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## Peace Studies, Peace Education, and Peace Research

**P**ace 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

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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

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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.<sup>1</sup>

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.<sup>2</sup> 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

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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

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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 inexpert 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

at the University of Oslo in Norway (until recently a global leader in the field). Other peace studies graduate and other graduate programs are being “merged” into social science and international or global studies divisions and are losing their disciplinary autonomy. And many younger scholars, originally attracted to the idealistic visions of peace education, may become frustrated and disappointed at the academy’s inability to incorporate them. Whether the field of peace studies as a whole is in a period of global retrenchment remains to be seen.

Scholarly debate about the value of multidisciplinary programs also provides a challenge for PCS. Most scholars are accustomed to looking at the world through the lenses of the disciplines in which they were trained. Peace studies, rather than relying on a single disciplinary perspective, can provide a potentially unifying center for political scientists, educators, sociologists, theologians, psychologists, biological scientists, lawyers, anthropologists, economists, diplomats, historians, and philosophers. Nonetheless, although colleges and universities typically pay lip service to interdisciplinary studies, the reality is that such programs are difficult to establish and to maintain; in this regard, PCS, sadly, is no exception.

An unexpected development following the US election of Donald Trump in 2016, along with the (re-)emergence of right-wing authoritarianism in many other nations, was widespread revulsion at the growth of militarism resulting from heightened inward-looking nationalism and the (more expected) concomitant indifference of many authoritarian and illiberal elites to human rights, economic inequality, and environment destruction. This, in turn, has energized movements for peace, democracy, and climate change mitigation, as citizens turn to strategies of resistance and political transformation. Nonetheless, the mainstream politicians who emphasize responding to violence with greater violence and who, along with some mass and social media, substitute “fake news” and outright falsehoods for the truth, make it hard to build support for peace studies among citizens and decision makers who see the pursuit of peace by peaceful means as idealistic, unglamorous, impractical, and/or unprofitable.

The pursuit of peace is often labeled idealistic because it is assumed that human beings will always be violent due to “human nature” and that any talk about building a peaceful global community is naïve and dangerous. Peace work for nonviolent conflict transformation is also widely considered unglamorous because bloody and dramatic events make headlines; an old saying in journalism is “If it bleeds, it leads.”

Peacemaking successes are usually not covered by mainstream mass media seeking to titillate an audience that has been raised on unrealistic macho images of violence promoted on television, in novels, movies, video games, and popular music. News reports obsessively cover the protagonists in violent conflicts but generally ignore the peacemakers who may be present and working to resolve conflicts nonviolently. Importantly, the business of war and preparations for war (a.k.a. the military-industrial complex) is a multitrillion-dollar global enterprise whose economic and political clout currently dwarfs that of the world’s peacemakers. Accordingly, PCS needs to find ways to dramatize the work of peace heroes and heroines and to signal the successes of nonviolent movements. It is crucial that the struggle to build a peaceful world be a dynamic part of the public debate, so that the rest of the 21st century will not be as dominated by violence and war as it has been for its first two decades, as was much of the 20th century, especially the period from 1914 to mid-century.

## A Final Note on Peace and Conflict Studies, Education, and Research

When Gandhi said that the theory and practice of nonviolence was at the same level as electricity in Edison's day, he was probably right. "Peace by peaceful means" is an important concept, especially because it modifies the more traditional justification of war-making as a way to achieve peace. With disciplined research, creative action, and compassion, PCS educators, activists, and students can better address global and local challenges.

We hope this textbook will be a useful tool for those taking that path. At the same time, we note with alarm and regret that violence continues to plague the world, such that the need for PCS and its approaches has never been greater.

Like peace itself, peace studies, peace research, and peace education are very much works in progress. We invite you to discuss and debate the values and methods that have been used thus far, and, where possible, to add to this necessary and dynamic endeavor.

### Questions for Further Reflection

1. Based on what you have now read about peace and conflict studies, what would you consider to be the strengths and weaknesses of this field?
2. If you were to design a peace education program for your community/nation, what would you include?
3. Do you think global peace is achievable in your lifetime? Why or why not?
4. What are the most and least fruitful areas for peace and conflict research?
5. How do you envision the future of PCS?

### Suggestions for Further Reading

- Robin Cooper and Laura Finley, eds. 2014. *Peace and Conflict Studies Research: A Qualitative Perspective*. New York: Information Age.
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## Scholarly Journals

The International Journal of Peace Studies:  
<http://www.gmu.edu/programs/icar/ijps/>

Journal of Conflict Resolution: <http://jcr.sagepub.com/>

Journal of Peace Research (JPR): <http://jpr.sagepub.com/>

Peace and Change: <http://www.wiley.com/bw/journal.asp?ref=0149-0508>

Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology: <http://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/pac/>

Peace Review: <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/10402659.asp>

## Notes

1. Betty Reardon. 1988. *Comprehensive Peace Education: Educating for Global Responsibility*. New York and London: Teachers College Press, Columbia University.
2. David Barash offered a course on nuclear war at the University of Washington

between 1982 and 1990; it typically enrolled a thousand students, the maximum possible. By 1990, enrollment had dropped substantially.