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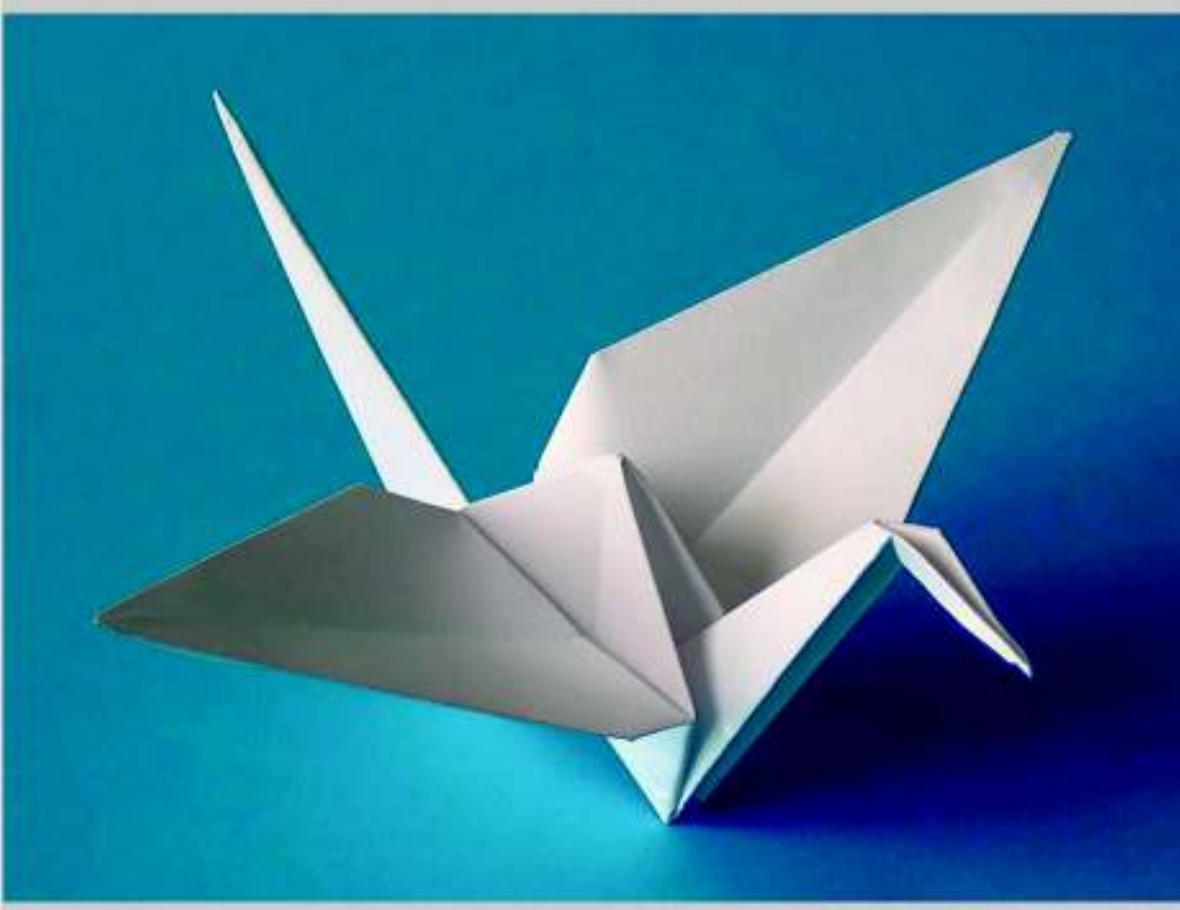

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The *Journal of Transdisciplinary Peace Praxis* (*JTPP*) is a peer-reviewed, biannual, subscription-based, scholarly journal of contemplative cutting edge research and practice on subjects related to human social flourishing and peace.

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Editor-in-Chief's Welcome and Introduction

Once again, it is with great pleasure that I welcome you to our eleventh (XI) issue of the *Journal of Transdisciplinary Peace Praxis (JTPP)*! Now well into our sixth year of publication we remain committed to providing a venue to critically think about peace praxis and nonviolent conflict resolution. The theory and practice of peace is desperately needed in the current era of conflict, cycles of violence, and retaliation in places like Ukraine, Gaza, and the Levant. As I reported in my introduction to our 10th (X) issue, though fatigued as *JTPP's* editor-in-chief, I remain excited for the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead. With conflict comes pain and suffering, but also opportunity. I continue to feel the need to spread knowledge and experience of working for peace; peace is both theoretical and practical and the *JTPP* provides a needed transdisciplinary lens to expose and highlight the importance of this reality! This issue continues our focus on peace pedagogy and practice—ideas that need to be discussed continually and collaboratively in public and in private venues around the world. We hope that the *JTPP* helps provide some space and structure in print for this type of discussion and believe that such dialogue is invaluable to human progress. Thanks for reading us and please share our work with your friends and colleagues. We appreciate your ongoing support.

As I proudly present our eleventh issue, which we are sure will not disappoint, remember the daily suffering in places like Gaza, Donetsk, and Tigray. For people in these places conflict and violence are all too real; a daily experience. It is with these places in mind that we must explore peace praxis and highlight the emotional, rational, and cultural aspects of conflict and war. Offering a broad and deep dive into multiple world areas, the five articles in this issue explore the wicked problems of resistance, black philanthropy, history education, peacemaking, and politics in creative and engaging ways. Each provides critical insight into the human condition and the consequences of hate and violence. I hope these critiques open space for discussions of peace and they deserve a wide reach.

The first article by Dean J Johnson and Liam Oliver Lair, entitled 'Resistance and Repression: Responding to Hate Groups on Campus', takes on the growing problems of hate groups and the challenges of resistance to abhorrent discourse that outside groups often foist on the US college campuses. As practitioners and not just theorists, Johnson and Lair share their experience as tenured faculty using resistance to hate on their campus as a means of critical pedagogy. Their accounting of Westchester University (WCU) faculty, staff, and student attempts 'to disrupt, distract, and document the harm while creating community' (p.26)

presents an inspiriting story of resistance. Documenting this resistance, and the counter repression that the collective they formed in response to disruptive campus visitors spawned, allowed Johnson and Lair to better understand the 'techniques of power' the institution yields as well as document insights from their work to reduce the harm and destruction caused by these outside forces in their community. This article is a truly inspiring read and one that I hope our readers will not ignore or pass over.

The second article in this issue is by a regular contributor to the *JTPP*, Vandy Kanyako. In 'Black Philanthropy, African Donors and Human-Centered Peacebuilding' Kanyako documents the 'poverty of literature on indigenous African donors in general, and their contributions to the peacebuilding and human security domains in particular' (p.43). His argument 'that giving is not an alien concept in the African tradition' underscores the fact that peace and human security is grounded in placed-based investment and philanthropy. Kanyako's use of case study to illustrate the importance of both studying and speaking of African philanthropy develops a nuanced view of African's own investment in the continent. This is a story that, like the Johnson and Lair article introduced above, needs further telling. Through sharing such stories, we shift the thin narratives about a particular context and give them important new meanings. In the words of Sara Cobb: 'Narratives must be told if they are to evolve' (Cobb, 2013: 24). The story that Kanyako tells is one that helps to evolve the narrative of Africa as productive and self-sufficient entity, as opposed to an under-developed and dependent context.

Melissa Delury's 'Rethinking the Role of History Education to Facilitate Positive Peace: The Case of Northern Ireland' continues this narrative focus by training its sights on history, history text, and 'the role that history education can play to address root causes of conflict and contribute to positive peace' (p.67). Delury's piece highlights the role of history in peacebuilding and underscores how history textbooks can help develop a transdisciplinary approach to peace when coupled with structural and curricular change. While acknowledging that more research is needed on the connections between teachers' experiences and policymakers' curricular innovations, this essay speaks to the important role of history education in attempts at reconciliation after past trauma and violence. The discursive connections between these first three pieces of this issue are strong and deserve a close reading.

The last two articles in this eleventh issue present slightly different vantage points towards peace. Advocating for multi-voting options in electoral politics, Peter Emerson's piece ('From Binary and Adversarial to Preferential and Inclusive Politics') argues that wicked problems, like climate change, require more 'inclusive' (p.85) means of decision-making. Moving away from binary politics to what he

calls 'quantum governance', Emerson argues against zero-sum thinking, which he sees as especially important in 'existential crises like that of COVID-19 and Climate Change' (p.101). In his comparative analysis of electoral systems across the globe, Emerson raises pragmatic political points about the political structures of governance and change making. Taking an even wider lens Jacqueline Haessley rounds out the eleventh issue's essays with her piece entitled 'Reflecting on the Praxis of Peacemaking During a Time of War'. Haessley takes on the ambitious goal of highlighting 'how cultural paradigms shape decisions we make in our individual and communal lives' (p.106). Interrogating cultural paradigms and shared meaning systems, Haessley identifies seven strands that make up worldview around the world. The value, image, language, systems and structures, policy and practice, education, and action strands 'can lead to a transformation of a worldview and a transformation of relationships within the family, the community, and the world in a manner that supports efforts to create and preserve a culture of peace' (p.111). In issuing a call to create and preserve a world culture of peace, this last article is fittingly aspirational and calls us to come together as an international community—something that by definition will have to be transdisciplinary and enduring.

I would urge readers to explore the *R & R* section of this issue to engage with peace contexts. In my own short op-ed style *R & R* piece, I attempt to explore the identity traps inherent in the progressive left's turn towards increasingly emphasising divergent social identity. The culture wars embroiling the United States require close attention and scrutiny not just by anti-woke forces on the right, but also by progressives concerned about universal values and eroding democratic institutions.

Also included in this issue are two book reviews by Omar Sufian (review of Brooks Dollar, 2021) and Eleyan Sawafta (review of Patel, 2021). Sufian's review explores a book that is unique in exposing the 'the intersection between personal experiences and sociological concepts'. Cindy Brooks Dollar's *I Never Wanted to Be a Stereotype: Sociologist's Narrative of Healing* is part memoire and part sociological analysis, weaving auto-ethnography with sociological theory. Of the book, Sufian argues that it should be of interest to 'even general readers interested in understanding the nuances of personal trauma within a broader social context'. A truly transdisciplinary and methodologically rich book, we are happy to have reviewed it in this issue of the *JTPP*. Sawafta's review delves into settler colonial ideology in higher education. Sawafta writes of the book *No Study without Struggle: Confronting Settler Colonialism in Higher Education*: 'Patel's book is an abundant source of information for any educator/learner interested in the relationship between power and knowledge.' Sawfata opens an important lens for exploring peace and conflict by focusing our attention on defining and

understanding how settler colonialism is tied to neoliberal ideologies and the many modern difficulties of decolonisation. This is an important book to review and engage, and we are thankful Sawafta brings it to the attention of our *JTPP* readers.

Lastly, the *Kaleidoscope's* focus on ongoing conflicts around the world and the new movie Origin by Ava DuVernay shines a light on the diverse ways in which peace can flourish.

As always, we are indebted to the Peace and Justice Studies Association's (PJSA), a bi-national social justice organisation that supports the work of the *JTPP*. As an affiliated journal of the PJSA, we encourage engagement and collaboration with PJSA membership, and I want to, here, thank PJSA members for their readership. Please see our open call for papers at https://jtpp.uk/call-for-papers/; in our website: https://jtpp.uk/ you can also find what is in our most current issues as well as archives to all past issues. Please subscribe, get your library to subscribe (https://jtpp.uk/library-recommendation), share your ideas, and send us feedback. Also encourage your friends and colleagues to subscribe to the *JTPP* (https://jtpp.uk/subscription-plan/)—we need your support, as does a world in search of peace!

With metta (loving kindness and compassion),

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Resistance and Repression
Responding to Hate Groups on Campus

Dean J Johnson & Liam Oliver Lair

ABSTRACT

What does it mean to be in community together? How do we take care of one another? How do we create safe spaces? Are safe spaces even possible on campuses of higher education? In this article, we consider these questions in conversation with our specific university context—one in which we have worked to respond to hate groups that visit our campus, while balancing and navigating justice, safety, and an increasingly neoliberal administration. We reflect on the creation of an informal community-led resistance collective informed by interdisciplinary theories and social change praxis in response to hate groups on our mid-size state university. In our effort to build a coalition that would respond to hate groups on campus, create a safe space, and challenge harmful norms, we learned the complexity of not only repression and resistance, but also the contours of what justice work looks like within the academy. We understand this work of responding to hate as part of the larger goal of education—to cultivate agency, empowerment, and engagement with and knowledge of creating more just futures, and something opposed to repression, coercion, and control. It is our hope that our experiences and our continued reflection about this work will add to the growing body of knowledge and praxis when considering how best to advocate for resistance that is grounded in feminist and peace-oriented frameworks.

KEYWORDS

Repression, Resistance, Hate Groups, Hate Speech, Nonviolence, Reflective Practice

INTRODUCTION

What does it mean to be in community together? How do we take care of one another? How do we create safe spaces? Are safe spaces even possible on campuses of higher education? The purpose of this article is to document the creation of an informal community-led resistance collective informed by interdisciplinary

theories and social change praxis in response to hate groups on our mid-size state university. We set out to build a coalition to reduce harm, create a safe space, challenge harmful norms, and be accountable to one another in a time of rising fascism and demagoguery. What we discovered in our efforts is a complex set of relationships among the members of our campus community who have different priorities, come from different vantage points, and who fall on a spectrum of being institutionally oriented/minded to student oriented/minded. Ultimately, we have found the frameworks of resistance and repression useful in analysing our efforts.

We consider these questions in conversation with our specific university context—one in which we have worked to respond to hate groups that visit our campus, while balancing and navigating justice, safety, and an increasingly neoliberal administration. It is our hope that our experiences and our continued reflection about the last two years will add to the growing body of knowledge and praxis when considering how best to advocate for resistance that is grounded in feminist and peace-oriented frameworks.

ORIENTATION

Engaged Pedagogy

We are practitioners, not just theorists. bell hooks reminds us:

> …our work is not merely to share information but to share in the intellectual and spiritual growth of our students. To teach in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of our students is essential if we are to provide the necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin.[1]

The work we do in the classroom has real and practical implications for social change and struggles for justice. This means looking at the problems we face in the larger society, but also striving to hold up a mirror to the communities and spaces where we live and work, and engage with the problems that we see. According to Henry Giroux:

> Educators need to encourage students by example to find ways to get involved, to make a difference, to think in global terms, and to act from specific contexts. The notion of teachers as transformative intellectuals is marked by a moral courage and criticism that does not require them to step back from society but only to distance themselves from being implicated in those power relations that subjugate, corrupt, exploit, or infantilize.[2]

We understand that to have legitimacy in our teaching and scholarship we need to practise and live out what we are teaching—both in our communities and within our relationships. This is important to our commitment to making change and in relationship to our identities. In that vein, we want to be clear about our positionalities. Dean Johnson is a white, hetero, cisgender person. Liam Lair is a white, queer, transmasculine person, and is read by others as a cisman. We are both tenured faculty and members of the faculty union. We are afforded a lot of power and privilege in society and on our campus, and we have a responsibility to utilise that privilege to create positive change. Our identities are also important to how we experienced the events we will discuss, which include institutional reluctance and pushback to our efforts.

We understand that to have legitimacy in our teaching and scholarship we need to practise and live out what we are teaching—both in our communities and within our relationships. This is important to our commitment to making change and in relationship to our identities.

Relationships and Place-Based Activism

We bring to this work an understanding of the importance of relationships in creating social change. Our work to create a more radically inclusive, equitable, and democratic society requires us to build relationships rooted in the belief of mutuality: the idea that we are responsible for one another. According to John Paul Lederach:

> Peacebuilding requires a vision of relationship. Stated bluntly, if there is no capacity to imagine the canvas of mutual relationships and situate oneself as part of that historic and ever-evolving web, peacebuilding collapses.[3]

Our focus on mutual relationships is aimed at building up the place where we work. For the students, it is building up the place where they live. adrienne maree brown emphasises interdependence as a foundational aspect of collaborative work, 'One of the most common and exciting elements . . . I have done with social justice movements and organisations is the desire for a society where there is more interdependence—mutual reliance and shared leadership, vision.'[4] Our focus on relationships and interdependence, runs counter to the all too pervasive neoliberal—and capitalist-mindset of transactional relationships, which places emphasis on what can be gained, taken, or controlled from interacting with others. As we will demonstrate, a transactional orientation treats people as though they

are commodities or customers where dissatisfaction only matters to the degree that there is a loss of profit. A relationship orientation leads us to place-based activism, whereby action is taken by those who are members of the community and have an investment in building up the community and intervening when necessary. Creating a response to the harm occurring on campus could only be successful if we did it as a community. Within the context of our university, we looked to bring interested individuals in from across divisions, positions, and statuses.

Complexity Rather Than Simplicity

Too often in social change and conflict transformation work we try to simplify the problems we face through the manufacturing of dualisms. The pressure to do so comes in large part from living in a zero-sum, hyper-capitalist war culture that informs socially constructed binary structures and ways of thinking: true/false, us/them, winner/loser, etc. The problem with this way of thinking is that it is both limiting and reductionist. When we get caught up in dualistic thinking it not only limits our way of understanding the problem, but it also limits the possible solutions.[5] Our goal is to see the world in complex ways developing a kind of curiosity that interrogates the problem and considers the different priorities, vantage points, and relationships of those affected by and/or involved with the problem within cultural, political, and social contexts.[6]

Reflective Practice

Finally, our work is shaped by what is known in the field of conflict transformation as, 'reflective practice–building knowledge, understanding and improvement of practice through explicit and disciplined reflection.'[7] The writing of this article serves both as a documentation of our experience and as an opportunity for us to engage in explicit reflection about how our theories of change and practice work together. Because we understand ourselves to be practitioners, teachers, and scholars, creating this space of self-reflection will provide insights for future work on campus in each of these realms.

Our goal is to see the world in complex ways developing a kind of curiosity that interrogates the problem and considers the different priorities, vantage points, and relationships of those affected by and/or involved with the problem within cultural, political, and social contexts.

CONTEXT AND THE PROBLEM

The problem we continue to face is how

Black Philanthropy, African Donors and Human-Centred Peacebuilding

Vandy Kanyako

ABSTRACT

There exists a poverty of literature on indigenous African donors in general, and their contributions to the peacebuilding and human security domains in particular. Where it exists, extant literature on the subject views Black/African philanthropy and gifting through a Western prism that fails to accurately account for the broad range and forms of giving across the continent. Unsurprisingly, the African donor community is often treated as a footnote in conversations about donors and giving. This outright neglect and glaring omission are in spite of the fact that an enormous amount of informal philanthropy takes place in communities, families, and kinship networks across the continent. These non-traditional gifting efforts are not currently recognised and documented largely because they take place 'under the radar' of the more formal international aid architecture. The serious lack of data on both formal and informal forms of giving in Africa is also partly embedded in the region's historicity where indigenous African gifting manifests itself through its deep ties to the history, politics, and struggles of pre- and post-independence Africa. This paper aims to fill that void and contribute to the growing body of literature on the unique forms of African philanthropism, and its implications for human security and peacebuilding.

KEYWORDS

Africa, Philanthropy, Black Giving, Donors, Gifting, Peacebuilding, Human Security, Civil Rights, Africare

INTRODUCTION: Global Giving and Black Gifting

Philanthropy is not a new concept. The act of giving is as old as humanity, and is prevalent across all cultures. The word originates in ancient Greek and literally means: love of mankind. In common usage the term denotes the act of giving private assistance, mainly financial, to individuals in need and non-profit organisations (Levine M & Bergman, 1977; Shai et al, 1999). In its modern usage, philanthropy denotes formal, large-scale donations of money and other

Philanthropy is increasingly being called upon to help address some of the world's most difficult problems, ranging from tackling the climate crisis to rebuilding societies emerging from conflict.

kinds of assets made by wealthy individuals to address various social problems and needs that are overlooked or neglected by the government (Rudich, 2007: 7). As Jones (2010: 4) points out, philanthropy is characterised by an individual giving to an organisation, intended primarily for public purposes, rather than individual-to-individual basis (Ostrower, 1995: 9).

Institutional philanthropy has a global reach, contributing to social and economic development in diverse countries throughout the world. Global philanthropy holds immense promise in the 21st century. Over time and across geographies the world has witnessed a near-universal charitable instinct to help other (Johnson, 2018). Philanthropy is increasingly being called upon to help address some of the world's most difficult problems, ranging from tackling the climate crisis to rebuilding societies emerging from conflict. As the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) points out, private philanthropy is a growing source of funding for middle- and low-income countries—supporting global public health, education, agriculture, gender equality or clean energy. Between 2016-2019, private philanthropy provided an estimated USD 42.5 billion (OECD, 2019) with some 43 per cent of the funds (or US 18 billion). In the 2016-2018 fiscal year, health and reproductive health received the most funding, with USD 18 billion. Global giving has been driven by factors such as the global economic growth and the enormous increase in private wealth accumulation; persistent economic and social inequalities; and governmental and private efforts to encourage and support philanthropic institutions and giving, have all contributed to the growth of private philanthropy (Johnson, 2018: 12).

WHY PEOPLE GIVE

There are a wide variety of reasons why giving to a cause has gained traction globally. Around the world, relatively recent global economic growth has led to the accumulation of substantial private wealth, a prerequisite of a robust philanthropic sector. Global high net worth individual (HNWI) wealth has increased almost fourfold in the last 20 years and now totals almost 60 trillion USD$ (Johnson, 2018: 12). Global economic integration, globalisation, the emergence of new industries, privatisation of state-owned enterprises, and the generational wealth transfer have all contributed to the growth of private wealth.

This has prompted the question: Why do people, and institutions give? Using the 'identification model' of gifting, discussed in a bit more detail in this paper, Rudich (2007) points to four key determinants that influence philanthropism.

1. Membership in formal and informal networks of associations. People's self-interest and ability to identify with others develops as a result of formal and informal associations with communities and organisations through which they practise charity. The associational dynamics of charity allows individuals to identify with their surroundings and with causes that they are not directly connected with. Membership in a religious community has also been found to influence charitable giving. Most cases of charitable giving and volunteering stay within the community and religious houses of worship. They are mainly intended to support causes and activities with which the donor is associated or from which the donor derives benefit (Jackson, Bachmeier, Wood & Craft, 1995; quoted in Rudich, 2007). According to this model, donors learn about other people's needs and learn to identify with them through the very act of participation.
2. Cognitive frameworks that foster values and priorities, encourage a sense of belonging, and encourage giving and involvement. The cognitive frameworks of individuals are based on personal beliefs, thinking processes, emotions and general values of generosity, self-respect, respect for others, and concepts of justice—all of which foster a sense of commitment to the cause (Schervish & Havens, 1995; quoted in Rudich, 2007).
3. Personal requests directed at individuals to donate time and resources encourage social involvement and participation. Charitable giving and volunteering is not only a consequence of various motivations and a rational decision-making process of some sort, but also a consequence of the exposure to a request to donate or to become involved in some other way (Bekkers, 2004). Personal requests to donate, or solicitation for donations, are an important mechanism that affects donations and are known to raise the probability that people will donate to charity. This significantly means that the more opportunities people have to donate, the more they will donate (Bryant et al, 2003; Schervish & Havens, 1997).
4. Past experiences affect giving in the present and steer donors to their relevant areas of involvement, as for example: the death of a loved one due to an illness, a successful college experience, gratitude for a scholarship, a special-needs relative, admiration for the arts, etc (Rudich, 2007: 23-24, in Rudich, 2007).

The role of religion and spiritualism in the context of black giving deserves a

further comment. People give to a cause for a variety of reasons, some of it is driven by social factors. Emerging trends on the African continent shows that among the many reasons why African donors give is because of spiritual reasons. Faith-based philanthropism is, therefore, important for understanding black giving. For example, on Muslim charity in the United States, Bagby (2018) set out to explore the reasons why Muslim charity tends to be so misunderstood, especially when taking into consideration their economic and social status. The research revealed that, like in the black community, Muslim giving, in the context of the United States is not as understood as say white mainstream donors partly because they tend to give for specific projects as opposed to less tangible projects, and through their own well-defined channels.

> Donors most often expressed their preference to give when there was an immediate need. Interviewees mentioned that they gave when the mosque needed something specific, like remodeling an ablution area, furnishing a new classroom, or repairing the roof. Notice that this preference for giving to an urgent need fits the age-old model of giving to zakah, when appeals, for example, are made to help a starving person or someone in dire strait (Bagby, 2018)

BLACK GIVING

A wealth of research has been conducted on traditional donors such as the World Bank, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), UK's Department for International Development (DFID) or the Ford Foundation. While a lot is now known about global philanthropy on the one hand, on the other, there is a serious lack of data on both formal and informal forms of giving in Africa by Africans or Africa-based institutions. Unsurprisingly, the African donor community is often treated as a footnote in conversations about donors and giving. This outright neglect and glaring omission is in spite of the fact that an enormous amount of formal, semiformal and informal philanthropy takes place in communities, families, and kinship networks across the continent, partly driven by the emergence of a distinct African middle class. These efforts are not recognised and properly documented because it takes place 'under the radar' of the formal economy (African Grantmakers Network, 2013, quoted in Obadare & Krawczyk, 2021). The serious lack of data on both

Indigenous African gifting manifests itself through its deep ties to the history, politics, and struggles of pre- and post-independence Africa.

Rethinking the Role of History Education to Facilitate Positive Peace
The Case of Northern Ireland

Melissa Delury

ABSTRACT
The potential role of history education in facilitating positive peace has been explored in post-conflict contexts, including Northern Ireland (NI). Since the signing of the Good Friday Agreements in 1998, policymakers have looked to education as a way to bridge societal divisions and promote reconciliation (i.e. integrated education). However, schools in NI remain segregated by religious affiliation with less than 10% of students choosing to attend integrated schools. Furthermore, while curriculum changes encourage dialogue and critical thinking to engage with the past, there remains a 'culture of silence' that pervades NI culture and makes its way into the classroom. The avoidance of talking about difficult pasts often suggests a still fragile environment, which has been discussed recently in relation to Brexit, as well as the united Ireland movement.

In this sense, scholars argue that in teaching difficult pasts, the answer is not to erase the past, but to recognise that different perspectives and identities must be seen and acknowledged. Teachers play an enormous role in this process. In NI, teachers are often reluctant to connect the past with present politics leading to the question of history education's effectiveness to develop historical empathy. It is within this context that scholars call for more research on how teachers engage history textbooks to teach about The Troubles. This article approaches these questions in NI through a transdisciplinary approach (education and peace studies) in advance of doctoral fieldwork.

KEYWORDS
History, Education, Textbooks, Northern Ireland, Positive Peace, Troubles, Teachers

INTRODUCTION
The role of education in both contributing to violence and facilitating peace has

been explored in many contexts (Davies, 2004; King, 2014; Bar-Tal et al, 2014; Bekerman, 2009; Bentrovato, 2017; Korostelina, 2013). Schools are spaces where societal divisions can remain intact, or be transformed to more peaceful outcomes. History education, in particular, displays this duality, since it holds potential for social transformation, yet has been known to perpetuate narratives of conflict that often align with certain political agendas (Bentrovato, 2017; Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991). The role that history education can play to address root causes of conflict and contribute to positive peace (Galtung, 1969) has been explored in many post-conflict contexts, including Northern Ireland (NI) (McCully & Reilly, 2017). Following the signing of the Good Friday Agreements (GFA), which brought an end to the thirty-year conflict known as 'The Troubles' (1968-1998), NI focused on utilising education to further reconciliation efforts and sustainable peace (Worden, 2023). While there were several initiatives following the signing of the GFA, this article focuses on two that reflect changes at the structural level (types of schooling) and classroom level (curricula).

History education, in particular, displays this duality, since it holds potential for social transformation, yet has been known to perpetuate narratives of conflict that often align with certain political agendas.

The first was the introduction of integrated education, which brought Catholic and Protestant students together in one school. Integrated schooling was introduced in 1989 through the Education Reform Order. Integrated schooling includes both Catholic and Protestant students and has been touted as the golden ticket for sustainable peace by international actors (Meredith, 2021). Yet only 8% of students choose to attend integrated schools in NI (Branford, 2021). This miniscule, albeit slowly growing, number indicates that parents and students continue to choose schools that are aligned with their own background and identity (Butterly, 2023).

The second was the introduction of the Local and Global Citizenship Education (LGC)—a cross-curricular programme—that provided a statutory curriculum in all post-primary schools (Key Stage 3—ages 11-14) to encourage dialogue and learning about past conflict. The goals of this curricular programme is to investigate how and why conflict occurs in the community and also explore ways to manage conflict and improve community relations (CCEA, 2017: 2). However, these changes have been met with some challenges. First, while these curricular changes encourage dialogue and critical thinking when engaging the past, there remains a 'culture of silence' that pervades Northern Irish culture that is arguably attributed to the avoidance or lack of discussion of past conflict in

Northern Irish classrooms (Worden, 2023; Pace, 2021; Smith & Neill, 2005). Guichard (2013) argues that this 'collective amnesia' keeps conflict dormant, rather than addressing root causes, leading to what Galtung (1969) describes as a negative peace, or simply the absence of direct violence. Efforts to create harmony and unity sometimes risk glossing over difficult pasts instead of addressing them directly, leading to the perpetuation of conflict (Guichard, 2013). The avoidance of talking about difficult pasts often underscores a still fragile environment, which has been discussed within the context of NI with the Brexit, as well as the rise of the united Ireland movement.

Therefore, the importance of identity is also critical in this context. Scholars argue that in teaching difficult pasts, the answer is not to avoid the past, but to recognise that different perspectives can be true, and identities must be seen and acknowledged. As Ferguson and McKeown (2016) say, 'in order to move community relations forward, Protestant and Catholic identities need to be accepted and not threatened; otherwise, they will become barriers to progress, again illustrating the need for positive and secure social identities in building peace' (p.220). Scholars argue that this must be coupled with 'historical empathy' and desire to coexist intentionally and meaningfully in order for this peace to be a positive peace and not simply the absence of violence.

This growing potential of history education to further these goals cannot be actualised without teachers. Indeed, even though NI has made progress at the policy level, education policies that are more progressive cannot be successfully implemented without teachers (McCully, 2012). Several studies in NI have found that some teachers are reluctant to push the boundaries of 'traditional history teaching' by introducing innovative methods for societal transformation (Donnelly, 2020; McCully, 2012; Kitson, 2007; Conway, 2004). McCully and Reilly (2017) also argue that history teachers 'must meet curriculum objectives, teach sensitive and controversial issues, enable pupils to achieve good exam results and on top of all of this, hope to improve community relations' (p.316). The tendency of teachers to avoid connecting the past with the present politics has led to the critique that history teaching does not properly address this concern (Barton & McCully, 2005; Kitson, 2007; McCaffery & Hansson, 2011). It is within this context that Donnelly et al (2020) call for more research on how teachers and students engage in learning about The Troubles and past conflict. This study responds to this call by exploring how the Troubles are reflected in history textbooks and how teachers and students engage with them in classrooms within the three types of schools in Belfast: state (Protestant), maintained (Catholic), and integrated (mixed).

This article will provide an overview of history education within the peace studies field, including a review of history textbook research within the context

of peace and conflict. I then provide a contextual background on the Northern Irish context, including recent educational changes. This will be followed by an overview of the role of teachers within this context. This article closes with possibilities for further research in advance of doctoral fieldwork next Spring.

HISTORY EDUCATION

The Role of History Textbooks in Peace Studies

Research around history textbooks in relation to peace and conflict often focuses on three key areas: their role in perpetuating conflict; their potential for social transformation and peace; and their role in nation-building. Within the field of textbook research, Foster (2011) argues that most scholarly work in this area fall under two traditions: the *conciliatory* tradition, whose origins can be traced to the end of the World War I; and the *critical* tradition, which focuses on the dominant socio-cultural and political forces that control narratives in history textbooks (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991). While these two traditions are not mutually exclusive, and often overlap, they provide a helpful frame when discussing the role of history textbooks in relation to peace and conflict.

Conciliatory Tradition

The role of history textbooks in perpetuating conflict has been well researched (Williams, 2014; Davies, 2004; King, 2014). Foster (2011) notes that *conciliatory tradition's* principal goal is to 'counter aggressive nationalism and ensure that school textbooks offer a more "objective", sensitive, and thoughtful appreciation of how the past is depicted' (p.7). This tradition of history textbook research aims to bring together educators, administrators, and historians with a goal of producing common historical understanding that is sensitive to the histories of other nations. The origins of this tradition can be traced to the end of World War I, when a central body within the League of Nations, the International Committee on Intellectual Co-Operation, proposed that all nations set up 'a reciprocal comparative analysis of textbooks in order to revise texts that were biased and flawed, and which would thus help to avoid essential misunderstandings of countries in the future' (Pingel, 2010: 9). Similarly, the end of World War II ushered in numerous initiatives led by international agencies (i.e. UNESCO) to improve the writing and utilisation of history textbooks (Pingel, 2010; Foster, 2011). One important organisation that continues this tradition of history textbook research is the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research (GEI), which has hosted numerous conferences and workshops mainly for individuals

From Binary and Adversarial to Preferential and Inclusive Politics

Peter Emerson

ABSTRACT

Climate Change is telling all nations to cooperate; so they try (sometimes) not to divide, and the recent UN conference in Dubai, for example, aimed to reach agreements without majority voting. Given the existential nature of the problem, political parties within nations should maybe do the same. Majority voting after all is easily manipulated and very vulnerable to artificial intelligence, AI. Furthermore, it is primitive, often divisive, sometimes inaccurate and at worst a provocation to violence and war. Likewise, simplistic elections may produce an inexact reflection of the collective will with a bias which favours extremists. For the future of humankind, the choice of voting system is crucial.

Accordingly, this article looks at voting procedures both in elections and in decision-making, before then advocating a form of governance by which politicians can more exactly identify and then implement the common will. It is a polity which, it is argued, is not only more peaceful, but also more commensurate with the natural human condition of evolution.

KEYWORDS

Consensus, Pluralism, Power-Sharing, Preferential Decision-Making, Climate Change

INTRODUCTION

Civilisation has inherited at least three major erroneous practices. Our forebears allowed persons to own that which they did not make: ores, oil, land and in some countries even water. Next, the powers-that-be morphed the vice of usury into the virtue of credit. And thirdly, in nearly every country on the planet, humankind chose to resolve *multi*-option problems in *binary* votes. This article focuses on the last mistake.

In elections and in decision-making, societies world-wide continue to use the simplistic—and divisive!—single-preference varieties. These forms of electoral

systems facilitate the rise of right-wing parties, while majority vote decision-making can be false-flag weapons of war. Indeed, 'all the wars in the former Yugoslavia started with a [binary] referendum' (*Oslobodjenje*,[1] 7 February 1999); the *Interahamwe* initiated their 1994 Rwandan genocide with the slogan, '*Rubanda nyamwinshi'*, 'we are the majority' (Prunier, 1995: 183); and in 2014, the above Balkan quotation also applied to Ukraine. 'Everything is connected', to quote the Ukrainian philosopher, Vladimir Vernadsky. 2014 was also the year of Scotland's referendum, and the word 'Shotlandiya' Шотландия, was used by Russian separatists in Luhansk, to 'justify' the unjustifiable.[2]

Wars in Ukraine, the Middle East, Sudan and elsewhere, as well as Climate Change itself, are exacerbating the refugee crisis; the latter prompts some to support a more extreme politics; and politicians, especially the extreme ones, often make use of a majority diktat.

Hitler came to power 'democratically', competing in elections and then, in 1933, initiating the (weighted) majority vote 'Enabling Act'. In 1903, Lenin did nothing on losing one particular vote, but then did everything when he won a second ballot —he took control; the very word 'bolshevik' means 'member of the majority'.[3] And Napoléon became the world's first 'democratic dictator' when he was elected *l'empereur* in 1803, by 99.7%! (Emerson, 2012: 143-150) They all used majority voting. Furthermore, AI is warning us all of the dangers of manipulated voting systems…and the simpler the system, the easier it is to manipulate.

Despite its appalling history, from the United Nations Security Council[4] to North Korea[5] (Juche, 2017: 22), many decision-making rules prescribe binary voting. Multi-option voting can be more accurate, yet majority voting predominates. In law, in business, in civil society everywhere and definitely in politics, problems are often reduced to dichotomies or series thereof. So decisions are based on majority votes. So politics is adversarial. So parliaments divide, and thus democracies also split into two, while many other states become autocratic.

It need not be so.

Just as there are numerous electoral systems in the world, and nearly all of them are regarded by some if not by all as democratic, so too there are quite a few decision-making processes. The latter vary to a lesser extent—after all, elections may elect just one, or a few, or even an entire parliament, so some electoral systems are proportional, and the size of the constituency is another variable; on decision-making, however, no matter what the forum, those concerned make only one decision (or one prioritisation), one at a time; so decision-making systems are fewer, but they still vary, from the basic to the more accurate. Sadly, the chosen methodology is usually the most primitive, either a simple or weighted majority vote. And it is indeed ubiquitous.

Multi-option voting is possible, and the methodologies vary from 'single-

preference-only' to preferential. And just as electoral systems may be ranged on a spectrum from unfair via moderate to fair, so too decision-making systems can be similarly compared. Most of these procedures are 'win-or-lose' and, as such, they are inappropriate for the UN's Conference of the Parties COP gatherings. In contrast, some of the most accurate are non-majoritarian; they can identify, not the *more* preferred of only two options—the option with a majority of votes—but the *most* generally acceptable of many options—the option with the highest *average* preference. And an average, of course, involves *every* (voting) member of the parliament or the electorate. The methodology is inclusive, literally. If democratic decision-making were to be based on just such a non-majoritarian methodology, it would be logical to replace the majority rule style of governance, be it under a single party or a coalition, by a political structure grounded on all-party power-sharing. Unfortunately, Switzerland is the only non-conflict zone to adopt such an inclusive polity; and equally sadly, the formulas adopted in Northern Ireland, Bosnia and Lebanon all tend to perpetuate the very ethnic divisions which the relevant peace agreements were supposed to overcome.[6]

This article first refers to electoral systems but then concentrates on decision-making; it compares majority voting with some of the multi-option methodologies, and concludes that a non-majoritarian 'win-win' methodology is actually the most accurate and therefore the most democratic. Accordingly, the text goes on to describe a democratic structure by which an all-party executive may be elected and function.

Democracy is an ideal. Humanity is a wonderful creation. Many years ago, our ancestors learnt that minority rule is just downright dangerous. Not yet, however, have today's societies, many of which are multi-multi in their diversity, devised democratic structures which fully embrace pluralism, which enable humankind to develop further and progress in a manner commensurate, not only with peace, but also with our natural tendency to evolve.

ELECTIONS

The world's first elections were held in Greece, some 2,500 years ago, but it was soon realised that something was not good enough; all too often, the openly ambitious were tempted to seek office. It was therefore decided to resort to sortition, not least because it was widely believed that, 'He on whom the lot falls is…dear to the gods.' (De Ste. Croix, 2004: 95)

Today, however, we have elections. Probably the world's worst system is the binary vote, as used in North Korea. The party, the only party, chooses the candidate, the only candidate, let's say Mr ***X***, and the voters then vote, 'Mr ***X***, "yes" or "no"?' (Or maybe it's 'yes' or 'yes'.)

There should of course be at least two candidates on every ballot paper.[7] If such is the case, however, in an election involving just three candidates —***A***, ***B*** and ***C***—an individual voter cannot express his/her opinion accurately if the voting procedure is single preference, if asked to state, in effect, 'I think "this one" is good, but equally so, "those other two" are not.' The system is Orwellian, yet this first-past-the-post FPTP system is the basis of democracy in the UK, the USA, India and many other former British possessions; it is a highly divisive. The equally widespread French two-round system TRS is not much better, and nor too are some of the single-preference systems of PR (see below).

Some countries have a two-tier, semi-proportional parallel system of FPTP and PR, (only the PR bit is proportional), as in Japan and Pakistan, or of TRS and PR as in Georgia. While in Germany and New Zealand, their multi-member proportional MMP system is a 50:50 balance of FPTP and PR, and the PR bit predominates the final balance, so it is fully proportional. The variations are indeed numerous (Emerson, 2021: 72).

Other single-tier electoral systems are also fully proportional, but here too the differences are several. Israel uses a closed-list system, so the voters may choose only a party. The Netherlands has an open-list system, so Dutch voters can choose a candidate, but only one, of just one party;[8] in Belgium, the electorate can choose more than one candidate of their chosen party; while the Swiss voters can be very peaceful, for they can choose to cross both the gender gap and the party divide by voting for more than one candidate of more than one party.

Australia's alternative vote AV is preferential but not proportional; all the constituencies are single-seaters, and voters can vote in order of preference for more than one party, for one candidate of each, and the system inherently encourages parties to cooperate a little. The same system in Papua New Guinea has an additional proviso: to be valid, the voter must cast at least three preferences, so in effect, he/she must cross the party and therefore the tribal divides.

The Irish use AV as well, in its PR format with the single transferable vote, PR-STV; this system is called ranked choice voting RCV in the USA. In effect, it allows the voter to cross every barrier—the gender gap, the party divide and—as in the case of Northern Ireland—even the sectarian chasm. One further system also deserves a mention, the Quota Borda System QBS, which not only *allows* the voters to cross these divide—it actually *encourages* them to do so, (section 2.2) and is the most cohesive electoral system of all (Emerson, 2010: 197-209).

Of the above electoral systems, binary voting is ideally suited to a one-party state like the DPRK. FPTP tends to support a two-party structure, which is often made worse with binary vote decision-making—the USA has the world's most binary polity, and Donald Trump is its denouement. PR caters for a multi-party state, especially if it is conducted in a large constituency as in the Netherlands[9]

Reflecting on the Praxis of Peacemaking During a Time of War

Jacqueline Haessly

ABSTRACT
In this work I briefly review the history of wars in this first quarter of the 21st century, consider how cultural paradigms shape decisions we make in our individual and communal lives, describe seven strands that I believe are common to all cultures, and examine more closely how these seven strands shape a current cultural paradigm in support of a culture of war. I then suggest a different cultural paradigm, one focused on peace; I propose a unique definition of peace and two terms helpful for reconsidering and reconceptualising a culture of peace with justice. I then explore the praxis of peacemaking from three perspectives, in the home, the community, and at the national and international levels.

KEYWORDS
Peacemaking, Presence, Integral Peace, Actualised Peace, Culture, War

INTRODUCTION

Reflecting on the Praxis of Peacemaking During a Time of War

The 21st century began with a Proclamation by Nobel Peace Laureates and members of the United Nations General Assembly calling for a decade—2000-2010—dedicated to education for a culture of peace and nonviolence (UN Declaration, 1999). Yet today, a quarter of the way into this 21st century, we continue to witness too many acts of warfare, terrorism, counterterrorism, and continuing acts of retaliation, claiming lives in too many villages, cities, and countries of our world.

In this work I briefly review the history of wars in this first quarter of the 21st century and then introduce and highlight how cultural paradigms shape decisions we make in our individual and communal lives. Next, drawing upon the metaphor of weaving (Haessly, 2002), I identify seven strands that I believe are common to all cultures, and examine more closely how we draw upon these seven strands to shape a current cultural paradigm, one in support of a culture of war.

I then suggest a different cultural paradigm, one focused on peace. I propose

a unique definition of peace and two terms helpful for reconsidering and re-conceptualising a culture of peace with justice. I then examine how we can weave these seven strands together to promote, protect, and preserve a culture of peace. Lastly, I explore the praxis of peacemaking from three perspectives, in the home, the community, and at the national and international levels.

EXPLORING WARS IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Two horrific attacks bookend a quarter century of terrorist attacks, counterattacks, invasions, and both civil wars and international wars. People throughout the world still reel from the terrorist attacks that occurred in the United States on 11 September 2001. Thousands of people died horrific deaths following the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York City, at the Pentagon in Washington, DC, and at the site of the aborted crash in Pennsylvania.

Much the same can be said about the current fighting in Israel and Gaza.

The horror that took place in small communities and at a music festival for peace during a terrorist attack in Israel on 7 October 2023, along with the daily continued attacks in both Israel and Palestine, especially in the Gaza Strip, horrify peoples around the world.

In between these two horrific attacks, other wars continue to destroy the lives of people and their communities in countries around the world. These include the invasion of Ukraine by Russia and the ensuing war that has headlined media coverage for the past two years, while other wars, such as in Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Haiti, Syria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Sudan, Venezuela, and Yemen, (Knight, 2023)—have received far less media coverage. Ethiopia provides one such example. 'Researchers in Belgium's Ghent University estimate that 385,000 to 600,000 civilians had died of war-related causes in Ethiopia as of August 2022. Sources from both sides say hundreds of thousands of combatants have died in fighting since August 2022' (The Crisis Group, 2023), yet these deaths, these atrocities, receive little media coverage from the international media.

Throughout this quarter of the century, millions of people have died in both highly visible and far less visible wars. Hundreds of thousands injured! Millions more mourn the loss of loved ones. Civilians—babies in arms, children, mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, grandparents, neighbours, co-workers, friends—make up the largest number of those injured or who have died in all of these wars. The pain and suffering, the loss of life and innocence, the destruction of monuments, and the devastation of the land seem more than we can comprehend! Each of these deaths, each of these injuries, and all this devastation, is the direct or indirect result of actions motivated by a value system that fails to honour all of life and finds its roots in a value system that calls for revenge, retaliation,

retribution, and/or domination. How, we ask, could anyone conceive of, plan, and carry out such unspeakable acts?

Yet, on the very days of these attacks and on the many days both before and after, in far less dramatic but no less deadly fashion, hundreds of thousands more have died as a result of malnourishment, preventable disease, toxic pollutants, armed conflicts, and violence, too often caused by governmental and corporate values, systems and structures, policies and practices that lead to a devaluing of human life as well as the devaluing of the eco-system and all its created life forms. *And we fail to ask, how could anyone conceive of such unspeakable suffering!*

Terrorists engaged in imagining, planning, and acting to bring about the deaths and devastation that occurred during the 11 September attacks in the USA in 2001 and during the 7 October attacks in Israel in 2023. Elected and appointed government and military officials engaged in imagining, planning, and acting to bring about the counterattacks led by the USA in 2001 and by Israel in 2023. The same can be said of those engaged in all wars that have taken place during these past 25 years. All of these deaths, these injuries, these acts of destruction occurred as the result of beliefs, philosophies, and values that hold that some lives are expendable in the name of a perceived greater justice. Some person or a group of people valued retaliation, attacks and counterattacks and the many other acts of violence and warfare that have taken place in so many places in the world. They used language to communicate and mis-communicate about their vision; they developed an infrastructure by which to plan these attacks and counterattacks carefully; they established ground rules or policies to be followed by others; they trained people both to accept the values and beliefs on which their plans were based and to follow the ground rules needed to implement the plan. Lastly, people acted to bring these plans to reality. S Zabala and C Gallo (2022) provide an excellent example of how all of this takes place in the hearts and minds of people when they describe both the ideological and cultural motivations behind the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

The trouble is that in all these conflicts, parties on all sides claim that their cause is just! Parties on all sides call the other 'enemy'! The Infidel! The Evil One! Parties on all sides fail to heed the most basic of human values and human rights—the sanctity of all life and the right to live! In places too numerous to count, families live in fear as their children are being taught to hate and their young ones are trained to kill. This is no way to provide a secure global community for our young and their future. Martin Griffiths, UN Under Secretary General for Emergency Relief, remarking about the escalations of wars in this 21st century states 'Leaders often choose war first as an instrument to resolve differences' (*PBS NewsHour*, 23 January 2024).

Moreover, many who engage in any of these multiple wars call upon 'their'

God to bless their efforts to seek justice, failing to see that for many—Jewish, Christian, Muslim, people of all faith traditions—God is the same God who goes by many names. People of diverse faith traditions ask God to bless their war, failing to notice that a loving God embraces all members of the human family—those we call friend and family and those we call enemy. God will not be divided! God's love is expansive! Welcoming! Embracing of all people! We are called to do likewise!

Some claim that wars will continue as long as we hate the enemy's children more than we love our own. Golda Meir is quoted as turning that statement around: 'The only way to eliminate war is to love our children more than we hate our enemies' (Meir, in AZ Quotes). If we as a people want to eliminate wars, this is what is needed to provide a secure global community for our young and their future, for now and unto the 7th generation.

Transforming a culture from one that accepts war as a given to one that both cultivates and celebrates peace in a family, a classroom, a community, a workplace, our places of worship, and our world requires an examination of our worldview, the cultural paradigms that shape our perspectives, perspectives that either impede or enhance the creation of a culture of peace.

IDENTIFYING CULTURAL PARADIGMS

Culture has been described as a social system that includes a 'shared meaning system' (Triandis, 2003), 'a shared pattern of beliefs, attitudes, self-definitions, norms, roles and values organized around a [common] theme' (Triandis, 2003: 19). Culture is 'a system of knowledge, meanings, and symbolic actions that is shared by the majority of the people in a society' (Ting-Toomey, 2003). Culture aids people in adapting to and functioning within a given social milieu because 'they share common standards of communicating, behaving and evaluating in everyday life' (Fong, 2003: 198). Further, 'Today, it is widely recognized (and maybe even taken for granted by many) that culture matters and that culture influences behaviour and development' (Raeff, C, DiBianca Fasoli, A, Reddy, V & Mascolo, M, 2020).

Culture has been linked to worldview in important ways. A worldview 'shapes culture and serves to distinguish one culture from another' (Ishii, Klopf, & Cooke, 2003). V Didenko and V Tabachkovskyi (2002) define worldview as 'a system of principles, knowledge, ideals, values, hopes, beliefs, views on the meaning and purpose of life, which determine the activities of the individual or social group and are organically included in human actions and norms of behaviour' (p.569).

Communication specialists Satoshi Ishii, Donald Klopf and Peggy Cooke draw upon the wisdom of anthropologists, educators, psychologists, social

Response and Reflection

HOW ABOUT A LITTLE R & R?

While this is only the second issue of the *JTPP* with an *R & R* section, I believe it is critical to continue this relatively new section (even if I personally found less time for *R & R* during this issues' production). As *JTPP*'s Editor-in-Chief, I continue to envision this section as a space to dialogue directly with readers on important topics of the day and use critical thinking as an important means for rest, relaxation, reflection, and rejuvenation. As this section develops over time, *Response & Reflection* harkens to emulate the African America Christian church's call and response tradition. In my own short piece below, I spend a little time thinking about social identity and the cultural wars engulfing both the United States and the rest of the world in 2024 and I welcome response and dialogue on my thought piece. We all know that both the conceptions of, and the importance of, social identity have changed drastically over the last few decades, but why? How can we ensure universalistic and peace-centric approaches to social change are not lost to the global turn towards the political right and away from long accepted liberal ideals of universalism and pluralism? These are the complex and shifting dynamics I touch on in my second *R & R* section contribution below. We continue to hope this new *Response and Reflection* (*R & R*) section will foster dialogue and, like the *JTPP*, foreground and empower transdisciplinary platforms for peace.

The format of these pieces is intended to be more informal and shorter than regular *JTPP* manuscript pieces (which range in size from 8,000 to 10,000 words). Here, in this now regular Response and Reflection section, we reserve some journal space for thought pieces and op-eds on transdisciplinary peace issues, which range between 1,000 and 2,500 words. The idea of this section is to develop and test transdisciplinary arguments that present clear statements of a particular opinion/position/context and that engages with counterarguments to this opinion while making a case for particular policies, praxis possibilities, or important dynamics impacting our global peace reality. As a venue for thought and conversation between *JTPP* readers and its editorial team, as well as a catalyst for further academic engagement with under addressed global and transdisciplinary conflict contexts, the *R & R* section aims to develop as a provocative space to test ideas and foster dialogue.

We welcome your submissions of between 1,000 and 2,500 words aimed at addressing contemporary issues from a peace-oriented perspective. Please submit

any response letters and/or *R & R* submissions to submission@jtpp.uk and mention that this is a submission for the *Response and Reflection (R & R)* section in your subject line. As with all submitted manuscripts, a short bios of no more than 75 words should accompany any submission to the *JTPP*. We look forward to your active participation and now how about some more *R & R*!

Woke Identity and the Ongoing Culture Wars

JEREMY A RINKER, *JTPP Editor-in-Chief*

Following my *R & R* entry in issue X of the *JTPP* (*Finding Fraternal Community in a Dystopian Technological and Polarized World*), I want to think further about political polarisation and, more specifically, its connection to our current understandings, and socio-political dynamics, of social identity. Rather than focusing on how polarisation impacts community, I want to take a step back and explore how identity politics, 'wokeism', or what Yascha Mounk (2023) calls 'the identity synthesis'[1] is strengthening the political right and narrowing the opportunities in support of legitimate arguments for universal values in liberal democracies around the world. What Mounk (2023) calls a 'new ideology',[2] he later describes as a 'body of ideas [that] draws on a broad variety of intellectual traditions and is centrally concerned with the role that identity categories like race, gender, and sexual orientation play in the world'.[3] The identity synthesis is limiting of shared universal discourse. While our collective sense of community is certainly shrivelling due to polarisation, the space for deliberative democracy is also narrowing as a result of this increased emphasis on social identity. I have come to believe that a primary reason for this is our increasingly fixed sense of, and intransigent obduracy on, the centrality of social identities; our increasing focus on difference as opposed to finding both likeness and reflexive divergences in humanity. Even though the progressive left would like to see issues of identity foregrounded in every aspect of institutional collective decision making, what does such an identity emphasis do to democratic dialogue, deliberation, and attempts to create civic space to achieve truly universal inclusion? My answer—not much—aligns with what Mounk (2023) is referring to as the identity trap in his recent book. Increasingly we are asked to publicly recognise our identities with little collective reflection on whether these ascribed social identities are primary to us and our personal sense of being in the world. With little space or structure for reflection on how these identities relate to other identities we hold, we are increasingly asked to foreground gender, race, creed, or sexual orientation in ways that seem totalising and short-sighted. Take, as example, the increasingly

normalised practice of announcing our pronouns as we introduce ourselves in contemporary public meetings. Ten years ago, this practice did not exist in the United States, but now it is common in US movement organising culture for people to introduce themselves using their preferred pronouns. While this is intended to create an inclusive environment for non-binary and non-cis-gendered individuals, it also presupposes that gendered identities are somehow more primary than other of our many identities, and it assumes that everyone desires to express their gender identity publicly. Now, don't get me wrong, I understand the need and desire to foreground gender differences in the public consciousness, and this practice has certainly increased awareness about both the existence of, and challenges faced, by gender non-conforming individuals. At the same time, this explicit social insistence (and indeed social pressure) to put everyone in a gendered box, does little to explicitly encourage universal humanistic values and/or a sense of co-authored acceptance and free expression for gender non-conforming individuals. John McWorter labels such virtue signalling a 'new religion' and argues that it harms as well as helps minority groups.[4] Social pressure to conform to progressive ideals in such cases might produce as much social backlash as it does acceptance and it assumes that public expression of diverse gender identities fosters acceptance. This is the irony of the progressive turn towards emphasising identity: it not only creates some level of identity acceptance, but also forecloses alternative conceptions of identity that may be equally important to profess and express publicly. Further, such practices assume that identifying as a particular marginalised social identity fosters not only awareness, but increased tolerance. Such practices simplify ideas of diversity and inclusion and assumes a deficit-based approach, as opposed to an assets-based approach, to social change. The increased emphasis on identity and affinity groups emphasises the ways we socially construct difference and does little to encourage prosocial commonalities or embrace of intersectionalities. The totalising narrative that systems of oppression, and implicit bias, are active in every facet of life leaves little room for alternative reason and debate, and indeed works at cross purposes to professed progressive goals of social inclusion and processes of acceptance of unity in diversity. This is why the far right indeed gains political ground from progressive insistence on foregrounding identity as a means of equitable social change. Insistence on identity as the primary driver of political decision-making opens a perilous trap for the goals of progressive transformation and social inclusion. The very ideals that progressive activists aspire to achieve are undermined when calls to categorise and identify drown out attempts to embrace universal values or new means of collective agency and humanity.

Despite the role of social media in making us more tribal, the left has morphed its sense of identity in ways that are both problematic and, at times, defeatist of traditional liberal goals like multiculturalism and inclusion. Big ideas like

democracy, universalism, and critical pedagogy are everywhere under attack, and unless progressive thinkers see their own complicity in the recent success of the global political drift to the right, I believe we are doomed to repeat the violent collective traumas of the World War II. Current right-leaning political discourse does not arise in a vacuum. No doubt fundamentalists forces on the right are courting fascist ideologies to gain and maintain power, but what role do progressives on the left play in these global shifts to the right? Vijay Prasad arguing for a polycultural approach to difference in his 2002 book *Everyone was Kung Fu Fighting: Afro-Asian Connections and the Myth of Cultural Purity*, writes:

> For comfortable liberals a critique of multiculturalism is close to heresy, but for those of us who have to tussle both with the cruelty of white supremacy and with the melancholic torments of minoritarianism, the critique comes with ease. The orthodoxy of below bears less power than that from above, but it is unbearable nonetheless.[5]

Clearly the progressive left is no freer of hegemonic forces than the conservative right. A view of polyculturalism, rather than overreliance on multiculturalism, helps progressives see the complex realities that stances or practices of liberal multiculturalism foreground. Inclusion as a goal may be underserved by creating any hardened sense of singular identity. In the words of Kwame Anthony Appiah 'poems, like identities, never have just one interpretation'.[6] This means we must continually reflect on 'the promise and the peril of identity'[7] and work to retain a healthy scepticism of any identity that attempts to totalise our individual or collective experience.

I am an optimist and I do not like to be a doomsayer, but current alliances between right-wing and neoliberal forces globally portends catastrophic social conflict for years to come. This feeling is grounded in recent changing re-conceptions of identity, increasing global inequality, and elite moves towards illiberal education and over-reliance on market forces to address political disputes. Progressive attempts to foreground identity as a reactive solution to the rightward shift will do little stem this social and cultural conflict. Elite conservative forces are aligned and organised in syncopated rhythm with each other. The global left has largely failed to realise this and lacks the collective organisation, or shared sense of identity around universalistic ideals, to push back against these well aligned forces. Failure of the left to embrace a polycultural worldview has also exacerbated the identity-based divisions in many societies. This is not to say such fascist neoliberal forces will inevitably triumph, but rather that progressive universalistic movements must engage in critical pedagogy and reflective praxis about the ways they frame and deploy identity if they want to effect real change

over time. This means embracing shared identities, not just reifying divisive ones. If progressive liberalism continues to fail to engage in such self-reflection, the right leaning neoliberal fascism that is engulfing the world will lead to great violence and ongoing dissensus over who we are as a human race, as well as what we will be able to accomplish.

NOTES

1 Mounk, Yascha, *The Identity Trap: A Story of Ideas and Power in Our Time,* New York: Penguin, 2023, p.8
2 Mounk, *The Identity Trap*, 2023, op. cit, p.8
3 Mounk, *The Identity Trap*, 2023, op. cit, p.9
4 McWorter, John, *Woke Racism: How a New Religion has Betrayed Black America,* New York: Portfolio, 2021
5 Prasad, Vijay, *Everyone was Kung Fu Fighting: Afro-Asian Connections and the Myth of Cultural Purity,* Boston: Beacon Press, 2001, p.xi
6 Appiah, Kwame Anthony, *The Lies that Bind: Rethinking Identity, Creed, Country, Color, Class, Culture*, New York: Liveright Publishing, 2018, p.215
7 Appiah, Kwame Anthony, *The Lies that Bind*, 2018, op. cit, p.215

Book Reviews

I Never Wanted to Be a Stereotype: Sociologist's Narrative of Healing

By CINDY BROOKS DOLLAR

pp.210, New York: Peter Lang, 2021, PB
$105.60

Reviewed by
OMAR SUFIAN

Initiating a review of a book that intertwines personal memoirs with nontraditional literary forms presents a unique challenge but marks a significant departure from my usual reading selections. As an introduction, the book *I Never Wanted to Be a Stereotype: A Sociologist's Narrative of Healing* is an introspective journey that blends personal narrative with sociological insights. As Brooks Dollar herself says: 'I Never Wanted to Be a Stereotype is a personal narrative that recounts provocations and attempts to overcome the sense of shame, unworthiness, confusion, and misperceptions associated with being objectified and feeling isolated.' Brooks Dollar, a sociologist, goes deeply into her experiences of sexualisation, objectification, and the subsequent emotional and psychological impacts. This exploration is set against a backdrop of broader social and cultural contexts.

In the book, Brooks Dollar courageously recounts incidents from her school years, interactions in multiple social events, and her struggles with shame, anger, and confusion. These experiences are intricately linked to broader themes of societal norms, gender roles, and the stigmatisation of victims. Brooks Dollar's narrative has so many reflections on sociological theories and concepts, making the book a unique piece of personal memoir and academic analysis.

The book's exploration of the intersection between personal experiences and sociological concepts provides a solid argument for the importance of understanding trauma not just as an individual phenomenon but as a societal issue. This perspective is particularly relevant in discussions about gender, power, and the social construction of identity. Brooks Dollar's narrative serves as a reminder of how sociological understanding can illuminate the paths towards healing and transformation. Her story underscores the necessity of addressing the root causes of objectification and harassment within the fabric of society,

advocating for systemic change alongside personal recovery. One of the good aspects of the book is its focus on the long-term impact of sexual objectification and harassment. 'This chapter provides a statement about the ways in which trauma and its transcendence may be felt as a lived experience in certain socio-cultural contexts ' (pp.151-52). The author's experiences serve as a lens to examine the broader societal issues contributing to such experiences. She discusses the role of power dynamics, societal expectations, and the silence surrounding such topics, offering insights into how these factors shape individual experiences and perceptions.

The narrative also touches upon Brooks Dollar's journey towards healing and self-discovery. The author provides an interesting example of how her academic journey in sociology offered her the tools to understand and articulate her experiences of objectification and sexualisation. She recounts, 'By my teenage years, I had become dedicated to reading about patterns of criminal offending, criminal injury, and victimization, and in the years that followed, I began completing my own research on these topics. . . . All of this work and what I read in preparation for and interpretation of it helped me gain an awareness about the ways in which pain, trauma, and crises may encourage distrust, withdrawal, and a sociality, as well as a dissociation with one's body' (p.2). This self-reflective process is portrayed as an integral part of her healing, highlighting the power of knowledge and introspection in overcoming personal traumas.

Furthermore, the book challenges traditional academic writing norms by blending personal narratives with scholarly research. This approach makes the book relatable and bridges the gap between academic discourse and real-world experiences. Brooks Dollar's decision to include raw, unfiltered journal entries and creative pieces adds depth to her narrative, offering readers a more comprehensive view of her life and thoughts.

While *I Never Wanted to Be a Stereotype: A Sociologist's Narrative of Healing* offers insightful perspectives, certain aspects could be critiqued. Firstly, while fruitful and insightful, blending personal narrative with academic discourse sometimes results in a disharmonious transition between the deeply personal and the analytical. When the author transitions from a personal recounting of childhood experiences and feelings of objectification to a broader sociological analysis of these experiences within the context of societal norms and expectations, this swinging between the intimately personal and the analytical might leave readers seeking a smoother narrative transition to enhance overall readability and coherence. This stylistic choice, although unique, may occasionally disrupt the flow for readers who prefer a more consistent narrative style.

Secondly, while Brooks Dollar's personal stories are compelling, they sometimes overshadow the broader sociological analysis. The book would benefit from a

more balanced approach emphasising personal experiences and their sociological implications. This would offer a more comprehensive understanding of the issues, providing readers with an individual account and a broader contextual analysis. Though robust, reliance on personal anecdotes might limit the book's appeal to those seeking a more rigorous academic exploration of the topics discussed. For example, in Chapter 4, Brooks Dollar recounts a personal experience of facing discrimination in the academic setting. This story is interestingly moving and reflects the emotional and psychological impact of such experiences. However, this section could be further enhanced by integrating more sociological insights that contextualise the personal story within broader issues of discrimination within academia. A detailed analysis of how individual experiences of discrimination reflect and maintain broader societal structures and biases could offer readers a better understanding of the issue. This would align with my critique, suggesting that a more balanced approach between personal narrative and sociological analysis would benefit the book.

Brooks Dollar's *I Never Wanted to Be a Stereotype* is a book I would recommend for a diverse audience that includes sociologists, students, academics, educators, and trauma survivors. It is a thought-provoking book that seamlessly integrates personal experiences with sociological analysis. It offers valuable insights into the complexities of sexual objectification and its long-lasting effects while also exploring themes of health, healing, empowerment, and the transformative power of self-reflection and academic inquiry. The author's courage in sharing her story and weaving personal and scholarly perspectives make this book compelling for, I think, even general readers interested in understanding the nuances of personal trauma within a broader social context.

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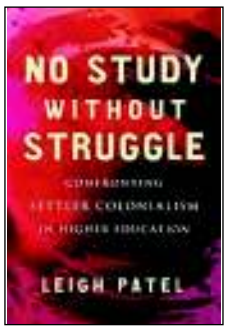
No Study without Struggle: Confronting Settler Colonialism in Higher Education



By LEIGH PATEL

pp.208, Boston: Beacon Press, 2021, PB
$ 24.99

Reviewed by
ELEYAN SAWAFTA

On 6 December 2023, US President Joe Biden stated that his administration made higher education more affordable and 'brought the total student debt cancellation to $132 billion for 3.6 million Americans through various actions' (The White House, 2023). Despite many people struggling to pay their educational debt, debt cancellation is not a solution for higher education in the shadow of neglecting the reality that 'the establishment of higher education has been through the intertwined practices of settler colonialism', practices such as 'land seizure, erasing to replace, and creating and relying on chattel labor' (Patel, 2021: 56).

To comprehensively deconstruct the structural problems in higher education in the United States, one should read 'No Study without Struggle: Confronting Settler Colonialism in Higher Education'. This book conspicuously examines how settler colonialism in higher education affects knowledge quality, and its consumers, based on gender and race. Given that the United States was founded as a settler colonial state on the land of indigenous peoples, it is essential to explore the education system as a significant contributor to the discourse of power surrounding racism, colonialism, and class inequality. This discourse ultimately supports and maintains the structural and cultural violence faced by marginalised populations.

Leigh Patel wilfully uses the term 'marginalised populations' to refer to Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour, collectively known as BIPOC. They use this term to draw attention to the issue of racism in colleges and universities from a broader perspective, and to emphasise that merely identifying the problem of racism in higher education is inadequate. Patel, instead, argues that settler colonialism, an ongoing phenomenon in several countries, is a more accurate theory to elucidate the main obstacles in knowledge.

Although I concede with Patel's argument about settler colonialism, I still maintain that some thinkers, such as Michel Foucault, believe that knowledge is

produced based on social constructs. According to Foucault, 'We are subjected to the production of truth through power, and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth.' However, Foucault excludes the role of colonialism and race in shaping and reshaping knowledge in general. As a social constructivist, his focus on knowledge is on the interaction of interests and norms in society (Foucault, 1980: 93).

In the chapter on settler colonialism, Patel cites Patrick Wolfe's work and argues that settler colonialism is based on the logic of owning land (logic of property), and that there is never enough land to satisfy the landowners' thirst" (p.43). Patel's argument about the 'logic of property' accurately reflects the narrative of settler capitalism. However, other authors, such as Lorenzo Veracini in the work 'The World Turned Inside Out: Settler Colonialism as a Political Idea', contend that settler colonialism does not necessarily entail multi-dimensional political, economic and social domination, as it was initially conceived as a political idea to prevent class-based revolutions in Europe. To put it another way, Veracini disagrees with Patel's recognition of the capitalist aspect of settler colonialism by focusing on the belief that settling 'empty lands' is a form of modernity to head off revolutionary tensions (Veracini, 2021).

Looking deeper at Wolfe's work on 'Settler Colonialism and The Elimination of the Native', we notice that Wolfe maintains that the 'logic of elimination' means, in its positive aspect, 'a return whereby the native repressed continues to structure settler-colonial society (Wolfe, 2006: 390).

Basically, Wolfe is saying that native displacement and erasure occur over time in many dimensions rather than just through land ownership, as seen from a capitalist perspective. My feelings on the issue are mixed. I do support Patel's position that settler colonialism forms knowledge by stealing indigenous people's land , but I find their argument about how settler colonialism impacts knowledge is ambiguous when it comes to distinguishing between different types of higher education institutions. Patel did not provide a clear response on how settler colonialism affects private, public, and community institutions differently. Hence, Patel's work does not clearly offer a new institutional perspective beyond what Wolfe had already presented on the topic of settler colonialism as a nationally framed concept.

As they believe that settler colonialism is a white capitalist patriarchy, Patel suggests that it is essential to confront the issue of settler colonialism in higher education as they consider all higher education institutions to be the same. Patel is right that overcoming challenges in higher education is crucial in promoting justice for oppressed individuals, as I think they are, then we need to ensure that it is directed against the elimination structures, not people, that seek to dehumanise a particular community.

Patel's explanation of the idea of struggle is intriguing. Resourcing Kelley (2016), Patel states that struggle 'does not mean suffering and pain but people's rigorous engagement with each other and differing ideas of freedom' (p.3). In the context of higher education, struggle means improving the education structure for positive social transformation to create a better society by uniting people. As an example, in the 1960s and 1970s, on-campus activism played a significant role in the civil rights movement's success. Despite facing systematic barriers to accessing higher education and achieving upward social mobility, black people received support from other organised groups, as Walter Rodney (1975) mentioned in the book 'The Groundings with My Brothers'. This is precisely what Patel meant: the struggle is a collaborative effort to fight against various forms of oppression. Still, Patel's reference to higher education goes beyond just resistance to oppression in the curriculum. It includes campus activities, student acceptance processes, student debt, hiring policies for teaching and research positions, and diversity, equity and inclusion policies. The author demonstrates that by critiquing higher education institutions as knowledge production clusters, activists can determine if the idea of 'all men are created equal' holds true in a settler colonial state and whether higher education is accessible to all people or not.

Building upon the above two queries, the book concludes that white supremacy made higher education white. The author acknowledges that: 'The nation's oldest and most elite institutions (like Harvard and Brown University) of learning were created exclusively for land-owning white men' (p.14). As a result, the author draws a connection between struggle and study to make higher education for all, highlighting that 'there is no divide between political struggle and study - they interlope, intertwine, and depend on each other' (p.34). In this sense, higher education is reckoned a powerful tool for bringing about social change. According to Gramsci's prison notebooks (1926), political education in society has the potential to offer counter-knowledge to hegemonic knowledge and achieve emancipatory goals by studying power relations in society.

Patel emphasises that 'In order for higher education to be more inclusive, it would actually need to reckon with its history, its origins, and the ongoing nature of colonization and transform its ways of being' (p.31). As such, Patel insists that 'Settler colonialism has attempted to commodify knowledge itself, anointing it as property, convertible into careers and well-being' (p.27). In effect, the learning process is seen as, yet another, avenue for selling a colonial ideology.

Patel claims that the learning process is a part of anyone being human. They also articulate that 'higher education may learn that its responsibility, its indebtedness, is to those who have always striven for learning and knowledge, rather than property and wealth' (p.101). Being human is a crucial question—

especially in the era of post-humanism and new materialism—when the context is dehumanised and materialised.

Many American students struggle to meet their basic human needs and maintain a decent quality of life, making them feel insecure, anxious and dropping out. Students do not face higher education problems only during their study years; some suffer for many years after graduation. As an example, in August 2023, I spoke with a professor who specialised in conflict management. He mentioned that he had recently turned 50 and had only managed to pay off his debts the previous year. I was quite taken aback by the fact that the professor had to work for over a decade in order to become debt-free. Patel clarifies that 'settler colonialism desires wealth and property for a few, but that cannot happen without the displacement and debt of millions' (p.74).

Writing in *The Washington Post*, Fowers and Douglas-Gabriel (2022) complain that approximately 20% of Americans have student loans. The essence of this statistic is that the higher education system has become more privatised and neo-liberalised, where students are treated as 'customers' and education is viewed as a market (Mintz, 2021: 79). This approach aims to engineer society and wealth by burdening students with heavy debt and loans, forcing them to work solely to pay off these loans. This results in only a select few individuals accumulating wealth and having knowledge and benefits power, which is essentially the foundation of a capitalist system, e.g., the accumulation of capital for a select few.

Consequently, Patel's book is an abundant source of information for any educator/learner interested in the relationship between power and knowledge. It specifically focuses on the decolonisation struggle as it relates to higher education, including resistance to discrimination based on race, class, gender, and sexuality, within the context of campus protests that took place during the late 1960s. However, it's also valuable situated knowledge for anyone who writes about solidarity movements in other contexts, such as Palestine, or Canada's First Nations, or Haitian resistance, and the campus protests against settler colonialism/colonialism that continue to occur in response to these contexts.

I recommend readers look at decolonisation literature. Decolonisation, like other historical movements, seeks to rectify historical injustices and empower marginalised communities towards self-determination and freedom (Tuck & Yang, 2012). Decolonisation remains a broad movement, including activists and scholars such as Frantz Fanon, Walter Rodney, and Aimé Césaire, who aim to liberate human beings and their land. Also, in the book 'Orientalism', Edward Said (1978) dissected the power dynamics inherent in colonial discourse. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o advocated for decolonising African literature and education and made an impact with 'Decolonising the Mind' (1986) and 'Petals of Blood' (1977).

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Kaleidoscope

Film 'Origin' based on Isabel Wilkerson's 'Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents' shines a light on the diverse ways in which peace can flourish

Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents is a nonfiction book by the Pulitzer award-wining American journalist Isabel Wilkerson, published in August 2020. The book describes racism by drawing a line between India's caste system, the hierarchies of Nazi Germany and the historic subjugation of Black people in the United States. In October 2020, Netflix announced that it would produce a film adaptation of the book to be titled *Origin* and directed by Ava DuVernay. The film, starring Aunjanue Ellis-Taylor, Jon Bernthal, Vera Farmiga and Niecy Nash-Betts, had its world premiere at the 80th Venice International Film Festival on 6 September 2023 and a theatrical release in the USA on 19 January 2024.

(Read more on: https://www.npr.org/2024/01/15/1224037292/caste-ava-duvernay-origin/ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caste:_The_Origins_of_Our_Discontents#:~:text=Film%20adaptation,-In%20October%202020&text=The%20film%2C%20starring%20Aunjanue%20Ellis,the%20U.S.%20in%20January%202024)

Young poets lend their talents to promote peace, marking the 75th anniversary of UN peacekeeping

'Peace Begins With Me' multimedia poem showcases a creative collaboration between Congolese peacekeeper and musician Pacifique Akilimali and Nigerian peace advocate and poet Maryam Bukar Hassan. Called 'Peace begins with me' the poem pays tribute to the strength and resilience of communities affected by conflict as well as those who help them rebuild their lives and livelihoods. It is a reminder of our responsibility to promote peace in our communities, countries and across the world—a conviction that has driven more than two million men and women to serve in over 70 peacekeeping operations since 1948. 'Peace means everything to me' says Pacifique Akilimali, who works in the aviation team at the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO), grew up in North Kivu in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), a region affected by decades of violence between armed groups. 'The only thing I know since I was born is war . . . peace has been a dream for a long time now', reminds Pacifique. 'All the wars and conflicts have gotten us nowhere', adds Maryam, a native of Nigeria's northern state of Borno where relentless insurgency and violent extremism has plagued people for more than a decade. It was in this state nine

years ago that close to 300 schoolgirls, also known as the Chibok girls, were kidnapped by the armed separatists, Boko Haram. Today, many of them are still missing. For Maryam, 'peace is not just the absence of conflict but also the presence of justice, equality, and respect for human dignity. Everyone deserves to have and find peace.'

(Read more on: https://social.desa.un.org/sdn/young-poets-lend-their-talents-to-promote-peace-marking-the-75th-anniversary-of-un-peacekeeping?_gl=1*gkiwel*_ga*MTUzNjM2MzA3NC4xNzA4MTM1NDI5*_ga_TK9BQL5X7Z*MTcwODE0MTUwMC4xLjEuMTcwODE0MTc1Ni4wLjAuMA.)

India takes #1 spot, overtakes China as the world's most populous country

India's estimated population overtook that of China, becoming the world's most populous country in 2023. The UNFPA's State of World Population Report 2023 confirmed that India's estimated population was 142.86 crore, marginally ahead of China at 142.57 crore. India's population is virtually certain to continue to grow for several decades. By contrast, China's population reached its peak size recently and experienced a decline during 2022. Projections indicate that the size of the Chinese population will continue to fall and could drop below 1 billion before the end of the century.

(Read more on: https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/publication/un-desa-policy-brief-no-153-india-overtakes-china-as-the-worlds-most-populous-country/)

Iranian women began protesting against their government at a scale not seen since the 1979 revolution

Iranian citizens have been risking their lives to protest the nation's authoritarian regime, and despite the bloodshed amid a crackdown by security forces, they show no signs of backing down. It all started with the death of Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old Kurdish-Iranian woman, on 16 September 2022 who was arrested for 'improper hijab' and allegedly beaten to death by Tehran's Morality Police. The unrest rapidly spread across the country, with demands ranging from more freedoms to an overthrow of the state. Videos have shown women agitators defiantly setting their headscarves on fire and cutting their hair in public to chants of 'Woman, life, freedom' and 'Death to the dictator'—a reference to the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. While some women have publicly protested against the hijab before, cases have been isolated and dealt with severely. There has been nothing compared to the current scale. Authorities have not

released an official death toll, but Iran's Human Rights Activists News Agency (HRANA) says at least 530 protesters have been killed by security forces. Almost 20,000 other protesters have reportedly been detained, including journalists, film stars and footballers.

(Read more on: https://time.com/6234429/iran-protests-revolution-history/
https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-63240911)

Financial woes facing higher education in the US continue to spread, evidenced by several colleges and universities recently forcing to cut their budgets

A new round of sweeping austerity is underway at colleges and universities across the United States. Public and private schools in every part of the country have announced mass layoffs, programme eliminations and campus closures in response to significant budget shortfalls as a result of declining enrolment, the ending of federal COVID-19 pandemic funding, and a long-term decline in state investment into higher education. The latest revelations come from both public and private colleges, small and large institutions, and they are occurring in several regions of the country, another indication that higher education's financial precarity is not limited to any one kind of school.

(Read more on: https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2023/11/14/fapj-n14.html)

Talks on a hostage and ceasefire deal for Gaza appear to be at an impasse; Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu dismissed Hamas proposal ceasefire and prisoner exchange deal as 'delusional'

US President Biden repeatedly tells Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu there 'has to be a temporary ceasefire' in war on Gaza. The US says an Israeli ground attack on Rafah with 1.4 million people would be a 'disaster' without a plausible evacuation plan. Israel's attacks on Gaza have killed at least 28,775 Palestinians and wounded 68,552 since 7 October 2023. The death toll in Israel from the 7 October Hamas-led attacks stands at 1,139. Although Israel's top-level delegation has returned from Cairo Peace-Talk, indirect talks in Cairo continued as Israel faces pressure from its allies to negotiate, and Hamas faces the prospect of a major Israeli offensive in the southern Gaza city of Rafah, where over a million Palestinians are sheltering.

(Read more on: https://edition.cnn.com/2024/02/15/middleeast/hamas-israel-ceasefire-hostage-talks-what-we-know-intl/index.html/

https://www.aljazeera.com/news/liveblog/2024/2/16/israels-war-on-gaza-live-17000-children-torn-from-parents-un-says)

Ukraine War continues to dominate world news

Russia's invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022 dominated last year like no other news—and for good reason. The conflict is the largest land war in Europe since World War II, it has upended the global economy, and has forced nearly 8 million Ukrainians to flee their country.

(Read more on: https://time.com/6243942/global-stories-to-watch-2023/)

Global Peace Index (GPI) reveals deterioration of global peacefulness

Despite 126 countries improving their positive peace from 2009 to 2020, the 2023 Global Peace Index (GPI) reveals the average level of global peacefulness deteriorated for the ninth consecutive year, with 84 countries recording an improvement and 79 a deterioration. Positive Peace measured by the Positive Peace Index (PPI) represents attitudes, institutions and structures that create and sustain peaceful societies. This demonstrates that the deterioration was larger than the improvements, as the post-COVID-19 rises of civil unrest and political instability remain high while regional and global conflicts accelerate.

(Read more on: https://www.visionofhumanity.org/maps/#/)

UN chief warns climate chaos and food crises threaten global peace

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warns that climate chaos and food crises are increasing threats to global peace, telling a high-level UN meeting that climate disasters imperil food production and 'empty bellies fuel unrest'. 'Climate and conflict are two leading drivers of (our) global food crisis', says the secretary-general. 'Where wars rage, hunger reigns—whether due to displacement of people, destruction of agriculture, damage to infrastructure, or deliberate policies of denial.'

(Read more on: https://apnews.com/article/un-climate-change-food-crises-global-peace-d13c6285acc1746dfad7ffee3802548a)

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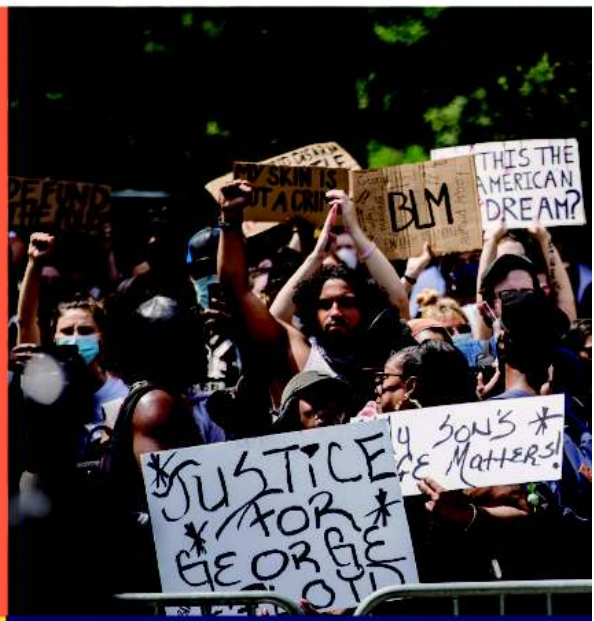

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