

FIFTH
EDITION



PEACE & CONFLICT STUDIES



DAVID P. BARASH • CHARLES P. WEBEL



Peace and Conflict Studies

Fifth Edition

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• Preface •

Welcome to the fifth edition of *Peace and Conflict Studies*. Not surprisingly, a lot has happened since we wrote the fourth edition, about five years ago. Although it isn't clear whether the pace of events is quicker now than in the past, it often feels that way.

In any event, it is striking to consider how rapidly the world changes compared to that of any academic discipline: That's why it's called "current events"! Since the fourth edition of this book, the United States of America and Russia have gone from a situation of cautious collaboration to increasingly overt distrust, bordering on another Cold War and including threats of renewed nuclear competition. Somewhat less volatile, but if anything more economically and politically consequential, China has assumed an increasingly prominent international role as the world's second-largest economy, soon to surpass the United States in total gross national product and with an ever more assertive footprint when it comes to world politics generally.

Much of the Arab world went from an exciting time of prodemocracy movements to deep disillusionment, disappointment, and violence. One "terrorist" organization (al-Qaeda) diminished in importance and was replaced by another (ISIS), which has been militarily defeated, at least in Iraq and Syria, but nonetheless remains a potentially potent force worldwide, especially in North Africa, Afghanistan, and other parts of Asia. The Trump administration (2017–2021) engaged in a hyper-nationalistic "go-it-alone" policy that disrupted many of the prior relationships among countries, notably the stability and reliability of Western collaboration, which had previously counted on US support and collaboration. Along the way, numerous assumptions about the stability of global relationships—especially those based on the assumption of US stability—were shattered; their future remains to be seen. Moreover, the global environmental situation has further deteriorated, notably with respect to two crises: climate and the novel coronavirus pandemic that emerged in 2020.

Although this book is directed to a global audience, it will doubtless continue to be especially relevant to students and teachers in the United States in particular and to the English-speaking world and Scandinavia, more generally. Given the many missteps of the recent Trump administration, not the least of which are the incitement of violent mob insurrections—most notably on the US Capitol on January 6, 2021—along with the importance of the United States when it comes to world events, it is critical how the Biden administration deals with the many crises it has inherited: especially those involving the economy, the pandemic, racial justice, social inequities, and climate change. Only the future will reveal whether the extraordinary malfeasance of the Trump administration and the unprecedented threat to American democracy posed by its leader and base were an aberration from the norms and processes of the US system—and whether they will be successfully surmounted.

All things considered, the rate of change sometimes seems so dizzying that it has been hard to keep up, and periodically we wish that we were specialists in such "stable" fields as ancient languages or Baroque harpsichord music.

Fortunately, not all changes have been for the worse. There are encouraging signs of global cooperation when it comes to environmental awareness, including global campaigns to mitigate climate change and the development and distribution of vaccines to fight Covid-19. Millions of people—especially in Asia—enjoy greater prosperity and health than ever before. Global communication and other indications of connectedness have expanded. By some measures, even as world attention has been riveted on specific acts of terrible violence and disunity, our world has actually grown more peaceful, statistically speaking.

At the same time, and fortunately (at least for those who write textbooks and teach about these events and their significance), some things remain unchanged, namely, the historical and philosophical background of world affairs as well as the implications of what has happened, and is happening, and—perhaps—what is likely to take place in the future.

Probably more than any other discipline, peace and conflict studies (the subject) as well as *Peace and Conflict Studies* (the book) are deeply enmeshed in and concerned about that world. You are therefore about to enter an academic discipline but also much more than that. Everyone is welcome; indeed, you are unavoidably engaged in issues of peace and conflict, contentment and dissatisfaction, life and death, whatever your current “course load”! The Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky once commented that although you might not be interested in war, war is interested in you. So are peace, social justice and injustice, environmental phenomena, and much more.

In the fourth edition of this book, written immediately following the 2016 election of Donald Trump as president of the United States, we added a “Supplementary Preface,” in which we analyzed some of the implications of the election and made some tentative predictions. The ensuing four years have, unfortunately, demonstrated that our expectations regarding the Trump administration were, if anything, too measured and “optimistic,” although our fear that the United States would engage in one or more gratuitous wars was not realized. We now revisit and supplement what we wrote then, with some reflections regarding the possible “legacy” of Donald Trump and Trumpism.

In November 2020, Joe Biden was elected president of the United States, disappointing the more than 74 million voters who had supported the re-election of Donald J. Trump, while providing welcome relief to most of the American electorate and to much of the rest of the world as well. Biden carried the US Electoral College 306–232 and had the highest popular vote in US history, with more than 81 million and a margin of more than 7 million votes over Trump. The long-term consequences of Biden’s victory are unforeseeable, as are the responses of the millions of voters who supported Trump, especially the most violent and seditious fringes. The refusal of Donald Trump, his enablers, and his supporters to accept the clear results of that election not only roiled the US political environment, but it has threatened to undermine the fundamental democratic institutions of the United States, with likely negative consequences for the future—within the United States and abroad because many countries have, until recently, regarded the United States as a model of democratic government. Other notable downsides of the Trump administration include the following:

1. A reversal of climate change policies; withdrawal of the United States from international treaties and accords, most notably the Paris Agreement, as a result of which coordinated efforts to reverse climate change have to some extent faltered worldwide; increased domestic focus on coal, oil,

and nuclear energy, with decreases in funding and support for alternative sources of energy; and the dilution or elimination of much environmental protection regulation with increasingly grave consequences for water, air, land, and the biosphere domestically and globally.

2. The loss of health insurance by about 20 million or more Americans who had obtained coverage from the Obama-sponsored Affordable Care Act, plus the danger of yet more uninsured people; the spread of infectious diseases and epidemics (Covid-19 in particular); and underfunding of the National Institutes of Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institute of Mental Health, along with scientific and scholarly research more generally; reduced public acknowledgment of the validity of science as a whole, along with increased distrust of mainstream news reporting; a kind of “truth-decay”; and pressure to reverse gains in reproductive rights, especially for women, including the possible eventual reversal of *Roe v. Wade*, the Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion.
3. The deportation of thousands of immigrants and refugees, leading to a significant worsening of the global refugee crisis and to a rise in the number of victims of civil and regional wars; an upsurge in racism, sexism, ultranationalism, jingoism, Islamophobia, violent right-wing extremism, and xenophobia in the United States and in other countries undergoing waves of “populist nationalism,” followed by uprisings and violence across the United States; and protests against US policies around the world and a worsening of relations with many other nations, with the exception of Israel and some Persian Gulf States.
4. The “packing” of the Supreme Court and other judicial and federal agencies with far-right conservatives who may be seeking to enforce measures protective of corporate and religious fundamentalist interests and to reverse legal protections for women, minorities, the disabled, immigrants, the impoverished, LGBTQ individuals, and the disadvantaged.
5. The encouragement of far-right, nativist, nationalist, and neo-fascist political movements within the United States and in other countries, notably in Europe, although possibly elsewhere as well, as in Brazil and the Philippines.
6. The disparagement and debasement of longstanding democratic political ideals and practices, including the federal election; and degrading of the office of the US presidency itself, leading to dismay and alarm within the United States and around the world, along with a substantial reduction in the esteem that the United States had previously enjoyed.

To address these disturbing trends, we propose for our readers’ consideration the following potential courses of action, individually and collectively, should the legacy of the Trump administration persist after Trump’s departure from the White House:

1. Remain silent, accept the policies of the new Biden administration, and hope that Trump and his policies will prove to be a singularly disruptive anomaly in the history of the American presidency.
2. Have individual conversations and debates about the strengths and weaknesses of the new and previous administrations, supporting

what one favors and objecting to what one dislikes about its policies, proposals, and actions.

3. Join and support the ongoing but thus-far unsuccessful movement to abolish or reform the Electoral College, which was originally set up in large measure to protect Southern slave-owning and rural agricultural interests against Northern urban interests and elites, and replace it with either a national popular vote or the proposed National Popular Vote Interstate Compact, in which each participating state agrees to allocate its electors to the winner of the vote nationwide.
4. Become part of a mass domestic and international nonviolent political revolution to resist the legacy of the Trump administration and its policies and to catalyze the new administration to pursue policies supportive of social, racial, and gender equity and justice, both domestically and internally.

As we emphasize throughout this text, peace and conflict studies differs from other branches of scholarship, not merely in the overall richness of its intellectual material but in its commitment to help create a better world and in its overt hope that you, the reader, will undertake your own commitment actively to support this effort.

Toward that end, we have sought to combine our own sociopolitical orientation with informed scholarship, to analyze recent events while not getting mired in short-term issues of the moment, and, where appropriate, to engage in advocacy without sacrificing academic rigor. As is often the case with co-authored books, we are not in complete accord about everything in this book, notably the degree to which academic style and detailed referencing are always suitable for a project of this kind. But we are in agreement about virtually every substantive issue covered in this long book, which is remarkable considering the number and range of topics covered, not to mention the degree to which issues of peace, war, and conflict themselves tend to generate their own opportunities for conflict, even among scholars! We also concur that you, the readers, should reflect on and debate the issues of greatest interest to you, to humanity, and to our shared planet in general.

We encourage feedback in this regard—and, indeed, on anything related to either the style or substance of this book—from students as well as faculty, just as we welcome all of you to this important subject, something as challenging, frustrating, rewarding, and important as anything we can imagine.

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The Promise of Peace, the Problems of War

In the third decade of the 21st century, we are faced with many problems. The Earth is composed of finite resources whose limits may soon be reached. Moreover, global climate change has been ongoing, already resulting in unprecedented catastrophes. Human societies contain gross maldistributions of wealth and power, another problem that has grown worse in recent years, preventing most human beings from realizing their potential and driving millions of people to despair, violent political extremism, and premature death.

Many cultural systems perpetuate regrettable patterns of economic, social, and political injustice in which racism, sexism, homophobia, militarism, ageism, religious intolerance, and other forms of unfairness abound and in which representative government is relatively rare and torture and other forms of oppression are distressingly common. The natural balance upon which all life depends has been increasingly disrupted. Global pandemics are not infrequent. Threats may also include super-intelligent and potentially malicious computers, existential risks of asteroid collisions, super-volcano eruptions, and, especially, thermonuclear war, the risk of which may well be increasing for the first time since the end of the Cold War between the United States and the former Soviet Union. And this is only a partial list.¹

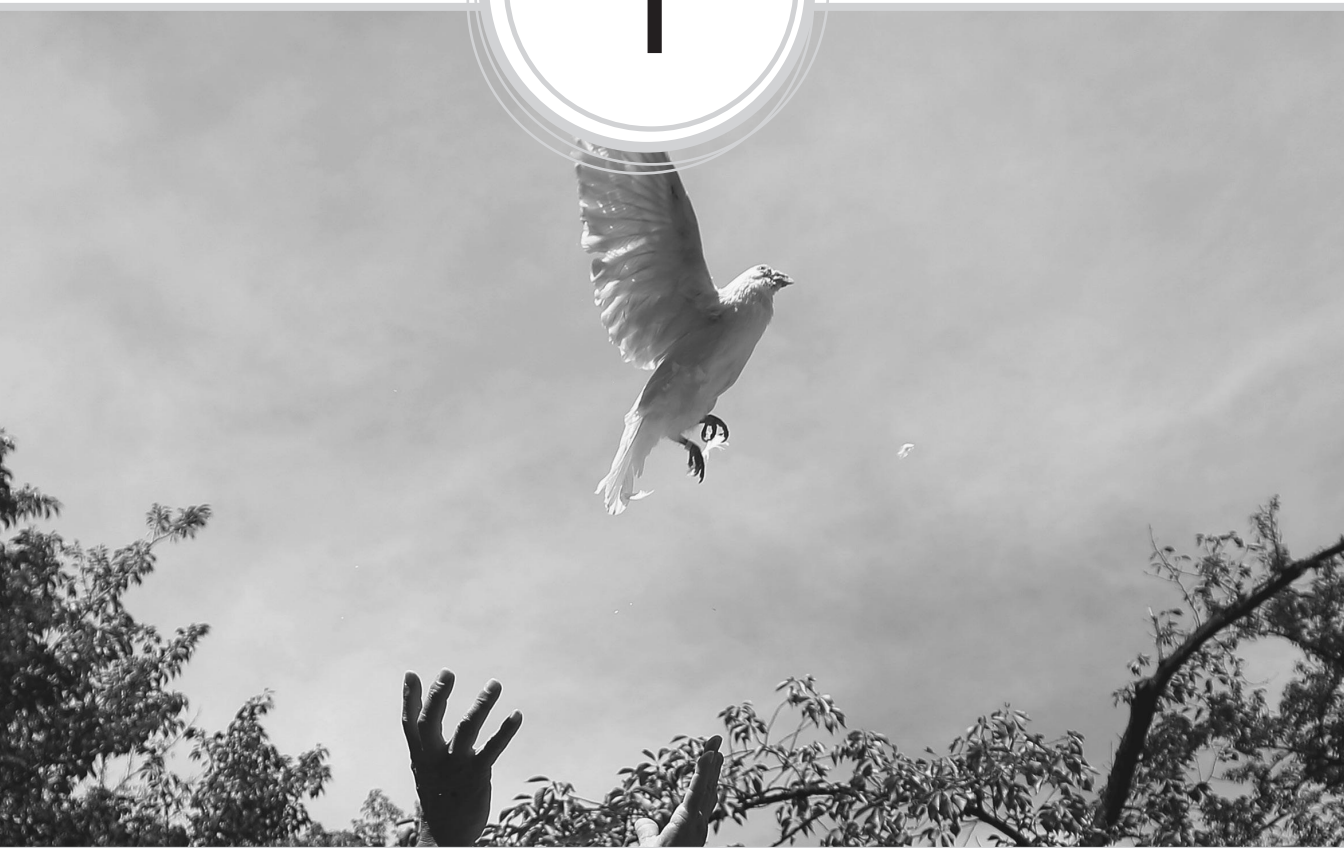
Yet, despite all of these difficulties, the remarkable fact is that enormous sums of money and vast resources of material, time, and energy are expended, not in solving what we might call the “problems of peace” but rather in threatening and actually making war on one another. Although it seems unlikely that human beings will ever achieve anything approaching heaven on Earth, or what the philosopher Immanuel Kant called “Perpetual Peace,” it seems reasonable to hope—and perhaps even to demand—that we will someday behave more responsibly and establish a global community based on the needs of the entire planet and the beings who inhabit it, a planetary society that is just and sustainable and not characterized by repeated major outbreaks of violence. Seriously, along with the many problems confronting us, there is also the hopeful reality that to some degree these problems have generated social and political involvement among people increasingly committed to solving them.

This book explores some of the aspirations, needs, prospects, and obstacles involved in achieving a genuinely peaceful world. After opening chapters on

the meanings and measurement of peace, it proceeds to examine war—its causes and prevention. This is one of humanity's most serious challenges because behind the threat of war—especially nuclear and/or biochemical war—lies the prospect that human beings may end their civilization and perhaps all life on Earth.

Part I looks specifically at the promise of peace and the problems of war. Although war and peace are not polar opposites, there is a fundamental tension between them, two differing ways in which people interact. Part II considers war and its apparent causes, and Part III looks at possible routes toward preventing and abolishing war and other forms of collective violence. Part IV turns to deeper aspects of peace, examining our shared dilemmas and considering some solutions, including the creation of positive structures of peace—steps that go beyond just preventing war. Each chapter concludes with some questions for further thought and discussion, along with a few recommended readings; however, because peace and conflict are a moving target, and this book aims to emphasize material with a longer “shelf life,” it will go light on transient issues-of-the-moment. This 5th edition of *Peace and Conflict Studies* is intended not just to inform you but also to challenge you, not only intellectually but also in other dimensions of your life, and ideally to inspire you to work toward a better world.

1



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The Meanings of Peace

War is one of humanity's most pressing problems; peace is almost always preferable to war and, moreover, it can and must include not only the absence of war but the establishment of positive, life-enhancing values, political institutions, and social structures. We know that there is no simple solution to the problem of war. Most aspects of the war-peace dilemma are complex, interconnected, and, even when well understood, difficult to move from theory to practice. On the other hand, much can be gained by exploring the various dimensions of war and peace, including the possibility of achieving a more just and sustainable world—a way of living that can nurture life.

Throughout this book, we maintain that there is good reason for such hope, not simply as an article of faith but based on the realistic premise that human beings are capable of understanding the global situation and

recognizing their own species-wide best interests. People can behave rationally, creatively, with compassion, and, over time and with collective good will, can diminish—and, ideally, eliminate—most if not all forms of violence.

Most people think they know what *peace* means, but in fact different people often have very different understandings of this seemingly simple word. And although most would agree that some form of peace—whatever it means—is desirable, there are often vigorous, even violent, disagreements over how to obtain it.

The Meanings of Peace

Peace is surprisingly difficult to define. Like happiness, harmony, justice, and freedom, it is something we often recognize by its absence. Johan Galtung, a founder of peace studies and peace research, has proposed an important distinction between “positive” and “negative” peace. “Positive” peace denotes the presence of many desirable states of mind and society, such as harmony, justice, equity, and so on. “Negative” peace has historically meant the “absence of war.” By contrast, positive peace refers to a condition in which exploitation is minimized or eliminated and in which there is neither overt violence nor the more subtle phenomenon of underlying *structural violence*. Positive peace denotes the continuing presence of an equitable and just social order as well as ecological harmony.

Many philosophical, religious, and cultural traditions refer to peace in its positive sense. In Chinese, for example, the word *heping* denotes world peace, or peace among nations, while the words *an* and *mingsi* denote an “inner peace,” a tranquil and harmonious state of mind and being akin to a meditative mental state. Other languages also frame peace in its “inner” and “outer” dimensions.

The English language has many terms that refer to peace. In *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*, for example, peace is initially defined as “freedom from civil clamor and confusion” and also as “a state of public quiet,” as well as “a state of mutual concord between governments: absence of hostilities or war.” In some cases and some cultures, the word *peace* even has an undesirable connotation. The Roman writer Tacitus spoke of making a desert and calling it “peace,” an unwanted situation of sterility and emptiness. To be *pacified*, derived from *pax*, the Latin word for peace, often means to be subdued or lulled into a false and misleading quietude. Indeed, *appeasement*—buying off a would-be aggressor—has acquired a very bad name. In probably the most notorious example of appeasement, former British prime minister Neville Chamberlain appeased Hitler in September 1938, famously declaring as he signed the Munich Agreement, which essentially gave in to all of Hitler's demands: “I believe it is peace for our time.” (Less than a year later, Hitler invaded Poland, effectively starting World War II on the European continent.) At the time, however, public opinion had generally supported “appeasement,” seeing it as a reasonable and far-seeing effort to meet the legitimate needs of an aggrieved party and to do so short of war. Today, appeasement stands as a warning to genuinely peace-loving people that even efforts toward peace can backfire if unwisely pursued.

By contrast, even the most peace-loving among us recognize the merits of certain martial and aggressive attitudes, especially when referring to something other than direct military engagements: President Lyndon Johnson's “war on poverty,” for example, or the medical “war on cancer,” and “battle against AIDS.”

Some Eastern Concepts of Peace

The foregoing is not simply a matter of playing with words. Fighting, striving, and engaging in various forms of conflict and combat (especially when they are successful) are widely associated with vigor, courage, and other positive virtues. Nonetheless, it is no exaggeration to claim that peace, along with happiness, may be the most longed-for human condition.

Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu (6th century BCE), founder of Taoism and author of the *Tao Te Ching*, emphasized that military force is not the recommended *Tao*, or “Way.” He frequently referred to peaceful images of water or wind—both soft and yielding yet ultimately triumphant over such hard substances as rock or iron. The teachings of Confucius (approximately 551–479 BCE) are often thought by most Westerners to focus on respect for tradition, including elders and ancestors. But Confucius did not hold to these ideas because he valued obedience and order as virtues in themselves; rather, he maintained that the attainment of peace was the ultimate human goal and that it came from social harmony and equilibrium. His best-known collection of writings, the *Analects*, also emphasizes the doctrine of *jen* (empathy), founded on a kind of hierarchical Golden Rule: treat your subordinates as you would like to be treated by your superiors.

The writings of another renowned ancient Chinese philosopher and religious leader, Mo Tzu (468–391 BCE), took a more radical perspective. He argued against war and in favor of all-embracing love as a universal human virtue and the highest earthly goal, yet one that is within the grasp of each of us. Mo Tzu said, “Those who love others will also be loved in return. Do good to others and others will do good to you. Hate people and be hated by them. Hurt them and they will hurt you. What is hard about that?”² In what is now India, the Buddhist monarch Ashoka (3rd century BCE) was renowned for abandoning his successful military campaigns in the middle of his career and devoting himself to the religious conversion of his adversaries by nonviolent means.

The great ancient Indian text, the Hindu epic *Mahabharata* (written about 200 BCE), contains as perhaps its most important segment the *Bhagavad Gita*. This is a mythic account of a vicious civil war in which Arjuna, one of the principal warriors, is reluctant to fight because many of his friends and relatives are on the opposing side. Arjuna is ultimately persuaded to engage in combat by the god Krishna, who convinces Arjuna that he must fight, not out of hatred or hope for personal gain but out of selfless duty. Although the *Gita* can be and has been interpreted as supporting caste loyalty and the obligation to kill when bidden to do so by a superior party, it also inspired the great 20th-century Indian leader Mohandas Gandhi as an allegory for the de-emphasis of individual self in the pursuit of higher goals. The *Gita* was also cited by the “father of the atomic bomb,” J. Robert Oppenheimer, when he described the first atomic explosion as a contemporary incarnation of Krishna: “I am become Death, the Destroyer of Worlds.”

Some Judeo-Christian Concepts of Peace

Peace per se is not prominent in the Old Testament. The God (Yahweh) of Abraham, Moses, and David is frequently portrayed as bellicose, even blood-thirsty, and the ancient Israelites were often merciless warriors. Exceptions exist, however, such as the prophet Isaiah, who praised the reign of peace and described war as a punishment to be inflicted on those who have failed God.

Under the influence of Isaiah and later Hebrew prophets—and despite the ostensibly defensive violence of the Maccabees and Zealots (who opposed Roman rule in the lands now called Israel and Palestine and who have

sometimes been called history's first recorded terrorists)—Jewish tradition has tended to strongly endorse peacefulness. On the other hand, it can also be argued that with the emergence of Israel as a militarily threatened—and threatening—state, this tradition has substantially changed. In fact, Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions all have bellicose components and elements in their history. A key question is whether such militarism—often persistent and widespread—is part of a pattern of faithfulness to, or a deviation from, their underlying religious worldview.

A deep irony underlies the concept of peace in these three great Western religious systems. “My peace I give unto you,” declares Jesus, according to the New Testament, along with “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding” and the Sermon on the Mount, which famously urges followers to turn the other cheek. Christianity is, in fact, unique among Western religions in the degree to which it was founded upon a message of peace, love, and nonviolence, and yet it gave rise to one of the great warrior traditions. Although definitions of peace often vary and hypocrisy is not infrequent, most people share a positive presumption in favor of peace, in accord with the stated aspirations of most major religions.

Positive and Negative Peace

Let us recall the important distinction between positive and negative peace. Negative peace usually denotes the absence of war. It is a condition in which little, if any, active, organized military violence is taking place. When the noted 20th-century French intellectual Raymond Aron defined peace as a condition of “more or less lasting suspension of rivalry between political units,” he was thinking of negative peace.⁴ Aron's is the most common understanding of peace in the context of conventional political science and international relations, and it epitomizes the so-called realist view that peace is found whenever war or other direct forms of organized state violence are absent. From this perspective, the peace proclamations of Pharaonic Egypt, the *Philanthropa*, were actually statements of negative peace, expressions of benevolence from a stronger party toward those who were weaker. Similarly, the well-known *pax* of Roman times indicated little more than the absence of overt organized violence, typically a condition of nonresistance or even acquiescence enforced by local arrangements and the military might of the Roman legions. The negative peace of the *Pax Romana* was created and maintained, in large measure, through social and political repression of those who lived under Roman law.

An alternative view to this realist (or *Realpolitik*) perspective is one that emphasizes the importance of positive peace and that has been particularly advanced by Norwegian peace researcher Johan Galtung. Positive peace refers to a social condition in which exploitation is minimized or eliminated and in which there is neither overt violence nor the subtle phenomenon of underlying *structural violence*. It denotes the continuing presence of an equitable and just social order as well as ecological harmony.

Structural and Cultural Violence

Violence is usually understood to be physical and readily apparent. But it is important to recognize the existence of other forms of violence that are more indirect and insidious. This structural and cultural violence is typically built into the nature of social, cultural, and economic institutions. For example, both ancient Egypt and imperial Rome practiced slavery and were

highly despotic, although they were technically in states of negative peace for long periods of time.

Structural violence usually has the effect of denying people important rights, such as economic well-being; social, political, and sexual equality; a sense of personal fulfillment and self-worth, and the like. When people starve to death or go hungry, violence is taking place. Similarly, when people suffer from preventable diseases or when they are denied a decent education, affordable housing, freedom of expression and of peaceful assembly, or opportunities to work, play, or raise a family, violence is occurring, even if no bullets are shot or no clubs wielded. A society commits violence against its members when it forcibly stunts their development and undermines their well-being, whether because of religion, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual preference, social class, or some other factor. Structural violence is a form of oppression that can also involve mistreatment of the natural environment. However defined, structural violence is widespread, hurtful, and often unacknowledged.

Under conditions of structural violence, many people who behave as good citizens and who think of themselves as peace loving may, as Galtung puts it, participate in “settings within which individuals may do enormous amounts of harm . . . without ever intending to do so, just performing their regular duties as a job defined in the structure.”³ Analyzing the role of “normal” people, such as Adolf Eichmann, who helped carry out the Holocaust during World War II, philosopher Hannah Arendt referred to the “banality of evil,” emphasizing that routine, workaday behavior by otherwise normal, decent people can contribute to mass murder, social oppression, and structural violence.

In contrast with structural violence of starvation, underlying racism, economic impoverishment, and psychological alienation, direct violence generally works faster and is more visible and dramatic. In cases of overt violence, even those people not specifically involved in the conflict may be inclined to take sides. News coverage of these events is often intense, and because the outcome is typically visible and undeniable (e.g., wars, terrorism, as well as acts of domestic repression such as the murder and violent removal of Chinese citizens from Tiananmen Square by Chinese Army troops in 1989), the public is more likely to pay attention to what they can see rather than to the underlying structural but less visible factors that may have led to the conflict.

The concept of *cultural violence* can be seen as a follow-up to the idea of structural violence. Cultural violence is any aspect (often symbolic) of a culture that can be used to legitimize violence in its direct or structural forms. Symbolic violence built into a culture does not kill or maim like direct violence or that built into a social structure. However, it is used to legitimize either or both, as in the Nazi theory of a *Herrenvolk* or superior (“master”) race.

Structural and cultural violence are, however, contested concepts. Clearly, they occur wherever there is slavery or gross political, cultural, and/or economic oppression; it remains debatable, on the other hand, whether social inequality constitutes structural violence and whether culture-specific norms and practices can even constitute violence. And what about skewed access to education, jobs, or medical care? Does simple social hierarchy (as, for example, in a family or classroom) constitute structural violence, and do culturally relative forms of life amount to cultural violence?

Achieving Positive Peace

Many cultural and spiritual traditions have identified political and social goals that are closer to positive than negative peace. The ancient Greek

concept of *eireinei* (the related English word is *irenic*) means harmony and justice as well as peace. Similarly, the Arabic *salaam* and the Hebrew *shalom* connote not only the absence of violence but also the presence of well-being, wholeness, and harmony within one's self, a community, and among all nations and peoples. The Sanskrit word *shanti* refers not only to peace but also to spiritual tranquility, an integration of outward and inward modes of being, just as the Chinese *ping* denotes harmony and the achievement of unity from diversity. In Russian, *mir* means peace, a village community, and the world.

Public awareness of negative peace, or the simple absence of war, usually comes about via a diplomatic emphasis on peacekeeping or peace restoring (if war has already broken out). Negative peace is a conservative, status-preserving goal, as it seeks to keep things the way they are (if a war is not actually taking place), whereas positive peace is more ambitious and bolder, implying the creation of something that, in most cases, does not currently exist.

Moreover, just as there is disagreement about how best to avoid a war—that is, how to achieve negative peace—even among decision makers who may be well intentioned, there is often disagreement about the best routes toward positive peace. Peace in its positive form is more difficult to articulate, and possibly more difficult to achieve, than its negative version. Although there is relatively little current debate about the desired end point in pursuing negative peace (most people agree that war is a bad thing), there is considerable controversy over *how* to prevent (or terminate) specific wars, as well as war generally.

People often disagree about the justification for any particular war. When it comes to positive peace, there is substantial disagreement about goals and the means to achieve them. Some theorists have argued, for example, that only negative peace should be pursued because once defined idealistically as a goal to be achieved, peace becomes something to strive for, even perhaps to the point of going to war! As Quincy Wright, one of the 20th century's preeminent researchers into the causes of war, put it:

Wars have been fought for the sanctity of treaties, for the preservation of law, for the achievement of justice, for the promotion of religion, even to end war and to secure peace. When peace assumes a positive form, therefore, it ceases to be peace. Peace requires that no end should justify violence as a means to its attainment.⁴

Other notable figures have maintained that a free society may justify—or even require—occasional violence. Thomas Jefferson, for example, wrote in 1787 that “the tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants.” This apparent paradox—violence as a precondition for attaining its alternative—is a recurring theme in the study of and quest for peace.

Supporters of positive peace nonetheless agree that a repressive society, even if it is not at war, should be considered at peace only in a very narrow sense. In addition, a nation at peace that tolerates outbreaks of domestic violence on a widespread level, despite an absence of violent conflicts with other nations, is not really at peace with itself.

Social Justice

Having recognized the importance of positive peace, we now turn to a related notion: social justice. Although almost everyone today agrees that a

just society is desirable, there is often widespread disagreement as to what, exactly, a just society looks like, or how to achieve it. For example, whereas capitalists and individualists tend to privilege economic freedom from state intervention along with individual liberty—often at the cost of mass poverty, malnutrition, and homelessness—socialists and collectivists tend to value economic and social security, sometimes at the price of individual freedoms. Also, many Western individualists assert that nations with capitalist economies and democratic political systems seldom, if ever, go to war with one another, whereas many non-Western and dissident Western critics of capitalism claim that capitalism by its very expansionistic nature is inherently predatory and militaristic, impelling ostensibly democratic nations to invade and occupy undemocratic but economically and/or strategically important countries, usually in the non-Western world.

The Peace-War Continuum

“War is not sharply distinguished from peace,” according to Quincy Wright. Moreover,

Progress of war and peace between a pair of states may be represented by a curve: the curve descends toward war as tensions, military preparations, and limited hostilities culminate in total conflict; and it rises toward peace as tensions relax, arms budgets decline, disputes are settled, trade increases, and cooperative activities develop.⁵

Although a quick look at war and peace gives the impression that the two are clearly distinguished, a more detailed examination suggests that *war and peace are two ends of a continuum*, with only a vague and uncertain transition between the two. But the fact that two things may lack precise boundaries does not mean that they are indistinguishable. Thus, at dawn, night grades almost imperceptibly into day and vice versa at dusk. Yet when two things are very distinct, we say that “they are as different as night and day.” The transition from war to peace may often be similarly imprecise (although the move from peace to war may be all too clear and dramatic, as was evident at the beginning of World War II, both in Europe and in the Pacific).

Consider, for example, that the US involvement in Vietnam and much of the rest of Southeast Asia began in the early 1950s with economic and military aid to French forces seeking to retain their colonial possessions. It progressed to include the deployment of relatively small numbers of “technical advisers” in the early 1960s to what was then called South Vietnam. Larger numbers of American “advisers” were then added, accompanied by combat troops in small numbers, followed by limited and eventually massive bombing of all Vietnam (and its neighbors Laos and Cambodia). Finally, even though more than 500,000 American troops were eventually committed to propping up a corrupt and autocratic South Vietnamese government engaged in both a civil war and in hostilities against what was then called North Vietnam, and even though more than 50,000 Americans died as did perhaps more than 2 million Vietnamese, Cambodians, and Laotians, the United States never formally declared war! Yet there was no doubt that a state of war existed.

There is an increasing tendency—especially since the Vietnam War and notably during America’s “War on Terror(ism)” —for nations to fight wars without a formal declaration and, similarly, without solemn peace ceremonies or treaties signaling their end. The Korean War, for example, which

began in 1950, was never officially declared and has never technically ended (although there has been a prolonged ceasefire, with rare outbreaks of violence, between North and South Korea over more than a half-century). One of the most destructive wars of the second half of the 20th century, the conflict between Iran and Iraq in the 1980s, was never declared, although it produced casualties that may have numbered in the millions (and Iraq probably used chemical weapons and may have been developing biological weapons). In fact, most of the world's armed conflicts involve revolutionary, counter-revolutionary, genocidal, and/or terrorist violence with no declarations of war whatsoever. Examples include East Timor, Kashmir, Sudan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, and much of the rest of central Africa; the former Yugoslavia and several independent nations spawned from the former Soviet Union; and El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Afghanistan, Angola, Syria, Libya, Yemen, and Cambodia. By the same token, the US-led invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq were not preceded by formal declarations of war and seem unlikely to conclude with official announcements of peace.

The reluctance of most governments to declare war, as opposed to their willingness to fight or promote wars, may also result from the fact that although wars continue to be fought and to break out, most citizens and politicians are not proud of that fact. And despite theoretical arguments over the precise transitions between different stages of conflicts, most people know at a gut level what is meant by war. There is also little doubt that, given the choice, most would prefer peace.

Measuring Peace

Defining and Redefining Peace

The concept of peace remains nonetheless difficult to define. This may partly explain why there have been so few attempts to measure states of peace across nations. Although scholars have made numerous attempts to measure and operationalize “war,” it is only recently that similar efforts have been made to measure peace.

The Global Peace Index

Unlike such economic indices as gross national product or unemployment rates, the peacefulness of a country does not readily lend itself to direct measurement. However, the Global Peace Index (GPI), produced by the Institute for Economics and Peace in Sydney, Australia and updated annually, has succeeded in generating a credible assessment.⁶

The GPI offers us the opportunity not only to rank countries with regard to their peacefulness, but—more importantly—to begin assessing what factors correlate with peaceful versus nonpeaceful societies. For example, the 2019 GPI examined 163 countries, comprising more than 99% of the world's population, and used 23 qualitative and quantitative indicators that reflect three broad themes: (1) level of internal safety and security, (2) involvement in domestic or international conflict, and (3) degree of militarization. Measurements used include number of external conflicts, internal conflicts, violent domestic demonstrations, incarceration and murder rates, relations with neighboring countries, and so forth.

According to the 2019 GPI, Europe is the most peaceful region, while the Middle East and North Africa are the least peaceful. The 10 most peaceful

countries are, in order: Iceland, New Zealand, Portugal, Austria, Denmark, Canada, Singapore, Slovenia, Japan, and the Czech Republic. The United States ranks rather poorly—128th out of 163 countries—while the least peaceful country is Afghanistan, closely followed by Syria, South Sudan, Yemen, Iraq, Somalia, Central African Republic, Libya, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Russia, and Pakistan. Democracies consistently have the strongest level of positive peace but represent the minority of countries. Similarly, high-income countries generally rate very highly in the Positive Peace Index. The most militarized country is Israel, followed in turn by Russia, the US, North Korea, and France.

Importantly, peace is becoming more unevenly distributed. While Europe continues its long-term trend of pacification, the Middle East continues its recent tendency for belligerence, further increasing the distance between the most and least peaceful regions and countries. In Europe and in many other developed countries, homicide rates and other forms of interpersonal violence continue to drop and are at historic lows. By contrast, rates of interpersonal violence have climbed in Central America.

The economic impact of violence on the global economy in 2018 was substantial and is estimated at more than \$15 trillion, equivalent to the combined economies of Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Spain, and the United Kingdom.

The United States

In 2012, the United States was chosen for the first national peace index (Mexico and the UK were subsequently selected, and a second US Peace Index appeared more recently) principally due to the high quality of state-level data, dating back to the early 1980s, and the existence of a large literature of related studies, which estimate the various costs of violence as well as the costs associated with containing it.⁷ The United States performs well on citizen perception of crime within the country and on the low likelihood of violent demonstrations. But as already noted, the United States fares comparatively poorly on the GPI, especially when compared to other highly developed Western-style democracies, mainly due to its involvement in numerous wars, its exceptionally high level of military expenditures, and its civil unrest.

The United States also has a higher rate of violence than most other developed economies, although trends in crime over the past 20 years have fluctuated substantially, for reasons that have been much debated. At the beginning of the 1980s, the US crime rate was comparable to that of other developed nations, after which violence steadily increased to a peak in the mid-1990s and has since been falling. However, this reduction has been accompanied by a steadily *increasing* incarceration rate leading to an unrivaled percentage of its population behind bars—especially people of color—which has significant economic, racial, and social consequences.

Here are some significant findings from the US Peace Index: Compared to most other countries, relatively more data are available for the United States, permitting a more fine-grained analysis:

1. During the last 25 years, there has been a substantial decrease in the rates of homicide and violent crime. (Because of a drumbeat of misinformation, however, due in large part to Trump and his supporters as well as some social media, the majority of Americans mistakenly believe otherwise.) These improvements have been largely offset by increases in the incarceration rate, which, as of year-end 2018,

stood at 0.7% of resident adults, the highest in the world. Although some political conservatives claim that this is due to the greater effectiveness of US criminal enforcement activities, most experts reject this interpretation and associate the high US incarceration rate with unusually punitive social traditions and the targeting by law enforcement agencies of people of color, especially males.

2. The five most peaceful states are Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Minnesota, and North Dakota. The Northeast is the most peaceful region in the United States, with all of its states ranking in the top half of the US Peace Index. This includes the heavily populated states of New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. The least peaceful states are Louisiana, Tennessee, Nevada, Florida, and Alabama.
3. Peace is linked to opportunity, health, education, and the economy. Statistically significant correlations exist between a state's peacefulness (notably low crime rate) and 15 different social and economic factors, such that higher scores in peacefulness are associated with higher scores in health, education, and economic opportunity, but not with political affiliation.
4. The potential economic gains from improvements in peace are significant. Improvements in peace would result in the realization of substantial savings for both governments and society as a whole. If the United States reduced its violence to the same levels as Canada, for example, local governments would collectively save about \$89 billion. For instance, lost productivity from assault and from incarceration constitutes the greatest share of the total cost of violence, so states with high levels of incarceration and assault tend to have a higher per capita cost. The release of "trapped productivity" via a reduction of violence would create a stimulus that could generate an additional 1.7 million new jobs. And the benefit of transferring state and federal expenditures from violence-containment industries (including the military, police, and prison-industrial complex) to more economically productive industries is significant. This can be exemplified by building more new schools than jails and by employing more new teachers than missile designers. Although such efforts would not necessarily generate additional economic activity in themselves, they would create the foundation for a more productive economy. The implementation of such additional economic activity is defined as the "dynamic peace dividend," which can result in a substantial lift in GDP, employment, and quality of life.
5. Growing incarceration is a drag on the economy and in recent years has not had a significant effect on violent crime. While homicide and violent crime rates have fallen, the economic benefits to flow from these decreases have been largely offset by the costs associated with the increase in the incarceration rate. In recent years, there has been no statistically meaningful relationship between increases in incarceration rates and decreases in violent crime.
6. There is a strong correlation between peacefulness within each state and people's satisfaction with their access to such basic services as clean water, medicine, a safe place to exercise, affordable fruits and vegetables; enough money for food, shelter, and health care; perceptions of safety within one's community, and access to necessary medical care.

Culture of Peace

In 1999, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly launched a program of action to build a “culture of peace” for the world’s children, which envisaged working toward a positive peace of justice, tolerance, and plenty. The UN defined a culture of peace as involving values, attitudes, and behaviors that

- reject violence,
- endeavor to prevent conflicts by addressing root causes, and
- aim at solving problems through dialogue and negotiation.

The UN proposed that such a culture of peace would be furthered by actions promoting education for peace and sustainable development, which it suggested was based on human rights, gender equality, democratic participation, tolerant solidarity, open communication, and international security. However, these links between the concept of peace and its alleged causes were presumed rather than systematically measured. For example, although advocates of liberal peace theory have held that democratic states rarely attack each other, the ongoing wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere demonstrate how some democratic countries can be militant or belligerent—the justification for war often being that peace is ultimately secured through violence or the threat of violence.

A Final Note on the Meanings of Peace

Neither the study nor the pursuit of peace ignores the importance of conflict. Peace and conflict studies does not aim to abolish conflict any more than peace practitioners expect to eliminate rivalry or competition in a world of finite resources and imperfect human conduct. (Analogously, medicine and public health do not realistically seek to eliminate all bacteria or viruses from the world, although they are committed to human betterment by struggling against those that generate diseases.)

Where possible, peace and conflict studies seeks to develop new avenues for cooperation, as well as to reduce violence, especially organized, state-sanctioned violence and the terrorizing violence perpetrated both by and against non-state actors. It is this violence, by any definition the polar opposite of peace, that has so blemished human history and that—with the advent of nuclear weapons, biochemical weapons, and other mechanisms of global destruction—now threatens the future of life on this planet. And it is the horror of such violence, as well as the hope for peace (both negative and positive), that make peace and conflict studies especially frustrating, fascinating, and essential.

Questions for Further Reflection

1. Is peace an absolute, or are there degrees of peace, both outer and inner?
2. To what extent are peace and war mutually exclusive?
3. Under which circumstances, if any, is conflict inescapable and perhaps even desirable?

4. Under which circumstances, if any, is violence inescapable and perhaps even desirable?
5. Assess the strengths and weaknesses of empirical tools such as the GPI for measuring peace and its absence.

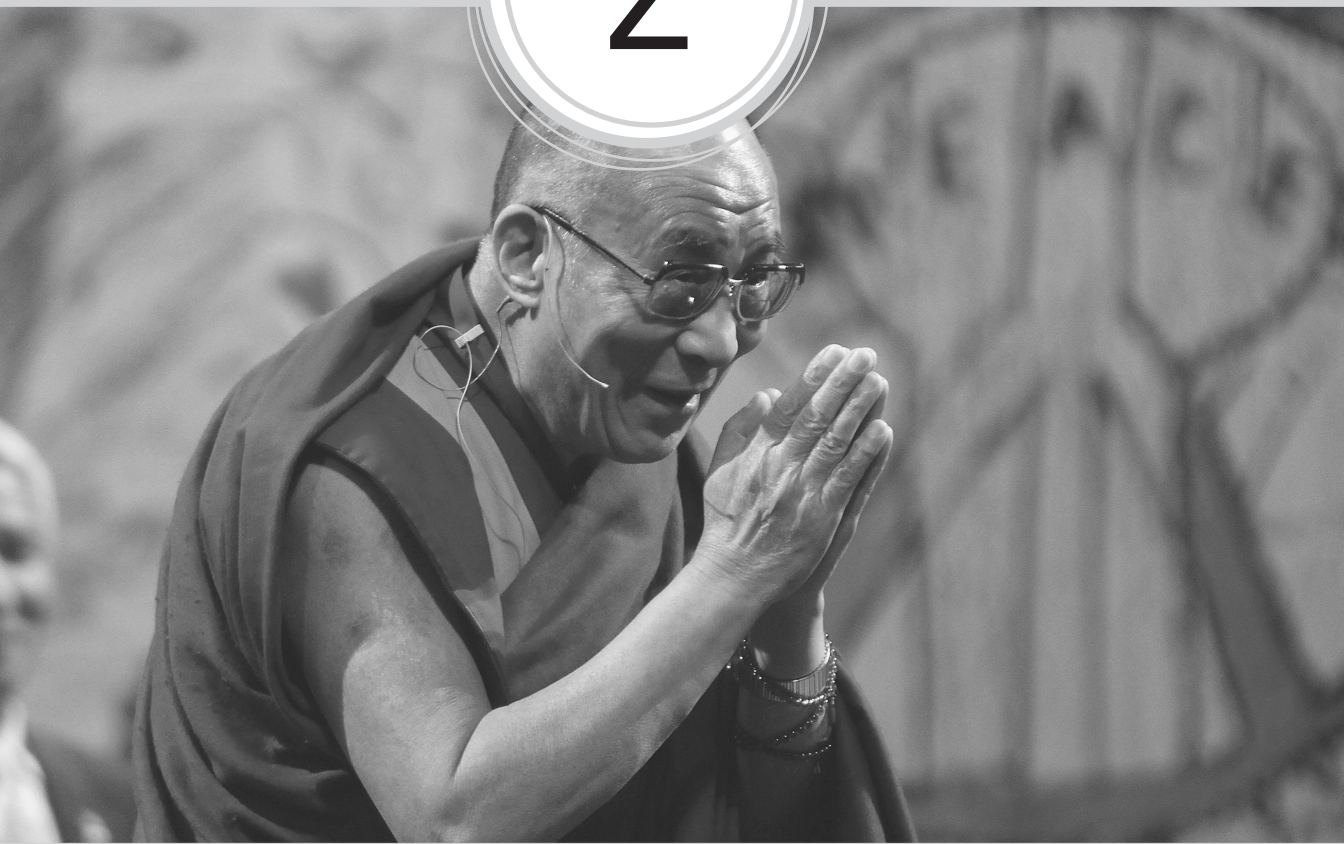
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Notes

1. For an overview and analysis of existential risks to humanity and the Earth, see Nick Bostrom, ed. 2008. *Global Catastrophic Risks*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Toby Ord. 2020. *The Precipice Existential Risk and the Future of Humanity*. London: Bloomsbury.
2. Mo Tzu. 1967. *Basic Writings of Mo Tzu*. New York: Columbia University Press.
3. Johan Galtung. 1985. "Twenty-Five Years of Peace Research: Ten Challenges and Responses." *Journal of Peace Research* 22: 141–158.
4. Quincy Wright. 1964. *A Study of War*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
5. Ibid.
6. For the *Global Peace Index* and related documents, including *COVID and Peace*, see <http://www.visionofhumanity.org/gpi-data/>
7. The 2012 United States Peace Index (USPI) is available at <https://www.visionofhumanity.org/maps/us-peace-index/#/>

2



Taylor Hill via Getty Images

Peace Studies, Peace Education, and Peace Research

Pace studies is a child of its time, notably the Cold War and the nuclear era from 1945 to the present. It is a transdisciplinary inquiry that has grown considerably since its birth during the mid-20th century, although its precursors go back to ancient times. On the other hand, the practice of peace education began in the early 20th century, partly in reaction to World War

I. It took off after World War II, as did the earliest peace studies programs at certain colleges and universities.

Similarly, although the origins of peace research date back to religious and ethical traditions across many world cultures and traditions, and the forerunners of scientific approaches to investigating peace and war emerged out of frustration over the advent of World War I (which was often called “the war no one wanted”), peace and conflict research as a distinct scholarly discipline gained momentum after World War II. It continues to be vibrant today.

Peace Studies, War Studies, and Peace and Conflict Studies

Whereas there have been different approaches to studying peace, contemporary Western peace studies (or *irenology*, from the Greek “Irene,” the goddess of peace) focuses on the analysis, prevention, de-escalation, and solution of conflicts by peaceful or nonviolent means, thereby seeking satisfactory outcomes for all parties involved, rather than winners and losers. This is in contrast to traditional international and so-called security studies, which focus on factors leading to victory or defeat in conflicts waged principally by violent means and to the increased or decreased “security” of one—but typically not all—of the parties involved.

Because peace studies investigates the reasons for and outcomes of large- and small-scale conflicts, as well as the preconditions for peace, the discipline is also known as *peace and conflict studies* (PCS). Its focus allows one to examine not only war but also the various forms of violence, including structural violence—notably social oppression, discrimination, exploitation, and marginalization—while also addressing the effects of political, cultural, and physical violence. The rigorous analysis of peace and conflict lends itself, as well, to the assessment and promotion of various peacemaking strategies, in response to growing popular alarm about the many perils facing today’s world.

Peace Education

The first organized initiatives in peace education focused on the horrors of war and generated statistics about weapon systems. Today, peace education consists of a wide variety of courses and programs aimed at giving students the tools to reduce violence and oppression. These include nonmilitary strategies for avoiding bullying and increasing citizen empowerment.

According to Betty Reardon, a noted American peace educator,

the general purpose of peace education . . . is the development of an authentic planetary consciousness that will enable us to function as global citizens and to transform the present human condition by changing the social structures and patterns of thought that have created it.¹

Like her fellow progressive peace educators, Reardon takes “a transformational approach,” aiming not only to inform students but also to shift current conventional values, thinking, behaviors, and institutions away from violence and toward nonviolent solutions to interpersonal, social, and political disputes.

Toward this end, The Peace Education Foundation writes and publishes materials for conflict-resolution curricula currently used in more than 20,000 schools worldwide. Peace education is also strongly supported by the UN. Koichiro Matsuura, past director-general of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), has written that peace education is of “fundamental importance to the mission of UNESCO and the United Nations.” Peace education has been increasingly integrated with education for democracy; women’s rights as well as those of children, indigenous peoples, and LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) individuals; and human rights more generally, along with nonviolent conflict resolution.

The Israeli peace educator Gavriel Salomon has described some major challenges facing peace educators around the world today, especially those working in zones of ongoing and seemingly intractable conflict such as Israel and Palestine. In addition to political opposition to their programs and severe socioeconomic inequalities in the regions where they operate, peace educators face such challenges as conflicting collective narratives, divergent historical memories, and contradictory beliefs.

To maximize the enduring social impact of peace education, effective programs of peace education should take ethnic and social differences into account and combine general dispositions to peace with specific context-sensitive applications of peace pedagogy and practice. Peace and conflict studies may be viewed, in part, as the dimension of peace education that is present in institutions of higher learning.

The Dimensions of Peace and Conflict Studies

As a scholarly enterprise, PCS is multi- or transdisciplinary, incorporating important theories and research findings from anthropology, sociology, political science, international relations, psychology, biology and zoology, ethics and philosophy, theology, history, and aspects of contemporary neuroscience. Ideally, PCS is also multilevel because it examines inner peace and conflict, as well as peaceful and conflictual relations between individuals, neighbors, ethnic groups, organizations, states, and civilizations (or outer peace and conflict).

Central to peace studies, peace education, and peace research is a concern not just with understanding the world but with changing it. This is a bone of contention for academics who espouse “value neutrality and scientific impartiality,” especially by such more conventional disciplines as political science, international relations, and strategic or security studies.

PCS is both normative (or prescriptive) and analytic (or descriptive). As a normative discipline, peace and conflict studies often makes value judgments, such as the assertion—often, the unspoken assumption—that peace and nonviolence are *better* than war and violence. But it makes these judgments both on the basis of ethical postulates (i.e., humans *should* resolve conflicts as nonviolently as possible) and of analytic descriptions (i.e., most violent efforts to resolve conflicts *in fact* result in less social stability than nonviolent means of conflict resolution). Also assumed is that violence is in itself undesirable. Importantly, such value judgments are not unusual in the academic world: medical science values health over disease, literary studies often focus on “classics of literature” rather than on “junk novels,” just as art, music, mathematics—indeed, all scholarly enterprises—make value judgments regarding the material they study and teach. Even physical science, which might seem the least overtly value-oriented of disciplines, has

value judgments at its core: prizing honesty, accuracy, replicability of results, correspondence between scientific propositions with the natural world, and the possible falsifiability of truth claims.

Therefore, the normative components of PCS are little different from many other scholarly endeavors. What distinguishes PCS from most academic fields is principally its subject matter—peace, violence, conflict, and power—its inter- (or multi-) disciplinary methodology, and its aim of identifying, testing, and implementing many different strategies for dealing with conflict situations. In addition, of course, its subject matter and recommendations are often controversial and politically fraught, in contrast with the lack of debate over, say, whether cancer and schizophrenia are bad whereas physical and mental health are good.

Peace and conflict studies is both theoretical and applied, including history and concepts as well as “hands-on” experiences when possible. It also focuses not merely on conflict resolution (as crucial as that is in specific cases), but on conflict transformation and reconciliation, thereby aiming to heal old wounds and establish sustainable peace among antagonistic parties.

At the theoretical level, PCS aims to uncover the roots of conflict and cooperation by examining and proposing theoretical models to explain violent and nonviolent individual and collective behaviors, both historically and cross-culturally. By revealing the underlying structures that give rise to human conflict and that support conflict resolution, PCS aims to transform the underlying causes, develop preventive strategies, and teach conflict transformation skills.

Fieldwork is often an important part of peace studies, with students often taking extended internships in conflict zones or with local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), where they can learn and apply dialogue, negotiation, and mediation skills. The fruits of peace studies may sometimes be difficult to see and take long to come to fruition, but given that human beings have been engaging in violent conflict for thousands of years, it is unrealistic to expect enduring solutions in months or even years. At the same time, the dangers and sheer horror of recent history combined with worries about the future lend a sense of urgency to the practical necessity for peaceful and—no less important—sustainable change.

Peace and conflict studies also aspires to be multicultural and cosmopolitan, in part citing the lives and works of Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. as paragons. However, true multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism remain more an aspiration than a reality for the field because most peace studies programs and centers are located in the West (although their influence is increasing elsewhere, particularly in Asia).

Peace and conflict studies is both a pedagogical activity, in which teachers and learners come together to understand the roots of peace and conflict, and a research enterprise, in which researchers propose rigorous theories and methods for formulating and testing hypotheses about the sources of conflict and the institutionalization of lasting cultures of peace. In the process, researchers also interact with peace and antiwar activists and political movements engaged in “peace work” because the goal is not just to study but also to achieve peace.

Teaching PCS

Everyday citizens, teachers, and students have long been motivated by an interest in peace. American student interest in what is today considered peace studies first appeared in the form of campus clubs at US colleges in the

years immediately following the Civil War. Similar movements appeared in Sweden at the end of the 19th century and elsewhere in Europe soon after. These were usually student-originated discussion groups, not formal courses included in college and university curricula.

Because of its destructiveness, World War I, or “The War to End All Wars,” was a turning point in many Western attitudes to war. When the leaders of France, Britain, and the United States (led by Georges Clemenceau, David Lloyd George, and Woodrow Wilson, respectively) met to sign the Treaty of Paris in 1919 and to decide the postwar future of Europe, President Wilson proposed his famous Fourteen Points for peacemaking, which included breaking up European empires into nation-states and establishing a League of Nations. The failures of both these aspirations contributed, paradoxically, to heighten focus on how international peace could be established and maintained. As a result, PCS gradually emerged as an academic discipline.

Peace studies was initiated by scholars who were intentionally separating themselves from the older, more established discipline of international relations (or IR, whose first professorial chair was established in 1919 at Aberystwyth University in Wales). IR is still seen by many peace studies professionals, including the distinguished scholar-activist Elise Boulding, as principally devoted to maintaining a Eurocentric, pro-establishment orientation toward “negative” peace, for the world as well as for their discipline. Other peace studies educators have argued that the field of international relations itself was initially developed with a peace studies focus to avoid war and that the disciplines can and should be complementary, albeit in fact they are sometimes competitive. Peace studies started out on most American college campuses within departments emphasizing international relations, which, to many scholars and activists, had reneged on the study and promotion of war avoidance in favor of a self-identified “hard-headed realism.”

Just after World War II, many university courses on peace and war were established. The first undergraduate academic program in peace studies in the United States was created in 1948 at Manchester College in Indiana. It was not until the late 1960s in the United States that student and professorial objections to the Vietnam War stimulated more universities to offer courses about peace, whether in an undergraduate major or postgraduate degree program, or as a course within such traditional majors as political science and sociology. In the US, notable peace studies programs were initiated in 1968 at Manhattan College, which is a Catholic school and hence representative of the support for peace studies by many religious institutions of higher education, as well as by the secular Colgate University in 1969. In England, the first school of peace studies was founded in 1973 at Bradford University. By the early 1970s, many North American universities were offering courses about the Vietnam War, with faculty responding to student demands for courses that were “relevant to their own lives.”

Growth in peace studies programs accelerated during the 1980s, as students and the general public became increasingly concerned about the prospects of nuclear war. This spurred the creation of a host of new courses and programs aimed at promoting global survival.² Key components of peace studies during this period included courses on violence and war, the nuclear arms race and the threat of nuclear destruction, international conflict, alleged aggressive tendencies in human nature, disarmament, discrimination against minorities, group conflicts, nonviolent action, defense policy, group dynamics, environmental damage, cultural integration, the unequal distribution of wealth, women’s roles, Central America, apartheid in South Africa, and structural violence.

With the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the formal end of the Cold War in 1991, the emphasis of peace studies courses at many North American colleges shifted somewhat from international politics to the domestic scene, emphasizing structural, domestic, and civil violence. In 1991, the United States Institute of Peace published *Approaches to Peace: An Intellectual Map*, which listed the following headings for the study of peace: traditional approaches (collective security and deterrence); international law approaches (international law, interstate organizations, third-party dispute settlement); new approaches (transnationalism, behavioral approaches, conflict resolution); and political systems approaches (internal systems and systemic theories/world systems). Many international organizations, agencies, and NGOs, from the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the European Union (EU), and the World Bank to the International Crisis Group, International Alert, and others, began to draw on PCS research. By the mid-1990s, peace studies curricula in the United States had somewhat shifted from research and teaching about negative peace to positive peace.

Since the beginning of the new millennium, course offerings in peace studies have expanded to include topics such as north-south relations; development, debt, and global poverty; the environment, population growth, and resource scarcity; feminist perspectives on peace, militarism, and political violence; zones of local peace; ecology and climate change; nonviolent alternatives to terrorism; and in-depth treatments of conflict resolution and transformation.

Research in PCS

Such notable thinkers as Plato, Jesus, Immanuel Kant, Leo Tolstoy, and various Eastern religious leaders long recognized the centrality of peace for inner and outer harmony. But it was not until the 1950s and 1960s that peace studies began to emerge as an academic discipline with its own research tools, a specialized set of concepts, and such forums for discussion as conferences and journals. Peace research institutes were established in Europe in the 1960s, although many of these do not offer formal peace studies courses. Some of the oldest and most prominent peace research centers include PRIO in Oslo, founded in 1959; the Department of Peace and Conflict Research at Uppsala University in Sweden; and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). Scholarly journals such as *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* and *The Journal of Peace Research*, begun in the 1950s and 1960s, reflected the growing interest in and academic stature of the field.

In 1963, the Peace Research Society was founded in Sweden. The group of initial members included Walter Isard, Kenneth Boulding, and Anatol Rapoport. In 1973, this group became the Peace Science Society. Peace science was viewed by these academics as an interdisciplinary and international effort to develop a set of theories, techniques, and data to better understand and mitigate conflict. Peace science attempts to use quantitative techniques developed in economics and political science, especially game theory and econometrics, otherwise seldom used by researchers in peace studies. The Peace Science Society website makes available the *Correlates of War*, one of the best-known collections of data on international conflict. The society also publishes two scholarly journals: *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* and *Conflict Management and Peace Science*.

In 1964, the International Peace Research Association (IPRA) was formed at a conference organized by Quakers in Switzerland. The IPRA holds a biennial conference. In 2001, the Peace and Justice Studies Association (PJSA) was

created after the merger of two precursor organizations. It publishes a newsletter (*The Peace Chronicle*); lists programs in peace, justice, and conflict studies; and holds annual conferences on themes related to the organization's mission "to create a just and peaceful world" through research, scholarship, pedagogy, and activism.

PCS Today

The number of universities offering peace and conflict studies courses is hard to estimate because it is often difficult to identify whether a course takes a basically PCS perspective, given that suitable courses may be taught in different departments and have different names.

Of the several hundred North American colleges and universities with peace studies programs, about one-half are in church-related schools, about a third are in large public universities, approximately one-fifth are in non-church-related private colleges, and a smaller number are in community colleges. About half of the church-related schools that have peace studies programs are Roman Catholic. Other religious denominations with more than one college or university offering a peace studies program are the Mennonites, Quakers, United Church of Christ, and Church of the Brethren. About 80% of these programs are at the undergraduate level and the rest at the graduate level. Despite the growth in courses related to PCS, only about 10% of North American colleges and universities have both undergraduate and graduate programs, both of which are noticeably absent at elite private universities (such as the US's "Ivy League"), where departments of political science and government hold sway along with programs in security and international studies. By contrast, many elite private colleges offer coursework readily associated with a PCS perspective. Most international PCS programs offer primarily graduate-level degrees, notably including the UN-mandated University for Peace in Costa Rica.

PCS programs and international security and diplomacy research agendas have also become common in institutions located in conflict, post-conflict, and developing countries and regions, for example, the National Peace Council (Sri Lanka), Centre for Human Rights (University of Sarajevo, Bosnia), Chulalongkorn University (Thailand), National University of Timor (Timor-Leste), University of Kabul (Afghanistan), Makerere University (Uganda), Tel Aviv University (Israel), the University of Sierra Leone, and so on.

Until 2017, PCS had mostly shifted its focus from interstate rivalry to intrastate conflict, as well as to problems caused by interpersonal violence. However, because of the Trump administration's hostility to China and Iran, and its appeasement policies toward Russia and North Korea, international conflict is again on the agenda of much contemporary PCS research and teaching. In addition, PCS is also now addressing such hot-button issues as wars, terrorism, trafficking, refugees, treaties, climate change, the pros and cons of nonviolent resistance, and multilateral efforts to curtail war and the arms trade and to promote an ecologically sustainable future.

Some Contributions of PCS

Scholars and others working in peace and conflict studies have made significant contributions to the policies of many NGOs, development agencies, international financial institutions, and the UN system, as well as to human

knowledge more generally. Social scientists and other peace researchers, although still concerned with assessing historical trends in warfare and violence, have also increasingly analyzed the comparative efficacy or failure of violent and nonviolent strategies and tactics of revolutionary and other movements. This represents a shift in interest from conflict management approaches, or a strictly negative peace orientation to conflict resolution, to peacebuilding approaches aimed at positive peace. This shift started at the end of the Cold War and was encapsulated in the report of then-UN secretary-general Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace*.

What has been called *liberal peacebuilding*, or democratic *state-building*, is based largely on the work that has been carried out in this area. The techniques of nonviolence protest and resistance, initially developed by peace researcher Gene Sharp, have been so widely (and sometimes successfully) adopted that Sharp has been called a modern-day godfather of this approach, as it has been practiced in, for example, prodemocracy protests in Russia and Hong Kong. Other notable cases of bringing nonviolent theory to progressive political practice have been the “Arab Spring,” the “Occupy Movement,” “Extinction Rebellion,” the “Umbrella Movement” and its successor in Hong Kong, and such recent other peace and democracy political movements as those in Belarus and Burma (Myanmar).

On a cautionary note, the once-inspiring “Arab Spring” of about a decade ago across North Africa and the Middle East appears to have led to significant democratic progress only in Tunisia, although there are some reasons for cautious optimism in Algeria, Morocco, the UAE, and Jordan as well—in sharp contrast with the restoration of military dictatorship in Egypt and the ongoing catastrophic wars in Syria, Yemen, and Libya.

Liberal peacebuilding or state-building has been successful at times in places as diverse as Cambodia, Colombia, the Balkans, Timor-Leste, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Nepal, Tunisia, and for a while, in Burma/Myanmar, although in all such cases, stability has been fragile and old conflicts (notably between military and civilian sectors) have re-emerged, especially in Burma. Some PCS scholars have advocated an emancipatory form of peacebuilding, based upon an international “responsibility to protect” (R2P), human security, local ownership, and popular participation in democracy-building processes. Ultimately, however, the success or failure of PCS will depend on the impact it has on peace movements, which will ideally include students and teachers of the subject.

Conflicts Within PCS

Not surprisingly, there are disagreements within PCS. Although many PCS observers and critics smile when they hear about conflicts among those studying conflicts, the reality is that just as doctors sometimes get diseases, PCS scholars and practitioners now and then have disputes. (Thus far, however, they have all been resolved nonviolently.)

For example, peace studies is now often referred to as peace and conflict studies, reflecting an integration of both studying peace and understanding conflict. But some leaders in the field believe that by doing so, peace studies risks becoming more like war studies as attention in peace research is devoted to war research and to conflict resolution rather than to building peace and transforming conflicts by peaceful means.

The inclusion of the analysis of (violent) conflict within peace studies has sparked a debate not only with mainstream international relations and its dominant *Realpolitik* orientation but also in the field of peace studies itself.

Most research on large-scale conflicts looks at wars, which have been studied by pioneers such as Lewis Richardson, who developed a series of mathematically sophisticated models, and Quincy Wright, a political scientist best known for his attention to international law as it relates to the causes, effects, and prevention of war.

Some PCS researchers and activists claim that if we could simply persuade people to be more tolerant and open-minded, conflicts would no longer be harmful, or may even disappear altogether. Others focus on how people behave, maintaining that the problem is humanity's use of violent and aggressive means of trying to resolve conflict. And some conflict transformers argue that what matters is that existing social and economic contradictions must be resolved or transcended, that "social justice" is a necessary precondition for the establishment of a durable peace. All three perspectives have some "fundamentalists," but a growing majority of PCS researchers and conflict specialists see the need to include them all.

An old controversy within PCS concerns the relation between inner and outer peace. Should one first strive to achieve peace within one's self or initially try to create greater peace in society at large? Which comes first, healing one's self to gain inner peace, or changing a violent world to gain outer peace? Despite different views, many peace researchers and activists view this as a false dilemma and see the need for both.

Some peace scholars and educators are absolute pacifists, proponents of "principled nonviolence" who oppose use of military force in *all* circumstances, but many are not, advocating what is called "strategic nonviolence." People in both camps see themselves as contributing to a body of knowledge and practice that historically has been neglected in favor of the study and practice of war. But peace studies is not antimilitary. Many peace scholars are in conversations with the military, and at least some in the military support peace studies.

As in other social and human sciences, there is considerable debate about methodology within PCS. To get the best understanding of a conflict or a peace movement, should the emphasis be on quantitative or qualitative investigations? At present, the majority of those close to the political science and international relations side tend to use more quantitative methodologies, while the social movement and nonviolent side usually conducts more qualitative analyses.

When initiatives are taken to have new PCS programs at universities, there have often been spirited discussions regarding whether the best way to create a PCS degree is to include PCS in existing fields (like international relations) and within academic disciplinary divisions (like social science) or to set up separate PCS centers. Around the world there is now an expansion of both types. Many academic fields have a theoretical component, PCS included. Good theories are essential for anyone who wants to understand the world. The complexity of conflicts makes it a challenge to have a complete understanding of such multifaceted political realities. As with most human sciences, PCS finds it difficult to do experiments and repeatable tests, so empirical observation and case studies are much needed and highly regarded.

Comparing PCS with meteorology and the early history of public health may help clarify some of the challenges faced by the field. The complexity of weather forecasting is probably similar to the complexity of many conflicts. Meteorologists today are pretty good at predicting a five-day weather forecast. By identifying, measuring, and analyzing the

many variables that influence the weather, they are able to forecast the probability of how weather will develop in the near future. However, it is almost impossible to accurately predict the more distant future. Early warning systems for predicting the development of human conflicts face similar or even more difficult challenges. Human beings significantly alter the Earth's climate, especially by causing global warming, but have little influence on day-to-day weather. Natural forces create weather and human behavior creates conflicts. Although both are to some extent predictable, neither is rigidly so.

Understanding human behavior is necessary but not sufficient for students of PCS because it is an ethical and applied social science as well as an analytical one. Like public health professionals who were trying about a century ago simultaneously to forge a disciplinary identity separate from the medical establishment and to scientifically analyze and treat epidemics, contemporary peace scholars, researchers, and students attempt not merely to understand the world but to improve it. But before acting, one must have sufficient knowledge and skills. For a practicing surgeon or a public health worker combating a mass infection, this is obvious. Many soldiers are normally given at least a year of training prior to being sent to a conflict zone, and medical doctors and other public-health workers must also have rigorous training before going into the field. Similarly, peace and conflict workers should be equipped with a comparable toolbox of conflict resolution skills and nonviolent techniques before they intervene in a conflict.

All tools, theories, and kinds of knowledge can be misused. Medical science is a gift to humanity, but it was misused by some doctors in Nazi Germany. Governments and individuals employing tactics of torture often use legally, psychologically, and medically trained personnel to help them be more efficient. Many PCS scholars and activists accordingly feel a need to include a humanitarian ethic in their teaching, research, and politically engaged practices.

Criticisms of PCS and Some Responses

Critics of the field have sometimes claimed that PCS research is diffuse, imprecise, and insufficiently rigorous. Such views have been strongly opposed by scholars who have done interdisciplinary, theoretical, methodological, and empirical research into the causes of violence and dynamics of peace. Others assert that PCS is not objective, is derived from mainly leftist and/or inexperienced sources, is not practical, supports certain forms of violence and terrorism rather than rejecting them, or has not led to useful policy developments.

PCS supporters respond that other social and human sciences are also normatively oriented and involve subjective choices; sociology, political science, psychology, and even economics, for example, are not neutral, value-free sciences. They typically value, for example, social stability (in the case of sociology), democracy and freedom (political science), sanity (psychology), and capitalism (economics), just as medicine values health. The sources on which PCS educators and researchers rely are often the same books, journals, and databases as other academic fields and reflect the full range of ideological and political orientations. PCS action proposals are almost entirely nonviolent and antiterrorist in orientation; whether or not these proposals are operationalized, they are neither more nor less practical than those formulated outside PCS.

Furthermore, the development of UN and major donor policies (including the EU, United States, United Kingdom, Japan, Canada, Norway, etc.) in conflict and post-conflict countries has been heavily influenced by PCS. Since roughly the year 2000, a range of key policy statements has been developed by these governments, as have such UN (or UN-related) documents as “Agenda for Peace,” “Agenda for Development,” “Agenda for Democratization,” the “Millennium Development Goals,” and the “Responsibility to Protect.” PCS research has also been influential in the work of, among others, the United Nations, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the UN Peacebuilding Commission, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Bank, the EU, and OSCE.

PCS has also significantly influenced such international NGOs as International Alert, International Crisis Group, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and many local NGOs. And PCS scholars have generated major databases such as “The Correlates of War” project by the Peace Science Society at the University of Michigan, as well as the resources of PRIO in Oslo and SIPRI in Stockholm. Finally, peace and conflict studies debates have generally confirmed, not undermined, a broad global consensus on the importance of human security, human rights, equitable and sustainable economic development, democracy, and the rule of law.

The Future of PCS

The growth of peace studies programs in Canada, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, China, India and the developing world, Western and Central Europe, and elsewhere indicates a concern for the future of life on this planet. Faculty members are using their professional skills to educate students about the causes of war while pointing out concrete alternatives to violent behavior. PCS programs vary considerably as to their scope, content, and structure. More conventional programs that emphasize the study of treaty arrangements, alliance systems, deterrence theories, and the study of war between sovereign nation-states have been complemented by newer programs focusing on sub-national groups and movements that cut across the boundaries of nation-states.

As we move further into the 21st century, there is a danger that many peace studies courses and programs will disappear as faculty and administrators who were attracted to peace studies as a result of the war in Vietnam, the original Cold War between the Soviet Union and the West, and/or the nuclear threat, retire. Many graduate programs produce young scholars committed to peace paradigms who have difficulty finding work at universities that are downsizing and whose faculty and administrators are committed to traditional subject matter and disciplinary boundaries. More conventional academic departments (notably political science and international relations), feeling threatened by large peace studies enrollments and themselves having to cope with fewer institutional resources (which are increasingly devoted to STEM fields—Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics—as well as to programs in Business, Economics, and Computer Science/Information Technology), and often supported by budget-conscious university administrators, sometimes seek to roll back if not terminate peace studies degree programs.

The undergraduate peace and conflict studies major at the University of California at Berkeley, for example, has been “retired,” as was the program