being inherited across generations. This impacts individuals' functioning even if they have not directly experienced the original trauma [7]. This framework has been relevant in examining the experiences of individuals affected by domestic violence, the enslavement of peoples, and the decimation of Native populations. By incorporating this paradigm into the discussion, the aim is to provide insights into how young Hondurans might be manifesting traumas inherited from their ancestors. Crucially, this chapter will also highlight the efforts of those who are actively interrupting and healing these generational cycles of trauma, showcasing them as key figures in the practice of peace psychology.

1.5 Methodology

The methodology employed in this research is grounded in a blend of observational techniques and interviews, tailored to navigate the complex political landscape of Honduras. Given the sensitive nature of the subject matter, stringent measures were taken to ensure the anonymity and safety of participants. This involved a deliberate omission of names and precise locations within the manuscript. While every effort has been made to maintain the accuracy of the information presented, the identities, locations, and certain demographic details such as gender, place, and time have been intentionally altered. These modifications were necessary to safeguard the individuals who generously shared their experiences and insights, providing verbal consent for their contributions to be utilized in this study.

This research aligns with the principles outlined in qualitative inquiry, emphasizing the importance of ethical considerations and the responsible handling of sensitive information in research settings [8]. This approach underscores the need for researchers to be acutely aware of the potential implications their work may have on participants, particularly in politically volatile contexts such as Honduras. The methodology adopted here reflects a commitment to these ethical standards, balancing the pursuit of knowledge with the imperative to do no harm.

The narrative qualitative research method forms the backbone of this investigative approach, enabling a deep exploration of individual and collective experiences within the Honduran context. This approach is characterized by its emphasis on storytelling and the subjective interpretation of events by participants, providing rich, nuanced insights into the social, political, and cultural dynamics at play. By weaving together individual narratives, this research paints a comprehensive picture of the current state of Honduras, from the grassroots efforts to build a more democratic society to the lingering shadows of past traumas.

In situ observations further enrich the data collection process, offering a direct look into the daily realities faced by Hondurans. This immersive approach allows for a more authentic understanding of the lived experiences of individuals, beyond what can be captured through interviews alone. By situating the research within the actual environments where these stories unfold, a more textured understanding of the challenges and triumphs of the Honduran people emerges.

Data analysis was conducted through a rigorous process of coding and thematic development, with findings presented in conjunction with on-the-ground observations. This dual methodology not only provides a solid foundation for the research but also ensures that the voices of those at the heart of the story are heard and respected [8]. Through this careful and considered approach, the study aims to contribute meaningful insights into the ongoing struggle for peace and democracy in Honduras, while upholding the highest ethical standards in research practice.

2. History of colonization, tales of oppression

Honduras, nestled in the heart of Central America, is bordered by El Salvador and Guatemala to the north and Nicaragua to the south. Its strategic position provides access to both the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, along with significant freshwater reserves. Recognized for its rich biodiversity, Honduras boasts lush rainforests, once-vibrant coral reefs, and a climate conducive to cultivating a variety of tropical staples, including coffee and chocolate. However, this nation has oscillated between being labeled as the most violent country in the Western hemisphere and ranking as one of the poorest nations in the Americas. This section aims to trace the origins of Honduras, elucidate the forces that have sculpted its current societal structures, and examine the country's present-day context.

2.1 History of colonization

Honduras's story, like much of the Western hemisphere, begins with the pivotal Encounter of 1492. Prior to European arrival, the Maya and Lenca civilizations thrived here, particularly between the sixth and ninth centuries AD. Copán was a cultural epicenter, celebrated for its advancements in writing, art, and architecture [9]. These civilizations were both advanced and prosperous but faced catastrophic decline under Spanish domination. Estimates are that the indigenous population in present-day Honduras plummeted from nearly 800,000 in 1520 to just 50,000 by 1550, raising questions about the long-term impacts of such dramatic population losses on a burgeoning nation [10].

The essence of Spanish colonization was twofold: economic exploitation and religious conversion. The colonizers were driven by a quest for wealth and agricultural commodities, as well as a zeal for converting indigenous populations to Christianity. Spanish rule in the Americas was marked by extreme brutality, transforming the region into a vast plantation system [11]. However, by the early nineteenth century, Honduras, along with other colonies, began to assert its independence. Initially part of the Mexican Viceroyalty and later Empire, Honduras emerged as a sovereign state in the early 1800s, adopting constitutional principles [1]. Yet, the transition to a stable republic was fraught with challenges.

As an independent republic, Honduras grappled with both internal strife and external pressures. The Catholic Church and the nascent democracy often found themselves at odds, polarized between the push for progress and the pull of traditional values. Furthermore, much of the population endured rural poverty, with *mestizo* (those from native and Spanish heritage) and indigenous cultures largely marginalized from political power and treated as mere resources to be managed [12]. Despite the slow emergence of a national identity, complete with unique contributions to literature and art, British colonial endeavors on the Mosquito Coast further complicated Honduras's journey towards independence and a cohesive cultural identity [12]. It was not until 1981, with the end of British colonialism in Central America and the ceding of 'British Honduras' to Belize, that a chapter of external colonial influence was conclusively closed.

2.2 Banana republics and identities

In the dawn of the twentieth century, Honduras, along with its Central American neighbors, transitioned from an antiquated plantation economy to one focused on agricultural production. The early 1900s marked the beginning of significant

investment by U.S. fruit companies in these nations, with Honduras emerging as a quintessential example of what would later be termed a ‘Banana Republic’ [13]. Although the contributions of native banana growers and the establishment of community-based trade networks might not be widely acknowledged, by the 1920s, the U.S. had secured formidable control over Honduran ports, railways, agriculture, and extensive areas of fertile land.

This shift turned Honduras into an agricultural powerhouse but also precipitated severe social and economic disparities, political turmoil, and the rise of authoritarian regimes. This scenario, often referred to as a resource curse, sees productive areas actual suffer for their blessings. In Honduras, a recurring narrative unfolded: laborers toiling on plantations called for fair wages and humane working conditions, culminating in movements towards unionization. Meanwhile, foreign corporations, primarily concerned with maximizing profits, entrenched themselves further into the country’s socio-economic fabric. Faced with a decision, the fragile Honduran government opted to side with these external entities, favoring the suppression of domestic dissent to safeguard their own grasp on power [12]. This pattern of prioritizing foreign interests over national welfare became a defining characteristic of Honduran politics, persisting up to the era of the most recent dictatorship. During this era, trauma could have been entrenched in communities that will manifest in unique ways later in the country’s development.

This period of economic transformation under the shadow of foreign corporations not only reshaped Honduras’s economic landscape but also left indelible marks on its social fabric and political identity. The legacy of being labeled a Banana Republic reflects not just an economic condition but a complex interplay of exploitation, resistance, and the struggle for sovereignty. It underscores the challenges faced by Honduras in navigating the forces of international capitalism and the quest for self-determination amidst external pressures and internal divisions [14].

The shadow of dictatorships and the legacy of colonization extend far beyond mere political oppression. Scholars have identified a concerning trend wherein post-colonial societies, particularly in Latin America, are predisposed to a cycle of underdevelopment, authoritarian rule, and continued susceptibility to external influence [15]. This pattern is starkly evident in Honduras’s experience with democracy throughout the twentieth century. Despite global shifts towards independence and self-determination during this period, Honduras found itself unable to fully disentangle itself from the vestiges of its colonial past. This era profoundly influenced the country’s international perception and its interactions with foreign powers.

The enduring impact of colonialism on Honduras’s political, economic, and social structures has been profound. The country’s struggle to forge a stable, autonomous path forward has been consistently undermined by the lingering effects of historical exploitation and interference. This situation has led to a pervasive state of vulnerability, where progress towards genuine democracy and development is repeatedly thwarted by the resurgence of repressive regimes and the strategic interests of more powerful nations [16].

2.3 Democracy amidst shadows of dictatorship

Colonization has been the seed of many issues in Honduras, and dictatorship the verdant leaf. The complex history of colonization has often been viewed as laying the foundation for unstable governments, strongmen, military intervention [14, 17]. Honduras’s political landscape is no different, and from the early 1930s onward,

Honduras has been marred by a series of upheavals that severely impeded its democratic aspirations. The era commenced with General Tiburcio Carias Andino's authoritarian rule from 1932 until 1949, setting a precedent for political instability that would persist for decades. This period was characterized by a succession of coups, military takeovers, and resignations, reflecting a nation in constant turmoil [18].

The quest for a civilian-led government bore fruit in 1981 with the election of Roberto Suazo Cordova, marking the first time in over a century that Honduras was led by a civilian. However, this transition was short-lived, as Cordova's liberal centrist administration quickly lost ground to US-friendly General Gustavo Alvarez, who seized control of the armed forces. Honduras's fragile democracy was further destabilized by external influences, including Sandinista incursions and the US government's subsequent support for right-wing regimes across the Americas to counter leftist movements. The ensuing violence throughout Central America, particularly the Nicaraguan revolution and the Salvadoran civil war, inflicted a staggering human toll, with over 100,000 lives lost and widespread human rights abuses [19].

Even under civilian rule, Honduras grappled with the terror of death squads targeting marginalized groups, from homeless youth to gang members, reinforcing its notoriety as one of the deadliest countries globally. The political narrative took a significant turn with the election of Manuel Zelaya in 2005, who governed until his ousting by a military coup in 2009—a move that drew international condemnation. The aftermath saw the rise and fall of Juan Orlando Hernandez, under whose rule Honduras experienced severe drought, an influx of deportees from the US, and the controversial nullification of presidential term limits, culminating in the assassination of activist Berta Caceres in 2016 [20].

Xiomara Castro's ascent to the presidency in 2022, becoming the country's first female leader, marked a pivotal moment in Honduras's modern history. Her administration followed the contentious reign of Hernandez, whose presidency was tarnished by allegations of drug trafficking, culminating in the revocation of his US visa and subsequent trial in New York for related crimes. This tumultuous journey underscores the resilience of the Honduran people and their continuous struggle for democracy amidst the enduring specter of dictatorship and foreign intervention.

3. Organizations bringing peace and security to Honduras

Honduras stands as a pivotal case study in peace psychology due to its complex history of colonialism, enduring legacies of foreign domination, and the resilience it has shown through periods of dictatorship. The essence of this resilience and the pursuit of a just society are epitomized by various organizations dedicated to fostering peace and security within the nation. This chapter illuminates the significant contributions of these groups, employing liberatory and community psychological principles to forge peaceful structures in a society emerging from the shadows of dictatorship. Their efforts shine as beacons of hope, exemplifying paths towards liberation from oppression.

3.1 Land defenders

The narrative of community resistance and resilience is vividly illustrated by the land defenders of the Aguán Valley in Honduras, a region of critical economic significance to the country. Situated in the northeastern provinces, the Aguán Valley spans approximately 200,000 hectares, boasting fertile land, abundant rainfall, and

vital river access. Throughout much of the twentieth century, this valuable land was predominantly cultivated by international fruit companies to produce bananas and pineapples. However, as regional economic dynamics shifted, the valley experienced a period of neglect and disrepair. It wasn't until the 1980s and 1990s that foreign corporations began to resettle the area, marking a new chapter in its agricultural exploitation [21]. By the early 2000s, the focus of investment in the Aguán Valley shifted towards palm oil production, a venture that has since come to occupy nearly one-fifth of the valley's land. Palm oil, a major commodity in global markets, has contributed significantly to the pollution of the valley. Furthermore, the adoption of palm oil as a monoculture has led to the degradation of biodiversity, posing a severe environmental threat to the region. This shift in land use has not only environmental but also social repercussions. Many local inhabitants assert ancestral land rights over the areas now dominated by palm oil plantations [21]. These individuals express a fervent desire to reclaim their lands, motivated by a vision to prevent Honduras from succumbing to the adverse effects of pollution and the loss of ecological diversity.

In the Aguán Valley in Honduras, a movement fueled by resilience and a deep connection to ancestral lands is unfolding, led by a group known as the Central Committee. This group has adopted a strategy of direct action to reclaim the lands to which they hold historical titles, in a bold effort to revive their communities. The Central Committee's approach diverges from conventional methods of land recovery, as it involves the members risking their freedoms, and in some instances, their lives, to assert their rights to the land. The Central Committee consists of hundreds of individuals who, armed with their historical land titles, have chosen to live in tent villages on the disputed lands. These lands are currently under the control of palm oil corporations, which view the members of the Committee as squatters. However, from the perspective of the Central Committee, they are not squatters but land defenders, committed to the cause of transforming the Aguán Valley back into a diverse and sustainable agricultural landscape that can support their communities.

The direct action undertaken by the Central Committee is characterized by its non-violent nature, though the response from the government and corporations has often been anything but peaceful. The Committee has reported numerous instances where its members were detained by the government on charges such as illegal land use, obstruction, and even terrorism. Tragically, some members have lost their lives in this struggle. Despite the grave risks involved, the spirit of the community remains undeterred.

During a visit on the anniversary of their movement, Committee members provided a community meal and speeches that painted a vivid picture of their struggle: the loss of land to palm oil corporations, the environmental and social consequences of these changes, and the ongoing efforts to resettle the Aguán Valley. The gathering, which drew over a hundred Committee members, was a testament to their collective resolve. After the meal, this researcher was taken into the palm groves to witness the resettlement process firsthand. The scene was powerful—without weapons or legal representation, members of the Committee staked their claims on small plots of land, a symbolic act of defiance and hope.

"This is where our health clinic will be," the young woman, holding an infant, told this researcher. As she spoke, the immediate surroundings were dominated by the invasive palm trees and overshadowed by a palm processing plant, its chimneys releasing black smoke into the sky, symbolizing the environmental and health adversities faced by the community.

An older man, casting a steadfast gaze towards the polluting plant, voiced a profound sentiment that resonated with a collective yearning.

“It makes us sick, but we stay,” he declared, his expression etched with the resolve to transform the land back to a state of productive agriculture, prioritizing the well-being of the community over the commodification and profit motives of corporations.

Further elucidating on the community’s blueprint for renewal, an elderly woman outlined the strategic development of infrastructure pivotal for economic sustainability. She spoke of a planned road that would forge a direct connection to the highway, thereby linking the community to the coastal regions. This infrastructure is envisioned as a vital artery for the community, facilitating the sale and trade of agricultural surplus, essential for the community’s economic rejuvenation.

“And this will be a road that leads directly to the highway. From there, the highway will connect to the coast,” she explained to the researcher, highlighting the importance of accessibility and trade for the community’s survival and prosperity.

“To stay is to fight,” she concluded, encapsulating the indomitable spirit of the community. This statement reflects a profound attachment to their land and a fierce determination to secure a sustainable future for their families. The community’s plans are not just about resistance but about a deeply rooted desire to foster a living environment where their children can grow, learn, and thrive in harmony with their surroundings.

Through their envisioned projects and the resolve to combat environmental degradation, the community members of the Aguán Valley are not merely advocating for their right to the land. They are actively laying the groundwork for a revitalized community, where education, health, and economic development go hand in hand with environmental sustainability. In their fight to reclaim and nurture their land, they stand as a testament to the power of community resilience and the enduring human spirit to envision and strive for a better, more peaceful future.

The land defenders in the Aguán Valley embody a profound and unique approach to community-driven liberation and psychological resilience through their practice of direct action. This ethos can be encapsulated in a phrase encountered during the visit: “Act now, sue later.” This strategy, while marked by its immediacy and urgency, carries with it significant risks, with the tragic assassination of Berta Cáceres, a Honduran political and environmental activist, standing as a stark reminder. Despite these dangers, the approach is not only bold but highly visible, drawing crucial attention and support to their cause. The image of community members standing defiantly with their historic land titles amidst the backdrop of tents, palm trees, and environmental devastation has not only resonated locally but has also captured the attention and support from international quarters, including the United States Embassy. Since 2014, the Embassy has embarked on missions to delve into the complexities of land-right disputes in the Aguán, seeking to mediate and understand the intricacies of these conflicts. Yet, the resolution to these disputes remains elusive.

As the time at the anniversary dinner ended, a poignant moment unfolded when a young girl and boy approached and sat with this researcher at dinner. For them, the Aguán Valley, as it stands today, is the only home they know, untouched by memories of past dictatorships or the world that existed before their time. This interaction sharply illuminated the reality that for the upcoming generations—whether *mestizo* or indigenous—their connection to this land is not just about reclaiming rights; it’s about affirming their identity and belonging. These young Hondurans, deeply rooted in their land, embody the future of their community’s enduring spirit and unwavering claim to their ancestral home, reinforcing the notion that for them, there is no

alternative homeland. This profound attachment to their land underscores a generational continuity of struggle and hope, with the valley not just a piece of land but a cornerstone of their identity and future aspirations.

3.2 Island resistance and resilience

The Garifuna community on the island of Roatán, Honduras, also serves as a remarkable illustration of community resilience and resistance. This island, with its complex history of colonial claims by both Spain and Britain, is home to the Afro-Honduran Garifuna people. Known as “Black English,” these communities are bilingual, speaking both English and Spanish, a reflection of their rich heritage descending from slaves brought to work in the New World. For over five centuries, they have endured severe oppression and terror, yet they have preserved their traditional livelihoods, which include fishing, agriculture, and working in local industries [22]. Presently, they find themselves in a critical battle to sustain their distinctive way of life amid forces of ‘modernization’.

“Our home is here; we have no other option but to stand our ground,” as one Garifuna host expressed it. This declaration of resistance, articulated in Spanish, was not about physical confrontation, but rather a daily commitment to fight for their homes and way of life. This ongoing struggle is exacerbated by the introduction of privatized lands on Roatán, often propelled by foreign investments, creating tension with the local communities and the government led by Xiomara Castro. Under previous administrations, ‘prosperity zones’ were established, operating independently from Honduran laws, an action that the Garifuna community views as a violation of their land rights and dignity.

During exploration of one such zone, the contrast between the promises made surrounding prosperity and the reality on the ground was stark. The Garifuna, primarily employed in service sectors, find themselves alienated by the zones’ gated exclusivity, advanced technology, and the predominance of English within these privatized lands. The guides, young individuals educated abroad, showcased ambitious plans for the area, including high-rise condos, golf courses, and a business center catering to a global market with features like cryptocurrency trading. However, the reality was a far cry from these glossy projections, with basic infrastructure like roads in poor condition and a noticeable lack of sustainable environmental practices, as seen in the casual use of disposable plastic cups and the unfinished state of the construction projects.

Touring the zone, questions lingered about the true intentions behind these foreign-developed enclaves and the stark opposition from the Castro government. The discord between the zones’ portrayal of the government and the government’s stance against these developments underscores a deep conflict over the future direction of Roatán and the preservation of the Garifuna’s cultural and environmental heritage.

In their fight against the encroachment of ‘prosperity zones’, the Garifuna community is turning towards their ancestral practices and holistic health methods as a form of resistance and resilience. The host detailed how planting coconut trees serves a dual purpose: it is a stand against the intrusion of multinational corporations and a return to traditional healthcare practices.

“Coco [coconut] is essential in various medicinal products, yet its value is overlooked by corporations,” the host explained. The use of coconut in their community is extensive, offering a myriad of health benefits due to its rich antioxidant properties. “It was particularly vital during the pandemic,” she shared, crediting traditional

medicines with maintaining lower rates of severe illness and mortality from COVID-19 within their community. Though these observations lack external verification, due to the remoteness of the area, they highlight a compelling field for further research.

The stark contrast between the Garifuna's traditional lifestyle and the encroaching 'prosperity zones' was evident in the small town of West End. There, amidst the backdrop of golf courses and towering condos, was a traditional tea house. The Garifuna were crafting teas and remedies, using herbal medicine, tinctures, and syrups to support their community's health. This recommitment to ancestral healthcare practices underscores their resolve to protect their cultural heritage from being commodified by 'prosperity zones'.

"Our hope is to live the American dream right here in our homeland," a local expressed, as machuca—a traditional stew made of ground green plantains and coconut sauce over fish, a dish that has remained unchanged since the arrival of Africans to the region was savored. "We don't want to go anywhere else to get what we already have here." This statement reflects a profound understanding among the Garifuna that while Honduras may sell off land rights to 'prosperity zones' and market its indigenous cultures to tourists, such ventures threaten their environment and way of life. Yet, they continue to resist, all while maintaining their innate hospitality.

"Would you like a bit more?" she inquired, offering more machuca. Her gesture, genuine and kind, underscored a moment of shared humanity, transcending the complexities of different backgrounds.

3.3 Labor rights and union movements

The struggle for labor rights and the advancement of union movements extends beyond the rural landscapes of Honduras, permeating urban centers and industrial zones alike. Workers across the nation are adopting similar community-based preventative psychological tactics as those practiced in the countryside, aiming to unify and empower labor forces in various sectors. The researcher engaged with two distinct groups during their investigation: one from the textile manufacturing sector and the other involved in beverage production and operations.

The Textile Union, representing workers in the garment manufacturing industry ("maquilas"), actively orchestrates the collective efforts of its members to address the challenges inherent in this sector.

"Dealing with each day feels like a psychological battle," confessed one of the workers. The nature of their work is highly monotonous and poses significant risks of repetitive strain injuries affecting the shoulders, neck, arms, hands, knees, and hips. Initially, the Union recognized that mobilizing for their rights often resulted in lost working hours, a sacrifice many could ill afford due to the need to sustain their incomes. However, over time, the Union has evolved into a more professional entity, functioning as a pivotal community support system offering legal, medical, and referral services to workers injured on the job. These services cater predominantly to a young workforce, many of whom are under 30 and have childcare responsibilities at home. The apprehension around being penalized for taking necessary sick leave is palpable, with young mothers particularly concerned about becoming targets of such retribution.

To mitigate these issues, the Textile Union strives to amplify the concerns of their members, engaging in proactive negotiations with the international corporations that oversee the maquilas. Their goals are straightforward: to secure fair, livable wages and to improve working conditions. When diplomatic and preventive strategies fall short,

the Union does not hesitate to resort to more assertive measures, including litigation, community demonstrations, fundraising events, and leveraging media attention to bring their plight to the forefront. Through these concerted efforts, the Union seeks not only to safeguard the well-being of its members but also to foster a more equitable and humane working environment in the textile industry.

“Honduran workers have long been viewed as expendable by the international corporations operating within our borders,” lamented one worker, sidelined from her job due to health complications stemming from prolonged periods of standing.

“They fail to equip us for success,” she added, capturing a widespread sentiment. This perspective was reinforced during a Union meeting, where workers implored this researcher to aid in amplifying their plight, stressing that global worker awareness is crucial for fostering improvement.

“We are not looking for joblessness but for respect from these corporations,” they articulated, highlighting the role of organizations like the Textile Union as catalysts for change in Honduras.

Similarly, the Beverage Workers of Honduras is another pivotal entity championing progressive labor practices. Given the central role of beverage production and distribution within Honduras and across Central America—despite the international branding, the workforce and logistics remain decidedly local—this researcher engaged with Beverage Worker representatives. Their approach towards instilling workplace harmony in the post-dictatorship era is notably ambitious.

“We advocate for a coalition among the Spanish-speaking nations of Central America, aspiring to forge a unity akin to the European Union in our hemisphere,” they shared, an aspiration that initially took this writer aback. The Beverage Worker’s vision extends beyond national borders, advocating for Central American solidarity.

“By solidifying the labor rights and opportunities across Panama, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala, we aim to limit neoliberal forces and increase equitable labor conditions,” a union member explained. This collective bargaining power across the region is seen as a strategic countermeasure to the overwhelming influence of larger economies like the United States and Mexico, aiming to secure a fairer and more just working environments for all involved.

The Union of Beverage Workers (UBW) is deeply committed to upholding the human rights of workers within the workplace, emphasizing the need for a more balanced and equitable dialog between labor and management. This includes advocating for increased transparency in corporate governance and a reduction in the impunity often enjoyed by corporate entities. Furthermore, the UBW stands in solidarity with various groups fighting for the reinstatement of ancestral rights, recognizing that local communities and indigenous populations have often been sidelined or overwhelmed by the operations of foreign corporations. The Union advocates for the acknowledgment and development of these small-scale and indigenous enterprises.

A representative encapsulated their perspective on the broader economic challenges facing Honduras.

“Capitalism is faltering in our country. With nearly 40% of the population living in poverty and the majority of employment being temporary, the current system is unsustainable.” This sentiment underscores the Union’s vision for a future beyond the constraints of current capitalist structures. The UBW’s aspirations for unity and solidarity resonate with the broader themes identified in this research: the imperative to prepare, prevent, and resist. Through these efforts, they not only seek immediate improvements in labor conditions but also contribute to a larger movement aiming for systemic change in Honduras and beyond.

3.4 Political reforms and international affairs

In the realm of political reforms and international affairs, there's a notable shift in the approach of the Castro government in Honduras, introducing policies aimed at fostering positive change. Concurrently, the United States and Canadian governments are recalibrating their strategies in Honduras, moving away from their historical support of the Juan Orlando Hernández administration, now viewed under a critical lens due to its illegal and authoritarian practices.

During meetings with both the U.S. and Canadian embassies, it became evident that there's a conscious effort to redefine their diplomatic and developmental engagements in Honduras. A representative from the Canadian government pointedly distanced themselves from the term "narco-dictatorship," highlighting a nuanced shift in narrative from past interactions that were deemed necessary for "doing business." With JOH facing legal proceedings in New York, the tone and terminology have evolved, with both embassies acknowledging the authoritarian tactics under the "Hernandez Government" moniker yet signaling a move towards more transparent and accountable governance models.

Both embassies are cognizant of the changing socio-political landscape, especially considering favorable rulings from the Inter-American Court of Human Rights towards the Garifuna community and increasing global awareness around labor rights, union movements, and land disputes [23]. This acknowledgment reflects a broader understanding that the dynamics in Honduras are evolving, with the emergence of social media campaigns, political activism, and candidates stemming from grassroots movements like the Textile Union and Beverage Workers. The sentiment shared in these meetings underscores a recognition that international attention is gradually shifting towards these critical issues, indicating a period of transformation in Honduras' political and social fabric.

The United Nations, extending beyond the efforts of the U.S. and Canadian embassies, is significantly involved in Honduras, launching various programs to nurture the nascent peace within the country. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the UN Development Programme are making strides to create inclusive spaces where Hondurans can freely share their experiences. A particular focus is placed on combating gender-based violence and encouraging small-scale, community-driven industrial innovations. The World Health Organization is active as well, working to enhance access to medicines, vaccinations, and health clinics for underserved communities. Concurrently, the UN Commissioner for Refugees is assessing the root causes of migration and labor exploitation, signaling a comprehensive international concern over the sustainability of Honduras's current trajectory.

Amidst this international intervention, President Xiomara Castro's administration is at a crossroads, endeavoring to break free from the legacy of previous governance while tackling pressing national issues highlighted throughout this discussion. The researcher learned of Castro's initiatives aimed at reforming the country, such as limiting prosperity zones and curbing foreign dominance, despite the formidable challenge posed by well-resourced and globally connected opposition. Additionally, the government faces the daunting task of curbing the surge in gang violence and drug trafficking—a significant factor propelling migration northward. The dilemma is providing economically viable alternatives to the lucrative drug trade, a tough sell when foreign entities dominate critical sectors like agriculture and textiles.

This nuanced perspective on international relations, encapsulated by an activist's poignant observation that "America [the United States] doesn't have friends; it has

interests,” underscores a broader skepticism towards the external influences shaping Honduras. This sentiment reflects a critical view of global dynamics, where profit-driven engagements are increasingly seen as unsustainable, both within Honduras and by its international partners and observers. The collective efforts of community groups and liberation movements are thus not just a call for local reform but a challenge to the prevailing global order, advocating for a more equitable and sustainable future.

4. Conclusion

From the time of arrival, one of the most striking and consistent scenes was the gentle care young men and women provided to the elderly, a testament to the deep-rooted compassion spanning generations observed everywhere from airports to fields. This observation challenged the northern research focus on epigenetics and the transmission of historical trauma, suggesting that Honduras embodies a powerful counter-narrative. Here, this researcher witnessed a nation not idly awaiting rescue but actively leveraging its own resources and structures to protect health and freedom. The commitment to preventing both personal and political oppression was unmistakable among textile workers and land defenders alike. The experience evoked an idea Paulo Freire put forth, that only the oppressed will have the strength and desire to liberate themselves, and by doing so, liberate the oppressor [17].

This study revealed a remarkable application of community-based grounded theory, particularly within the Garifuna communities, where practices were tested, adopted, or discarded with remarkable agility. The universal approach among all groups encountered directly confronted the criticism by Martin-Baró’s ‘neutrality of science.’ The prevailing belief in the necessity of science to remain objective and detached starkly contrasts with the path towards freedom and peace in Honduras. This researcher is hopeful that the insights gained, alongside the words and deeds of the individuals and groups featured in this narrative, will inspire, and assist others in their pursuit of a more free, healthy, and peaceful community.

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Chapter 4

Peace Promotion through Restorative Community Design: Five Case Studies in Latin America

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Abstract

Representative democracy is in crisis worldwide, notably in Latin America, where governments struggle to meet public expectations, exacerbating frustrations due to socioeconomic instability, poverty, violence, inequality, and a perceived inability to address these issues. Disenchantment often leads to the rise of authoritarian regimes, where a minority dictates decisions, initially appearing effective but ultimately favoring those in power and neglecting the majority. Such regimes frequently disregard civil liberties and the rule of law, fostering criminal violence and societal upheaval. In response, we propose the Restorative Community Design (RCD) framework, which fosters participatory democracy values by empowering communities to design their spaces in which they live. This chapter explores RCD concepts and case studies from Buenos Aires, Celaya, La Paz, Lima, and Pichincha. The framework systematically integrates urban design, community psychology, sociology, and restorative justice to foster community engagement and peace promotion strategies. Ten lessons learned from these examples conclude the discussion.

Keywords: restorative, community, design, democracy, justice

Algo debemos hacer / We must do something

en nuestra comunidad / within our community

para que reine la paz, / so that reigns peace,

la dicha y la prosperidad / happiness and prosperity

Betsayda Machado y La Parranda del Clavo.

Tiny Desk, NPR, 02.16.2018

1. Introduction: there is no community peace without democracy

A central assumption underlying our work is that democracy cannot prosper without peace. To understand this statement, we clarify what we mean by democracy and peace. Democracy is a political system in which the voices and interests of the different individuals that constitute a society—that can range from a community to a federation of countries—are represented in the decision-making process. However, it is often the case that a multiplicity of diverse and even opposing interests are sought by distinct individuals/groups and dialogue is required to reach social agreements that are beneficial to most. Without dialogue, social agreements are impossible. However, dialogue can only occur in contexts of peace, within safe spaces. Unfortunately, literature has neglected to explore peaceful spaces, particularly in Latin America. This chapter understands peace at a community level considering the voice and action of community members. We argue that the development of peaceful spaces allows citizens to connect and share information, and ultimately it empowers them to develop possibilities to improve their communities [1].

It has been demonstrated that the democratic system in Latin America is in recession [2, 3]. In the next segment of this chapter, we discuss that representative democracy in Latin America has not generated peaceful environments that allow people to thrive. In representative democracies, the government institutions are responsible for creating an atmosphere in which the rule of law and transparency in the decision-making process leads to peaceful societies [4]. The essence of these institutions is to create and execute social agreements. However, it is often the case that the groups in power impose their interests and neglect the voices and interests of other groups that are marginalized.

A lack of consideration to the needs of marginalized culturally diverse groups in many Latin American countries has further prolonged these sociopolitical crises. Psychologically, these entrenched social crises often produce learned helplessness, which is an individual's belief that they are unable to control and change adverse situations [5]. Learned helplessness is a response to adversity, powerlessness, and/or chronic trauma. In Latin American countries learned helplessness could translate into four general responses: emigrate, paralyze (e.g., depression or stress), street protest and riots, or seek messianic solutions in authoritarian governments. These responses are similar to the psychological reactions to traumatic situations: flight, freeze, fight, and fawn that are built-in defense mechanisms meant to help people respond to attacks, life threats, or stressful and traumatic situations [6]. However, most of these responses are only survival mechanisms; none of them work to restore trust, peaceful coexistence, and/or to empower them to gain control over their lives.

Given these problems, we have developed democratic decision making within peaceful environments in which dialogue can occur. Strengthening trust in democratic processes through community decision making is essential to conflict resolution. This chapter illustrates the Restorative Community Design (RCD) framework as a strategy to build local peace through the creation of community agreements based on engagement, participation, and negotiation while considering the needs and resources of different community members. After years of engagement with communities and local governments in 7 Latin American countries—Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Mexico, and Peru—the projects we have developed seek to overcome learned helplessness and mobilize community resources to build spaces for meetings, dialogue, and agreements that empowers them to reduce conflicts and increase human development in that specific community [1, 7]. For Guerra Pallqui [8], the restoration

of communal organization, social sharing, and communal coping are essential for the return and reconstruction of communities that have experienced or are experiencing conflict and adversity.

This chapter explores the ongoing process of promoting community peace. We do not intend for RCD to be a silver bullet to address the multiple problems of a continent whose democracy is in crisis, but rather a strategy to build a sense of belonging and hope for communities that reside there.

2. Democracy recession in Latin American

Democracy in Latin America and the Caribbean is in a critical state. According to a study by The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU)—which has developed a democracy index that scores electoral process and pluralism, political participation, and civil liberties such as freedom of expression and association—there are only two full democracies in the region: Costa Rica and Uruguay—where only 1% of the Latin American population resides—while four countries are under authoritarian regimes: Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela. The EIU Democracy Index scales from 0 to 10, ranging from authoritarian regimes to full democracies and has shown that democracy in Latin America and the Caribbean has fallen for the eighth consecutive year—from 5.79 to 5.68 [3]. The evidence shows that the democratic recession in Latin America is becoming structural.

According to Latinobarómetro Corporation [2], a non-profit organization responsible for surveying annual public opinion in 18 Latin American countries, this democratic recession can be expressed both in psychosocial dynamics, such as the preferences of Latin American citizens in favor of authoritarianism, and the factor of urban governance, such as the poor performance of the region's governments. The evidence shows that the democratic recession in Latin America is becoming increasingly widespread, and authoritarian regimes are expanding. The Latinobarómetro team of social scientists explains that democracy is born on a community scale through the interaction between different stakeholders rather than at larger scales of civil society [2]. This interaction occurs in the urban realm to generate collective efficacy, allowing citizens to anticipate and plan what happens [9, 10]. Community agreements end up being a key element in creating democratic environments.

In his book *Design for the Pluriverse*, the Latin American theorist Arturo Escobar [11] demands the construction of an “alternative West,” which addresses the psychosocial, ecological, and spiritual particularities of those territories, such as Latin America, where the model of Western democracy seems to have failed. In this sense, we propose a “middle road” framework called Restorative Community Design as a competent cultural model that may have much greater potential to connect with contextual/ecological and psychosocial meanings [7, 12–14].

In the *Journal of Democracy*, Mainwaring and Pérez-Liñán [15] delaminate the reasons for this democracy recession in Latin America. After a comprehensive analysis working with the V-Dem indexes for liberal democracy [16], they concluded three factors that explain why democracy is stuck in the region: the existence of organized criminal networks in Latin American governments, the threats to human rights in hybrid states, and the poor government results in most Latin American countries. After working directly with local governments in 7 Latin American countries for over 15 years, we argue that the last factor contributes significantly to strengthening the first two.

Certainly, the crisis of contemporary Latin American States is closely related to the existence of organized criminal states [17]. These networks have eroded global diplomatic practices [18] but have also permeated local governance [19, 20]. Likewise, there are criminal schemes that connect global businesses with community-level participation, as is the case of Cajas Clap (Boxes Clap, an acronym in Spanish for Local Supply and Production Committee) [21, 22], a mechanism for the distribution of subsidized food coordinated by the Venezuelan government. The affordable supply of products and services to underprivileged communities is one of the strategies of the Latin American hybrid states. States create pockets of efficiency that allow alliances with sectors of the population to consolidate authoritarian regimes [15]. In hybrid states, this authoritarianism generates social environments with a weak rule of law and a strong military presence [23], which ends up threatening peace at the community level.

However, despite these pockets of efficiency, the Latin American governments show poor government results. Latin America has almost three decades of high and persistent levels of income inequality [24, 25]. The United Nations report *Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2023 Unstacking Global Poverty: data for High Impact Action* [26] explains that more than 30 million people experience poverty. These data encompass socioeconomic poverty, but if we consider the helplessness experienced by Latin Americans with little access to the opportunities that representative democracy should offer to thrive, surely the numbers could be much higher.

Poor government results contribute to the growth of criminal violence that jeopardizes community peace. In his work *State and Criminal Violence in Latin America*, José Miguel Cruz [27] analyzes how state agents contribute to the escalation of criminal violence in the region by tolerating and supporting the use of extralegal approaches to combat crime and disorder and by partnering with groups, criminals, and militias to achieve this objective. This phenomenon has been called by some researchers the *Paradox of Violence* when some states use violence as a mechanism to eradicate it [28].

The decline of democracy that has produced socioeconomic inequality and lack of representation in Latin America has also generated social and political instability, including several street protests. Peru has experienced recurring episodes of social unrest since 2016 [29]. In 2019, the *Octubre Chileno* happened in Chile, a country that was once the model of representative democracy and economic progress in the region [30]. Bolivia has experienced violent street protests due to possible irregularities of a non-legitimate and illegal occupation of the presidency, first and later due to the arrest of departmental authorities [31, 32]. In Colombia, streets have recently been the scenario of social protests against the tax reforms offered by the democratically elected government [33]. Social and political instability has already become a pattern in Latin America, which undermines peace at multiple levels,

Social and political instability also tends to generate learned helplessness in the Latin American population. Recently, one of the Chilean activists who attended one of the participatory design workshops (PDWs), which will be addressed later in this chapter, told us: “Chile was once a model of representative democracy and economic progress, today it seems that the way out of this crisis lies in Arturo Merino Benítez, the international airport.” In our experience, Latin America is a continent whose people use the sense of humor as a source to address their social conflicts psychologically, but the sense of humor can be a mechanism that freezes individuals in the face of what they cannot attend to. This joke, heard in Chile, that the way out of the crisis is in international airports, that is, in emigrating outside the continent, has

been recurrent in several PDWs in Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Venezuela. As a defense mechanism, flight has also become a pattern in Latin America.

Certainly, the Latin American socioeconomic and political crises are also jeopardizing global peace as millions flee their home countries and emigrate into richer ones. Community displacement is a global issue; by 2022, 108.4 million persons worldwide were forcibly displaced as a result of persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations, or events that seriously disrupt public order [34]. In Latin America, the most dramatic case occurs in Venezuela where more than 7.71 million people—or about 26% of the national population—have migrated out of the country [35]. But the crisis of one country systemically contributes to the crisis of others within the same region; of those 7.71 million Venezuelan migrants, almost 85% have moved to other Latin American countries that are on the brink of collapse.

2.1 The vicious cycle of stuck democracy

An attempt has been made to demonstrate the three reasons emphasized that contribute to the democratic decline in Latin America: organized criminal government, hybrid states, and poor government results. Although these three factors are fundamental, not much research has been conducted between them and their psychosocial outcomes. It is argued that the poor results of the government can motivate people to feel disenchantment with democratic governments and experience learned helplessness, which can then translate into support for authoritarian populism, organized criminal networks in governments, and hybrid states.

In Latin America, authoritarian regimes are becoming increasingly popular, creating a phenomenon that may seem paradoxical: elected dictatorships. The recession of democracy generates a crisis in its institutions, and Latin Americans have stopped believing that agencies such as multinational organizations, local governments, or political parties can address their problems. It seems that a growing number of people are increasingly convinced that the only mechanism to improve their lives is through authoritarian regimes that present themselves as messianic to solve it all solutions. Often this belief is reinforced, the cases of Evo Morales in Bolivia and Nayib Bukele in El Salvador are examples of elected governments whose practices are close to autocratic regimes [2]. In the case of the latter, global figures seem to show signs of good governance [36]. Nevertheless, several scholars doubt that these autocratic decision-making methods that disregard human rights and community dialogue will be effective in the long run and fear that they could further erode democracy [37, 38]. Consequently, many societies seem stuck in a vicious cycle in which elected governments fail to accomplish sufficient socioeconomic progress which ends up exacerbating disenchantment and learned helplessness in the population that then moves to elect authoritarian regimes. Alarming, many of these authoritarian governments need the support of criminal networks to survive. It is not rare that drug cartels are often linked to government agencies. Furthermore, many authoritarian governments tend to become hybrid states as means to gain popular support from different communities. Unfortunately, often they end up supporting the groups in power and further marginalizing disenfranchised communities that are excluded from any political decision making. Authoritarian governments often amplify the breakdown in the trust that citizens have in governments which often exacerbates their learned helplessness which is reinforced by the lack of control they have to address daily conflicts. The proposal advanced here seeks to generate alternatives of hope, empowerment, and community mobilization through spaces for participation.

3. Restorative community design

In search of strategies to strengthen community participation within Latin American countries, the Restorative Community Design (RCD) framework was developed, which seeks to foster community dialogue in peaceful contexts through a multidisciplinary approach [7, 39]. RCD is a peace promotion strategy based on citizen dialogue and empowerment at different socioecological scales.

Through community participation they are encouraged to design their own spaces (e.g., buildings and parks) and create a plan to improve their spatial opportunities. As people voice their needs a sense of togetherness often develops. Furthermore, as more diverse voices participate in this dialogue more complex social conflicts can be addressed. Participatory design workshops (PDW) is a methodology that seeks to bring together different groups in conflict to achieve common objectives. The tool itself aims to generate social agreements that contribute to the promotion of peaceful democratic spaces at the community level.

Evidence to support the efficacy of RCD stems from a series of studies conducted between 2004 and 2014. Through the creation of multidisciplinary groups that included architects, urban designers, and clinical psychologists, a series of participatory projects were developed in the barrio of Petare in the city of Caracas, Venezuela. Petare is the densest populated neighborhood in the Western Hemisphere [40] with a proud tradition of self-governance. This tradition was epitomized in the construction of the Sports Park Mesuca which was designed by the community using RCDs tools. As the community more intensely participated in the design of their sports center there was a significant reduction in rates of violence in the community. The replicable methodology of the participatory design workshops (PDW) in the case of Mesuca was fully explained in the chapter *From a Junkyard to a Peace Promotion Sports Park: A Transdisciplinary Approach* [7], published by Springer in the book *The Psychology of Peace Promotion: Global Perspectives on Personal Peace, Children and Adolescents, and Social Justice*.

Subsequently, the PDW experience was adopted by the Petare Latam Foundation, an organization dedicated to the training of local administrations in Latin America, to build different agreements between community and local government groups in seven Latin American countries—Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Mexico, and Peru. Some results of this experience will be described later in this chapter. In short, RCD integrates three approaches: participatory design, spatial opportunities, and restorative justice [41]. Each will be explained.

The first approach, participatory design, advocates for integrating people's voices in decision making. To accomplish this goal, it is necessary that researchers have developed a trusting relationship with the community that is often only possible with long-term engagement that truly leads to work in participatory projects. From PDWs' experience, we confirmed that open dialogues strengthen communities and increase the sense of ownership since a community's specific voices and needs can be recognized and transformed into concrete and viable projects, giving them an active role in solving their conflicts and adversities [14]. For La Roche [42], one of the most effective ways to reduce violence in a community is to promote dialogue and collaboration between different groups with a common goal. In this case, the common goal is the physical transformation of public space as a tool for conflict resolution. The experience of working together with community members also demonstrated that daily stressors of violence, poverty, and inequality have their expression in the configuration of the space [43–45]. This chapter proposes that the structural transformation

of physical space will positively impact urban ecologies, reducing the stressors that translate into trauma and social conflicts. Consequently, RCD requires a second conceptual framework: spatial opportunities, understood as the access to resources such as public spaces, educational centers, healthcare facilities, public transportation, and other resources that facilitate citizens' integration into the urban exchange of economies, knowledge, and passions [40]. Urban ecologies are systems that offer—or limit—opportunities for its citizens to develop their capabilities as human beings and members of society [46, 47].

Spatial opportunities play a role in advancing the right to the city. According to Henri Lefebvre, the right to the city is essentially about the right to an urban existence that is evolving and revitalized [48]. This perspective has greatly influenced researchers who advocate for enhancing the right to the city by ensuring fair access to urban spatial resources and fostering their connectivity throughout the city [40, 49–51]. While the participatory design workshops seek conflict resolution as a strategy to promote community peace, spatial opportunities envisions addressing this strategy at the spatial level.

Finally, restorative justice is the third conceptual framework of restorative community design, which is more of an aspiration than a methodology. Restorative justice is a branch of criminal righteousness that seeks to bring together different stakeholders affected by wrongdoing [52–54]. The reunification of these actors opens a discussion of responsibilities and opportunities to seek common solutions to repair social damage. To improve the psychological well-being of a community that has experienced or is experiencing a conflict situation, the mobilization of resources within the same community in agreement with other stakeholders is more effective than interventions from outside [14]. RCD focuses on promoting a sense of togetherness through participatory design workshops to improve the absence of spatial opportunities that have contributed to collective trauma and social conflicts. The aspiration is that the culturally competent perspective of the RCD will allow for the collaborative construction of the hope of an inclusive and participatory democratic model that contributes to the resolution of conflicts and the construction of community peace.

3.1 Application of restorative community design in Latin America

Between 2020 and 2023, Petare Latam Foundation coordinated the *Programa de Innovación y Capacitación para Gestiones Locales en América Latina* (Innovation and Training Program for Local Management in Latin America), funded by the National Endowment for Democracy. The program aimed to create participatory environments with local leaders to promote democratic values. The experience included the participation of 543 local leaders from 41 Latin American municipalities in 7 countries—Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Mexico, and Peru. The goal of this chapter is not to describe the full scope of each program but to summarize their development from five selected cases in which the RCD framework was employed.

3.1.1 Project 20_PE07, Lima (Peru)

In 2020, the project the Municipality of Lima (Peru) developed a popular market called “Tierra Prometida” (Promised Land), to relocate street vendors that overcrowded the street during the COVID-19 pandemic. “Tierra Prometida” focuses on some of the sanitary and health-related challenges and economic concerns that afflicted merchants. The project focuses on their temporal relocation and registration of the

merchants to ensure the continuity of their commercial activities under safe, sanitary conditions. Tierra Prometida intervenes in the socioeconomic fabric of the community from the individual up to the collective scale of the market and its distribution of goods around the urban context. The project addresses an immediate crisis through this broad scope and reconfigures business practices toward resilient and adaptive models for possible future contingencies. It represents a feasible example of improving spatial opportunities of local vendors by redesigning a public law. The project was implemented to tackle health and economic sustainability challenges simultaneously.

The project's impact due to its dual focus promotes a crisis management model through participatory design workshops, business census, and the adaptability of business infrastructures to improve access of this infrastructure to the broad community. Collectively, these measures underline the significance of scalable approaches for resolving conflicts incited by global health crises, thus providing useful lessons on the necessity of planning and flexibility in urban development and emergency management policies.

3.1.2 Project 21_BO06, La Paz (Bolivia)

“Espacios en Movimiento” in La Paz (Bolivia) is a project developed by the “Secretaría de Planificación” of the Municipal Autonomous Government of La Paz in 2021, focuses on the revitalization of public spaces after the COVID-19 pandemic through urban interventions involving local social agents, citizens, and cross-sector partnerships through participatory design workshop. The community redesigned abandoned urban spaces, reclaiming them physically and symbolically. The community was able to create public spaces in which they could engage in civic activities and conflict resolution.

The project applied the inclusive and sustainable management model of the spatial opportunity framework in eight main phases of development: (1) Physical and spatial analysis of the abandoned space, (2) on-site data collection with the local community, (3) institutional approval, (4) establishment of on-site and recurrent participatory design workshops for constant iterations with the local community, (5) creation and implementation of a sensible communication strategy of the planned intervention and its expected impact, (6) development of the project pilot, and (7) impact evaluation. In addition to resolving tensions and potentially violent conflicts between the use and abuse of urban spaces, the model acknowledges and strengthens access to public space as a fundamental strategy for the promotion of citizenship and human rights.

3.1.3 Project 21_AR02, Buenos Aires (Argentina)

The “Centro Comunitario, Social, Cultural y Deportivo” (Social, Cultural and Sports Community Center), developed in 2021 members of the Legislature of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires (Argentina), provides a regeneration plan for an abandoned plot of land in Barrio San Francisco. As explained above, spatial opportunities is a design framework to improve equitable access to physical urban infrastructures. This project is at the core of this framework through the redesign of an abandoned lot into an educational, sports, and community hub for the nearby residents. Through the revitalization of this urban sector, the project seeks to promote citizen participation, provide parental educational support, and foster a strong sense of identity and local belonging.

The participatory design workshops permit the development of the distinctive feature of the project, which is the convergence of diverse needs at individual and

collective levels. The plan also seeks to expand community participation by offering a volunteer fire brigade, a civil registration office, a municipal delegation, and spaces to allocate a technical school. Through these activities, the project envisions to drive social, cultural, and economic growth as it provides sensible, locally-driven, and culturally competent solutions while paving the way of a people-centered urban development model.

3.1.4 Project 22_EC06, Pichincha (Ecuador)

In 2022, the Main Advisor to the Mayor of the Municipality of the Metropolitan District of Quito (Ecuador) proposed an alternative to the economic inequality and vulnerability of young children (1–3 years old) in Pichincha through the reuse and reconditioning of an abandoned child development center. The plan addresses immediate childcare needs, as well as long-term structural problems such as malnutrition and economic stagnation of affected families. The improvement of access to childcare permitted the improvement of spatial opportunities for the community of Pichincha, whose strategy is planned to be replicated in Guayaquil, another municipality in Ecuador.

By providing a safe and stimulating environment where children can develop their cognitive and motor skills under the supervision of professionals, the project seeks to free up time for parents to generate income so they may indirectly contribute to the domestic economy and, by extension, the local economy. This comprehensive approach works around resolving social conflicts by simultaneously addressing individual, family, and community needs. The project also stands out for its ability to define long-term personal and social development through a specific intervention, positively impacting family and community dynamics.

3.1.5 Project 22_MX04, Celaya (Mexico)

The “Strategic Plan to Combat Poverty,” developed in 2022 by the Municipality of Celaya (Mexico), has the improvement of spatial opportunities as the main goal. The project is based on the premise that a critical lack of access to health and social security services is one of the central components of poverty. In an effort to overcome the fact that the 19 medical units in Celaya cannot meet the medical demand of the population, the plan focuses on the creation of a comprehensive public policy that supports the construction of a third-level hospital and two first-level hospitals, complemented by a linkage program between Mobile Medical Units (MMU) and Primary Health Care Medical Units (UMAPS). The magnitude of this project made it impossible to build on the scale of the participatory design workshops without support from multiple levels of government, which also made exposed the limitations of community participation. One of the advantages of this approach is its ability to operate and generate solutions at different levels simultaneously: from individualized care through advanced medical technology and specialists to the redesign of the public health system at the level of a municipality, the articulation of programs lead to a holistic problem resolution, which not only seeks to resolve the direct manifestations of poverty but also to address its suffering one of its origins.

3.2 Final thoughts

RCD uses participatory design workshops as a tool to improve spatial opportunities in Latin American communities which in turn foster psychological well-being and

social conflict resolution. RCD aims to empower communities to design their own spaces. At the center of this model is the idea of restorative justice toward historically disenfranchised communities. The application of RCD in five Latin American countries has allowed us to understand the breadth of possibilities. We discovered that although the development of local projects contributes significantly to providing alternatives for peaceful community environments, the country's complex socioeconomic conditions show its limitations. Working solely at the community level is insufficient for representative democratic systems to flourish, but it is certainly a condition for progress. Working with local leaders in Latin America, it was frequently found that addressing them at the community level is necessary but insufficient. The complexity of the conflicts the region experiences requires attention from national and international socioeconomic and political forces. Nevertheless, the improvement of public spaces and facilities is meaningful for local communities, even when ecological threats exist that are impossible to solve on a local scale.

Paradoxically, working with these five cases in Latin America and trying to improve democratic values highlighted the spatial inequalities of the region, revealing a complex socioecology whose survey was beyond the scope of the Program, and this applied research. Each community has significant absences of basic goods such as public spaces, schools, sports centers, and other facilities, and each community also struggles to produce agreements to address the shortcomings of representative democracy.

4. Conclusions

RCD is a framework to improve public spaces and facilities through community participation. Applying this framework to five Latin American case studies helped taught some valuable working lessons:

1. Applying the RCD framework teaches the importance of exploring local alternatives for peacemaking. RCD places special emphasis on building democracy through community participation and dialogue for the design of urban projects closely linked to socioeconomic and human development while increasing a community's sense of ownership. In this sense, this chapter concurs with Hughes, Öjendal, and Schierenbeck [55], who propose that a countries peace-building starts at the community level.
2. It is important to manage expectations about the real capacities of the RCD. Certainly, addressing the needs of a community is a fundamental step to address the learned hopelessness that has been linked with authoritarian regimes in Latin America. However, one must be aware of the limitations of community work in addressing conflicts that are exacerbated by national and even international socioeconomic and political interests.
3. The process of promoting peace with Latin American communities requires a decolonizing perspective in which the voice of communities takes precedence over the ideas and interests of other groups. By decolonization, we refer to the importance of people developing their own spaces in accordance with their culture and resources.

4. Communities are embedded in local and even international contexts, and their perspective is not always addressed in multidisciplinary projects. The lack of connection between communities and government exacerbates disenchantment with its institutions and learned helplessness which are often connected with election of authoritarian regimes and violence.
5. A growing awareness of the complex, diverse, and intersectional characteristics of each community requires the development of multidisciplinary models [12, 14] that will more specifically link the contextual and psychological characteristics as well as the community and spatial ecologies that can lead to more effective peace promotion strategies.
6. Participatory design techniques are useful tools to educate community members about the importance of agreements for peacemaking. But more importantly it is a tool for the technical team to learn from the community, from their assets and needs.
7. Developing flexible, participatory design methods is important when designing in highly conflictive environments. Project 20_PE07 in Lima (Peru) happened during the COVID-19 pandemic. Addressing the need of street vendors during this crisis was only possible with an adaptive planning framework that was modified as conditions changed.
8. A single participatory design meeting cannot achieve community peace but can do so with recurring and sustained community engagement. In the case of Project 21_BO06 in La Paz (Bolivia), the on-site PDWs installation occurred periodically to address the recurrent and changeable needs of conflict communities in the design of public spaces.
9. PDWs are useful tools for anticipating conflicts. During community meetings in Project 21_BO06 in La Paz (Bolivia) and Project 20_PE07 in Lima (Peru), community members discussed possible abuses in the use of public space. Periodic engagements with community members can reveal conflicts and achieve a system of agreements before the conflict appears in the public space.
10. Unfortunately, while writing this chapter there was a realization that there is not much literature in English on the inclusion of community voice and participatory design, especially when trying to include diverse communities as a strategy for conflict resolution. We recommend expanding the literature on community-based peacemaking, including diverse cultural perspectives, including the Latin Americans.

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- Karina Tello, an Advisor to the Mayor of the Municipality of the Metropolitan District of Quito, in Ecuador, developed in 2022–2023 a project focusing on the reuse and reconditioning of a child development centre to provide parental and educational support.
- Francisco Arreguin, of the Social Development Directorate of Celaya, in Celaya, Mexico, developed a Strategic Plan to Beat Poverty all through 2022–2023 which proposed the construction of three large-scale healthcare facilities based on the premise that a critical lack of access to health and social security services is one of the central components of poverty.

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Perspective Chapter: Traditional Reconciliation Method in Java

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Abstract

Conflict for Indonesian society is an inseparable part based on historical facts from pre-independence, the era of independence, post-independence, the New Order, and the reform era. The conflict reached its peak during the transitional period, the change from the New Order to reform. The evolving dynamics of conflict require varied resolution methods, combining several approaches (contending, problem-solving, yielding, inaction, and withdrawing). This article emphasizes conflict resolution methods in Indonesia, such as *musyawarah* for consensus, mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), and a cultural values approach, present in the wisdom of Javanese societies such as the Javanese and Sundanese. Wisdoms contains virtues used as guidance in life. For the ancient Sundanese community (*Baduy*), wisdom is a life principle containing binding rules. Violators will face sanctions ranging from mild to severe. In Javanese society, traditional conflict reconciliation methods involve applying cultural values and local teachings to build peace, understanding, and harmony among individuals or groups involved in disputes.

Keywords: conflict reconciliation, traditional methods, *musyawarah* for consensus, gotong royong, wisdoms

1. Introduction

Indonesia is a vast and diverse country, spanning from Sabang in the west to Merauke in the east. It comprises thousands of islands and hundreds of ethnic groups, each with distinct geographical and socio-cultural characteristics. Additionally, Indonesia recognizes seven religions and beliefs, making it a multicultural and pluralistic society with a high level of social vulnerability.

Social conflicts in Indonesia have developed and been influenced by the early history of the nation's formation. Starting from the Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms [1, 2], continuing through the Islamic kingdoms era [3, 4], pre-independence period, post-independence era, up to the present [5]. The forms of social conflicts are diverse, including ethnic conflicts [6–8], religious conflicts [9–12], school-related youth clashes [13, 14], motorcycle gang conflicts [15–17], and development-related conflicts [12, 18, 19].

The historical sequence and development of conflicts indicate that Indonesia is laden with conflicts, both in lighter categories that can be resolved through familial means without causing prolonged harm or casualties, and in more severe categories

where conflicts are challenging to resolve and result in significant material and human losses, such as in ethnic and religious conflicts.

The factors contributing to conflicts also influence the methods of conflict resolution employed. For instance, a win-win solution method can be easily applied if all parties are aware and accepting of the given agreement. However, results may differ if each party is not receptive, especially when dealing with complex interests, making negotiation, mediation, and cooperation difficult to achieve. Other methods such as contending, yielding, inaction, and withdrawing can also be employed, depending on the severity of the conflict.

Pruit and Rubbin [20] suggest that conflict is a practice of dualism involving vastly different interests and goals. In the current era, conflict factors are increasingly dynamic, leading to the synthesis of several conflict resolution combinations (contending, problem-solving, yielding, inaction, and withdrawing). They believe that no single theory on conflict resolution methods can permanently resolve conflicts unless implemented concurrently and continuously.

Social conflicts in Indonesia reached their peak during the transition from President Soeharto to President Habibie, marking the shift from the New Order regime to the reform era and from a centralized and militaristic approach in the New Order era to a decentralized approach. The dualism of interests in this struggle created a high level of social vulnerability. Examples include ethnic conflicts in Sampit, Central Kalimantan, and religious conflicts in Poso, as well as the separation of East Timor as a nation, which were significant events during that period.

Social conflicts in Indonesia are like a time bomb, ready to explode at any moment, depending on the actors and triggers involved. For example, development-related conflicts can sharply escalate in conflict ratings depending on the capitalists, actors, and objectives in play. The more complex the interests, the larger the involved actors. Therefore, conflict resolution methods must be developed and strengthened in line with conflict dynamics, including approaches through strong legal supremacy and inclusive education, reinforcing the indigenous philosophical values of Indonesia, such as *musyawarah* for consensus, *gotong royong*, and the virtues embedded in traditional Javanese societies like the Javanese and Sundanese.

As a nation that values family and cooperation, Indonesia must strengthen culturally-based approaches as efforts to resolve conflicts in the future [21]. Culture embodies the noble values and originality of Indonesia. These approaches serve not only as a form of reconciliation but also to preserve the nation's values from extinction.

2. Methodologies

The employed methodology is qualitative, utilizing a case study approach [22]. The case study was conducted on two ethnic groups, namely the Javanese and the Sundanese (Baduy). Data collection occurred in two locations, namely Central Java in 2020 and among the Sundanese (Baduy) in 2023. The primary data collection technique involved in-depth interviews with community leaders and traditional figures, while secondary data collection was carried out through a literature review. The literature selected encompassed various sources, including relevant books and articles. The books reviewed by the author spanned from 1948 to the present. Data analysis utilized the triangulation technique proposed by Huberman and Miles [23].

3. Conflict resolution in Indonesia

3.1 Musyawarah for Consensus

Indonesia, as a nation formed from a collection of diverse small nations with different cultural characteristics, has a unique way of resolving conflicts. Every decision made is the result of musyawarah for consensus, which is based on mutual agreement, reflecting various early events in the history of Indonesia. From the unity against colonial powers in the era of kingdoms to the formation of the renowned Indonesian Youth Pledge colony, known for the Youth Pledge event, to the decision-making in appointing the first president of Indonesia.

Musyawarah for consensus is an integral part of Indonesia's *causa materialis*. *Causa materialis* (origin of material) comes from the Indonesian people themselves, embedded in customs, culture, and religions. In essence, *causa materialis* is the values derived from the Indonesian people in the form of cultural and religious values present in their daily lives.

Therefore, the concept of musyawarah for consensus is an inseparable part of the Indonesian nation, embodied in the ideology and guiding principles of the entire Indonesian society, namely Pancasila in the fourth principle, which states "People's Sovereignty Led by Wisdom in Deliberation/Representation," and the third foundational idea in the Preamble of the 1945 Constitution, which states: "A state based on people's sovereignty, led by the wisdom of deliberation/representation." Consequently, the implications for the Indonesian state, as defined in the 1945 Constitution, are that it must be based on the people's sovereignty and deliberation/representation [24]. In every conflict resolution, Indonesia uniquely implements the value of musyawarah for consensus.

This means that the concept embodies various necessary values, including (1) collaborative, emphasizing cooperation and interaction among group members, where each member has the opportunity to contribute and provide perspectives without considering backgrounds (egalitarian); (2) democratic, emphasizing decision-making involving the participation of all members or groups, as each member has equal rights (joint decision); (3) mutual agreement, emphasizing compromise and agreement principles, meaning every decision is based on mutual agreement acceptable to all parties with awareness; (4) active participation of individuals, emphasizing the principle of freedom of expression, conveying aspirations with the aim of building good cooperation; (5) openness and transparency, emphasizing credibility and integrity principles so that all members have the same understanding; (6) appreciating diversity, emphasizing consciousness in behavior, accepting and respecting every difference in views.

Furthermore, musyawarah for consensus in resolving conflicts carries several meanings, including (1) reducing tension, (2) creating a space for dialog, (3) seeking joint solutions, (4) avoiding arbitrariness, (5) strengthening relationships, and (6) making better decisions. Thus, the method of musyawarah for consensus becomes an effective tool in responding to conflicts in a constructive and sustainable manner, creating the foundation for fair and acceptable solutions to all parties.

3.2 Gotong royong (mutual cooperation)

Indonesia is a monodualistic state, meaning it is not for one person or one group, but for everyone. It is based on the will of the people and the principle of kinship in mutual cooperation. Notonegoro emphasizes that the principle of kinship is the

awareness and consciousness of the mind and conscience of humans to work on everything by all and for all, under the leadership of a chairman or elder and under the scrutiny of the members and the community [25]. In other words, mutual cooperation is an action/behavior based on the awareness that we are all a family, and in doing something, it should be based on the principle of togetherness or kinship.

Mutual cooperation comes from the Javanese words “gotong” and “royong.” “Gotong” means carrying things together, and “royong” means working on something together. The meaning of mutual cooperation is working together to carry and do something, emphasizing the values of harmony, selflessness, and the principle of togetherness. See the following video. Gotong Royong.mp4 (Source: Personal Documentation).

Mutual cooperation (gotong royong) is the original culture of the Indonesian nation, deeply rooted in every Indonesian individual. Mutual cooperation is practiced by the Indonesian community in various activities, including community events, religious traditions, traditional ceremonies, agricultural activities, local arts and culture, crises, and natural disasters, including conflict reconciliation among individuals and community groups. In mild cases, mutual cooperation is done by forgiving each other, with a handshake while expressing an apology. In severe cases, such as property and life losses, reconciliation is done through apologies and restorative justice efforts through the legal system.

In general, in conflict resolution cases, mutual cooperation serves to ease tension and build shared understanding. Mutual cooperation has several meanings, namely emphasizing collaboration and joint participation; promoting a spirit of mutual respect and tolerance for differences; fostering a strong social bond among members or groups; strengthening groups to work together to prevent conflicts from escalating; and fostering communication to expedite the chances of reaching agreements or compromises.

4. The habit of resolving conflicts based on traditional methods in Java

For the Javanese people, understanding conflict is equivalent to understanding the cultural history of the Indonesian nation. They comprehend that conflict is an inseparable part of the life process, undeniable and unavoidable. It must be accepted, and rejecting it is considered deviating from the nature of being human. Because humans are created not only to interact but also to solve every problem with others. Thus, the Javanese society views conflict as common knowledge.

Conflict as knowledge includes: (1) conflict is an inseparable reality of life, always present accompanying life; (2) conflict requires in-depth study because it involves various contexts that need to be clearly identified; (3) conflict creates motivation to be resolved; (4) conflict leads to sweet changes and brings forth new ideas that can be used as material for discussing conflicts; (5) conflict is dynamic, referring to the pattern of knowledge development and technological progress; (6) conflict is both positive and negative, hence it requires proper management.

The relationship between conflict and humans complements each other, such as sadness and happiness, hatred and longing. Proverbs say it is like a dish without salt or like a garden without flowers. These proverbs imply that conflict is the spice of life, the color of life, aimed at awakening, developing, and maintaining nature to be harmonious and balanced. To create a harmonious and balanced condition, conflict needs to be encouraged to generate creative and innovative ideas. For example, the love between a couple can be motivated by feelings of jealousy, hatred, and longing.

Culturally, the Javanese people resolve conflicts based on the values inherited from their ancestors. These values are reflected in various teachings about virtues and serve as guidelines for living in society. For most Javanese people, upholding these values is equivalent to desiring a peaceful, safe, and tranquil life. As the saying goes, “gemah ripah loh jinawi, tata tentrem kerta raharjo,” which means a depiction of a prosperous, safe, tranquil, and prosperous life.

Concretely, the function of values for the Javanese people includes giving purpose or direction (goals of purpose) to where life should go, develop, or be directed; giving aspirations or inspiration to someone for something useful, good, and positive for life; directing someone to behave (attitudes) or act in accordance with the morality of society, so values provide guidance on how one should behave; attracting someone's interests, capturing their hearts to be pondered, owned, fought for, and lived; disturbing someone's feelings, conscience when experiencing various emotions or moods, such as joy, sadness, pressure, joy, enthusiasm, etc.; related to someone's beliefs or convictions, related to certain values; a value demands certain activities or actions in accordance with that value, so the value does not stop at thoughts but encourages or generates intentions to do something in accordance with that value; values usually emerge in someone's consciousness, conscience, or mind when they are in a confusing situation, facing dilemmas, or dealing with various life problems (worries, problems, obstacles).

The sources of values that guide the Javanese society are available in ancient Javanese literary works, such as Serat Centini, Serat Sastra Gending, Suluk Syeh Malaya, Suluk Sujinah, Serat Sabdatama, Suluk Walisongo, and Bujangga Manik. The values in these ancient Javanese manuscripts contain complex meanings, including harmony and balance, devotion and obedience to God, social awareness and humanity, grace and authority, strength and resilience of the soul, beauty and art, and social harmony and solidarity.

5. The wisdoms in Javanese Society as a traditional method of conflict reconciliation

Wisdoms known as “petuah” in Indonesian, refers to advice or wise words conveyed to provide guidance, teaching, or inspiration to someone. *Petuah* stems from life experiences or wisdom that has been passed down from generation to generation. *Petuah* can take the form of practical advice, life values, or warnings aimed at guiding individuals in their daily lives.

For the ancient Sundanese people (Baduy Tribe), *petuah* is a set of highly binding rules known as “*pikukuh*.” *Pikukuh* comprises a set of rules and norms within the Baduy traditional community. It is also referred to as the fundamental principles of life in the Baduy community. *Pikukuh* includes 10 rules that are highly binding for both the internal and external Baduy communities. *Pikukuh* contains commands that should be followed to avoid violating *karuhun* [26–28]. These principles have sustained the way of life of the Baduy community up to the present and future.

As a principle that must not be violated by their group, *pikukuh* in practice has classifications, namely, heavy and light categories. The classification is adjusted based on the treatment received by the violator. It is also adapted to the internal and external Baduy traditional community groups. As explained by Danasasmita [29], the implementation of *pikukuh* violations differs between the internal and external Baduy traditional community groups based on the level of sacredness. The internal

Baduy community has a stricter punishment for violators compared to the community in the external Baduy area.

5.1 Javanese wisdoms

- a. *Nerimo ing pandum, urip sakdermo ngelakoni, urip mung mampir ngombe; alon-alon waton kelakon*; accepting fate, living wisely, and life is just passing by; slowly but surely.” Human beings should be able to control their hearts to live the best they can. Life in this world is destined, and it’s temporary. Therefore, one should accept the fate given by the Creator.
- b. *Lire mati sajroning ngaurip, iyo urip sajroning apejah, urip bae salawase, kang mati iku nnafsu, badan lair ingkang nglakoni, katampan badan nyata, pamoring sawujud, pagene ngrasa matia*; reading death while alive, yes, alive while dead, life is eternal, death is mere desire; the body is just a vessel, its beauty is in the essence, feeling alive. This verse conveys the message that human life should control its desires. One who cannot control desires is considered dead. Conversely, living without desire is also a form of death. Human life is a continuous cycle like the turning of a wheel. Desires are part of the human soul, but they must be controlled to avoid becoming tendencies.
- c. *Sopo siro sopo inggun, ojo adigang adigung adiguno, ojo dumeh*; whoever you are, do not claim to be too great, do not act arbitrarily, do not discriminate. When one has achieved success, they should not feel superior to others and to God. Knowledge, wealth, and power should not be used to boast or act recklessly. They should not be used to overshadow the rights of others.
- d. *Ojo midak marang liyan, sakjeroning isih ngerasakke loro*; do not disturb others when you are still in pain. When experiencing pain, one should not insult or hurt others, especially considering their own suffering.
- e. *Ngono yo ngono ning ojo ngono*; do what needs to be done, but do not overdo it. Life should be lived with control, avoiding excesses and sharp debates. Controlled actions are part of self-awareness.
- f. *Sing bisa prihatin sajroning bungah, sing bisa bungah sajroning prihatin*; be moderate in happiness and always be humble in power and wealth, so that in difficult times, you will not be shocked, and you can always live simply. Do not go overboard when happy and always remain humble in times of power and wealth to be prepared for difficult times.
- g. *Aja bungah ing pengalem, aja susah ing panacad atau aja mongkong ing pambombong, aja kendho ing panyendhu*; do not be arrogant in comfort, do not be sad in criticism, do not be arrogant in success, and do not be afraid in challenges.” Life should be self-aware, not easily swayed by pride, criticism, or challenges.
- h. *Eling lan waspada*; always be mindful and cautious. Life should always be careful, meticulous, and precise in observing phenomena. Do not judge from one perspective but see things comprehensively to understand each issue inclusively.

- i. *Yen krasa enak uwisana, yen krasa ora enak terusana*; if it feels good, hold back; if it does not feel good, persevere. Life should always control desires and restrain oneself. Ambition is acceptable, but not being overly ambitious. Ambition to win exists in every human, and it should be controlled to prevent it from leading astray.
- j. *Nglurug tanpo bolo, menang tanpo ngasorake*; advance without arrogance, win without demeaning others. Issues should be resolved through cooperation, compromise, and peace to avoid harming the parties involved. Each party can benefit with balanced satisfaction.
- k. *Bener ning ora pener*; the truth is not always accepted. Each party should not assume they are right, and others are wrong. Truth is an interval, which is tiered, and acceptance is universal, comprehensive, and impartial. Feeling right oneself is a potential tendency and can be malicious. Comprehensive understanding is needed to find the truth, without taking sides.
- l. *Ngalah ning ora kalah*; do not be proud of what you have gained, and do not feel superior to the defeat of others. Do not be proud of what you have achieved, and do not feel superior to the failure of others. Balance and sincere acceptance should be prioritized.
- m. *Pinarak tambah sanak*; brotherhood is the most important thing in life. Every problem should be resolved through sitting together, discussing, understanding, and taking care of each other. All are siblings, and dwelling too much on problems is not advisable.
- n. *Tego lorone ora tego patine*; issues between humans are common, but as fellow compatriots, do not be heartless. Even in conflict, remember that each person is a brother. Do not let the problem sever the bond of brotherhood.
- o. *Suro diro jayaningrat lebur dening pangastuti*; any strength will be defeated by virtue, love, and sincerity. No matter how powerful, strength can be overcome by good morals, love, and sincerity.
- p. *Memayu hayuning bawana*; to nurture the world to remain sustainable and beautiful. Protect and preserve the environment to maintain its original characteristics, with the aim of keeping the cosmic order intact.
- q. *Urip iku neng ndonya tan lam, upamane jebeng menyang pasar, tan langgeng neng pasar bae, tan wurung nuli mantuk, mri wismane sangkane nguni, ing mengko aja samar, sangkan parnipun, ing mengko padha weruho, yen asale sangkan paran du king nguni, aja nganti kesar*; life is not long, like a person going to the market, not staying there forever, returning home is essential; do not doubt your origin, do not get lost. Life is short, like a person going to the market, not staying there forever, and eventually returning home. Therefore, do not doubt your origin, and do not lose your way. Always remember that everything in the world will return to God.
- r. *Manunggaling kawulo Gusti*; humans should approach God closely, reaching a level of growth in God, creating inner peace.

- s. *Urip iku urup*; reminding people to provide brightness and radiance to others. Additionally, eliminating hatred and injustice towards others with sincerity and willingness.
- t. *Karyatenak tyasing sama*; Reminding people to provide brightness and radiance to others. Additionally, eliminating hatred and injustice towards others with sincerity and willingness.
- u. *Nglurug tanpa bolo, menang tanpo ngasorake*; descend without humiliation, triumph without degrading. People should act chivalrously and responsibly. Advance into battles without betraying friends, and win without belittling others.

5.2 Sundanese wisdoms

1. *Teu meunang binasa ka sasama*; prohibited to harm others; avoid harming fellow living beings.
2. *Teu meunang maling*; prohibited to steal.
3. *Teu meunang ingkar janji, ngabohong atawa nipu batur*; prohibited to break promises, lie, or deceive others.
4. *Teu meunang nginum nu ngamabokeun*; prohibited to consume intoxicating drinks.
5. *Teu meunang ngaduakeun hate atawa nyandung*; prohibited to have multiple spouses; avoid polygamy.
6. *Teu meunang dahar tas panonpoe surup*; prohibited to eat after sunset.
7. *Teu meunang dangdan, diwedak, sabun, atawa make seuseungitan*; prohibited to use cosmetics, soaps, or perfumes.
8. *Teu meunang sare tibra teuing*; prohibited to sleep too soundly; Avoid sleeping too deeply.
9. *Teu meunang ngawih lantaran senang*; prohibited to sing for pleasure.
10. *Teu meunang make barang mahal atawa rarangken, kongkorong, suweng, ali jeung geulang*; prohibited to wear expensive items or jewelry such as necklaces, earrings, rings, and bracelets.
11. *Lojor teu meunang dipotong, pondok teu meunang disambung*; long things should not be cut, short things should not be extended.
12. *Gunung teu beunang dilebur*; mountains should not be melted.
13. *Lebak teu meunang diruksak*; valleys should not be damaged.
14. *Larangan teu meunang dirempak*; taboos should not be violated.

15. *Buyut teu meunang dirobah*; ancestral customs should not be changed.
16. *Nu lain kudu dilainkeun*; others' belongings must be respected; others' belongings should be acknowledged as owned by others.
17. *Nu lain kudu diulakeun*; prohibitions should not be justified.
18. *Nu enya kudu dienyakeun*; truth must be acknowledged; the truth should be accepted.
19. *Mipit kudu amit*; taking must be accompanied by permission.
20. *Ngala kudu menta, ngeduk cikur kudu mihatur*; seek permission before taking and inform the owner before taking ginger.
21. *Nyokel jahe kudu micerak*; digging ginger must be reported.
22. *Nyaur kudu diukur*; think before speaking.
23. *Nyabda kudu diunggang*; think before speaking to avoid hurting others.
24. *Ulah ngomong sageto-geto*; do not speak carelessly.
25. *Ulah jinah papancangan*; prohibited to commit adultery and engage in dating.
26. *Teu meunang nurut sareng batur*; prohibited to engage in actions that harm or inconvenience others.
27. *Teu meunang ngajawab batur*; prohibited to hate or seek revenge against others.
28. *Teu meunang mengoyak batur*; prohibited to spread slander or false news that can harm others.
29. *Teu meunang ngarokok di batur*; prohibited to damage or harm collective interests.
30. *teu meunang ngalah ka batur*; prohibited to act selfishly or refuse to compromise for the common good.
31. *Teu meunang ngaranna batur*; prohibited to curse or swear at others.
32. *Teu meunang ngedasar ka batur*; prohibited to oppress or treat others unfairly.
33. *Teu meunang ngarabur batur*; prohibited to create chaos or conflict with others.
34. *Teu meunang nabrakkeun batur*; prohibited to blame or accuse without clear evidence.
35. *Teu meunang ngaranca batur*; prohibited to create division or discord within the community.

36. *Teu meunang nyarios batur*; prohibited to create disharmony or conflict with others.
37. *Teu meunang ngarwa batur*; prohibited to exploit or take advantage of others.
38. *Teu meunang nglalana batur*; prohibited to degrade or demean others.
39. *Teu meunang nyumehan batur*; Dilarang menciptakan suasana ketegangan atau pertikaian dengan sesama.
40. *Teu meunang nyembur batur*; prohibited to create tension or conflict with others.
41. *Teu meunang ngacungkeun tangan ka batur*; prohibited to make threats or physical violence against others.
42. *Teu meunang ngrusak harta benda batur*; prohibited to damage or destroy others' property.
43. *Teu meunang ngilangkeun tina batur*; prohibited to take or rob others' belongings.
44. *Teu meunang ngaribut batur*; prohibited to create trouble or quarrel with others.
45. *Teu meunang ngetokakeun batur*; prohibited to create intrigue or sow discord among others.
46. *Teu meunang ngati-atikeun batur*; prohibited to hurt or harm others physically or mentally.
47. *Teu meunang ngamukeun batur*; prohibited to provoke anger or hatred towards others.

The wisdoms in Javanese society as a traditional method of conflict reconciliation involves applying cultural values and local teachings to build peace, understanding, and harmony among individuals or groups engaged in disputes. Therefore, in its implementation, it requires cooperation and active participation from all parties involved. This process aims not only to resolve conflicts substantively but also to establish harmonious and sustainable relationships for the future.

6. Traditional methods in global reconciliation

Traditional methods such as consensus-building through deliberation and mutual cooperation can serve as guidelines for fostering peace, understanding, and harmony on a broader scale, including the global level. This is particularly relevant to global cooperation, global conflict resolution, diplomatic efforts based on shared interests among conflicting nations, and the recovery process following global conflicts. Additionally, traditional methods are essential for instilling a sense of unity, camaraderie, and addressing the basic needs of fellow nations, namely comfort and peace.

In the context of Javanese culture, there is a profound saying, “*rukun agawe santosa, gemah ripah loh jinawi, tata tentrem karta raharjo*,” which emphasizes the importance of unity for the sake of peace and prosperity. This cultural wisdom reflects the timeless principles that can be applied to global reconciliation efforts.

Meanwhile, wisdom plays a crucial role in global reconciliation, as it anticipates open aspirations, embraces tolerance, builds empathy and solidarity, imparts lessons on weaknesses and strengths, nurtures wise and sagacious community figures, and encourages each party to seek change. Thus, wisdom not only fulfills a role in providing moral guidance but also has the capacity to shape worldviews and collective actions that support global reconciliation.

7. Conclusion

Indonesia, a country rich in social, cultural, and religious diversity, faces challenges related to high social vulnerability. The dark historical facts accompanying Indonesia's journey have given the nation a strong experience in dealing with conflicts, especially severe ones. The evolving dynamics of conflicts necessitate a more varied approach to conflict resolution, adapting methods suitable for the complexity and dynamics of the conflicts.

As a characteristic of the Indonesian people, some conflict resolution methods used include “*Musyawarah untuk Mufakat*” (musyawarah for consensus), mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), and the advice traditions in Javanese society. In addressing the challenges of conflict resolution, Indonesia needs to uphold and strengthen cultural values such as consultation, mutual cooperation, and advice. Integrating these values into contemporary conflict resolution strategies can serve as a foundation for building a more harmonious, inclusive society that values local wisdom. By combining modern and traditional approaches, Indonesia can effectively and sustainably address conflicts, promoting peace, unity, and justice.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Sustainable Social Reconciliation Process and Approaches in Divided Societies: The Case of the Ali-Saaid Conflict

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Abstract

The Ali-Saaid district in Somaliland faces ongoing conflict between local communities, further intensifying the humanitarian crisis caused by severe drought. This ongoing violence has severely affected vulnerable groups, particularly women, children, and families, leading to the closure of community learning centers and overwhelming limited government and police resources. The conflict drains resources and undermines stability, emphasizing the importance of resource allocation in peacebuilding. This chapter discusses the imbalance between resources devoted to conflict and those designated for peacebuilding, advocating for a more deliberate and sustained approach to transform peace ideals into reality. However, it warns against unstructured resource distribution, such as using livestock for blood compensation, which might inadvertently escalate conflicts. To foster peace in Somaliland, the chapter suggests categorizing resources into community-based (e.g., livestock, monetary contributions) and state-based (e.g., infrastructure, services). It also highlights key peace-promoting elements, like reducing harm to vulnerable groups, prompt settlement of Diya claims, and the crucial role of clan elders in maintaining peace. Additionally, it underscores “flashpoints” where conflicts are likely to erupt, such as clan tensions, generational divides, unmanaged urbanization, and friction between internally displaced persons and host communities, calling for comprehensive strategies to ensure long-lasting peace.

Keywords: Somaliland, peace dividends, peacebuilding, community conflicts, clan conflicts

1. Introduction

In the contemporary global landscape, violent conflicts are pervasive, with mainstream media reporting over 700,000 fatalities annually due to violence and armed conflicts worldwide [1]. Moreover, civil wars can significantly hamper a country's economy, causing a decline of 2.2% per year [2]. Since 2008, the world has

witnessed a decrease in peace levels, marked by heightened terrorist activities, violent demonstrations, organized conflicts, and perceptions of criminality [3]. To address these issues, various peace-building strategies have been developed, contingent upon factors such as conflict type, history, stakeholders involved, root causes, and stakeholder perceptions.

In Africa, pastoral conflicts often stem from resource competition exacerbated by factors like marginalization, environmental challenges, climate-induced droughts, proliferation of arms, imperialism, religious and ethnic differences, poor governance, and corruption. In eastern Somaliland, escalating violence among clans and political factions, prolonged drought, and economic crises have led to a humanitarian emergency, with hundreds killed and thousands displaced. This violence, rooted in clan competition over natural resources, is exacerbated by the influence of Islamist militant groups, hindering traditional conflict resolution efforts.

Addressing past human rights violations is crucial for long-term stability and reconciliation. However, responses to political conflicts in eastern Somaliland have often overlooked micro-level realities, leaving reconciliation efforts inadequate and the region politically and socially unstable. Non-state actors like clan elders, religious leaders, and civil society organizations have stepped in to fill governance gaps, but their effectiveness is limited by low capacity, weak legitimacy, and narrow clan bases. Supporting these actors to gain skills and expand their reach is essential for addressing poverty and instability in the region. While non-state actors play a vital role, government support is crucial for sustaining peace efforts and achieving national reconciliation. However, Somaliland's government lacks essential governance skills, leading to tensions with traditional leaders and hindering conflict resolution. Transferring governance skills to local authorities and empowering moderate religious voices are vital for addressing root causes of conflict and countering extremist narratives.

The chapter emphasizes the importance of peace-building strategies tailored to specific contexts and supported by empirical evidence. Despite numerous peace-building initiatives, violent conflicts persist in Ali-Saaid, fueled by disputes over resources and district administrative control. Only a minority of residents show increased positivity toward peace, indicating the limited impact of current strategies. Emphasizing a holistic approach, the chapter advocates for interventions in governance, security, reconciliation, socioeconomics, and justice tailored to local conflict analyses.

To enhance peace-building effectiveness, the chapter proposes exploring the influence of strategies like peace dividends, community agreements, and capacity development of peace-building structures on social reconciliation. Understanding the effectiveness of these strategies is essential for peace-building organizations and donor communities to allocate resources strategically. Additionally, it informs Somaliland's government and the Ministry of Interior about effective peacebuilding and conflict management strategies. Despite challenges like insecurity and high costs, the chapter contributes to the literature on peace-building strategies in Somaliland's eastern regions. By leveraging field visits and personal resources, the research overcame data collection obstacles. The chapter aims to inform evidence-based, context-specific peace-building interventions to mitigate conflict and promote reconciliation in Somaliland.

This chapter employs a qualitative approach intertwined with phenomenology to delve into and comprehend the intricate lived experiences of individuals, offering a nuanced and comprehensive analysis of the subject matter. By embracing phenomenology, this methodology seeks to grasp the essence of the phenomenon under scrutiny, thereby facilitating a robust and multifaceted exploration of the topic.

In this qualitative study, contextual analysis serves as the backbone to investigate the prevailing state of peace in Somaliland, with a specific focus on its eastern regions. Through a meticulous review process encompassing policy analysis and institutional scrutiny, the research evaluates the effectiveness of peace-building endeavors by examining stability-related policies and normative frameworks. Drawing upon historical data sourced from publications like the National Gazette and archives from the Ministry of Justice, both pre- and post-colonial independence records are scrutinized to provide a contextual backdrop to the landscape of peace-building efforts. Furthermore, insights from scholarly literature and publications available at the Somaliland Parliament Library enrich the understanding of Somaliland's historical trajectory in peace-building endeavors. Additionally, content analysis methodology is employed to explore a diverse array of sources, including written documents, interviews, speeches, visual media, and social media posts, further enhancing the depth and breadth of the investigation.

2. Ali-Saaïd reconciliation efforts

Somaliland stands out within the Somali-inhabited eastern Horn of Africa due to its robust resilience and response capabilities against armed violence, positioning it at an advanced stage of “consolidated” or “durable” peace compared to neighboring regions. Unlike less effective governance structures observed elsewhere in Somalia, Somaliland's unique hybrid model combining tri-party democracy and traditional clan-based governance has cultivated an environment conducive to consolidating governmental authority, ensuring political stability, facilitating social and economic recovery, and upholding relative peace and security.

At the heart of this success lies Somaliland's distinctive political culture, which revolves around clan elders who command respect and legitimacy within their communities, thereby fostering political stability—a key divergence from the situation in southern Somalia.

These factors have significantly contributed to Somaliland's remarkable achievements in maintaining peace, security, and democracy in a volatile region. However, sustaining this consensus has come at a considerable cost, with over 40% of the national budget allocated to security services while the provision of social services remains heavily reliant on foreign aid [4]. Yet, the threat of armed conflict and political violence still exists in Somaliland, especially in the disputed eastern regions, Togdheer and Sanaag [5]. Although state-building efforts in Somaliland have shown relative success, particularly in southern Somalia, there are various factors contributing to fragility and potential conflicts in the future. The political elite has become increasingly disconnected from and less inclined to engage with local communities [6]. The autonomy and credibility of the Guurti (House of Elders, the upper house of the Parliament of Somaliland) have diminished over time. Peace institutions lack the capacity to effectively address human rights violations, and there is frequent executive interference in the affairs of the elders.

Somaliland's remote eastern regions have historically lacked the same enduring peace seen in other parts of the region, making them potential hotspots for armed conflict [5]. Over the past 5 years, tensions between the HabarYonis and Issa-Muse, two Isaaq sub-clans, have escalated in these areas. Compounding the issue, the relationship between the central government in Hargeisa and local traditional elders, crucial for resolving clan conflicts, has weakened.

Ali-Saaid's conflict revolved around a land dispute between two neighboring clans in the vicinity of the Togdheer region. The root of the conflict stemmed from one clan's disagreement with the administration's jurisdiction over a small district, prompting them to establish a new settlement nearby. However, this action was deemed unacceptable by the other clan, which received governmental support in line with existing policies. The escalation of tensions was fueled by social media campaigns and hate speech from both sides, as well as interviews with violent members of each clan.

Despite two previous initiatives failing to yield results, a new agreement was eventually brokered after initial casualties were reported. However, concerns were raised within the local community regarding the legitimacy of external interventions, which often occurred without consulting the affected communities, leading to feelings of imposition.

Drawing from the lessons of past conflicts like El-Afwayn, where the failure to implement agreements led to recurring violence, it was understood that the non-payment of blood compensation, or Diya, as mandated by Sharia law, could trigger revenge acts. This compensation, integral to the Somali justice system, is meant to foster forgiveness and prevent vendettas between families. However, the shortage of livestock, exacerbated by economic hardships, often made timely payments challenging for communities.

To address these challenges, a peace committee comprising business leaders, elders, and government officials was established by the two clans. This committee recognized three key politicized elements: firstly, the impact of climate-induced droughts on livestock availability, making it difficult to fulfill Diya obligations; secondly, the adoption of cash equivalents for blood compensation; and thirdly, the development of timelines for Diya payments. Through collaborative efforts, all Diya payments were completed within 2 months, amounting to a total exceeding one million USD. However, it was acknowledged that this significant resource allocation could have been better utilized had the conflict been managed earlier through timely interventions and de-escalation strategies.

Moving forward, both clans have reached a mutual agreement that any future incidents will be regarded as individual responsibilities rather than the collective responsibility of the entire clan. Additionally, they have agreed to abstain from seeking revenge. Any incidents that occur will be promptly reported to government authorities, and the clans have pledged their support to the government in addressing and resolving such issues.

3. Community social reconciliation

Social reconciliation is the process of repairing relationships between two groups that were previously in violent conflict. According to Kumar [7], it involves acknowledging the wrongs committed by both parties, openly discussing the disputes, and validating painful experiences. Lederach [8] describes reconciliation as the convergence of four elements: mercy, truth, justice, and peace. He emphasizes the importance of acknowledging past wrongs, showing forgiveness, achieving justice through restitution, and envisioning a shared future for divided communities.

As indicated above section, the Ali-Saaid clan conflict in Somaliland had been a source of tension and violence for many years, leading to numerous casualties and displacements within the region. The conflict stemmed from various factors, including historical grievances, competition over resources, and political disagreements.

Amidst this turmoil, the efforts of the peace committee played a crucial role in facilitating reconciliation between the warring factions. Recognizing the urgent need for peace, the committee embarked on a comprehensive reconciliation process aimed at addressing the root causes of the conflict and fostering sustainable peace in the region.

Central to the success of the peace agreement was the peace committee's emphasis on certain key principles. Firstly, the committee prioritized the need for the agreement to reflect a sense of justice, restitution, and reparation for past wrongs committed by both sides. This acknowledgement of historical grievances was essential in building trust and laying the groundwork for reconciliation. The aim here is to restore relationships between divided communities through forgiveness, healing, restitution, and a shared vision for the future, ultimately leading to unity and cooperation [7].

Additionally, the committee focused on fostering brotherly relations between the clans involved, emphasizing the importance of mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation. By promoting a sense of solidarity and unity among the clans, the committee sought to bridge long-standing divides and promote reconciliation. Moreover, the peace agreement underscored the significance of a shared vision for the future, emphasizing the importance of collective goals and aspirations in building a peaceful and prosperous society. Through these efforts, the peace committee played a pivotal role in bringing about reconciliation and paving the way for a brighter future for the Ali-Saa'id clan and the broader Somaliland community.

4. The influence of peace dividends on community social reconciliation

The peace dividend concept emerged after the Cold War, suggesting that resources previously allocated for military expenditure could be redirected toward productive activities. This concept encompasses three main benefits: savings from reduced military expenses, opportunities for practical actions through military redeployment, and gains from preventing destruction caused by conflicts [9]. Peace practitioners and researchers have adopted this concept as a strategy in peacebuilding and conflict management, viewing it as the potential benefits that communities would experience if violent conflicts ceased or were effectively managed.

Two prominent peace-building models, the peace-building palette model by Dan Smith and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) peace-building models, prioritize socio-economic interventions. These interventions aim to achieve balanced physical reconstruction, equitable access to social services and natural resources, and sound economic management [10]. By addressing the underlying root causes of violence, such as social injustices and resource distribution inequalities, these interventions can contribute to sustainable peace.

In Ali-Saa'id, a range of government and community-led peace-building strategies have been initiated with a focus on establishing tangible public basic services that directly support peace agreement efforts. These efforts, often referred to as peace dividends, encompass a variety of initiatives aimed at addressing underlying social tensions and fostering harmony.

These peace dividends include enhancing essential social services to alleviate competition and conflicts over resources, promoting collaborative projects that facilitate interaction between historically divided communities, and tackling the root causes of disputes. The overarching objective is to prioritize, co-manage, and share such

infrastructure among these communities to cultivate improved relationships, shift perceptions, and foster positive attitudes toward one another. The ultimate aim is to demonstrate that communities can successfully share resources and benefits without the need for establishing new settlements or engaging in competitive behaviors.

5. The influence of community peace agreements on community social reconciliation

Yawanarajah and Ouellet [11] define a peace agreement as a contract aimed at ending violent conflicts or transforming them constructively. These agreements can vary, including ceasefire, pre-negotiation, interim, or comprehensive peace agreements, depending on the negotiation stage or conflict scene. For success, peace agreements need procedural, substantive, and institutional components. In protracted conflicts, injustices and harm create a need for reparations and justice to heal divided communities and foster reconciliation. Restorative justice, emphasizing harm repair through dialog and negotiation rather than punishment, is preferred [12].

To successfully implement comprehensive peace agreements (CPAs), Lederach [8] suggests focusing on leadership within divided communities. Representative leaders must articulate and advocate for their constituents, possessing the power to garner community support for the agreement. In the Ali-Saaid district, clan elders typically hold leadership roles. In the context of the Somaliland government's Ministry of Interior, Clan Peace Agreements (CPAs) are made between conflicting parties following violent conflicts to establish a ceasefire, provide restorative justice, and plan for peaceful conflict resolution without resorting to violence. CPAs are reached through peace dialogs mediated by representatives or leaders of the conflicting parties.

Once agreed upon, CPAs are disseminated to grassroots communities by inclusive teams representing the conflicting parties. Grassroots dialogs aim to ensure community understanding and alignment with traditional conflict resolution mechanisms such as Xeer¹ and conflicts like the one that occurred in Odwayne in 2020. Any objections are addressed through further deliberation, and agreed-upon issues are documented and signed by leaders in a public forum attended by the divided societies.

6. Drivers of conflict and fragility in Ali-Saaid

The environment for implementers working in Somaliland is complex and evolving. The security situation in Somaliland depends, to a large extent, on continued internal economic and political stability. According to those interviewed, continued financial stability and prosperity are essential to maintaining peace and security in Somaliland. Somaliland's continued political stability also shapes the security situation—political stability has kept extremist groups from gaining a foothold in Somaliland—and has enabled the government to create an enabling environment for peace, making Somaliland one of the most peaceful political entities in the Horn of Africa.

¹ Xeer is a Somali word which means a traditional legal system and customary law practiced by the Somali people. It is a system based on customary norms, community consensus, and oral tradition rather than codified laws. Xeer governs various aspects of life including property rights, contracts, dispute resolution, and social relations.

7. Clannism

Somaliland has established successful governance structures, a feat achieved from the bottom up. This accomplishment, however, is juxtaposed against long-standing clan grievances, possibly spanning decades or even centuries [13]. This presents a unique and challenging environment for any development partner. Presently, clan grievances fuel community polarization, with carefully negotiated agreements among clan elders facing increasing challenges from the younger, more urbanized population.

This polarization is exacerbated by environmental concerns and a lack of employment opportunities, which drive competition over limited resources. Additionally, clan affiliation is a primary trigger for conflict in Somaliland, shaping disputes and influencing recruitment and promotion within the armed forces.

Elections and electoral disputes significantly influence the security landscape in Somaliland. According to an interview with a local human rights lawyer and activist, the electoral process often revolves around clan affiliations, undermining democratic principles and contributing to civil unrest. The rise of political hegemony in Hargeisa has intensified clan-based politics, driven by elites' ability to advance their economic interests through political channels. The perceived dominance of the Isaaq clan within these power structures has sparked periodic anti-government protests and civil unrest [6].

8. Clan conflicts

Clan conflicts, exacerbated by various factors,² are a significant challenge in Somaliland, particularly in the Togdheer and Sahil regions. These conflicts stem from competition over land and resources among the Isaaq clans, such as the HabarYonis and Issa-Muse, residing in these areas. A recent study by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute highlights how these conflicts, compounded by climate-induced pressures like increased herder-farmer conflicts and competition over land, pose threats to peace and stability in Somaliland [14].

Environmental changes, particularly irregular precipitation and temperature variations have intensified conflicts between herders and farmers throughout East Africa. In Somaliland, these changes have disrupted traditional grazing routes and nomadic mobility patterns, leading to heightened tensions over land and resources. This conflict, according to the UN strategic framework, perpetuates a cycle of violence, hindering local reconciliation efforts and exacerbating disputes over territory, resources, and clan tensions [15].

The Somaliland Development Fund underscores the role of land usage, tenure, and rights as potential triggers for conflict, especially in rural areas where the impact of climate variability is most severe. As a predominantly agrarian society, Somaliland's economy is highly vulnerable to the shocks caused by climate events,

² Clan conflicts in Somalia are exacerbated by historical grievances stemming from colonial divisions, competition for scarce resources such as land and water, and political manipulation by elites exploiting clan identities for power. These conflicts are also fueled by external factors including the proliferation of small arms and the involvement of neighboring countries in Somalia's internal affairs.

such as recurrent droughts, which further exacerbate resource scarcity and food and water insecurity.

Interviews conducted in December 2023 confirm these dynamics, particularly in rural and remote regions, where climate-induced resource conflicts have contributed to internal displacement and undermined public trust in the government's ability to maintain peace and stability. Recurrent droughts and flooding, exacerbated by climate variations, have further exacerbated internal displacement, leading to disputes between displaced populations and urban inhabitants over land and resources.

Furthermore, the recurrent occurrence of droughts and floods in specific regions due to climate alteration has led to increased internal displacement, with rural migrants moving to urban centers. This influx has resulted in disputes over land and other resources between internally displaced persons (IDPs) and permanent residents, contributing to a decrease in trust and confidence in the central government.

According to multiple interviewees, competition among clans for resources often triggers disputes that can escalate into armed conflicts. For instance, water scarcity prompts conflicts when pastoralists allow their livestock to graze on farmland during droughts, as seen in the 2020 conflict in Odwayne. Similarly, conflicts over water and grazing land have intensified, exemplified by inter-clan armed clashes in the Ali-Saaïd district over borehole water rights due to persistent drought.

The scarcity of arable land and water sometimes reaches a critical point, compelling both farmers and pastoralists to abandon their traditional lifestyles and migrate to urban centers. This migration leads to disputes between IDPs and host communities, exacerbating tensions and straining local commodity supplies, especially food products like milk and meat, which become less accessible and more expensive for the urban poor.

In the future, as the impacts of climate change persist, inter-clan conflicts over natural resources such as grazing land and water are expected to continue, particularly in disputed areas like the Sanaag and Togdheer regions. Additionally, internal migration flows are likely to persist, further straining infrastructure and government institutions such as law enforcement and the judiciary. Moreover, rural-to-urban migrants often lack the education, training, or skills needed to support themselves in urban environments, adding to the challenges faced by both migrants and urban communities.

9. The indelible clan elders' role

In Somaliland, traditional elders, influential clerics, and community leaders play vital roles in peace processes, a pattern observed elsewhere as well. These elders engage in a form of mediation known as insider-partial mediation, which is characterized by several key factors contributing to their effectiveness [16]. Firstly, traditional elders are deeply embedded within the communities and conflict settings they serve, providing them with first-hand knowledge and understanding of local dynamics. This proximity allows them to navigate complex social structures and relationships with greater insight.

Secondly, they command trust and respect within their communities, earned through years of service and adherence to cultural norms. This credibility enables them to act as impartial mediators, bridging divides and facilitating dialog between conflicting parties. Thirdly, traditional elders wield significant traditional authority and leverage moral persuasion to influence outcomes. Their positions of respect and

reverence afford them the ability to guide community members toward reconciliation and peaceful resolution of disputes. Lastly, traditional elders maintain close relationships with their communities, ensuring that their interventions are grounded in the realities and needs of the people they serve. This connection fosters a sense of ownership and legitimacy, enhancing the impact of their mediation efforts.

These distinguishing features set traditional elders apart from formal government justice institutions, making them indispensable actors in peace-building processes. They engage in mediation and negotiation with opposing clans, collaborate with peacekeeping efforts, and serve as essential conduits for Somaliland's peace and state-building endeavors. During the civil war, clan elders played pivotal roles in establishing stability and security by overseeing the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of former combatants and clan militias. Their leadership was instrumental in organizing reconciliation conferences across various regions, including Borama, Burao, and Hargeisa, all achieved without external support.

Drawing upon customary law (Xeer) and Islamic law (Shari'a), traditional elders employed these frameworks to resolve conflicts and lay the groundwork for lasting peace. Their adept use of indigenous dispute resolution mechanisms contributed significantly to Somaliland's successful peacebuilding and state-building efforts, setting it apart from the challenges faced by counterparts in South and Central Somalia. In conclusion, the alternative dispute resolution (ADR) processes overseen by traditional elders, rooted in Xeer and Shari'a, are indispensable to maintaining peace and stability in Somaliland. Their unique blend of local knowledge, cultural legitimacy, and moral authority positions them as key architects of peace in the region, ensuring that disputes, particularly those concerning land and water, are resolved peacefully and sustainably.

10. The imbalance between resources allocated for conflicts and those designated for peace-building efforts

In the complex landscape of Somaliland, where the Ali-Saaid conflict continues to deplete vital resources and prolong instability, the significance of resource management in facilitating peace-building endeavors cannot be overstated. This section illuminates the glaring dissonance between the resources allocated for fueling conflicts and those earmarked for fostering peace and stability. It underscores the imperative of meticulous preparation, steadfast long-term commitment, and judicious allocation of resources to translate the collective yearning for peace into tangible realities. However, it also cautions against haphazard resource distribution, which runs the risk of inadvertently exacerbating the conflict, as evidenced by the misuse of livestock in the context of blood compensation rituals.

The stark dissonance between the substantial resources dedicated to fueling conflicts and the comparatively meager allocations for fostering peace and stability is emblematic of a systemic imbalance. While clans mobilize resources with a sense of urgency for conflicts, the process of collecting Diya, essential for blood compensations and peace agreement resources, often languishes. This anomaly underscores a broader societal issue wherein the immediacy of conflict overshadows the vital but less urgent task of nurturing peace. Clans typically harness livestock and monetary contributions from their members to fuel resource mobilization for conflicts, highlighting a cycle wherein resources flow more readily toward perpetuating strife rather than toward sustainable peace-building endeavors. Addressing this dissonance

necessitates a fundamental re-evaluation of societal priorities, emphasizing the imperative of allocating resources equitably toward both conflict resolution and peace promotion initiatives.

In addition to the human-induced challenges, environmental degradation, exacerbated by relentless droughts and unchecked overgrazing, compounds the pervasive insecurity gripping Somaliland's eastern territories. Nomadic pastoralist communities, deeply entrenched in a way of life reliant on livestock for sustenance, find themselves disproportionately impacted by this degradation, hampering their ability to uphold customary practices and discharge obligations like blood compensation. This section advocates for a broadened conception of resources pertinent to peace-building efforts, delineating them into community and clan resources, encompassing tangible assets such as livestock and financial contributions, alongside state resources comprising essential services and infrastructural provisions.

Furthermore, this section underscores the pressing need for holistic strategies that integrate environmental sustainability into peace-building initiatives, recognizing the intrinsic interplay between ecological stability and social harmony. It emphasizes the imperative of fostering resilience within pastoralist communities through sustainable land management practices, targeted interventions aimed at mitigating environmental degradation, and equitable resource distribution mechanisms. By adopting a nuanced approach that addresses the multifaceted dimensions of resource management, Somaliland can chart a more sustainable path toward peace, resilience, and prosperity for all its inhabitants.

11. Institutional, legal, policy and governance gaps

Ultimately, clan elders play a crucial role in driving community change and implementing effective peacekeeping processes. Peace initiatives led by clan elders are known to be effective, with agreements they broker enjoying legitimacy and credibility within the community. These processes have historically contributed to the relative peace and stability that Somaliland currently enjoys, contrasting with other regions of Somalia. Therefore, leveraging the influence and expertise of clan elders remains integral to sustaining peace and stability in the region [17].

Expanding and enhancing upon the institutional, legal, policy, and governance shortcomings that have contributed to clan conflicts in Somaliland reveals a multifaceted challenge rooted in issues concerning resource allocation, governance structures, and law enforcement capacity. Firstly, the historical and cultural significance of water, land, and grazing rights within the context of clan conflicts underscores the urgent need for institutional reforms. Despite their pivotal role in community livelihoods, the mechanisms for managing these resources remain inadequately defined and poorly regulated. This institutional gap perpetuates tensions and exacerbates conflicts as competing claims over scarce resources escalate into violent confrontations.

Legally, the absence of clear frameworks and enforceable regulations exacerbates the situation. Disputes arising from land ownership, access to water sources, and grazing territories often lack transparent resolution mechanisms, leading to prolonged conflicts with no satisfactory outcomes for the involved parties. The lack of legal clarity and enforcement mechanisms only serves to perpetuate grievances and sustain cycles of violence. Furthermore, existing policies aimed at addressing these issues are either insufficient or remain largely unimplemented, particularly in rural areas where the majority of these conflicts occur. The limited presence of law

enforcement agencies in rural regions compounds this problem, as communities are left to resolve disputes independently, often resulting in localized violence and retaliatory actions.

The challenges associated with deploying law enforcement resources to remote areas further exacerbate this issue, as logistical constraints hinder the timely intervention necessary to prevent or de-escalate conflicts. To address these institutional, legal, policy, and governance gaps effectively, a comprehensive approach is required. This entails:

- Institutional reforms: establishing robust community-owned, community-led institutions tasked with managing and adjudicating disputes related to land, water, and grazing rights. These institutions should be inclusive, transparent, and equipped with the necessary authority to enforce their decisions.
- Legal frameworks: developing clear and enforceable legal frameworks that fit local realities and context issues that delineate property rights, access to resources, and dispute resolution mechanisms. This includes ensuring access to justice for all parties involved and promoting alternative dispute resolution methods to alleviate the burden on formal legal systems.
- Policy implementation: prioritizing the implementation of existing policies aimed at mitigating clan conflicts, particularly in rural areas. This involves strengthening the capacity of local governments to administer policies effectively and providing adequate resources to support their implementation.

By addressing these fundamental gaps in institutional, legal, policy, and governance frameworks, Somaliland can work toward fostering sustainable peace and stability, mitigating the drivers of clan conflicts, and promoting inclusive development across the region.

12. Conclusion

In Ali-Saaid, a region marked by its complex and evolving environment, maintaining peace and security in Somaliland is intricately linked to internal economic and political stability. Political stability has notably kept extremist groups at bay, contributing to Somaliland's reputation as one of the most peaceful entities in the Horn of Africa. However, clan dynamics rooted in historical grievances pose a significant challenge, with clan affiliations acting as primary triggers for conflict. These dynamics are further exacerbated by environmental concerns, which disrupt traditional livelihoods, aggravate resource scarcity, and intensify competition for limited resources.

Clannism is deeply ingrained in Somaliland's governance structures and societal fabric, with clan grievances driving community polarization and challenging historical agreements. Environmental concerns exacerbate these tensions by disrupting traditional patterns of agriculture and nomadic lifestyles, leading to increased conflicts between herders and farmers over land and resources. The resulting disputes often escalate into armed conflicts, further destabilizing the region. Moreover, climate-related events such as recurrent droughts and flooding contribute to internal displacement, straining urban resources and exacerbating tensions between displaced populations and host communities.

Traditional elders, influential clerics, and community leaders play a vital role in peace processes in Somaliland, leveraging their traditional authority and community trust to mediate conflicts and reconcile opposing clans. Their effectiveness in peace-building efforts, particularly through customary dispute resolution mechanisms like *Xeer* and *Shari'a*, highlights the importance of indigenous approaches to conflict resolution. However, ongoing challenges such as increasing inter-clan conflicts over resources and internal migration place additional strain on these traditional structures, necessitating sustained efforts to address underlying drivers of fragility and promote inclusive and sustainable peace-building initiatives.

The chapter uncovered several essential factors for the promotion of peace and stability in Somaliland, which directly affect the implementation of the peace agreements. Among these factors, the disproportionate suffering endured by women and vulnerable groups amid conflicts in Somaliland stands as a poignant concern, necessitating the integration of measures to mitigate unintended harm to these populations into any peace-promoting initiative. Furthermore, the delayed settlement of *Diya* (blood compensations) serves as a trigger for retaliatory actions, underscoring the urgent need for timely resolution to prevent escalation. Additionally, the indispensable role of clan elders emerges as a linchpin in upholding peace and stability, highlighting their pivotal function in resolving disputes that pose threats to Somaliland's political and economic equilibrium, a role that warrants utmost recognition and support.

Furthermore, the chapter illuminates several critical “flash points” within Somaliland that can exacerbate conflict dynamics, including tensions simmering between clans and sub-clans, exacerbated by factors such as access to dwindling land and water resources, especially pronounced during periods of drought. Additionally, the shift in social norms driven by generational disparities, compounded by rapid urbanization without adequate urban planning, strains on infrastructure, and a dearth of employment opportunities, particularly for young men, serve as additional flashpoints ripe for igniting conflict. Moreover, underlying tensions between internally displaced persons (IDPs) and host communities further compound the volatile landscape, necessitating comprehensive strategies to address these multifaceted challenges in the pursuit of lasting peace and stability within Somaliland.

To conclude, the chapter amidst the backdrop of the Ali-Saa'id conflict in Somaliland, a region plagued by resource drain and enduring instability, the imperative role of resources in fostering peace emerges as paramount. This chapter underscores the stark imbalance between resources allocated to fuel conflicts and those earmarked for fostering peace, emphasizing the necessity for deliberate preparation, steadfast long-term commitment, and judicious resource allocation to translate peace aspirations into tangible realities. Yet, it sounds a cautionary note against haphazard resource distribution, which risks inadvertently escalating conflicts, evident in the misappropriation of livestock for blood compensation. Environmental degradation, compounded by factors like severe droughts and rampant overgrazing, further exacerbates insecurity in Somaliland's eastern regions. Pastoralist communities, heavily reliant on livestock for sustenance, bear the brunt of this degradation, impeding their ability to uphold traditional practices and meet obligations like blood compensation. To address these challenges, the chapter advocates for an expanded conception of resources for peacebuilding, delineating them into community/clan resources (such as livestock and monetary contributions) and state resources (encompassing services and infrastructure), thereby laying the groundwork for sustainable peace initiatives.

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Section 2

Theoretical Approches

Peace beyond the Absence of War: Three Trends in the Study of Positive Peace

Gijsbert M. van Iterson Scholten

Abstract

Recent years have seen a surge in renewed academic interest in positive concepts of peace. This chapter takes stock of these developments, arguing that three trends can be observed. First, in a quest to make positive peace measurable, additional indicators of peace are added to the absence of war, mostly relying on existing databases. Second, in an attempt to capture the varieties of peace that resonate with inhabitants of postwar countries, authors rely on interviews with various groups to construct locally grounded notions of peace. Third, the ontological status of peace is reconceptualized. Rather than being a (utopian?) state of affairs, peace is said to be a process, an emergent phenomenon, or a quality of relationships between actors. The uptake of these three trends is that we are left with a variety of peace paradigms for local and international peacebuilders to work on. Consequently, special attention should be paid to concepts of peace that resonate with rising powers in peacebuilding and with populations in conflict-affected areas. The chapter concludes that the field of peace studies is maturing into a separate discipline, following a different logic than that of conflict studies, holistic rather than reductionist, bottom-up rather than top-down and focusing on long-term change rather than quick problem-solving.

Keywords: peace, peacebuilding, positive peace, concepts of peace, measuring peace, peace continuum, relational peace, quality peace, complexity, local turn, peace and conflict studies

1. Introduction

In 2016, the International Study Association devoted its annual conference to the topic of “exploring peace,” a call by its president to “look beyond conventional ideas of ‘negative peace,’ typically thought of as the absence of war, and examine the manifestation of ‘positive peace’ in the cases and situations that we study” [1]. A few years before, the president of the Peace Science Society (International) likewise called on the members of his society to “bring peace back in” to their studies of armed conflict and peacebuilding [2]. Both calls seem to have originated in a certain unease with the fact that most academics that study peace are actually studying armed conflict [3, 4]. Some exceptions withstanding, the general consensus among peace researchers seemed, and perhaps still seems, to be a paraphrase of the old Latin adage: if you want to understand peace, study war.

This chapter is about those exceptions. It argues that they are growing in both numbers and depth and that the calls to “bring peace back in” should be seen as part of a renewed interest in the study of peace as a positive phenomenon. That is, as something that extends beyond the absence of war and should be studied as a phenomenon “in and of its own” ([5], p. 177). This renewed interest comes at a time when armed conflict is once again on the rise [6], seemingly thwarting earlier optimism about a decline in violence [7, 8].

It also comes at a time when other authors are arguing that international peacebuilding is experiencing a severe crisis [9, 10]. For the study of (post-conflict) peacebuilding, conceptualizing peace in terms other than an absence of armed conflict seems to be especially appropriate, as the very notion of building peace would seem to presuppose that peace is a positive phenomenon. Building an “absence” of anything seems a priori absurd. Having a more fine-grained concept of peace might lead to a more realistic assessment of what international peacebuilding can and has achieved and thus a better assessment of whether peacebuilding is “in crisis” or merely building a different kind of peace, or different peaces (in the plural, see [11]) than its critics are looking for.

Various authors, in contexts other than peacebuilding operations, have pointed out the need for a concept of peace that can make a distinction between North Korea and Sweden [12], for instance, or between various situations described as “no war, no peace” [13]. Whether the trend of focusing primarily on the study of armed conflict to understand peace has been broken is not yet certain, but the past decade has been rather productive in producing studies that explore peace as a positive phenomenon. This chapter seeks to take stock of this renewed interest in positive peace, exploring three tracks researchers have taken to further our understanding of peace. Adopting a peacebuilding perspective, the chapter presents arguments for fruitful ways in which to combine and/or elaborate on these three tracks. The three paths taken can roughly be characterized as (1) a quantitative track expanding the concept of peace by combining the absence of armed conflict with other databases and indices, for instance, on democracy or various human rights; (2) a local turn asking mostly representatives of marginalized groups in (post-) conflict areas what peace means to them; and (3) a more philosophical approach seeking to understand the ontological nature of peace as something other than a condition at a certain point in space and time. Before going into the details of these three developments, it is important to first briefly revisit the concept of positive peace and the changes it has undergone since its first inception in the 1950s/1960s.

2. Positive peace: a short history

The notion of positive peace is often traced back to two of the founding fathers of peace studies: Quincy Wright and Johan Galtung. Wright was the first to coin the term “positive peace” [14] to describe a situation of integration and cooperation between states in international relations. This idea of cooperation and integration as the antithesis of war was taken up by Johan Galtung in his first exploration of positive and negative peace [15]. He later changed his mind though and famously equated positive peace with the absence of structural—rather than direct or physical—violence, or “structural limitations on the fulfillment of human potential,” sometimes also formulated as the presence of social justice [16, 17].

Over time, other peace researchers have proposed different conceptualizations of positive peace (for an excellent overview, see [12], p. 40-47). Some of these went back to the original meaning attached to the concept by Wright, stressing “harmonious

relationships” as a core attribute of peace (see, e.g., [18, 19]). Others have tried to describe a situation of positive peace as the presence of a common legal order or international rule of law [20, 21] or tried to conceptualize peace as a continuum of ever-increasing levels of peacefulness in various domains of human interaction [19, 22–24].

However, among scholars of peace, it is primarily Galtung’s name that has stuck to the concept of positive peace. His focus on peace as the absence of different kinds of violence has probably helped to keep the discussion of peace closely linked to conflict and violence, rather than studying peace as a phenomenon in and of itself ([12], p. 27). Concerns that more elaborative definitions of peace would be too vague or expansive to be of any practical use in studying the real-world occurrence of peace have reinforced the tendency of peace scholars to focus on conflict and war [12, 25, 26].

In the late 2000s, the need to evaluate the success of United Nations peacebuilding operations, especially the more multidimensional peace operations that did much more than observe cease-fires, led to a renewed interest in definitions of peace beyond the absence of war [27]. It is to these efforts to reconceptualize peace that we now turn, starting with the idea that positive peace equals negative peace plus some additional criteria.

3. The first trend: more data

The first trend that can be observed in more recent efforts to reconceptualize peace as a positive phenomenon is to add additional criteria for a situation to count as one of positive rather than negative peace. Scholars in this first track are mostly concerned with finding operational definitions of peace that allow for systematic analysis and comparison across cases [12]. One of the reasons negative peace is so attractive as a concept is that it is easy to observe. Various institutes host online databases, like the Correlates of War project (COW, <https://correlatesofwar.org/>), the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP, <https://ucdp.uu.se/>), or the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED, <https://acleddata.com/>). All of these keep track of the number of armed conflicts in the world, using precise and widely accepted measures of armed conflict, based on casualty statistics. If the level of violence drops below the specified threshold for armed conflict, (negative) peace prevails.

However, for many comparisons, merely relying on casualty statistics is too crude a measure to capture the diversity of peace in post-settlement societies [28] or the differences between the peacefulness of Sweden and North Korea [12, 29]. For larger-N comparisons, we need some concept of peace, for which indicators exist, that can be measured with the same level of accuracy as the absence of armed conflict. Therefore, authors have searched for other datasets that can capture these additional aspects of peace.

Early attempts in this direction simply added a measure of democracy to distinguish more “participatory” peace from negative peace (e.g., [17, 30–32]). Although this does make it possible to distinguish peace in Sweden from that in North Korea, the stream of critiques on what is called “liberal peace” by its critics (for example [33–38], see also [11] chapter 2) shows serious challenges with this simple equation of positive peace with some semblance of democracy. In a nutshell, critics argue that state capacity might be more important than democracy for prolonged peace [33], that the notion of democracy (or at least the models implemented in postwar peacebuilding) forces Western concepts and institutions onto non-Western states [36, 37, 39], and that democracy-promotion makes liberal peacebuilding focus too much on national-level politics at the expense of local factors relevant for peace [37, 38, 40].

A more ambitious attempt was made by Madhav Joshi and Peter Wallensteen in a 2016 edited volume [41]. They try to conceptualize the quality of peace in societies emerging from civil war along five dimensions: postaccord security, governance, economic reconstruction, transitional justice, and reconciliation and civil society. They stress that every situation is different and not every dimension is equally important in every situation or at each moment in time. Although they present the diversity of the findings in different case study chapters as a strength of their new concept of peace, they also acknowledge that more data, more theory development, and more rigorous methods are needed to make the concept as clear as the classic notion of negative peace.

Davenport, Melander, and Regan build on the idea of quality peace, as well as Wright's insistence that peace is best thought of as a continuum, to argue for various interpretations of a "peace continuum" [12]. Their three proposals for a positive concept of peace are all grounded in a solid theoretical approach to peace and measurable by way of indicators that should be able to distinguish different levels of quality peace. They take great care to avoid both the Scylla of an overly narrow definition like the one by Doyle and Sambanis [30] and the Charybdis of overly broad concepts of peace that are impossible to measure, like the ones by De Rivera [18] and Anderson [19]. As an illustration of this rather sophisticated attempt to broaden our understanding of peace, while keeping it measurable, their three proposals will be briefly introduced.

Regan offers the narrowest conceptualization, proposing that we see peace as a situation in which "no actor or group of actors has a unilateral incentive to attempt change by force of arms" ([42], p. 86). This may seem overly biased in favor of stability and keeping the status quo, as well as difficult to measure, but he valiantly tries to overcome these doubts and propose proxy indicators for risk assessment (bond prices and black-market currency exchange rates) that might capture the extent to which actors have such incentives.

His two colleagues propose more expansive definitions of peace, one cleverly constructed as a mirroring of Carl Clausewitz' famous definition of war as the continuation of policy by other means [43], the other as a continuum ranging from opposition to mutuality along different dimensions of interaction and levels of analysis [44]. Both approaches produce indicators that can be measured using existing databases on, for example, the occurrence of torture, democracy, and women's rights [43], or citizenship rights and degrees of segregation [44].

A slightly different, but even more ambitious approach, to come up with indicators for positive peace is the Institute for Economics and Peace's Positive Peace Index [45, 46]. Based on a big data analysis of factors that create and sustain peaceful societies, it identifies no less than eight "pillars of peace" that create and sustain peaceful societies: a well-functioning government, low levels of corruption, acceptance of the rights of others, good relations with neighbors, free flow of information, a sound business environment, the equitable distribution of resources, and high levels of human capital. Each pillar has various indicators to measure a country's progress on it. If this seems to leave open the question of what constitutes a peaceful society, the same institute also publishes the Global Peace Index measuring peacefulness in terms of a country's level of safety and security in society, the extent of domestic or international conflict, and the degree of militarization [47].

For all their sophistication, these attempts at operationalizing a measurable concept of peace are not without problems. For one thing, the focus on measurability and country rankings sits somewhat uncomfortably with the idea that peace in different societies is qualitatively different. How can these qualitative differences be accounted for in some quantitative comparison like the Positive Peace Index? Can we really say

that a country with high levels of economic growth but low levels of human rights observance (let us say China) is less peaceful than a country that is economically less developed but fares better on the human rights spectrum (like Guyana or, potentially, Bhutan)? Is the United States, with its large levels of gun violence but also a sound business environment and premium internet access, really more peaceful than Costa Rica or Mauritius, two countries in the positive peace index that do not even have a standing army?¹

However, the move to expand the concept of peace beyond the absence of war by integrating various other concerns into it is definitely an interesting one. While the authors working in this track should be applauded for their efforts at methodological rigor, operationalization, and data collection, the track is not without risk. Three main risks are conceptual overstretch, conceptual confusion, and blind spots because of the need for indicators and data.

The first risk is conceptual overstretch. By adding democracy, observance of various human rights, or the IEP's eight pillars of peace, the risk is that peace becomes a synonym for "all things desirable," making it impossible theoretically to even describe the relationship between positive peace and things like economic development, human happiness or well-being, and various forms of government. This seems to be a risk most people working with this notion of positive peace are aware of though and seek to limit by proposing only a few indicators and insisting that peace remains a separate concept ([12], p. 29).

The second risk is that indicators drive the underlying concept of peace away from something that can be meaningfully labeled "positive peace" and to the direction of human rights observance, economic development, or economic risk management. For instance, Regan's concept of peace as a situation in which "no actor or group of actors has a unilateral incentive to attempt change by force of arms" ([42], p. 186) can still be seen as a positive concept of peace, but his indicators (bond prices and black-market currency exchange rates) push peace into the economic domain, where many actors actually working for peace would not think it belongs (see [11, 48]). Of course, it can be argued that the proposed indicators should explicitly be seen as proxy indicators, but that begs the question of whether these proxies correctly mirror the level of positive peace in a society or are merely selected because of the availability of databases.

Third, by basing their concept of peace on indicators for which data is available, authors in this line of research run the risk of molding peace according to Western practices, as the Global West has the most extensive and highest quality data available. Western countries score consistently higher on all pillars of the positive peace index, but maybe because the index is based on statistics that come mostly from Western countries. It is this third pitfall that the second trend in positive peace research seeks to counteract by calling attention to the concepts of peace that people in the Global South espouse.

4. The second trend: more voices

The second shift in conceptualizing peace can be observed in authors partaking in a "local," or anthropological, turn, who have started to ask people in conflict-affected areas what peace means to them, in order to come up with more locally legitimate notions of peace. The local turn is a hotly debated topic among peacebuilding scholars

¹ Like 19 other countries in the world, though most of them are too small to have been included in the positive peace index.

[49–52]. Those debates will not be summarized here; rather the focus is on the key development relevant for exploring peace: the trend to ask people in conflict-affected areas what peace means to them in their everyday lives. In the past 10 years, studies have been published on the meanings that indigenous peoples [53, 54], young people [55], women [56, 57], or more generally people in local communities in conflict-affected areas [48, 58, 59] or traditional peaceful societies [60] attach to peace.

One of the most ambitious projects in this regard has been the effort to “reclaim” everyday peace by developing a set of Everyday Peace Indicators that can serve as a yardstick for measuring peacebuilding success [48, 61, 62]. These indicators were established in a two-step bottom-up process using focus groups from particular conflict-affected communities in Colombia and Uganda. First, people were asked what peace means to them and how they know whether there is more peace or less peace in their community. The list of possible indicators derived from these interviews was then narrowed down to ten indicators for everyday peace that a focus group from the community had to agree on. These indicators were subsequently used in longitudinal surveys to establish whether peace was increasing or decreasing over time in this particular community ([48], pp. 68–76).

Although presented as a tool to improve the measurement of peacebuilding success in external evaluations, the Everyday Peace Indicators project also has consequences for how peace is conceptualized. One of the more interesting findings in this respect is that the indicators, and thus the meaning attached to peace, not only are different for different communities but also change over time [48, see also 63]. This presents problems not only for peacebuilders who might have to adapt their programs to fit these shifts in objectives but even more so for researchers who want to study the development of peace over time and/or in different parts of the world, like the academics in the first track identified above.

One other striking aspect of these studies is that often the (explicit) objective of them is to “give a voice to people who have not been heard before” [64]: the victims of armed conflict, in particular marginalized groups like youth or women. Lee [58] is an exception in that he also included former Khmer Rouge combatants in his study of everyday peace in Cambodia, but often the focus seems to be on making additional voices heard, rather than on finding consensus between different groups or actors. While this is certainly laudable, and a much-needed correction on overly Western-centric conceptualizations of peace, it would be interesting to apply the same methodology to Western peacebuilders. Doing so could establish a dialog between local and external peacebuilders that would allow both sides to see some new perspectives, rather than maintaining the divide between warzones and what Severine Autesserre has called “peaceland” [65] or the fiction of a unified liberal peace consensus [34, 66]. The works of Van Iterson Scholten [11] who interviewed professional peace workers rather than victims of conflict and Caplan [26] who studied the meanings that different international organizations attach to peace are promising points of entry for such a dialog.

5. The third trend: A different ontology

The third way authors have tried to find new meanings for positive peace is by moving away from the idea that peace is a certain condition, or situation, in a particular country at a certain moment in time. While this idea of peace as a state of affairs is highly attractive, if we want to measure it, it just might not reflect the ontological status of the phenomenon in reality. Or, to put it in slightly less controversial terms,

changing the ontology of our concepts of peace provides new insights into how it can be achieved. There are three main routes for this ontological reorientation: defining peace as a process, as an emergent phenomenon, and as a relationship.

The first, peace as a process, is the oldest of the three (for an early formulation, see [67]). Authors studying nonviolence [68–70] or conflict transformation [71, 72] stress that conflicts do not necessarily need to be resolved for peace to occur, but rather that peace is about the way in which conflicts are handled. The quote that “there is no way to peace, peace is the way,” ascribed (apocryphally) to both Gandhi and the Buddha, nicely sums up this approach.

More recent contributions to this line of thinking have stressed the need for an “agonistic” understanding of peace [73–77]. Building on the work of Carl Schmitt and Chantal Mouffe, these authors argue that peace consists of the transformation of antagonistic (openly hostile) conflicts into agonistic ones, in which the opponent is thought of as an “adversary” rather than an enemy. In order to achieve this, structures should be put in place that channel conflicts between adversaries along nonviolent paths. Especially the work of Lisa Strömbom and colleagues should be mentioned here, who valiantly try to operationalize this idea into an analytical framework [75–77].

In the 2015 review of its peacebuilding architecture, the United Nations has also taken up the idea that peace is more a continuous process than a goal to be achieved [78]. This insight has led to a new literature on “sustaining peace” (see, e.g., [79–82]). At the core of the sustaining peace agenda are two ideas. Peacebuilding should be focused more on prevention of violent conflict than on handling the aftermath of violent conflict, and it requires a more holistic approach than the UN has taken to date ([82], pp. 15–16). Peace is something that requires upkeep, or “perpetual peacebuilding” [83], also in countries not immediately affected by war. Although this is still often framed in terms of preventing armed conflict, one interesting consequence of reconceptualizing peace as a process is that it allows us to see that also in countries where war seems “unthinkable” ([84], p. 13), sustaining peace still requires governments to invest in peace as a positive project. In this respect, it is like the Sustainable Development Goals, which also require action by all governments, not only by governments in the Global South.

One other aspect of peace that is stressed by authors writing about sustaining peace is the idea that peace is not so much the result of deliberate policies or actions, but “emerges” out of a complex web of social interaction among a host of different actors [79]. This idea of peace as an “emergent phenomenon” is the second interesting reconceptualization now taking place [79, 85–87]. Drawing on complexity theory, authors working with this concept of peace suggest that peace is best thought of as a stable equilibrium in a complex system. Complex systems are defined by three characteristics: holism, nonlinearity, and self-organization ([79], p. 168). Holism means that the properties of individual elements of a social system (individuals or groups) are co-determined by the properties of the system as a whole. To put it (perhaps too) bluntly: people in a democracy behave differently from those in an autocracy. Hence, analysis should not start from (rational) individuals or social groups but should take into account the feedback loops between the individual and the system level.

One of the consequences of these feedback loops is that causality takes a nonlinear form, meaning that the output of a system can be disproportional to its input. A small peacebuilding initiative may have large consequences but may equally have effect only in the longer term, or have one effect at one point in time but another effect at another point in time. This nonlinearity makes it difficult to predict the outcomes of any specific peacebuilding intervention.

Finally, complex systems are self-organizing, meaning that the feedback loops tend to push the system toward a state of equilibrium, even in the absence of specific planning or (foreign) intervention. Thinking about peace as an emergent property of complex systems makes concepts like the local [49–51], friction [87], resilience [88], and hybridity [89] even more relevant. As de Coning notes, if the system is self-organizing, intervention can also be seen as an interruption preventing such organization ([79], pp. 174–175).

The complexity approach to peace has two main drawbacks. The first is that it becomes extremely difficult to identify the factors that lead to successful peacebuilding. If peace is some emergent phenomenon arising more or less spontaneously out of complex interactions between a myriad of actors and factors (both local and international, if those categories still make sense in a complex system), it becomes hard, if not a priori impossible, to pinpoint which of these exactly lead to success. The most one can do is either analyze which characteristics of a system correlate to a situation of peace (as the Positive Peace Index purports to do) or reconstruct the factors that led to success after the fact. But since no two complex situations are alike, it becomes virtually impossible to draw lessons from past peacebuilding experiences. Or, to make the point even more pressing, if peace is something that emerges autonomously from complex interactions, efforts to actively “build” it may always go amiss. This might seem like a philosophical underpinning of the argument that peacebuilding is in crisis [9, 10] or that war should be given a chance [90].

The second problem with this approach is that for all its stress on complexity and emerging properties, it is not very clear what exactly constitutes this “emerging” peace, other than a situation in which no regular fighting occurs: negative peace. By limiting peace to a stable state of the system, even if this comes in the form of a dictatorship, we once again lose sight of a positive definition of peace that is more than the (self-organized) absence of war.

Here is where another set of scholars, some of whom are also interested in complexity, come in [44, 91–94]. Rather than focusing on characteristics of the system in which actors operate, they investigate the relationships between actors and conceptualize peace as a quality of these relationships. The more relationships between two actors are characterized by symbiosis [92] or by cooperation, non-domination, and trust [93], the more peaceful this relationship is.

There are five advantages to defining peace in relational, rather than conditional, terms. First, it relates peace much closer to power, which is also a relational concept. Second, it draws attention to the crucial role played by reconciliation and trust-building in establishing sustainable peace. Third, it reminds us that war and peace are ontologically different and hence can coexist at the same time and place. Even in a situation of war, people can still experience peaceful relations with others, a point developed in the literature on everyday peace as well [e.g., 95]. Fourth, it matches the way people in conflict-affected areas themselves define peace. In the Everyday Peace Indicators project alluded to above, relational indicators were the second most common kind mentioned, after security-related ones ([62], p. 7). Fifth, defining peace in relational terms makes it easier to study its occurrence across different levels of analysis. Individuals can have (everyday) peaceful relations with other individuals, even if the relations between their respective ethnic groups are more hostile. States have relations with other states, as well as with the people living in their state, and predatory elites can do a lot of damage to the relationship people experience with their own state. Finally, international interventions build new relationships between

those intervening and those intervened upon. Relational peace offers a framework that can accommodate all of these.

Despite its potential, the reconceptualization of peace into a quality of relationships is not without problems. The first of these is epistemological. How do we know whether a relationship between two actors is peaceful or not, other than by looking at the behavior that characterizes their interactions? If the two are fighting, their relationship is obviously not peaceful, but if not, how can we tell just how peaceful their relationship is? Or whether there is a relationship at all, and the two are not just ignoring each other? Söderström and colleagues [93] propose two other components of relational peace, subjective attitudes toward the other and the idea actors have of the relationship, and provide some categories that can be used to classify these but do not really discuss the validity or operationalization of these categories. More work needs to be done here.

Second, if relations extend beyond individuals to inter-group relations, what are the boundaries of these groups? Individual people often have different overlapping identities, but if peace is conceived as a collective phenomenon depending on the quality of relationships between groups, how can the boundaries between these groups be drawn? If the groups are ethnic (a relatively easy and often occurring case), what to do with people who are of mixed ethnic origin? Or with people who do not identify (primarily) with their ethnic group or who reject the concept of different ethnic groups altogether? Any distinction between social groups runs a risk of essentializing those groups, but without some sort of differentiation between groups, it becomes extremely difficult to say anything at all about the relationships between them. And given the interconnectedness of groups at the local, national, regional, and international levels, it becomes very challenging to compare cases.

6. Toward a mature field of peace studies

So far, this chapter has sketched three different tracks that research into positive peace has taken over the past 10, maybe 15 years. By analytically separating these tracks and showing the advantages and disadvantages of each, this chapter strives to have contributed to the building of better notions of peace along each of them. But if some of the brush between the paths has been cleared and people along the tracks can once again clearly see each other, the question remains what the way forward should look like. Three suggestions are provided.

The first is to really start treating peace as a word with a plural [96]. Researchers should take seriously the idea that peace is not just an essentially contested concept, but that it might be more fruitful to make some distinctions between different kinds of peace. Doing so would allow researchers to identify both what kind of peace is most urgently needed in a specific (post-) conflict area (or frozen conflict, or pre-conflict situation) and what kind of peace different kinds of peacebuilders (both local and international) can actually bring. Elsewhere, I have proposed both a five-fold distinction of different visions of peace, based on what professional peace workers say they are working on ([11], chapter 3), and a more coarse-grained distinction between (political) Security Council peace and (cultural, societal, or even individual) UNESCO peace ([11], pp. 212–214). Other authors have proposed different distinctions with different numbers of “peaces” [24, 97, 98]. The point is not so much to settle on a specific number, or to draw rigid boundaries between them, but rather to acknowledge that different peacebuilders build different *peaces*. Peace education is not going to lead to the signing of a peace agreement in the foreseeable future, but neither is peace

agreement implementation (no matter how “comprehensive” the accord) going to lead to a genuinely felt desire for reconciliation and a culture of peace among the wider population. What academics should do is find out how these different peaces are connected to one another, either strengthening each other or working at cross-purposes. The Varieties of Peace research program at the University of Umeå is one interesting development in this regard, as it actively seeks to further a research agenda taking into account situational, relational, and ideational conceptualizations of peace [98].

Second, academics should look beyond the Global West for existing ideas about peace. If we think of peace as a relational phenomenon, rather than a state of affairs, non-Western philosophies may offer interesting insights. Especially Eastern philosophy also focuses more on relationships rather than on entities and may bring useful insights for how to further peace [99]. Along the same lines, the interesting work of Call and de Coning on rising powers and peacebuilding [100] should be elaborated with an exploration of the philosophical backgrounds these rising powers bring to their peacebuilding efforts. Likewise, the exploration of everyday peace can be deepened by considering the many different ways that local traditions in conflict-affected areas conceptualize peace. Some work in this field has already been done [53, 101–103], but more effort is required to connect it to the literature on peacebuilding and make it operational.

Although the diversity of peace probably warrants scrutiny of the ideas of peace prevalent in many different societies, two areas would seem to be particularly urgent. On the one hand, it would be interesting to look at future “providers” of peace in the world. This makes Chinese visions of peace and related concepts a very interesting area to study. By all accounts, China is going to be a, if not the, major power in the 21st century, so studying its ideas about peace and peacebuilding might help us understand the way UN peacebuilding is going to evolve [100, 104, 105].

On the other hand, and following the cue of the local turn, African ideas about peace also ought to receive much more attention. Most armed conflicts still take place in Africa, and whereas we should not fall in the trap of treating all these conflicts (or indeed all of Africa, probably the most diverse continent on earth) as somehow similar, much can be learned from studying African ideas of peace [101, 102, 106].

The third way forward is to stop thinking of peace as something closely related to either violence or conflict. Violence is merely a symptom of conflict run amok, as the conflict transformation literature has been arguing for a long time, and conflict can also be productive. However, the main lesson we can draw from this review of positive peace is that conflict and peace might have two different “logics”. Hence, efforts to mirror Clausewitz’ analysis of war [43] or Galtung’s conflict triangle [28] are not necessarily the best way forward for the study of positive peace. Just like the study of conflict has provided us with models for conflict analysis, conflict transformation tools, and many other insights into the working of conflicts, the study of peace, as a phenomenon in and of itself, should provide us with models for peace analysis and valuable insights for peacebuilding. To demonstrate, I will end this chapter with three differences between an approach focused on (analyzing or ending) conflict and an approach focused on (analyzing or building) peace. Three things seem to be especially worth noticing about these different approaches.

First, both the practice and analysis of conflict is geared toward finding differences between actors. A conflict approach has a binary logic, separating one side from the other and trying to get a clear view of where both sides differ. Conflict analysis is quite clear on this: the aim is to identify actors, their allies, the incompatibilities between their positions, and their underlying goals and positions [107].

Peacebuilders, on the other hand, seek to identify not just what different actors have in common but more broadly to overcome a focus on incompatibilities and oppositions. Peacebuilding is often presented as a holistic enterprise that seeks to take all elements of a situation into account. If peace is an emergent phenomenon arising from a complex set of interactions in nonlinear ways, then analysts of peacebuilding ought to have attention for all the little details that make up a conflict situation and should always be on the lookout for other factors that further complicate the picture. In that sense, academics studying peace have more in common with historians than with social scientists.

Second, scholars of conflict and conflict resolution practitioners often take a top-down approach, by focusing on the incompatibilities and demands of political leaders, as well as high-level negotiations, the signing of peace agreements and political interventions like democracy promotion, rule of law, and state building. This is a point well noted by many critics of international peacebuilding (e.g., [37, 40, 61]), but my argument would be that this top-down approach is an inherent part of any strategy that focuses on violent conflict as the main obstacle to peace. After all, the easiest way to resolve, transform, or mitigate violent conflict is *via* the leadership that drives the conflict.

In contrast, peacebuilders take a bottom-up approach, focusing on civil society, infrastructures for peace, and what ordinary people can do to promote peace. Rather than trying to find solutions for a particular incompatibility, peacebuilding tries to inculcate the population against conflict entrepreneurs and delegitimizes the use of violence to achieve any objective. This is a long-term strategy that requires a different mindset than international actors operating in conflict zones often have [65].

Third, and perhaps somewhat surprisingly, because of its focus on bringing out incompatibilities, the logic of conflict is better suited to address issues of injustice and demands for (radical) change. If a group feels they are subject to historical injustices, naturally they want to get attention for their cause, rally supporters (both within their own country and internationally), and show that they are being treated differently from other groups in society. This fits very well with a (nonviolent) conflict approach.

In contrast, peacebuilding is more geared toward stability and slow change in the status quo. Being holistic and bottom-up, there is no principled objection to including ever more perspectives and voices, but there is also plenty of attention for other groups and how demands for radical change might impact them. This is probably a drawback of this approach for practitioners who want to see (or need to show) quick results. It is, however, entirely in line with what peace practitioners have been saying for decades: peace is a slow and never-ending process.

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Perspective Chapter: Evolving Education – In Search of a Model for Being Well

Karyn A. Cooper and Robert E. White

“Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn.”

–Benjamin Franklin

Abstract

Violence in schools is rising around the world. Causes are many—neoliberalism contracts curricula while technology often reduces our understanding to binaries. Materialism job insecurity, lack of opportunity, economic instability, mass migration, civil unrest, armed conflict and famine contribute to a less than happy society. These factors may currently be beyond our control. However, we can control how we school our younger generations. There is no simple or single response, and it is incumbent upon all members of society to invest in education. Beginning with students, this chapter discusses their needs and wants before identifying what teachers can do to improve education by increasing wellbeing. We then move to administrators in schools and school districts, before identifying how universities and education programs can help to develop a sense of wellbeing. Finally, we come full circle and address the society as an extension of our education community. At issue is the development of a society that is capable of being well.

Keywords: administration, education, neoliberalism students, teacher education, teachers, wellbeing

1. Introduction

First, with regard to the title of this chapter, the term “evolving” is used both as an adjective and as a verb. This implies a dynamism that appears to be lacking in many school systems in North America and beyond. Educators seem reluctant to embrace change, possibly because they have experienced extensive change during the past half-century. Not only has the amount of change increased, the rate of change has also increased exponentially.

Thus, the intent of this chapter is to strive to identify some ways that education can re-invent and re-invigorate itself. Such evolution has the potential to create and maintain much needed change within the society, itself. Certainly, this fits well within the concept of wellbeing, particularly since societies around the globe appear to be experiencing numerous compound challenges, occasionally simultaneously. Consequently, when one contemplates global peace, wellbeing could be considered

as an independent contributing variable. “Well” individuals contribute positively to society and, as a result, to the world at large. This perspective on global peace has, at its core, the wellbeing of each member of every society. And, at the core of every society is some provision for educating future generations into the values and beliefs of that society.

The entry point for this chapter is the recognition that schools, in Western societies, as well as in other parts of the world are not well. It has become evident that we live in societies where education is frequently referred to as a “broken system.” Addressing this issue can be accomplished, with the result that a healthy school can promote a healthy society, given the time to do so. While we cannot, at present, counter all the ills of society, we may be able to improve the way we school our children in order to improve their knowledge and experience of education. Teachers can assist in this, as can school administrators, school boards and other systems of education, including our faculties of education. If our systems of education are up to accepting this challenge, the potential to refashion the society becomes attainable. Thus, in the truest sense of the term, we may be able to heal ourselves. Such change is unlikely to happen on its own and this chapter begins with the challenge of student engagement and motivation.

2. Violence in schools

Many educational institutions throughout the world are experiencing upheavals in student “deportment.” Violence is on the rise, across the nation and around the world [1]. North American societies are no exception regarding increasing violence in society. Causes are many—materialism job insecurity, lack of opportunity, economic instability, mass migration, civil unrest, armed conflict, poverty, and food insecurity all contribute to a less than happy society. Some of these factors may currently be beyond our control. However, we can control how we educate our younger generations.

While the intent of this chapter is not to address the ills that exist within the larger society, it may at least be able to provide direction in alleviating tensions that produce and promote “unwellness” in schools. At issue are notions of power and control and, while power and control are serious and necessary functions of any society, a balance of both is sought in order to develop the most optimal version of education possible. Hopefully, this will permeate student experience positively and will eventually lead to interventions within society that will result in greater wellbeing throughout. Thus, the intent for this chapter is to end at the beginning, with education being a reflection of the society that invests in it, with the only difference being a positive intervention that strives to reverse the current “race to the bottom” [2].

There is no attempt in this chapter to cross reference American education against other systems except to recognize that all systems can benefit from an infusion of wellbeing. This is possible even in the case of those which appear to be pro-active in striving to develop and produce thoughtful, empowered, creative and dedicated citizens; citizens who have the capacity to work together across societies and geographical areas to promote a well planet.

3. Wellbeing as a goal

“Wellbeing” is basically an umbrella term that may best be defined by the recognition of its opposite, not being well. Because education is a feature of most societies

and because education is viewed as being a mechanism for the socialization of young citizens, it makes sense to begin with education as a means to bring a semblance of wellbeing into this scholastic environment, hopefully paying it forward as our young citizens grow into the leaders of tomorrow.

Consequently, wellbeing can be defined very loosely as referring to the state of being comfortable, healthy, and/or happy. Each of these adjectives arrives with parameters. For example, some may equate comfort with leisure, although it may also refer to a relative lack of distress. To be healthy is to be relatively free of health issues that are not contributed to by errant policies that may be inclusive for some but may disqualify others. Happiness is another term that does not mean eternal bliss but a relative freedom from worrying where the next meal may come from. A society that does well, and is well, may be identified as a society that cares for its citizens more than a quantification of interest rates, stock market convulsions, or the mill rate. However, many societies have a long way to go, in terms of equity, with respect to considering themselves and their citizenry “well.” This may be especially true if we consider that any society is composed of, at least in part, by its citizens, and that society is not merely an abstract term or a cipher for economic success.

Simply put, wellbeing is not about changing curricular goals so much as it is about changing attitudes to incorporate a positive enhancement of the student experience rather than an indoctrination of the student. As Kokichi Shimizu [3] notes, we need to change our relationship with our students from a “power over...” to a “power with...” relationship to become “co-researchers with our students.” Authentic relationships are empowering, especially as it is becoming increasingly obvious that neoliberal sentiments are not helping to improve the world, contribute to its wellness, or even improving it in general. The proposed solution is elegant in that it is simple to institute and effective for empowering students who will later become the future leaders of society.

4. Neoliberalism and technology

Neoliberalism contracts the curriculum while technology often reduces our understanding into binary terms. These strong claims are, however, supported by evidence.

4.1 Neoliberal sentiments

Neoliberalism has become an immensely interesting topic of discussion if only because neoliberalism is so prevalent today, that it has virtually disappeared to all but the keenest of observers. Neoliberalism has been construed as the marriage between commerce and politics. As such, neoliberal thought, although barely 50 years old, has successfully transformed societies, worldwide.

Capitalism, an important component of neoliberal ideology, has been around for centuries. For example, Philbrick [4] notes that the Puritans, the second generation of pilgrims to North America, beginning in 1620, realized that individually owned gardens produced much more food than the customary communal gardens. The ownership of land became important and, as a consequence, the concept of capitalism was born. According to Cooper and White [5].

Capitalism, itself a thoroughly neutral concept, lies incongruently alongside Marx and Engels's notion of the appropriate distribution of capital. In their work, Marx

and Engels [6] identify the bourgeois as the factory owners. This group has the means to create goods, while the proletariat has only their labour to offer. As goods are produced and sold at a profit, the labourers earn a wage. Of course, with successful means of producing [and selling] goods, the factory owners create a surplus of “capital,” which they then proceed to use in order to expand their operations. In Western societies, this was deemed acceptable, even necessary, in order for society to be wealthy, healthy and happy, particularly among the bourgeoisie.

Capitalism allowed for rapid expansion, brand name recognition and loyalty to one or more corporations. While it is impossible to gauge the effect this had on any particular society, it has been noted that capitalism has been responsible for the growth of individualism, wherein society has restructured its loyalty base to the corporation rather than to family structures, teachings and values. Society, at large, appears to have lost its identity along with the family unit. In an almost schizophrenic convulsion, society has experienced cognitive dissonance, becoming at once conformist and at the same time different, like everybody else [7].

The postmodern era opened with the invention of the microchip, creating a technological revolution that has greatly influenced human life and activity greatly. Some claim that this was not a new revolution, but merely an extension of the Industrial Revolution [8]. However, with the invention of the microchip, miniaturization became possible, allowing for such modern conveniences as cellular telephones, Internet banking and many other luxuries that have ostensibly become necessary for our wellbeing. The microchip allowed for globalization. Humankind has become the beneficiary of innumerable privileges and advantages associated with globalization, one of the major effects of our postmodern era.

Globalization can be represented as a collection of processes or conditions that involve currents, individuals, and geographical locations—as well as information, misinformation, non-information disinformation, and propaganda—that may result in these larger currents becoming accelerated or decelerated, depending on global conditions. Globalization progresses on a broken front, however, and tends to exaggerate human conditions on a global scale. This regularly results in the marginalization of less well-developed economies or even entire countries [9]. While postmodernity has set the backdrop for globalization. Globalization has allowed the juggernaut of neoliberalism to proceed. Cooper and White state that;

Neoliberalism is represented by myriad dynamic, omnipresent and almost omnipotent, yet ultimately unhealthy, combinations of commerce and politics. As corporations are created, they seem to take on a life of their own. At first, they are local and, as they prosper, corporations expand much as Marx and Engels [6] have predicted. At first local, then national, they eventually become international and then, finally, transnational. It is no surprise that these corporations may become powerful enough to topple governments that dare to invoke taxes that may be greater than companies would like. In such a case, corporations may move from country to country, exploiting available labor in the pursuit of ever-increasing profit margins. Governments often have no recourse but to accept the demands of these trans-nationals in order to benefit their own economies [5].

These changes impact everyone's wellbeing. As change in society increases, so does the rate of change. One of neoliberalism's effects on education has been the introduction of outcomes-based education; in short, product has become valued over process. Ultimately, this begs the question, “What is the purpose of education?”

4.2 Technological innovation

While education and educating facilities were becoming “neoliberalized,” technology was advancing at a previously unheard-of pace. This has exerted pressure on schools and educational facilities of any stripe to remain at the “cutting edge” of technology. However, it also impacts students, their instructors and administrators, as well. Technology, although becoming more reliable, is now developing at such a rapid pace that newer applications, along with newer hardware and software, may still need time to prove themselves. In addition, while the learning curve is never-ending, it is also asymptotic in that one never arrives at the goal of becoming current or up to date. Technology may also create enormous undue stress in terms of defunct, deficient, or mis-behaving equipment; increasing power outages due, at least in part, to the (neoliberal) mismanagement of planetary resources; and learning new roles and rules with respect to technological expectations, both within and without the classroom. One of the greatest issues that society faces with technological innovation is the fact that we are increasingly expected to keep pace with our machines and technological devices, reducing available time for rest, recreation and the enjoyment of life.

5. Together, we are stronger

In fact, not only are citizens expected to behave like computers in that they will not become tired or bored, not go on strike, or ask for raises, and will be prepared to put in extra hours as necessary. People are also being asked to think like computers. Computers seek a single answer to any question posed, simply because they are binary programs. In this day and age of advanced computing, where technological advancements appear everywhere, it is no coincidence that people seek simple, single answers to complex problems. With the advent of artificial intelligence, humanity may be at an evolutionary crossroads, where computers will continue to work for humankind even as humankind works for abstracted, disembodied intelligences.

Because of the individualization of the society, noted earlier, people everywhere are witnessing a dearth of leadership. This is problematic at a foundational level, because people will tend to look to their peers for relevance, guidance, and consent; all this in the face of a general lack of allegiance to anything other than consumer-based goods, programs, and purposes. Even the notion of education has been reduced to a single outcome, preparation for the workforce. John Goodlad [10] identifies numerous purposes for education, including but not limited to the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, the socialization of students, citizenship education, and training, as well as the development of the ability to advocate for oneself. Thus, there is no single, simple answer to questions about the purpose of education. Clearly, reducing education to a single purpose is not only a disservice to current students and educators, but it also represents a serious miscalculation of resources as today’s students become tomorrow’s leaders. Leading with a deficit in terms of recognition of purpose and the recognition that one only knows what one knows represents a spiraling race to the bottom, even as humanity is reaching for the stars.

There are no simple or single answers to either, wellbeing in schools, and, by extension, wellbeing in society. However, it is incumbent upon all members of society to invest in education, through the notion of wellbeing. Even the term “wellbeing” is becoming conscripted by corporations and institutions to represent a cipher for greater productivity, in contradistinction to its original intent. Very few places that

acknowledge “wellbeing” or provide training, exercise, or services related to wellbeing ever consider the emotional toll that the lack of wellbeing and the toll of living within this neoliberalized, technologized society exact on its members.

6. Research methods

Autoethnography is the qualitative research methodology chosen for this study. The authors of this chapter have spent, collectively, well over a half century in public school education. This experience has offered a rich source of information with respect to education in North America. This research methodology was selected because autoethnography represents an autobiographical genre of academic research that interprets or analyzes the authors’ lived experiences that illustrates a variety of insights that may include cultural artifacts, beliefs and values, as well as societal resources and means of communication. According to Adams et al. [11],

[A]utoethnography is a qualitative research method that: 1) uses a researcher’s personal experience to describe and critique cultural beliefs, practices, and experiences; 2) acknowledges and values a researcher’s relationships with others; 3) uses deep and careful self-reflection—typically referred to as “reflexivity”—to name and interrogate the intersections between self and society, the particular and the general, the personal and the political; 4) Shows people in the process of figuring out what to do, how to live, and the meaning of their struggles; 5) balances intellectual and methodological rigor, emotion, and creativity; and 6) strives for social justice and to make life better.

Self-reflection, also known as self-reflexivity, “refers to the careful consideration of the ways in which researchers’ past experiences, points of view, and roles impact these same researchers’ interactions with, and interpretations of, the research scene” [12]. Autoethnography, simply put, is a reflexive, observational, and participatory methodology that strives to illuminate various social and emotional aspects of the society under discussion, from the researcher’s personal experiences within a culture.

Data collection and analysis makes use of many of the methods common among many forms of qualitative research. Participant observation, conversation, narrative and artifact analysis are among the most common methods of collecting data. In addition, archival research, journaling and field notes, while common to autoethnography, are also common to other forms of qualitative research [13]. And, of course, no qualitative research is complete without description and interpretation. Autoethnographers tend to take an eclectic approach to researching social, human, and cultural phenomena.

7. A model for education

The model proposed here remedies exactly that. Beginning with the students, this chapter discusses the needs and wants of students before identifying what teachers can do to improve education and reduce violence by increasing and improving wellbeing. We then move on to administrators in schools and school districts, before identifying how universities and education programs can improve their programs to develop a greater sense of wellbeing. Finally, we come full circle and address the society as an extension of our education community. At issue is the development of a society that is capable of being well.

Simply put, the proposed model (at risk of becoming trapped within its own critique) advocates for a simple, single change in education, from top to bottom. Curriculum and the existing structure of education need not change. What must change is the attitude that appears to be endemic in all aspects of education. This is the issue of control, which is commonly fraught with issues of power. Simply by changing this dynamic from “power over...” to “power with...” education may embrace the potential to heal its own wounds while, at the same time, offer much needed healing to the society at large. Let us begin with the students.

8. Findings, discussion and analysis

Findings, discussion, and analysis have been collapsed into one section, as many of the findings are items that have been discussed in a variety of forms for many years. Additionally, by collapsing these sections into one there is the avoidance of unnecessary repetition. The various subsections represent analyses from a number of points of view, illustrating how the identification of certain values and beliefs, with respect to the objectives of education, may be seen from a multiplicity of perspectives.

8.1 Students as creative innovators

As an example, imagine this uncommon dialog between a teacher and a student,
Teacher: Why are you at school, today?

Student: My parents made me come.

Teacher: How did they do that?

Student: They drove me to school.

Teacher: You could have not gone into the school.

Student: They watch to make sure I do not skip school.

Teacher: You could have left by the back door....

And the conversation continues, until, at some point there is the recognition that education still has some place in the minds of the attending students. By now, however, the student is becoming a little bit nervous as their motives for being at school are deconstructed. In essence, there is a tacit awareness and agreement that the teacher still has something that the student wants and/or needs. When the teacher points this out to the students, students tend to drop the pretense that education is immaterial and useless. They still believe. And, they are optimistic. Perhaps today, something positive will occur. Perhaps one or more needs will be met.

But what are the needs (and wants) of students? Given the current state of the world, students need safety. They need to feel secure and welcome. This is no small task, especially given that home lives of students may also be precarious. Students also want to be valued. They want the same things that everyone desires – to be valued and recognized, and to be cared for and about. It is this ethic of caring [14] that will provide students with a modicum of personal power. If students feel that they are

valued, that their voice is not only heard but listened to, and acted upon [15], would they tend to become more engaged and motivated in their schoolwork? Student voice refers to the expression of values, opinions, beliefs, and perspectives of students in a school and to instructional approaches and techniques based upon student choices, interests, passions and ambitions. Listening to and acting on student preferences, interests, and perspectives helps students feel invested in their own learning and can ignite passions that will increase their persistence [16]. To act upon the student voice [17] is not necessarily to surrender power to students entirely, but to at least consider and address the request. At its heart, the student voice is all about choice.

What would a school look like if students were motivated, engaged, and encouraged to be the best version of themselves? School would likely seem more noisy, messy, and would likely have an intensity about it that could not be mimicked, substituted, or quelled. This transformation of the student voice [17] could encourage students to be their most creative, most compassionate, and most energetic selves. Of course, this does not mean that teachers have become redundant; quite the opposite. Teacher input has just become more essential than ever before, albeit in a different way, shape and form.

Hopefully, what will have changed is the student attitude towards school and education. This will hopefully alleviate some of the issues that students bring to school with them. While attitudes may be notoriously difficult to change, teachers can and do assist with patience, kindness, and understanding.

9. Teachers as partners in learning

Teachers are the students' prime partners in learning. As such, agreements, both tacit and voiced, may be useful for assisting in developing a "professional" working environment for both students and teachers. Four agreements [18] from ancient Toltec wisdom can be incorporated into today's fast-paced, ever-changing world. The four agreements are:

- Always do your best.
- Be impeccable with your word.
- Do not take anything personally, and
- Do not make assumptions.

Perhaps, making these agreements explicit for students allows for a co-learning and a shared philosophy that the students may want to build on. In addition, these agreements could lead to a discussion of the foundations of wellbeing. In other words, what helps one to feel safe, happy, and productive in the classroom and beyond? Even the very young, can engage in a conversation about classroom safety, which is both timely and relevant, today, given the violence in schools and the many challenges of our time.

These four agreements feed into one another and, in the case of mistaken identity for an infraction, an apology from the power that be is often all that is required. Always doing one's best is a sentiment that almost goes without saying. Teaching is complex and, the longer we teach, the more complex we realize the process is.

However, teachers and students are not perfect and, so, errors in judgment will occur. Doing one's best may easily feed into being impeccable with one's words, and into the remaining agreements.

Whenever teachers make a statement, issue a warning, or pronounce judgment on anything, they must be impeccable with regards to their sources. Inaccuracies, hollow warnings, or implausible judgments do nothing for the community of students within the teacher's purview.

Teachers need to remember to not take the issues they meet in their classrooms personally. This may be difficult to do at first, but practice and patience are their superpowers. Teachers may feel vulnerable to begin with, but this vulnerability is also a great strength. Students tend to respond more positively to teachers who they see as "real," with real lives and families. Students may even be surprised to learn that teachers do not spend all their time at school.

Everyone, at some point, makes assumptions; it is part of human nature. However, teachers must vet their assumptions constantly, simply because, in a regular classroom, life is fast-paced, and the moment of assumption must be ascertained to be an accurate assumption. How many times has a teacher picked the wrong culprit, only to lose face with that student and with the entire class, as well?

If teachers wish to encourage students to change their attitudes towards learning, teachers will also be interested in changing their own attitudes towards teaching. Shimizu [3] has noted that teachers can benefit their students' learning more by becoming co-researchers with their students. This implies that the key to improved engagement and motivation may be about valorizing what each and every student brings to school. And establishing an agreement or agreements to live by is representative of the social contracts that each of us shares with the society at large.

Of course, students have life experiences. These experiences may be accessed and built upon. Even very young students do not come to school with a blank slate. As Piaget, the noted Swiss psychologist has theorized, there are four stages of intellectual or cognitive development. The first stage is the sensorimotor stage that occurs from birth to approximately 2 months of age. The preoperational stage occurs throughout early childhood until about age seven. This is followed by the concrete operational stage that lasts until around age 11. The final stage is the formal operational stage that begins around adolescence and lasts throughout adulthood [19]. Surprisingly enough, even young students may have very sophisticated understandings of the world but may not have the advanced vocabulary to express themselves fully.

Project-based teaching and learning may allow students to bring their creativity into the classroom. In fact, according to Howard Gardner [20], people possess an intellectual capacity, as well as having many kinds of intelligence, such as musical, interpersonal, spatial-visual, and linguistic intelligences, to mention but a few. As such, it is not about *what* is taught but about *how* the lesson is learned. At the crux of the matter is the notion of *control*. Teachers must be able to control their classes, of course. However, more control than necessary is not useful. It tends to ascribe to the view that there is a reason why prisons and schools look similar from the outside. This is not lost on childhood sensitivities. What really needs to happen is to have children and adolescents come to school joyfully, ready to engage with the tasks at hand, and to rejoice in their new learning acquisitions.

Project-based learning can occur in any curriculum. Bloom's Taxonomy [21], comprised of three learning domains—the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor—assigns to each domain a hierarchy corresponding to different levels of learning. For example, estimating the height of the Eiffel Tower or using a hamburger to

study geometry is not impossible for math students to explore new ways of learning. Similarly, one teacher used the story of the sinking of the Titanic to have students explore news articles, create journal entries, imagine personal experiences and even to invent “rare” artifacts that may have come from the wreckage. One student supplied a stick drawing that was supposedly drawn by a child who survived the tragedy. Using these and other similar strategies may ensure that the student not only develops the requisite skills but may also ensure that the learning experience is instructive, if not empathetic.

Most teachers want to do the very best they can for their students. Teaching becomes an inordinate challenge, otherwise. However, some teachers may feel that students will not learn what it is that the teacher may wish to teach. This happens naturally, in any event. One cannot control what the student learns any more than the student can control what the teacher is attempting to teach. Teaching objectives are complementary to learning objectives; they are merely opposite sides of the same coin. Curriculum guidelines are valuable documents that help to guide the teacher with respect to teaching and learning objectives. This does not mean, however, that teaching must be rendered dry and brittle. Teaching and learning is a two-way street and, by working together, rather than at odds, teaching and learning can become much more of a synchronous experience that is satisfying and gratifying to both student and teacher.

It has been stated that one should never talk about teaching, only about learning. This is a wise observation, since teaching is the process and learning is the product. To confuse the two is to valorize teaching over learning, as a simple power differential. An adept and experienced teacher will recognize the problem of power dynamics and will strive to value student contributions to the teaching and learning process. This may be as simple as asking students how they wish to be taught or creating spaces for student input in all aspects of the curriculum, even in the planning of the curriculum. In essence, if teachers begin to treat students as the adults, they wish them to become, rather than treating them as the children they are leaving behind, the students will rise to the occasion. Teachers who invest in patience and are determined to assist in developing the best future citizens possible will not be disappointed.

10. Administrators as benevolent parents

Unfortunately, the goal of education has become employability. Whenever education ignores the importance of humanization in terms of development of social skills, the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, citizenship [10], and the ability to advocate for oneself, students risk dehumanization. It is true that Neoliberalism increasingly threatens learner agency because neoliberalism favors profit margins over human wellbeing and continues to exacerbate inequalities between classes [22] and societies. Within such a socio-political educational climate, a humanizing approach to teaching and learning becomes vital.

However, people are increasingly struggling and are being marginalized or abandoned due to cultural values, practices, and policies that alienate the most vulnerable within society. In addition, education policies and testing standards are becoming increasingly globalized. Such policies and standards are frequently made by policy makers, such as the OECD [23] and UNESCO, which reside outside of the very countries or regions for which they make policy [1]. This trend may put a crimp in the administrator's style, all the way from the office of the superintendent to the school that wishes to

become more evolved. The fact is that policy is made at every juncture of administration and thus, the power of the administrator to influence the student body may be limited by extant power structures rather than by a lack of good will. However, it may be said that any policy that is not for the benefit of the student is not a good policy.

Schools and school districts are awash in policy, and policies seem to generate lives of their own. For example, some policies may be successful and become so ingrained in the fabric of the school that they seem to disappear from view, as if, “We have always done it this way” [24]. Other policies, however, may be unsuccessful at accomplishing what it was that they set out to do. These policies may either languish through neglect, be implemented so that they do no harm, or they may become problematic. A periodic review of policies at any level is recommended but rarely actually occurs.

School and district administrators may be well advised to encourage only those policies that offer a direct benefit to students and their educational needs. After all, that is what the entire school project is about. Recognizing and assessing the benefit of these policies is important, but so is attempting to envision unintended consequences of such policies. Although administrators may not be able to roundly ignore all policies, they may be able to manipulate, interpret and encourage policies that support student enterprise with respect to learning.

Schedule planning is another important area that may, with some sensitivity, present a useful strategy to support student learning. One school in British Columbia, Canada, had a large English as a Second Language (ESL) population. The administrators created a high school timetable with ESL at the centre of the planning process. The effect of this was to create a cadre of ESL students with relatively similar personal timetables so that they moved through their classes together. This allowed subject teachers to concentrate more effectively on these students’ language needs while also teaching them course content. While the possibilities may be endless, each possibility begins with placing the needs of the student first. In order to reduce violence, improve learning and encourage inspired teaching, administrators can be successful by remembering that, while the school system is an imposing structure, it still fundamentally concerns the people within the system, and the most vulnerable of these people are the students, themselves.

Discipline is another area that school administrators may find to be a challenging area. Discipline issues arise in every school setting and cannot be minimized. It may even occur that the administrator in charge of discipline visualizes him- or herself as a jailer, of sorts. This is the wrong signal to send if one is not trying to make the students feel like inmates at a correctional facility. With disciplinary issues, two thoughts arise, here. The first is to ask the question, “What happened?” Hearing the student’s side of the altercation may put things on an entirely different footing. Asking questions almost automatically encourages a common ground, and a more balanced interaction, with the objective being to find out what went wrong and how it can be fixed. A second approach is the notion of restorative justice. While time and space preclude expansion of this topic, the term “Restorative Justice” expresses its intent. Injured parties may meet with the perpetrator of the injustice in order to come to terms with what happened, how and why. Again, common ground may be established where the damage can be corrected, mitigated or even improved. For example, the four agreements or a common school philosophy, that is public, might be a good foundation to guide the school. One school, based on the authors’ experience, had the staff develop a common philosophy for the school in consultation with students. This process tended to hold the students and staff accountable because everyone had a voice in the process.

In essence, every good administrator who is interested in making his or her school a site of grace, spirit and industry is encouraged to bear in mind that the entire educational project centres upon the learner. In this respect, the administrator may assume the role of the benevolent parent. Although this may be an obvious trope, education often resembles the adage about the alligators in the swamp [25], and the objective to drain the swamp may well be overlooked, given multiple events that may be taking place simultaneously. However, if the administrator is able to hang on to his or her humanity, while draining the swamp, there is a good chance that the student body may be able to reclaim their own humanity, as well. To see the results of this in practice are truly awe inspiring.

Such formidable practices are more common than one might think. In 2012, Cooper and White [26] worked with a group of teachers to explore critical literacy in a grade Three classroom. What began as a single classroom experiment unfolded into a total school experience. The administration was on board from the beginning of the project. The result was that the administration worked with staff and with experts on a joint initiative to explore the multiple ways in which young children can become more critically literate. Through this endeavor, students, staff, administration, and community members all had an opportunity to discuss, describe and experience new-found knowledge.

11. Universities and faculties of education

Another important consideration in the development of a particular model of education is the role that teacher education institutes play in the education and training of teacher candidates. It is expected that teacher candidates enter these facilities with adequate content knowledge, whether they are bound for elementary education, secondary education, or independent teaching. Given this, the role of the teacher education programs is twofold—to teach theory and to teach methods. Because theory influences one's teaching practice and one's teaching practice influences what one has absorbed theoretically, in both cases, whether it be methods courses or courses in theory. Whether methods or theory, teacher candidates are taught *how* to teach, as well as having candidates familiarize themselves with teaching documents, curriculum guides and requisite subject knowledge.

It is this, *how* to teach, that often becomes problematic. The presenting position is that teachers need to be fair and considerate of their students, to teach them well, and to cover the course outlines. However, there is a sinister underbelly to this utopian view. Whether explicit or implicit, teacher candidates are also taught that they must be able to control their classrooms. The zeal with which this is accomplished becomes obvious when the teacher candidates are observed in their practicum settings, where their chief influences are practicing teachers. Teaching lore is passed along from older to younger teachers and represents *insider* knowledge in comparison to the younger teacher's *incoming* knowledge [27].

One of the most important lessons, for the teacher candidate, is the knowledge around how to control one's classroom situation and maintain order. In many cases, young candidates are told not to crack a smile before Christmas. This works well, but it does little to encourage all of the things that makes education joyful. In fact, it reinforces the incarcerative aspects of the education project. Even in softer versions of this move to control, there is the tendency to over control. Of course, experience plays a significant role in helping teachers, young and old, experienced and inexperienced,

to hit the appropriate measure of classroom control. However, by the time the teacher figures out how much control is required, how many students have become disillusioned, discouraged, and disenfranchised?

How does one find the appropriate level of control for one's classroom? There is nothing wrong with asking the students. Once the teacher has passed the "test" – and there is always a test that the teacher must pass in order for them to be accepted by the students – some of those barriers that separate the teachers from the learners may be set aside. The objective here is to reduce the distance between teachers and learners, and approach that "co-researcher" relationship advocated by Shimizu [3].

There are numerous other issues that faculties of education and institutes of learning could examine and redress. However, the most challenging issue is the one that situates teachers as having unbridled power over students. This, alone, may be responsible for many disenchanting, unmotivated, or disengaged students. While this chapter speaks for the "regular" student, students with special needs may be particularly sensitive to issues of power and control that exist in their classrooms and schools. In addition, specialized programs, such as vocational or skill-based programs may require more stringent safety regulations. In essence, a reasonable amount of control is what is required and this may be negotiated by those who are responsible for the program in conjunction with those who are the recipients of that program.

At the end of the day, Teacher education programs must advocate for a certain level of classroom control. By the same token, new and experienced teachers must be able to identify appropriate levels of control that do not alienate students. In short, teachers must examine what they have been taught to operationalize what they have learned for the benefit of their students.

12. The larger society

All the information that appears in this chapter has been previously expressed in many ways. At issue is why we have yet to put this information into practice. Perhaps, at its heart is the fact that we are all products of our own histories. That is to say, we have all been to school. We have all been indoctrinated by the knowledge that has been put into place by "experts," past and present. Perhaps it is time to question, once again, the wisdom of the choices that we have made and that have been made for us.

Perhaps this is the place to distinguish between schooling and education. While education refers to what we may learn, schooling refers to the place where much of our learning occurs. Thus, it can be said that not all our education takes place in schools. If one were to expand on that thought and cast one's vision back to Covid-era lockdowns, a great deal of "education" occurred through the Internet. In fact, some education facilities eschew the notion of a concrete and material "school" in favor of an online classroom. Other permutations, of which there are many, may include outdoor education, apprenticeship programs, and other types of experiential learning opportunities, including but not limited to fieldtrips. Imagine a future society where schooling has not been excluded from the greater society. In this vision, it may be common to see young people learning alongside senior citizens. Of course, checks and balances would be required, but imagine to joyfulness of school when someone brings in home-baked cookies, or an elderly person finally comprehends the concept being explained by a young student. Younger and older generations have much to learn from one another.

Education is central to our society and from this emanates all manner of things, from policy to governance to culture and to art. Because education is seen as one of the bastions relating to the socialization of individuals within society, it is a powerful force in the development of society, and helps to form beliefs, values, mores and attitudes. It also contributes to the implementation and establishment of peaceful coexistence among states. Given the influence of Neoliberal thought over the past 50 years, it is not surprising that the commodification of just about everything is experienced by today's students as natural and normal. Unfortunately, such attitudes and patterns of behavior are eventually harmful to the society itself.

In 1954, long before the invention of the microchip and the development of Neoliberalism, Herbert Marcuse [28] published his seminal work, *One-dimensional Man*. In this volume, he warned of dire consequences of new forms of social repression, which integrates individuals in society into existing systems of production through, at least in part, existing and contemporary modes of thought. As a result, "one-dimensional thinking" promotes conformity and obedience to all-encompassing methods of control. Certainly, today, in societies around the globe, Marcuse's words ring true. We see our society in all its ragged glory—wars, famine, homelessness, insufficient health care, and other ills too numerous to detail here. This is a society in decline if not in eclipse. There is so much redress to be made that the most powerful leaders on the planet quail to think of where to begin. Where is the centre of the issue?

Let us look to education as a way forward. It will take time, generations, in fact. However, with the recognition that Neoliberal sentiments have not helped us gain Utopia, perhaps it is time to seek alternative approaches. Perhaps it is time to return humanity to humankind. We can do this through our systems of education.

Curriculum is important and this is where the effects of good teaching and strong learning become most apparent. However, it is not the curriculum that is at fault, but the teaching that accompanies it. Together, in unison, teachers, administrators and institutes of education can and should return to a more student-centred approach to teaching and learning. While there may be many claims that teaching *is* student-centred, it is not apparent that all students would agree. Teachers may know intuitively what it is that their students need but they are too often constrained by policies and the realities of the society that the students will inherit. Here is an opportunity to make the necessary changes in order to benefit the students, themselves, and all parts of the educational project, and, eventually, society itself. This hearkens back to the notion of including a model for wellbeing or at least acknowledging that the threat of violence is a looming problem that permeates the confines of every classroom.

13. Conclusion

This chapter has been a David and Goliath moment. The issues at play within the society are huge and have been recalcitrant and impervious to change. The proposed antidote pales in comparison to the magnitude of the problem. However, it may just be that the proposed resolution is elegant in that it is simple and effective. At the heart of the problem lies the fact that humanity is recoiling from some of its most pernicious challenges, and something will have to change in order to effect a sense of wellbeing.

Although some may claim that a lack of authority and discipline are at the heart of delinquency, more authority and discipline are not at the heart of wellbeing. The evolutionary change presented here may be the way we school our future generations. This chapter began with the notion that school violence is on the rise. Well, violence

within the society is also on the rise and these two forces may well be intertwined and interconnected, with each stoking the other. Perhaps one begets the other. So, when the society cannot seem to extricate itself from such negative influences and appears to be reproducing them in their educational systems, an intervention is required.

That intervention may well be “wellbeing.” Unfortunately, the actual process of adopting and implementing wellbeing is unique to each location and to each level and component of the educational project. Because of this, being well remains vague and requires experiential input at the practical level. It may not look the same in each geopolitical location. However, it is much easier to ascertain when one or more aspects of education is not being or doing well. When that point is recognized by any of the actors involved in education, an intervention is required.

Pragmatically, that intervention may be as simple as an attitude adjustment. Such an adjustment may arise in the form of valorizing our students, offering them a voice and a modicum of power to become the best possible versions of themselves. Carry this best version forward into graduation and beyond. Carry it into the workforce and the structures of governance that we claim to need. Carry it into our daily lives. Yes, the road may be long and there will be mistakes made along the way. There will be errors, and recidivism, and redundancy, but, if educators are committed to such an ideal, they will eventually succeed. After all, what do we have to lose? And, if the greatest challenge in schools really concerns violence – unremarkable, given the dysfunctions of society – it is hoped that, by offering a path of co-operation and appreciation that eventually leads to wellbeing, any cessation of violence may have benefitted from this modicum of insight.

However, at the end of the day, positive, rather than negative associations with schooling may well encourage the elusive notion of peace and wellbeing. This is exactly how reducing violence in our schools through the practice of valorizing our students by all levels of school governance will result in greater wellbeing. But it does not end there. As educational facilities around the globe become more well and, as a result, better able to meet their students’ needs, this pays forward from generation to generation until, at last, societies may have access to the peace within themselves and with one another. It is in this perspective that global peace may finally be recognized and realized.

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Perspective Chapter: The Primacy of Freedom over Equality as a Condition for Peace from Jean-Jacques Rousseau to Pope John Paul II

Zdzisław Kieliszek

Abstract

The author answers the question of which of the two values - freedom or equality – is more fundamental to peace in human relations. Four projects of public order are analyzed. First, J.J. Rousseau's postulate that the fundamental condition for a peacefully functioning society is to guarantee equality among its members is discussed. Then, Karl Raimund Popper's opposing idea that the fundamental principle of peaceful public life is the protection of freedom is presented. Then, A. de Tocqueville's idea that religion plays a key role in a peaceful society, since its presence in the public sphere guarantees effective protection of citizens' freedom and serves peace, is evoked. It also analyzes John Paul II's observation that the Christian vision of man is in harmony with the ethos of a peaceful society whose fundamental value is freedom. It turns out that freedom is a more fundamental value than equality for peaceful relations between people. Moreover, the effectiveness of the defense of human freedom and the building of peace depends directly on the active presence of Christians in the public square. This activity should be manifested in the implementation of various educational and social projects by Christians.

Keywords: freedom, equality, J.J. Rousseau, A. de Tocqueville, K.R. Popper, John Paul II, peace

1. Introduction

Article One of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, adopted in Paris on December 10, 1948, at the Third Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, reads as follows: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights."¹ *The Declaration* was intended by its authors to impose moral and political obligations on individual states, to induce them to comply with its provisions and to

¹ See Ref. [1].

provide a lasting basis for international peace. Thus, the first article of *the Declaration* establishes the main moral-political criterion by which public orders should be judged, including in terms of their potential to promote or threaten international peace. The point is that, according to *the Declaration's* authors, any state order that protects the freedom of its citizens and ensures their equality is peacefully creative. By contrast, state regimes that do not provide these guarantees should be considered a serious threat to world peace, and action should be taken to change them accordingly.

It is interesting to note that freedom is listed first, before equality, in the aforementioned article. One could conclude that the authors of *the Declaration* considered freedom to be the most important value for human beings, certainly more important than equality. This means, then, that, from the perspective of concern for world peace, these social regimes should be fostered and developed that do not so much provide people with equality, guaranteeing the protection of freedom.

In these reflections, an attempt will be made to support that the conviction of the authors of *the Declaration* to place freedom before equality is as correct as possible. This research will further attempt to clearly define what and why a concretely defined vision of humanity requires the true protection of human freedom and, therefore, the pursuit of peace. Four outstanding thinkers have been chosen as intellectual guides in this research: Jean-Jaques Rousseau, Karl Raimund Popper, Alexis Clérel, comte de Tocqueville, and John Paul II. They have not been randomly (nonchronologically) listed in this order by chance. Their thinking appears to be complementary. Issues not taken up by the first author are subsequently taken up (or addressed) by others. Therefore, it is not difficult to understand that the concept of public order, formulated by John Paul II, can be considered the most appropriate development of a project whose moral-political foundation is Article One of *the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

2. J.J. Rousseau: equality as a condition for peace

J.J. Rousseau, in his seminal, political, and social work, on *The Social Contract*, states “Man is born free; and everywhere he is in chains. One thinks himself the master of others, and still remains a greater slave than they. How did this change come about? I do not know. What can make it legitimate? That question I think I can answer.”²

The above statement indicates the problem that Rousseau intends to solve. He will not concern himself with the actual process of the formation of societies. Rousseau will limit himself to the search for the principles on which any unjust social order is based. In this way, Rousseau will identify the main sources of social unrest. Injustice is to be understood here as any form of social bondage, and its existence presents a constant danger for the outbreak of struggles between people seeking freedom. *The Social Contract* is therefore a philosophical and juridical work, not a historical one. Rousseau considers the theses it contains to be normative, not hypothetical.³ This means, on the one hand, that according to its author, *The Social Contract* clearly identifies the source of social injustice and, on the other hand, defines the principles upon which a just and thus peace-promoting social system should be based.

Central to Rousseau's entire conception is the assertion that the source of social injustice, and the real threat of the outbreak of unrest, lies in the political

² See Ref. [2].

³ See Ref. [3].

organization of society, not in the ontic human condition. The problem to be solved in creating a social order conducive to peaceful relations among human beings is to design political institutions that respect the freedom inherent in human beings.

According to Rousseau, the greatest threat to human freedom, and thus to social peace, is inequality among human beings. The main source of inequality is private property. It is also the fundamental source of strife among men.⁴ This follows from the fact that the principle of relating people to each other is to compare them to each other. Also, as the primary object of comparison among men is wealth, it differentiates them among themselves, making relations among individuals unequal and hostile for it is natural in every society that some people own more and others have less private property.⁵

However, the criticism of private property should not be understood as Rousseau advocating the introduction of collective property in society or even a communist type of property. Rousseau seems to have in mind the general idea of the development of any society. This development goes from a complete community to more and more individualized forms. In a complete community, all its members are completely equal. In individualized forms, individuals are increasingly different from each other. Therefore, the most important implication of this critique is that it is necessary to design political institutions that treat all citizens with absolute equality. Only in this way will it be possible to ensure both the natural freedom of each individual and peaceful relations between people.⁶

The desired political institutions, according to Rousseau, must be based on the collective will of all citizens and the social contract. By the former, the French thinker intends the common position of the people living in a given society with regard to all the problems and difficulties it faces;⁷ by the latter, he means the simultaneous abandonment by all individuals of the pursuit of their personal goals and the absolute submission of all decisions to the collective will and the political body that embodies it.⁸ Only such a social order remains in harmony with the natural (ideal) state of

⁴ For example, in *On the Origin of the Inequality of Mankind*, J.J. Rousseau states: "The first man who, having enclosed a piece of ground, bethought himself of saying *This is mine*, and found people simple enough to believe him, was the real founder of civil society. From how many crimes, wars and murders, from how many horrors and misfortunes might not any one have saved mankind, by pulling up the stakes, or filling up the ditch, and crying to his fellows, *Beware of listening to this impostor; you are undone if you once forget that the fruits of the earth belong to us all, and the earth itself to nobody*." See Ref. [4].

⁵ See Ref. [5], p. 53.

⁶ See Ref. [6], p. 52–53.

⁷ "The more concert reigns in the assemblies, that is, the nearer opinion approaches unanimity, the greater is the dominance of the general will. On the other hand, long debates, dissensions and tumult proclaim the ascendancy of particular interests and the decline of the State." See Ref. [7].

⁸ "If then we discard from the social compact what is not of its essence, we shall find that it reduces itself to the following terms: *Each of us puts his person and all his power in common under the supreme direction of the general will, and, in our corporate capacity, we receive each member as an indivisible part of the whole*. At once, in place of the individual personality of each contracting party, this act of association creates a moral and collective body, composed of as many members as the assembly contains votes, and receiving from this act its unity, its common identity, its life and its will. This public person, so formed by the union of all other persons formerly took the name of city, and now takes that of Republic or body politic; it is called by its members State when passive. Sovereign when active, and Power when compared with others like itself. Those who are associated in it take collectively the name of people, and severally are called citizens, as sharing in the sovereign power, and subjects, as being under the laws of the State." See Ref. [8].

human life and guarantees peaceful relations between people. In this state, no individual exists as a separate element of the community but remains in full and friendly communion with other men, and all men remain equal to each other and enjoy real, not imaginary, freedom.⁹ The former consists in doing what is consistent with reason; the latter appears to be mere arbitrariness.¹⁰ According to Rousseau, thanks to the conclusion of a social contract with other people, and the submission of all citizens to the collective will, equal rights, true freedom, and social peace are guaranteed to each individual.¹¹

Rousseau places the political body that embodies the collective will, as the guardian of equality, freedom, and peace. Only this political body, according to the French philosopher, is entitled to protect them. In extreme cases, this protection can even adopt the form of coercion. This applies to citizens who do not submit to the collective will and thus violate the previously concluded agreement. According to Rousseau, such an attitude is tantamount to questioning the equality of all citizens, a rejection of true freedom, and a lack of peaceful attitude toward other people. In such a case, the political body is entitled to apply coercion to certain citizens. This is about the right to force citizens to respect each other's equality and to remain in peaceful relations with each other.¹²

Based on the social views of Rousseau, outlined above, it can be noted that the conception of social life in which the active subject is not an individual but the whole community becomes clear. Consequently, this means that the French thinker – as if contrary to his intentions – actually deprives man of his freedom. During the French Revolution and the history of the socialist movement, the flaws in Rousseau's concepts became apparent. As is well known, in the first case, the decisions of the collective will of the people were treated as a justification for terror, which, after all, should be considered the most radical possible violation of human freedom and the extreme deprivation of peaceful relations between people; while in the second case, the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat also stands in clear contradiction to human freedom and the desire for peaceful regulation of relations between people. I am far from blaming Rousseau

⁹ "(...) instead of destroying natural inequality, the fundamental compact substitutes, for such physical inequality as nature may have set up between men, an equality that is moral and legitimate, and that men, who may be unequal in strength or intelligence, become everyone equal by convention and legal right." See Ref. [9].

¹⁰ "What man loses by the social contract is his natural liberty and an unlimited right to everything he tries to get and succeeds in getting; what he gains is civil liberty and the proprietorship of all he possesses. If we are to avoid mistake in weighing one against the other, we must clearly distinguish natural liberty, which is bounded only by the strength of the individual, from civil liberty, which is limited by the general will; and possession, which is merely the effect of force or the right of the first occupier, from property, which can be founded only on a positive title. We might, over and above all this, add, to what man acquires in the civil state, moral liberty, which alone makes him truly master of himself; for the mere impulse of appetite is slavery, while obedience to a law which we prescribe to ourselves is liberty." See Ref. [10].

¹¹ See A. Szahaj, M.N. Jakubowski, *Filozofia*, p. 54–55.

¹² "In order then that the social compact may not be an empty formula, it tacitly includes the undertaking, which alone can give force to the rest, that whoever refuses to obey the general will shall be compelled to do so by the whole body. This means nothing less than that he will be forced to be free; for this is the condition which, by giving each citizen to his country, secures him against all personal dependence. In this lies the key to the working of the political machine; this alone legitimizes civil undertakings, which, without it, would be absurd, tyrannical, and liable to the most frightful abuses." See Ref. [10].

for the horrors of the French Revolution or the consequences of the dictatorship of the proletariat. However, it is difficult not to see that, in both cases, what is somehow hidden in the French philosopher's conception is very clearly revealed: the absolute power of a political body to decide the actual fate of certain people or certain communities, including the complete deprivation of their freedom or even their existence due to the violation of the broadly understood interests of a certain community.¹³

Rousseau's social vision should therefore be described as a totalitarian project in which there is absolutely no room for any opposition to the will of the whole (in political practice, this should be understood as the will of the majority) of the citizens and the specific political body that embodies it. In a society built according to the recommendations of the French author, there is also no place for arbitrary decisions made by individuals or human communities smaller than a larger-than-life community of which they are a part, which amounts to questioning human autonomy (freedom) and individuality and threatens to cause outbreaks of social unrest.¹⁴

Where is the error that led Rousseau, contrary to his original intentions, to design a social order in which there is ultimately no place for either human freedom or peaceful human relations? When we speak of the mistakes made by the French thinker, we usually refer to his erroneous assumption that the source of injustice and social unrest is the institutional organization of public life or the perception of man as an inherently good being, i.e., incapable of harming others. It must be admitted that these are indeed mistaken assumptions, which are not without influence on this or that formulation of Rousseau's concept.¹⁵ It appears however, that he also made a mistake that is not clear: on the level of institutional arrangements, he puts equality before freedom. The point is that Rousseau seems to have put forward the following thesis: the only effective means of protecting the freedom of citizens and ensuring peaceful relations between people is to guarantee them an equal influence on the shaping of the public order in which they live. In fact, the French thinker noted that as the greatest threat to freedom and peace is inequality between people, guaranteeing freedom and peace to citizens requires that people first be equal. Meanwhile, I think that, by equating citizens with each other, an even greater threat to their freedom and peace is created. Rousseau did not seem to realize this when he developed the concept of public order.

3. Karl Raimund Popper: freedom as the basis of social peace

To understand why equality should not take precedence over freedom, it is worth considering the thought of the Austrian philosopher Karl R. Popper. In his intellectual autobiography, *Unended Quest*, he says "For nothing could be better than living a modest, simple, and free life in an egalitarian society. It took some time before I recognized this as no more than a beautiful dream; that freedom is more important than equality; that the attempt to realize equality endangers freedom; and that, if freedom is lost, there will not even be equality among the unfree."¹⁶

¹³ See M. Król, *Historia*, p. 54–56.

¹⁴ See Ref. [11], p. 42–44.

¹⁵ See, e.g. Ref. [12], p.88–92; Ref. [13]. It should not be forgotten, of course, that J.J. Rousseau is also the author of a number of extremely valuable philosophical ideas that provided important inspiration for later philosophers. For a brief presentation of such ideas, see Ref. [14], p. 148.

¹⁶ See Ref. [15], p. 36.

Karl Raimund Popper's thought is part of the current political and social reflection that emerged in Western Europe and the United States after the Second World War. Thinkers belonging to this current (besides Popper, the most important are F.A. von Hayek and I. Berlin) attempt to show the true roots of totalitarianism and sketch models of a social order in which human freedom is the highest value.¹⁷

The main issue that Popper deals with in his most important work on socio-political problems, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, is the question of the proper organization of public order. A properly organized society is what Popper calls an "open society." By "open society," the Austrian philosopher means a social system in which the individual has the right to make completely free decisions about his or her life, all citizens have equal opportunities for social advancement, and the organization of public institutions promotes competition among citizens. Competition should not be understood as a hostile rivalry. Popper has in mind a kind of competition between people for worthy goals, with the complete exclusion of the use of force or violence. The tool of human interaction in such an understanding of competition is not persuasion or appeal, but argumentation and rational justification of the validity of one's views. An "open society" therefore allows a diversity of views among its citizens. The principle of internal development and improvement of existing political and social institutions in the "open society" is the cooperation of citizens, exchange of opinions of citizens on specific issues, and joint search for optimal solutions to given problems. Approaching the truth in terms of social life consists, in turn, of 1) rejecting solutions that do not work at a given moment and do not seem to correspond to the objective state of affairs; 2) designing and implementing innovative ideas in their place; 3) citizens jointly evaluating new solutions and rejecting those that are unacceptable at a given moment and must be replaced by new designs (in this way, the entire process begins to repeat itself).¹⁸

The opposite and, in a sense, the only alternative to the "open society," according to Popper, is the "closed society."¹⁹ It is characterized by the restriction of the

¹⁷ See M. Król, *Historia*, p. 172.

¹⁸ See J.P. Hudzik, *Wykłady*, p. 142–145. It is worth noting that the project of a proper social order and its development, formulated in this way, is deeply connected with the so-called concept of *falsificationism*, developed by Karl Raimund Popper within the framework of his research on science. For example, the Austrian thinker writes the following about the nature of scientific progress: "Bold ideas, unjustified anticipations, and speculative thought, are our only means for interpreting nature: our only organon, our only instrument, for grasping her." See Ref. [16], p. 280.

¹⁹ "In what follows, the magical or tribal or collectivist society will also be called the closed society, and the society in which individuals are confronted with personal decisions, the open society. The closed society at its best can be justly compared to an organism. The so-called organic or biological theory of the state is to a certain extent applicable here, since the closed society lacks those features of the open society which must defeat every attempt to apply this theory. The features I have in mind are those connected with the fact that, in the open society, many members strive to take the place of other members. This may express itself, for instance, in such an important phenomenon as class struggle. We cannot find anything like class struggle in an organism. The cells or tissues of an organism which are sometimes said to correspond to the members of a state, may perhaps compete for food; but there is no inherent tendency on the part of the legs to become the brain, or of other members of the body to become the belly. Since there is nothing in the organism to correspond to one of the most important features of the open society, competition for status among its members, the so-called organic theory of the state is based on a false analogy. The closed society, on the other hand, does not know much of such tendencies. Its institutions, including its castes, are sacrosanct – taboo." See Ref. [17], p. 152–153.

freedom of citizens, the curatorship of the state over them, the omnipresence of legal regulations restricting the freedom of action of citizens, censorship, the insistence on the adoption by all citizens of a single worldview doctrine considered true by the authorities, the tendency toward a totalitarian form of government. According to the Austrian thinker, examples of “closed society” projects are primarily the political and social concepts of Plato, G.W.F. Hegel, and Karl Marx. In these projects, there is a conviction of the possibility of realizing a single, desirable model of political-social order. The political institutions within such an order uphold a single moral doctrine that is considered binding.²⁰

Although Karl Raimund Popper does not explicitly mention Rousseau’s concept as an example of a “closed society,” it seems that it too can be considered a typical model of a “closed society.”²¹ This is because it reveals very clearly the main characteristics of this type of society: the lack of respect for individual freedom and the pernicious tendency to build an ideological (totalitarian) society, guided by a single worldview that is considered the most appropriate.²²

All projects of the “closed society” seek to realize the vision of holistic good. According to their authors, it can be achieved only through the realization of a certain model of social order, which appears to be ideal.²³ According to Popper, such a thesis is based on the mistaken belief that socio-historical reality is determined by “iron laws of destiny” that can be known and according to which the social order should be shaped.²⁴ The belief that such laws exist is mistaken because the future appears to be open-ended.²⁵ Thus, there are no laws that determine (i.e., somehow summarily conclude) human history.²⁶

²⁰ See A. Szahaj, M.N. Jakubowski, *Filozofia*, p. 111.

²¹ This does not mean, however, that Karl Raimund Popper does not include the French philosopher in a very broad current that creates various types of models of the “closed society.” He writes, for example: “(...) the collectivist Hegel, like Plato, visualizes the state as an organism; and following Rousseau who had furnished it with a collective ‘general’ will, Hegel furnishes it with a conscious and thinking essence, its ‘reason’ or ‘Spirit’. This Spirit, whose ‘very essence is activity’ (which shows its dependence on Rousseau), is at the same time the collective *Spirit of the Nation* that forms the state.” See Ref. [17], p. 35.

²² See Ref. [18], p. 238–244.

²³ See Ref. [19], p. 127.

²⁴ “It is widely believed that a truly scientific and philosophical attitude toward politics, and a deeper understanding of social life in general, must be based upon a contemplation and interpretation of human history. While the ordinary man takes the setting of his life and the importance of his personal experiences and struggles for granted, it is said that the social scientist or philosopher has to survey things from a higher plane. He sees the individual as a pawn, as a rather insignificant instrument in the general development of mankind. And the really important actors on the Stage of History he may find, perhaps, in the Great Nations and their Great Leaders, or perhaps in the Great Classes, or in the Great Ideas. However, this may be, he will try to understand the meaning of the play which is performed on that Stage; he will try to understand the laws of historical development. If he succeeds in this, he will, of course, be able to predict future developments. He might then put politics upon a solid basis and give us practical advice by telling us which political actions are likely to succeed or likely to fail.” See Ref. [17], p. 5–6.

²⁵ This belief is called “historicism” by Karl Raimund Popper.

²⁶ See Ref. [20]. Karl Raimund Popper devoted his entire book *Die Zukunft ist offen* (1985; written together with K. Lorenz) to the idea of the openness of history. One should also not forget the work *The Open Universe: An Argument for Indeterminism* (1982). This idea also appears there.

According to Popper, the openness of history is indicated by the observation that the course of human history depends primarily on the development of science and the future states of consciousness of individual human beings. Neither, in turn, can be reasonably predicted. Therefore, the future development of human history cannot be accurately determined. This means that the future is completely open, i.e., it is a matter of many different coincidences, accidents, and more or less rationally justified decisions of certain people, and in the long run, nothing can be precisely determined. Therefore, it is not possible to predict future human ideas rationally and unambiguously about what a good human society should look like in the future and what specific solutions to specific problems should look like.²⁷

As the history of humankind is open-ended, it is not possible to determine the future history with precision. This means that the future of humankind is unpredictable. Consequently, it is not possible to determine how to build a social order in which peace would prevail permanently. According to the Austrian thinker, the “skeleton” of a peaceful social order is determined by the idea of an “open society” rather than a “closed society.” Thus, the peaceful search for ever-better solutions to specific social problems is possible only in an “open society.” In addition, an “open society” is conducive to peacefully meeting the needs of a given community, which are constantly changing over time. In contrast, this is impossible in the case of a “closed society.” All orders built according to the idea of a “closed society” attempt to realize a preconceived, specific vision of an ideal public order. In this way, citizens are deprived of the opportunity to gradually improve and develop specific solutions to a specific situation.²⁸

The “open society,” despite its undoubted advantages over the “closed society,” is not, however, without its shortcomings.²⁹ According to Popper, the most important of these appears to be the possibility of being subject to various kinds of moral-political imperfections. This should be understood in such a way that the specific institutional

²⁷ See Ref. [21], p. 39; Ref. [22], p. 339.

²⁸ “In all matters, we can only learn by trial and error, by making mistakes and improvements; we can never rely on inspiration, although inspirations may be most valuable as long as they can be checked by experience. Accordingly, *it is not reasonable to assume that a complete reconstruction of our social world would lead at once to a workable system.* Rather we should expect that, owing to lack of experience, many mistakes would be made, which could be only eliminated by a long and laborious process of improvement; in other words, by that rational method of piecemeal engineering whose application we advocate. But those who dislike this method as insufficiently radical would have again to wipe out their freshly constructed society, in order to start anew with a clean canvas; and since the new start, for the same reasons, would not lead to perfection either, they would have to repeat this process without ever reaching anything. Those who admit this and are prepared to adopt our more modest method of piecemeal improvements, but only after the first canvas cleaning, can hardly escape the criticism that their first sweeping and violent measures were quite unnecessary. This irrational attitude which springs from an intoxication with dreams of a beautiful world is what I call Romanticism. It may seek its heavenly city in the past or in the future; it may preach ‘back to nature’ or ‘forward to a world of love and beauty’; but its appeal is always to our emotions rather than to reason. Even with the best intentions of realizing heaven on earth it only succeeds in realizing hell – that hell which man alone prepares for his fellows.” See Ref. [17], p. 147–148.

²⁹ According to Karl Raimund Popper, the most important institutional advantage of the “open society” over the “closed society” seems to be that it allows reforms to be carried out peacefully, without violence. For the Austrian thinker, parliamentary democracy is the institutional embodiment of the “open society.” See e.g. Ref. [17], p. 140.

solutions adopted within the framework of the “open society” are to some extent a result of the moral-intellectual level of the society as a whole and, in particular, of the specific individuals who hold political power at a given time. Thus, the higher this level, the greater the guarantee of a more peaceful functioning of a given society. Of course, the opposite is also true – the lower this level, the more vulnerable a given society is to the outbreak of social unrest. The disadvantage of the “open society” understood in this way is structural as it is directly inscribed in the functioning of the whole system and cannot be avoided. This does not mean, however, that the “open society” should be rejected for this reason and considered an inappropriate model of social order that best serves the cause of peace.³⁰ According to the Austrian philosopher, the postulate that follows from the recognition of this flaw is quite different: “What we need and what we want is to moralize politics, and not to politicize morals.”³¹

Returning here to the concept of Rousseau, it can be noted that, in his case – from the point of view of Popper’s thought – we are dealing with the politicization of morality. The French philosopher sketches a vision of public order that has the task of realizing a particular moral idea, misunderstood as the general good. It is the belief in the primacy of the equality of all human beings over their right to decide freely about their lives.

It is difficult to disagree with Popper’s justification of the primacy of freedom over equality and the related idea of the superiority of the “open society” over the “closed society.” The Austrian thinker also rightly points out that the former should not be regarded as a completely finished construction. Rather, “open society” is only a guideline for building a social order that serves the cause of peace in order to protect human freedom. Popper’s postulate for the moralization of politics also seems to be correct. Paradoxically, however, the greatest weakness of the idea of the “open society” lies in such a postulate. By placing human freedom above all other values, Popper deprived the concrete human being of any guidance as to how morally decent he is to realize his goals and on what concrete moral principles the public life of the “open society” is to be based. In other words, while the Austrian philosopher made the all-too-common postulate of “moralizing politics,” he failed to show on what moral values the “open society” should be based. Thus, Popper’s idea is, in sum, an attempt to outline a

³⁰ “Not only does the construction of institutions involve important moral decisions, but the functioning of even the best institutions will always depend, to a considerable degree, on its personnel. Institutions are like fortresses. They must be well designed *and* manned. This is often misunderstood by the critics of democracy. Democracy provides the institutional framework for the reform of political institutions (other than this framework). It makes possible the reform of institutions without using violence, and thereby the use of reason in the designing of new institutions and the adjusting of old ones. It cannot provide reason. The question of the intellectual and moral standard of its citizens is to a large degree a personal problem. (The idea that this problem can be tackled, in turn, by an institutional eugenic and educational control is, I believe, mistaken; some reasons for my belief will be given below.) It is quite wrong to blame democracy for the political shortcomings of a democratic state. We should rather blame ourselves. In a non-democratic state, the only way to achieve reasonable reforms is by the violent overthrow of the government, and the introduction of a democratic framework. Those who criticize democracy on any ‘moral’ grounds fail to distinguish between personal and institutional problems. It rests with us to improve matters. The democratic institutions cannot improve themselves. The problem of improving them is always a problem of persons rather than of institutions.” See Ref. [17], p. 110–111.

³¹ See Ref. [17], p. 99.

morally neutral space of social life in which adherents of different world views would find their place. But the existence of such a morally neutral space is impossible. It is necessary to identify very precisely the specific moral values on which the “open society” must be based.³²

4. Alexis Clérel, comte de Tocqueville: the religious foundation of peaceful liberty

To find their previously articulated values, it is worth referring to the reflections of de Tocqueville. This French philosopher, who lived a century before Popper, proposed a solution that, on the one hand, is in harmony with the idea of an “open society” and, on the other hand, points out that the protection of human freedom, oriented toward the peaceful coexistence of people, requires the presence of strictly defined values in the public sphere.³³

In his major work, *Democracy in America*, de Tocqueville analyses the mechanisms of the American public order of the time, which seems to him to be a perfect example of a democratic system. The French philosopher notes that it is noticeable what kind of social system disappears with the advent of democracy. This system is broadly defined as the aristocratic rule. What is less clear, however, is what democracy can bring in the future. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze what can be expected from democracy, i.e., what opportunities it offer humanity and what dangers it generate.³⁴

The author of *Democracy in America* notes that democracy is not so much a fully formed and ready-made system as a public order, which can take on different institutional expressions, depending on the historical, geographical, economic, political, or cultural conditions of the society that creates it. The fundamental values of this order are freedom and equality, the former being the more fundamental. The point is that without freedom there can be no democracy. While equality is also a formal condition for the existence of democracy, it is somehow secondary to freedom. When de Tocqueville speaks of the subordination of equality to freedom, he has in mind equality of opportunity, not the actual equality of citizens (equality in this case would mean a certain equality). Freedom is more fundamental to the democratic system. The reason being, that in democracy, citizens are always free to realize the possibilities

³² The point is that in the face of serious moral and political conflicts, liberalism cannot help but take sides, giving the lie to its official neutrality. See, e.g. Ref. [23], p. 176.

³³ Because traditional moral values are at stake, A. de Tocqueville is often described as a conservative liberal. See, e.g. M. Król, *Historia*, p. 141–143; A. Szahaj, M.N. Jakubowski, *Filozofia*, p. 68.

³⁴ “It is evident to all alike that a great democratic revolution is going on among us; but there are two opinions as to its nature and consequences. To some it appears to be a novel accident, which as such may still be checked; to others it seems irresistible, because it is the most uniform, the most ancient, and the most permanent tendency which is to be found in history. (...) Whithersoever we turn our eyes we shall witness the same continual revolution throughout the whole of Christendom. The various occurrences of national existence have everywhere turned to the advantage of democracy. (...) Will it stop now that it has grown so strong and its adversaries so weak? None can say which way we are going, for all terms of comparison are wanting. (...) It is not necessary that God himself should speak in order to disclose to us the unquestionable signs of His will; we can discern them in the habitual course of nature, and in the invariable tendency of events: I know, without a special revelation, that the planets move in the orbits traced by the Creator’s finger.” See Ref. [24], p. 13, 15–16.

available to them in the current situation. In other words, democracy is a public order in which citizens are completely free to decide how to realize opportunities before them. The freedom to choose how to realize opportunities here applies both to citizens taken as specific individuals and to citizens grouped in smaller or larger groups that make up the community as a whole.³⁵ Because the freedom of citizens is understood in this way, the democratic order can take on different institutional expressions in the case of a given society. This expression depends directly on the choices made by its members at any given time.

According to de Tocqueville, the direct dependence of the institutional form of a given democratic order on the actual choices made by its citizens is, paradoxically, the greatest weakness of democracy. Although nothing is imposed on the citizens and they themselves freely make certain choices, which is a great advantage of democracy (understood here in the spirit of Popper's idea of an "open society"), at the same time, the actual choices made by the citizens can be de-structural for the entire system. Understood in this way, the weakness of the democratic order is a consequence of the internal tensions and contradictions inherent within it. It is therefore necessary to understand the mechanisms that govern it.³⁶

The French thinker notes that the democratic way, in which public order functions, is primarily conducive to the spread of false attitudes in society. These are mediocrity, intellectual and spiritual mediocrity, selfishness, passivity, and involuntary submission to the majority of individual citizens. The spread of such attitudes results – first – from the fact that people value equality more than freedom.³⁷ This is because the benefits of bringing equality to society are felt almost immediately, while

³⁵ See M. Król, *Historia*, p. 136. A. de Tocqueville described the workings of American democracy with the words: "In some countries a power exists which, though it is in a degree foreign to the social body, directs it, and forces it to pursue a certain track. In others the ruling force is divided, being partly within and partly without the ranks of the people. But nothing of the kind is to be seen in the United States; there society governs itself for itself. All power centres in its bosom; and scarcely an individual is to be met with who would venture to conceive, or, still less, to express, the idea of seeking it elsewhere. The nation participates in the making of its laws by the choice of its legislators, and in the execution of them by the choice of the agents of the executive government; it may almost be said to govern itself, so feeble and so restricted is the share left to the administration, so little do the authorities forget their popular origin and the power from which they emanate." See Ref. [24], p. 75.

³⁶ "The heads of the State have never had any forethought for its exigencies, and its victories have been obtained without their consent or without their knowledge. The most powerful, the most intelligent, and the most moral classes of the nation have never attempted to connect themselves with it in order to guide it. The people has consequently been abandoned to its wild propensities, and it has grown up like those outcasts who receive their education in the public streets, and who are unacquainted with aught but the vices and wretchedness of society. The existence of a democracy was seemingly unknown, when on a sudden it took possession of the supreme power. Everything was then submitted to its caprices; it was worshipped as the idol of strength; until, when it was enfeebled by its own excesses, the legislator conceived the rash project of annihilating its power, instead of instructing it and correcting its vices; no attempt was made to fit it to govern, but all were bent on excluding it from the government." See Ref. [24], p. 17.

³⁷ "I think that democratic communities have a natural taste for freedom: left to themselves, they will seek it, cherish it, and view any privation of it with regret. But for equality, their passion is ardent, insatiable, incessant, invincible: they call for equality in freedom; and if they cannot obtain that, they still call for equality in slavery. They will endure poverty, servitude, barbarism – but they will not endure aristocracy." See Ref. [24], p. 573.

the harms only become apparent over time. In the case of freedom, the opposite is somewhat true. The freedom given to citizens to make certain choices creates some anxiety and uncertainty about the rightness of those choices and creates space for citizens to compete quite freely with each other. The benefits, (including the prospect of unfettered personal intellectual and spiritual development) of such a way of operating public order, are gradually and very slowly revealed, while the harms (including this fear and uncertainty) are felt almost immediately.³⁸ Second, the mechanisms of the democratic order lead to a gradual atomization of society. This also leads to an increase in the anonymity of citizens, as the ties that bind them become weaker. These bonds are weakened by the pluralism of values, attitudes, and beliefs among which citizens are completely free to choose.³⁹ Third, the way democracy works means that the desire for material well-being, which is inherent in human nature and is not fundamentally a bad thing, slowly turns citizens away from big ideas and makes them more and more concerned only with temporal matters. Thus, instead of spending their time in intellectually and spiritually creative ways, citizens pay more and more attention to visible, immediate, and calculable goals.⁴⁰ Also, fourth, the principles of democracy imply that the majority of citizens, who make up the broad public opinion, exert an ever-increasing pressure on the individual. This pressure forms in the individual citizen the conviction that the truth is always on the side of the majority. In this way, public opinion, formed by the majority of citizens, provides the individual with ready-made models of attitudes and beliefs, relieving him of the trouble of taking an independent stand on certain problems.⁴¹

According to de Tocqueville, the mechanisms of the democratic order described above can lead to its total destruction. Therefore, it must be somehow protected from this danger.⁴² The French philosopher notes that there are certain institutional arrangements inherent in the democratic order that protect it from self-destruction. Among the most important of these are freedom of the press, freedom of custom, freedom of association, the principle of civil disobedience, the right of citizens to take an active part in public life, or the grounding of law in the prevailing morality of a given society. These solutions seem necessary, but they are not sufficient. For there is still the danger of an inappropriate formation of the ethos of a given society, the outbreak of social unrest, and the spread of attitudes dangerous to the democratic order.⁴³

³⁸ See Ref. [24], p. 573–575.

³⁹ See Ref. [24], p. 576–580.

⁴⁰ See Ref. [24], p. 599–603.

⁴¹ See Ref. [24], p. 493–497.

⁴² Very interestingly this observation of the French thinker is described by a contemporary Polish researcher M. Król. He notes that some of the remarks, Tocqueville devotes to democracy seem to anticipate a certain way of thinking about society and democratic institutions that is characteristic of later times. Democracy will be seen as a system for the triumph of mediocrity, the decline of the arts and sciences, and, more generally, the degradation of human nature. The merits of democracy will be at least debatable for many thinkers, while the damage it has done will be undeniable. However, unlike the catastrophic, aristocratic, nihilistic, or extreme conservative critics of democracy, Tocqueville, while recognizing the evils that democracy can produce, does not stop there, but considers how to remedy them in the most permanent (structural - as we would say today) way possible. In other words, Tocqueville is looking for ways to ensure that democracy does not take on a revolutionary character and destroy the values that make human life meaningful. See M. Król, *Historia*, p. 135–136.

⁴³ See M. Król, *Historia*, p. 136–143.

According to de Tocqueville, religion plays a key role in saving democracy from self-destruction.⁴⁴ Only it guarantees the ethos of a given society at an appropriate level. The French thinker does not have a specific form of religion in mind here, but any form of religion, that is, the belief in the existence of a widely understood entity transcending temporal reality. Religion understood in this way protects against violations by citizens of key moral principles that are fundamental to the proper functioning of democracy. These include honesty in relations with other people, respect for them, a peaceful attitude toward people, opposition to selfish attitudes, an awareness of certain obligations to other people, and an appropriate distance from the pursuit of worldly happiness.⁴⁵

De Tocqueville's observations on the dangers of the democratic functioning of the public order are very pertinent. In fact, two opposing tendencies are structurally inscribed in this order: the anarchization of society and the totalization of public space by a single dominant vision of reality. Both threaten the destruction of the system.⁴⁶ Similarly, the French thinker rightly points out that stopping these destructive tendencies is made possible only by an adequate moral level of society. This means that strictly defined values and beliefs must be present in the ethos of a given community.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ It is worth noting here that, according to A. de Tocqueville, ideas of a religious nature have a more or less direct influence on all human activity: "There is hardly any human action, however particular a character be assigned to it, which does not originate in some very general idea men have conceived of the Deity, of his relation to mankind, of the nature of their own souls, and of their duties to their fellow-creatures. Nor can anything prevent these ideas from being the common spring from which everything else emanates." See Ref. [24], p. 503.

⁴⁵ "Men are therefore immeasurably interested in acquiring fixed ideas of God, of the soul, and of their common duties to their Creator and their fellow-men; for doubt on these first principles would abandon all their actions to the impulse of chance, and would condemn them to live, to a certain extent, powerless and undisciplined. (...) The first object and one of the principal advantages of religions is to furnish to each of these fundamental questions a solution which is at once clear, precise, intelligible to the mass of mankind, and lasting. There are religions which are very false and very absurd; but it may be affirmed that any religion which remains within the circle I have just traced, without aspiring to go beyond it (as many religions have attempted to do, for the purpose of enclosing on every side the free progress of the human mind), imposes a salutary restraint on the intellect; and it must be admitted that, if it do not save men in another world, such religion is at least very conducive to their happiness and their greatness in this. This is more especially true of men living in free countries. When the religion of a people is destroyed, doubt gets hold of the highest portions of the intellect, and half paralyzes all the rest of its powers. (...) Such a condition cannot but enervate the soul, relax the springs of the will, and prepare a people for servitude. Nor does it only happen, in such a case, that they allow their freedom to be wrested from them; they frequently themselves surrender it. (...) The greatest advantage of religion is to inspire diametrically contrary principles. There is no religion which does not place the object of man's desires above and beyond the treasures of earth, and which does not naturally raise his soul to regions far above those of the senses. Nor is there any which does not impose on man some sort of duties to his kind, and thus draws him at times from the contemplation of himself. This occurs in religions the most false and dangerous. (...) The chief concern of religions is to purify, to regulate, and to restrain the excessive and exclusive taste for well-being which men feel at periods of equality; but they would err in attempting to control it completely or to eradicate it. They will not succeed in curing men of the love of riches: but they may still persuade men to enrich themselves by none but honest means. (...) Thus it is that, by respecting all democratic tendencies not absolutely contrary to herself, and by making use of several of them for her own purposes, religion sustains an advantageous struggle with that spirit of individual independence which is her most dangerous antagonist." See Ref. [24], p. 503–506, 510–511.

⁴⁶ See, e.g.: Refs. [11, 25–28].

⁴⁷ See, e.g.: Ref. [29], p. 296–305; Ref. [30]; Ref. [31], p. 166–197; Ref. [32], p. 145–147; Ref. [33].

If we place de Tocqueville's analyses against the background of the thoughts of the two philosophers mentioned earlier (Rousseau and. Popper), we can say that they appear much profound, more penetrating and, above all, more accurate. De Tocqueville, analyzing the mechanisms of democracy, precisely pointed out the dangers for democracy itself, which Rousseau obviously failed to notice. First, there is the occupation of the public space by a single vision of reality that is considered correct and desirable by the majority. On the other hand, in contrast to the Austrian thinker, de Tocqueville rightly underscored that if democracy ("open society") is to function well, including serving to build peaceful relations between people, and if we want to save it at all, social space cannot be morally neutral. Leaving this space empty risks destroying democracy itself, something Popper failed to recognize.

The author of *Democracy in America* also rightly observed that religion plays a key role in the formation of an ethos of democratic order that serves peace. But can we agree with the French philosopher that all forms of faith play an equal role? In other words, is each form of religion equally capable of creating and sustaining in a democratic society the appropriate ethos necessary for the duration and proper functioning of a public order that protects human freedom and serves the cause of peace? To answer these questions, it is worth referring to the social reflection of John Paul II.

5. John Paul II: the Christian vision of man in the service of Freedom and Peace

John Paul II dedicated three social encyclicals to the organization of public order: *Laborem Exercens*, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, and *Centesimus Annus*. The first of these documents discusses issues related to human work; the second discusses problems related to the economic, political, and cultural development of human societies; the third presents a vision of a peacefully organized social order based on two foundations: freedom and justice. In all three encyclicals, the Pope refers to the Church's past tradition and tries to re-read it in the light of the current social situation. In the case of what is of particular interest here: John Paul II severely criticizes the organization and mechanisms of the peaceful functioning of the democratic social order. This is because he points out its weaknesses and, at the same time, proposes appropriate steps to be taken to save it in the first place and then to allow its further peaceful development.⁴⁸

According to John Paul II, a profound reflection on the question of human work is the key to understanding all questions related to the problem of the peaceful organization of

⁴⁸ Of course, it must be remembered that the Catholic Church, in its official social doctrine, never proposes specific institutional solutions to be applied in public life. This constructive criticism of democracy by John Paul II therefore means that democracy appears to him as the public order that most fully realizes the Catholic vision of social reality in the present social situation. Michael Novak, a contemporary American thinker, encourages the reader to read the Pope's reflection: "(...) Catholic social thought has slowly but steadily come to embrace the basic institutions of the liberal society, in the economic, the political, and the moral-cultural systems. It is time for that process to become more self-conscious, self-confident, and boldly imaginative. I do not believe that "Catholic social thought should serve the liberal society. On the contrary, I hold that the liberal society, among known and workable present and future societies, best serves Catholic social thought: best uplifts the poor, institutionalizes the dignity of the human person, makes possible the growth and manifold activities of human associations of every sort, and conspires to establish a more voluntary and open and communitarian form of life than any society of the past, present, or foreseeable future." See Ref. [34], p. 38.

social life.⁴⁹ The reflection shows that “work is a fundamental dimension of humankind’s existence on earth.”⁵⁰ This means that, through work, people become more human and develop self-realization in the world.⁵¹ The human being thus appears as the sole subject and direct cause of working.⁵² This last observation is of great significance. It indicates that the criterion for identifying a peacefully organized social order is the treatment of the individual human being by public authorities. In any social order aimed at building peaceful human relations, people must be treated as real subjects of social life, capable of their own free initiative. If, on the other hand, an individual is treated as a small cog in a large mechanism, moved from top to down by some political body, then a given social order will not serve the cause of peace.⁵³ In other words, in a peacefully organized society, the freedom to which each person is entitled is protected first and foremost, and in a society in which human freedom is constantly threatened, the outbreak of unrest is inevitable.⁵⁴

John Paul II, by putting the matter in this way, as presented above, seems on the one hand to support Popper’s project of the “open society” and on the other hand to indicate that the path proposed by Rousseau is completely wrong. In the first case, the individual person is seen as the subject of public life, while, in the second case, this subject is society, and in particular a particular political body representing it. It would seem, therefore, that by making the individual person the subject of social life, the Pope is acknowledging the crucial place of freedom and its priority over equality in the vision of a peacefully organized public system, of which he considers democracy to be a good model for today.⁵⁵

⁴⁹ In *Laborem Exercens*, John Paul II states: “While in the present document we return to this question once more-without however any intention of touching on all the topics that concern it-this is not merely in order to gather together and repeat what is already contained in the Church’s teaching. It is rather in order to highlight-perhaps more than has been done before-the fact that human work is a *key*, probably *the essential key*, to the whole social question, if we try to see that question really from the point of view of man’s good. And if the solution-or rather the gradual solution-of the social question, which keeps coming up and becomes ever more complex, must be sought in the direction of > > making life more human<<, then the key, namely human work, acquires fundamental and decisive importance.” See Ref [35], No. 3.

⁵⁰ See Ref. [35], No. 4.

⁵¹ See Ref. [35], No. 9.

⁵² See Ref. [35], No. 7.

⁵³ In *Laborem exercens*, John Paul II calls this criterion the “personalist argument” (No. 15).

⁵⁴ In *Laborem Exercens* (No. 11–15), the Pope, referring to the communist system that existed in many Eastern European countries at that time, points out that it is a perfect example of an inappropriate organization of society, since in it social life (and especially the economic sphere) is strictly controlled by a certain narrowly limited group of people. This means that, in societies of the communist type, the individual person is objectified, and his freedom is constantly threatened. John Paul II points out that even in so-called “primitive capitalism” human dignity is violated and freedom is destroyed, because in it the concrete human being is treated as a tool for the production of certain goods and is placed on an equal footing with the entire set of material means of production. Nevertheless, according to the Pope, the communist system is more harmful when it comes to violating human freedom. A good illustration of the Pope’s assessment of the harmfulness of the communist system is the observation of F.A. von Hayek, one of the most important representatives of the so-called Austrian School of Economics: “A complete monopoly of employment, such as would exist in a fully socialist state in which the government was the only employer and the owner of all the instruments of production, would possess unlimited powers of coercion. As Leon Trotsky discovered: *In a country where the sole employer is the State, opposition means death by slow starvation. The old principle, who does not work shall not eat, has been replaced by a new one: who does not obey shall not eat.*” See Ref. [36], p. 137.

⁵⁵ See Ref. [34], p. 238.

By making man the subject of social life, John Paul II also seems to invite representatives of different ideological traditions to work together toward the achievement of a common goal. This is to work for the good of the concrete person and for the peaceful organization of human relations. According to the Pope, only if a broad consensus is formed among all the groups that make up a given community around this goal can they succeed in building a peacefully functioning public order.⁵⁶ In this way, the reflection of John Paul II seems very close to the reflections of de Tocqueville. Both underscore that the public sphere in a peacefully functioning democracy cannot be morally empty but must have a well-defined content. It is shaped above all by obligations such as honesty toward others, respect for their inherent human dignity, openness to those in need (especially the weak and the poor), or an appropriate distance from material goods.⁵⁷

According to John Paul II, if this space remains morally empty or is filled with inappropriate content, the peaceful functioning of democracy will be constantly threatened.⁵⁸ This follows from the fact that the mechanisms of functioning of democracy alone⁵⁹ will gradually lead to increasing spiritual underdevelopment of society.⁶⁰ This means that it is impossible to build a peacefully functioning social

⁵⁶ See Ref. [37], p. 303.

⁵⁷ John Paul II lists these and similar moral obligations and discusses, among other things, the moral basis for a peaceful economic life. See Ref. [38], No. 32.

⁵⁸ In the light of the encyclical *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, it can be said that the obstacles to the peaceful development of human societies are primarily of a moral nature. The Pope attaches much less importance to various difficulties of an economic and political nature. See Ref. [39], p. 315.

⁵⁹ The point is that the democratic functioning of the social order as such creates a climate conducive to the spread of wrong attitudes. To use the Pope's language, one would have to say that democracy as such (not only, of course, and not even primarily) favors the perpetuation in society of the so-called *structures of sin* from which the "two are very typical: on the one hand, the all-consuming desire for profit, and on the other, the thirst for power, with the intention of imposing one's will upon others." See Ref. [40], No. 37.

⁶⁰ John Paul II, in *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, mentions the dangers of excessive material development in addition to the drama of underdevelopment (especially economic) of many human societies. Particularly noteworthy, according to the Pope, is the peculiar spiritual underdevelopment of many societies that accompanies their excessive economic development. In the aforementioned encyclical, the Pope states: "A disconcerting conclusion about the most recent period should serve to enlighten us: side-by-side with the miseries of underdevelopment, themselves unacceptable, we find ourselves up against a form of super-development, equally inadmissible. Because like the former it is contrary to what is good and to true happiness. This super-development, which consists in an excessive availability of every kind of material goods for the benefit of certain social groups, easily makes people slaves of *possession* and of immediate gratification, with no other horizon than the multiplication or continual replacement of the things already owned with others still better. This is the so-called civilization of *consumption* or *consumerism*, which involves so much *throwing-away* and *waste*. An object already owned but now superseded by something better is discarded, with no thought of its possible lasting value, nor of some other human being who is poorer. All of us experience firsthand the sad effects of this blind submission to pure consumerism: in the first place a crass materialism, and at the same time a radical dissatisfaction, because one quickly learns - unless one is shielded from the flood of publicity and the ceaseless and tempting offers of products - that the more one possesses the more one wants, while deeper aspirations remain unsatisfied and perhaps even stifled. (...) The evil does not consist in *having* as such, but in possessing without regard for the quality and the ordered hierarchy of the goods one has. Quality and hierarchy arise from the subordination of goods and their availability to man's *being* and his true vocation." See Ref. [40], No. 28.

order unless it is based on a properly ordered and well-defined hierarchy of goods and values.⁶¹ According to the Pope, the key role in the formation of this hierarchy in the consciousness of society is played by religion,⁶² and in particular by Christianity.⁶³

In this way, John Paul II added the reflections of de Tocqueville. The French thinker posited that every form of religion serves equally to maintain the ethos necessary for the peaceful functioning of the democratic order in society. Rousseau did not, however, privilege Christianity in this regard. The Pope, on the other hand, while not denying the importance of various forms of religion, clearly indicates that the Christian vision of reality coincides with the moral ideas underlying the order which guarantees human freedom and serves the cause of peace.⁶⁴

As repeatedly emphasized, throughout this chapter, the ideological foundation of this order is the belief that individuals are by nature free beings. Inseparable from this

⁶¹ “The intrinsic connection between authentic development and respect for human rights once again reveals the moral character of development: the true elevation of man, in conformity with the natural and historical vocation of each individual, is not attained only by exploiting the abundance of goods and services, or by having available perfect infrastructures. When individuals and communities do not see a rigorous respect for the moral, cultural and spiritual requirements, based on the dignity of the person and on the proper identity of each community, beginning with the family and religious societies, then all the rest - availability of goods, abundance of technical resources applied to daily life, a certain level of material well-being - will prove unsatisfying and in the end contemptible.” See Ref. [40], No. 33.

⁶² “Solidarity helps us to see the *other*-whether a person, people or nation-not just as some kind of instrument, with a work capacity and physical strength to be exploited at low cost and then discarded when no longer useful, but as our *neighbor*, a *helper* (cf. Gen 2:18–20), to be made a sharer, on a par with ourselves, in the banquet of life to which all are equally invited by God. Hence the importance of reawakening the religious awareness of individuals and peoples. (...) Development that does not include the cultural, transcendent, and religious dimensions of man and society, to the extent that it does not recognize the existence of such dimensions and does not endeavor to direct its goals and priorities toward the same, is even less conducive to authentic liberation.” See Ref. [40], No. 39, 46.

⁶³ In *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, the Pope makes clear the unique responsibility of Christians for the peaceful development and functioning of human communities: “I wish to appeal with simplicity and humility to everyone, to all men and women without exception. I wish to ask them to be convinced of the seriousness of the present moment and of each one’s individual responsibility, and to implement - by the way they live as individuals and as families, by the use of their resources, by their civic activity, by contributing to economic and political decisions and by personal commitment to national and international undertakings - the measures inspired by solidarity and love of preference for the poor. This is what is demanded by the present moment and above all by the very dignity of the human person, the indestructible image of God the Creator, which is identical in each one of us. In this commitment, the sons and daughters of the Church must serve as examples and guides, for they are called upon, in conformity with the program announced by Jesus himself in the synagogue at Nazareth, *to preach good news to the poor...to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord* (Lk 4:18–19). It is appropriate to emphasize the preeminent role that belongs to the laity (...). It is their task to animate temporal realities with Christian commitment, by which they show that they are witnesses and agents of peace and justice. I wish to address especially those who, through the sacrament of Baptism and the profession of the same Creed, share a real, though imperfect, communion with us.” See Ref. [40], No. 47.

⁶⁴ See Ref. [34], p. 236–254.

conviction is the idea of human beings as a subject who is by nature capable of doing both good and evil indiscriminately. According to John Paul II, these two truths are not only deeply rooted in the Christian vision of humanity but also allow for a proper understanding of the human situation in the world and point in the direction where attempts to build human communities should be directed.⁶⁵ The point is that any social system that ignores these truths is doomed to failure. The disregard of human freedom and the disregard of man's ability to do both good and evil, sooner or later, leads to the decomposition of a given order and destroys social peace. This decomposition and the destruction of peace are thus more or less a direct consequence of the attempt to build a social system whose ideological foundations are incompatible with the ontic condition of man.⁶⁶

The above observations have, according to John Paul II, three extremely important consequences. The first is that the purpose of any criticism of malfunctioning democratic social orders (and not only theirs) should be not so much to point out some institutional solutions that should be introduced so that the given system begins to function better, but rather to find the erroneous ideological foundations behind certain solutions. Second, any attempt to repair a malfunctioning democracy should begin, first and foremost, by properly shaping the ethos of a given society. This can be achieved by helping parents to raise their children properly and by implementing certain socio-educational projects (e.g., in schools and foundations).⁶⁷ Thirdly, the greater the influence of Christian revelation on the moral attitudes of

⁶⁵ See Ref. [41].

⁶⁶ "Nevertheless, it cannot be forgotten that the manner in which the individual exercises his freedom is conditioned in innumerable ways. While these certainly have an influence on freedom, they do not determine it; they make the exercise of freedom more difficult or less difficult, but they cannot destroy it. Not only is it wrong from the ethical point of view to disregard human nature, which is made for freedom, but in practice it is impossible to do so. Where society is so organized as to reduce arbitrarily or even suppress the sphere in which freedom is legitimately exercised, the result is that the life of society becomes progressively disorganized and goes into decline. Moreover, man, who was created for freedom, bears within himself the wound of original sin, which constantly draws him toward evil and puts him in need of redemption. Not only is this doctrine an integral part of Christian revelation; it also has great hermeneutical value insofar as it helps one to understand human reality. Man tends toward good, but he is also capable of evil. (...) The social order will be all the more stable, the more it takes this fact (...)." See Ref. [38], No. 25.

⁶⁷ John Paul II, in *Centesimus Annus*, referring to the general crisis of the family in the modern world and the spread of consumerist attitudes, especially in capitalist countries, says: "These criticisms are directed not so much against an economic system as against an ethical and cultural system. The economy in fact is only one aspect and one dimension of the whole of human activity. If economic life is absolutized, if the production and consumption of goods become the centre of social life and society's only value, not subject to any other value, the reason is to be found not so much in the economic system itself as in the fact that the entire socio-cultural system, by ignoring the ethical and religious dimension, has been weakened, and ends by limiting itself to the production of goods and services alone." See Ref. [8], No. 39.

society, the more properly the democratic order will function in it and the more it will serve the cause of peace.⁶⁸

The last of these consequences is particularly interesting. In its light, the obligation that the Pope imposes on Christians today becomes extremely clear. According to the Pope, it is not the task of Christians to support specific institutional solutions in public life. However, given the deep connection between the Christian vision of reality and the moral ideas underlying democracy, it can be said, according to John Paul II, that the future of democracy and its further peaceful development depend directly on Christianity. The Pope emphasizes that, without the participation of Christians in the construction of the proper ethos of the societies in question, the continued existence of democratic regimes is in jeopardy. Thus, world peace is threatened. The passivity of Christians in this regard threatens the very destruction of democratic orders and consequently the proper protection of human freedom and social peace. The point is that no other religion (e.g., Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism) has the ideological potential to serve the cause of democratizing societies and building world peace as well as Christianity.⁶⁹

The fulfillment by Christians of this papal commitment seems necessary because of a rather paradoxical structural characteristic of the democratic order and its effects, which can already be observed quite well today. A democratic state cannot guarantee, in itself, the ethical foundation upon which it rests. Perhaps, expressing this differently for clarity's sake, the democratic order can only exist because the freedom it guarantees to its citizens is largely regulated from within by the citizens themselves,

⁶⁸ "Authentic democracy is possible only (...) based on a correct conception of the human person. It requires that the necessary conditions be present for the advancement both of the individual through education and formation in true ideals, and of the *subjectivity* of society through the creation of structures of participation and shared responsibility. Nowadays there is a tendency to claim that agnosticism and skeptical relativism are the philosophy and the basic attitude which correspond to democratic forms of political life. Those who are convinced that they know the truth and firmly adhere to it are considered unreliable from a democratic point of view, since they do not accept that truth is determined by the majority, or that it is subject to variation according to different political trends. It must be observed in this regard that if there is no ultimate truth to guide and direct political activity, then ideas and convictions can easily be manipulated for reasons of power. As history demonstrates, a democracy without values easily turns into open or thinly disguised totalitarianism. Nor does the Church close her eyes to the danger of fanaticism or fundamentalism among those who, in the name of an ideology which purports to be scientific or religious, claim the right to impose on others their own concept of what is true and good. Christian truth is not of this kind. (...) Furthermore, in constantly reaffirming the transcendent dignity of the person, the Church's method is always that of respect for freedom. (...) The Christian upholds freedom and serves it, constantly offering to others the truth which he has known (cf. Jn 8:31–32), in accordance with the missionary nature of his vocation. While paying heed to every fragment of truth which he encounters in the life experience and in the culture of individuals and of nations, he will not fail to affirm in dialog with others all that his faith and the correct use of reason have enabled him to understand." See Ref. [38], No. 46.

⁶⁹ J. Życiński, a contemporary commentator on the thought of John Paul II, notes that from the perspective of the positive assessment of liberalism presented in *Centesimus Annus*, one should not expect the Church to extol the charms of this system. While accepting the general principle of the inviolability of human freedom, the Church cannot avoid specific questions about the inevitable limitations of values that occur at the level of the economy, culture, and ethics. See Ref. [42], p. 67.

guided by certain moral principles. At the same time, conversely, a democratic state cannot enforce compliance with certain moral rules and prohibitions by means of authoritarian coercion. Were the state to do so, it would be tantamount to making totalitarian claims that are completely contrary to the spirit of democracy. It is this paradoxical feature of the democratic order that is largely responsible for the gradual weakening of democratic societies. This is because democratic societies increasingly reject or deny the moral principles that form the ideological foundation of democracy. The process of this disappearance began around the time of the enlightenment. At that time, societies that were building democracy through the secularization of public life were cut off from the spiritual layers that animate the proper ethos of democracy and which the democratic state cannot (because it cannot) reproduce with the instruments at its disposal.⁷⁰ Thus, with the passage of time, the link between the actual ethos of a given society and the Christian vision of reality gradually weakened. In turn, the fragility of this connection, as based on John Paul II's reflections, means that the future of democracy and its peaceful development in a given society are at risk. Therefore, to re-establish this link, as it were, Christians should actively participate in shaping the ethos of the societies in which they currently live.⁷¹

The essence of the Pope's idea of democratic public order outlined above is the assertion that this order, to function peacefully, requires an appropriate ethos that is close to Christian revelation and, in principle, one might even say grows out of it. Thus, the space of public life cannot be morally empty (as Popper desired), nor can it be filled with morally inadequate content (as Rousseau, among others, proposed). In both cases, the peaceful functioning of democracy in each society is threatened. Therefore, John Paul II obliges Christians to actively participate in the construction of an appropriate ethos in democratic societies. After all, Christianity seems to be uniquely predestined to create and constantly renew this ethos in given societies (something that de Tocqueville failed to observe).

⁷⁰ See E. Böckenförde, *Wolność*, p. 99–121.

⁷¹ The question of the relationship between Christian revelation and the moral foundation of democracy is analyzed by M. Novak in a very interesting and original way. It seems that his thoughts have had an enormous influence on the thought of John Paul II. In fact, there is a striking similarity between the two concepts, and the American thinker's reflections precede those of the Pope in time. This similarity is not accidental. As is well known, M. Novak was a papal advisor at the time when John Paul II wrote the encyclical *Centesimus annus*. In the context of the relationship between the Christian understanding of reality and the moral foundations of democracy, and in view of the declining influence of Christianity on the actual ethos of democratic societies, the following statement by the American author is very interesting: "(...) *the moral-cultural system is the chief dynamic force behind the rise both of a democratic political system and of a liberal economic system*. The moral-cultural system is the *sine qua non* of the political system and economic system. Neglect of it bodes ill. One result of this curious neglect of the moral-cultural resources of our own system is the abandonment of the exposition of these systems to social scientists and technicians. Yet such experts are barred by their disciplines from the very sorts of moral inquiry most required. The second result is that this system makes no moral presentation of itself to the word. It discusses itself, and allows itself to be discussed, in sheerly material and procedural terms. (...) A third result is that morale is lowered in the West. Human beings do not live by bread alone. They must believe their political and economic activities have moral significance. Their stamina, their perseverance in difficulties, their sense of well-being and purpose—all these depend on the strength of the moral-cultural system in which they participate. (...) Democratic capitalism is more likely to perish through its loss of its indispensable ideas and morals than through weaknesses in its political system and economic system. In its moral-cultural system lies its weakest link." See Ref. [43], p. 185–186.

6. Conclusion

The initial hypothesis advanced the observation that the authors of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, in its first article, expressed the conviction that freedom takes precedence over equality, and as the research revealed during the analysis, they were quite right. This means that a peacefully established public order should, first and foremost, protect the inherent freedom of all people and only secondarily ensure equality, regardless of how it is understood. Any attempt to reverse this order, as was the case, for example, with Rousseau's project, in the near or distant future, threatens the loss of personal freedom for a significant part of the members of the order in question and endangers social peace. Therefore, we must agree with Popper, who claims that the basis of a peacefully organized society is respect for the freedom of all its members. Consequently, democracy should be considered as the general model of a peacefully organized public order today. However, the Austrian thinker erroneously postulated that this respect is tantamount to leaving the space of public life in a democracy morally empty. In a democratic order, in which citizens have no general moral guidelines on which to base their specific choices, certain processes occur that threaten the destruction of the system and the outbreak of social unrest. De Tocqueville, recognizing this danger, indicated that democracy needs the religious consciousness of its citizens to function peacefully. Thus, only in a religious society is it possible to maintain an appropriate ethos that guarantees the peaceful functioning and development of democracy. John Paul II, expanding upon the reflections of de Tocqueville, noted that the ethos of democracy not only coincides with the Christian vision of reality but also even grows directly out of it. On this basis, the Pope imposed certain obligations on modern Christians, pointing out that the future and further peaceful development of democracy directly depend on their fulfillment.

In the light of these considerations, it can be said that

1. A condition for peace is that people respect each other's freedom. This means that in order to guarantee peace, it is necessary to secure a "space" for people to exercise their own freedom sufficiently so as not to violate the freedom of others.
2. The future of democracy, and therefore the effectiveness of the protection of human freedom and social peace, depends directly on the active presence of Christians in the public life of the communities concerned.
3. Christians, through their educational and social activities which promote Christian values in particular societies, will contribute to the renewal of the ethos of faith in these societies which guarantees the peaceful functioning and development of democracy.
4. Of course, it should not be forgotten that this is not the most important task that Christians have to carry out, nor should the danger of their peculiar appropriation of public life be underestimated. Nevertheless, in the light of the above analyses, any attempt to exclude the Christian vision of man from the moral space of modern democracy must be considered completely flawed as this threatens its complete destruction and destroys the chance of preserving peaceful relations between human beings.

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Perspective Chapter: A Difficult Peace

James Rowe

Abstract

The unprecedented destruction, human suffering, and advances in weapons technology that occurred during World War II spawned an intense push by the international community to create global peace. To create lasting peace, the international community adopted liberal peacebuilding, which includes “the promotion of democracy, market-based economic reforms, and a range of other institutions associated with ‘modern’ states...” The theory supporting liberal peacebuilding is the democratic peace theory, which posits that democracies do not go to war against each other. While there is some support for the democratic peace theory, there also exist strong arguments against it. This chapter will argue that war-averting agreements among countries are only possible when the issue(s) involved are not of significance to at least one party; otherwise, diplomatic negotiations are most likely to fail, and armed conflict is often the end result. This is because critical issues are more akin to zero-sum games than other issues. One side’s gain is another side’s loss when the issue is one in which all parties consider it not negotiable.

Keywords: democratic peace theory, liberal peacebuilding, market-based economic reforms, liberal institutions, critical issues

1. Introduction

If one ever watches an awards show or a beauty pageant, it is almost a given that the term global peace or world peace will be invoked at some point during those events. Leaders from the world’s most powerful countries regularly discuss peace. International organizations such as the United Nations, International Monetary Fund, and World Bank were created in the name of peace. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) seemingly develop overnight to address some components of the various security challenges facing the world at any given time. Yet, despite all these efforts, peace eludes the world, wars continue to rage, and sensitive issues that carry the prospects of war exist in every nook and cranny the world has to offer.

If a majority of countries in the global community are in favor of global peace, then why have not they succeeded in creating the conditions for global peace? Why does global peace seem unattainable? Why do so many people snicker at the mention of world peace (if you have ever watched the Oscars with a friend, you will understand what I am referring to)? There is a simple and familiar answer to this question: irreconcilable differences. Irreconcilable differences occur when a specific issue is of great importance

to all concerned parties. If you have ever been engaged in an argument with your spouse, sibling(s), parent(s), or neighbor(s), this should sound familiar. When an irreconcilable difference exists, no amount of discussion or pleading is going to produce an outcome that is acceptable to all parties. This same phenomenon plays out on the world stage, and it is the reason wars still occur and will continue to occur for as long as human society exists despite humanity's best efforts to the contrary.

Another factor making it impossible to settle certain disputes is the lack of an enforcement mechanism. During the Cold War, the United States or the Soviet Union enforced international rules, whether they be those of the communist block or those of the Western democracies, using military force if needed. Examples include Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan, and the uprisings in Eastern Bloc countries such as Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Modern-day ad hoc alliances (discussed in the next section) of states, international organizations, NGOs, private sector enterprises, and wealthy individuals do not possess the power to enforce negotiated agreements, international law, international customs, or superimposed rules on warring parties. As a result, security challenges go unabated for long periods, and they often spill over into neighboring countries in a conflagration of the conflict, creating an even greater obstacle to global peace [1].

Even non-state actors that possess an enforcement mechanism have failed to create peace in the absence of armed conflict. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is the primary example of such an actor. NATO is a political and military alliance that spreads democratic values and works towards the peaceful resolution of disputes [2]. Under Article 5 of its founding charter, NATO is authorized to undertake military operations to prevent warfare or facilitate peaceful resolutions of disputes that have already resulted in active combat [2]. NATO's record of preventing the outbreak of hostilities is, like its international partners, underwhelming. Some of the most recent examples include the Balkans Wars in the 1990s that witnessed the most egregious war crimes since World War II, the terrorist attacks on the United States and the subsequent failed campaign in Afghanistan, and NATO's inaction involving the war between Russia and Ukraine.

The issue with non-state actors such as the U.N., the World Bank, the IMF, and NATO has not been studied in a comprehensive manner. It is commonly accepted that international organizations have to incorporate the vested interests of the states that created them, as well as the fact that international organizations do not always support the state actors in a conflict, but rather the splinter factions and groups that are in direct conflict with the state. All of that is true. What is also true, and requires more research, is that many international organizations develop their own independent authorities and power through the widely accepted process of custom building [3]. International organizations develop this independent power via the legal authorities that were granted to them by the creator states [3]. In the process of carrying out their missions, international organizations create rules, definitions, and processes that, after a period of time, become international customs law [3]. This is a legitimate practice in the international arena, but it leads international organizations to develop authorities and powers that are independent of their creators and supervisors, the nation-states.

2. International relations theories review

International relations is a subject that has been studied since the nation-state was born with the 1648 Treaties of Osnabrück and Münster. Known as the Peace of

Westphalia. Researchers have long since established scholarship describing different theories of international relations and continue to argue to this day which theory best describes the international environment. The theories scholars have developed all subscribe to the democratic peace theory, which states that democracies do not go to war with other democracies [1]. Several reasons are used to buttress the democratic peace theory, and they all support the overarching idea that democracies share characteristics that make it injurious to go to war with other democracies.

The most prominent of those characteristics include: (1) democracies are characterized by common political norms that reject conflict and coercion as legitimate measures to accomplish their foreign policy goals; (2) democracies are composed of governing institutions that owe their authority to their citizens, and those citizens will be reluctant to go to war due to the sacrifices and costs associated with war; and (3) democracies engage in free trade through bilateral or multilateral trade agreements, and war with other democracies would disrupt their economies [4].

The democratic peace theory is not without its detractors. Disagreement exists among scholars as to whether democracies are less prone to wage war [4]. Scholars have put forward the following arguments to answer that question: (1) democracies are more peaceful overall; (2) democracies are equally as likely to conduct war as other forms of government; and (3) democracies are more likely than other forms of government to wage war [4]. Opponents of the democratic peace theory can point to examples of democracies fighting each other, such as the War of 1812 between the United States and the United Kingdom, the United States Civil War, the Spanish-American War, and the 1948 and 1967 wars between Israel and Lebanon [4]. Furthermore, Ripsman argues that relations are intense and ripe for conflict between democratic and authoritarian states because authoritarian states claim their authority by coercing their citizenries rather than by gaining their trust and consent [4].

The most prominent theories of international relations support both conflicting views of democracies, the view that they are more peaceful than other forms of government and the view that they are not. There are various subvariants of these theories, but the three theories presented below provide the broadest description of modern thought on international relations theory.

First, realism argues that human beings are instinctually violent, and states reflect this violent nature [5]. Realism argues that self-interested states continuously compete for power and security [6]. It maintains that states are the main actors, and they use economic and military power to pursue their self-interests [6]. Second, liberalism provides that concern for power is trumped by economic and political interests, especially a desire for prosperity and commitment to liberal values [6]. Finally, constructivism posits that states' actions are influenced by elites' beliefs, collective norms, and social identities. The key actors in constructivism are the individual citizens, and their methods of influence are ideas and discourse [6].

3. The players

Contemporary views of global peace require parties to investigate and respond to a more diverse set of issues than in the past, including traditional security threats such as civil wars, failed states, failing states, and regional conflicts as well as new threats, including organized crime, piracy, kidnappings, arms trading, narcotics trafficking, human migration, conflict-related commodity rents, and human rights abuses [1, 7]. Add to that the ever-present issue of terrorism, which has dominated

the international security agenda since the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon on September 11, 2001, and one can easily see the diverse, differentiated, and fragmented set of challenges facing today's world [7].

The challenge of creating sustainable peace has never been more difficult. The international security regime faces the quid pro quo of trading effectiveness for legitimacy and vice-versa [1]. In response to this tradeoff, new international alliances, created from the aforementioned list of players, and methods for addressing security threats have developed [1]. Many of these alliances have formed on an ad hoc basis, including in those peacebuilding efforts headed by sovereign nation-states.

3.1 The mediators

To effectively respond to such a diverse list of international security challenges, contemporary liberal peacebuilding has transformed from a state-centric strategy dominated by the United States and the Soviet Union to a multifaceted and multi-lateral approach that includes many different players including states, international organizations, nongovernmental organizations, private businesses, and even wealthy individuals. These different players tend to form informal teams on an ad hoc basis as crises arise around the globe, and they are involved in all facets of the peacebuilding process including security assistance, economic development, humanitarian assistance, governance, and the rule of law [1, 7]. The active participation of these new parties in the international peace process is a positive development because they bring a diverse set of expertise that may not exist in the governments of nation-states.

3.2 The disputing parties

Parties to international disputes have changed in their character in the past 30 years. It is no longer the case that disputing parties are exclusively sovereign nation-states. Contemporary disputes can involve nation-states, criminal networks, pirates, drug cartels, human trafficking networks, terrorist organizations, local belligerents, illegal immigrants, shadow governments, and illegitimate ruling parties. These are the most common groups with which the international community must deal if they are to achieve global peace [1].

This new group of belligerents is unique and dangerous to global peace due to their ability to either cross borders themselves or facilitate the spread of conflicts to other states and regions. Additionally, responding to this new set of belligerents is challenging because they often operate underground, whereas nation-states are easy to locate and identify. The ability of these belligerents to operate outside of the public eye makes responding to them extremely difficult and makes the outlook for global peace less likely than when the sole threats were from other nation-states.

3.3 The process

The contemporary process of creating and sustaining global peace is vastly different than the multipolar, superpower state-led process that was commonplace during the Cold War. The new process, dominated by the aforementioned ad hoc teams of diverse entities, has been termed "collective conflict management" in much of the current peace literature [1]. Collective conflict management experienced its beginnings before the conclusion of the Cold War as Mikhail Gorbachev worked to liberalize the Soviet Union's economy with his policies of glasnost and perestroika [1].

The parties that implement collective conflict management have done so without upending the rules and customs of the established international order [1].

While the global peacekeeping parties have ensured their actions are in accordance with international rules and customs, this may not be sustainable. As previously mentioned, the security challenges have evolved into elements that are mobile, hard to detect, and effective at bringing what may have started as a local conflict to other locales, states, and regions. Whether it be via the establishment of new customs or the creation of new international laws and rules, at some point peacemakers will be forced to adopt new strategies and tactics.

4. Global peace is an unrealistic goal

The conclusion of World War II initiated a new phase in international relations and peace promotion known as liberal peacebuilding. Liberal peacebuilding is a process predicated on the democratic peace theory that includes a variety of policies that are supposed to promote and spread peace in areas with ongoing conflicts. Policies that fall under the liberal peacebuilding umbrella include “supporting ceasefires and peace processes; demobilizing and disarming former combatants; reintegrating former combatants into society; stabilizing the economy; employment creation; economic development; repatriating (or resettling) refugees and internally displaced persons; responding to food insecurity; responding to acute health concerns; strengthening law and order; promoting and facilitating democratic practices; strengthening institutions of justice and legislation; resuming and strengthening public service delivery; promoting human rights; promoting reconciliation; addressing land reform claims; and drafting constitutions and amendments” [7].

Liberal peacebuilding is a cause that is worthy of the international community’s investment. The different elements of the liberal peacebuilding process are, however, not accepted in all societies [7]. Certain liberal peacebuilding elements such as liberal democracy, liberal human rights, market values, the integration of societies into the global economy, and the centralized secular state are broadly accepted in the West due to the presence of secular societies and the acceptance of the values associated with democracy, but certain of these values may not exist in countries whose main identity is their religion and countries that have been ruled by authoritarian governments for extended periods [7].

4.1 Public opinion

The widely held assumption about conflicts is that they are started by aggressive leaders, while, in reality, states’ citizens often push their leaders to engage in such conflicts [4]. While populaces in mature democracies are initially hesitant to become involved in conflicts, they can be provoked. When they are provoked, most of the evidence available regarding past wars demonstrates the existence of demanding publics that often will not settle for less than unconditional surrender and harsh peace agreements with former combatants [4]. According to Ripsman, public opinion in established democratic states tends to harden during times of war. While he does not supply reasons for this reaction, there are some obvious reasons why democratic populaces respond in such a harsh manner.

First, democratic populaces have access to information, whether it be through free media or online platforms that increasingly provide news content to their subscribers.

Second, democratic populaces have more freedom to express and exchange information among their families, friends, neighbors, coworkers, and other affiliates. Third, leaders in democratic populaces are expected to provide transparency, honest assessments, and updates on the states of the countries that they govern. Fourth, in many cases, established democracies and their populaces are wealthier than countries and populaces that possess other forms of government (exceptions include Qatar, Singapore, and the United Arab Emirates) [8]. As a result of this wealth, populaces in these states have access to technology where they can find information about current events. All of these reasons have to do with information. It is information that hardens opinions in democratic states.

4.2 Social factors

States, regions, and locales that are either involved in an ongoing security crisis or have recently emerged from a security crisis often have a significant amount of built-up social tension that can undermine the prospects for peace and cause a state to regress back into conflict [7]. Conflicts can be caused by social strife or worsened by deteriorating social conditions as a result of a conflict [7]. One of the greatest risks that peacemakers face when intervening in a conflict is the potential for corruption to favor certain social groups at the expense of others, thus worsening social relations and risking a return to or an intensification of a previous conflict [7].

Social relations are sensitive issues states, regardless of their form of government (witness the change in the current Chinese government's focus on the private sector, an issue that has not been at the top of Chinese President Xi Jinping's list of priorities until now). States marred by conflicts are particularly ripe for social injustices, and international peacemakers have to ensure that a special emphasis is placed on treating all social groups within states in a fair and equitable manner to reduce social tensions. Doing so, however, is easier said than done. Whether international peacebuilders take a top-down or bottom-up approach, the prospects of corruption and social injustice are always probable. Ensuring the broadest possible participation in the peace process is a critical imperative to ensure the creation of a sustainable peace.

4.3 Cultural factors

Many contemporary hotspots are multicultural in nature. One recent example where the outcome of peacebuilding is still to be determined is Iraq. Iraq is divided along three different sectarian and ethnic lines, including Shia Arabs, Sunni Arabs, and Kurds [7]. These three groups have historically been hostile towards each other. The presence of an authoritarian leader in Saddam Hussein is the only reason that Iraq did not disband into three separate regions, each dominated by one of the three groups.

Even though the presence of an authoritarian leader prevented the breakup of Iraq, Saddam Hussein's actions, including the gassing of his own people, created tensions that simmered until Hussein's regime was toppled when those tensions were allowed to boil over. Iraq is still in the very early stages of a democracy created with the influence of the United States. Whether the country can overcome its differences and integrate its diverse population is still to be determined. Doing so will require compromise and understanding on the part of the Shia Arabs, Sunni Arabs, Kurds, and international peacebuilders; unfortunately, such a compromise may be an example of an irreconcilable difference, making agreement without conflict unlikely.

4.4 Historical factors

The end of World War II brought great change to the global scene. The center of power moved from the European continent to the United States in the West and the Soviet Union in the East [9]. The destruction wrought by the fighting in Europe left the former powers including the United Kingdom, France, and Germany in tatters, without the resources to rebuild or provide for their populations. Most important for global peace, the end of World War II marked the end of colonialism as the European powers could no longer afford to maintain their vast empires [9]. As a result, the European powers' former colonies obtained independence almost overnight in a geopolitical sense [9].

With former colonies being given the gift of self-determination, global peace became subject to the ability of those former colonies to integrate disparate communities and unify them into governable nation-states [9]. Given the fact that the former European colonizers had drawn boundaries without concern for the ethnic, racial, religious, or cultural makeup of the different communities within those boundaries, an atmosphere conducive to conflict was created. For example, pre-colonial Africa had been divided up into different tribes. The European colonizers did not consider the tribal nature of Africa when they divided up the continent [9]. In the Middle East, Iraq is a prime example of the haphazard way colonies were created. The United Kingdom created borders for Iraq that incorporated three communities of people that were diametrically opposed to each other, including Shia Arabs, Sunni Arabs, and Kurds [10]. Another example, which is described later in the text, was the creation of Israel on land that had been administered under the British Mandate for Palestine until 1948, resulting in a population composed of both Muslim and Jewish communities who each considered the land on which Israel was created to be their own [11].

Conflict in Africa, Iraq, Israel, and other former colonies was tamed in colonies that transitioned to authoritarian states after gaining independence. Not until the fall of the Soviet Union did some of these states begin to democratize and open deep divisions that were present within their populations. That watershed moment created the conditions that are conducive to world peace in the long run, but fertile for conflict in the short term. For example, in South Africa, apartheid deeply divided the former British colony and ensured that the majority of the native population lived a life of poverty during the policy and created the conditions for retribution after the policy was ended. In Iraq, the United States removed the former authoritarian leader, Saddam Hussein, from power and created a power vacuum, which they spent the better part of two decades trying to fill. Iraq is experiencing a tenuous success at the moment, but only time will tell whether the country is able to successfully integrate its Shia Arab, Sunni Arab, and Kurdish populations. Finally, Israel will be discussed later in this paper, but they are engaged in an ongoing struggle with organizations such as the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and Iranian-backed Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiya, commonly referred to as Hamas, for the right to occupy the land that was granted to Israel by the United Kingdom after World War II and the Holocaust. The Palestinians and the Israelis have suffered through an intermittent hot war with unmeasurable suffering as a result of the irreconcilable differences in the form of land.

4.5 Political factors

This chapter has presented the arguments and justifications for the democratic peace theory, and the idea that democracies do not go to war with other democracies

for a variety of reasons including trade relations, common political beliefs, and populaces that are naturally inclined to avoid the hardships of war. The merits of the democratic peace theory have been debated and will continue to be debated in the future, but there is another side to the story of democracy and how it creates peace among nations.

While fully developed and functioning democracies may claim that established democracies are peaceful towards other established democracies and settle conflict in a civilized way, countries with newly established, young democracies and quasi-democracies are described as being ripe for conflict, including war [12]. Gat argues that the lack of a fully developed economy and the need for social modernization create fertile conditions for conflict [12]. Additionally, Gat argues that the democratization process creates the conditions for conflict because it releases ethnic tensions and nationalist aspirations that were previously suppressed by authoritarian governments [12].

Historical evidence supports Gat's hypothesis. The United States and Great Britain engaged in the War of 1812 when both countries were developing democracies. While Great Britain possessed what was then considered an advanced economy, the United States did not. A second example was the Falklands War, a short war between the United Kingdom and Argentina over control of the Falkland Islands. Argentina was a quasi-democracy that was characterized by significant instability. Afghanistan represents a young democracy installed by the United States that engaged in brutal infighting and, ultimately, a failed democracy. Finally, Yugoslavia is the most brutal example of a country whose democratization led to the release of ethnic tensions and nationalist feelings. Yugoslavia broke up into multiple republics, but not before a bloody civil war ensued that included numerous war crimes, including genocide on a scale unseen since World War II.

Modern history has witnessed unprecedented peace among the world's most developed and functional democracies. This peace does not mean democracies never fight each other, as some interpretations of the democratic peace theory portray. In fact, democracies can be one of the most conflictual forms of government when they are in developmental stages without a mature economy, liberal democratic institutions, and advanced social relations.

4.6 Lack of local ownership

According to Newman, a major contributor to the perceived lack of credibility of peacebuilding efforts, including economic development and liberal governing institutions, is the lack of "local ownership" [7]. Western peacebuilding efforts have often relied on local leaders and "power brokers" regardless of the legitimacy or lack thereof of those leaders and "power brokers" [7]. Newman stipulates that the success of liberal peacebuilding efforts requires "local ownership," better understood as a "bottom-up, community peacebuilding" approach [7].

Implementing a peace-building process centered around power centers often results in an incomplete understanding about the causes of conflict [7]. Society's power sources may not be fully transparent because it is in their interests to frame a problem in such a way as to keep them in power. Members of the local community are more apt to provide an uncensored narrative of the issues affecting their lives.

Another issue that Newman does not cover is the need for local support in order to carry out liberal peacekeeping efforts. Experience has shown that relying on the centers of power very often leads to corruption and wasted resources. Relying on

the local populace to implement a peace plan, assist with distributing resources, and provide important intelligence is likely to result in more success than relying on the centers of power.

4.7 Education

A factor integral to addressing the issue of conflict resulting from the critical nature of issues involved in a dispute is education. The composition of a curriculum necessary to address contemporary conflicts is very different than the composition of the curriculum that was necessary to address conflicts that arose during the multipolar Cold War. Institutions are working to address what may be referred to as a “conflict education deficit.” According to Harris’s Peace Education Theory, peace education has evolved from a curriculum focused on the impetuses of war and prevention methods to a study of conflict in its various forms and how to address those conflicts [9]. As concern about different forms of conflict, including ecocide, genocide, modern warfare, ethnic hatred, racism, sexual abuse, domestic violence, human trafficking, sexual exploitation, the drug trade, gangs, and more have increased, educators have worked to develop a “twenty-first century” education that includes instruction about human rights, international relations, development, the environment, and traditional conflict [9].

Harris’s education hypothesis is that peace education teaches about peace, why it is lacking in some areas of the world, and how to create peace in areas riven with conflict [9]. Peace education is composed of the following five elements:

1. “It explains the roots of violence;
2. It teaches alternatives to violence
3. It adjusts to cover different forms of violence;
4. Peace is a process that varies according to context; and
5. Conflict is omnipresent [9].”

Peace education is a necessary first step to addressing the world’s conflicts. Current global leaders are from an older generation that grew up during the Cold War and studied peace from the standpoint of a multipolar struggle among states and their respective allies. In order for peace education to succeed, it must incorporate the idea of the importance of issues to the parties involved in conflict because shared, higher levels of importance can lead to negotiation stalemates and long-term conflicts, including combat. A second requirement for peace education is that young policy professionals, who have been properly educated about modern conflicts, influence contemporary leaders, who, as has been mentioned, are unfamiliar with modern peace education and often employ tactics that were designed for traditional state-based struggles centered around superpowers and their allies.

5. Case studies

As mentioned in the previous section about the democratic peace theory, there are several examples of democracies engaging in combat or other types of conflict

that can be classified as war. The common thread in these case studies is the presence of an issue of significant interest to both parties, making it too challenging to compromise. Such an issue is referred to as an irreconcilable difference. Understanding irreconcilable differences is critical because they are immune to non-conflictual forms of diplomacy and usually lead to conflict, including war. The case studies that follow provide examples of irreconcilable differences and the predicted conflicts to which they lead.

5.1 France and West Germany

France and Germany have historically been bitter rivals. The two neighboring countries were at the forefront of the two worldwide wars, and each side suffered greatly due to their involvement. Each war was characterized by a period of time in which Germany temporarily conquered French territory before ultimately being defeated by the Allied powers, which included the United States, the United Kingdom, and the French resistance. After the conclusion of each war, Germany adopted a democratic government. After World War II, this analysis applies to West Germany as the country was divided into four sectors controlled by the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and the Soviet Union. East Germany, administered by the Soviet Union, adopted an authoritarian government that ultimately answered to Moscow.

During both post-war periods, the French adopted a conflictual nature towards the German state. After World War I, Germany was experiencing economic upheaval due to the crushing effects of the Treaty of Versailles. Germany was unable to pay the reparations required of her without resorting to hyperinflation-causing monetary policy. As a result of Germany falling behind on its reparations payments, France and Belgium used their militaries to occupy the Ruhr, an important industrial center for the German economy [13]. The French and Belgian occupation of the Ruhr harmed German workers and weakened the German economy further. The French viewed their actions as a way of securing economic value equal to Germany's unpaid reparations [13]. The result was a hardening of German public opinion to match that of French public opinion and the ultimate failure of the French to accomplish its goals [13]. The occupation of the Ruhr was later utilized by the Nazis as a way of galvanizing support for their eventual rise to power.

After the Second World War, France adopted a similar conflictual attitude. When the United States and the United Kingdom agreed on the need to rehabilitate West Germany as a bulwark against the spread of communism, the French were uncooperative [13]. The French finally agreed to support the rehabilitation of West Germany, but only after intense pressure from the United States and the United Kingdom [13]. The French were interested in curtailing Germany's potential power by separating Germany's industrially rich regions, including the Ruhr and the Rhineland, from the broader country [13]. One of the major reasons for French intransigence was negative French public opinion towards Germany, forcing French leaders into the difficult situation of pushing back against its allies [13].

In both instances, the conflict involved two democracies, as both France and Germany had established democratic governments at the time of these crises. The reason for the conflicts, an armed invasion in the first case outlined above, was the presence of issues that both countries classified as extremely important. In the case of France's invasion of the Ruhr, France was adamant about Germany paying for the destruction it caused during World War I. Germany, on the other hand, was adamant

about not paying reparations because reparations were crippling the German economy, preventing its rebuilding efforts, and creating suffering among its population. Reparations represented an issue about which both parties had very strong interests, and thus they could not achieve agreement.

In the second instance outlined above, while not an armed conflict, the issue centered around the rehabilitation and integration of West Germany. The French, having fought two wars in 20 years with Germany, were against a strong, centralized West Germany, while West Germany, the United States, and the United Kingdom were unwilling to accede to France's demands. Germany was in favor of consolidating as a centralized West German state for economic and security reasons. In the case of the post-World War II conflict, France's relative weakness vis-à-vis its allies forced it to accept the idea of rehabilitating a centralized West Germany, but France would not have done so without the pressure of its two stronger allies. The issue of rehabilitating and creating a strong, centralized West Germany was an issue that was critical to both parties, and thus, they could not come to an agreement.

5.2 Israel and Palestine

Since the birth of the Jewish state, Israel and Palestine have been in a constant state of conflict, including armed conflict on multiple occasions. The impetus for the long-term conflict that is approaching its eightieth anniversary is the issue of land. After World War II, the State of Israel was declared and immediately recognized by the United States, helping to cement its legitimacy. The land that Israel claimed was the land that had been administered by the British as Palestine. Resolution 181 (UN Partition Plan for Palestine) of 1947 was to create two states—Israel and Palestine. While the Israelis agreed to the two-state solution, the Palestinians did not. Since that fateful decision, there have been multiple episodes of full-scale war between the two sides. One of the most significant wars was the Six Day War of 1967, the result of which left Israel in control of the former Arab territories of East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip [13]. The long “intifada,” as the struggle is referred to, has created poor living conditions for both the Israelis and the Palestinians [13]. Opinion polls have demonstrated that the Israeli population has mostly supported a two-state solution, though support has waned during times of conflict [13]. Though the public has supported a two-state solution, they have demonstrated doubts in those same polls regarding the likelihood of sustained peace due to mistrust of the Palestinian Authority (PA), the governing body of the Palestinian Liberation Organization [13]. The October 7, 2023, attack by Hamas on Israel that killed approximately 1200 people, created 240 hostages, and resulted in an Israeli counteroffensive gives credence to the doubts about the prospects of peace by the Israeli populace [14]. There have been multiple negotiations and peace plans proposed during the prolonged conflict, including the Clinton Plan of December 2000, in which Israeli Prime Minister Barak offered the Palestinians 95% of the West Bank plus additional territory to provide the Palestinians with the equivalent of 100% of the territory of the West Bank [13]. All these offers were refused.

Why, given the length and brutality of the struggle between Israel and Palestine, have the two parties not been able to agree to end the hostilities? Why have some Arab countries in the Middle East and North Africa displayed a reluctance to establish diplomatic relations with Israel to show their support for Palestine (it should be acknowledged that Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Morocco, and Sudan established diplomatic relations with Israel with the Abraham Accords negotiated during the

Trump Administration)? The reason is that the issue at stake, land and, in some cases, Holy land, is an issue that is critical to Palestinians and Israelis. Both states lay claim to territories controlled by the Israelis, and neither is willing to negotiate a settlement with the other due to the fact that compromises over the very critical resource, which is land, are much too difficult. There are many reasons for the difficult nature of compromise on this issue including hardened positions among the two civilian populaces and a shortage of land for both. Despite the fact that these issues can be worked out if the parties cooperate, the conflict continues due to the critical nature, for both parties, of the issue of land.

6. Potential solutions

Solutions to the problem of irreconcilable differences on issues of great importance leading to armed conflict are difficult to envision. One idea, provided by Dr. James Welch in a different context, is to classify transnational criminal actors in such a way as to make them accountable to states and their judicial systems [15]. Specifically, Dr. Welch proposes to reclassify subnational actors with a broad geographical reach as “Stateless International Entities” or “SIEs” [15]. Doing so would subject SIEs to international tribunals, where they can face justice for their actions [15].

A second action that involves international organizations is to restructure the leadership of international organizations such that the founding states maintain control over the missions as well as the rules of these organizations. Doing so will help prevent international organizations from growing independent of states’ leadership and limit the sovereign power these international organizations are able to accumulate. In this way, international organizations can focus on effectiveness and efficiency rather than budgets, portfolios, expertise, and power grabs.

7. Conclusion

Contemporary ideas about global peace are centered around the employment of liberal international peacebuilding processes that must address a laundry list of issues in newly formed democracies and societies characterized by ongoing conflicts or problems associated with post-conflict rebuilding and reconciliation. Some of the major issues on which international peacebuilders must focus include security, development, humanitarian assistance, governance, and the rule of law [7].

While the international community is working to reorient itself from a multipolar state-centered world characterized by conflict among nation-states to a world characterized by a wide variety of untraditional challenges, it has been argued in this paper that the international community will only find success in a limited number of conflicts or former conflicts. They will be challenged and most likely fail to implement sustainable peace in conflictual situations that involve issues that are viewed as critical to all of the parties involved in a particular conflict, a situation that has been termed irreconcilable differences in this paper. This is because these conflicts are best characterized as zero-sum games where one party’s gain is another’s loss on an issue that the parties all view as not negotiable.

The international community is seeking to better prepare itself to address the underlying issues related to contemporary conflicts through updated peace and conflict curriculums in institutions of higher learning, and the use of ad hoc partnerships

that involve the private sector, non-profit organizations, international organizations, and wealthy individuals in addition to traditional nation-states. The hope is that the combined experience and expertise of this diverse group of actors will be better able to respond effectively to such contentious issues. Whether that is true or not remains to be seen.

This chapter represents an introduction to contemporary global peace efforts and the complicated issue of resolving conflicts that involve issues critical to all parties. This issue demands the attention of other scholars to expound upon the arguments in this paper, study tools that have been implemented with success in conflict situations and tools that have not achieved success, opine upon the developing peace curriculum in our institutions of higher learning, and refine the roles of different actors in the global peacebuilding process. This issue is in its infancy, and only at such time as we have a solid body of empirical and qualitative evidence can scholars and our peace-building institutions start turning the tide in contemporary conflicts.

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Section 3

Analytical Approaches

Between a Rock and a Hard Place: The Drivers of Violent Conflict and the Elusive Quest for Global Peace

James Patrick Welch

Abstract

Dealing with the drivers of conflict is a less onerous task than seeking out the “road not taken,” the road to global peace. Addressing war and conflict is a less complex proposition than broaching the topic of peaceful coexistence and amicable international relations. War, therefore, is a far more prevalent phenomenon. Aggression is an inherent trait and distinguishing feature of the human ethos. This aggression is often subsumed under the heading of what is commonly referred to as the survival instinct. While human intelligence and intellectual prowess have certainly advanced the relentless quest for peace, animal instinct still lurks in the dark recesses of the human psyche. We present the proximate, distal, and ultimate drivers of war and violent conflict through various lenses, ranging from economic disparities to long-standing ethno-religious conflicts and cultural and ideological divergence. The geopolitical realities of the present day are contrasted with deep-rooted historical grievances of the past. At the geopolitical level, power dynamics, vested regional and national interests, which inevitably lead to conflict and inhibit diplomatic solutions, feature prominently. Issues surrounding fundamentalist ideologies, including extremism, separatism, ardent nationalism, and ethnocentrism, all contribute to strife and provide fuel to the flames of division.

Keywords: conflict, war, strife, economics, politics, ethno-religious conflict, geography, peace, diplomacy, peacemaking, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, international relations, realpolitik

1. Introduction

“War and peace are not separate compartments. Peace depends on threats and force; often peace is the crystallisation of past force.”

— Geoffrey Blainey, *The Causes of War*

To better understand the pathway leading to meaningful and lasting peace, one is obliged to first explore the reasons for its perpetual failure. The fact is violence, and

its consequences are, and always have been, by their very nature, more compelling, more alluring, and more exciting. A computer simulation game based upon establishing global peace would garner extraordinarily little interest. Hollywood cinema productions display a marked preference for the shock effects of violent confrontation. From novels to film and music, and from news reports to academic research, violent conflicts have always captured the spotlight and received the lion's share of funding and appropriations. The first hypothesis of this chapter advances that human aggression is a more attractive proposition as a schema and fosters greater interest and support among human society. Given this caveat, it may be that our best hope resides in reconfiguring our understanding of sustainable peace, what it means, and realistically modifying our approach, beginning with reduction of war and violent conflict as our primary focus, rather than its elimination.

Human aggression requires a much further examination in all its multidimensional facets. Limitations of time and space, however, preclude the full treatment an important topic, such as this, merits. Nevertheless, it is important for us to initially consider the vital role played by the human predisposition to violence transmitted evolutionarily as a strategy and mechanism of survival. Violence and aggression are often attributed to two schools of thought: doctrines adopting an ultimate, innate, and deterministic view (e.g., Konrad Lorenz et al.) and those asserting that human aggression is a unique proximal and environmental manifestation of culture (e.g., Bronislaw Malinowski), or the functionalist perspective. The latter was the view also adopted by Shaw and Wong, who assert that the human inclination to engage in violent conflict stems from a complex multitude of factors developed in accordance with an evolutionary timeline [1].

The position adopted here is that violence and aggression are driven by a unique cocktail of biological, evolutionary, psychosocial, environmental, and cultural variables. These drivers play a determining role in human aggression and by extension violent conflict. In this regard, the human predisposition to violence is inherent, but can be harnessed as evidenced under the right conditions and within specific environments.

The chapter will also consider recent drivers, such as the effects of globalization, the lack of effective international governance, corruption, authoritarianism, and technological asymmetry. We conclude this chapter by emphasizing the interconnectedness of these drivers and the urgent need for new creative and innovative approaches for reduction if not solutions. Conflict is a seemingly intractable, a wicked problem “par excellence,” and it is only through international research and collaboration that responses can be envisioned. This chapter urges scholars, policymakers, and global citizens to address the issues that promote global peace and reduce the formidable obstacles that stand in their way. It is only through understanding violent conflict and its genesis that we can eventually hope to gain any control over it. The research conducted for this chapter is qualitative and draws from theoretical perspectives, including international relations theory, bargaining theory, Marxist theory, voting theory, peace and conflict studies, social choice theory, power transition theory, constructivism, anthropological theory, ethnology, and evolutionary psychology. The research is also based on various case studies, complemented by a comprehensive literature review.

Finally, this research advances that aggression differs markedly at the individual and collective levels and that, contrary to the view of Malinowski, the larger the group, the greater the propensity to resort to violent aggression. This seems only logical given the fact that the greater the number of individuals involved in any given

context, the greater the likelihood of disagreement and the failure to achieve consensus. This chapter attempts to clarify various significant drivers related to aggression, violent conflict, and war and the ways in which they undermine peace, while simultaneously exploring the challenges to peaceful coexistence as evidenced by war and violent conflict. This is by no means the only view related to resolving war and violent conflict and the field of peace and conflicts studies is rapidly expanding, though remaining, nevertheless, outpaced by its nemesis.

1.1 Defining war

The shifting sands of international relations and the quest for global peace remain elusive. They are caught up in the constant swirl of the winds of war. Efforts at détente, and eventual entente, are cast hither and thither. They drift asunder among endless discord and relentless conflict. Even the most ardent and stalwart promoters of peace must, at times, pose themselves the question of whether global peace is a realistic aspiration; or whether it is merely some quixotic and futile quest, a Sisyphean task. In nearly every text consulted while researching this chapter, this same concern has been echoed, either directly or indirectly [1].

This conundrum was succinctly summed up by Bronislaw Malinowski, in 1941, where he queried “[S]hall we abolish war, or must we submit to it by choice or necessity? Is it desirable to have permanent peace and is this peace possible?” [2] On a much more questionable note, however, was the functional constructivist logic Malinowski adopted to discredit the view that there exists any possible association between primitive conflict and that of modern industrialized warfare; that aggression decreases as group size increases, that economic-based warfare only developed with the existence of portable wealth; that aggression is strictly a by-product of cooperation and the observation that aggression is a unique by-product of culture, with no deterministic evolutionary or trait-diffusion influences, such as genetic, biological, or psychological intervention [2]. The following chapter explores the drivers of conflict that lock societies between a metaphorical rock and a hard place and prohibit the development of meaningful and lasting peace.

Various sources have erroneously cited unsubstantiated claims that humans have experienced only 268 years of peace in the past 3400 years of existence. This would work out to approximately 8% of human history.¹ This perspective was often fostered by early assumptions and unfounded assertions that humans lived in peaceful coexistence during the hunter-gatherer epoch, and it was the advent of nomadic pastoral grazing and sedentary agriculture society that generated human aggression. Though it is certainly a well-established fact that much of human history has been defined by deadly conflict, attempts at statistical precision are both counterintuitive and counterproductive. Before we can even begin to consider the question of global peace, it is imperative to first understand the obstacles which prevent its implementation. This chapter deals with analyzing the proximal, distal, and ultimate drivers of war and violent conflict, which represent the foremost challenges to the establishment of enduring peace.

If we define global peace as the absence of war, then, we must first fully understand and address the underlying dynamics that lead us down the road of conflict and away from the pathways to peace. To accomplish this task, as with understanding any

¹ There are numerous sources that perpetuate these statistics in the form of endless regression. Examples include [1, 3, 4]. From [5].

other phenomenon, we need to begin with a solid definition, or at the very least a collective understanding, of both what constitutes war and violent conflict and similarly how do we define sustainable peace.

Let us begin our analysis by attempting to define the topics being addressed, an onerous task as best. War is defined according to various sources as an intense armed conflict between states, nations, societies, or groups such as militias, insurgents, terrorists, or paramilitary groups. Malinowski provided a useful definition considering “...war as an armed conflict between two independent political units, by means of organized military force, in the pursuit of a tribal or national policy.” Of course, such a definition is clearly minimalistic and restrictive and Malinowski himself admitted these limitations. Malinowski divided violent conflict into six distinct classifications in his analysis:

- Private and anger inspired.
- Collective and organized.
- Armed, manhunting sport.
- Political or proto nationalist.
- Organized pillage.
- An instrument of National Policy [2].

It is worth noting that his first and third classifications appear to contradict his presumption against deterministic influences. War, according to one source, has been defined as ongoing hostilities which have claimed the lives of more than 1000 individuals [3]. This figure of 1000, battle-related deaths, was originally drawn from work conducted by The Correlates of War Project, which established this threshold to differentiate war from other types of violent conflict [6]. Though arbitrary in nature, it does provide an analytical starting point. Such limitations, on the other hand, automatically raise the question, what is a conflict with nine hundred and ninety-nine casualties then? Thus, we have difficulty in accurately providing a clear conception of what war is, but we know it when we see it or more accurately when we experience it.

Hans Speier, an influential German-American sociologist, proposed that war may be classified into three social configurations: *Absolute*, *instrumental*, and *agonistic*. Absolute war was defined as having the qualities of being unrestrained, unrestricted, and unregulated, whereas agonistic war conversely follows well-established rules and precepts, and is regulated by norms, according to Speier. Finally, what Speier refers to as instrumental war straddles both the previous typologies and is context-specific, with restrictions being based upon the criteria of expediency [7]. Speier further attached three objectives, or orientations to each of these forms. Thus, absolute war seeks annihilation, instrumental war's goal is to obtain an advantage, particularly enrichment, and finally the objective of agonistic war is glory and justice [8]. Speier further clarified that no war adheres to one of these pure types, and that when waging a war based on ideology, some advantage is usually sought as well.

Raymond Pearl, contributor to the same 1941 journal issue as Speier, held a different hypothesis, positing that war and violent conflict grew from three unique sources, *predation*, *invasion*, and *courtship, mating, and reproduction*. This was a more ethological-based

observation. It is worth noting that even though Speier, Malinowski, and Pearl were all writing in 1941 for the *Journal of Sociology*, their observations remain, nevertheless, pertinent and serve as a useful basis for the classification and understanding of certain armed conflicts. If there is any criticism, it would be that it is perhaps too simplistic a model for such a complex phenomenon as war as it is presently waged.

Speier's observations can, for instance, be applied to current historical events. In the context of the current and ongoing (at the time of writing) Israeli-Hamas conflict, it is worth citing Speier's observations on absolute war:

Absolute war is not waged to effect a change of the enemy's mode of life; nor is it waged in order to conclude peace with the vanquished foe. Peace terminating an absolute war is established without (author's emphasis) the enemy. The opponent is an existential enemy. Absolute war is waged in order to annihilate [8].

Speier also emphasizes the concepts of in-groups and out-groups, or othering, which we shall address later in this chapter—a psychological phenomenon related to ostracization and othering. Those following current events will immediately recognize the language here as reflected in the discourse of the present Israeli-Hamas conflict.

Finally, we can also attempt to understand and evaluate war and violent conflict from a unique perspective of evolutionary and developmental phases. These phases represent a flexible cycle and may appear, be entirely absent, or even overlap one another. The phases we have established include range from pre-onset, onset, escalation, expansion continuation, termination, and ending with successful (or unsuccessful) reconciliation. This is an alternative form of analyzing war and violent conflict.

“Real peace is more than the absence of war; it is an absence of the causes of war.”

— Mildred Lisette Norman (*Peace Pilgrim*)

Finally, when considering war and comparing it to other types of conflict, it will be useful to differentiate between the distinct levels or typologies for the sake of clarity. The following *Conflict Progression Index*, a sliding scale, is proposed. Please note that the first stage is referred to as “relative peace.” This is because, in the opinion of this research, peace, like risk, can never be absolute (**Figure 1**).^{2,3}

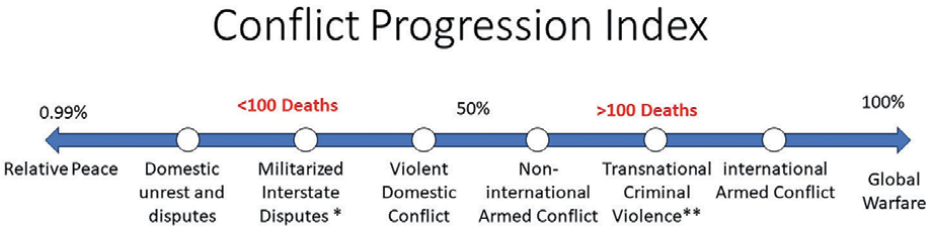


Figure 1.
Conflict Progression Index (CPI).

² *Based on work by [6].

³ **This category refers to international events resulting in violent death and confrontations ranging from terrorism to State-like International Entities and transnational organized criminal activity (TOCA). Note that there is no official category related to this type of violence.

1.2 Defining peace

Is peace merely the absence of war and violent conflict (or indeed its causes)? This depends, of course, upon who is conducting the analysis. The absence of one does not necessarily imply the existence of the other. There exists no universal definition of global peace, or even peace for that matter. Various religious faiths and secular organizations have approached the question from their own individualized perspectives. Researchers, institutes, and organizations also include criteria such as economic stability, prosperity, important levels of social engagement, positive political participation, technological adaptation, low levels of incarceration, and good governance. Inevitably, this chapter will also suggest strategies related to reducing conflict and advancing global peace. For the purposes of this chapter, our focus will be on the absence of conflict, both violent and non-violent forms since the latter often devolves into the former. This is already a formidable task. Please bear in mind that peace, like risk, is never absolute, and there always exists an indeterminate level of unrest.

Estimates of peace in modern society vary, and it is difficult to ascertain which truth is true; or at least truer. Statistics are often massaged to provide the desired results, ending in the obfuscation of reality. Consider the statement “The world has been more democratic on average since 1993 than in any of the last 100 years.” Is such a statement credible, or even quantifiable? [9]. Another foible in the peace calculus is attempting to integrate climate and environmental issues as metrics of peace. While there is a limited correlation, such superfluous associations detract from the issue at hand. Nevertheless, radical environmentalists continually attempt to hijack any issue, regardless of how relevant it is to advance their agenda.

The Global Peace Index (GPI), the world’s leading indicator of peacefulness, reported in 2020 an average level of improvement over the five preceding years. Ukraine was reported to have the highest improvement at the time. Events, in the wake of the Russian invasion of February 24, 2022, will attest to just how fragile and transitory such improvements are. An even earlier assertion by John Mearsheimer was particularly prescient:

...the situation between Ukraine and Russia is ripe for the outbreak of security competition between them. Great powers that share a long and unprotected common border, like that between Russia and Ukraine, often lapse into competition driven by security fears. Russia and Ukraine might overcome this dynamic and learn to live together in harmony, but it would be unusual if they do.⁴

According to the 2023 report of the GPI, Afghanistan is the least peaceful state in the world, and Iceland is the most peaceful [12]. The 2023 edition of the report is divided into four metrics: Trends, and Economic Impact of Violence, Conflict trends and Hotspots, and Positive Peace. While the first three categories are self-explanatory, positive peace is not. According to the GPI, “Positive Peace is defined as the attitudes, institutions, and structures that create and sustain peaceful societies.” Bramsen, Poder, and Weaver [13], in their title *Resolving International Conflict*, adopt the view of conflict as style of behavior, based upon social relations, and thus environmental and cultural in nature. They explore conflict from a perspective of social instrumentality and conflict dynamics, rather than exploring variables, the drivers, and causes.

⁴ [10]. cited in [11].

One of the most interesting findings in the 2019 edition of the GPI established that there tends to be a close correlation between conflict-related deaths and those attributed to terrorism. As the percentage of conflict-related deaths declines, so too do those related to terrorism [14].

1.3 Literature review

As one might imagine, there exists a bountiful content of literature and research dedicated to the examination of violent conflict and warfare in all their diverse manifestations. On the other hand, research dedicated to peace has received comparatively less attention, though this trend is evolving. The reasons for this disparity are multiple and we shall examine these within the context of this chapter. As an initial observation, consider a simple observation such as the study of history in schools. History is most frequently taught as a metric of warfare and its outcomes and is replete with examples of violent conflict, rather than the more mundane aspects of peaceful coexistence.

An important reference work which contributed various insights to chapter development also included the comprehensive title *Understanding Peacekeeping* (2001) by Williams and Bellamy. This title was fundamental to understanding the dynamics of peace operations, their historical development, their operations, and the challenges they pose. Insights developed from this title were included under the analysis of peace operations.

This chapter has been supported by an important volume of body of research in its development. Minor portions of this research are drawn from, and based upon, much earlier writing. The reason for this is quite simple. The fact is that information developed in the past can still contribute to current thinking. Additionally, such early research provides the possibility of measuring the evolution, and indeed the devolution of human thought and practice.

Thus, inferences have been drawn from the earlier writings of such renowned scholars and researchers as Bronislaw Malinowski and others. The study of violent conflict crosses multiple lines and the study of the drivers of conflict—the subject of this chapter, requires a multidisciplinary and multidimensional approach. Even though earlier texts may be misguided, inappropriate to the present scope or context, and at times even clearly incorrect, they do provide insights and clarification, for a better and more epistemological understanding of the subject.

Contributions from more recent explorations include, among others, the *Resolving International Conflict* by Weaver and Bramsen. These authors propose an alternative model for evaluating and intervening in violent conflict based upon two core phases of pre-onset to reconciliation dynamics. These include the phases of escalation and continuation. While interesting, laudable, and extremely well-researched, the previously cited model does not go far enough and overlooks several other important phases.

To their credit, the previously mentioned authors tend to subsume several of those distinct phases within their escalation and continuation hypothesis. The title *Anticipating Flashpoints with Russia: Patterns and drivers* was especially useful for conceptual development in the current chapter and allowed the extrapolation of various information for a wider theoretical application. An in-depth analysis of the dynamics, which contributes to the escalation and continuation of violent conflicts, provided useful insights included within the body of the current chapter. In this research report, developed for the U.S. Army by Rand Corporation, the authors objectively

explore the underlying drivers, which could lead to potential conflicts between Russia and the U.S. Army. One of the strong points of this research resides in the objectivity and transparency of their findings.

Other research that was useful for conceptual extrapolation included *The Use of Armed Force in Occupied Territory*, by Marco Longobardo [15], a solid resource for exploring the international legal framework regarding the justified use of force and is particularly relevant to current world affairs and the numerous situations where occupation is a major dilemma, not only for the occupied populations but also for the occupying forces. This is also a proximal driver of war and violent conflict, as we are currently witnessing between Israel and the Hamas-controlled Palestinians.

For understanding human aggression, as a driver of violent conflict, *Genetic Seeds of War* proved invaluable for the development of a more coherent approach to this long-standing and contentious debate. *Making War and Building Peace*, by Doyle and Sambanis, presents a comprehensive analysis of peace operations, as well as providing a tour of the major theoretical foundations supporting them. Further analysis includes peacekeeping, peacemaking, peacebuilding, and most importantly peace enforcement, or making war in the name of peace. Successes and failures are objectively examined, via the analysis of individual operations and mandates. Complementary to the previous title *Understanding Peacekeeping*, by Williams and Bellamy, represents yet another important source of reliable information and data, which contributed to a greater understanding of the processes, evolution, the obstacles, and debates regarding peace support operations (PSOs), their scope, and utility as a tool for the regulation of armed conflict.

2. Foundational philosophical and theoretical underpinnings

Various theories exist regarding aggression, violent conflict, and war, exploring the reasons behind their occurrence, the justification for their declaration, and the methods by which they are or should be conducted. Many books have been written outlining these principles, so we will briefly present the major arguments for the sake of clarity. In this context, it is worth underscoring that the UN Charter forbids wars of aggression, at least in principle. One is justifiably entitled therefore to wonder, if war is indeed forbidden, why does it exist, nevertheless? There are a couple of explanations that will clarify this. First, let us examine the text of the Charter. According to Article 2 para. 4,

All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.

The language, in the article above, is overly broad, and this could leave room for either intentional or unintentional misinterpretation. While the purpose of the United Nations is clear and straightforward, it is not actually spelled out. Additionally, there exist three exceptions which allow for the use of force. Therefore, the Charter has not completely ruled out the use of force under exceptional circumstances.

The first exception to the rule relates to the obvious and necessary right of self-defense. Even if this rule were not in effect, it is highly unlikely that states would allow themselves to be attacked without responding. Thus, states retain the right,

either individually or collectively, to defend themselves against aggression, whether such an act constitutes a legal or illegal attack.

The second exception to the rule represents the source of the most egregious abuse of the concept of nonaggression and that is the fact that the Charter does not specifically address internal armed conflicts such as terrorism, insurgencies, or civil wars. The aspect of State-like international entities, or SIEs was addressed in a doctoral thesis, *The Grotius Sanction* [16]. The vast majority of modern conflicts fall into this category, though large-scale conflicts are, once again, beginning to rear their head.

The third, and final, exception is more positive in nature and refers to collective action under Article VII of the Charter. States have a right to take collective action with the purpose of either maintaining or restoring peace and security. Examples of such actions were witnessed during the Korean War as well as the Gulf War. Finally, it is worth noting that even though armed conflict and wars of aggression are forbidden by the Charter, war nevertheless continues unabated. Obviously, good intentions are not enough to stop the endless spiral of death and destruction.

2.1 War and justice: just war and international relations

There are many perspectives and theories relating to the reasons that conflict occurs. One of the strongest arguments in support of war relates to the concept of justice and its restoration. Such foundations are very closely related to the concept of punishment and deterrence in criminology. War is guided by specific rules and regulations. In this regard, the only way of ensuring a just peace is by ensuring a just war. In this context, the laws relating to the conduct of war are *jus in bello*, which, for the purposes of this chapter are considered as synonymous with the terms international humanitarian law (IHL), and the law of armed conflict (LOAC), *jus ad bellum*, and *jus post-bellum*. Quite simply, these refer to the just reasons for conducting war, the conduct during war, and finally the appropriate measures following war, respectively.

2.2 Realpolitik and geopolitical reality

Historically, there have been many efforts to establish peaceful relations as many as there have been efforts to thwart such efforts. So why does human aggression always seem to win out in this never-ending struggle, then? Part of this reason is based upon the simple fact that it is impossible to achieve complete consensus regarding both hostilities and peaceful negotiations.

Several overarching principles obstruct the advancement of global peace initiatives. Among these, we might also cite the following: vested national and political interests; the quest for power and dissatisfaction with global status, the competition for limited natural resources, historical antecedents, significant interests from the military-industrial complex, the inherent nature of human beings, and a predisposition for violence and aggression, the principles relating to group dynamics and decision-making. All these various elements will be considered in the following section.

Finally, the institution for guaranteeing global peace is the United Nations. This venture had resulted in mitigated success. The reason for this is a lack of enforcement powers, funding, support, and the near impossibility of consensus on the part of its one hundred and ninety-three member states. When consensus is achieved, the initial effort is usually watered down to the extent of being meaningless. President John F. Kennedy, in his 1961 address to the United Nations, calling for nuclear disarmament and global peace, underscored this fact:

“In the world we seek, the United Nations Emergency Forces which have been hastily assembled, uncertainly supplied, and inadequately financed, will never be enough (Address by President John F. Kennedy to the UN General Assembly, 2017).”⁵

3. International power dynamics and the international order

“War is politics by other means”⁶

— *Carl von Clausewitz*

The seat of world power, prior to various efforts to establish a peaceful international order, was in Europe. Prior to the Treaties of Munster and Osnabrück, also referred to as the *Peace of Westphalia*, of October 24, 1648, Europe had been embroiled in an endless series of violent, destructive, bloody, and successive struggles for political, religious, and military dominance such as the Hundred years’ War (1337–1453), the Mediterranean War (1470–1574), the Italian War (1494–1559), the Eighty years’ war (1568–1648), and the Thirty Years’ War (1618–1648), among others, including various colonial conquests in the New world.

The total death count related to these various conflicts, not including the plagues and diseases that ravaged the continent and its possessions between these periods, is estimated at well over 650 million victims. Bear in mind that the world population was far inferior to today’s levels. Some scholars assert that the Peace of Westphalia established, for the first time in history, the concepts of state sovereignty and the immutable character of national boundaries, other scholars, however, have refuted such claims, speaking of them disparagingly as “*The Westphalian Myth*.” Whatever the truth in this matter, one thing cannot be denied, the fact remains that religious wars were curbed which provided an opening for peaceful international relations.

There are several important aspects which need to be borne in mind in the context of the international order and the various challenges and obstacles, which impede attempts to foster peaceful coexistence. These issues include, notably, the international provision and supply of weapons, legal and illegal migration, and internally displaced persons (IDPs), and finally, the ways in which the influence of international actors can contribute to or exacerbate violent conflicts either directly or using proxy forces.

4. Vested national interests, state sovereignty, and the nation-state vs. globalization and the international order

One of the first post-Westphalian attempts at developing an international order was known as the *Concert of Europe*. This was a set of various precepts, rules, regulations, and practices, between the great powers, which were established in the wake of the Napoleonic wars. The concert was in effect from 1815 until just following the outbreak of World war I, in 1915. This informal structure grew out of the *Congress of Vienna* (1814–1815).

⁵ Address by President Ref. [17].

⁶ [18]. This aphorism has become a foundational component of international relations theory and realpolitik.

This effort at stabilizing international relations was followed by Woodrow Wilson's efforts in the wake of World War I and the Treaty of Versailles, to establish the League of Nations, founded on January 10, 1920. This organization would have ostensibly superseded the rights of states, while simultaneously constraining them by forcing them to adhere to international oversight and obligations. Wilson, in his efforts to establish a globalist post-Westphalian order, also advanced the principle of self-determination, the first real effort of enforcing globalism and post-Westphalian policy. Malinowski, a strong anti-statist and ardent globalist, considered Wilson's views as both scientifically and morally justified and expressed the view that self-determination could be advanced "by the abolition of all states, rather than the arming of all nations [2]." Both of these views are, however, counterintuitive, because when a people or ethnic group choose to strive for self-determination, this is almost always accompanied by the desire to establish a new independent sovereign state.

The League represented a failed effort at establishing the first intergovernmental governing body with international authority. Ironically, although it was funded by the U.S. President, the United States was never a member. The worldwide depression of the 1930s, coupled with the rise of fervent nationalism, weak decision-making, and no enforcement capabilities, led to its eventual downfall. The organization limped along until its dissolution in 1946. One can still witness this element of the clear absence of decisive enforcement powers in its successor, the United Nations.

Following the aftermath of World War II, and until the present day, peaceful coexistence has been the remit of the United Nations. The only problem is that there is rarely unity or agreement between the members of states among themselves. The structure and strategy following the end of the Cold War adopted a post-Westphalian character. This was in sharp contrast with approaches during and preceding the Cold War, which were markedly Westphalian in nature. This does not mean the tensions suddenly disappeared between those advocating for the absolute respect or state sovereignty, on the one hand, and their opponents seek international governance at the other extreme.

This contest of wills is often depicted as conflict over the interpretation of the Charter and the balance between the security of states and the security of individual human beings [19]. In recent events, the pendulum has, once again, swung back, and there has been a decidedly less dynamic approach to the implementation of liberal peacebuilding. Following 2017 due to financial constraints and other related concerns, the strategy of the UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, shifted away from large-scale military operations in favor of a prevention and more diplomatic strategy to peace operations.

According to the first image of international relations, the locus of the important causes of war is found in the nature and behavior of man. Wars result from selfishness, from misdirected aggressive impulses, from stupidity.

— Kenneth Waltz

5. The driving dynamics of violent conflict

The following section is dedicated to an analysis of various core drivers, both direct and indirect, which contribute to the propagation, expression, and expansion of violent conflict and armed warfare. For the sake of conciseness and due to limitations of space,

observations have been limited to the most important and relevant causes. This will allow a more in-depth and detailed analysis of these phenomena. Thus, we shall explore the human factors, the political power and historical dynamics, the socio-economic drivers, the impacts of cultural, religious, and ideological polarization.

5.1 The human psychology of aggression

The most probing question in the context of attempting to understand human psychology and behavior, as it relates to aggression and conflict, is: Are human beings naturally aggressive? In other words, is there some genetic predisposition to violent and aggressive behavior? Much research has been conducted by behavioral psychologists, cultural anthropologists, and evolutionary biologists in search of a response. According to Shaw and Wong, and their comprehensive literature review, the results of this research indicate that both aggression and affinity for culture appear to have evolved simultaneously in human beings. These findings appear to suggest, or at least one might imagine, that culture is a counterbalance to violence and aggression. These same authors, however, underscore that there exists no empirical basis for supporting either the presumption of innate aggression or the survival of the fittest hypothesis.

One of the earliest and most influential researchers in this area of research was Konrad Lorenz. Lorenz made associations between animal aggression and territoriality and that of human beings. While his contributions remain important, particularly regarding the process of imprinting, there has been criticism of some of his approaches to human aggression, particularly his concept of “innate releasing mechanisms”. Niko Tinbergen expanded on Lorenz’s earlier “filtering” concept and coined the term innate releasing mechanisms. These are neural networks that react to various stimuli and subsequently elicit a corresponding response, known as fixed action patterns [20]. Currently, the view of human aggression has expanded to be more multidimensional and includes the contribution of molecular genetics, neurobiological insights, and the observation of socio-behavioral characteristics.

It behooves researchers nevertheless to conduct much deeper exploration and investigation into the following areas: genetic and biological predispositions to aggression; crowd psychology and group dynamics; and the role of ostracization. Particular focus should center on the “us versus them” paradigm perpetuated in propaganda, media, and public policy development, as they relate to and in the context of violent and armed conflict.

6. Til death do us part: echoes of the past, shadows of the present, windows of the future: proximate, distal, and ultimate drivers

The following variables have been identified as ultimate (“root”) drivers of violent conflict: the structural and institutional causes, as opposed to the immediate proximal or more remote distal drivers. It is important to bear in mind that there may exist a long series of linked ultimate causes, each contributing in its own way. Frequently, it is the proximate causes that are addressed, rather than the underlying ultimate causes. These are rarely addressed. The result is like taking an aspirin for deep pain. While the aspirin removes the surface affliction, it fails to cure the source.

The ultimate causes address the structural and ontological issues, whereas proximal and distal issues serve as the direct and indirect triggers of violent conflict, respectively. One of the leading ultimate causes lies in the structural framework of

unresolved historic conflicts. These types of conflicts may have many proximal causes resulting from treaties, warfare, population demographics, cultural and religious factors, or human migration, for example.

At the proximal level, we might consider the establishment of borders, boundaries, and colonies, whereas the institutional policies behind these phenomena represent the ultimate causes. Several important historical examples and case studies include the creation and dismemberment of the former Soviet empire, the fractionalization of the former Yugoslavia, and more historically the Durand line, the partition of the Middle East, the Balfour agreement, the McMahon Hussein accord, and the Sykes-Picot agreement. Regional tensions and conflict persist to the present day because of these policies developed from self-interest and balance of power political dynamics.

Huntington provides another example of historical drivers of conflict by highlighting the long-standing and ongoing enmity between the Azeris and Armenians over the control of Nagorno-Karabakh. He insightfully points out that Turkey and Armenia have long been historic enemies. Under Stalin, the Nagorno-Karabakh region was established as an Armenian autonomous oblast within Azerbaijan in 1923 [11]. Though close to ninety-five percent of the population was of Armenian ethnicity, this did not stop Azerbaijan, with Israeli technology, Syrian mercenary troops, and Turkish support, from a relentless and brutal invasion and in 2023, capitalizing on its aggression by driving out its 130,000 inhabitants.

Other examples of proximal drivers include separatism, irredentism, and militarized efforts at ethnic and national self-determination. One interesting take-away from this previous example is the fact that the desire for self-determination by the Armenian population was ignored by the international community, which was increasingly occupied with events transpiring between Russian and Ukraine at the time.

Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired, signifies in the final sense a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed.

— Dwight D. Eisenhower

7. The dynamics of political economy and the socio-economic drivers of war and violent conflict

Among the socio-economic drivers of war and violent conflict, we can include global violence, structural inequality, poverty, disparity, despair, and mass human migration, which includes both internally displaced persons (IDPs) as well as large-scale international movements of refugees. Unfortunately, limitations of space preclude the full-scale treatment of these phenomena that they so justifiably deserve.

Under the heading of drivers of the political economy leading to war and violent conflict are subsumed competition and trade wars. Analogous proximal drivers to be considered are resource competition and what is commonly referred to as the resource curse; the profitable and enduring economic foundations of the *Military-Industrial Complex*. War is a very profitable enterprise, and the massive production of arms can only continue unabated if they are used and disposed of. Natural resources are rarely expressed as a driver of armed conflict, though they are often foundational elements accessory to warfare.

At the political level, we can consider various schemas such as international and regional hegemony, as well as expansionist imperialism. Examples of international players include NATO, Russia, the U.S., and China. Regionally, Iran, Turkey, and Azerbaijan exercise aggressive intervention and employ proxy forces in conflicts in Syria, Libya, and Nagorno-Karabakh. Collective decision-making and multilateral coalitions often result in a tyranny of the majority, where the voices and rights of minorities are suppressed, and preferences are aggregated. This process can lead to groupthink and disastrous consequences, such as the 2003 invasion of Iraq, which was driven by unfounded assumptions, poor intelligence, a lack of empirical evidence, political ambitions, and a desire for power projection.

Beware the leader who bangs the drums of war in order to whip the citizenry into a patriotic fervor.

— William Shakespeare

8. Cultural, religious, ideological polarization and globalization

Drivers which are simultaneously proximal and ultimate in nature include the clash of cultures, religions, and ideological polarization. The creation of in-groups, out-groups, othering, and ostracization are all tools of authoritarianism meant to divide and shift the balance of power, particularly within intrastate conflicts. The conflicts are often ideological, political, ethnic, or religious in origin. There exist countless pertinent examples of this. A few pertinent examples include the suppression of the Tibetan and Uyghur communities of China, the repression and persecution of the Muslim Rohingya communities of Myanmar and Bangladesh, prior to this all the various ethnic cleansings and genocides including those conducted in Bosnia, Armenia, Rwanda, Cambodia, and the genocides carried out by the Germans during World War II. Other examples of ethnic and nationalist massacres that were nevertheless severe but not rise to the level of genocide were conducted in Uganda under Idi Amin's reign of terror, the ethnic cleansing of the Tigray community in Ethiopia, the horrific violence between the majority Sinhalese and the minority Tamils of Sri Lanka, the ethnic violence between the Shi'a and Sunni communities of Iraq, and the Indonesian invasion and occupation of Timor-Leste. Other ethnic clashes and violence that arise from efforts of self-determination include ethnic Armenians in Nagorno Karabakh, Georgian separatists in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and the long-standing conflict between Serbia and Kosovo. These represent just a few of the countless examples of such clashes.

Globalization is a distinct yet important driver of conflict. Many of the principles being advanced by elite globalist organizations, such as the World Economic Forum, advance a rhetoric of surrender and subjugation of national religious and ideological models in favor of a liberal democratic model, resulting in a spiritless cultural homogenization. Other significant dangers posed by globalization are the creation of technological and economic inequality, global economic instability, and severe environmental degradation from the unabated plunder of natural resources. The principles espoused by these organizations often encounter violent resistance from individuals, groups, parties, and states with opposing views and belief systems. Additionally, the globalist agenda is frequently perceived in developing and emerging nations as merely a tool for the creation of a dependent underclass.

8.1 Fault lines: cultures, civilizations, and clashes

Many of these flashpoints and sources of eventual violent conflict are rooted in fundamental differences, particularly at the cultural and civilizational level. This clash of civilizations was explored in the now seminal title of the same name, *The Clash of Civilizations*, by Samuel S. Huntington [11]. Huntington divided civilization into nine distinct categories of Western, Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American, and possibly African civilization. While there has been much criticism and many challenges, at all levels, of Huntington's findings,⁷ the basic concept, nevertheless, provides a conceptual understanding of the processes involved. In summary, many of the challenges are pedantic in nature and fail to discredit the role of civilization in conflict. It is also worth noting that criticism leveled at Huntington's proposals is frequently presented by writers with clearly defined liberal agendas and ardent proponents of globalization.

8.2 Religious and ideological extremism, and fundamentalism

The strength and impotency of religious doctrine are defining features of potential contributing factors to the adoption or abandonment of violence. Nevertheless, even the most peaceful religious doctrines, such as that of the Buddhist, non-violent creed, cannot completely alleviate the advent of violence. When there is an existential threat, religious prohibitions exercise less authority. In Thailand, during the 1970s, Buddhist monks such as Phra Kittiwuttho declared that the killing of communists was permissible and did not violate Buddhist doctrinal precepts forbidding violence. Such tenets, once again, reappeared in Thailand in 2004, when conflict spread between the Muslim and Buddhist communities, once again reaffirming Huntington's perspectives. Myanmar also has a militarized faction of hardline Buddhist monks, such as Wirathu of the 969 movement, who regularly resorts to violence and has been accused of both inciting and condoning terrorism. It should be stressed, however, that in addition to the religious component, there are also economic drivers at work, and those involved in the violence, at times, are not even Buddhist, rather they used the religious drive to fulfill their economic goals. Additionally, other Buddhist leaders, including the Dalai Lama, have vociferously condemned such violence. Thus, in both Sri Lanka and Tibet, there have been occasions where the Buddhist communities have reported violence, albeit in a defensive posture. There has also been a tradition of self-inflicted violence among Buddhist monks. More frequently, the peaceful nature of the religion has been distorted and manipulated by nationalist ideologues bent on the expansion of power dynamics. The mixture of religion and propaganda-driven nationalist politics makes for a powerful and dangerous elixir, frequently contributing to violence, misinformation, and ostracization of the minority.

8.3 The drums of war: ethnocentrism. Colonialism, nationalism, imperialism, and xenophobia

Malinowski in his anthropological analysis of warfare made the cogent observation that "Nationalism readily turns into imperialism, that is, the tendency of

⁷ Refer to Paul Musgrave, Paul Berman, Amartya Sen, etc.

incorporating other nations under the political rule of the military conqueror [2].” This has been evident in many conflicts, both past and present. It is also worth noting that the aftermath of conquest frequently generates entrenched hostility eventually culminating in unified resistance. This was clear during the Indian Mutiny of 1854, where the native population arose against their British overlords. In this circumstance, a strong cultural or religious element may be predominant.

Other examples include the anti-Soviet combat in Afghanistan in the late 1980s, the long-running internecine conflict between Sunni and Shi’a factions, following the defeat of Sadaam Hussein in Iraq, the more recent aggression, and imperialistic movements by states such as Azerbaijan, Turkey, and Iran, as they attempt to extend their influence and project power.

“The Best Defense is a Good Offense.”

— George Washington, Dec 25, 1799

9. Promoting war and aggression at the expense of peace and diplomacy

The above adage, attributed to George Washington, was originally styled as “... *make them believe, that offensive operations, often times, is the surest, if not the only (in some cases) means of defense.*”⁸ Similarly Sun Tzu, the renown Chinese tactician and military philosopher, asserted that “*Attack is the secret of defense; defense is the planning of an attack.*” [21]. It is an empirical fact that war, aggression, and violent conflict receive far more attention and investment than peace, prosperity, and diplomacy. Everything in society from earliest education to cinema, and on through and including the military-industrial complex, advances the former at the expense of the latter. It is obvious that violence and aggression exercise a hypnotic attraction, and this is on a global level. The greater the violence and destruction, the deeper the interest and attachment. Peace as an institution truly offers little in the way of fascination, attraction, or visceral stimulation.

Thus, this chapter posits that violent conflict and its extended family, aggression, violent crime, traditional interstate, war, non-international armed conflict (NIAC), revolution, guerilla warfare, low-intensity conflicts, proxy wars, civil war, colonial occupation, insurgencies, terrorism, and rebellion, are all more compelling and receive far great interest and funding than do efforts at peace and diplomacy. This interest and the promotion of war and violent conflict are advanced and aided through the agency of propaganda, misinformation, organized political and military disinformation, such as PsyOps and operations in the information environment (OIE). The media also contributes to the intensification, escalation, and expansion of conflict.

“We must be prepared to make the same heroic sacrifices for the cause of peace that we make ungrudgingly for the cause of war.”

— Albert Einstein

⁸ Washington penned these lines at the end of a letter addressed to John Trumbull. See: <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/06-04-02-0120VD>.

10. Fighting for peace: the other side of the coin

A full treatment of peace operations and efforts at establishing sustainable peace is not possible at this point, however, a brief overview is certainly in order. While it may seem an oxymoron, the reality is that frequently, the only feasible way to implement peace is through armed intervention and the adoption of military force. This is referred to as peace enforcement. The history and evolution of peace operations is a torturous path winding over many decades. Peace operations are multilateral in nature and encompass three primary goals: the prevention of armed confrontation, observation, following a violent conflict, and the enforcement of treaties and agreements following the cessation of hostilities.

The UNSC first realized the need for such an entity in 1965, when they established the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations. At the outset of the 1990s, which coincided with the decline of communism and the end of the Cold War, the UN found itself vested with greater liberty to help in ensuring Global Peace, in a way hitherto unimaginable. It was at this juncture that, in 1992, peacekeeping was finally institutionalized in the form of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) [22]. Peace operations witnessed their peak in 1991 and were subsequently followed by a steady decline, with one smaller peak in 1997. Interestingly, whether peace operations were led by the UN, authorized by the UN, or independent of UN oversight, the patterns remained almost identical [21].

The end of the Cold War spelled a time of great aspirations, regarding the possibilities of global peace. At the request of the UN Security Council (UNSC) and following their summit that same year, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, then Secretary-General, outlined an ambitious plan in his seminal report entitled, *An Agenda for Peace*.⁹ His new proposal laid out five core principles which included *preventive diplomacy, peace enforcement, peacemaking, peacekeeping, and post-conflict reconstruction*. These principles covered all aspects of preventing warfare, from hindering its occurrence, through to and including armed intervention, and ending with post-conflict development and reconciliation.

It is important to note that despite these various initiatives, the very first recorded peace operation undertaken by the UN preceded any formal organization. It was the UNTSO, or the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization, which monitored the 1948 truce between Israel and the Arab neighboring states involved in the conflict. One may question the utility of this effort, considering the current conflict, and the fact that, 75 years later, these observers are still in place at the time of writing, and the results remain mitigated at best [25].

In the mid to late 1990s, a string of catastrophically failed responses, such as those in former Yugoslavia (Bosnia Herzegovina), Somalia, and Rwanda, resulted in a culling of international support for the organization. However, not long after, following the plan developed by Boutros-Ghali, international support returned. By 2010, the UN deployed nearly 100,000 armed forces, making it second only to the United States in the number of uniformed personnel. Butros-Ghali also called for the creation of peace enforcement units as part of his plan, though this never occurred, and there still exists no formal doctrine associated with UN peacekeeping operations. There do, however, exist three guiding principles to peacekeeping operations according to the unofficial *UN Capstone Doctrine* of 2008.

⁹ [23]. See Also [24].

These principles are consent, impartiality, and the non-use of force, except in self-defense and defense of the mandate [26].

The purview of the UN and its abilities to override sovereign authority expanded during the immediate post-Cold War era. This can be directly attributed to a change in the nature of the conflicts themselves. According to Doyle and Sambanis, and their outstanding research on UN peace operations, between the turn of the twentieth century and 1941, approximately 80 percent of all wars were interstate conflicts; whereas between the end of World War II and up until 1976, the nature of armed conflict changed and approximately 85 percent of all conflicts became intrastate or conducted within the borders of a single state. These types of conflicts were often characterized by SIEs, separatist struggles for independence, civil wars, insurgencies, rebellions, or guerilla movements, often with the belligerents merely serving as proxies for exogenous interests [24].

Peacekeeping operations have not been limited to the UN, however, as regional forces and coalitions have taken on an increasing number of these missions as well. Thus, according to the Princeton University Encyclopedia of Self-determination—the Princetoniensis, NATO, the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWS), the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and on occasion, even the EU have stepped into the breach, generally in their own areas of responsibility (AOR), but also sometimes further afield [22].

11. Conclusion and policy recommendations

Three different hypotheses were advanced in this chapter. The first relates to the human proclivity and penchant for violence. Whether we like it or, not humanity has a distinct and morbid fascination for violence and death. This was echoed in the writings of the eminent psychologist Sigmund Freud [27], who developed the concept of *Thanatos*, the death instinct or the self-destructive instinct of humanity, which stands in contradistinction with *Eros*, the life instinct. Freud's [27] premise was that *Thanatos* influences and drives self-destructive and aggressive behavior, which in turn contributes to conflict and destructive tendencies in human behavior. From his astute analysis, we may infer and draw a parallel, as proposed in this chapter, that there is an inherent link between individual aggression and that perpetuated on a much wider scale.

The second hypothesis advanced flows from the first. Human violence and aggression are an integral part of human nature; and therefore, global peace, as it is normally envisioned, is not only unrealistic but also false and little more than a Utopian dream. This is borne out by current events and a cursory glance at new and developing military technology. It behooves us, then, to reconsider our approach and redefine what we mean when we speak about peace. The goals must be appropriately circumscribed. It is more realistic to envision a reduction of violent aggression than it is to chase after fleeting aspirations. Part of the solution, unsurprisingly, is the reformulation of education. This entails a long and drawn-out process, however, if there is to be any hope of a reduction in violence, this is one of the important steps that must be taken. We must learn to rethink how we witness and experience violence, from glamorizing war on the silver screen to the attribution of medals for killing on the battlefield.

Another crucial step in reducing violence is also obvious, and that is reducing international poverty and disparity. When hopelessness and despair become the fare

of individuals, and there is limited opportunity to support their families or improve their lot, the inevitable result is chaos, anomie, crime, and violence. The ever-increasing gap between the haves and the have-nots, along with rampant corruption, particularly within so-called liberal democracies, will inevitably result in violence. When people have nothing, they have nothing left to lose.

The third hypothesis postulated that there is a significant difference between individual aggression and conflict based upon collective group dynamics. Although unable to explore this hypothesis with the detail it deserves, the outlines were nevertheless clarified. This does not mean that they are different in nature, indeed, the seeds of collective violence flow directly from the individual. There is an axiom which states, “you are what you eat.” If we consume violence, be it visually, kinesthetically, or auditorily, we will inevitably become the harbingers and progenitors of violence. Children raised in violent and unstable homes statistically lead delinquent and impoverished careers. The mechanisms of violence and aggression remain elusive despite the extensive research that has been conducted over the centuries. Further research is thus still required.

It is not until we are able to effectively understand the mechanisms that drive violent aggression that there is any hope for a reduction of war and conflict. Changing human nature from competitive to cooperative is an unenviable task, but until such a change occurs violence and aggression will be our reality.

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Genocide: The Mother of All Crimes

Frederik Harhoff

Abstract

Genocide is frequently misperceived as a crime involving the killing of a lot of people—without further qualification. However, this is a misinterpretation of the crime, because it does not embrace the particular *mental element* of a *special intent* to destroy, in whole or in part, a *national, ethnic, racial or religious* group, *as such*. Common to these groups, and indeed the reason for the Convention's protection of them, is that they are *permanent* in the sense that their members have not made any individual and deliberate choice to join the group; they were rather “born” into membership. According to the 1948 Genocide Convention, genocide can indeed be committed by killing members of the group, but it can also be committed in *other* ways—without actually killing anyone—for example, by causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group, *or* by forcibly transferring children of the group to another group. Looking at a few historic genocide cases—but without going into any lengthy detail with them—and in view of the current armed conflicts in Ukraine and Palestine, this chapter seeks to analyze the elements of the crime of genocide and to put the current applications by South Africa against Israel and by Nicaragua against Germany before the International Court of Justice in a broader context.

Keywords: genocide, International Genocide Cases, International Humanitarian Law, The International Court of Justice, provisional measures, The International Criminal Court

1. Introduction

One of the essential yearnings of human life is to be able to *live in peace*—that is to live without fear of being attacked and exposed to violence, persecution, and intimidation by others. I boldly suggest that every human being shares this aspiration anywhere on this planet; who—when it all comes down to it—would not prefer to live in peace rather than in fear of violence?

Yet it appears that we have never experienced any extended period in history where mankind has enjoyed *total* and *global* peace; there was always *somewhere* in the World where humans were fighting wars and inflicting death, violence, bloodshed, pain, and fear upon other human societies. As far as we know, wars have been fought

since time immemorial from long before ancient Greece to modern-day wars. Global peace, thus, is but a hot dream—an unattainable ideal which we all strive for, but in vain.

Wars, or adopting the modern expression “*armed conflicts*,” are fought for any number of reasons, such as natural resources, historical grievances, the pursuit of power, hate, envy, revenge, lust—or any of the other deadly sins enshrined in all camps of faith. Regardless the *reasons* for armed conflicts, they always involve the *killing* of other people.

However, there was always an inverse attempt to at least put some *limits* to the killings and suffering in armed conflict, based primarily on considerations of *humanity*—in particular for persons not taking an active role in the hostilities [1]. Sun Tsu (sixth-century BC), for instance, advised respect for one’s enemy, and military commanders since the Middle Ages have realized the martial wisdom that by far the best way to improve the fighting potential of *one’s own army* is to reduce your soldiers’ fear of what the enemy might be up to; *we can all focus more efficiently if we know what’s coming*. That reduces panic and enables us to act with at least some degree of human restraint.

This wise insight led to the development of basic *rules of war* with principles, prohibitions, and instructions about what combatants *can* and *cannot* do during armed conflict—chiefly for the purpose of boosting the confidence and morale of one’s own soldiers—and, perhaps indirectly, also out of respect for human life. Inflicting unnecessary harm on enemy fighters, for instance, torturing prisoners of war, deliberately killing innocent civilians, or indiscriminately shelling civilians and combatants, were among such rules that still form the core of international humanitarian law. However, contrary to general principles of *human rights*, the *act of killing is not, in and of itself, forbidden in armed conflict*—as long as the victim is a lawful military target. (In fact, killing an enemy soldier may, under certain circumstances, even be *required*—as a duty).

Violating the laws of armed conflict by, say, unlawful killing, may constitute a *war crime* [1] or a *crime against humanity* that can be prosecuted and punished by a domestic or an international Court of law—so why is this not enough to protect the victims of war and violence? Why has *genocide* appeared as an additional and indeed *qualified* crime, and just how do we distinguish between genocide and “ordinary” war crimes and/or crimes against humanity when these crimes have so many common features?¹ [2].

2. What is “genocide”?

According to Article 2 of the Genocide Convention,² [3] “genocide” means any of the particular acts lined up in that article “committed with *the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, an ethnic, national, racial or religious group – as such*.” Common to these four groups is that they are permanent and stable in the sense that their members do not (or at least very rarely) change their personal affiliation with the group; most Christians or Muslims, for example, are born Christian or Muslim and they will

¹ The word “genocide” is composed of the Greek noun “genus” (meaning species, sort) and the Latin verb “caeda” (meaning to kill, cut down).

² “Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide” of 9th December 1948.

live and die as such. These four groups, in other words, are protected by the Genocide Convention because their members form part of the group *for reasons they have not chosen by themselves*; they cannot be blamed for their membership and it would run contrary to fundamental human rights to deny them the right to belong to that group. Political, ideological, or professional groups, in contrast, are formed by the members' personal and selected priorities and are therefore not covered by the humanitarian protection offered by the Convention [4].

"Destruction" of the group is frequently committed by *killing* all or most of the group's members, because that is often the fastest and most efficient way of getting rid of the group. However, genocide can also be committed in a number of *other* ways, provided the acts are perpetrated with the *special intent* to eliminate the group, cf. Article 2: "*Killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting upon the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures to prevent births within the group; and forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.*" Obviously, such measures are all conducive to the ultimate destruction of the group, but the point here is that genocide does not necessarily imply the killing of anyone.

Thus, genocide can be committed without any physical harm occurring whatsoever! In plain words: The members of the targeted group may well survive physically, but the *purpose* of a genocidal act must be to deprive the group of its *right to exist as a group*; it must vanish. This is the *objective* element of genocide (*Actus reus*).

However, it is not enough to simply make the group somehow disappear physically. The Convention particularly requires that the destruction of the group must be committed with the *special intent* to destroy the group *as such, in whole or in part*. The acts listed in Article 2 of the Convention suggest that genocide is not just about the *physical destruction* of the group (e.g., by killing the members), but as much about the deprivation of the group's fundamental *right and ability to exist as a group* in a given place. The abstract target of genocide is really *the group as such*, not necessarily its individual members.

A group, obviously, may physically disappear if all the members are killed, but it may also cease to exist *as a group* if its members no longer share the common values, beliefs, and experiences that used to bind them together (internally), and when the group is no longer perceived or seen *as a group* by society (externally). In other words, the odd member of what was once "a group" may still be physically alive and walk around freely, but that member shall henceforth not be able to *feel* that he or she belongs to the group, simply because the group is no longer relevant for the member, or because the group no longer exists. *What the perpetrator really seeks to destroy is what the members share and enjoy together, that is, the very foundation of and reasons for the group's existence.* This means, to fully understand the concept "genocide," that the group must lose its internal *coherence* so that its members no longer have any ethnic, national, racial, or religious common ground or attachment—or whatever it is that binds them together. That is the *subjective* element of the offense of genocide (*Mens rea*). *Both* elements of the crime of genocide (*Mens rea and Actus reus*) must be proven at trial beyond a reasonable doubt as a condition for conviction of genocide.

Regrettably, it is a widespread misperception that "genocide" is merely about the *killing* of a lot of people; such straightforward killings may well constitute a war crime or a crime against humanity, indeed, but it is *not genocide* if it is not committed with the *special intent* to deprive that group of its fundamental *right to exist here—as a group* [4].

Genocide is—or at least was—considered the most serious crime that humans can possibly commit, albeit for *other* reasons than just killing the members of the group.³—Were we to ask hypothetically *who* may possibly possess the almighty power to decide *which (non-criminal) human groups* should be allowed to exist as “groups” on this planet—and indeed which groups should *not*—most of us would probably answer that this authority rests exclusively with *the Gods* (*i.e.*, those immortal powers who reside and reign *above* us all, in Heaven or Nirvana, or perhaps elsewhere in *nature*). However, denying certain groups the *very right to exist*—as such—is certainly *not* a determination that we mortals can rightfully take upon ourselves.

Admittedly, this may be a somewhat Christian and Western view based on a perception of the sacrosanct value of every human being, but it probably reflects a belief that it is not that different from how other religions assess the quality of human life. It is therefore plausible to hold that the commission of the crime of genocide would amount to hubris in many or perhaps most parts of the World. (In any case, the concept of genocide was in fact conceived in the West - by Raphael Lemkin, a Polish Jew, in 1944 in response to the Nazi Holocaust against Jews).

This is exactly why genocide was labeled “*the mother of all crimes*.” After all, the members of the group have done *nothing wrong or unlawful*; their only “sin” is to belong to an “ethnic, national, racial or religious group” and to share the values and culture of that group. That, however, cannot and indeed should not ever be a legitimate reason to *destroy* the group—neither in whole, nor in part [5].

3. Genocide cases

The extermination of appr. 6 mil. Jews during the Holocaust is known, recognized, and forsaken by most, but the crime of genocide has been, and indeed is being perpetrated over and over again. It may therefore be appropriate to illustrate genocide by way of a few cases which have drawn international attention, such as Srebrenica; Rwanda; the Armenian genocide in Nagorno-Karabakh 1915-1923 and the ongoing conflict in the enclave; Ukraine; and the current conflict in Gaza.

3.1 Srebrenica and the Balkan war

The mass killing of (Muslim) Bosniaks, during the Balkan wars from 1993 to 1995, carried out by units of the Bosnian Serb Army of Republika Srpska (VRS), including the massacre in Srebrenica in July 1995 of around 8.000 Bosniak men and boys and other instances of systematic extermination, were documented by the UN International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) [6] and judged as crimes of *genocide*. Convictions of general Mladić, president Karadžić and other Serb leaders for this crime were based on evidence presented at their trials (documents, radio broadcasts, video footages, speeches, etc.), in which they were quoted to assert that “Bosniaks have no right to exist in the Greater Serbia!” By way of a *joint criminal*

³ After the adoption of the amendment of the ICC-Statute in 2010, many seem to hold that the crime of *aggression* also ranges *above* “ordinary” war crimes and crimes against humanity in terms of culpability, at par with genocide.

enterprise fostered between Serb leaders, politicians, businessmen, army officers, soldiers, and others, more than 100.000 individuals, mostly Bosniaks, were killed or expelled in an attempt to ethnically cleanse Greater Serbia of Muslims.

The ICTR's [7] and the ICTY's [6] Trial Chambers and the Appeals Chamber, and subsequently the ICC [8] and other international criminal tribunals, upheld the definition of genocide as outlined out above⁴ [9].

All three parties to the wars in the former Yugoslavia, *i.e.*, Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks, committed and were convicted by the ICTY of *war crimes* and *crimes against humanity*, but only Serbs were convicted of genocide by the Tribunal.

3.2 Rwanda

Tensions between Hutus and Tutsis go back several centuries but escalated during the German colonization of the area from 1884, and then later by Belgium in 1917 after World War I, when Rwanda and Burundi became Belgian colonies.

From the outset, the European colonists had favored the minority Tutsi group over the majority Hutu population, believing the Tutsis to be racially and intellectually superior. The colonial authorities assigned Tutsis to administrative positions and gave them privileges in the colonial administration. Tutsi children were offered higher education in European schools and universities in order to raise and train new generations of well-educated young French-speaking Tutsis who could subsequently return and be integrated in the colonial administration—a program that was actually successful, even if it were highly discriminatory. The Belgians also modernized and refined the economies, but the Tutsis were always favored—at the expense and of the Hutus—and to their discontent. Belgium introduced a permanent ethnical division of the population into three groups (Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa) in the 1930's, and imposed *identity cards* on the population to document each individual's ethnicity as either Hutu, Tutsi, or Twa.

After World War II, a Hutu revolutionary movement began to grow in Rwanda, supported by the Catholic Church and fueled by increasing resentment of the colonial administration's discriminatory reforms and practice. A civil war erupted in 1990 when the Tutsi dominated Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) invaded Northern Rwanda from Uganda and tried to overthrow the Hutu Government. RPF's attempt failed, however, but resulted in peace negotiations between the parties leading to a power-sharing agreement in August 1993, which included the deployment of a UN peace-keeping force (UNAMIR). On 6th April 1994, the Rwandan reformist Hutu President Habyarimana was killed when his aircraft was shot down during landing in Kigali, allegedly by South African mercenaries hired by the Hutu rebel leader Théoneste Bagosora. That event marked the beginning of the genocide in Rwanda, during which approximately 800.000 Tutsi men, women, and children were exterminated for the reason that they were tutsis! The RPF fought back and eventually won the war in less than 4 months, chasing thousands of Hutus out of Rwanda and into neighboring Congo.

⁴ See for clarification ICTR's Judgment of 28th September 1998 in the trial against Jean-Paul Akayesu; UN-ICTR.org; Case nr. ICTR-96-04-T; at paras. 497-512 and 730-733. - See also *Schabas, William*, "The Crime of Crimes - Genocide in International Law"; pages 130-133, 157-176, 211-227; Cambridge University Press, 2000.

The UN International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) [7] was set up in Arusha in November 1994-1995 and prosecuted 93 persons, out of which 62 were sentenced for genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. The ICTR's conviction of Jean-Paul Akayesu in September 1998 was the first ever international judgment of genocide, defining genocide as the deprivation of *the right to exist as a group*.

3.3 Nagorno-Karabakh

Nagorno-Karabakh is a small Armenian held enclave (4,400 km²) located within Azerbaijan but mainly inhabited mostly by Orthodox Christian Armenians (appr. 150,000) with historical ties to neighboring Armenia, and a minority of Muslim Azerbaijanis (appr. 7,000). Ownership of the enclave's territory has been disputed by both countries ever since the dissolution of the Russian Empire in 1917 and the establishment of the Soviet Union in 1922.

The three main ethnic groups of the South Caucasus, *Armenians, Azerbaijanis, and Georgians*, have disagreed for centuries about the nature of political government in the region and ended up being invaded in early 1918 by the Ottoman Empire, under the rule of the Young Turks, which ordered what eventually became known as the "Armenian Genocide"—one of the first recorded instances of genocide. In May 1918, separate Armenian, Azerbaijani, and Georgian national republics declared their short-lived independence until they were assumed as *Soviet republics* in 1922. The mass killings, deportations, and other atrocities resulted in the deaths of an estimated 1.5 million Armenians between 1915 and 1923.

The First Nagorno-Karabakh War from February 1988 to May 1994 was an ethnic, religious, and a territorial conflict between the majority of *Orthodox Christian Armenians*, in Nagorno-Karabakh backed by Armenia, and the minority of *Muslim Azerbaijanis*, supported by Azerbaijan and Turkey, who strived to crush the secessionist Armenian movement in the enclave.⁵

In the developments leading up to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990, Azerbaijan attempted again to seize control over Nagorno-Karabakh, which prompted the Armenian majority in Nagorno-Karabakh to hold a referendum in February 1988. The Armenians voted overwhelmingly to secede from Azerbaijan and proclaimed the (unrecognized) Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh.

As the Soviet Union further disintegrated, the conflict between Armenians and Azerbaijanis grew increasingly violent, resulting in widespread inter-ethnic cleansing directed by both Armenians and Azerbaijanis against each other. Full-scale fighting erupted in early 1992 and Turkey deployed mercenaries to support Azerbaijan and assist in blockading most trade to Armenia, including humanitarian aid. International mediation by the Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) and other international organizations ultimately failed to bring a viable result.⁶ By the end of the war in 1994, however, the Armenians controlled the enclave and a few surrounding Azerbaijani territories, notably the Lachin Corridor—a mountain

⁵ See https://wiki2.org/en/First_Nagorno-Karabakh_War.

See also *UN Security Council Resolutions* on Nagorno-Karabakh: Res. 822 of 30th April 1993; Res. 853 of 29th July 1993; Res. 874 of 14th October 1993; and Res. 884 of 12th November 1993, all condemning the violations and calling for support of the negotiations in the CSCE Minsk peace process.

⁶ See, e.g., <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/countries-that-recognize-the-armenian-genocide> See also (Polls) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armenian_genocide_recognition.

pass that links Nagorno-Karabakh with mainland Armenia. A Russian-brokered ceasefire was signed in May 1994, but the conflict never really ended. Hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijanis had been expelled from Armenia, Nagorno-Karabakh, and the surrounding territories, while some at least some 130.000 Armenians living in Azerbaijan or Armenian border areas had been forcibly displaced. This left the enclave in a state of legal uncertainty with a remaining *de facto* independence, but internationally unrecognized.

The second Nagorno-Karabakh war began in September 2020 with another Azerbaijani offensive using drones, and missiles, supported again by Turkey. Israel also supplied technical assistance, such as supplying lingering munitions, or suicide drones. Azerbaijan made significant gains during the war, regaining all of the occupied territories surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh and capturing one-third of Nagorno-Karabakh. The war ended quickly on 10 November 2020 when a ceasefire agreement was signed between Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Russia, and all the remaining occupied territories surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh were formally returned to Azerbaijan; the enclave was then officially recognized as officially the “Republic of Artsakh”.⁷ An approximately 2000-strong Russian peacekeeping force was deployed to the region for a minimum of 5 years to keep things under control and notably to protect the narrow Lachin corridor.

Azerbaijan again launched several attacks against the enclave and blocked the Lachin corridor and other strategic points while ignoring the Russian Peacekeepers’ calls to observe the 2020 peace agreement’s demands and return to their agreed positions. Azerbaijani’s President claimed that Armenians living in Nagorno-Karabakh would have to either accept Azerbaijani citizenship—or look for another place to live! The fighting between Armenians and Azerbaijanis continued, but Russia finally managed to broker yet another a cease-fire agreement on 20th September 2023. Under the terms of the agreement, the Artsakh Defense Army was disbanded and temporarily sheltered by the Russian peacekeepers and the ICRC. Local Armenian residents then feared that the continued blockade of the Lachin corridor and Azerbaijan’s blockade of energy supplies from the enclave threatened to exclude them from their homeland, and various human rights organizations warned of a genocide risk. An estimated 100,400 ethnic Armenians, representing 99% of the remaining population of Nagorno-Karabakh, fled by the end of September 2023, leaving a couple dozen people within the region.

The case of Nagorno-Karabakh/Artsakh is relevant because Armenia has repeatedly argued that Azerbaijan is truly determined to destroy the (ethnic and religious) Armenian group in Artsakh *as such*, accusing Azerbaijan of genocide. Azerbaijan, on its side, holds that the conflict is really only about vindication of a territory that rightfully belongs to Azerbaijan. The legal determination of this question depends on evidence of the *subjective* element (as explained above) in Azerbaijan’s motives to expel Armenians from the enclave. A *judicial* determination of this issue yet remains.

3.4 Russia and Ukraine

On 24th February 2022, Russia launched a “special military operation” against Ukraine under the assertion that Russia was acting in *self-defense* according to Article 51 of the UN Charter in order to protect the Russian-speaking population in the two

⁷ See short account of Nagorno-Karabakh’s history at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki?curid=65220>.

Eastern Ukrainian oblasts Luhansk and Donetsk from genocide, allegedly committed by Ukraine, and to defend the right of the two oblasts to become sovereign and independent states.

Two days later, on 26th February 2022, Ukraine filed an application with the ICJ instituting proceedings under Article IX of the 1948 Genocide Convention against Russia concerning the interpretation and application of that Convention.

In its application, Ukraine contended (a) that Russia's *reasons* for the attack—that Ukraine was committing genocide against the Russian speaking population in Luhansk and Donetsk—were groundless, and (b) that Russia's justification for its use of force against Ukraine on 24th February 2022 and its prior recognition on 21st February 2022 of the independence of the so-called “Donetsk People's Republic” and “Luhansk People's Republic” constituted themselves violations of Articles I and IV of the Genocide Convention. Ukraine added that Russia's attack, anyway, constituted a violation of Ukraine's sovereignty in light of Russia's recognition in the UN of Ukraine as an independent State after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990.

Ukraine requested the Court to “adjudge and declare” that, contrary to what the Russian Federation claimed, *no acts of genocide had been committed by Ukraine* in the two oblasts. Thus, Ukraine asked the Court to affirm that Russia cannot lawfully take any action against Ukraine under the Genocide Convention aimed at preventing or punishing an *alleged*—and falsely claimed—genocide in Luhansk and Donetsk. Ukraine further asked the Court to order *provisional measures* by ordering Russia to suspend its “military operation” and to prevent any further armed violence against Ukraine, and finally to pay full reparation for all damage caused by Russia.

Russia, for its part, rejected the application because there was no “dispute,” at the time of the filing of the application, between the Parties, as required under Article IX of the Genocide Convention, and hence the Court had no jurisdiction.

Russia further raised the objection that Ukraine had introduced *new claims* in its subsequent *memorial*. While Ukraine's *application* originally asserted that *no acts of genocide had been committed by Ukraine*, the *memorial* merely held that there is “*no credible evidence*” of Ukraine's alleged violation of the Genocide Convention, which requires a different standard of proof. In Russia's view, thus, there is a discrepancy between Ukraine's submissions in its original *application* and its subsequent *memorial*, and it would be “inconsistent with Article IX to broaden the Court's jurisdiction under that provision to rule on issues that are not regulated by the Convention, as Ukraine tried to do”.⁸ Russia therefore submitted that Ukraine's new claims significantly altered the scope of Ukraine's application which, in Russia's view, constituted an abuse of process.

Ukraine explained that it had simply provided specificity to its claim, as is permitted by the Rules of the Court. The formulations in the Application and the Memorial both arise from the same dispute with the same subject-matter, and Ukraine had therefore simply asked the Court to determine whether there was in fact any credible evidence of Ukraine's responsibility for genocide. In Ukraine's submission, Russia had falsely accused the applicant of committing genocide and had invoked the Convention in bad faith in order to justify, in an abusive manner, its military actions in violation of international humanitarian law as well as Articles I and IV of the Genocide Convention.

⁸ See ICJ's Judgment of 2 February 2024 in “*Ukraine vs. Russia concerning Allegations of Genocide under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*”, at para 131.

The Court agreed that Ukraine's amended submission merely clarified the claim as presented in its Application and therefore did not alter the subject of the dispute originally brought before the Court under the terms of the Application. Accordingly, the Court found that Article IX of the Genocide Convention does not preclude the possibility for a State to seek a declaration that it is *not* responsible for committing genocide in violation of the Convention. Thus, the Court accepted Ukraine's request for a ruling that it did *not* breach its obligations under the Convention, and Russia's objection on this point was therefore rejected⁹ [10].

On 16th March 2022, the Court then indicated *provisional measures* and ordered Russia to *suspend* the military operations commenced against Ukraine. The Court also ordered both Parties to refrain from any action which might aggravate or extend the dispute before the Court or make it more difficult to resolve.¹⁰

In the Order for provisional measures, the Court observed that the Convention does *not* authorize a Contracting Party to use force against another State for the purpose of preventing or punishing an alleged genocide. The Court noted that there was no evidence, anyway, to substantiate Russia's allegation that genocide had been committed by Ukraine in the two oblasts. The Court therefore concluded that Ukraine had retained "a plausible right" *not* to be subjected to military operations by Russia for the hypothetical purpose of preventing and punishing an alleged genocide in Ukraine.¹¹

The Court found, on the other hand, that even *if* Russia's recognition of the Luhansk and Donetsk oblasts as independent republics and its subsequent attack on Ukraine had been made under the false pretext of compliance with the Genocide Convention, as Ukraine claimed, these acts would *not* constitute a violation of obligations under Articles I and IV in the Convention.

In its provisional judgment on jurisdiction of 2nd February 2024, the Court rejected most of Russia's objections but *upheld* Russia's contention that its recognition of the independence of the so-called "Donetsk People's Republic" and "Luhansk People's Republic," and its subsequent "special military operation" against Ukraine beginning on 24 February 2022 did *not* violate Articles I and IV of the Genocide Convention, as claimed by Ukraine. These acts may well constitute violations of *other* provisions under international law, but the Genocide Convention itself does not address the issue of *the means* by which a contracting party seeks to prevent an alleged genocide. The Court, in other words, supported Russia's preliminary objection that Ukraine's false allegations of genocide and the related use of force, *fall outside the scope of the Genocide Convention*. Thus, the only part of the case that still remains to be heard is whether Ukraine itself, as claimed by Russia, had been responsible for committing genocide in the two oblasts.

By this ruling, the bulk of Ukraine's application appeared to have been turned down by the Court. The question therefore remains whether the binding *provisional measure* against Russia to *immediately suspend its military operation in Ukraine* has also become void by virtue of the fact that the Court has now *rejected* the jurisdictional part of the case upon which Ukraine's request for provisional measures was originally

⁹ *Op. cit.*, at para 107.

¹⁰ See the Court's Order of 26th March 2024 for provisional measures, at para 86.

¹¹ *Op. cit.*, at para 74. - See also Nedeski, N., Sparks, T., & Hernández, G. (2023); "The World Is Burning, Urgently and Irreparably – a Plea for Interim Protection against Climatic Change at the ICJ". *The Law & Practice of International Courts and Tribunals*, 22(2), 301-337. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15718034-bja10095>.

based (*i.e.*, that Russia's recognition of the two oblasts and its use of force was a violation of the Genocide Convention).¹²

An unprecedented number of 32 States intervened in the case on the side of Ukraine, albeit with considerable diversity on whether unilateral force could be used to prevent genocide. Some States sided with the Court's finding that the Convention does not authorize the use of force to *prevent* genocide, while others held that Russia's use of force could and indeed should be considered lawful *if* there were sufficient evidence to show that genocide was in fact being committed by Ukraine.

In the meantime, the *International Criminal Court* (ICC) [8] has issued international *arrest warrants* against the Russian Federation's President Vladimir Putin; Russia's Commissioner for Children's Rights Ms. Maria Alekseyevna Lvova-Belova; Lieutenant General Sergei Ivanovich Kobylash; Admiral Viktor Nikolayevich Sokolov; Russia's (then) Defense Minister Mr. Sergei Kuzhugetovich Shoigu; and the Chief of the Russian General Staff Mr. Valery Vasilyevich Gerasimov. However, Russia has not ratified the ICC Statute and is therefore not required to arrest and transfer these suspects; they can only be arrested and transferred if they set foot on the territory of one of the 124 States who have ratified the Statute.

3.5 The conflict in Gaza

The current conflict between Israel and Gaza goes back to the 6-day war in 1967 and the Oslo Accord in 1993 but is also a part of a much older regional conflict between different powers in the Middle East, including Iran and Saudi-Arabia, Qatar, and Saudi-Arabia and between Egypt and Turkey.

Hamas won the election over Fatah and took control in Gaza in 2005, which led to a political division of the Palestinian Self-Government between Fatah in the West Bank, and Hamas in Gaza. As a result of the fighting that erupted in Gaza between Hamas and Fatah, Israel agreed to withdraw from the area according to the "Disengagement Plan" in 2005 (originally proposed by Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in 2003). Israel accordingly closed its *military institutions* and demolished most Israeli settlements in Gaza.

However, the "Disengagement Plan" authorized Israel to continue guarding the borders of the Gaza Strip and to maintain exclusive authority in Gaza air space and along the Mediterranean coast, as well as to exercise control of security and to monitor passage of goods and persons on the Egyptian-Gaza border. Israel still controls six of Gaza's seven land crossings, while Egypt controls the land crossing at Rafah. Gaza is also still dependent on Israel for water, electricity, telecommunications and other utilities, currency, and Israel still issues identification papers and permits to enter and leave the territory. According to the UN and some international experts, Israel appeared to have maintained *de facto* its military occupation of Gaza, which Israel has denied, and Israel's treatment of the Palestinians in both Gaza and the West Bank for decades is seen by some as the very root of the mistrust, fear, and hatred between the two peoples.¹³ Hope for a peaceful future might possibly lie in the oft-proposed

¹² See Alexianu, Matei: "Ukraine's ICJ Provisional Measures: A Narrow Path to Remedies", in the EJIL blog on 20th February, 2024, of the European Journal of International Law.

¹³ See, *e.g.*, Sanger, Andrew (2011). "The Contemporary Law of Blockade and the Gaza Freedom Flotilla". In M.N. Schmitt (Editor). *Yearbook of International Humanitarian Law 2010. Yearbook of International Humanitarian Law. Vol. 13. Springer Science & Business Media*. p. 429.

creation of a two-State solution based on mutual respect for each other—a solution which, ironically, both Israel and Hamas seem to oppose—for their own political, security, and ideological reasons.

In response to Hamas's terrorist attack against Israel and the taking of Israeli civilians as hostages on 7th October 2023, Israel launched a counter-offensive of massive bombings targeted at power infrastructures, public institutions, residence buildings, hospitals, mosques, refugee camps, etc., claiming that these sites were indeed lawful military targets in an all-out war against Hamas. Israel asserted that it was acting purely in self-defense and that the purpose was to "eliminate Hamas." According to the Israeli Prime Minister, Government officials and the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), Israel is doing "everything possible" to protect the civilian population in Gaza and is acting in full compliance with international humanitarian law.

In Israel's view, Hamas is deliberately seeking shelter among civilians and in civilian structures, thereby itself exposing Palestinian civilians to the shelling, and calculatedly taking Palestinian civilians as hostages. This is commonly referred to as unlawful human shielding. Hamas, in return, claims that Israel and the IDF are indiscriminately shelling the Gaza strip, leaving no means for the civilian population to find shelter anywhere after having been pushed around from one end of the Gaza strip to another.

In October 2023, shortly after Hamas' attack on Israel, *Germany* publicly offered military and financial help to Israel and promised to take action against the militant Hamas group in Germany.

More than 29,000 Palestinians are reported to have been killed and up to 70% of all buildings destroyed in whole or in part. As a security measure, the IDF initially blocked access of humanitarian aid, medicine, water, fuel, and electricity, although Israel later softened its position and allowed limited access of these supplies. Both the UN and various international relief agencies have issued warnings of an imminent humanitarian catastrophe and called for providing immediate access of humanitarian supplies into Gaza.

In November 2024, the ICC [8] issued *arrest warrants* against *three leading members of Hamas*: the Commander-in-chief of the Al-Qassam Brigades, Mohammed Diab Ibrahim Al-Masri, (more commonly known as DEIF); Mr. Yahya SINWAR, and Mr. Ismail HANIYEH. *The latter two suspects are believed to have been killed. At the same time, the ICC also issued arrest warrants against Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Israel's former Minister of Defense Mr. Yoav Gallant.* However, Israel has not ratified the ICC Statute and is therefore not required to arrest and transfer these suspects; they can only be arrested and transferred if they set foot on the territory of one of the 124 States who have ratified the Statute.

4. South Africa's first request for provisional measures before the International Court of Justice

A few months later, on 29th December 2023, South Africa filed an application against Israel with the International Court of Justice (ICJ in The Hague), alleging that the State of Israel is responsible for violations of the 1948 UN Genocide Convention committed against the Palestinian population of Gaza. Israel, unsurprisingly, denied the allegation and asked for the case to be dismissed as completely unfounded. The US, the UK, and several other European countries supported Israel's view and held that the case was groundless. South Africa also requested the Court to adopt

provisional measures, notably to order Israel to immediately suspend its military operations in and against Gaza.¹⁴

South Africa argued in its opening submission on 11th January 2024 that Israel and the Israeli Forces (IDF) were in fact—and had been all along—guided by the *special intent* to deny Palestinians the right to exist as a “national, ethnic, racial or religious group, *as such*” in Gaza; (The Palestinians, to be sure, constitute a “national” group in the sense of the Genocide Convention.)

South Africa concedes that Israel has an inherent right to defend itself against Hamas’s violent terrorist attacks against Israel and Israeli civilians on 7th October. South Africa argues, however, that the massive, continuous, and indiscriminate bombing of civilians and civilian infrastructure in Gaza, including bombings of hospitals, schools, and refugee shelters established by international organizations, among others, far exceeds the level of military force needed to “fight Hamas”—a terrorist group. These acts include killing Palestinian civilians, causing them serious bodily and mental harm, and inflicting on them conditions of life calculated to bring about their physical destruction which, in South Africa’s view, are genocidal acts attributable to Israel.¹⁵

The *special intent* required for genocide, in South Africa’s submission, can be inferred from the nature and *conduct* of Israel’s military operation in Gaza and from repeated *statements* by Israeli political and military leaders who have explained that it is impossible to distinguish physically, politically, and ideologically between the Palestinians and Hamas; in Israel’s view, apparently, they are all on the same path toward the extinction of Israel.

As long as Hamas manifestly violates *international humanitarian law* by deliberately hiding out among civilian Palestinians and in civilian buildings, Israel claims the right to lawfully target Hamas in these positions—even at the cost of thousands of civilian Palestinian lives and hundreds of buildings as *collateral damage*. This, however, would seem to leave open the question of how to identify Hamas warriors in Gaza and how to distinguish between Hamas and Palestinians in the first place.¹⁶

The issue here is whether the *principle of proportionality* in international humanitarian law may apply to Israel’s military campaign in Gaza. This principle is codified in Article 51 of Additional Protocol I and is also accepted as a rule in *customary international humanitarian law*.¹⁷ The principle of proportionality establishes that it is *prohibited* to launch an attack expected to cause incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians, damage to civilian objects, or a combination thereof, which would be *excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage* anticipated. According to the Commentary to Additional Protocol I [1], this means that the “concrete and direct military advantage” must be “*substantial and relatively close*.” Remote, long term

¹⁴ See South Africa’s submission of 29th December 2023, at para. 144 (1).

¹⁵ *Ibidem* at paras 1 and 4. - See also Zyberi, *Gentian*:” Application of the Genocide Convention to the Israeli military operations in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel)”, in” International Law Observer”, 2nd January 2024.

¹⁶ See, e.g. Lattimer, *Mark*:” Assessing Israel’s Approach to Proportionality in the Conduct of Hostilities in Gaza”, in” Lawfare” Thursday, November 16, 2023.

¹⁷ See Rule 14 in “*Customary International Humanitarian Law*”; ICRC, Cambridge University Press, 2005. Israel, to be sure, has *not* ratified Additional Protocol I but is still bound by *customary* international humanitarian law.

or tenuous advantages, on the other hand, should be disregarded in the planning and execution of the attack that may result in “excessive” civilian casualties.¹⁸

If the IDF, thus, were really determined to *only* target Hamas and other terrorist groups in Gaza (as Israel claims), the IDF could—and indeed should:

- *avoid* bombing civilian apartment buildings, hospitals, ambulances, maternity clinics, museums, mosques, etc., *unless* substantiated by reliable intelligence that Hamas was in fact hiding out or had concealed its weaponry in each of these particular locations;
- *avoid* to the greatest possible extent bombing vital infrastructure such as water stations, power stations, telecommunications (telephone, Internet, etc.), hospitals, schools.
- *ensure* protection for Palestinians in the South after having forced them to leave Northern Gaza; and
- *provide* the supply of humanitarian aid such as water, food, and medicine to the civilian population of Gaza.

Despite Israel’s official assurances that Israel respects international humanitarian law and does whatever possible to protect civilians and civilian buildings, the IDF’s *means and methods of combat*—according to the South African perspective—nevertheless indicate that it may have been Israel’s *intent* all along to destroy the Palestinian population in Gaza. In South Africa’s view, this is further supported by Israel’s indication that, once the war is over, Israel will in due course “control the security” of all of Gaza and thus effectively *occupy* the area.¹⁹

In any case, Israel’s continued shelling of civilian objects and dwellings in Gaza appear to exceed the limits of the principles of proportionality and precaution applicable in armed conflict.

Israel, on the other hand, argued that the Court has no jurisdiction in the case because, prior to the application on 29 December 2023, *there was no “dispute”* between the parties on the interpretation and application of the Genocide Convention, as required in Article IX of the Convention. According to Israel, this issue had never been officially and directly discussed between the two countries and thus, the first condition for ICJ’s jurisdiction is simply not met.

¹⁸ See “*Commentary on the Additional Protocols*”; ICRC, Geneva 1987, §2209.

¹⁹ South Africa further adduced that Israel’s promotion and protection of the illegal settlements in the occupied West Bank is similarly based on a *special intent* to deny Palestinians the right to exist as a group in the West Bank, but the current case before the ICJ is only about Gaza.

On 30th December 2022, for information, the UN General Assembly had adopted Resolution A/RES/77/247 in which, referring to Article 65 of the Statute of the ICJ, it requested the Court to give an *Advisory Opinion* on the “*legal consequences arising from the ongoing violation by Israel of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, from its prolonged occupation, settlement and annexation of the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including measures aimed at altering the demographic composition, character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem, and from its adoption of related discriminatory legislation and measures*”. Hearings on this request for an advisory opinion were scheduled for 19th to 26th February 2024. This matter, thus, is still pending.

Israel further claimed that it never had any intention to deny Palestinians the right to exist as a group in Gaza. The whole purpose of Israel's attacks on Gaza had only been to defeat Hamas as a political terrorist organization, in *lawful self-defense*, and to liberate the Israeli civilians taken, and still held, as hostages by Hamas. For Israel, the war merely concerns guaranteeing Israel's security against further terrorist attacks by Hamas, Jihad, and other terrorist groups that have openly declared their determination to destroy Israel and eradicate the country from the map.

Israel explained that the reason for the extremely high civilian casualties is due to Hamas' own war strategy—namely by deliberately *refusing* to distinguish themselves from the civilian population and by intentionally hiding out in civilian buildings and operating from there (which, by itself, constitutes war crimes, see above). In this way, Hamas has itself taken the civilian population as hostage in the war and Israel therefore bears no responsibility for the excessive destruction and numbers of casualties; *it is Hamas's own responsibility!* Furthermore, in Israel's view, Hamas is a *terrorist* group but *not* an ethnic, national, religious, or racial group and therefore does not enjoy protection under the Genocide Convention.

Moreover, Israel argued that Hamas had itself, on several occasions, unlawfully seized some of the vital, but extremely limited humanitarian aid that was eventually allowed into Gaza for the civilian population, such as fuel, water, medicine, only to use these resources to support its own warfare.

In its Decision of 26th January 2024, the Court decided to *admit* the case and thus ruled against Israel at this preliminary stage of the proceedings. The Court found that it does have jurisdiction in the matter because there is, in fact, a *possibility* that genocide *may indeed have been committed* against the Palestinians. That question, however, remains to be examined at trial. Ten other countries subsequently joined South Africa's case before the ICJ.²⁰

However, the Court refrained from ordering Israel to immediately *bring an end to the war*, pursuant to South Africa's request, as that would appear to interfere with Israel's right to self-defense. The Court therefore limited itself to order Israel, as *provisional measures*, to take all measures within its power to *prevent the commission of all acts within the scope of Article II of the Genocide Convention*. It also ordered Israel to *prevent any direct and public incitement to commit genocide* against members of the Palestinian group in the Gaza strip, and to prosecute those responsible for the atrocities. The Court went on to order Israel to *ensure access of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance* into the Gaza strip. Furthermore, the Court ordered Israel to take all effective measures to *prevent the destruction of any evidence* related to allegations of genocide. Finally, the Court ordered Israel to *submit a report* to the Court on all measures taken, to give effect to its orders within 1 month, *that is*, on 26th February 2024 (after the submission of the present article). Israel complied with the Court's Order and did submit its first report to the Court, as requested, but the report remains confidential.

5. South Africa's second request for provisional measures

On 6th March, furthermore, *South Africa* filed a *second* urgent request to the ICJ for *additional* provisional measures in light of the aggravating "new facts and changes

²⁰ Turkey, the Maldives, Bolivia, Libya, Chile, Spain, Palestine, Mexico, Colombia, and Nicaragua.

in the situation in Gaza — particularly the situation of widespread starvation — brought about by the continuing egregious breaches of the Genocide Convention ... by the State of Israel.” South Africa pointed to “Israel’s ongoing manifest violations of the provisional measures indicated by this Court on 26 January 2024 ... in order urgently to ensure the safety and security of 2.3 million Palestinians in Gaza, including over a million children.”²¹ In South Africa’s new submission, the situation once deemed “perilous” in February 2024 is now “so terrifying as to be unspeakable, as described by United Nations humanitarian chiefs, justifying — and indeed demanding — the indication of further provisional measures of protection.”²² Palestinians in Gaza are no longer just at “immediate risk of death by starvation”—they are *in fact* now dying.

In South Africa’s view, these deaths are “man-made, predictable and entirely preventable” and they will increase exponentially unless Israel stops its military activities and ends the blockade of humanitarian aid by its obstructions, restrictions, denials, and closed crossings. Israeli forces are “deliberately targeting and killing humanitarian workers, destroying Palestinian crops and arable land and even killing Palestinian livestock. Israel is forcing Palestinian men, women and children to eat animal feed, bird seed and leaves, unfit for human consumption and is attacking desperate Palestinians as they try to obtain aid from humanitarian convoys”²³. South Africa further contends that, according to UN Humanitarian chiefs: “the worst famine fears” have been realized”, and also quotes Medical Aid for Palestinians for declaring: “[t]his is the fastest decline in a population’s nutrition status ever recorded. That means children are being starved at the fastest rate the world has ever seen.”²⁴

South Africa therefore now requests the Court to additionally order that “*all* participants in the conflict must ensure that all fighting and hostilities come to an immediate halt, and that *all* hostages and detainees are released immediately” (italics added). South Africa further asks the Court to order that Israel “immediately suspends its military operations in Gaza; lifts its blockade of Gaza; rescinds all measures and practices that directly or indirectly obstructs the access of Palestinians in Gaza to humanitarian assistance and basic services; and ensures provision of adequate and sufficient food, water, fuel, shelter, clothing, hygiene and sanitation requirements, alongside medical assistance, including medical supplies and support”²⁵. South Africa also requested the Court to order Israel to submit an *open* report on its actions to comply with the Court’s provisional measures.²⁶ Israel, thus, is under considerable pressure to soften its grip on Gaza, and several traditional Western allies of Israel are now openly advising Israel to reduce the level of violence and ensure supply of humanitarian assistance.

²¹ See “South Africa’s Application and Urgent Request of 6th March 2024 to the ICJ for the indication of additional provisional measures and the modification of the Court’s prior provisional measures decisions pursuant to Article 41 of the Court’s Statute”, at para. 1.

²² *Ibidem*, at para 5, referring to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (‘UN OHCHR’) on Israeli operation into Rafah, 12 February 2024.

²³ *Ibidem*, at para 9.

²⁴ Quoted by South Africa, *ibidem* at para 11. See UN News, Gaza: “Worst famine fears realized as the 10th child reportedly starves to death”; 1 March 2024, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/03/1147112>. (See also: “Medical Aid for Palestinians”, February 29, 2024), <https://twitter.com/MedicalAidPal/status/1763172220900151317>.

²⁵ See South Africa’s Application of 6th March 2024, at para. 17.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, at para. 17. Israel’s first report of 26th February 2024 was kept confidential.

The Court rendered its Order on South Africa's second request on 28th March 2024 [11] and ordered Israel to take all necessary and effective measures to ensure, without delay, in full co-operation with the United Nations, the unhindered provision at scale by all concerned of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance, including food, water, electricity, fuel, shelter, clothing, hygiene, and sanitation requirements, as well as medical supplies and medical care to Palestinians throughout Gaza; and to ensure with immediate effect that its military does not commit acts which constitute a violation of any of the rights of the Palestinians in Gaza as a protected group under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.²⁷

Presumably, the parties will now be given a few months to prepare for the main trial before the proceedings can begin, and a final judgment will then be handed down in a few years' time.

The core of the case, as explained above, is whether South Africa can bring reliable evidence at trial to convince the Judges, *beyond a reasonable doubt*, that Israel does in fact entertain the necessary *special intent* to destroy the Palestinian group—as such—in Gaza, and that it does in fact commit (or is responsible for the commission of) all or some of the acts contained in Article II of the Genocide Convention.

Should the Court ultimately conclude by the end of the trial in the present case that Israel has indeed been responsible for genocide by denying the Palestinians the right to exist as a group in Gaza, Israel may conceivably be ordered to pay compensation and help rebuild the destroyed infrastructure, etc. If Israel does not comply with the Court's orders, it may face diplomatic, political, and/or economic sanctions from a number of countries, but the Court itself has no further means of enforcing the judgment on its own. In any event, it may appear as a tragic paradox that the very convention which was adopted in 1948 in response to the Nazi holocaust against the Jews under WWII, is now being brought in action against Israel itself—and most recently against Germany (by Nicaragua).

6. Criminal prosecution of genocide

It is important to recall, however, that the ICJ is *not a criminal court*—states cannot be criminally “punished” under international law and the Court can only hear cases *between states* in respect of their compliance with international legal obligations. Thus, the case before the ICJ is really about whether Israel—as a *State*—can be held responsible for the commission of genocide in Gaza.

Conversely, criminal proceedings against *individuals* for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, can indeed be brought before the *International Criminal Court* (ICC, which is also located in The Hague). Israel has not ratified the ICC Statute [8] and the ICC does therefore not have jurisdiction over Israeli territory. Palestine, on the other hand, *has* acceded to the Statute (in 2015), and the ICC Prosecutor is therefore entitled to investigate violations of international humanitarian law committed *on Palestinian territory*—or *having effects* there—regardless of *who* committed the crimes.

Accordingly, a criminal investigation was initiated last year in October by the ICC's Prosecutor against members of both Hamas and the IDF for, among other things, war crimes [1] and/or crimes against humanity committed *on Palestinian territory*.

²⁷ See The Court's Order of 28th March 2024 at para.51.

(If Israel eventually authorizes the ICC to also investigate Hamas's October 7 terrorist act against the music festival in Israel, the ICC may also investigate this crime on *Israeli* territory). The ICC's investigation may eventually lead to criminal charges against individual members of Hamas, the IDF and others, who can then be arrested, extradited to The Hague and prosecuted at the ICC. In other words, what is happening at the ICC is a purely *criminal* investigation, which is fundamentally different from South Africa's current lawsuit against Israel before the ICJ.

7. Possible outcome of the trial in South Africa vs. Israel

At this point, the 17 Judges have only found, by majority, that there are sufficient grounds for *accepting the possibility* that Israel may in fact have acted with the intent to force all or at least most Palestinians away from Gaza on the grounds that they are not entitled to exist as a group there. That, however, remains to be proven at trial.²⁸

8. The broader perspectives of South Africa's case against Israel

In a broader perspective, there is a risk that the ICJ—whichever way it chooses to go—may be criticized for being entertaining political considerations.

Should the Court ultimately find that Israel was *not* responsible for genocide, the US and many Western countries may find some relief in having loyally supported Israel and avoided denouncing a troubled ally—although several attempts have subsequently been made by US and other Western countries to advise protection of the civilian population. On the other hand, South Africa, and a number of other countries in the Global South may perhaps assert that the Court has improperly sided with the United States and parts of the West—at the expense of the Palestinians.

South Africa's lawsuit against Israel is widely regarded as a signal from the "Global South" aspiring to take a more independent role in international politics by distancing itself from the Western World's (occasionally) imperious demands for human rights, the rule of law, democracy, and a rule-based international order. In this spirit, they may perhaps enjoy support from Russia, which ostensibly considers to be threatened itself by the United States, NATO, and the West. Russia has already pointed to the West's hypocrisy in its assistance to Ukraine while at the same time supporting Israel before the ICJ.

Conversely, if the Court ultimately concludes that Israel *was* indeed responsible for genocide against the Palestinians, the ICJ may perhaps retain some of its legitimacy and trust among a number of non-Western countries in seeing the Court stand out as *the* independent international judicial institution capable of guaranteeing a just

²⁸ The Ugandan Judge filed a dissenting opinion asserting that she was "not convinced that the acts complained of by the Applicant are capable of falling within the scope of the Genocide Convention, in particular because it had not been shown, even on a prima facie basis, that Israel's conduct in Gaza is accompanied by the necessary genocidal intent" and [...] "The dispute between the State of Israel and the people of Palestine is essentially and historically a political one, calling for a diplomatic or negotiated settlement, and for the implementation in good faith of all relevant Security Council resolutions by all parties concerned, with a view to finding a permanent solution whereby the Israeli and Palestinian peoples can peacefully coexist."

international legal system and a rules-based international order. However, finding that Israel can indeed be held responsible for genocide in the present case could also further complicate negotiations on the creation of a two-state solution—now generally supported by many countries around the World—but so far still rejected by both Israel and Hamas.

No matter how the Court decides this case, ultimately, the ICJ may face various degrees of criticism from different camps in the international community. However, that is exactly what the ICJ is required to overcome in due time by issuing a *well-argued judgment which strikes a reasonable, neutral and wise balance between the opposing views*—in the interest of peace and justice. There is, anyway, a great deal at stake in this trial—both for the United Nations, for the international community and, not least, for the situation in the Middle East.

9. Nicaragua's case against Germany before the ICJ

On 1st March 2024, *Nicaragua* filed an application to the ICJ instituting proceedings against *Germany* for alleged violations of the Genocide Convention in direct response to Germany's *political, financial and military assistance to Israel in October 2023*, and by having defunded UNRWA (see above). By providing this assistance, in Nicaragua's view, Germany has deliberately supported Israel's alleged genocide against the Palestinians in Gaza.²⁹ In its application, Nicaragua therefore requested the Court to urgently indicate *provisional measures* by ordering Germany to *immediately suspend its military assistance to Israel* and to make every effort to *ensure that weapons already delivered to Israel are not used to commit genocide*. Nicaragua further requested that *Germany be ordered to reverse its decision to suspend the funding of UNRWA*.³⁰ As of 10th March 2024, the Court has not yet opened proceedings to hear Nicaragua's submission.

On 30th April 2024, the Court decided that it has jurisdiction in the case under Article 48 of the Statute and therefore dismissed Germany's request to remove the case from the Court's docket. However, based on the factual information and legal arguments presented by the Parties, the Court concluded on 19th July 2024 that, at present, the circumstances were not such as to require the exercise of its power under Article 41 of the Statute to indicate provisional measures. The Parties are now given time until July 2025 to prepare their memorial and counter-memorial.

10. Conclusions

In this article, I have tried to clarify the concept of genocide.

First of all, by showing that the very purpose of the 1948 Genocide Convention is to ensure *protection of certain permanent and stable* (ethnic, national, racial, or religious) *groups, the membership of which is independent of each member's individual and personal choice*. The members are, so to speak, "born" into these groups and do not, in general, change their affiliation. (Indeed, membership of a *religious* group may change by virtue of an individual member's converting to another religion, but that

²⁹ See Nicaragua's Application of 1st March 2024 to the ICJ, at para 31.

³⁰ *Ibidem*, at para 101.

happens rarely in practice. For all functional purposes, membership of these groups is a lasting matter).

Secondly, the crime of genocide requires not only the physical commission of certain acts as lined out in Article 2 of the Convention (*Actus reus*), but in particular also that the perpetrator acted with the *special intent to destroy, in whole or in part, one of the protected groups, as such*. In essence, the group must be destroyed because *it does not, in the perpetrator's view, have the right to exist as a group at this particular time or place*. For a person to be criminally convicted of genocide, in other words, the evidence must show that the perpetrator had this special intent and acted accordingly, and the Judges must be convinced, beyond reasonable doubt, that the perpetrator in fact acted with this special intent. Such evidence may be difficult to prove at trial, but judicial practice includes examples of perpetrators declaring in public or in writing, or by agreement with the co-perpetrators, that the group must be destroyed for lack of right to exist here as a group.

Thirdly, genocide can be committed in *different* ways and does not necessarily entail the *killing* of all or most members of the targeted group. Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group, for instance, or inflicting on them conditions of life calculated to bring about the physical destruction of the group, or by imposing measures to prevent births within the group, or by transferring children of the group to another group, are all effective means to destroy the group. The members may well survive physically and live on, thus, but they have lost their sense of *belonging* to the group once it is destroyed, and that is exactly what the perpetrators had wanted to take away from them.

After reviewing a few genocide incidents, I went on to assess how genocide is handled in the two available tracks of international judicial practice.

The first track is applied by one State's submission of a case against another State before the International Court of Justice (ICJ), asking the Court to determine if the respondent State is or has been acting in violation its international legal obligations under the Genocide Convention, *that is, to prevent or punish* the commission of genocide within its jurisdiction. This track is particularly delicate because of the *political* implications of the World Court's ruling against either the applicant State or the respondent State; regardless of the Court's finding in these highly contentious cases, the Court risks criticism of national, cultural, or religious prejudice. The most proficient way to circumvent such criticism, as suggested just above, is to hand down a well-balanced and legally well-argued judgment, which lays out the opposing interests and facts in a neutral and strictly legal manner.

The other track is to apply *criminal legal procedures* to investigate and prosecute *individuals* before either national Courts or the International Criminal Court (ICC) [8]. This avenue is inherently different from the first track by virtue of the fact that *criminal trials* can only be instituted against *individuals* for the purpose of *punishing* the accused (e.g., by imposing prison sentences)—if he or she is eventually found guilty. In criminal proceedings, it is for the Prosecutor to *investigate* the facts on the ground and discover evidence to substantiate the criminal responsibility of one or more individuals who, in turn, are entitled to legal defense. It is then ultimately for the Court to establish, beyond a reasonable doubt, the guilt or innocence of the accused.

The challenges with criminal trials lie mainly in finding and securing relevant and reliable evidence during the investigations, which is extremely difficult during an armed conflict; evidence may be destroyed or forged, and witnesses are frequently threatened or traumatized and scared to offer their testimony at trial.

Criminal trials before the ICC, to be sure, can only be held against persons who are nationals of a State that has ratified the Court's Statute, or if the crimes were committed on the territory of a ratifying State, or if the case has been referred to the Court by the UN Security Council. Alternatively, the accused may be prosecuted and tried before domestic criminal Courts.

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Perspective Chapter: Basic Rules of Air Supremacy in the Last Thirty Years

Artsrun Hovhannisyan

Abstract

Modern warfare has brought with it the Electro-Fire Battle and Electro-Fire Fight. These are the new forms and methods of operational actions with no clear boundaries and only higher level of them are related to war. Operation “Desert Fox” carried out by the United States and Great Britain in Iraq in 1998 can be considered as a prototype of electro-fire action (operational level action). It was a 73-hour operation, during which four rocket-aircraft strikes were implemented lasting 6–9 hours. These correct electro-fire strikes and operations can break an anti-aircraft system of any density and quality. We can see these kinds of patterns in the wars of the last half century in the Middle East, Artsakh and Ukraine. This study is based on the facts of the wars carried out based on scientific-technical and military-scientific developments taking place in the world in the last thirty years. The method of combining facts and results, sometimes numerical results, was used for the study. Certainly, in military science the measurability of justifications is always difficult to prove with numerical data, sometimes they occur directly with political acts and results, however, it becomes possible to bring out patterns from several examples.

Keywords: electro-fire battle, electro-fire fight, Ukraine, Artsakh, army, warfare

1. Introduction

It is worth mentioning that after 1991 American air supremacy was more clearly manifested in Yugoslavia in 1999 and Iraq in 2003. They had certain dimensions, namely the American military school emphasized air superiority, giving great importance to digital control systems and precision weapons [1], p. 68; [2], p. 68; [3], p. 8.

The development of the American military-scientific school, which was justified especially after the Arab-Israeli war of 1973, has several fundamental features. They are as follows:

1. The center of gravity of wars has risen to the air and space domain.
2. Provision of air supremacy affects the development of all other types of weapons.

3. Conventional striking means are replaced by precision weapons.
4. Man should be replaced by technology and robot in all possible places.
5. Digital technologies develop control systems.
6. Good leaders should prevail in the culture of military control; management should be based on the principle of Mission Command.

All those innovations have made the wars fast and dynamic.

In several of our works in the form of articles and books, we have thoroughly described the provision of air supremacy, by which the American military–scientific culture achieves victory, especially over the ground Air Defense, in the form of six rules ([4], pp. 325–334).

2. Basic rules and patterns

In 1991, operations with precision air strikes lasted from 2 to 3 hours, while from 1999 to 2003, the duration of those strike operations reached 7 hours in a row. This became possible due to accurate strike means, quality intelligence, as well as effective management systems.

The speed of the enemy detection (its intentions), as well as information gathering and processing together with decision making, will be one of the decisive issues in the conflicts. Decision-making time will be further reduced making the commander's decision not a reaction to the ongoing situation, but a preparation for the predicted situation. That is to say, a decision should be made for the expected action, for the future.¹ The combat operations will be carried out in parallel or in an interconnected way in all four dimensions with the same intensity, moreover, the operations of the virtual dimension will be more than the operations of other dimensions. The air dimension will reach cosmic heights, while the sea dimension will go down to a depth of kilometers. Distances will become smaller and the speeds will increase unprecedentedly. Most of the combat arms will be able to carry out operations not only in their dimension but also in the other dimension. The GTs (ground troops) will receive toolkits to operate in the air and sea dimensions. Weapons of the new generation, drones, such as "F/A-XX," "FCAS," "XQ-58A Valkyri" [5], "MQ-25," etc., extended long-range missiles, such as "AARGM-ER" [6], "AIM-260," "JASSM ER," etc. will make air and anti-air operations "smarter," more far-reaching and effective. The ground Air Defense is becoming more vulnerable. The main part of the operations of different dimensions will be combined, interconnected and not necessarily carried out at the same time. The leading armies will try to minimize the involvement of human resources during combat operations or at least it will be by remote intervention, which will be supported by various robotic military techniques, built on a modular basis, are designed to operate in different environments (on the land, in the air, in the water or combined), equipped with different fire, shock means, providing high fire density and accuracy, which will be endowed with as high artificial intelligence as

¹ Artsakh 44-day war proved that commanders generally do not have time to work with maps. The dynamics of the battle has accelerated so much that no commander's decision in its classic time can express the real situation, it is always born out of date.

possible minimizing the factor of human intervention (even if various international humanitarian laws are tightened) [7]. Robots will take a wide place along with people, especially in special combat arms. They will be created with modular 3D printers, which will allow to have a large quantity of them [8].

During 2020 the Azerbaijani Air Force applied the above-mentioned Western military-scientific achievements and technologies, with which it overcame the Armenian Air Defense. In particular, mainly Israeli “Harop,” “AirStriker,” “Orbiter” strike UAVs, long-range anti-tank “Spike-NLOS” missiles, long-range rocket artillery, ballistic “LORA” missiles with the supervision of reconnaissance and air control points and extensive use of fake targets launched massive and combined airstrikes over the control points of the Artsakh Defense Army, large depots of weapons, Air-Defense means [9], and the heavy military equipment and artillery ([10], pp. 163–191) still being in permanent deployment locations. The Azerbaijani airstrike, with certain exceptions, was planned in accordance with the specified standards. All the reserves and military targets of the Defense Army were simultaneously subjected to intensive strikes, that is, a deep strike operation was carried out, which was implemented for the first time in the post-Soviet area from the perspective of operational art. During this strike, the Azerbaijanis necessarily used old Soviet “An-2” airplanes² instead of the extremely important fake targets, and they used UAVs and other “F-16” fighter jets instead of expensive American air control points. “E-7A (AEW)” airplanes of air control of the Turkish Air Force were also used during the combat operations [12]. REW (Radio-Electronic Warfare) disruptions were actively used so that the Armenian Air Defense means could not fight effectively. The Israeli experience ([13], 209–211) of 1982 and the American experience of 1991 were required for the Azerbaijani Army to paralyze the Armenian Air Defense system. This piece of the operation was carried out at a high level, which seriously paralyzed the control system of the Armenian Army [14]. This strike, the success of which is often exaggerated, in any case caused a lot of damage to the Armenian Air Defense, while it gave a free hand to the Azerbaijani troops. It is true that some planned target points were hit unnecessarily, for example, no damage was caused when striking the headquarters of the Defense Army or the divisions. Here the problem was not related to one or two massive strikes, taken separately, but the fact that in real time the Azerbaijani Air Force saw the theater of the operation on the entire front and almost in full depth, therefore, it had the opportunity to strike everywhere, along the entire front and depth of the front.

The Azerbaijani helicopters started to use “Spike-NLOS” missiles to launch long-range strikes even on separate armored vehicles and other vehicles.³ The Turkish “Bayraktar TB2” UAVs gained more popularity in this case, but still, the Israeli missiles did the main job. The long-range missiles started to launch precision strikes also on the Armenian logistics network and the newly discovered command points and the Air Defense means.

During the 44-day war, the Armenian Air Defense Forces did not have the strength, means, skills and mastery to disrupt the highly competent Azerbaijani air operations, even if they were local. In fact, Azerbaijan used the above-mentioned

² About F. Mamedov, Since 2013, Azerbaijan has been preparing “corn popper surprises” for the Armenian army: October 14, 2021 [11].

³ The iron-winged hero of the Patriotic War (in Azer. – Vətən müharibəsinin dəmir qanadlı qəhrəmanı), December 14, 2020 [15].

concept at the local level, where the air management points, intelligence striking complexes, fake targets and direct striking means broke down Armenian Anti-aircraft defense, which had been based on the Soviet Union model.

In September 2023, the Azerbaijani Armed Forces again used these technologies and solutions towards the population of Artsakh which had been in blockade and had been suffering hardships already for several months. They launched the first strikes over the Air Defense and REW installations of Artsakh, and in order to ensure the great effectiveness of those strikes, they used the Israeli “LORA” ballistic missiles. In a short period of time the Azerbaijani Armed Forces launched intensive strikes on the Air Defense means, artillery divisions and heavy equipment of the Armenian Army. The battles of the ground troops were very tough and intensive, but they lasted very short. The months-long blockade had yielded its results, the Armenian population, which had relied on the Russian peacekeepers, but was completely disappointed, was exhausted and not ready for persistent resistance.

Achieving success within a short time they depopulated Artsakh with the tools of crimes against humanity.

Unfortunately, advanced weapons also enable dictators to target the civilian population, and they achieve their goals by violating the world order. Aliyev committed a new crime in the 21st century with advanced Israeli, Turkish and other weapons. The tyrant of Baku forcibly depopulated Artsakh using Syrian mercenaries, targeting the Armenian civilian population and destroying Armenian millennial culture. Even after the war of 2020 Armenians relied on the Russian peacekeepers, who, however, could not or did not want to perform their duties. Even the death of the Russian officers did not change anything [16].

During the 2020–2023 Russian-Ukrainian war, both sides were actively using accurate means, which are often decisive for solving the main challenges in military operations, but both sides, due to the lack of accurate means—used more conventional means rather than accurate ones. Even though the Russian side also has strategic long-range cruise missile defense systems and other means, their effectiveness is low, due to the lack of their number, as well as the lack of tools to ensure their use, particularly, the lack of reconnaissance strike complexes. By the summer of 2023, the Russian army had used about 2475 long-range missiles, mainly air and sea weapons, on the territory of Ukraine. According to Forbes experts, the value of this amount is 12.5 billion dollars. At the same time, the Russian army spent about 2300 operational and tactical long-range missiles, mainly Iskanders, the cost of which was 3.5 billion dollars.⁴ The number of released missiles is also confirmed by other sources.⁵ The reason why such a large number of missile strikes are ineffective is mainly the result of not using combined, complex and mass strikes due to the low efficiency of reconnaissance strike complexes. At best, the Russian side launches a dozen or two missiles at a time, one of two types. The number of launches of Persian UAVs by the Russian army is certainly increasing, but it cannot be considered as a part of a complex combined air attack. In May 2023, 413 UAVs were launched, after which the numbers decreased significantly. However, in September, they increased again, making 503 units, of which, according to Ukrainian sources, 396, that is 78.7%, were damaged [19]. The real number of wounded UAVs is not as important as the

⁴ About V. Datsenko, Russia launched about 5000 missiles worth \$16 billion into Ukraine. How many of them are left and how many can the Russian Federation produce? Forbes calculations [17].

⁵ The Ukrainian Armed Forces told how many missiles Russia has launched at Ukraine since the beginning of the full-scale invasion [18].

significance of how many UAVs were launched. The increased number of launched UAVs does not have an influence on the strategic number and importance. The Russian Air Force and Navy are unable to carry out large-scale military operations, especially with two or three branches of service. Later we will refer to the complex American strikes lasting 6–9 hours. In the Ukrainian war, the Russian side also tried to disrupt the small, local multi-layered strikes organized by the Ukrainian side, in which a small number of airstrike tactics, fake targets, etc. were included. With the help of air control points, fighter air force and anti-aircraft warfare division the Russian Air Force tried to disrupt these attacks, in which several units of quality cruise missiles and/or reactive volley-fire system missiles were included. However, it was enough for the Ukrainian side to use several units of fake high quality, equally cheap and low-quality fake targets, cheap strike UAVs and properly plan everything. Nearly all Ukrainian local strikes achieved their goals and implemented effective strikes. Because of those strikes, the Russian “Moscow” cruiser, several other important ships, the building of the Black Sea Command, several strategical bridges, several Russian airports were sunk, as a result of which dozens of high-quality aircraft and anti-aircraft warfare divisions were destroyed.

Contrary to that, the Russian side tried to implement mixed multi-layered strikes from the beginning of the war, which later became poorer in terms of means. Cheap Persian UAVs were replaced by cruise missiles, but they did not have much effectiveness, because the organization and provision of strikes failed seriously. Before and during the strikes, the organization of the constant intelligence process, the accompaniment, the radio-electronic support, the same type of tactical tricks, the pooriness of strike means, and the deficiencies in the organization of the interaction of the military forces make these strikes ineffective. The help of the American reconnaissance means allows the Ukrainian high-quality anti-aircraft defense to hit most of these means on the way, even though these anti-aircraft means are not quantitatively sufficient.

Today it is evident that significant revolutionary changes take place in military affairs. For example, unmanned aerial vehicles and strike devices of various sizes have been created. Another important step in the management system is that every soldier should be visible on the commander’s screen. After the C4 I and C4 ISR command and control systems, the US military uses new, more advanced digital command and control systems ([20], p. 260).

Fighter jets of the new generation already operate in the system of “C5 ISR (Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Combat Systems, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance).” These systems ensure unity of the brigade and air component control systems and together form the control component of network-centric warfare. In the case of NPCW (network platform-centric wars), these systems even give the opportunity to control joint or separate wars that are factually going on in one strategic network but are actually being waged in different operational and strategic theaters. In 2021, the name of that system was fixed as “Combined Joint All-Domain Command and Control (CJADC2)” ([21], p. 8).

Some experts believe that simultaneously horizontal and vertical integration systems will give the opportunity to increase the accuracy of destruction, as well as enhance the control of actions, etc. [22].

Here the theory of “Prompt Global Strike (PGS)” is important. Thanks to the new type of airstrike means systems, the American armed forces will have the opportunity to strike at any point in the world after a maximum of 1 hour. Now within the framework of 48 hours, the American army can accumulate the number of airstrike means

systems needed to provide the necessary superiority at any point on the planet.⁶ The “Prompt Global Strike (PGS)” project is being promoted in parallel with the network-centric war theory, it is a highlighted toolkit for “Multi-domain battle,” “Multi domain operations/Joint All-Domain Operations (MDO/JADO)” concepts. War is the set of simultaneous actions in all dimensions and domains ([24], p. 14). It is the highest display of means employment and operations management, a finished version of American military culture which has been developing over the decades. The latest doctrinal document of the US Army “MDO/JADO” clearly states that there are a lot of dimensions and domains of wars and military operations, the separations are often artificial, and cognitive and cyber domains are as important as the physical ones [21]. In May 2023, the third operational group of the US Army, built according to the “MDO/JADO” concept, reached the appropriate level of operational readiness [25].

3. Conclusion

The conclusion can be made that at the operational and strategic levels of the war, air supremacy will remain a decisive factor. However, this does not mean that traditional, classical military types and weapons will be pushed into the background.

Today we can clearly see all this in Ukraine, where no large-scale offensive operation is carried out without ensuring air supremacy, but ground troops and especially artillery are widely used.

The Russian Air Force is constantly trying to carry out complex air operations in Ukraine, but they have never been of a high level. The maximum number of aircraft that were simultaneously involved in the military operations did not reach a hundred. As a rule, they were used with very poor coordination, sometimes with intervals of two to three hours, while the maximum launches during the same operation generally amounted to no more than a hundred means of airstrike, of which about a quarter were striking unmanned aerial vehicles. This is a result of the limited possibilities of implementation of the six rules that we have previously mentioned. The Russian Air Force does not have sufficient space and air reconnaissance and control capabilities, the accuracy of the strike means and the coordination of complex strikes is weak. The most massive strike was carried out on November 29, 2023, when a total of 158 means of airstrikes were launched, about 40 were striking UAVs, and the rest were mainly air defense cruise missiles. There is a very small number of aeroballistic missiles that are difficult to shoot down. Two days later, on the second day of January 2024, 100 similar means of airstrikes were launched, 10 of which were the well-known “Kinzhal” aeroballistic missiles. According to some information, they are launched in the following sequence, first the UAVs with a small number of anti-radiolocation missiles, then various cruise missiles, after which aeroballistics and ballistic missiles are launched, which are also accompanied by old anti-aircraft missiles, used as ballistic missiles. In total, during the five days, according to Ukrainian official data, more than 500 means of airstrikes were launched, 300 of which were cruise missiles and aeroballistic missiles, and 200 were attack UAVs, a very small number of anti-radiolocation and other means of airstrikes. Before that, the record of the Russian army was 50–60 striking UAVs and other cruise missiles per day, or about 500 cruise missiles per month, most of which were striking UAVs. In May 2023, the Russian army launched 400 “Shahed/

⁶ About Sanger D., Th. Shanker, (February 28, 2010), White House Is Rethinking Shoigu called the US strike against Syria a threat to the security of the Russian military personnel [23].

Geran” type striking UAVs and a very small number of means of airstrikes with good quality. In September of the same year, they launched more than 500 of the same UAVs and again a small number of means of airstrikes.

In December 2023, 780 units of “Shahed-136/131/Geran” strike UAVS were launched.⁷

This ratio expresses the main trend of the last two decades, when many means of airstrikes are supported by not expensive and not high-quality means of airstrikes which we also saw during the second Iraq war. According to the Ukrainian and Western official data, as well as our personal sources, most of these means of airstrike systems, or at least more than half, are hit by anti-aircraft missiles, which occurs first as a consequence of the poor organization of strikes, and then the technical quality of means of airstrikes. These data are very impressive at first glance, never has the Russian air force carried out more strikes, but a detailed study of the strikes shows that as a military operation, they present several challenges, and they are not effective, in particular:

- a. In terms of density, the strikes are not unprecedented in the art of war, however, they lasted for a long time, which means, that the synchronization was bad, which gives the Ukrainian Air Defense an opportunity to competently defend itself.
- b. The strikes are not accompanied by many Radio-electronic struggle, distracting and fake means, and with many anti-radiolocation missiles.
- c. The efficiency reduced significantly, as a result of the strikes being scattered over a large area.
- d. Hits were made only against stationary targets.
- e. Strikes were not accompanied by constant, guided intelligence.

In other words, the Russian side did not manage to ensure the six rules we mentioned by organizing unprecedentedly large strikes for them. It is not surprising that there are no accompanying videos of these strikes, evidence of their accuracy, and only eyewitnesses’ videos are cited as arguments for effective strikes, and sometimes there are ridiculous claims that, for example, a Ukrainian factory that used to produce uniforms was destroyed by those strikes.⁸

On January 15, 2024, the Ukrainian Air Defense, according to their claim, hit the air control plane “A-50” of the Russian Air Force over the Azov Sea basin.⁹ If this fact is confirmed, then it is unprecedented in the history of military art. According to some experts’ interpretation, the forces of the Ukrainian Air Defense acted in a very interesting and complex combination, used the Soviet “S-300” division, discovered the Russian control airplanes, after which the hidden “Patriot PAC 2/3” station was started for a short time, presumably one launching station which launched the hitting missiles. At the same time the crew of the airplane “Su-34” recorded the launch of the division “S-300.” Everything lasted for a very short time, during which the

⁷ How many missiles and drones does the Russian Federation produce and what will happen to the war in 2024: the main thing from Skibitsky’s interview. January 15, 2024 [26].

⁸ Clothing factory for Zelensky destroyed in Ukraine [27].

⁹ Ukrainian army shot down a Russian A-50 aircraft over the Sea of Azov and knocked out an Il-22, 15.01.2024 [28].

hitting means of the Russian Air Force did not manage to detect and suppress or hit the Ukrainian Air Defense means.¹⁰ This operation is also a complex operation with network control and delicate cooperation.

Russian authors like I. Popov and M. Khamzatov mentioned the failures of the Russian Air Force in detail in the work of “War of the Future” ([30], pp. 100–114).

All this proves that the claim of some theoreticians that UAVs will forever push back the classic tactical air force is not very valid. There are also such discussions in the USA, where, for example, theorists Lieutenant General Samuel Hainot, Colonel Maximilian Bremer, Kelly Grieco and others believe that the era of air superiority is ending [31]. They claim that UAVs are replacing conventional air forces wherever possible. We do not agree with these claims. In addition, we have appropriate arguments for that:

- a. First of all, the striking UAVs, which are cheap, do not have much efficiency at the operational and strategic levels, get severely affected by weather conditions, as well as being weak due to the lack of complex equipment, etc.
- b. They are effective at the tactical level, which is the domain of the artillery. For example, FPV attack drones replace mortars, but not always.
- c. Although such cheap means are important, they satisfy the tight ranks.
- d. Means of airstrikes are expensive, therefore, they require high-level technical and combat skills.
- e. It is not possible to launch high-quality means of airstrikes from UAVs, for that you need fighters and bombers.

Contrary to that, the Air Force is transforming and becoming more flexible, all possible UAVs, being varieties of means of airstrikes, are integrated with the classic Air Force and complement each other. Modern means of airstrikes are getting smaller in size and perform high-level combat tasks. UAVs and helicopters supplement and often replace attacking aircraft. The capabilities of attack aircraft are approaching the tactical Air force, the American tactical air force has been conducting strategic strikes for a long time, and the new strategic bombers are shrinking in size, maintaining the capabilities of the previous ones. The American “B-21” bomber is almost two times smaller than the other types.

¹⁰ About David Ax, Ukrainian Crews Set A Complex Missile Trap for Russia’s Best Radar Plane, Jan 16, 2024 [29].

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