



# PEACE EDUCATION, RELIGIOUS DISCOURSE, AND SCIENTIFIC ENQUIRY

DIALOGUE AND COLLABORATION FROM EASTERN  
EUROPEAN CONTEXTS

EDITED BY

**Jarosław Michalski and Monika Wolińska**



# PEACE EDUCATION, RELIGIOUS DISCOURSE, AND SCIENTIFIC ENQUIRY

Empowering educators and policymakers to effect positive change in their communities, this book critically examines how sustained dialogue and cooperation between scientific inquiry and religious discourse can contribute to the fostering of successful peace education initiatives.

Providing an overview of the historical and cultural context of peace education in Eastern Europe, the chapters look initially at the theoretical foundations, emphasising the need for empathy, internal peace, and traditional values. Featuring contributions from the United States, Germany, Italy, Slovakia, Turkey, and Poland, subsequent sections outline ethical, moral, and religious dimensions to inform effective peace education strategies, along with a discussion on how they can be harmonised with secular approaches to provide a holistic framework for peace education. Case studies and practical applications follow, ranging from Maria Montessori's educational approach to the role of social media and sustainability in peace education, providing readers with a comprehensive understanding of how different perspectives can inform effective peace education strategies.

With implications and take aways for educators and researchers looking to foster a culture of peace and non-violence, this book will be of interest to scholars, policymakers, postgraduate students, and curriculum designers in the fields of peace education, values education, conflict resolution, and social cohesion more broadly. Those working in peacebuilding organisations and NGOs more widely may also benefit from the chapters.

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Dialogue and Collaboration from  
Eastern European Contexts

*Edited by Jarosław Michalski and Monika Wolińska*



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# INTRODUCTION

*Jarosław Michalski and Monika Wolińska*

Education for peace, the search for peaceful ways of overcoming conflicts, and the social and individual conditions for peaceful coexistence of both individuals and nations are themes that, particularly in contemporary times, increasingly define socio-pedagogical reflection and activity. This is because the post-modern period, associated with rapid political, socio-economic, educational, and civilisational changes, has presented humankind with many complex problems concerning its existence. Today, there is no longer any doubt that we are unprepared for the opacity and ambivalence of the world as well as its failures. Modern individuals are exposed to constant stress and a sense of being out of control of their own lives. The tragic events surrounding the coronavirus pandemic and the deaths of several million people, or the recent experience of the war in Ukraine and the suffering of many innocent people are good examples. Every day, people are faced with the need to make choices, which are all the more difficult because they often do not find support in the past, in the examples of those closest to them, and have to create their own identity on “shifting sands” themselves. All this becomes a special reason to make the category of peace and, above all, education for peace the object of serious reflection, especially in the context of all-embracing pluralism (historical, socio-cultural, etc.).

What is needed, therefore, is a solid reflection and reconstruction of a philosophy of education directed towards discovering the value of peace, but with the participation of critical, analytical thinking, reinterpreting the many currents of the social understanding of man and his chances of being present in the world. Therefore, we aim to undertake a critical reflection on the value of peace at the socio-educational level, exploring ways of examining attitudes towards peace or beliefs relating to it, also ways of experiencing peace,

becoming aware of it, and the relationship of peace with people's personalities, behaviours, and attitudes by analysing models of axiological education and examining the function of the value of peace in upbringing and education.

In light of the above, we would like to take up the challenge of an interdisciplinary theoretical and empirical reflection, which will lead us to a better understanding of the mechanisms underlying authentic peace education as well as contribute to the development of pedagogical implications from the issues explored.

The book presented here seeks to foster collaboration and dialogue between science and religion to promote peace within the context and experiences of Eastern Europe. Focusing on the unique perspectives of the region, the book explores how cooperation between these two disciplines can support peace education by combining tradition with post-modernism and contemporary challenges, theory with practice, and values with pragmatism.

The prospects for peace in the modern world may lie in recognising the plurality of our belonging and in thinking of us human beings as co-inhabitants of the wider world, rather than confining us to rigidly defined little boxes, categorised by a particular religion or culture. Seeking good relations only within single intergroup categories – such as between civilisations, religious, or ethnic groups – without considering other affiliations to which the same people also belong (e.g., economic, social, and political groups) results in the loss of many important aspects of human life. Individuals become prisoners of cramped boxes and are minimised. Thus, embracing a more holistic view of human identity could be key to fostering genuine understanding and cooperation across the globe.

“The future of the world”, as Nobel laureate Amartya Sen rightly said, “is closely linked to the future of freedom in the world” (Sen, 2006, 27). It is therefore important to confront threats to freedom, which are not only various forms of violence and slavery but also violent structures, including political and religious ones, that sustain the existence of wars and a lack of social justice. It is equally important that peacekeeping agencies, including those related to education, be activated to help transform this violent world into a “nest-world”, that is, an enclave of peace, security, well-being, and happiness, which – unlike Plato's caves – is a launching pad for greater freedom.

Asking that education for peace build nesting spaces is certainly excessive and overly idealistic. What is possible, though, is a solid reflection and reconstruction of a philosophy of education aimed at discovering the value of peace, yet with the engagement of critical, analytical thinking, reinterpreting the many currents of social understanding of the human being and his or her opportunities for presence in the world. Therefore, in this book, we undertake a critical reflection on the value of peace at the socio-educational level, asking about approaches to studying attitudes towards peace or beliefs

relating to it. We also explore the ways of experiencing peace, realising it, and the relationship of peace with the personality, behaviour, and attitudes of people through the analysis of models of axiological education and the study of the function of the value of peace in upbringing and education.

### Structure of the volume

The publication *Peace Education, Religious Discourse, and Scientific Enquiry. Dialogue and Collaboration from Eastern European Contexts* is interdisciplinary in nature, fostering dialogue and collaboration to address the pressing challenges facing global peace initiatives. Through a synthesis of different perspectives, this work offers strategies for action and innovative approaches to cultivate a more peaceful and just world. It presents a unique approach to peace education by synergising science and religion. Collaboration between these two fields is rare, and its potential for promoting peace is enormous. We show how these different perspectives can work together to build a more peaceful society.

This volume, through its structured composition, aims not only to present the results of the research but also to create a space for dialogue between different approaches and perspectives. It is a book that engages in deep reflection on the role of education in peacebuilding, and how different religious traditions and research methods can interact in this process. The chapters in this monograph are carefully planned to reflect these key areas and their interconnections.

The presented publication consists of three integral parts, corresponding to its title. In the first part, it reveals the basic theories, the role of dialogue, the interplay between collective and individual peace, and the psychological and pedagogical conditions necessary for peace education. These provide the basis for the concepts and challenges of promoting a peaceful society through education.

The second part of the publication focuses on the ethical and religious dimensions and explores the contribution of religious traditions and moral philosophies to peace education. It discusses the importance of theological perspectives and how they can be harmonised with secular approaches to provide a holistic framework for peace education. The chapters examine the moral foundations of social peace, axiological principles from religious encyclicals, and the educational philosophies of influential figures such as Giovanni Bosco and Pope Francis. It also discusses the practical applications of these philosophies in academia and individual perspectives on peace.

In turn, the third part of the publication focuses on contemporary strategies and practical applications of peace education in different contexts. It presents case studies and examples from Eastern Europe, illustrating how theoretical principles can be transformed into effective educational practices.



The chapters focus on practical applications, from Maria Montessori's educational approach to the role of social media and sustainability in peace education. They also touch on the psychological aspects of peace among young people and the importance of respect for the environment as a basis for peace.

It is worth noting that true understanding and effective action in the areas of peace education, religious discourse, and research cannot exist in isolation. Each chapter in this monograph represents a step towards this understanding, attempting to address questions that are common to many yet have deep roots in local contexts.

As we traverse this intellectual journey, we are encouraged to reflect on how our own experiences and beliefs can enrich our capacity for dialogue and collaboration. This book is not only an invitation to scholarly exploration but also a call to action for meaningful change. Ultimately, our hope is that by understanding and working together towards the goals of peace and cooperation, we can build bridges between different perspectives and create inclusive spaces (nest-world) rather than confining ones, thereby contributing to a more harmonious world.

Jarosław Michalski & Monika Wolińska

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## **PART 1**

# Theoretical Foundations and Perspectives of Peace Education



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# 1

## EDUCATION FOR PEACE AND PROMOTION OF DIALOGUE

*Zbigniew Babicki and Zbigniew Formella*

### Introduction

On the threshold of the 20th century, Ellen Key, a Swedish writer and suffragist, published her book titled “The Century of the Child”. The book caused a great stir among scientists and people of good will. In the educational sciences that were emerging at that time, there was hope that adults, in a conscious and purposeful way, could create conditions for children to bring out the best in them. Hence, in pedagogy, the 20th century was called the “century of the child”. Reasons were sought for constructing theories that would enable shaping the child’s cognitive sphere and good and strong will, thanks to which it would be possible to build a better world. Hopes for unlimited possibilities of pedagogy and educational practice were quickly dashed. However, this did not destroy the hope that the adult world gave to children. As Barbara Smolińska-Theiss argues:

Children remain the hope of adults, the hope of the world, by the very fact of being children. They trigger parental love, the joy of everyday contact with them, and expectations for the future. This is due to the rights assigned to the children. The 20th century added value to children and gave them all rights confirmed by international acts.

*(Smolińska-Theiss, 1999a, p. 8)*

At the same time, the same 20th century enslaved the children and their world. Criminal systems wanted to destroy nations by destroying and killing children. The world of adults showed children the darkest face of evil by harnessing them to the machine of war. “War and violence became the

hallmark of pedagogy at the end of the century” (Smolińska-Theiss, 1999a, p. 9). In his message for the 29th World Day of Peace, John Paul II appealed to all people of good will to help children grow up in an atmosphere of true peace. Expressing deep concern for children who have become victims of war and other forms of violence, the Pope encouraged: “Let us give children a future in peace!” (John Paul II, 1999, p. 11).

### **The essence of peace**

The ongoing war in Ukraine once again reveals the extent of pain, suffering, and humanitarian crisis and shows once again its humanistic senselessness and the low moral motives of its initiators. In recent decades, Europeans have become convinced that the outbreak of a regular war in this part of the world is unimaginable. Meanwhile, the killing of civilians, including women and children, in front of the entire world for their own imperial and political gain has become a brutal reality. In this context, the belief in the need to build peace as a value and, at the same time, the goal of education should be strengthened. The motives for initiating armed conflicts may be puzzling. Do they arise solely from the imperfections of human nature? (Babicki, 2023). Understanding these motives could help prevent wars. The preamble to UNESCO’s constitution states, “since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed” (UNESCO, 2023).

Stanisław Kawula emphasises that peace is not only the absence of war but, above all, the absence of hostility between people, states, and nations and the presence of positive values such as justice and empathy. Education for peace should therefore, first of all, restore the meaning of life and a sense of value to individuals. According to the author, the educational programme of education for peace should be understood in terms of the pedagogy of dialogue, reconciliation, and coexistence. “In this way, education for peace acquires ideological and moral as well as socio-political aspects” (Kawula, 1988, pp. 48–49). Shaping human attitudes aimed at accepting the peaceful coexistence of societies and nations is therefore one of the most important goals of education. Confirmation of the promotion of the idea of educating for peace and caring for a peaceful future in the world is, among others, the Declaration on the Preparation of Societies for Life in Peace adopted at the request of Poland by the UN General Assembly on December 15, 1978. Therefore, peace is not the mere absence of war or the result of political negotiations and compromises, but the result of a consistent and long-term educational process. Building lasting peace is the very essence of education, and the task of politics is to maintain peace and prevent hostilities.

UNESCO was born from a simple but strong belief: that lasting peace must be built on more than just political and economic ties between states. Reconciliation and development require stronger foundations, deeply rooted in mutual understanding, respect for the equal dignity of all people, and the intellectual and moral solidarity of humanity.

*(UNESCO, 2023)*

When analysing the idea of education for peace, the opinion of Bogusław Śliwerski deserves special attention. In the text “Pedagogy of peace in conditions of permanent anxiety”, he questions the effectiveness of such education. He claims that

the approach to upbringing as a specific or separate peaceful, conflict-free activity is associated with the hope, illusion or dream that it is possible to obtain certainty that it will achieve a relatively lasting character of the pupils, changes in their personality (attitudes, habits, beliefs). etc.) in accordance with the educational ideal (model, goal) imposed on them. [...] However, if the decision to go to war is decided not by educators but by politicians, even the best and most effective education must be broken when a young person is faced with a choice: joining the war operations of their own country, formation or deserting. Therefore, the peaceful attitudes and durability of citizens’ peaceful attitudes are determined not by upbringing, but by politics and politicians who can waste the efforts of educators at any time [...] Therefore, I do not believe in peace education created in this way in the course of education, because it becomes only a record of pious wishes and dreamy sighs, with full respect for the noble, humanistic messages it contains.

*(Śliwerski, 2016, pp. 20–21)*

In the opinion of the quoted author, the school should enable students (pupils) to find their own identity in their autonomous relationship with a world full of wars and war threats.

### **Education for peace**

A peaceful and safe childhood allows children to look to the future with hope and confidence. It is difficult to expect children to be able to build a better, safer world in the future if adults today do not make a concrete effort to provide them with a proper education for peace. John Paul II argued that children should learn peace because it is their right that should not be ignored. He pointed out that it is in the family that a child first learns peace by growing up in an appropriate atmosphere. Building peaceful order in the universal

dimension begins in the family and at school by preparing children to live in peace. The Pope emphasised the importance of all initiatives undertaken by public and private institutions to restore normal lives for children affected by wars and conflicts.

What deserves attention are specific educational programs that aim to fully use all individual abilities, so as to turn children and young people into true builders of peace. [...] Children, if they receive appropriate help and experience love, can become creators of peace themselves, builders of brotherhood and solidarity in the world. Their enthusiasm and sincere commitment allow them to be witnesses and teachers of hope and peace, to the benefit of adults. In order not to squander this potential, children must be provided with – all conditions conducive to harmonious and comprehensive development, with due respect for their personality.

*(John Paul II, 1999, pp. 16–17)*

Children learn about life very quickly, and through observing and imitating adults, they adopt certain patterns of behavior. They easily learn attitudes of love and respect for other people, but they also quickly absorb behaviours filled with violence and hatred. What they experience in their childhood in their immediate educational environment (family, school, peer group, and media) is transferred to their adult lives. Therefore, children should first experience the mutual love of their parents within the family. By showing love, respect, and authentic dialogue, parents allow the child to grow up in an atmosphere of peace from early childhood. Joint development of values such as respect for other people, acceptance, selflessness, the ability to share goods, and forgiveness enables true education for peace. In this way, the child participates in the peace-building process from the very beginning of their existence. Similarly, the school environment should support the family in carrying out this task. School, through formal education, should provide children and young people with appropriate knowledge that will allow them to gradually learn about the nature and requirements of peace in the context of their world and culture. According to John Paul II, the young generation should be taught the history of peace, not only the history of victorious or lost wars.

Let us therefore give them models of peace, not violence! Fortunately, such positive examples can be found in every culture and in every period of history. Appropriate educational situations should be provided, creatively searching for new ways of influence, especially in places where cultural and moral poverty is most severe. Everything should serve to make children become preachers of peace.

*(John Paul II, 1999, pp. 17–18)*

When talking about upbringing for peace, it is worth mentioning the concept of peaceful child development. We will use the concept of Katarzyna Olbrycht, which explains the idea of “a situation of peaceful development of a child”. The author, adopting the perspective of Christian personalism and referring to the “Universal Declaration of Human Rights” adopted by the international community, largely inspired by the work of Jacques Maritain, presents the development of a human being as a person. Therefore, those changes that contribute to strengthening the sense of one’s own dignity, freedom, and rationality, responsibility for recognised human values, changes that deepen the ability to love, understood as a voluntary gift of oneself to another person, as well as creative and active participation in the community, become developmental.

Situations supporting a child’s development will be consistently understood as situations (a system of stimulus and task conditions) supporting his or her personal development. However, the distinction »peaceful« requires explanation. It should be understood as conditions for development in peace and towards peace.

*(Olbrycht, 1999, pp. 70–71)*

Peace education, as defined by UNESCO, is primarily an activity aimed at promoting a culture of peace. Peace is a value that should be passed on to children and young people by shaping attitudes and behaviours supporting peace and teaching them how to resolve conflicts through dialogue and understanding without resorting to violence. The idea of education for peace entails the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes, as well as values necessary to induce changes in behaviour that will give the young generation and adults the opportunity to prevent conflicts and violence. Therefore, the goal is to resolve conflicts peacefully and create favourable conditions for peace on both the interpersonal and international levels (Leek, 2014).

Albert Bandura and Richard Walters believe that aggression is a learned way of behaving, coping with life, and overcoming life’s obstacles that make it difficult or impossible to achieve a goal. Therefore, if we react aggressively, it means that such ways of acting have become effective in our memory and such patterns of behaviour have been assimilated by us in the socialisation process that our social environment offers us. This further means that if aggressive behaviour can be learned, it is also possible to unlearn it and realise why the path of violence and evil is not a constructive solution for humans but is destructive and leads nowhere (Uniewska, 2003; Bandura & Walters, 1968; Babicki, 2017).

Aggression and violence against children may also occur in conditions of prosperity. It is experienced by unloved, rejected children living in conflicting



environments – family and school. Moreover, violence is widely present in the mass media, especially on the Internet.

Images of killing and rape accompany the young viewer from the very beginning. They attract attention, entertain and make people laugh. They blur the difference between fiction and reality. They show violence free from pain and suffering, they promote models of strong people who implement plans without scruples, often dispensing justice with a gun. Heroes of children's computer games have a second or third life to spare. In this world, the difference between good and evil, between law and lawlessness, between life and death is blurred.

*(Smolińska-Theiss, 1999b, p. 83)*

Violence insidiously penetrates the hearts and minds of children. Meanwhile, education for peace should be achieved through education in peace and dialogue.

### **Promoting dialogue with the hope of peace**

The aim of education for peace is to awaken the child's spirituality with the help of dialogue and the educator's authenticity. So, why is it so difficult to shape peaceful attitudes in the upbringing process? Are we currently dealing with an education crisis? Janusz Tarnowski claimed that today we are dealing not so much with a crisis of upbringing but with the collapse of the authority of educational and upbringing institutions and a crisis of relationships. This is not a call to reject education, to withdraw from any influence on the young generation or on adults or educators. So how, passing through the "gate" of the above way of understanding the educational process, can we implement its humanistic message? J. Tarnowski's answer to this problem is that you can go on a journey along the path of personal experiences, the essence of which is the process of Christian personal education in dialogue (Śliwerski, 2005).

Pope Francis speaks in a similar spirit. Without making an exhaustive analysis or taking into account all aspects of the problem, it presents its own vision of education for peace based on the idea of social friendship and brotherhood. Social friendship and fraternity, in the understanding of Francis, mean the need to get closer to each other, express one's opinion, listen to each other, look for points of contact, and all this fits into the expression "conduct dialogue". The Pope calls for authentic meetings and honest conversations to help each other. It reminds us that persistent and courageous dialogue is not news, unlike misunderstandings and conflicts. Authentic dialogue subtly helps the world live better, much more than we could ever imagine. He also emphasises that dialogue is too often confused with

a hectic exchange of opinions on social media, often shaped by media information that is not always reliable. These are just monologues that proceed in parallel, sometimes imposing themselves on the attention of others due to their raised or aggressive tone. However, monologues do not engage anyone, and as a result, their content is often opportunistic and contradictory.

*(Francis, 2020, pp. 139–140)*

Bogusław Śliwerski claims that conducting dialogue

requires healthy, natural interpersonal relationships between people. If someone in this relationship does not accept themselves, does not like themselves, then by focusing on their own flaws, weaknesses or complexes, they do not behave authentically because they do not want to be hurt by the interlocutor. The inability to dialogue results from a lack of self-esteem, and thus also from a lack of courage to be disliked, not to be afraid that one may be disliked for some reason. If we enter into a relationship with another person in order to meet their expectations, we put ourselves in a state of slavery because we are afraid that we may not meet them and that we will experience some unpleasantness because of this.

*(Śliwerski, 2019, p. 21)*

The Church understands dialogue as a way of communicating between people who strive for mutual understanding, rapprochement, and cooperation. Henryk Skorowski argues that

reliable dialogue grows from a certain assumption, which must be accepted – clearly or tacitly – by the people in the dialogue, that they are unable to know the truth about themselves and the truth they strive for if they remain in the world of their beliefs, i.e. in a world of mutual isolation. You can only learn the truth through direct contact.

*(Skorowski, 2007, p. 13)*

It is worth remembering that dialogue is always about finding the truth, i.e., striving to obtain an image consistent with reality. This is probably the most difficult element of any dialogue because no one has the absolute truth, but we only approach it from our own perspective. In authentic dialogue, reaching the truth is achieved through joint effort, not in isolation or hatred. Moreover, dialogue in its deepest sense cannot be equated with compromise because it would lead to relativism. Compromise is only one element of dialogue. Of course, in the common search for truth, there is room for

compromise, but it is assumed that it has its limits in dialogue. The limit of every compromise in dialogue should be fundamental values.

In dialogue, you can make concessions up to a certain point as long as the partners are in an ambivalent zone, weighing the pros and cons of the issue at hand. At this point, these partners are still in the sphere of community search for truth. However, there comes a moment when for a certain person it is an obvious truth, not subject to any concessions. And this is the limit of dialogue. The real limit of any compromise is always the belief about the truth. At this point, giving up the truth would be a denial of the very essence of dialogue.

*(Skorowski, 2007, p. 15)*

Nevertheless, John Paul II argues:

Yet dialogue for peace is possible, it is always possible. It is not a utopia. Moreover, even when dialogue seemed impossible and when armed confrontations occurred, wasn't it ultimately necessary in each case – after the devastation of war, confirming the strength of the victor but not solving anything in terms of the disputed rights – to return to the search for dialogue? The conviction I express here is not based on this fatalism, but on reality: it takes into account human nature in its deepest understanding. It will be easier for a follower of the Christian faith to share this conviction, even though they also accept the innate weakness and sin that leaves its mark on the human heart from the very beginning.

*(John Paul II, 1983, p. 2)*

According to Pope Francis, the way to achieve peace, fraternity, and social friendship is authentic dialogue, which refers to the logic of self-gift and the attitude of selflessness towards other people. The dialogue here means the need to get closer to each other, listen to other people, get to know each other, look for points of convergence, and skilfully express one's own opinion. Authentic dialogue assumes the ability to respect the other person's point of view and is a condition for commitment to the common good. The beginning of building a dialogue, a path in interpersonal communication based on social friendship, is noticing the temptation of indifference towards others, especially the weakest. The Pope indicts modern Western civilisation when he states:

It must be said that we have developed in many aspects, but we are illiterate in accompanying, caring for and supporting the most vulnerable in our developed societies. We have become accustomed to looking away, to passing by, to ignoring situations unless they directly concern us.

*(Francis, 2020, p. 47)*

Social friendship leads to brotherhood, which is one of the fundamental and universal values. Relations between people and nations should be built on such a foundation so that people in difficult situations do not feel excluded and unnecessary but accepted and supported as part of the same human family. Therefore, the Pope proposes that by cultivating feelings of brotherhood towards each other, we should become “promoters of a culture of peace that would favor sustainable development, tolerance, social inclusion, mutual understanding and solidarity” (Francis, 2022, p. 11).

The dialogue the Pope is talking about should be educational in nature. It is important to note that authentic dialogue always takes place in the intersubjective space “in between”. There should be no place for hidden and instrumental appropriation in this space. An intersubjective space, characterised by hidden reasons for one’s own point of view, with its specific intentions and motivations, and therefore opaque to the parties, ceases to be, even if it creates such an appearance, a space of dialogue.

The biggest obstacle to dialogue (also in education) is not the lack of dialogue, because when there is no dialogue we can still strive for it, but the ‘dialogue’ is directed and apparent, making space between something non-transparent and ambiguous. Directed and apparent dialogue consists in styling and staging specific actions in such a way that they appear in the perception of others as dialogue, although these actions do not fulfill any real functions of dialogue.

*(Gara, Jankowska & Zawadzka, 2019, p. 8)*

In light of this statement, an educational dialogue that is real and full-scale can take place when all parties of the intersubjective “in-between” express the will and willingness to distance themselves from each other. The distance to each other thus increases the space in which the dialogue takes place.

Dialogue is the most appropriate way to build peace based on brotherhood, social friendship, and openness to others. Speaking about dialogue, which must be enriched and enlightened by motivations, rational arguments, diverse perspectives, and the contribution of various fields of knowledge and points of view, the Pope does not exclude the belief that it is possible to reach certain basic truths that must be and will always be maintained. “The acceptance that there are certain lasting values, even if they are not always easy to recognize, gives social ethics solidity and stability” (Francis, 2020, p. 147). Pope Francis’ voice on the issue of peace as a fundamental value in human life is clear and strong in its message and argumentation. The Pope argues that peace is an autonomous value and results from respect for the natural order; therefore, it has a universal character. We already encounter such a view in Pope John XXIII in the encyclical

“Pacem in Terris”, which begins with the words, “Peace in the world, which all people of all times have so passionately desired, cannot be built and consolidated except by the faithful maintaining the order established by God” (John XXIII, 1963, p. 1).

Peaceful coexistence takes place wherever God’s order is preserved, which is the foundation for the development of the human being. The principles defining the framework for implementing educational practice for peace are strictly personal in nature and are based on the idea of brotherhood and social friendship. In his reflection on peace, the Pope analyses the existence of humans open to God and at the same time capable of building unity encompassing all people. For the practice of education for peace to bring the intended effects, it should be expanded, more common, and go beyond the school system. It requires covering the education of university students and adult education in various organisational forms.

### Summary

Experiencing life in the category of a task as an activity involving being in an I-Thou relationship requires dialogue. Dialogue of an individual with others, dialogue in a diverse public space created by the idea of the common good and the principle of justice and social friendship. Attempts to impose your own – only right – opinion and way of life on others and to solve problems by force or military means do not bring positive results. Man’s dialogue with other people and with the world is the only way to maintain peace. But this dialogue requires commitment, overcoming indifference, and the willingness to learn and understand other points of view. Such a dialogue should begin in each of us; it should begin with the consent to reflect on our own life and our place in the world. A world dominated by the language of force, violence, hatred, and fighting needs dialogue as an opportunity to choose a different way of being in this world. Dialogue is necessary to seek common ground between people. Dialogue inspires us to think in terms of the common good, to build an open society, and not to destroy and enslave. Dialogue eliminates conflict situations and protects living conditions in peace. Therefore, the task of pedagogy and educational practice is to provide children and adults with the opportunity to experience situations of mitigating conflicts. Education for peace builds a civilisation of peace by supporting solutions that do not harm anyone and teaching the hardships of fruitful understanding and wise compromises. Education for peace, focusing on competencies that are considered basic peace skills, such as communication, conflict resolution, managing personal conflicts, and conducting dialogue, plays an important role in promoting a culture of peace.

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# 2

## INNER PEACE

A Foundation for life and social ecology

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Treating the individual should take the form of a particular observation and consideration. The psycho-physical unity of every living being boils down to endowing them with specific dimensions, indicating their individuality and distinctiveness. Possessing a personal profile imbued with these qualities enables the human being to become the proprietor of the capacity for continuous reassessment of actions towards development, social communication, and adaptation to communal existence. Becoming a subject, not an object, is associated with the potential to transition from the phase of being an individual, through the phase of being a person, to the state of experiencing humanity as an independent and autonomous entity.

Advancing towards humanity entails a process of maturing into a self-valorisation of treating every inhabitant of the globe as an end in themselves, not as a means, thus recognising their utmost value.

We are all unique individuals, and our composition is so varied and intricate that each part plays its own role, every moment, and there is as much difference between us and ourselves as there is between us and others: ‘Magnam rem puta, unum hominem agere’ [‘Esteem it a great thing always to act as one and the same man’, Seneca, Ep., 150].

*(de Montaigne, 2002, p. 227)*

### **The essence of inner peace**

The individual, endowed with sensuality, reason, intuition, and experience, outwardly manifests behaviours that mirror beliefs and perceptions about



themselves. These are egoistic judgements, self-fashioned, stemming from the root of domination and the prevailing urge to demonstrate superiority over other individuals. Emerging from a foundation of primary socialisation and fundamental communal adaptation, human nature essentially seeks to be uplifted and to occupy a distinctive place to attain unique developmental conditions. Subjectivity must be recognised as an attribute of being a free, independent human being, governed by free will, and entitled to freedom of choice (Durbin & Bowlby, 1939). Only the steadfast utilisation of these qualities enables the activation of consciousness and knowledge to progress towards the stage of socialisation and cultural adaptation. Inclinations yield to spirituality, and the individual acknowledges the necessity for respect and kindness in fulfilling their inherent nature.

Becoming a subject involves the deliberate and rational cultivation of an inner psycho-spiritual realm that enables one to transcend limitations, cultivate a sensibility oriented towards individual ownership, and gain an understanding of the superiority of empathetic and pro-social sensations and emotions. To attain the status of independence and complete mastery over nature, it is imperative to view one's own life as a journey towards natural growth, continuously shaping one's imagination at increasingly elevated levels. Striving towards an ideal that may never be fully attained in order to acquire the essential qualities for sustaining a proactive life is a fundamental condition for survival. The essence of existence lies in a creative endeavour, courage infused with the wisdom of perpetual questioning of what is, and the imperative of striving for what ought to exist for the collective welfare and happiness of humanity. Abandoning the path of life guided by these guiding principles signifies a conscious choice to withdraw from active and creative authenticity, thereby resigning oneself to existential anguish. Maintaining a commitment to comprehensive development, guided by wisdom of reason and nobility of spirituality, reveals the world of living beings as a realm of eternal contentment. Regarding this truth, Michel de Montaigne (2002, p. 223) remarks:

If to philosophise be, as 'tis defined, to doubt, much more to write at random and play the fool, as I do, ought to be reputed doubting, for it is for novices and freshmen to inquire and to dispute, and for the chairman to moderate and determine. [...] That the wise man lives as long as he ought, not so long as he can; and that the most obliging present Nature has made us, and which takes from us all colour of complaint of our condition, is to have delivered into our own custody the keys of life; she has only ordered, one door into life, but a hundred thousand ways out. We may be straitened for earth to live upon, but earth sufficient to die upon can never be wanting, as Boiocalus answered the Romans.

*(Tacitus, 2004, XIII. 56)*

Why dost thou complain of this world? it detains thee not; thy own cowardice is the cause, if thou livest in pain. There needs no more to die but to will to die: “Ubique mors est; optime hoc cavit deus. Eripere vitam nemo non homini potest; At nemo mortem; mille ad hanc aditus patent” (“Death is everywhere; God has wisely provided for this. No one cannot take life from a person, but no one can avoid death; a thousand paths lead to it”).

The wisdom of this philosopher and essayist’s message lies in prompting individuals to realise that it is solely up to them to determine the pattern of life they define through their choices. No one can satisfy the needs that give meaning to one’s existence. Surrendering one’s higher needs, worldview, radicalism, and moral duty in favour of other members of the human community constitutes a voluntary abandonment akin to inflicting civil death upon oneself. Thus, objectifying oneself constrains self-creation and closes off the possibility of creatively influencing existing reality. The pertinent action is the attainment of subjective predication, characterised by an individual way of perceiving, discovering, and shaping the world through reason, sensuality, and an expanded realm of spiritual imagination and desire. The subjective dimension of the human individual emerges when they independently relinquish organic impulsiveness and exclusively draw – akin to a parasite on a tree – from the vitality of the social fabric. Through self-awareness and self-knowledge, individuals reject all forms of parasitism, recognising it as an embryonic, incomplete structure of social adaptation. Advancing to higher levels of personal growth necessitates recognising that this is facilitated through efforts to dismantle internal and external barriers and limitations. Such effort entails embracing risk and hardship and liberates the individual from passivity, stagnation, and the shame of experiencing guilt in the event of failure due to their own actions. The holistic development of the individual, indicative of their subjectivity and autonomy, occurs when they possess the awareness of experiencing and comprehending self-knowledge independently of external stimuli.

The passive existential stance of an individual who voluntarily refrains from acquiring attributes of subjectivity is the resignation from one’s own agency, which allows for significant changes in behaviour. Rejecting self-awareness and not seeking out new learning experiences deprives the person of the capacity for alternative choices and the shaping of adaptable traits. This leads to a blockage in personality development due to the loss of opportunities for the individual to acquire additional competencies and skills. It creates stagnation in the pursuit of reprofiling goals and tasks, transitioning from material and consumptive to spiritual and comprehensively developing the psycho-social sphere of the human being.

The most painful and grievous form of loss of subjectivity is the self-mutilation of the human being through the deliberate numbing of one’s own consciousness in exchange for complete submission to the existing environment in return for offered benefits. Affirming low motives and dystopian

motivations, often related to material goods and profits from public power, enslaves the individual and turns them into an instrument and object of reinforcement based on force and violence imposed by the normative order. A conformist stance at the expense of transactional advantages and speculative exchange with others testifies to the ongoing process of depersonalisation. In these circumstances, the psycho-physical nature of the human being undergoes destruction and becomes a powerless mass for unrestricted external manipulation.

The key to maintaining inner peace within the realm of psycho-physical unity lies in achieving a state of thorough self-evaluation and making unadulterated choices in actions. Internal equilibrium, essential for forming reasoned judgements supported by both reason and spirituality, stems from internalising the need for self-possibility. This fosters coherence between thought, speech, and behaviour. Through this authenticity with one's intrinsic nature, individuals adopt a specific framework for self-assessment and make judicious choices in harmony with emotional freedom. Compromised integrity in self-evaluation leads to behaviour and attitudes that merely mask one's true self, resembling the performance of societal roles dictated by external pressures. While elevated self-esteem may manifest socially acceptable behaviours and even altruistic or heroic inclinations, these are often transient, serving external needs rather than addressing internal fulfilment. Conversely, excessively low self-esteem leads to choices characterised by borderline behaviours, often marked by disintegration and pathology. True scaffolding for inner peace and the development of a coherent self-image emerges from understanding the necessity of aligning expectations, perceptions, and their realisation in one's life. Each person embodies a unique configuration of predicates and antecedents shaping their personality profile. Adequate self-esteem, commensurate with an individual's intellectual and spiritual potential, serves as a cornerstone for psycho-physical balance and fosters creative and pro-social development. This aspect of human subjectivity finds resonance in the words of Montaigne:

Hegesias said, that as the condition of life did, so the condition of death ought to depend upon our own choice. [...] And it is a vanity of the same stamp to desire to be something else than what we are; the effect of such a desire does not at all touch us, forasmuch as it is contradicted and hindered in itself. He that desires of a man to be made an angel, does nothing for himself; he would be never the better for it; for, being no more, who shall rejoice or be sensible of this benefit for him. »Debet enim, misere cui forti, aegreque futurum est, Ipse quoque esse in eo turn tempore, cum male possit Accidere« [For he to whom misery and pain are to be in the future, must himself then exist, when these ills befall him].

*(de Montaigne, 2002, pp. 234–235)*

The development of subjectivity, in its constitutive sense, occurs through the fervour of individuals striving to attain the wisdom derived from science and the guidance of reason in practical application. This wisdom entails a perpetual pursuit of truth and a commitment to scaling “the heights of thought, thereby becoming aristocrats of ideas” (Tatarkiewicz, 1971, p. 102). Through knowledge acquisition, individuals gain the capacity to unravel the mysteries of the natural world, thereby attaining self-awareness, competence, and skills and broadening their thinking to embrace alternativity and aplasticity. To be guided by reason and to withstand all forms of adversity is to demonstrate personal subjectivity in practice, as one rejects mediocrity and gravitates towards the extraordinary. The gratification of viewing life from a lofty perspective lies in the discovery of ideals rather than the accumulation of utilitarian knowledge. This mode of thinking stands in stark contrast to conformism, which thrives on palliatives and substitutes for values, often prioritising economic and financial pursuits. Prioritising material success and aligning one’s life with an efficient matrix of benefits entails forsaking one’s axiological self and authenticity.

The establishment of human subjectivity is an ongoing journey, wherein science plays a pivotal role in shaping a civic and professional ethos grounded in ethical principles and fulfilling cognitive and emotional experiences. The application of knowledge in daily life involves navigating the repository of wisdom by independently and creatively identifying ideas and values, nurturing them, and putting them into practice. Through this process, individuals attain axiological self-awareness, enabling them to recognise their own emotions in relation to the values they hold. By integrating knowledge with subjective experiences, individuals can develop a form of rationality that transcends personal empathic states through an integrative function. Axiological self-awareness thus emerges from the depths of consciousness, often referred to as wisdom by philosophers like Socrates. It encompasses cognitive, socio-moral, and motivational dimensions, shedding light on the true intentions behind human actions and their objectives.

To forsake reason and self-awareness is to consign oneself to mediocrity and social Darwinism, thereby dismissing the enigmatic nature of humanity, its idiosyncrasies, and uniqueness, while marginalising and diminishing the significance of science in defining truth, goodness, and beauty. This pessimistic choice justifies a reliance on thinking fuelled by myths, stereotypes, or fideistic principles, thereby rejecting a priori rationality and idealised inferences and values based on logical values. At the heart of this is the pursuit of truth, which is guided by the individual’s reason and courage, as well as their emotions and sentiments articulated through ideas, desires, and internal assent. These elements allow for the assimilation of knowledge with dignity and discernment, revealing the individual as the paramount value in fostering and unleashing creativity. Creative individuality transcends the confines of

instrumental and axiological rationalism by formulating its own fundamental judgements, rather than merely reproducing prevailing opinions, thus constituting its creative intellect (Czeżowski, 1965).

In the post-cultural era, individuals lack fixed reference points to guide their choices and provide a clear life perspective. All values have been levelled, eliminating distinctions between higher and lower values and eroding any axiological hierarchy. Everything appears fluid and ephemeral, leading to the conclusion that essential elements are non-existent. People wander through a world of commodities and virtual realms, seeking items and ideas that fulfil their immediate consumer desires.

A person's pursuit of truth lacks its full potency if reason does not engage the emotional sphere, particularly desire, to collaborate in this endeavour. The fusion of these two faculties ensures the achievement of noble deeds, rendering the individual perceptive, illustrious, and dignified. Relying solely on reason's discernment allows one to remain tethered to earthly, unenlightened realms. The individual's steadfastness in aligning reasoning with the impulses of desire transforms into a life of grandeur, as it is rooted in curiosity, humility, and fidelity to one's nature. Conversely, a reflexive inclination towards self-aggrandisement in one's thought process leads to blindness and pride, engendering conceit and false pride in one's actions. The issue of personal subjectivity can be related to a creative life's ascent towards truth, intertwining reason and spirituality, and highlighting the importance of humility over pride. In literary terms, this dilemma was articulated by de Montaigne:

I am of opinion that a man must be very cautious how he values himself, and equally conscientious to give a true report, be it better or worse, impartially. If I thought myself perfectly good and wise, I would rattle it out to some purpose. To speak less of one's self than what one really is folly, not modesty; and to take that for current pay which is under a man's value is pusillanimity and cowardice, according to, Aristotle. No virtue assists itself with falsehood; truth is never matter of error. To speak more of one's self than is really true is not always mere presumption; 'tis, moreover, very often folly; to be immeasurably pleased with what one is, and to fall into an indiscreet self-love, is in my opinion the substance of this vice. The most sovereign remedy to cure it, is to do quite contrary to what these people direct who, in forbidding men to speak of themselves, consequently, at the same time, interdict thinking of themselves too. Pride dwells in the thought; the tongue can have but a very little share in it. [...] Because Socrates had alone digested to purpose the precept of his god, »to know himself«, and by that study arrived at the perfection of setting himself at nought, he only was reputed worthy the title of a sage.

*(de Montaigne, 2002, pp. 249–250)*

The aspect of human subjectivity holds significant importance in the organisation of public law spaces with institutional features for community life. These spaces should be founded upon individual, social, and cultural values, promoting empathetic and pro-social conduct in interpersonal relationships. There should exist a symbiotic relationship of mutual influence and additive connectivity between these values, norms, and the structural model. The foundational elements that serve as the source link for establishing the macro-structural order are the lofty values themselves. These values must emanate from the same substrate, which is the universal acknowledgement of the primacy of life as the highest value. Life is deemed inviolable and transcends any limitation or rationing from other axiological-social categories. Upholding the centuries-old paradigm, the assertion that the value of life is an end in itself and should never be relegated to a means to an end remains pertinent in the modern era. Community individualism entails crafting normative solutions that inherently align with the ideal of justice. This attribute is preserved when the legal system's content is designed in harmony with human nature, safeguarding inherent and inviolable freedoms, including freedom and inner peace. Any regulation defining public authority upholds the attribute of subjective-collective justice when it is formulated with the involvement of individual free will, maintaining the validity and legitimacy of his value judgements. Thus, the institutional order becomes a framework that fully corresponds to the rational-spiritual rationality of individuals and exhibits high efficiency due to its fidelity to their internal attributions. By aligning with humans' natural inclinations, sensations, and volitional-intellectual feelings, life gains significance through the acknowledgement of these essential personality predictors in public space. Conversely, the institutional system retains its universality, solemnity, and continuity of past practices, reflecting the consciousness state of its participants.

De Montaigne underscores the subjective distinctiveness stemming from the weight of nature and the resultant circumstances:

Since it has pleased God to endue us with some capacity of reason, to the end we may not, like brutes, be servilely subject and enslaved to the laws common to both, but that we should by judgment and a voluntary liberty apply ourselves to them, we ought, indeed, something to yield to the simple authority of nature, but not suffer ourselves to be tyrannically hurried away and transported by her; reason alone should have the conduct of our inclinations. I, for my part, have a strange disgust for those propensities that are started in us without the mediation and direction of the judgment [...].

*(de Montaigne, 2002, pp. 253–254)*

### Stages of maturation and building inner peace

The transition of an individual into a social being occurs within the family unit. The family plays a crucial role in introducing the child to both individual and collective norms and values, as well as cultural practices. It is believed that infants possess a biological predisposition to develop into social beings, a phenomenon referred to as socialisation by Schaffer (1971). Individuals are not inherently members of society; rather, they possess a distinct social instinct, which, through interaction, integrates them into the community (Berger & Luckmann, 1991). The process of family socialisation provides crucial opportunities for individuals to develop into social beings, opportunities they cannot achieve in isolation.

During early childhood and the initial stages of socialisation, the functions of the child's ego and superego, along with their internal control mechanisms, start to take shape. It becomes the responsibility of parents to nurture the child's inherent developmental capacities, which are intrinsic to the human species, and to cultivate their ability to establish and maintain relationships with others. Consequently, the formative years of socialisation serve as the foundation for the development of human subjectivity, viewed within the context of the individual's life cycle.

Educational theorists, particularly those rooted in the psycho-dynamic orientation, have conducted thorough studies on the development of children during their early years. One concept they have elucidated is the "separation process of subjective individualization", observed during the initial three years of life. This process delineates how newborns, initially immersed in their inner world during the autistic phase, progressively form their ego, initially directing it towards their parents and subsequently towards other individuals in their external environment (Cullberg, 1994).

Social psychologists often discuss the concept of "significant subjects" or the crucial "dependency of persons". As a child progresses in development, their personal relationships expand continuously. Family interactions play a pivotal role in shaping the individual's subjectivity during specific periods and phases of life. This influence is manifested through practices such as discipline, positive parenting, monitoring the child's behaviour beyond the household, and addressing issues and conflicts (Loeber & Stauthamer, 1996).

The process of family socialisation serves as an ethical guidepost, charting a path towards acquiring autonomous subjectivity. Within the family environment, emphasis should be placed on fostering interpersonal communication skills and developing the capacity for meaningful connections. As individuals progress through various developmental stages, personal reflexivity plays a crucial role in forming bonds that are rich in value and depth, ultimately culminating in what can be described as a timeless cultural bond.

Through the innate strength derived from the intellectual and spiritual realm, individuals possess the capacity to navigate social settings without resorting to self-aggrandisement or dominance over others. However, the holistic development of individuals, commencing within the family unit, also underscores the potential pitfalls of self-reflexivity. It highlights the ease with which individuals can devolve into unjust and cruel behaviour when they indulge in an unfounded sense of power and superiority over others. Such pursuits of self-perfection in unjust ways can engender cruelty, leading individuals to make inhumane choices driven by destructive instincts.

In the eloquent words of the essayist, de Montaigne, the issue is vividly portrayed:

A true and consistent affection towards children should grow and mature alongside our understanding of them. If they prove themselves deserving, the natural inclination, guided by reason, should lead us to cherish them with genuine paternal love. Conversely, if they demonstrate otherwise, we should still adhere to reason, despite the pull of our natural inclinations. [...] Personally, I consider it both cruel and unjust not to involve them in the sharing and management of our possessions, and not to engage them in the discussions of our household matters when they are capable. Moreover, it is unfair not to reduce our own expenses to accommodate theirs, considering that we bring them into this world for precisely that purpose.

*(de Montaigne, 2002, pp. 253–254)*

When exploring the process of socialisation, it becomes necessary to examine various facets of adult behaviour observed in interactions between parents and their children. Moreover, understanding adolescents' preferred attitudes towards their caregivers constitutes a vital area of research. The configuration of mutual communication, interpersonal bonding, and the nature of exchanges within the framework of intergenerational transreactivity in the familial environment elucidates the essence of nurturing and preparing young individuals for life in society. At this juncture, it is pertinent to reference the theory of parental attitudes as formulated by Eleanor Maccoby and John Martin, which they developed based on parental demands and responsiveness (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Parental demands denote attitudes towards child control, varying from high to low, while parental responsiveness reflects attitudes of acceptance or rejection, resulting in four principal types of parental behaviour: authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and dismissive attitudes.

The authoritative approach, identified as the most effective (Baumrind, 1971), entails age-appropriate demands on children coupled with mature behaviour, independent viewpoints, and continuous communication. A parent



adopting an authoritative attitude acknowledges the subjective individuality of the child and their capacity to navigate diverse situations. Disagreements between parent and child do not escalate into conflict but are resolved constructively, often through the use of intuition and intelligent discourse by the adult.

The authoritarian parenting style is characterised by a lack of sensitivity to the child's abilities, desires, and needs. Parents exhibiting this style tend to issue categorical demands and orders in a domineering manner, without reciprocating the child's input, thereby hindering the development of self-confidence and proper motivation. In its extreme forms, this approach can be associated with both physical and psychological abuse of the child. There are reciprocal counterparts in both the authoritative and authoritarian styles, leading to speculation that the authoritarian style represents the clinical extreme of inappropriate parental behaviour. The authoritative approach is regarded as ideal because it emphasises the child's social competence and skills (La Rose & Wolfe, 1994).

The authoritarian, permissive, and dismissive attitudes, when taken to their extremes, aim to inhibit the child's social competence, potentially leading to self-expression through deviant behaviour and externalised choices. In contrast, an authoritative caregiving approach fosters empathic and pro-social behaviour patterns in adolescents. Proximity to adult parents, seen as a natural necessity for children, should trigger internal self-control mechanisms governed by reason and passion. Relying solely on adults for support based on egoistic needs can result in shallow relationships and personal bonds, reducing them to mere instruments for seeking satisfaction. The acquisition of a subjective outlook on life occurs when children learn from their parents' behaviours that prioritise individual growth while respecting their own dignity. This state is achieved through active and ongoing efforts to cultivate emotional freedom and the right to inner peace in the intellectual-spiritual realm, guided by reason and high values such as friendship, love, and kindness. Independence, viewed as an autonomous attribute, becomes a hallmark of subjectivity when individuals voluntarily reject all forms of violence and external coercion in shaping their behaviour and attitudes. True individualism, aligned with one's nature, integrates into collective life when individuals recognise not only their rights but also their moral duties towards others. Conditioning-free behavioural choices to fulfil duties within human collectives for the common good can occur when individuals acknowledge reason and higher feelings as their underlying basis. The importance of subjective upbringing in families, emphasising the assimilation of values such as love, friendship, and prudence, is underscored by de Montaigne. He advocates for the cultivation of a correct and creative personal identity, stating:

A father is very miserable who has no other hold on his children's affection than the need they have of his assistance, if that can be called affection;

he must render himself worthy to be respected by his virtue and wisdom, and beloved by his kindness and the sweetness of his manners; even the very ashes of a rich matter have their value; and we are wont to have the bones and relics of worthy men in regard and reverence. No old age can be so decrepid in a man who has passed his life in honour, but it must be venerable, especially to his children, whose soul he must have trained up to their duty by reason, not by necessity and the need they have of him, nor by harshness and compulsion [...] »He wanders far from the truth, in my opinion, who thinks that government more absolute and durable which is acquired by force than that which is attached to friendship« [Terence & Adolph., i. I, 40]. I condemn all violence in the education of a tender soul that is designed for honour and liberty. There is I know not what of servile in rigour and constraint; and I am of opinion that what is not to be done by reason, prudence, and address, is never to be affected by force.

*(de Montaigne, 2002, pp. 254–255)*

Interdisciplinary cognitive science research has enabled the identification of primary paradigms concerning family dynamics that play a detrimental role in shaping an individual's personality, leading to the erosion of their subjectivity. These paradigms encompass disregard, conflict, deviant behaviour, and destructive attitudes (Loeber & Stouthamer, 1996). Disregard manifests when parents fail to allocate adequate time to their children and remain unaware of any challenges they may encounter outside the home. Caregivers exhibit indifference, showing little interest in guiding their children's evaluative relativism, a crucial mechanism influencing their volitional-spiritual development throughout the life cycle. The conflict paradigm emerges from intense mutual opposition within family interactions. Parents and children often engage in escalating conflicts during family communication, typically resolved through compulsive-aggressive relationships. This pattern of pathogenic behaviour in resolving interpersonal conflicts within the family environment can significantly influence individuals' responses to stressful situations in subsequent phases of human development.

Parents may engage in various forms of deviant behaviour, possess a criminal history, or exhibit pathological tendencies, which can influence the child in similar directions. A young person can absorb patterns of immaturity and inattention from their parents simply by observing them consistently at home. Even if caregivers do not overtly display externalising or socially negative actions, their very attitudes towards these problems can exert an influence to ignore, disregard, or even approve of such attitudes in the child.

When a family is subjected to detrimental external factors, such as unemployment, divorce, bereavement, or prolonged illness, conflicts may arise due to inappropriate interpersonal interactions. External stressors have the potential to disrupt the harmony within family dynamics and decrease

the threshold for irritability, consequently increasing the likelihood of aggressive behaviour among family members. The family elements outlined above, represented by the four paradigms, can occur independently or interact in various interrelationships.

Robert Loeber and Marcel Stauthamer have contended that comprehensive analyses of socialisation factors have underscored parental supervision and the absence of nurturing interactions in emotionally troubled relationships as the primary contributors to negative behavioural outcomes in adolescents. These outcomes may include withdrawal, disrupted peer relationships, depression, and deviant behaviour (Loeber & Stauthamer, 1996).

As children transition into adolescence, parents' attitudes towards them evolve accordingly. During this phase, when adolescents are still developing self-control and self-awareness, much of their learning occurs through operant conditioning, with formal education and modelling becoming increasingly significant once they acquire verbal communication skills. As a result, caregivers often phase out coercive measures in favour of more democratic forms of family interaction, recognising the need to respect the subjectivity of minors. This shift towards a more democratic approach entails granting adolescents equal personal status within the family and involving them in important family decisions on an equal footing with adults. Empowering young people with democratic competencies fosters a sense of responsibility, a fundamental aspect of their identity. When adolescents are afforded the symbolic recognition of entering the family community as equals and assuming co-responsibility for its affairs, they are treated as subjects rather than mere objects or instruments. This experience cultivates a sense of respect and dignity, providing an environment conducive to comprehensive personality development in line with their natural inclinations. Research by James Garbarino (1992) indicates that parental control diminishes its formative effect on children's development between the ages of 10 and 14. Therefore, the opportunity for adolescents to participate in democratic decision-making should be considered a universal paradigm for effective socialisation. This approach not only nurtures their self-awareness and self-assertion but also fosters a departure from passivity, social apathy, and structural objectivity. By replacing external control with internal control, facilitated by familial bonds characterised by proximity, acceptance, and respect, individuals can develop a sense of self-worth essential for empowerment within both individual and collective spheres.

John Snyder and Gerald Patterson (Patterson, 2002) proposed a two-phase model to explain children's antisocial behaviour within the context of family socialisation. In the first phase, characterised by neglect within the family dynamic during early socialisation stages, the child experiences inadequate adaptation, leading to a lack of parental discipline and subsequent disobedience. This results in the rejection and spatial isolation of the

individual from their immediate environment, including interactions within the microsystem, mesosystem, and social exosystem. This marginalisation from family, peer groups, and the local community fosters the development of antisocial behaviours as the individual adopts a negative attitude towards their community environment. The processes of marginalisation and personal exclusion contribute to feelings of isolation, fostering the formation of malicious intentions, hostile attitudes towards life, and a tendency to attribute blame for one's life circumstances to others and external factors. This can lead to dichotomous thinking, influencing the individual's subjective distinction between good and evil (Radochoński, 2009).

### **The role of inner peace in social ecology**

Traditional studies on socialisation typically examine the child's family environment through the lens of socio-economic status within the primary community group, often relying on structural variables. However, in recent years, researchers have increasingly turned their focus to the influence of the immediate local neighbourhood on children, highlighting its significance as a socialising environment. Some researchers have delved into describing the child's physical surroundings and their utilisation of the local area, while others, adopting a developmental and ecological approach, view the neighbourhood as a resource for parents in their parenting role. Although the ecological-social perspective is now widely acknowledged in cognitive science research, the intricate relationship between family socialisation, neighbourhood dynamics, local community influences, and the manifestation of internalising or externalising risk behaviours remains poorly understood (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Baładynowicz, 2019; Sawicki, 2018).

The overwhelming amount of research on child development is ecologically flawed because it frequently occurs in artificial, systematically controlled environments. A methodologically sound approach to studying the socialisation of juveniles involves observing them, along with all family members, in their natural environment where they actually function (McCord, 1983). Bronfenbrenner's ecological environment model allows for the study of the conditions in which a young person grows up at different levels, facilitating an additive and eclectic hermeneutic approach. By conducting a complementary meta-analysis of the phenomenon, considering the equilibrium of axionormativity and the validity of intervening dimensions with meaningful properties, a holistic view can be achieved, enabling the formulation of probabilistic claims with truthful characteristics (Baładynowicz, 2019).

Microsystems encompass individual environments or contexts in which the child and their immediate surroundings participate. Examples of such systems include the family, preschool group, classroom, sports team, association, or club in which the child may be involved, as well as the

neighbourhood in which they reside. A microsystem comprises people, objects, and events that interact with the individual or are directly influenced by them. Key elements in the analysis of microsystems include the child's connections with other members of the system, their activities, and the social roles they fulfil.

The young person undergoes continuous physiological and psychological growth, resulting in evolving relationships with their immediate environment. As they mature, the scope of interactions with material entities expands, leading to transformations in the individual's microsystem configuration. Consequently, the relationships within this ecological framework will continue to adapt and evolve in response to these changing circumstances.

When an adolescent actively engages within a specific microsystem, they both influence and are influenced by the system. The norms and values governing interactions among members of the system are adopted by the child through a process of internalisation: "the child constructs the microsystem as shaped by it" (Bronfenbrenner, 1986, p. 301).

The microsystem can have inhibitory and detrimental effects on a child's development if there are weaknesses within the microsystem itself or if deficiencies arise within it. A child's microsystem can become pathogenic if it is diminished for several reasons – such as a reduction in the number of people involved, for example, following a divorce, disruptions in the balance of interactions among its members, and interpersonal conflicts that pose risks or actually occur. Moreover, combinations of these three elements may also manifest.

The young person simultaneously participates in numerous microsystems, leading to the development and increasing complexity of their social environments. These individual reference groups collectively form the mesosystem, serving as the connections between the various contexts and microsystems that shape the individual's reality (Gottfredson, 1987). However, it is unlikely that the young person will distinctly delineate between these systems as they undergo a process of assimilation and existential accommodation. The nature of the mesosystem is determined by the relationships between the different social groups in which the individual is involved. A strongly cohesive mesosystem, with a beneficial holistic impact on the individual's psycho-physical and social well-being, serves as a guide for their actions in later stages of life.

While the exosystem exists outside the child's immediate environment, it sustains the structure of the child's daily functioning. The young person's immediate environment is shaped by factors such as the social and economic status of their parents, the conditions encountered in their workplaces, the economic, physical, and social characteristics of their neighbourhood, and much more. The exosystem affects the individual through its interactions with the meso- and microsystems. For instance, parents may restrict their child's interactions with peer groups due to influences

stemming from their own work-related stress, employment challenges, or lack of time for deeper educational engagement. The extent of support available to parents, such as cultural infrastructure within the community, varies based on municipal resources and initiatives. A proactive stance and entrepreneurial approach by local public administration can significantly aid parents in fulfilling their social partnership role for their children. The holistic development of the child, facilitated by positive elements within the exosystem, eases the burden on caregivers in fulfilling their parental responsibilities in alignment with the expectations, aspirations, and ideals of the youth (Hawkins & Lishner, 1987).

The macrosystem represents the overarching framework of society, encompassing a system of ideas, values, legal frameworks, religious doctrines, and cultural norms. It emerges from a universally accepted objective order of norms and values. When viewed through an ecological lens, the macrosystem's primary significance lies in its influence on other morphological systems rather than its self-identity. Culture, as a macrosystem, plays a pivotal role in defining what it means to live a truly human life. It distinguishes humanity from other beings in the visible world. Culture is indispensable to humans, as it allows them to engage in symbolic thinking through language, science, religion, and various forms of creative expression.

An individual truly embodies humanity when shaped by the processes of upbringing and socialisation; they develop their own unique subjectivity, defined by the breadth, dynamism, and depth of two fundamental values: friendship and universal benevolence. The measure of identity lies in the capacity to display emotional responsiveness in interpersonal relationships, a hallmark of mature psycho-spiritual existence. Recognising emotions and feelings within oneself and others enables proactive engagement with reality, fostering a sense of being a fully formed subject. Failure to cultivate layers of friendship and benevolence within oneself leads to adherence to egoism and the adoption of egocentric attitudes, characterised by a pursuit of power and dominance over others. As Montaigne astutely noted, the effects of coercion often breed cowardice or obstinacy rather than genuine transformation: "I have never observed other effects of whipping than to render boys more cowardly, or more wilfully obstinate" (de Montaigne, 2002, p. 255). Besides, without experiencing genuine friendship and exhibiting unwavering benevolence, one cannot achieve congruence between the private and public spheres of life. Such individuals prioritise selfish and power-driven needs over communal well-being, failing to seek creative solutions that harmonise individual and collective needs. Transcending self-perception and experiencing a diverse range of material and spiritual states is inherent to human subjectivity.

The acquisition of subjective rather than objective properties within the surrounding reality is an ongoing process throughout an individual's lifespan. It commences during early childhood and extends through subsequent phases,

culminating in a lifelong cycle. Human psycho-physical and social maturation exhibits an evolutionary trajectory characterised by dynamic change or, conversely, may assume a stagnant form necessitating stasis. The determination of the axis of subjective maturation is entirely within the purview of the individual's will, inner freedom, and life experience guided by intuition. Equally pivotal for shaping one's identity is the initial developmental phase occurring during family socialisation. It is during this period that the inclination to forge strong bonds with relatives and social acquaintances emerges or dissipates. Through family socialisation, young individuals learn interpersonal relationality and may cultivate a need for communication and emotional growth fostered by profound feelings such as friendship. The realisation of friendship during this developmental phase responds to the fulfilment of emotional needs within the individual's psycho-spiritual realm. As individuals mature, the yearning for friendship may intensify, evolving into a sublime spiritual state known as fraternity. This sentiment has the potential to crystallise as an elevated and refined expression of the friendships experienced during youth. Authentic and profound friendships among peers, extended to interpersonal relationships marked by personal bonds in adulthood, give rise to a new emergent psycho-spiritual state – fraternity – the pinnacle of human connectivity. Fraternity embodies a lofty value, the internalisation of which shapes one's cultural bonds, influencing the perception of humanity in universal rather than solely individual or supra-individual terms. The nurturing and socialisation of individuals through friendship endow them with enduring strength and empowerment, fostering comprehensive personal development within the realms of private and public life, enriched by communal participation.

The recognition of friendship's role and significance in individuals' behavioural choices correlates strongly with their autonomy, which is often inadequately defined and shaped by upbringing and educational environments. During childhood, preferences for daily activities, types of play, and subjects that foster interests tend to prioritise self-centred thinking and actions. Autonomy is construed as the acquisition of skills and knowledge geared solely towards individual success, with little consideration, if any, for others or broader social collectives. Actions driven by self-interest contribute to moral indifference in young people, fostering a positive valuation of strength, power, dominance, egocentricity, and selective attention. These tendencies, perpetuated into adolescence, can manifest in adulthood as opportunities to assert superiority over others and exercise privilege, both over fellow human beings and the natural world. Consequently, individuals may adopt a sense of unjustified superiority and domination in social interactions, potentially becoming morally compromised individuals. Inadequately developed personal autonomy during the transition to community life may coincide with a historical education that emphasises national

events, particularly wars, armed uprisings, and military triumphs, as paramount. In environments characterised by prevalent stereotypes, myths, legends, and conservative ideologies, the pursuit of valour, often equated with objectification, becomes prioritised as a means to loftier ends. This version of autonomy, coupled with a disregard for friendship in thought, speech, and action, results in the erosion of human subjectivity as an inherent value, divorced from external interests.

Diminishing the importance of human subjectivity in contemporary discourse often leads to an overemphasis on the decisive role of reason and empirical inference. It is tempting to become overly enamoured with scientific advancements and to rely solely on reason, coupled with objective thought, as the sole path to truth. However, in this pursuit, spirituality and the rich realm of human sensations and feelings are often disregarded. Among these spiritual dimensions, friendship holds a significant place. Unlike material entities, friendship is dynamic and subject to constant change, influenced by the sensitivity, desires, and inner consent of individuals. It is in the realm of emotional reactivity and feelings that individuals can transcend boundaries and reach the pinnacle of their humanity. While mental awareness facilitates the development of knowledge and confirms one's value through object-oriented choices, it often neglects the importance of spiritual values. This includes the significance of friendship as a phenomenon that underpins a creative and independent subjective life.

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# 3

## COLLECTIVE WAR AND INDIVIDUAL PEACE

From classical archaeology to postmodern reality

*Andreas Hillert*

### Introduction

Greco-Roman antiquity, i.e., classical antiquity, is the common cultural root (not only but also) of the western occident. The question arises as to how war and peace were depicted at the time, with which images and with which statements. Furthermore, to what extent were these representations present in the ancient world? What was the relationship between images in which battle and war were thematised and those in which peace was illustrated? These questions are not only of academic-historical interest. Ultimately, in view of the current wars in Europe and the world, it is about whether and to what extent the respective representations had implications for social reality and could potentially have them in the here and now of our postmodern present (Bauman, 1992). Specifically, what images could be used to depict peace today with a conciseness appropriate to the existential theme?

Since Johann Joachim Winkelmann (1717–1768), classical archaeology has primarily seen itself as an art and visual science. Meticulous attempts were made to analyse ancient works of art in terms of iconography, style, technical aspects, and as evidence of individual artistic personalities. Today, this approach is considered historical, not least because an expert approach based on it runs the risk of generating its own scientific world, whose relationship to the reality of the lives of ancient people remains vague (Borbein, 2000). Based on modern, social, and natural science-oriented archaeological perspectives, the deficits of established methods have been intensively discussed in recent decades, whereby it has become clear that answers to the question of how “ancient man” perceived his environment, which images were present to him, and what significance they had for him are at best only

approximate, regardless of the methodology. On the one hand, with regard to the fragmentary transmission of the monuments (a quasi-frozen transmission of antiquity as in Pompeii is the absolute exception). On the other hand, according to postmodern/constructivist scientific theory, the perception of ancient people was characterised by their own complex, historically developing social context and will therefore have differed substantially from our current perspective or perception. These fundamental methodological and scientific-theoretical aspects must be taken into account when discussing ancient pictorial representations of peace and war in antiquity. It should also be noted in advance that ancient and post-antique depictions, especially on the subject of peace, have been the subject of intensive academic research and exhibitions in recent years. The largest project in the German-speaking world in this regard was the 2018 exhibition in Münster to mark the 300th anniversary of the Peace of Westphalia, which ended the Thirty Years' War (Althoff et al., 2019).

### Images of peace in Greek antiquity

Experiencing individual and collective threats, insecurity, suffering, and atrocities in the face of and during wars has been part of the reality of life in antiquity over the centuries. Today, this can probably only be approximated in regions directly threatened by war. Homer and other ancient poets sang about wars on the one hand while also thematising the tragic side effects and consequences, including collective suffering and misery, on the other. It is therefore all the more remarkable that the suffering and misery of war were practically never depicted in antiquity, at least for their own sake or for the sake of their deterrent, peace-inducing effect. If they were, then suffering became a secondary theme, for example, in depictions in which defeated opponents emphasised the heroism of the victor. Or when gods, such as Apollo and Artemis, slaughter the children of Niobe, their dying or already dead bodies remind us of the power of the gods, which mortals should not challenge and to which we remain tragically and fatefully subject.<sup>1</sup> In contrast, peace, however one defines it – which was reflected on in detail elsewhere during the symposium – is more than “no war” and can only be depicted as such indirectly in this specific quality.

Like other virtues and values, peace can also be represented by an allegorical figure. According to Hesiod, who writes about it in the *Theogony* and later in *Pindar* (*Olympian Ode*, v. 6–8), *Eirene* (“peace”) is more than an allegory. She is presented there as the daughter of Zeus and *Themis* (“divine providence”). Her two sisters are *Eunomia* and *Dirke* (“good laws” and “justice”, respectively). However, none of the sisters develops a more extensive mythological reality. Stories of their divine work have not been handed down. There are no indications that there could have been any significant

number of such myths. The earliest pictorial representations of Eirene are late relative to ancient Greek art history, dating from the 4th century BC, i.e., from the late classical period. For example, a red-figure Attic krater, now in Vienna, shows Eirene sitting opposite a satyr.<sup>2</sup> Above all, however, depictions of Eirene can be found on vase paintings from Lower Italy. Here she appears as a youthful goddess dressed in a long chiton who has no specific attributes and can only be identified as such by the inscription of her name. On a now lost pelike, formerly in Paris, the youthful Dionysus and Eirene stand directly opposite each other; on a situla in Geneva, she appears more peripherally, on the right above a scene in which Dionysus presents King Maron with a vine.<sup>3</sup> Similar Dionysian scenes are frequently found on vessels made primarily for the funerary cult in Lower Italy, including in Taranto, during this period. They refer to Dionysian, light-hearted hopes for the afterlife, whereby the young women and men in the entourage of Dionysus and the satyrs accompanying him remain anonymous. Accordingly, they can equally be associated as projections of deceased people but also with divine figures such as Eirene.

Only one statue of Eirene has survived archaeologically (and in literature): the life-size statue created around 375 BC by the Attic sculptor Kephisodotus, father of the even more famous Praxiteles, which was once probably cast in bronze and was prominently displayed in the Agora in Athens (Vierneisel-Schlörb, 1979). The historical background was the Peloponnesian War (431–404 BC), which was ultimately disastrous for the once proud Athens. In view of this, the theme of peace initially became the subject of drama. The statue was probably erected on the occasion of a peace treaty concluded with Sparta after a successful naval war for Athens.<sup>4</sup> Eirene, with a left supporting leg and right free leg, appears as a woman with a youthful face, long hair tied back at the nape of her neck, and falling in curls to her chest. She is wearing girded peplos made of fine fabric lying in numerous parallel folds. Her back is also covered by a cloak/himation. In her right hand, Eirene holds a long sceptre that indicates her divine status. On her left arm, she carries a naked little boy, adorned with richly curled hair, who turns lovingly towards the goddess. She also holds a cornucopia in her left hand. The statue, which Pausanias mentions in Roman times as being located on the Agora in Athens and elsewhere names its creator Kephisodotus, is cited on so-called Panathenaic prize amphorae and later on rather inconspicuous Attic bronze coins. The type has also survived in the form of several marble copies from the Roman imperial period, some of which are very fragmentary. The most famous, most completely preserved version is now in the Glyptothek in Munich. Iconographically and stylistically, the figure is modelled on older sculptures, such as the coronas of the Erechtheion. The message of the depiction, characterised by the subtly captured tender communication between goddess and boy, is obvious: the boy, to which the cornucopia also refers, is the little God Pluto, who stands for prosperity and wealth. Peace is a

prerequisite for this. The Eirene-Pluto group is one of the rarer examples of Roman copies that can most probably be traced back to a specific, now-lost Greek work, thanks to its striking figure, the reference in Pausanias, and the citations on amphorae and coins (Scheibler, 1984). As an exemplary work of art with a timeless message, the group was part of the canon of Greek statues erected at least occasionally in the form of marble copies in both the public and private spheres in Roman times. The peace between Athens and Sparta did not last long. The war eventually ended with the final defeat of Athens, until both states succumbed to Philip of Macedon (338 BC). Depictions that at least implicitly refer to peace can be found on some of the so-called document reliefs. These stelae are inscribed with the treaties or agreements made between two states. Deities symbolising the respective states and linked by a handshake appear above them.<sup>5</sup>

With these few examples, the stock of monuments and the iconographic repertoire of Greek depictions of peace is de facto exhausted. Unless one also interprets the weapon friezes that have been common since Hellenism, which usually shows the weapons of defeated enemies, in this sense. In the original, the conquered weapons were often consecrated in shrines. Peace is celebrated as the result of a victorious war on monuments of this kind, which also include the so-called *tropaia*, weapons of defeated enemies hung on a pole (Rabe, 2008). In Roman times, depictions of this kind found countless successors.

### Iconography of peace in Roman times

In the Roman Republic, foreign policy victories, accompanied by considerable territorial expansion, led to exponentially increasing prosperity. At least for the leading social groups. Formerly peasant classes became impoverished. The situation escalated into civil wars. Foreign policy victories were depicted in the form of captured ships' beaks and weapons, including in the form of *Tropeia*.

The later Emperor Augustus, after military victories against competing Roman parties and through agreements with former war opponents, especially the Parthians, opened a golden age programmatically. In addition to a political settlement, which included a rather symbolic handover of rule back to the Senate, this included restoration of ancient cults, numerous building projects, especially in Rome, and general welfare, not least the aspect of peace. The most prominent monument in this regard is the "Ara Pacis" (Settis, 1988), which has been reconstructed at a neighbouring site and was once positioned on the Field of Mars, the traditional troop deployment area. This altar was dedicated to Augustus by the Roman Senate in honour of his victorious return from Spain in 9 BC. Peace as such is not represented here by symbols or a personification of the *Pax*. Rather, peace is the leitmotif running

through the complex pictorial programme. The outer enclosure of the inner reclining altar features depictions of central figures from Roman history on the front sides, including Aeneas and Roma. Another relief, the so-called Tellus relief, shows a youthful seated figure, iconographically reminiscent of Venus/Aphrodite (the Roman progenitor), but also of an earth and fertility goddess, framed on the sides by personifications of favourable winds in a lush, fruit-bearing landscape in every respect, including livestock and plants. Here, peace is synonymous with fertility, wealth, and happiness. To secure all this, the help of the gods is indispensable. The sacrificial processions on the lateral relief friezes, in which Augustus himself takes part as a priest and prominent members of the imperial family, are dedicated to the gods. In the form of these reliefs, the annual sacrifice is permanently visualised. There are no references to the military occasion for the erection of the altar in the depictions. Rather, peace is visualised as a gift from the gods to be made merciful through sacrifice, combined with the hope of eternal validity. This, in turn, is to be guaranteed through the regular performance of the ritual acts. The complexity of the pictorial programme of the Ara Pacis thus goes far beyond one-dimensional, communicative cyphers.

Emperor Vespasian erected a temple dedicated to peace (*Templum Paci*) on the occasion of the victory over the Jews and the destruction of the temple (this was depicted on the reliefs of the Arch of Titus on the Roman Forum) (Taraporewalla, 2010). More striking are the depictions of the Temple of Janus, the double-headed god of destiny who looks into both the past and the future (omnipresent on the AS, the standard bronze currency of the Roman Republic). The doors of this temple were opened in times of war and closed when peace returned. In the course of the Roman Republic, these doors were only closed twice. Augustus was able to close them for the third time, and Emperor Nero boasted on coins, among other things, that he had closed these doors<sup>6</sup>. However, the message of this picture is only clear to viewers who have the relevant background knowledge. This could not be taken for granted in view of the ever-growing Roman population, as Emperor Caracalla granted Roman citizenship to all free inhabitants of the empire in the *Constitutio Antoniniana*. This is probably one of the reasons why peace was henceforth depicted on the reverse of coins, the means of communication that spread political messages far and wide, mostly by the personification or the goddess of peace “Pax”, who, in turn, carries a branch, wreath, cornucopia, and/or the caduceus. In most cases, she is clearly identified by a name inscription. In terms of content, peace is and remains a favour that the Romans generously grant to defeated opponents (and which the latter usually have to honour with tribute payments, etc.). The figure of Pax emerged during the period of civil wars in the late Republic, and from Augustus to the Middle Imperial period it was associated with the reigning emperor on coins: the emperor and the military strength of the empire were thus emphasised as

guarantors of peace. This explains why *pax* is hardly found on the autonomous coinage in the eastern part of the Roman Empire, for example (Cornwell, 2017). Parallel to this, all depictions or cyphers aimed at military strength or superiority, from the God of War Mars to soldiers with standards, defence towers, horsemen stabbing enemies, soldiers pulling defeated people out of their huts, etc., can be understood as symbols of peace of the *Pax Romana*.

### Iconography of battle and war from Greek times to late antiquity

Greek and Roman depictions of battle and war are a *de facto* endless topic. From the Mycenaean period onwards, such evidence is so abundant that it would be illusory to provide an even remotely complete overview here. It was different in Minoan times. But since Mycenaean warlords ruled from their castles and shaped a chivalric-heroic ideal that outlasted their epoch, the warrior who stood up in battle for his glory and the lives of his own was the ideal *par excellence*. This is logically reflected in mythology. The Olympian Gods had to assert themselves in battle against the older race of gods (Wünsche, 2012). They fought and defeated the giants, whereby not only the gods, who were predisposed to do so by their nature anyway, from Apollo to Mars and Zeus, but also the goddesses, intervened in the battle (Lapatin, 2005).

The boundaries between battle and war are fluid, especially in the earlier eras. In the time of the Trojan War, or rather in this very war, man-to-man combat is the core element. This ideal sung about by Homer is still perpetuated in depictions centuries later, well into the archaic period. In this period, long since dominated militarily by the closed phalanx of at least similarly armed citizens, this is also depicted, although the loss of focus on individual destinies makes it less attractive from an artistic point of view. In military terms, *de facto*, the heroic, fighting individual has become obsolete (which makes the person of Alexander the Great appear all the more brilliant) (Pfrommer, 1998). Formally, it is easy to categorise the broad spectrum of ancient depictions of battle and war, for example, as follows: a) fighting, warring gods; b) fighting, warring heroes; and c) citizens or heroes fighting victoriously for their polis/state or falling in battle.

From archaic times (i.e., from the late 7th and early 6th centuries BC), the wide spectrum of war and battle depictions from divine and heroic spheres dominated both the private and public spheres, on painted ceramics used in the symposium and on temple pediments. From the 17th century onwards, the figures involved can be identified, initially sporadically and then more frequently by means of inscribed names and/or characteristic attributes. These depictions are often far removed from a generalised glorification of battle and war; the personal and tragic aspects of the events are sometimes

condensed in images that are among the masterpieces of art history. For example, Achilles and Ajas are shown playing a board game immediately before the battle on an amphora in the Vatican, signed by Exekias around 540 BC (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1 Calm before the battle, splendidly armed. Black-figure amphora signed by Exekias as potter and painter, Achilles and Ajas playing a board game around 540 BC. Vatican Museum, Museo Gregoriano Etrusco Inv. 16757.

It is not only the viewer who knows that Achilles will fall. The deliberate acceptance of death, because the fate is predetermined by the gods and the code of honour demands it, is compressed into a picture of fate that goes beyond the individual story. The weapons used are of particular importance. In the mythological context, these are the weapons personally forged by Hephaestus for the heroes (for Achilles' shield, on which war and peace were thematised) (Schadewaldt, 1959), while at the same time paying tribute to technological progress. The Corinthian helmets, hammered from a single piece and correspondingly sturdy, are status symbols on the one hand and a highly relevant export item for the Corinthian economy on the other. They became quasi-emblematic and were still worn by gods in times when they had long since served their military purpose. In contrast, the usually less elaborately designed friezes of de-individualised warriors on Late Archaic ceramics reflect the phalanx that was becoming established at the time.

The ideal characterised by battle and heroism, formerly aristocratic but as such enduring through the ages, is not only present in obvious monuments in this respect, in which, for example, a victorious horseman appears stabbing an inferior opponent or riding over him (a topos that recurs in contemporary variations on tombstones from at least the Late Classical period until well into the Roman imperial period). Monuments that, at first glance, at least today, appear to be militarily unencumbered could also have corresponding implications. The standing naked youth, the kuros, was the canonical form of depicting the young man of archaic times. Kuroi are found as votive offerings in sanctuaries, but often also as funerary statues. Only in a few cases have their original pedestals survived, which rarely reveal more than the name of the deceased. Towards the end of the 6th century, when tyrants still ruled in Athens (as in other city-states of this era), funerary inscriptions could also be longer:

“Stand and mourn at the monument of the dead Kroisos,  
which the violent Ares destroyed when he fought in the front row”  
(Kaltsas, 2002, 58–59).

The young man, who obviously comes from the best family, if only because of the size and quality of his statue, bears a non-Greek name, specifically that





**FIGURE 3.1** Black-figure amphora.

*Source:* [https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plik:Exekias,\\_anfora\\_con\\_achille\\_e\\_aiace\\_che\\_giocano\\_a\\_dai,\\_castore\\_e\\_polluce,\\_da\\_vulci,\\_540-30\\_ac\\_ca.\\_01.JPG](https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plik:Exekias,_anfora_con_achille_e_aiace_che_giocano_a_dai,_castore_e_polluce,_da_vulci,_540-30_ac_ca._01.JPG). This figure is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 License.

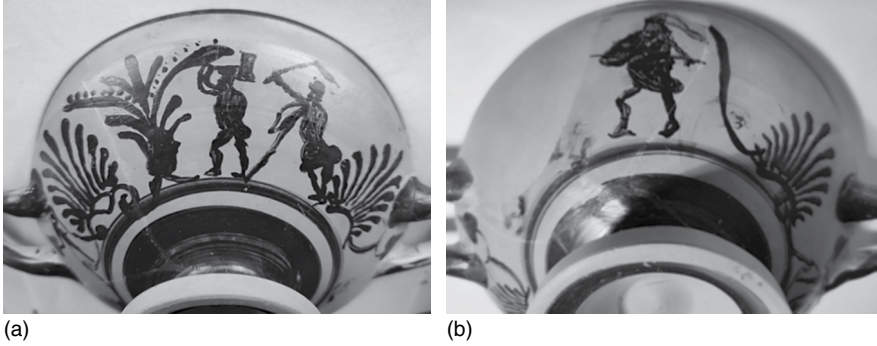
of a Persian king (who a few years later became the arch-enemy of the Greeks). The honourable context of his early death, including a heroic component (it was not just any opponent, it was the god of war Ares himself who killed him), which is therefore considered worthy of being passed down, impressively reflects the existential social significance of the military dimension in de facto heroic exaggeration (von den Hoff et al., 2015).

It should be noted that in Greek times, even in the Hellenistic period of Alexander the Great and his successors, pictorial representations of specific historical events, including wars, are rare exceptions. The most famous is the Alexander Battle Mosaic, based on a painting (see note 20). Although wars had been waged before and continued to be waged, their dynamics and social implications were usually visualised with recourse to the battles of gods and/or mythologically anchored herons. It was not until the Roman imperial period, from the reliefs of the Arch of Titus to those of the columns of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius to the reliefs of the triumphal arches of Septimius Severus and Constantine, that historical depictions and reliefs established themselves as a category of their own (Hölscher, 1984).

However, even in the Roman Empire, which was based on military strength and countless victories, such depictions of contemporary battles and acts of war were initially rare in the Republican period and, under Emperor Augustus (see above for the Ara Pacis), were clearly not ideologically desirable. In addition to friezes of weapons symbolising Roman victories, images located in divine spheres were still preferred, for example, on the armour of the statue of Augustus from the Prima Porta, which directly transcended the emperor's rule. This did not change to any significant extent until the Flavians, who were more down-to-earth in relative terms. Here, goddesses and gods are often included in real historical events. While state monuments of later times were to be read as pictorial reports of battles (the columns of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius, as well as triumphal arches, have already been mentioned), the depictions on coins are limited to cyphers that express military strength and virtues, if only because of the compelling medium of compression. And this was all the more the case well into late antiquity, when Roman military power had long since become fragile (Heitz, 2008).

The suffering of the defeated and the senseless destruction that was the order of the day in the course of the war, starting with the deforestation of olive trees to secure their livelihoods, was addressed in historiography and literature. However, such aspects, the suffering of the population, were practically never depicted. In this respect, a Boeotian drinking bowl from the 4th century BC is remarkable. It was certainly not painted by a master of his trade, but this is – as far as can be understood – the decisive reason why and how the scene was created (Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2 Boeotian black-figure drinking bowl, 4th century BC, diameter 16.5 cm (with handles 23 cm), height 7.5 cm.



**FIGURE 3.2** (a and b) Boeotian black-figure drinking bowl.

*Source:* Photographs of the bowl taken by the author

It depicts a warrior chopping down a tree with an axe – presumably an olive tree. An older, helpless man, leaning on a staff, is trying – predictably unsuccessfully – to prevent this. On the opposite side, which is only partially preserved, there is a rather forlorn-looking warrior under a bow. This depiction, which goes beyond traditional pictorial formulae, was made possible because a vase painter working in the provinces and in a technique that had been out of fashion for more than a hundred years – black-figure vase painting – had made a mistake on a mass-produced product. The olive tree had initially been designed as an ornament, but this did not work out due to the insufficient distance to the neighbouring palmette, which is why the unknown painter began to improvise, whereby the scene that obviously occupied him in terms of content and emotion came about by chance, so to speak. Here, the atrocities and long-term side-effects of war become all the more authentic a theme, accompanied by the implicit hope for peace. Greek and Roman antiquity, as far as can be deduced from the surviving monuments, knew practically no such depictions.

## Conclusions

Statistically, if one compares ancient depictions of peace and war, one cannot avoid the realisation that the former group was marginal. A ratio of 1 to 1000, even if one includes the monuments that have only survived in literary form, may ultimately still be optimistic. The differences between the two groups in terms of iconography and content are at least as striking:

- Representations of peace: beautiful, idealistic, adynamic, and universal;
- Depictions of battle and war: powerful, concise, dynamic, and integrative.

This raises the fundamental question that goes far beyond antiquity: can peace be condensed into images that are stronger or have a stronger effect on people than images of war and battle? The quasi-ubiquitous representations of battle and war are characterised by their dynamism and anchoring in mythological contexts, for example. Here, binding social ideals are explicated that were either perpetuated from the heroic past and/or, from late archaic times onwards, visualise aspects of integrative democracy (hoplites/phalanx in step). In contrast, ancient depictions of peace are mostly allegories in which, if it does not remain on the symbolic level (kerykeion, the messenger's staff, branch, etc.), pretty, youthful women, floating in spheres beyond real time and real space, proclaim their message. It becomes more specific in Roman times, where peace is ultimately a favour bestowed by the victorious army or the emperor. The idea or illusion of pacifism, based on general insight into the abysses of war, was unknown in antiquity, at least if we look at the pictorial representations. Or vice versa: peace, as long as it is not based on military superiority, remains, in the depictions, an aloof ideal, rather localised in otherworldly spheres. Combat and war, on the other hand, have a quality that relates to the present and integrates the male individual ideologically and factually.

### Perspectives

In view of current wars, the question arises of how peace can be created and secured. It is easy to recognise pacifist ideals and ideas derived from Christianity of a democratic compromise based on the love of one's neighbour and the insight of all those involved into the abysses of war. It would be nice! This chapter shows that no images or formulas can be derived from the ancient pictorial tradition that could be helpful in realising such goals. Sure, there are beautiful, touching allegories of peace. But relative to dynamic, socially integrative images of battle and war, these remain weak in terms of their inherent "pictorial power". Images of the horrors and suffering of war, almost unknown in antiquity, only emerged in post-antiquity, occasionally in the Baroque period, among others, and in greater numbers and with an expressively destructive quality in and since the First World War. For their part, they are already historical today, accompanied by the message that even the most impressive trench paintings by Otto Dix, for example, apparently had no formative influence on further historical developments from the Second World War to the present day. From a psychological point of view, this is – unfortunately – not surprising: people adapt relatively quickly when confronted with images of horror. As far as studies show, frightening images (e.g., of dying lung cancer patients) on cigarette packets have little, if any, long-term effect on reducing nicotine consumption.

With this in mind, what could attractive, equally dynamic, and integrative images of peace look like, i.e., images that convey their message “visually powerful” in a similar way to depictions of battle and war? Art education authors propagate their approach to educating people about peace by creating appropriate images (Hinrichs, 2022), whereby Picasso’s famous dove of peace is the inspiration alongside the peace symbol. It is one thing for an individual who paints and draws to realise the qualities of peace in this way. The other, in terms of pictorial power, is the question of the extent to which neutral viewers can initially be addressed and convinced of the content. The latter would be of far-reaching importance in our postmodern media age. Approaches and attempts in this regard, such as the images of the ideal socialist life in peace and friendship or quasi-paradise depictions such as those found in the writings of Jehovah’s Witnesses, show where the problem with this approach lies: these are always ideal images of conditions beyond time and space. Even when viewed from a small historical or ideological distance, they quickly lose their power and often come across as kitschy, fake, and deliberate. Any online war game, however amateurishly programmed, is likely to attract the attention of viewers more intensely, which is not least due to the fact that the emotions of fear and rage are existentially superior to the emotional qualities associated with peace and tranquillity in terms of evolutionary history. So, on the one hand, we can hope for innovations, i.e., for images that go beyond the historical and currently imaginable iconography to convey peace as a value and a real possibility in an existential, dynamic, and integrative way. On the other hand, the only option would be to accept that peace in the ideal Christian or pacifist sense has a quality that is at best only possible in happy moments in this world and that it must ultimately be a matter of endeavouring to achieve what is celebrated in ancient iconography. In other words, the question of how we can best ensure our own safety and that of our loved ones in the face of the real threats of this world. Less idealistic and more real, dynamic, and – with a view to our society dominated by individualism – as integrative as possible.

## Notes

- 1 Cf. Roman sarcophagus: Apollo and Artemis kill the fourteen children of Niobe. [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Sarcophagus\\_Niobids\\_Glyptothek\\_Munich\\_345\\_front.jpg](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Sarcophagus_Niobids_Glyptothek_Munich_345_front.jpg).
- 2 Cf. Attic chalice crater, Vienna, KHM IV 1024, <https://www.khm.at/en/objectdb/detail/53575/>.
- 3 Cf. Apulian situla, Geneva, Musée d’Art et d’Histoire Inv. A 1998-301, <https://www.mahmah.ch/collection/oeuvres/situle/1998-0301>.
- 4 Cf. Eirene with the boy Pluto: Roman copy after a statue of Kephisodotos on the Agora of Athens (c. 370 BC). Glyptothek and Collection of Classical Antiquities Munich Inv. 219 H 201 cm, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Eirene\\_Ploutos\\_Glyptothek\\_Munich\\_219\\_n1.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Eirene_Ploutos_Glyptothek_Munich_219_n1.jpg).

- 5 Cf. Athens honours the Samnites who remained loyal to them after the Athenian fleet was defeated. The text quotes a decree from 405 BC. Athens, Acropolis Museum 1333.  
[https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:ACMA\\_1333\\_Samian\\_decree\\_2.JPG](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:ACMA_1333_Samian_decree_2.JPG).
- 6 Cf. Mosaic depicting the Battle of Alexander around 100 BC (after an older painting).  
 Naples, Museo Nazionale, from Pompeii, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Alexandermosaic.jpg>.

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# 4

## MONDIALIZATION OF PEACE AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL PARALLEL

A voice in discussion

*Zdzisław Kunicki*

The exploration of various facets of education for peace not only encourages but also, to some extent, mandates the enrichment of the spectrum of research, provided it aligns with the field of interest within pedagogy. These broadened contexts of pedagogical discourse facilitate the introduction of cognitive elements that straddle the border of mutual exchange. While not explicitly pedagogical, drawing from history, including political history and cultural theory, they aspire to a heuristic transfer into the realm of the theory of educating individuals for peace and fostering peaceful coexistence with others.

### **Historical-political context**

The mondialization of peace is one facet of the broader phenomenon of mondialization, recognized as a geohistorical process (Lévy, 2008). Let us consciously embrace this as one plausible interpretation of transforming peace into a global phenomenon. Contemporary endeavours to institutionalize frameworks that ensure the dissemination of peaceful coexistence and fair cooperation among nations and states, still relevant today, emerged in the second half of the 19th century. In the European context, significant components of this process proved to be essential socio-political, economic, and broader civilizational transformations. In a simplified view, aligning with the logic of events, two fundamental revolutions unfolded: the democratic and the industrial. Extensive literature has explored their descriptions. Here, our focus narrows to elements directly illustrating the genesis of the quest for a new model of peaceful coexistence on the international, or we might say, global stage – distinct from the discussed phenomenon of

globalization. While discussions surrounding globalization often revolve around the spread of liberal democracy, either in its entirety or in selected elements, and include variably justified criticism of this expansion, the concept of mondialization is more commonly employed in the realm of culture and social phenomena. French historian Serge Gruzinski, specializing in the history of South America, even posits that mondialization is a broader formula than globalization and, compared to the latter, is more cognitively multidisciplinary (Gruzinski, 2004).

The intricate processes of the 19th century ushered in a discernible, albeit gradual, decline in the political dominance held by governments rooted in the so-called *Ancient Régime*. While the departure from this system was not uniform across European countries, the *phenomenon* of nation-state formation intensified, diminishing the significance of dynastic interests and their modes of implementation. The growing desire for political participation, exemplified by the tumultuous events of the French Revolution, eroded the power of an elite class rooted in monarchy and feudal order. The principles of equality, freedom, and brotherhood, embodied in the political framework of a republican state, dismantled numerous constraints that had previously hindered the aspirations of broader social strata, particularly in the political realm. The proverbial “transfer of power to the people” occurred, transforming the masses into subjects and endowing all citizens with equal status within the new political entity – the nation-state. These transformations unfolded concurrently. The institutionalization of the nation-state coincided with the awakening of civic consciousness among the masses, and the social bonds within the state assumed civic and republican characteristics. Irrespective of social, regional, or religious distinctions, loyalty became directed towards the singular sovereign – the nation-state. This pattern of simultaneous emancipation of civic and national ideas is observable in almost every mode of the formation of modern states, with variations such as the preservation of the institution of the king within the constitutional order (naturalization of the monarchy) or the adoption of federalist concepts (e.g., Switzerland).

In conclusion, when applying this perspective to the present situation, Jerzy Szacki astutely observed that it is both possible and necessary to explore the pre-Enlightenment origins of national identity construction. The contemporary state of this construction

varies across different countries and regions of the world, spanning different historical epochs: the unevenness of development is striking, though for a considerable period, it has been somewhat mitigated by the dissemination of ideological models positing that nations possess special rights. Thus, any community seeking to avail itself of these rights must demonstrate its status as a nation.

(Szacki, 1997)



The Industrial Revolution exhibited distinctive dynamics and social consequences. The unprecedented rise of the machine-factory industry, a market commodity-capitalist economy, and intercontinental trade instigated a profound transformation in social structure and hierarchy. Individual entrepreneurship gained prominence, giving rise to a novel elite, primarily in the financial sector. The accumulation of capital and urban growth contributed to the emergence of a robust middle class (*bourgeoisie*), while areas surrounding production centres saw the influx of new, less affluent social strata in the form of factory workers. These social shifts were accompanied by broader civilizational changes, marked by accelerated communication, increased emigrations and migrations, a surge in readership owing to printing advancements, and the advent of new political ideologies.

It can be asserted that both of the mentioned revolutions contributed to the formation of new forms of cooperation during the 19th century while simultaneously escalating fields of conflict. The conservative endeavour to establish a novel political order, initiated at the Congress of Vienna (1815) and grounded in the doctrine of legitimacy (wherein the monarch exercises power by the will of God), proved unsustainable against the rising centrifugal movements of national revolutions (Holy Alliance of Nations). The consolidation of nation-states, prominently observed in the cases of France and Germany, triggered a wave of territorial expansion (e.g., Napoleonic wars or *Drang nach Osten*) and fueled a fierce struggle for continental supremacy, particularly among major players. This geopolitical landscape was further complicated by the political-economic dimension of colonial expansion undertaken by numerous European countries. Conflicts became inevitable, prompting the need for their prevention. In the political sphere, the culmination of these processes was undoubtedly the establishment of the League of Nations in 1919, belatedly and hastened by the catastrophic effects of World War I. Subsequently, the League of Nations transitioned into the United Nations in 1948, as it was called (Ghebali, 1983).

Let us highlight that, within the context of the Industrial Revolution, a less-known yet pioneering and highly valuable development for peace stability was the initiation of mechanisms for concluding international trade agreements and the establishment of branch organisations originating from various countries.

### **Pedagogical anticipation**

Interestingly, the external environment that sparked cognitive interests in the mondialisation of peace also found its pedagogical anticipations. We are primarily referring to the revival of the Olympic idea in broadly understood educational and peace-promoting aspects. Delving into internal discussions

about the genesis of the contemporary renaissance of the Olympic project, which, as always, has earlier and deeper *backgrounds* in the form of ideas, guarantors of their realisation, its own heroes, and patrons, it is not without justification to consider that the central figure in this revival is Pierre Frédy, Baron de Coubertin (Firek, 2016). De Coubertin himself viewed the development of culture, including physical culture and education, through the prism of a certain continuity of events rather than a revolutionary rupture. The establishment of the International Olympic Committee in June 1894 at the Sorbonne amphitheatre preceded the political formula promoting international peace by almost one generation. However, in the context of the mondialization we are interested in, we can also speak of a second anticipation, an etymological one. A meticulous analysis of journalistic texts written by de Coubertin in the early 20th century indicates that he operated with the concept of mondialization and, in a sense, without theoretical elaboration, can be considered its creator (Markovits, Singaréavelou & Todd, 2021). This is primarily about an article published in *Le Figaro* in December 1904, in which he drew attention to the problem of the political and economic regression of the French Republic, which was to be compensated by the mondialization of new ideas (de Coubertin, 1904).

De Coubertin, coming from an aristocratic family belonging to the elite of the Third Republic, was educated in a Jesuit school, close to conservative republicanism, and the school of social peace under the sign of Frédéric Le Play, quickly recognized the need for reform in education and more broadly in customs and social life through a greater emphasis on physical fitness along with its educational impulses. This was due to critical observation of the existing state in France, especially at the secondary school level, but also from positive examples he observed during his stays in England, considered the cradle of modern sports. In the preface to his *L'Éducation anglaise en France*, he expressed a desire to return to the military school of Monge to enrich the existing training system with observations gained on the other side of the English Channel (de Coubertin 1889). Interestingly, initiatives taken to improve the physical condition of students did not gain broader approval in the French education system. Similarly, the first attempt to restore the Olympic Games, undertaken in November 1892, turned out to be unsuccessful. There was not enough quorum. Only the collaboration with the International Bureau for Peace (*Bureau international permanent de la paix*), founded a little earlier (1891), whose members massively attended the second initiating meeting, ultimately led to the establishment of the International Olympic Committee (Terret, 2011). This event clearly shows that even in the cradle of the modern Olympic movement, de Coubertin's world of ideas and accompanying intentions tried to combine sport and education with the promotion of peace.

### Anthropological parallel

Let us put aside discussions about de Coubertin's educational and sports perspectives, the Olympic idea, as well as the principles and rules associated with it, and the educational aspects of sports. The literature on these topics is extensive and multifaceted. Instead, let's delve into outlining what we've termed the anthropological parallel. Once again, we'll link it cognitively to the pre-pedagogical field. Interesting data can be found in a study examining the potential influence of mondialization processes on peace promotion by analyzing their real effects (Martin, Mayer & Thoenig, 2006). While the authors primarily focused on the economic and socio-political components of mondialization and the pacifying role of trade, they also explored the historical period between the late 19th and the end of the 20th century – specifically, the time interval they analysed. The study openly engages in a critical dialogue with the uniquely French Enlightenment optimism and its universalistic aspirations. Trade, as predicted by Montesquieu, mitigates destructive prejudices: where mild customs exist, trade follows; where there is trade, mild customs prevail. [...] The natural outcome of trade is a tendency towards peace (Montesquieu, 1927). However, the study outright states in its initial fragments that the relationship between trade and peace is not self-evident (Martin et al., 2006). This observation is not new; we highlighted it in the first part of the article; nevertheless, let us briefly examine the explanation of this complexity.

Martin, Mayer, and Thoenig, adhering to the periodization validated by Suzanne Berger (2003), assert that the initial phase of mondialization (1870–1914) underscores the beneficial impact of free trade on stabilizing peace, despite the concurrent escalation of rivalry among major actors culminating in the eruption of World War I. Conversely, the interwar period, though devoid of major armed conflicts (albeit not politically tranquil), witnessed a significant decline in global trade and a deterioration of societal material conditions. Once again, both factors – the cessation of conflict and the exacerbation of social hardships – incorporated into totalitarian political ideologies offering simplistic solutions to prevailing issues, contributed to the genesis of World War II. The post-war era (1945–1970), notwithstanding the “Cold War” tensions between power blocs and an elevated risk of global conflict, marked a phase of heightened global trade. The 1990s witnessed a surge in global trade, correlated with relative peace, yet also accompanied by a noticeable uptick in local armed conflicts among states and nations. Against this backdrop, the authors conclude that mondialization during the late 19th century, compared to the contemporary scenario, does not support the hypothesis of a reduction in armed conflicts between states purportedly stemming from the perspective of economic exchange within the global system.

However, what is most intriguing is the phenomenon of geographic proximity and distance. The events of World War I clearly demonstrated that the

internationalization of economic exchange does not guarantee security. Moreover, interwar poverty did not preclude conflict. Following the end of World War II, we observe a state of no direct conflict on a scale similar to both World Wars, though it is important to remember the occurrence of local proxy wars, such as those in Korea, Vietnam, Angola, as well as Soviet military interventions in Central and Eastern European countries, and communist guerrilla warfare in South American countries. The authors highlight that capital transfer and mutual inter-neighbourly exchange (bilateral) may, but does not necessarily, increase the chances of shaping correct multilateral relations and consequently expanding the opportunities for “peaceful coexistence” within politically and economically larger entities, up to the global level. In this regard, a paradox becomes apparent. The decline in global conflict heightens the risk of local disputes, which could ultimately impact the maintenance of global peace. Moreover, broadening the scope of economic cooperation through agreements beyond the realm of inter-neighbourly relations also amplifies the risk of conflict. Consequently, the increase in inter-neighbourly (bilateral) trust stands out as the only certain factor ensuring the establishment of a culture of peace.

This has significant implications for peace education. The dimension of mondialization highlights the importance of prioritizing spaces characterized by close and intimate relations, from which the cultivation of a culture of peace can emanate more effectively. Transitioning to the realm of educational theory, we can observe a kind of anthropological parallel, which is already acknowledged and even serves as the foundation of its interests – that is, the relationships between humans and their educational environments. The closest bonds that individuals form within their lives and upbringing environments can significantly influence the creation of a safer world. How can this be achieved? This becomes a task for educators themselves because, as Montesquieu reminds us, while the political or economic dimension “unites nations”, it does not necessarily bring individuals together in the same manner (Montesquieu, 1927).

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# 5

## PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PEDAGOGICAL CONDITIONS OF EDUCATION FOR PEACE (EFP) IN THE FAMILY SYSTEM

*Marian Zdzisław Stepulak*

### **Introduction**

In contemporary psychological and pedagogical literature, the issue of education for peace (EFP) in the family system does not appear very often. The very concept of “peace” is a multidimensional, multifactorial and multivariate phenomenon. Generally, peace refers to relations between individual countries, which is why concepts such as “armed peace”, “peace through deterrence” or “cold peace” are used. A very important issue is EFP. This issue became the subject of Pope John XXIII’s encyclical *Pacem in Terris*. EFP must be based on fundamental values. The most appropriate place for developing an attitude of peace is a natural family system in which all values, including religious and spiritual ones, are respected. EFP in a family system is characterized by a certain individual nature. This nature covers some spheres of human development. One of them is the sphere of emotional and sensitive development. In the context of building peace, it is important to differentiate emotions and feelings, skills, empathy towards other people, knowledge of cultural and emotional rules and norms and the ability to deal with negative emotions. Another aspect of EFP relates to the social area. It is primarily about the development of the socialization process. Socialization in the family system concerns, among others, such areas as culture, worldview, aesthetics, life goals, work and study. The sphere of moral development also contributes to shaping an attitude of peace. Significant elements of this sphere include the following: knowledge, understanding of moral norms and principles, ability to solve problems and dilemmas, beliefs and values, attitude of responsibility and turning away from evil. Attitudes towards peace are also shaped by religious upbringing. The following elements appear to be

important in this case: understanding the importance of religious values of social communities in everyday life, shaping evaluative attitudes and proper formation of conscience. Religious education should include spiritual education that adopts the principles of integral personalism. Patriotic EFP should be added to the above development spheres. The patriotic personality of a young person depends on the family into which they are born. All these elements build external and internal peace in a human being.

### **The concept of peace**

The term peace (Hebrew: shalom, Greek: ειρήνη, Latin: pax) means a multi-dimensional, multifactorial, and multivariate phenomenon. Peace means tranquillity, security and social justice, respect for human foods, rights and personal dignity, free exchange of ideas, harmonious cooperation, brotherly coexistence, development, law and order in the world and is an expression of truth, freedom and love. Peace exists between people and also in the human heart and mind. Peace in the negative sense is the absence of war, a state of affairs based only on the balance of power. In the traditional sense, peace was treated as the absence of violence. The concept of peace is closely connected with politics and international relations because in this sphere, the conditions and causative factors of uncertainty or certainty of peace appear. However, the most important thing is peace in relations between individual countries (Wójcik, 2016).

Peace has been one of the most complex and contradictory concepts in the history of human thought.

It has radically different meanings: from the concept of peace as a ceasefire during the war, considered to be eternally recurring, which is typical of classical Greek-Latin thought, to the vision of peace as the fullness of life and the fulfillment of justice, which is appropriate for Judeo-Christian tradition.

*(Colzani, 2000, p. 568)*

A new vision of peace could be considered through a new anthropological vision. In this context, it would be about building peace for a culture of peace. This is a contemporary moral obligation. What is at issue here is the priority of forming consciences in creative involvement in this matter over the requirement of obedience to statutory law. Meanwhile, this understanding of peace is in contradiction with the results of anthropological research, which questioned the belief that humans are by nature peaceful people (Colzani, 2000).

The sociological approach to peace concerns various social levels (individual, group, class, nation, state and international systems) and refers to

various problems of social development, focusing on conflicts, social order, cooperation and integration, coexistence, systemic convergence, dependence and interdependence, imperialism, domination and hegemony. The starting point for undertaking research on peace issues is peaceful social ties at all levels of interaction of their participants (Wójcik, 2016). It can be said that one of the most important dimensions of the concept of “peace” is the social dimension. Peace, therefore, means tranquillity, security and justice. Peace is

[...] respect for human goods, rights and dignity, free exchange of ideas, harmonious cooperation, brotherly coexistence, development, law and order in the world and is an expression of truth, freedom and love; peace exists between people and in the heart and mind of humans; peace in the negative sense is the absence of war, a state based only on the balance of forces.

(*Kościół katolicki, 1965*)

Peace in a positive sense is a selfless activity for the benefit of other people, states, and nations, mutual cooperation and respect for human rights (Cynarzewska-Włazlik, 2011).

In the 1950s and 1960s, there was the so-called “armed peace” and “peace through deterrence” or “cold peace”. This type of statement was a derivative of the “Cold War” based on the arms race, the policy of deterrence as a way to prevent wars. However, this has led to the accumulation of destructive potential in international relations.

In the modern world, tensions and threats to security are caused not only by the presence of foreign troops and military operations, but rather by the phenomena of migration, euthanasia, abortion, pauperization, social injustice, regional ethnic conflicts, neighborly relations, nuclear armament, terrorism, as well as production and trade weapons.

(*Cynarzewska-Włazlik, 2011, s. 1025*)

An important issue in this aspect is the concept of EFP. It was presented in John XXIII's encyclical *Pacem in Terris*. Pope Paul VI spoke about shaping the human person through EFP, and for this purpose, he established the World Day of Peace, celebrated on January 1 since 1968. John Paul II also devoted a lot of attention to the issue of EFP. In his reflection, he referred to the message of John XXIII. In his opinion, peace is deeply embedded in the psyche of every human person. This is an inner room. In this context, it is possible to achieve it. EFP must be based on elementary values. These values are respect for human rights and duties, respect for human dignity, reconciliation, forgiveness, truth, equality, freedom, love, respect, trust, dialogue,



social justice, brotherhood, patriotism, love of homeland and worldview solidarity (Cynarzewska-Włazlik, 2011).

Paul VI and John Paul II addressed messages about peace to young people, believing that shaping the awareness of the young generation would result in peace in the future. The process of educating for peace includes not only young people, everyone is obliged to engage in building peace, which is a gift entrusted to people by God. Achieving peace is the right and duty of every person, of all states and nations. Responsible for educating for peace, building and supporting peace are mainly parents, as well as peers, teachers, employees of social media, cultural centers, people of science, politicians and diplomats, people performing military service, field pastors and international organizations [...] as well as Church [...] the credibility of authorities proclaiming peace and undertaking scientific research on its essence are also important.

*(Cynarzewska-Włazlik, 2011, p. 1026)*

It can be said that in the above area, there was an in-depth discourse on the issue of peace.

### **The concept of a family system**

Since marriage is defined by the Catholic Church as a union between a man and a woman, it is an institution that creates another institution, the family. There are many definitions of family in the literature on the subject, and one of them understands the family as a natural system. The concept of a system means a complex structural system that consists of interconnected component units. In this context, family as a natural system is a specific system of internal ties and interpersonal relations between spouses, parents with children and siblings (Sidor, 2005).

The family as a natural system is a group that cannot be replaced in any way. It is a relatively open and very dynamic system. We can already talk about it at the level of organic life, when the system stays alive despite the constant exchange of its components.

*(Stepulak, 2010, p. 233)*

A functional family system is characterized by the following:

- the whole is greater than the sum of its parts;
- the system is dynamic, which means that it is constantly looking for openness and development opportunities, adapting to incoming information and looming stress;

- the rules are public and always negotiable;
- the balance between community and individuality is based on mutual respect and respect for personal dignity;
- when the level of anxiety related to interpersonal and intrapsychic phenomena is low, forces related to the process of separating the natural system that is the family automatically begin to act (Brashaw, 1994).

The family system is the natural environment for the birth and development of a human person until their natural death. In this understanding, parents have not only the right but also the obligation to adequately raise their children. To accomplish this task, it is necessary for them to be aware of respecting the personal dignity of their children (Rzepa, 2010).

A family, especially a Christian family, which is the domestic Church, has an irreplaceable role to play towards young generations in its educational mission in the field of morality. Its undertaking and implementation is possible only by recognizing God's call flowing from both the order of nature and the supernatural gift.

*(Rzepa, 2010, p. 393)*

The unity of marriage and family lies in the sacrament of marriage, which naturally relates the family system to the mystery of Christ and the Church.

The unity of the family, as a sacramental reality, is based on the natural anthropological (personal) bond, but it exceeds it and creates, at the spiritual level, a synthesis of all interpersonal relationships expressing the specificity of the existence of humanity. The spousal relationship between husband and wife intersects internally with the parental relationship, revealing in the sacredness of marriage the features of God's image, which relates marriage to the mystery of Creation (actually to the Creator). The spousal relationship, seen in the full context of the sacrament, reveals the deepest current of the mystery: the relationship to the Holy Trinity, through participation in the mystery of the Eternal Birth

*(Bajda, 2010, p. 58).*

Religious faith is of great importance for the adequate functioning of the family system. Nowadays, however, it must be re-read. In many spheres of everyday life, spouses and children constantly encounter new obstacles and difficulties, which may take the following forms: misunderstandings, acute loneliness in living under one roof, somatic, mental or psychosomatic diseases, teenage crises, parenting difficulties or random accidents. In this dimension, individual members of the family system take responsibility for their faith.

This often requires heroic attitudes in thinking and acting, which are expressed in the form of strenuous struggle with difficulties, giving up one's own preferences, breaking oneself in order to become faithful to Christ. These difficulties may be of a material or cultural nature, they may concern the hierarchy of values, upbringing or spiritual issues.

*(Wieczorek, 2009, p. 154)*

Families today receive many proposals for marital and family life. However, this is often associated with giving up religious norms and principles. In such a situation, phenomena such as divorces, the creation of informal and alternative relationships, receiving the sacrament of marriage without living faith and the rejection of moral norms that guard adequate marital coexistence and give it a human and Christian shape are increasingly common (Stepulak, 2020). "The message of the culture of death is also creeping into the mentality of Polish families: a model of rape and violence is being disseminated, sex is separated from love, and hypocritically unrestrained freedom that despises morality" (Brzeziński, 2011, p. 88). Nowadays, we can talk about the following family functions: procreative function; sexual function; economic function; caring function; socialization function; educational function; emotional function; cohesion function (Wałęcka-Matyja, 2014).

All of the above functions occur in the family system. They also play a role in a specific EFP. In the systemic approach, individual family members are treated as elements of a group in which the behavior of one person inevitably determines the behavior of others (Świętochowski, 2014). The family system is a certain structure associated with construction, composition, or some organization. This structure usually includes parents, children, grandparents and closer and more distant relatives.

In systemic concepts, these people are, of course, also important, but the family structure is defined more broadly as a set of functional requirements fulfilled by a specific person (persons) and the expectations that are directed towards this person (these people).

*(Świętochowski, 2014, p. 27)*

Therefore, if someone is, for example, the head of a family, it only means the emblem of the person. However, what is important is whether this particular person makes decisions that are important for other members of the family system or avoids such decisions, even though everyone expects it.

### **Individual nature of education for peace in the family system**

Numerous models of family functioning are accepted in the literature on the subject. Some of them can be listed: operating models; structural models;

traditional cultural models (Catholic, Scandinavian, Muslim, and other); alternative cultural models; modernist models (partnership, egalitarian); and postmodern models (homosexual relationships, DINKS – double income, no kids – type relationships; LAT (living apart together) – type relationships; cohabitation relationships; other) (Liberska & Matuszewska, 2014).

Although structural models discuss EFP, the definition of peace itself is ambiguous. However, among various types of operational models, one can notice the model of a healthy family, which is a good foundation for peace education (Liberska & Matuszewska, 2011, 2012). This model assumes:

- the occurrence of an intense mutual positive emotional bond (in dyads, triads, etc.);
- the presence of harmonized, relatively stable patterns of activity and behavior assigned to
- individual people;
- the existence of a coherent, flexible system of norms and values;
- the relative autonomy of the psychological field;
- the level of cognitive processes enabling the correct reflection of reality;
- effective communication (Liberska & Matuszewska, 2014).

Depending on the phase of the family life cycle, its structure, organization of interactions and intra-systemic relations change primarily. Non-normative events may also trigger changes in the areas presented, such as the birth of a disabled child or the occurrence of an incurable disease in the family.

*(Liberska & Matuszewska, 2014, p. 127)*

In the model of a healthy family, EFP concerns the emotional sphere. Appropriate upbringing in this aspect concerns the acquisition of several skills by a young person, such as:

- Awareness of emotional processes and feeling states, as well as fully understood acceptance of the fact that the entire course of a given emotion and feeling may have its own dynamics and inaccessible areas of consciousness.
- The ability to differentiate emotions and feelings experienced by other people, closer and further.
- The ability to verbally express emotions and feelings as well as mime or pantomime using terms that are culturally common or specific to a subculture.
- The ability to empathically understand and experience the emotional and emotional states of other people.

- The ability to differentiate emotions and emotional states associated with coherent facial expression from states devoid of expression.
- Knowledge of cultural emotional and affective rules and norms.
- Ability to deal with negative emotions using various strategies, including the control and regulation of negative emotions;
- Acquired knowledge is needed to understand that the nature of interpersonal relationships is determined by direct emotional relationships and reciprocity.
- Achieved the ability to be emotionally self-sufficient (Jaworski, 2010).

The above-mentioned skills in the area of emotions and feelings prepare young and then adult people to build internal peace, but also have an impact on external peace and security. The second aspect of EFP refers to the social area. In this case, it is particularly about the socialization process, the natural environment of which is the family system. Therefore, the most important factors that determine the socialization process can be listed:

- Cultural values to which all members of the family system relate.
- The culture of the language of the family environment.
- The moral level of household members.
- Their aesthetic needs.
- Life goals.
- Patterns of life success.
- Worldview orientation.
- Attitudes towards work.
- Attitudes towards science.
- Attitudes towards life responsibilities.
- Attitudes towards people and their needs (Stepulak, 2013; Gerc, 2009).

Family upbringing builds an attitude of inner peace in children by adequately shaping the socialization process. In this context, it is difficult to talk about external peace when people do not have a developed attitude towards internal peace. Socialization in the family system extends to many areas, including: culture, worldview, aesthetics, life goals or work and study.

Another sphere of human development in EFP is moral development. In terms of moral development in the family system, the following elements can be distinguished:

- Knowledge about moral behavior.
- Understanding of moral norms and principles.
- Concepts of moral good and evil.
- Assessment of the rightness and wrongness of actions.

- Judgements, reasoning and justification regarding moral choices, especially solving moral dilemmas.
- Norms, principles and moral standards.
- Views, beliefs, ideals and moral values.
- Criteria of moral good and evil (rightness and wrongness of something).
- A sense of duty and obligation to do or not to do something.
- A sense of fulfilling one's duty and a feeling of contentment and satisfaction from fulfilling a moral obligation or duty and performing a good deed.
- An attitude full of discipline, responsibility, commitment and fulfilment of tasks that constitute moral obligations.
- Experience of regret related to the transgression, accusing and blaming oneself, and punishing oneself at the level of internal symbolic activities, which may even lead to self-aggression.
- The tendency to expiate, to turn away from evil and repair the damage caused by transgressions.
- Resistance to all temptations.
- Confession of guilt and others (Walesa, 1980).

Religious upbringing also shapes a person's attitudes towards internal and external peace. Such a disposition, filled with Christian love, will be constantly open to peace and harmonious coexistence in the family, local community, nation and the world. The integral development of a person is a condition for the implementation of religious values, but it is also a goal. The goals of religious EFP focus on:

- The inner need for the essence of the values of faith, prayer, sacraments, conscience and holiness.
- Awareness and understanding of the importance of religious values in the everyday life of people, groups and social communities.
- Acceptance of these values.
- Including religious values in your own hierarchy of values, giving them a significant place.
- Acquiring personality traits that determine religiosity.
- Shaping evaluative attitudes.
- Shaping active and creative attitudes towards religious values (Mazur, 2013).

The slogan: "God, Honor and Homeland" is very appropriate for the above aspect of scientific reflection. It refers not only to the love of God but also to the attitude of honor towards peace and one's homeland.

Spiritual education is highly correlated with religious upbringing. The concept of spiritual education in the family adopts the principles of integral

personalism. In this aspect, an important element of such an approach will be education for inner and outer peace. Therefore, it is necessary to mention the fundamental principles of integral personalism occurring in various types of transcendence. They are the following:

- Subjective transcendence: the “interiority” of human nature is the basic dimension of human transcendence. This indicates that a person is the subject of spiritual acts and deep experiences, creates their spiritual interior, has the ability to self-reflect and transcends themselves. This, in turn, causes such a person to develop the right attitude towards peace.
- Dynamic transcendence: it manifests itself in deeds, actions and culture. These various forms of activity are an expression of a person’s expression.
- Social transcendence: it is visible in being for another person in various manifestations of a person’s life with another person and for another person – in marriage, family, state and church.
- Axiological transcendence: it is the ability to move towards values and live values that exist beyond a person. These are truth, goodness, love, religion, spirituality and peace.
- Religious transcendence (vertical) shows a person who transcends the material world “upwards”, where they learn about love directed at God as the ultimate goal of human aspirations (Drożdż, 2011).

An internalized and spiritualized person has a developed, mature innate attitude towards building internal peace, and their openness to transcendence proves the attitude of external peace. It is also worth mentioning patriotic education in the context of peace. Experts on the problem claim that the family in which a person is born has the greatest impact on the patriotic personality. The family’s priorities, customs, upbringing and parental approach are also important. All these elements build external and internal peace in a person.

It is primarily the family that influences an individual the longest and leaves the deepest traces on it. This is where the first emotional bonds and feelings are built. By participating in its life, a child should build appropriate patterns of behavior, social norms and rules of conduct, and should also properly acquire knowledge about the world around them.

*(Pierzchała, 2016, p. 322)*

To sum up, it can be said that upbringing in the family system is the most adequate psychological and pedagogical method for shaping human attitudes towards internal and external peace.

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# 6

## CAN FORGIVENESS OFFER FREEDOM FROM HATRED AND PROMOTE PEACE IN YOUR HEART AND HOMELAND?

*Loren Toussaint*

On any given day, the news offers an immediate understanding of the current levels of hatred, violence, and war. Violence plays out in the streets and communities of many countries. International conflict and war have been with us for the majority of the 21st century. Notable current examples are the wars in Ukraine and Russia and the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas. Hatred has become normative, and attempts to quell hatred are often met with intense resistance, as many groups feel that they have historically, and in the present day, been oppressed and want justice (Szanto, 2020). Hatred has even been on grotesque display in the halls of our leading democracies, perhaps most evident in January 6, 2021 riots in the United States Capitol. Political hate portrayed on national stages has ultimately found its way into the thinking of everyday citizens. For instance, in one recent poll, both republican and democrat citizens in the United States indicated that they would be pleased if members of the opposing party simply died (Edsall, 2019).

There is no doubt that hatred is prevalent globally, and both historic and new instances of hate-fueled conflict and war are easy to find. Perhaps what is less readily available is a meaningful discussion of lasting solutions to the problem of hatred (Salice, 2021). I will argue in the following that a significant omission in attempts to bring about peace is a focus on forgiveness. I will begin by defining hatred and forgiveness and comparing and contrasting these two experiences. I will then consider ways of conceptualizing forgiveness in the peace process and offer a few ways to learn more about forgiveness and how to access tools that will help to promote forgiveness for those interested in both individual and community forgiveness.

## Hatred

Hatred is difficult to define, but scholars have long addressed the definition of this important concept (Royzman et al., 2004). Interdisciplinary work has uncovered multiple dimensions of hate (Blum, 1997; Sternberg & Sternberg, 2008). A key distinction is that hatred occurs both on the interpersonal and the intergroup level (Szanto, 2020). In interpersonal hatred, one person hates another specific person for some direct action or wrongdoing. This type of hatred can have ill effects on interpersonal relationships such as with family, friends, co-workers, and neighbours (Aumer et al., 2016). Intergroup hatred can be the result of one group harming another but also often arises out of one group's hatred for the beliefs or attitudes of another group (Fischer et al., 2018). It is interesting to consider hatred at both individual and communal levels, but the nature of hatred itself is also important to examine. In a recent informal review of the literature, my research team and I gathered 56 definitions of hatred (Toussaint, Barry, et al., 2020). We found 27 (48%) definitions emphasized emotion. Building from these sources (Brudholm, 2010; Fischer et al., 2018), we developed our own definition of hatred as an "intense, emotional response experienced by an individual following perceived wrongdoing or perceived ill-will on the part of another person or group of people" (Toussaint, Barry, et al., 2020, p. 49). We further developed a self-report measure to assess hateful emotional reactions and demonstrated its reliability and validity. The focus of this work and its integration with forgiveness remains an important concern for addressing hateful emotions, often uncontrollable and disproportionate.

## Forgiveness

If hatred is an extreme emotional reaction to an actual or perceived wrongdoing by another person or another group, as Toussaint, Barry, et al. (2020) suggest, then forgiveness might be considered as a possible alternative to hatred, as several scholars have conceptualized forgiveness as being an emotional state or means of emotion-focused coping in response to a transgression (Strelan, 2020; Worthington et al., 2007; Worthington & Scherer, 2004). The key to understanding the intersection between hatred and forgiveness is to know that forgiveness is a process by which negative emotions, as well as thoughts, motivations, and potentially even behaviors, are reduced and they are replaced with more positive experiences such as compassion, empathy, love, and altruism (Enright, 2019b; Enright & North, 1998; Worthington, 2020a). In short, the experience of forgiveness is not only the removal of hatred from one's experience but also the development of a positive disposition toward another individual or group.

There are several aspects of forgiveness that reduce hatred and promote peace. First, forgiveness is multifaceted. Forgiving oneself and others, feeling forgiven by God, and seeking forgiveness from others may all play important roles in addressing hatred and promoting peace (Toussaint et al., 2015). An offender may have self-hatred about a wrong that they perpetrated; some may blame God or a higher power for their plight; others may feel God or a higher power blames them; and some may feel a strong motive to apologize and may or may not be able to (some victims are too distant to communicate with or are deceased). Thompson et al. (2005) argued that some situations or circumstances, sometimes with complex and extensive histories, need to be forgiven. Second, forgiveness could be a personality characteristic that is consistent across time and place (Matuszewski & Moroń, 2022). A forgiving person might try to regularly forgo hatred and embrace a more virtuous life that centers around forgiveness, a potential key ingredient of lasting peace. Finally, while it is often thought that hatred can be learned and unlearned (Woo & Cho, 2023), so too can forgiveness (Freedman & Enright, 2020; Worthington, 2020b). With carefully designed curricula, forgiveness can even be taught to children in some of the direst circumstances (Park & Galiti, 2023).

### **Hatred, forgiveness, and peace**

Reducing hatred and promoting forgiveness are important parts of a durable peace process, but they often are not discussed together. Hate, forgiveness, and peace scholars and educators are siloed. Forgiveness scholars and practitioners frequently come from clinical settings where focus on individual patients or couples is paramount. Peace scholars and practitioners often come from social psychology, community psychology, and education. This is unfortunate, as several intersections among hate, forgiveness, and peace psychology exist and could provide valuable avenues of scholarly and applied work. For instance, it suggests that peaceful people are “individuals who exhibit a relatively consistent pattern of nonviolent and harmonious states, attitudes, and behaviors over time and across relevant situations, including intrapersonal, interpersonal, and intergroup domains” (Nelson, 2021, 109–110). Education and intervention that reduces hate and promotes forgiveness could impact people and encourage them in the way of peace by using key techniques from clinical and social psychology to reduce hateful attitudes or beliefs, promote the reduction of hateful emotions, and replace these with forgiving emotional experiences and dispositions. Another vantage point on peace is that of negative and positive peace. Negative peace is the absence of violence and aggression. Positive peace is the integration and flourishing of society (Galtung, 1967). Juxtaposing forgiveness and positive and negative peace provides a clear avenue for the joint consideration of forgiveness and

peace in both scholarly and applied work. The first aspect of forgiveness is the reduction of negative thoughts, feelings (i.e., hatred), motivations, and behaviors, which might be akin to promoting negative peace at the individual or community level. Furthermore, the second aspect of forgiveness is the promotion of positive thoughts, feelings (i.e., love), motivations, and behaviors, and this might share considerably with the efforts to promote positive peace. Building a foundation for peacemaking that consists of both education in forgiveness and positive and negative peace may offer a useful approach. As Velez and Gerstein (2021) suggest, work on peacebuilding and peace education, in particular, needs to continue and accelerate to support individual and community flourishing worldwide.

### **Models for integration of forgiveness education and peace building**

There are numerous ways forgiveness education could be incorporated into peacebuilding. I will review a couple of examples of efforts at the individual and community levels. I will also consider how forgiveness, hatred, and peace can be conceptualized for further scholarly and applied work.

#### ***REACH Forgiveness***

One common approach to forgiveness education is known as the REACH Forgiveness method (Worthington, 2008). After deciding to forgive and working through some preparatory steps, the REACH Forgiveness method progresses by first Recalling the hurt that one desires to forgive. The second step involves Empathizing with the offender, or at least attempting to find sympathy or compassion. The third step is to offer an Altruistic gift of forgiveness to the offender. The fourth step is Committing to long-term forgiveness, and the fifth step is Holding on to forgiveness when challenges arise in the future. The REACH Forgiveness method can be used with individuals or groups, and a downloadable do-it-yourself workbook is available (Sandage et al., 2015; Worthington et al., 2015). There are secular, Christian, and culturally adapted versions of REACH Forgiveness (Nation et al., 2018; Osei-Tutu et al., 2020; Toussaint, Worthington, et al., 2020). The REACH model has over 50 effectiveness trials supporting its use (Worthington, 2020c).

#### ***Process Model of Interpersonal Forgiveness***

Enright's Process Model of Interpersonal Forgiveness is another common approach to forgiveness education (Enright, 2019a). The process model contains four major components subdivided into 20 smaller units. In the *uncovering* phase, individuals work on acknowledging the pain, breaking through

unproductive defenses, and dealing with feelings of anger, rumination, shame, and guilt. The *decision* phase of the model emphasizes releasing unforgiveness, becoming open to forgiveness, and being clear about what forgiveness actually is and is not (i.e., condoning, justifying, or excusing offending behavior). The *work* phase involves the development of emotional experiences and virtuous dispositions that support forgiveness, using cognitive reframing to develop empathy, and building compassion. The *deepening* phase emphasizes the experiences of humility, common humanity, purpose in life, and emotional release. Numerous studies support the effectiveness of the Process Model of Interpersonal Forgiveness, and this model has been culturally adapted and used effectively in several different cultures across the globe (Enright et al., 2007; Freedman, 2018; Park & Galiti, 2023; Taysi & Vural, 2016). The Process Model of Interpersonal Forgiveness has been adapted for use with very young to late adolescent age groups (Rapp et al., 2022), and a story-based approach for especially young children is available (Kim & Enright, 2024).

### ***Forgive for Good***

A third commonly used forgiveness education tool is the Forgive for Good method (Luskin, 2002, 2007). This method uses a nine-step approach. Step one focuses on understanding the offense and emotional reactions. Step two involves committing to forgive and feel better. Step three delineates what forgiveness is and is not. Step four shifts perspective from past to present and future. Step five calms offense-related stress reactions. Step six deals with coping with the uncontrollability of offenses. Step seven re-emphasizes and empowers individuals to focus their energies on positive pursuits and goals in the future. Step eight builds positive emotions to replace the negative emotions of unforgiveness (e.g., gratitude, love, and optimism). Step nine re-emphasizes the power of the individual to overcome experiences of hurt. The Forgive for Good method has several studies supporting its effectiveness, and this curriculum has been culturally adapted (Luskin & Bland, 2000, 2001; Toussaint et al., 2009; Toussaint, Griffin, et al., 2020).

### ***Community forgiveness***

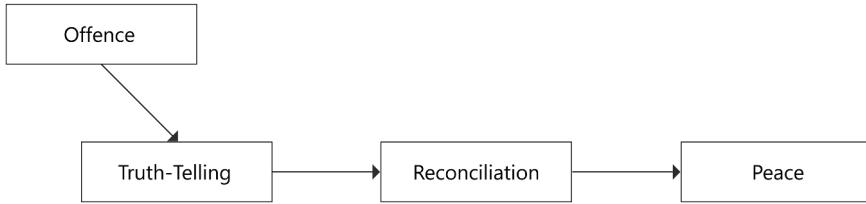
While REACH Forgiveness, the Process Model of Interpersonal Forgiveness, and Forgive for Good are useful methods of teaching forgiveness in ways that will help to reduce hate and promote peace, they were originally developed for individual and small group use. Extending these models to communities has yielded good results. Peaceful communities and societies are built on individuals who desire forgiveness and forgo hatred in the service of peace. The methods reviewed above offer the state-of-the-science in the most current and

effective methods and should be considered important tools for promoting peace at the community and social level. Nevertheless, expanding on these forgiveness education methods offers additional aspects of pedagogy to promote peace through community-level forgiveness training (Trickett, 2009).

Early community forgiveness education efforts suggested that forgiveness could be taught and effectively promoted in small communities ( $Ns = 100$ ) (Lampton et al., 2005; Stratton et al., 2008). These initiatives incorporated techniques such as the REACH Forgiveness method and other methods as part of community education. A larger community forgiveness education effort ( $N = 1200$ ) showed success when using a variety of forgiveness education and engagement tools and exposing large proportions ( $\cong 50\%$ ) of the community to the work (Griffin et al., 2019). More recent work has shown that community engagement around forgiveness learning activities is key to success (Ortega Bechara et al., 2024). In this community forgiveness education study, 5–13 activities appeared to be the critical amount of engagement for community members. The community forgiveness curriculum included knowledge-based work to better understand forgiveness, online written entries such as journals, forums, and video club forums, watching videos and movies, participating in webinars on forgiveness and related, and supportive topics such as positive psychology, yoga, and mindfulness, and other activities such as posting forgiveness stories or intentions on a forgiveness wall or forgiveness tree, participating in forgiveness mantras, and a social media marathon. Diversity of options for engaging with forgiveness education content is a key in community forgiveness education work as it offers more opportunities for community members to choose activities that they are interested in and connect closely with. Engagement in community forgiveness education is key to bringing about change in individuals that supports change in communities.

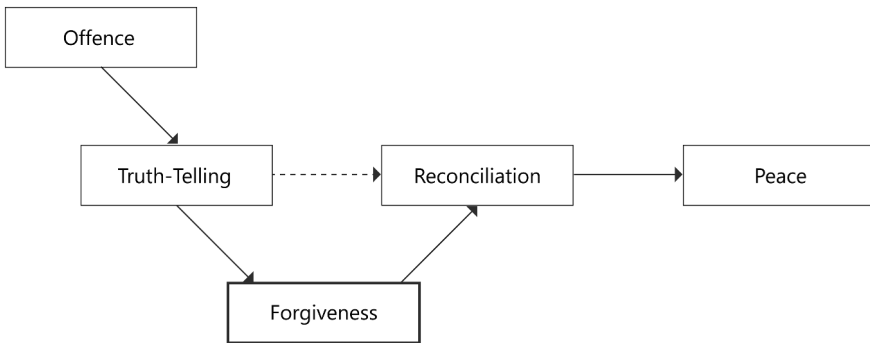
### **Models of forgiveness, hatred, and peace**

There are many ways to consider the connections between forgiveness, hatred, and peace promotion. One model that builds from the logic of the truth and reconciliation commission approach is to see forgiveness as a key cog in the wheel of the truth-telling and reconciliation process (Toussaint & Waldman, 2017, 2019). Often truth and reconciliation have success, but too often participants remain sceptical or uncertain about lasting peace. This occurs because peace processes that are built on reconciliation without a formal and significant component focused on forgiveness are likely fragile. Hatred may still remain, and this emotional state will evoke retaliatory or vengeful thoughts and motivations when challenges to peace arise. A common model for peace through truth and reconciliation might look like Figure 6.1.



**FIGURE 6.1** Model for peace through truth and reconciliation.

*Figure by the author.*



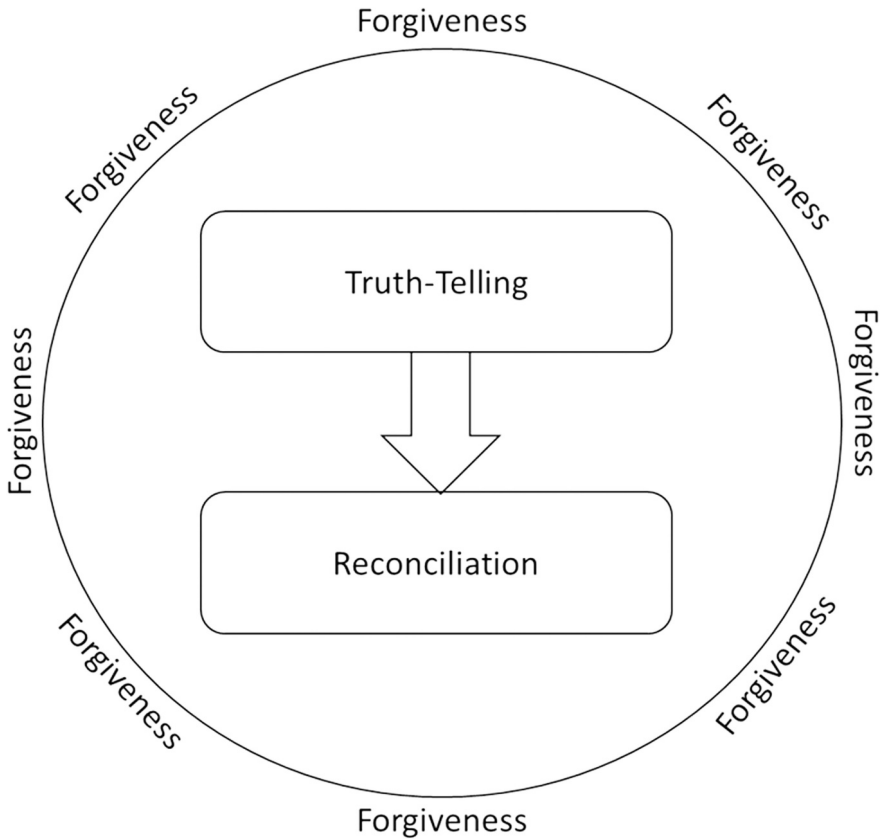
**FIGURE 6.2** Alternative model of peace.

*Figure by the author.*

In Figure 6.1, the assumption is that truth-telling is sufficient to bring about reconciliation and, as a result, peace. Most forgiveness education models would agree that truth-telling and recognizing the hurt is important and necessary, but it is arguably insufficient to elicit reconciliation and peace. Forgiveness stands in the breach between truth-telling and reconciliation and eventual peace and quells hateful emotions, motivations, and thoughts. Forgiveness provides a strong foundation for reconciliation and peace. An alternative model might look like Figure 6.2.

Another conceptualization of the truth-telling and reconciliation model might be that forgiveness is not part of the causal chain of events or part of the sequence of steps leading to peace. Rather, it might be considered the *prerequisite* of truth-telling and reconciliation (see Figure 6.3). Forgiveness might be what is required before an offender feels comfortable sharing the nature of the offense and what they have done, and it might be what is required before a victim feels confident that their response can be one that is just and aimed at reconciliation and peace and not vengeance. Forgiveness might be the foundation on which truth-telling and reconciliation can be used effectively to promote peace in a community or society. One useful





**FIGURE 6.3** Forgiveness as a foundation for truth-telling and reconciliation.

*Figure by the author.*

analogy might be to say that forgiveness is *itself* the culture in which truth-telling, reconciliation, and peacemaking can develop and flourish.

### **Conclusions and ways forward**

Hatred can impede peace. Hatred can be addressed through the development of forgiveness, and forgiveness can be developed through the use of forgiveness education. We are currently developing a curriculum that focuses explicitly on how developing the virtue of forgiveness in individuals can support motivations and experiences of peace. There are two unique aspects to this work. First, the work builds on existing forgiveness education models but offers online tools and web-based technologies to deliver the necessary content. Second, the curriculum aims to specifically build individual levels of forgiveness and to use that learning in forgiveness to support the experience

of peace. Surprisingly, few, if any, curricula have been specifically designed with this two-pronged strategy that synergizes the learning of forgiveness and peace simultaneously. This work is being done jointly with Rotary International ([www.rotary.org](http://www.rotary.org)) and the Forgiveness Foundation ([www.forgivenessfoundation.org](http://www.forgivenessfoundation.org)). Rotary International brings years of experience in promoting peace around the world with multiple peace centers sponsored by the organization. The Forgiveness Foundation brings extensive knowledge and resources for promoting forgiveness, developing forgiveness curricula, and expertise on the integration of forgiveness into personal and community flourishing and peace.

Forgiveness, hatred, and peace promotion are connected in important ways, yet all too often these topics do not intersect. Intentional discussion at scholarly, practice, individual, and community levels is important and should focus on the integration of these areas. The specific use of forgiveness education as a tool to defeat hatred, especially hateful emotions that often motivate violence, and promote peace is an important pursuit. As individuals, communities, and societies continue to recognize the value of peace and as they seek effective means to bring about lasting peace, forgiveness education is an important resource and should be considered a key part of the equation in building peace and promoting flourishing worldwide.

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# 7

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF EMPATHY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PEACEFUL SOCIETY

*Martyna Czarnecka and Mevlüt Aydoğmuş*

### Introduction

At the dawn of the 21st century, the world grapples with myriad tensions, conflicts, and disputes that impact various facets of societal and individual life. Among the array of challenges faced, armed conflicts, with their profound consequences and severe toll on human lives, remain paramount.

*(Leek, 2011, p. 45)*

The trajectory of humanity, the prospects of civilization, and even the essence of human existence hinge fundamentally upon the reinforcement and establishment of global peace. There exists a prevailing belief that no greater imperative confronts humanity than the cultivation of mature, constructive relationships among individuals. Consequently, the pursuit of fostering a culture of coexistence and attaining deeper insights into the experiences of others assumes paramount importance (Leek, 2011). In this context, the central challenge emerges as the construction of a society founded on principles of peace and sustainability. Reflecting on these premises prompts critical questions: What constitutes a peaceful and sustainable society? What are its defining characteristics, and how can it be realized?

From a scientific perspective, the concept of a peaceful society involves promoting prosperity and social justice, which translates into ensuring equal access for all citizens to basic rights and opportunities for development. This is essential for fostering a general sense of security and social stability. According to theories of social development, such an environment nurtures the strengthening of social capital and the forging of interpersonal bonds, which are crucial for the sustainable advancement of humanity. In scientific

discourse, a peaceful society is not merely an abstract ideal but a requisite condition for enduring progress and social harmony (Leek, 2011).

Peaceful conflict resolution and embracing diversity as a value rather than a threat are pivotal components of such a society. Research in the realms of social psychology and sociology suggests that societies actively engaged in peacefully resolving conflicts and promoting diversity demonstrate higher indicators of social well-being and stability (Roszkowska, 2006).

Empathy stands out as one of the foundational elements in cultivating healthy, fulfilling interpersonal relationships and fostering the development of a peaceful society. It is a multifaceted construct currently undergoing analysis and scientific inquiry across various disciplines, including the social sciences, humanities, and medicine. Empathy is commonly defined as the ability to comprehend and share the emotions and needs of others, facilitating a deeper understanding of individuals, the establishment of trust, and serving as a cornerstone in the construction of robust, gratifying social bonds (Kaźmierczak, 2004). Displaying empathy entails accepting and supporting others, irrespective of their differences or needs. It lays the groundwork for a more tranquil and harmonious society, where conflicts are resolved in a civilized manner and diversity is celebrated. Empathy acts as a conduit that connects individuals, enabling effective communication and enhanced mutual comprehension. Its significance extends to various facets of life, both personal and professional.

The primary objective of this paper is to underscore the pivotal role of empathy in the construction of a peaceful society. When combined with acceptance, respect, and understanding, empathy lays the groundwork for fostering a better and more harmonious world.

### **Empathy as the cornerstone of mature social relationships**

Empathy, as an intrinsic aspect of human nature, holds significant sway in the cultivation of mature and gratifying social relationships. Its function as a pathway to understanding, acceptance, and interpersonal closeness is indisputable. In this section, the author will elucidate how empathy shapes relationships and delineate the benefits it confers, both personally and professionally.

The development of empathy commences with an individual's acquisition of the capacity to discern the emotions of others. Even though they may not fully empathize with the situation, they can recognize the emotions being experienced by a particular individual. Understanding the emotions of others yields numerous undeniable advantages in the cultivation of healthy interpersonal relationships. It facilitates the establishment and sustenance of mature social bonds, enabling individuals to demonstrate compassion and understanding, and offer support during challenging times. Moreover, honing the



skill of comprehending others' emotions enhances one's communication abilities, especially in professional settings where empathetic listening and understanding can foster effective collaboration and problem-solving. Additionally, discerning the emotions of others contributes to fostering a positive social milieu, thereby enhancing the quality of familial relationships and friendships and influencing the ambience within social groups or work teams (Maczak, 2003).

A more advanced stage of empathy is co-feeling, which entails the ability to experience emotions in tandem with another individual. When we encounter someone who is sad, empathy enables us to share in that sadness, facilitating the provision of support and enhancing our understanding of the other person's needs and expectations. This heightened empathetic connection increases the likelihood that the assistance provided will be apt and well-suited to the situation (Remiszewska, 2021).

Empathy also serves as a cornerstone in cultivating trust within relationships, which, in turn, forms the bedrock of healthy interpersonal connections. Demonstrating understanding and compassion for the emotions and needs of others fosters trust. When others perceive our willingness to listen and comprehend their perspective, it fortifies bonds, engenders a heightened sense of closeness, and fosters attachment. Empathy enables us to grasp another person's viewpoint, even in situations where disagreement arises. It facilitates constructive communication and conflict resolution by honouring the other individual, whether through seeking compromises or rational solutions (Remiszewska, 2021).

Empathy holds particular importance during challenging times. An empathetic individual can offer support and solace to those experiencing difficulties. Empathetic listening entails focusing on the speaker and asking questions that aid in understanding their perspective and emotions. An empathetic conversationalist refrains from interrupting, judging, or offering preconceived advice, instead allowing the other person to freely express their challenges. Empathy and support during times of adversity are pivotal in the cultivation of mature social relationships. It is an ability that allows one to be present for others during pivotal moments, aiding them in navigating challenges, and fostering relationships built on trust and understanding (Ciechomski, 2020).

Furthermore, empathy significantly influences the success of cooperation and teamwork. It facilitates a deeper understanding and appreciation of differences within a group, thereby fostering effective collaboration. Moreover, empathy aids in comprehending and embracing cultural diversity, thereby promoting respect for various perspectives and forging connections between diverse communities (Goleman, 1999).

In summary, empathy plays a vital role in nurturing healthy and mature social relationships. Its importance in this realm is indisputable, enabling individuals to draw closer, communicate effectively, understand one another,

and forge resilient bonds. Understanding and compassion form the bedrock upon which enduring and fulfilling interpersonal connections are built, consequently fostering a society where individuals feel secure.

### **Empathy in education**

Empathy plays a pivotal role in the social education of children and adolescents. Preventive or educational programs aimed at fostering empathy primarily seek to cultivate interpersonal and social skills. Teachers play a crucial role in creating an environment conducive to empathy development (Ciechomski, 2017). They incorporate various exercises into their classes, such as role-playing, exploring literature featuring characters in diverse situations, and facilitating open discussions on challenging social topics, providing students with opportunities to grasp the emotions of others. It's noteworthy that teachers, in nurturing empathy in students, employ diverse methods and techniques, including brainstorming, problem-solving approaches, case studies, expression and impression methods, and emotion-focused strategies (Stańdo & Szałowska-Murmyło, 2017). Other methods for fostering empathy in students involve utilizing films and stories that depict cultural diversity and life experiences, aiding children in understanding differing perspectives (Wesoł, 2021).

To cultivate empathy in children, it's essential to develop a set of skills necessary for the child to attain the maximum range of empathic abilities. [...] Emphasizing the personal resources of the child (e.g., understanding emotions, self-control mechanisms) as well as situationally triggered action scripts – cognitive-emotional and situational factors – procedures, individual and group norms. Additionally, attention should be given to the communicative aspect of the empathic process, including the ability to convey empathy in relation to other individuals.

*(Ciechomski, 2017, p. 5)*

Considering these aspects, nurturing empathy in children is grounded in educational interactions aimed at acquiring a spectrum of skills, with the overarching objective of enhancing relationships with the environment. Through empathy training and programs, students acquire knowledge about emotions, develop the ability to recognize and label emotions in themselves and others, and gain insights into behaviors and strategies for managing various emotions. These interactions foster heightened emotional awareness in students. Additionally, stimulating imagination and cultivating reflective skills are integral to empathy development. During training, children learn to anticipate the consequences of their actions by examining different scenarios and moral dilemmas. This enables them to contemplate how their moral

decisions may impact their own values and those of others, thereby shaping their capacity to empathetically comprehend and foresee the ramifications of their actions within a broader social context. Moreover, it's crucial for teachers, in fostering empathy in students, to propose exercises that hone the ability to adopt someone else's perspective. This skill aids in mitigating egocentrism in children and enables them to grasp another person's viewpoint. By fostering cognitive decentration, students establish positive relationships with their environment, teachers, and peers and make decisions while considering perspectives other than their own.

Currently, numerous educational programs focused on fostering empathy in children and adolescents are being implemented in schools. In October 2023, the 4th edition of the Nationwide Educational Project Emp@thic Class was launched, targeting primary and secondary school students. The primary objective of the project is to instill loyalty, cooperation, and helpfulness attitudes in students (Regulations of the Nationwide Educational Project Emp@thic Class, 2023/2024). Additionally, anti-discrimination programs are being conducted in Polish schools to combat all forms of discrimination and promote empathy toward individuals with diverse characteristics, including gender, sexual orientation, origin, or disability. Given our multicultural society, an increasing number of schools are integrating educational programs that promote understanding and acceptance of different cultures. These programs emphasize fostering empathy and respect for cultural diversity (Goleman, 1999). Many schools also encourage their students to engage in volunteer activities, which can aid in empathy development by contributing to the welfare of others and communities. The value of these activities in fostering empathy in children is substantial. This is supported by scientific studies indicating that students participating in social skills teaching programs focused on empathy demonstrate better conflict resolution abilities, improved relationships with peers and teachers, and higher self-esteem (Prokopiuk, 2018). Additionally, numerous studies on empathy in the context of social education analyze its impact on students' quality of life and life satisfaction (Wilczek-Rużyczka, 2002). Various analyses also demonstrate that a high level of empathy correlates with engagement in actions for others. Conversely, individuals with lower levels of empathy may exhibit a greater propensity for aggressive and antisocial behaviors. Therefore, empathy is regarded as a valuable social asset. Hence, there is significant emphasis on nurturing this skill, especially in creating a healthy environment for children, supporting them during challenging situations, and helping them overcome difficulties. By nurturing children with empathy, we equip them to be sensitive, willing to assist others, capable of collaboration, and able to forge successful social relationships. Empathetic children can provide better support to one another, demonstrate interest in others' issues, and offer more appropriate forms of assistance. Emphasizing the communicative aspect of empathy, let us teach

children how to express supportive messages, enabling them to listen empathetically and respond to difficult situations empathetically, providing emotional support to others (Ciechomski, 2017).

In conclusion, integrating empathy into the educational process is undoubtedly an investment in the future of any society. It brings unequivocal benefits at both the individual and societal levels. The significance of empathy in building a peaceful society cannot be overstated. By teaching children empathy in school, we, as adults, enable them to respond with understanding, openness, and respect to the needs of others. Education rooted in empathy paves the way for constructing a more peaceful, comprehensible, and inclusive society (Wesołowska, 2003).

### **Empathy as a tool for building a peaceful society**

Given the aforementioned considerations, there is no doubt that teaching and developing empathy stand as one of the most crucial tools for constructing a peaceful society. In today's globalized and diverse world, the ability to approach others empathetically becomes increasingly vital. Teaching empathy transcends theory and evolves into a practical endeavour that can and should be fostered at various levels of society, beginning with the education of the youngest in preschools and schools, extending to international politics. It is a value capable of transforming the world for the better, leading to a safe, comprehensible, respectful, and tolerant society. However, achieving this goal necessitates a series of actions, employing various strategies and tools to cultivate an empathetic approach toward fellow citizens (Rosenberg, 2008).

One of the primary tools for nurturing empathy is education. Therefore, educational institutions should integrate content into their teaching programs that facilitates understanding and empathy toward others. These activities can manifest in various forms, including personal development classes, anti-discrimination workshops, and lessons on intercultural understanding.

Additionally, it is crucial to organize training and workshops for different social groups, including public sector employees, educators, and healthcare workers, where they can learn how to apply empathy in their professional practice.

Another step involves promoting empathy in media and culture. Supporting social campaigns that propagate empathy and intercultural understanding through advertisements, movies, and TV programs can be effective. Encouraging the creation and promotion of literature, films, and art that depict the diversity of life experiences and cultures also contributes to empathy development in society.

The third area for nurturing empathy in society entails implementing and intensively developing social programs and volunteering. Establishing cultural exchange and international cooperation programs that facilitate

understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity is imperative. Encouraging participation in volunteer activities, which allows direct contact with different social groups and promotes empathy through practical experiences, is also significant.

Leveraging new technologies is valuable for fostering empathy in society. Utilizing mobile applications and online platforms through educational games and simulations can teach an understanding of others' emotions, co-feeling, constructive conflict resolution, and assertive behavior. The use of VR technology to simulate various life experiences can enhance the ability to empathize with the situations of other people.

Furthermore, developing communication skills is essential. Organizing workshops and training in soft skills such as communication, conflict resolution, and negotiation, which are fundamental in building empathy, is necessary. Promoting open dialogue and exchange between different social groups contributes to a better understanding of different perspectives, tolerance, and respect.

Collaboration with non-governmental organizations working to promote empathy and intercultural understanding is also crucial. Financing social projects and initiatives is an essential aspect of this collaboration.

Lastly, attention should be given to the realm of politics and legislation. Creating laws and regulations that support empathy and understanding in society, such as anti-discrimination laws and equality promotion, is essential. Including empathy in political decisions and public policy-making is crucial.

In conclusion, developing an empathetic approach toward fellow citizens is a multifaceted process that requires engagement on many social levels and dimensions of life. An interdisciplinary approach to the problem, combining all the aforementioned steps – education, culture, technology, communication, support for social organizations, and politics – is necessary to create an environment conducive to empathy building. Only through the collaboration of different sectors can an empathetic approach be effectively developed, leading to a mature, integrated, and peaceful society.

## **Conclusion**

In summarizing the above considerations, it is crucial to highlight that empathy serves as the cornerstone upon which a society characterized by peace, mutual understanding, and harmony can be erected. It transcends being merely a personal attribute; rather, it stands as a potent tool with immense social potential. Endeavouring to cultivate empathy in daily interactions, education, professional endeavours, and public policy is undeniably an investment in a brighter future for society as a whole.

Empathy can also be regarded as a guiding light leading toward a more interconnected, compassionate, and tranquil world. It contributes to the

establishment of a sustainable society by averting conflicts, championing inclusivity, nurturing social responsibility, and fostering cross-cultural comprehension. Developing empathy in individuals is undoubtedly a challenging and time-consuming endeavour. It necessitates substantial dedication, interdisciplinary collaboration across various spheres, and a steadfast belief in its efficacy. Nonetheless, it holds paramount significance for the welfare of society and future generations.

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# 8

## SHAPING A CULTURE OF PEACE AS AN EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGE

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### **Introduction**

The topics addressed in this chapter revolve around the relevance of promoting or spreading a culture of peace and educating people about peace. Until now, issues related to peace have been taken up within the humanities and social sciences, which is clearly a reaction to the experience of the great totalitarianism of the 20th century. Such supranational organizations as the United Nations make ensuring world peace their goal. However, it should be borne in mind that establishing such organizational structures and their activities still does not prevent all conflicts. It is necessary to educate all generations for peace. Thus, one of the arguments for continuing to address the topic of peace is the memory of the persistent effects of both world wars, which for the countries of the Eastern European bloc lasted almost until the end of the last century. Another argument for the theme of building a culture of peace is the ongoing war in Ukraine, which began with Russia's onslaught in February 2022, and the current armed conflict in Israel. Finally, the socio-cultural conditions that characterize our modern times, referred to as a risky society, are another reason to examine this topic. This risk is the context of our life, an integral part of it, and is one of the conditions of postmodernity. It is ingrained and will not go away; it can only deepen or periodically focus on some selected areas of human life.

Thus, the purpose of the chapter is to show the relevance of developing a culture of peace through selected institutions responsible for education and to propose specific practices that can be used in the school space to build a culture of peace. First, the specifics of the current socio-cultural conditions characterized by risks and threats will be presented to provide background

and context. Then the issues of peace and the culture of peace will be addressed from the perspective of defining and interpreting them. Further, the role of education and self-education will be pointed out as important factors on which the development of a culture of peace depends. And in conclusion, ways of building a culture of peace in the school space will be proposed.

### **Risk in modern society and the relevance of peace efforts**

In 1986, Ulrich Beck wrote about the fact that reality and the world are entering a new era, the “post” era, where the previously known understanding of science and technology, the traditional forms of living within the nuclear family and working within a profession, as well as the established divisions of male and female roles, are becoming a thing of the past (Beck, 2002). Although new ways of life have emerged, they are accompanied by a spirit of uncertainty. Beck spotted risk in various spheres of human life, starting with his individual family and work situation and extending to the global situation. He noted that individuals must form their own biography, determine the path they take through life, and make constant choices. This is because they can achieve a lot, but they can also lose a lot. Life has become a personal project, which by its very definition is a risky and innovative endeavour. We assume the goal, but we have no certainty that we will achieve it (Pawlak, 2006). Thus, it is a kind of experiment that is fraught with uncertainty. An individual starting a family must reckon with the fact that it will not be for life. They also choose a job that may change in some time. It is not uncommon that individuals no longer choose a profession, for this is associated with a certain constancy and continuity despite the change of workplace. Uncertainty also applies to the broader context: the threat of war, terrorist attacks, climate change, and its consequences, and the threat of loss of health and life. In addition, and perhaps above all, people are accompanied by an inherent awareness of these threats, as well as an awareness of what is happening in the world and how many disasters and tragedies are occurring, and this, too, is overwhelming for people. This condition is intensified by the widespread access to the Internet, mainly on smartphones, which accompany people nearly always and everywhere, connecting them to a myriad of information. In the late 1990s, Stanislaw Lem predicted that this excess could prove overwhelming (Lem, 1999) and counterproductive for humans. Pierre Levy also referred to this then-impending, and now-present, circumstance as a “deluge of information without end” and an “ocean of bottomless information” (Levy, 2005, 374). One way of dealing with this excess is the mechanism of the reverberation booth or selective focus (Szpunar, 2014).

On the one hand, people have adapted to a life of constant tension and stress and have learned to function in a reality that is uncertain. That is the reason why individuals save money for the so-called “black hour” and have



some sort of contingency plan (at least designed in their minds) in case of job loss or illness. This is also helped by individualism and self-reliance, expressed in the unpleasant but extremely popular opinion that it is best to count on oneself. Individualism is a defence mechanism but also a condition that shows a person left to their own devices, with no ties or attachment to traditional institutions, such as religion, which in their essence are there to provide support. There are also several safeguards, such as taking out life insurance and securing bank accounts and one's personal information; there are institutions and services that take care of social security and many other things. This adaptation to risk also manifests itself in flexibility, which is a desirable value in the labor market. Flexibility is expected of the employee, and this, as Elisabeth Dunn conceded, means that the individual constructs themselves, selects, and changes their competencies (Dunn, 2008). Flexibility thus becomes a desirable trait not only of the employee but also of the personality (Dunn, 2008). It also becomes a way of identifying others (Ukłańska, 2022), in which those who are, in various areas of life, unsuited or averse to constant change and risk being rejected. Constancy and certainty are no longer an advantage.

On the other hand, individuals also bear the cost of this uncertainty. Stress is one of the leading causes of cancer (Surman & Janik, 2017), and an increasing number of mental disorders or diseases seem to have their determinants precisely in constant tension. This maladjustment also manifests itself in various addictions, including the Internet, smartphones, and computer games (Andrzejewska & Bednarek, 2014). Others include escaping from the real world into the virtual world, or a disorder diagnosed in Japanese society associated with social withdrawal (from work, social relationships, education, and daily life) referred to as *hikikomori* (Szluz, 2018, 82). It is noted that this syndrome mainly affects young people, for whom instilled traditional rules and norms do not work in the current reality and labor market. It is a type of anomic behavior (Furlong, 2008).

People accept that at the expense of prosperity and self-realization, there is risk and uncertainty, as well as anxiety in everyday life. However, the COVID-19 pandemic and the war on Europe's doorstep, as well as the massive problem of emigration from the African continent, must have made people realize that not everything can be controlled, that disasters also affect the world of Western culture and are no longer just an experience of hyper-reality in Baudrillard's sense (Melosik, 1996). All these elements are not irrelevant to human beings and their psychological well-being. Less than 30 years after Ulrich Beck's words, this change has already occurred in part and is continuing, for as Pierre Levy stated, "the idea of a permanent land is antediluvian" (Levy, 2005, 374). For this is a process, similar to the revolution in science that Thomas Kuhn wrote about (Kuhn, 1996), which involves a paradigm shift. Thus, the paradigm for seeing the surrounding reality is changing. A spirit of uncertainty inherently accompanies this

change in terms of the consequences not only for the duration of societies but also for individuals.

The need for peace, then, is felt by the individual and people at all levels of their functioning. Is such a state of permanent change – a state supported by digital technologies and referred to as the Fourth Industrial Revolution, in which the world currently finds itself (Schwab, 2018) – a reality that, although it offers humans many safeguards, can give them peace? Peace as a value is to be sought, pursued, negotiated, and dialogued about to ensure its durability. It seems that without support from various educational, cultural, historical, religious, and political institutions, this is not possible.

### **Peace and the culture of peace**

The concept of “peace” is considered by many scientific disciplines, such as political science, sociology, philosophy, and theology, as well as within other fields; for example, those related to security or military affairs. The humanities and social sciences in particular present a wide variety of positions regarding an understanding of peace, even if this condition is evident only within philosophy itself (Sieńkowski, 2021). It was in the 20th century because of the two world wars that a deep reflection on the condemnation of war was undertaken and efforts to care for peace began. The need for peace and security after World War II is the foundation of the United Nations (Web 1). The study of peace and concern for peace thus became an interest of the social sciences (Boulding, 1964). The essence of this research was the creation of a system of lasting peace, especially regarding international peace. Social systems are the right structures to ensure lasting peace in the appropriate subsystem, such as in the family, in the state, and the largest and closed system, i.e., the population in the global sense (Boulding, 1964). Peace is a multilevel concept, which means that one can consider individual peace (i.e., internal to a person), peace between people (interpersonal), peace between a person and the environment, intra-group peace (social peace), peace between states and between nations, and peace on a global scale (Stańczyk, 2003).

In dictionary and colloquial terms, “peace” is the opposite of war (SJP, n.d.). Intuitively, however, we know that the absence of war is still not enough to constitute peace. A state of tension, lack of readiness for dialogue, mutual resentment or contempt, lack of a sense of community or solidarity, or responsibility for these values – even without open war – doesn’t equate to a state of peace. Peace is the absolute good of people, nations, and the state. Its absence denies its value and leads to the destruction of human life (Kukułka, 1984). Thomas Aquinas saw the preservation of peace as the goal of the state (Kondrakiewicz, 2006). The Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations also refers to peace, making it a tool for the security and development of all societies and social groups in the world (Web 1). A broad

conception of peace is presented by John Amos Comenius (Jan Amos Komeński) and assumes that it is “a situation in which people (or other creatures) can enjoy what they have, in freedom, a sense of security, without pressure from others, in the most favorable conditions of life” (Komeński, 1964, 140). In the current scientific reflection on peace, attention is paid to such issues (Piejka, 2017) as the fact that it is a process rather than a state; it is not given once and for all; it has a micro dimension (concerning the individual) and a macro dimension (relations and groups); it has a universal character – it is a right to which everyone is entitled but also an obligation of every person; caring for peace is an expression of concern for the quality of human life and a call for the value of peace; reflection on ensuring peace and its permanence is interdisciplinary.

Considering what constitutes a culture of peace should begin by defining the concept of culture itself. In sociology and anthropology, there are many positions that capture culture through the prism of a particular paradigm and within it through the prism of theory. To narrow the scope of the subject, it should be assumed that culture has both an intangible and a material aspect. Thus, it is a complex whole, consisting of “knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, custom, and all other skills and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (Tylor, 1871, 13), as well as “objects, symbols, and tools” (Giddens, 2004, 45). Together, these elements form people’s living space, context, and medium of communication. Therefore, culture is defined as “the domain of society in which shared meanings are produced” (Kroeber & Parsons, 1958, 582–583). In sociological terms, then, peace culture revolves around a value that humans strive for and nurture: peace. This is achieved by acting individually and in groups, taking action, and producing various objects and symbols. Thus, there will be both a material and an ideal aspect to the culture of peace. This means that it is expressed and disseminated through works of art, for example, as well as through the symbols and meanings they transmit.

The promotion and development of a culture of peace is the task of many transnational and social organizations. A culture of peace is understood as

a culture of coexistence and sharing based on the principles of freedom, justice and democracy, tolerance and solidarity; a culture that rejects violence, seeks to prevent conflicts at their source and solve problems through dialogue and negotiation; a culture that ensures full rights for all and the opportunity to participate fully in the endogenous development of society.

*(Mayor, 2001, 468)*

Thus, the culture of peace is constructive, to be built, and is not a program of fighting for peace (Wojnar, 2000). It is seen as a norm of coexistence for all people and as an educational goal (Nikitorowicz, 2022). Supranational entities specifically established for this purpose shape the culture of peace, the culture

of dialogue and negotiation, as well as those entities that cultivate the culture of peace “incidentally” through other fundamental goals that guide them. Agnieszka Piejka notes that the essence of building a culture of peace is the skills, predisposition, and individual responsibility for the pursuit of this value (Piejka, 2021). Thus, shaping it has an individual dimension – it is the individual, through a series of activities undertaken daily, who can build and participate in this culture. It then has an interpersonal or local dimension when activities are undertaken within the immediate community in which one lives. It can also have a network dimension, which is also enabled by digital technologies, such as instant messaging and social media. Within the popularization of the culture of peace, networking allows specific people to “go beyond” their local space and reach out to others with various initiatives. It is possible to reach out and “infect” others with their ideas (here fandom can be helpful) who are not directly known but similarly perceive the responsibility of promoting peace. The analysis of networks involving so-called weak ties (links between individuals who are socially and sometimes spatially distant from each other) shows that these networks are very effective and efficient (Jamielniak, 2019), so they can also prove themselves in the task of popularizing the culture of peace.

### **Education as a space for learning the culture of peace**

Education is a process that takes place in formal institutions established to transmit knowledge and educate individuals. Education is also an institution, that is, a complex set of tasks, relationships, and functions that society undertakes regarding its members so that they can function and develop themselves efficiently within it. It is of interest to the state and to smaller social groups and individuals. Education also has a supra-state dimension in some subjects. Related to education is its individual dimension, for which each person is responsible: that is, self-education. This seems to be the most important part of education – the understanding of its need and the desire that comes from a conscious will to develop and educate oneself. The fact that there are educational systems supported by several educational tools, artefacts, and methods does not yet mean that everyone involved in the process of this education will see it as a value and use it effectively to develop themselves. It is therefore important to arouse the need for self-education and show the advantages it brings. Likewise, this is the case with organizations working for peacebuilding at various levels of society: unless self-education for peace takes place, unless we “start with ourselves” by forming in ourselves an attitude of dialogue and openness oriented towards understanding, not conflict, these organizations will not be effective. Shaping a culture of peace through education thus begins with influencing thinking and attitudes (Piejka, 2017).

Education for peace is one of the most important tasks that is set to be carried out in the 21st century (Wojnar, 2000). This path should begin with

knowing and understanding one's own culture and identity in order to understand other cultures and the identities formed by them (Nikitorowicz, 2022). Such cognition will be an enrichment of the self, a path to understanding other cultures and openness to them, and will contribute to the development of a culture of peace. In the process of developing a culture of peace through education, there are many actors who have an important role to play. The first entity is the individual's immediate environment, the primary group, family, and loved ones. It is this group that makes a person a social being, shows him ways to communicate, teaches him meanings, and takes care of him physically and mentally. The family and those closest to them are those entities that also take care of children's education – they take care to show its importance in life and pass on certain values. It is therefore up to them to shape and stimulate peaceful values in children.

The state is also an entity that educates through the curriculum in schools at all levels. Programs should therefore be rich in themes that build a culture of peace. This takes on particular importance in the face of the war in Eastern Europe. This does not mean, however, that school programs must avoid topics that are difficult and historically or socially controversial. On the contrary, they should use appropriate tools to build an atmosphere of dialogue and peace rather than inciting violence. An important task therefore faces subjects such as history, social and cultural knowledge, ethics, and religion. These are the ones that state structures should particularly recognize as important in building a culture of peace. After all, it is within the humanities and social sciences that the fundamental reflection on how to build peace and how to develop a culture of peace takes place. The situation of the war in Ukraine and the armed conflict in Israel should indeed serve as important arguments for expanding these subjects to include problematic threads related to taking care of security, avoiding violence, and establishing cooperation and solidarity. These are real external threats that cannot be overlooked in favor of pointing out only problems of a socio-cultural nature. History, therefore, cannot get away with being an unnecessary subject at school in today's reality, which is focused on creativity and innovation. It is precisely the knowledge of historical events and their consequences that should present the best lessons in what not to return to and what mistakes to avoid. The importance of history and experience especially reveals itself in situations that are difficult for cultures, nations, or states, in situations of threatening conflict and totalitarianism. On the other hand, it is worth rethinking the ways in which we teach it because today's young digital natives (Prensky, 2001) acquire knowledge in a different way than by reading books. If we, as digital immigrants, want to connect with young people, we cannot "take offense" at the hybrid reality that surrounds us (Morbiter, 2016), but rather should start using it skilfully.

Here appears another subject, very important in the process of building a culture of peace – the teacher, the educator – who is the "link" between the

educational system and the individual world of the student. The role of the teacher is therefore difficult because, in addition to hard competencies, they must possess soft competencies. They must be able to negotiate, be sensitive, and observe the class. In particular, the educator spends a considerable amount of time with the students, observes them, knows them, and can respond to their behavior. Nurturing the relationships between students is an excellent opportunity to get to know them individually and cultivate a culture of peace among them. The argument that today's school is massive and that teachers are entangled in many non-teaching tasks is not sufficient here. Currently, there are many teachers who are concerned about the well-being of their students and promote integration within the classroom, as the main secondary group in which the child learns how to act in relation to others without the presence of parents. Teachers strive to ensure that conflicts are clarified and resolved and that the classroom is a community where everyone cares about each other. This is good peace-building teaching.

As mentioned earlier, the individual themselves plays a crucial role in embracing this culture. They must be inclined towards self-education and taught how to educate themselves. It is necessary for individuals to be taught in such a way that they become self-reflective and can steer their own lives (Denek, 1999). This can be achieved if the above-mentioned entities are consistent in promoting the idea of self-education, working together, and fulfilling the tasks of promoting a culture of peace.

## Summary

The reality in which we live presents many dangers and risks that individuals experience across various levels of life, starting from the sphere of internal experiences and ending with terrorism and war. The individual is surrounded by many destructive phenomena, which are also harmful to their social relations (Dobrychłop & Jędrzejko, 2017). Therefore, it is even more important to nurture internal peace and cultivate interpersonal and intergroup peace. Dialogue, tolerance, inclusion, negation of violence, community, and abandonment of all prejudices are values that should be promoted in a variety of ways as part of spreading a culture of peace. Here, we should agree with Agnieszka Piejka that the existence of this peace depends largely on personality traits, predispositions, and abilities that are shaped in the process of upbringing and education, as well as self-education. The dissemination culture of peace represents a universal idea and one of the goals of the education process (Bałandynowicz & Thomas, 2023).

Numerous methods and practices related to building a culture of peace have already been proposed elsewhere. The field game, which has been successfully used in universities and high schools, can also be implemented in school settings. One such proposal could be a LARP (*Live Action, Role-Playing*) game

(Pisarek, 2021), which can be played within a school classroom or school community. The game involves collectively creating a storyline that can explore various contexts – historical, fantasy, or realistic. It may also be focused on one issue, such as the struggle between good and evil or the effects of violence or lying. LARPs can take place within school premises or in locations linked to the theme being explored. In addition to the fact that their purpose can become to show the role of peace, tolerance, and understanding based on a specific example, the players – students who participate in the game – “enter” their role, identify with the characters, integrate, and learn empathy. Games as a form of art and entertainment are characterized by flexibility, so it is relatively easy to use them to discuss an issue with the class. Perhaps this form of telling about difficult historical events has a chance to reach digital natives.

In addition to illustrating the roles of peace, tolerance, and understanding through specific examples, LARPs allow students to “enter” their roles, identify with the characters, integrate, and learn empathy. As a form of art and entertainment, games are characterized by flexibility, making it relatively easy to use them to discuss various issues with the class. This form of storytelling about difficult historical events may have a chance to reach digital natives effectively.

Social media can also be used to promote a culture of peace. Social networks are tools that are used for communication, but of course, they also present many dangers and pathological behaviors. One of them is cyberbullying, a form of peer violence that takes place online (Pyżalski, 2012). Another is the spread of verbal vitriol known as “hate”. These are examples showing that a culture of peace can also be shattered through digital technologies. But like any human invention, the Internet is ambivalent, so it can and does have positive effects. In this case, it is worth using it to spread a culture of peace and educate for peace (Wolińska & Büssing, 2023). Being a teacher and educator, it is worth taking up with students the problem of social media and its misuse, which is precisely what disrupts the culture of peace and is not conducive to community building. Thus, it can be suggested to students to think about what groups on social networks they participate in, whether they are filled with verbal violence or violent images. It’s also worth encouraging them not to write malicious, hateful comments under posts with which they disagree. Cyberspace, including social media, allows people to engage in communities and groups that work for the common good and peace. This is also how young people see one of the roles of social media – as a space that allows them to get involved in causes they care about and show their authenticity. This opportunity is also provided by fandom, understood as a fan-generated collective, a set of social, cultural, and communication phenomena which are passionate, committed, creative, and technologically competent (Lisowska-Magdziarz, 2017). Fandom is a community of participation. It is formed by web users who want to share their passions, and they do so by writing books,

sharing knowledge, creating databases, recording podcasts, and organizing fundraisers for charity. This grassroots phenomenon on the web makes its users prosumers, those who actively produce content. This is also an opportunity to foster a culture of dialogue, tolerance, and peace. Indeed, it has been pointed out that fandom is one of the most effective tools for cultural education (Lisowska-Magdziarz, 2017).

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## **PART 2**

# Ethical, Religious, and Axiological Approaches to Peace Education



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# 9

## THE COMMON GOOD AS A PREREQUISITE FOR SOCIAL PEACE AND ITS ROLE IN EDUCATION FOR PEACE

A discussion on Jonathan Haidt's moral foundations theory (MFT)

*Maria Małgorzata Boużyk*

Following the life of Western societies, we see their dangerous polarisation. It is expressed in a Manichean differentiation of attitudes towards moral issues. Social tensions not infrequently turn into a kind of cultural and political war. In this context, the need of the moment seems to be a debate on the principles of building social peace. It is necessary to look for common values that can unite the feuding parties. I will present my suggestions in this regard in a discussion with the concept of moral foundations proposed by American cultural psychologist Jonathan Haidt by drawing attention to the role of intellectuality and emotionality in human moral life and ultimately to the issue of the common good as a prerequisite for social peace.

Haidt poses a question which, I believe, troubles many of us: why are good people divided by religion and politics? I will note that the word “divide” is present in this question. So Haidt is not asking why we differ, but why human relations in a democratic society are breaking. The answer that he offers to the question can boil down to the fact that we fail to be moral pluralists and lock ourselves into our own moral matrices, built around certain key values. We are not aware that the catalogue of moral foundations is more diverse. The researcher singles out five of them (MFT) (and later in his argument, six): fairness, care, loyalty, authority, sanctity, and later, liberty. Corresponding to these are antagonistic values: inequality, harm, betrayal, subversion, degradation, and later, oppression.

The origin of these foundations will be explained later, as it would clarify the model of anthropology to which Haidt adheres, and this is not the most important at the beginning of my analysis. First, I would like to emphasise Haidt's perceived potential for social good enshrined in the

mentioned moral foundations. This is implied by the very title of the book: *the Righteous Mind*, as well as the term “good people” in the phrase accompanying the title.

### **The social determinants of moral beliefs**

With conflicts on the rise, is it still possible to return to peaceful solutions? The American psychologist Jonathan Haidt has his own proposal. He argues that the path to understanding is through the social awareness of a layer of morality common to all people and transcending the differences of the matrices. This thought leads him to make an effort to define the aforementioned moral foundations that determine the attitudes of supporters of political parties. He is convinced that moral foundations theory (MFT), while explaining the determinants of moral-political options, should help people go beyond the moral matrices and find a thread of understanding.

How does the adoption of one moral option or the other come about? Haidt notes that some values are activated as early as childhood, others only in adulthood, creating a moral matrix characteristic of each person. Therefore, growing up, for example, in a WEIRD society (Western, Educated, Industrialised, Rich, and Democratic), a person becomes proficient in the typical ethics of that society and is sensitive to all types of oppression and inequality. Only subsequent life experiences open them up to other values.

Being locked in a matrix results in moralising towards opponents and destructive tensions, where, Haidt notes, the human mind switches to the “fight mode”. But does the psychological knowledge of human behaviour provide a sufficient basis for transcending the social barriers that exist? Don’t we need a broader humanistic perspective to set in motion human self-development processes?

This direction of anthropological reflection is argued for by Polish philosopher Tadeusz Ślipko, who deals with classical ethics. Although, like Haidt, he writes about the dependence of human judgements on social interactions, he emphasises intellectualism in moral theory (Ślipko, 2021). While Haidt tries to describe, based on psychological research, the catalogue of “moral flavours” (this is how he defines moral foundations) common to various moral matrices, Ślipko argues for the existence of an objective moral order (metamorality) as superior to the moral systems functioning in social consciousness (in Haidt’s terminology: the moral matrix) (Ślipko, 2021).

Is it too hasty to abandon classical ethics today when the question of social peace is raised? Obviously, the criteria for the rightness and validity of moral judgements should not be primarily based on their direct reliance on objective principles or natural law but on the socially determined systems of judgements, norms, and role models. Our moral consciousness is largely or entirely formed by societal impact, even when we challenge

existing rules. Confirmation of this process can be found in the socially preferred systems of upbringing. The current battles over Polish education are a good example of this: progressive and conservative options compete with each other. Nevertheless, it may be worth returning to the wisdom reflection of the classics to find the rationale behind the possibility of getting to know the objective order of values and to return to the synergy of truth and goodness, which is significant in social upbringing. All the more so because in Haidt's theory one can see the desire of a researcher concerned about the state of contemporary culture to find some foundation of human morality.

### The intellectual and emotional aspects of education for social peace

Haidt attempts to isolate the moral foundations common (in potential dimension) to all people. He sees this as an opportunity to build agreements across social divides which involve the diversity of materialisation of the potential of these foundations (natural moral pluralism). To begin my discussion with his theory, I will first draw attention to its anthropological basis. To this end, I will focus on two passages from Haidt's text in which he gives advice for transforming hostile attitudes in people:

If you really want to change someone's mind on a moral or political matter, you'll need to see things from that person's angle as well as your own. And if you do truly see it the other person's way – deeply and **intuitively** – you might even find your own mind opening in response. **Empathy** is an antidote to righteousness, although it's very difficult to empathize across moral divide.

*(Haidt, 2012, 63) [bold – author MMB]*

and:

If you want to understand another group, *follow the sacredness* [what is valuable to them – MMB's explanation]. As a first step, think about the six moral foundations, and try to figure out which one or two are carrying the most weight in a particular controversy. And if you really want to open your mind, open your **heart** [bold – author MMB] first. If you can have at least one friendly interaction with a member of the 'other' group, you'll find it far easier to listen to what they're saying, and maybe even see a controversial issue in a new light. You may not agree, but you'll probably shift from Manichean disagreement to a more respectful and constructive yin-yang disagreement.

*(Haidt, 2012, 325)*

The words I singled out in the quotes – “empathy”, “intuitively”, and “heart” – designate the area in which, as Haidt suggests, we are to seek understanding in the name of social peace.

Is it a rational discourse? No, it is rather an area of emotions, intuition, and empathy, which can only open up an understanding of minds, curbing partisan moralising. Evoking not only the images of political rallies and demonstrations imbued with emotions but also the ideological rabidness of community members, an increase in empathy would be welcome. How to achieve this? Haidt gives a clue: it can be achieved through a kind of emotional rapprochement, i.e., empathy combined with an awareness of moral foundations, since rational argumentation is always entangled in a specific moral matrix. It is hardly surprising that Haidt as a psychologist sees the power of feelings and the process of rationalising our choices under their dictates. Nevertheless, it is worth asking whether the indicated relationship (feelings – mind) is a sufficient basis for extrapolating psychological dependencies to the matter of even philosophical considerations, which in my opinion Haidt does.

Haidt himself reveals the philosophical trail of his argument, referring to Hume’s theory as opposed to Plato’s rationalism. What he fails to recognise is the greater complexity of philosophical moral theories. Plato certainly was the inspiration for the rational model, but further data were analysed by his successors (e.g., Aristotle): it was recognised that the theoretical dimension of cognition (knowledge) is different from the practical cognition that determines the dynamics of moral life. It is not enough to know to do well. Desires, including our sensuality, are also involved in our choices, and feelings sometimes pre-empt our practical judgements (about what we should do). They can even affect scientific (theoretical) cognition, even though they should be avoided in this area. Thus, a person should not be examined selectively in terms of a certain characteristic (feelings and reason), because the person is a psychophysical unity.

The tradition of classical philosophy, which has been preserved to the present day, has been able to accommodate the element of reason’s entrapment in feelings without simultaneously giving them primacy in the moral sphere, as Haidt declares. According to this tradition, a strong feeling, such as anger, can force reason to invent a way to retaliate, fear – to paralyse thinking, the desire for pleasure – to divert from the true good. In the ordinary course of life, feelings are also active, and their participation in our decision-making can be felt. We may even experience a certain tension – a kind of bargaining between reason and feelings. Nevertheless, the intellectualism of classical ethics does not contradict the possibility of communicating with them, and therefore the regulation of emotionality. Its role (positive and negative) in human action is appreciated, and it is seen as a matter of upbringing, shaping character in order to realise human freedom. While virtue will

serve this process, vice will give feelings (and other sensory factors, such as imagination) the mandate to govern human conduct.

Therefore, it is both legitimate to say that feelings blind us and that they carry us. Stoic apathy is not a desirable state at all. It is rather a matter of emotional balance achieved by streamlining feelings into constant cooperation with reason, recognising the true good (and with the will oriented towards the good). Classical philosophy uses the adjective “right” (*recta voluntas* and *recta ratio*) for the spiritual powers so oriented (the will and the reason) and sees the ability to know the objective truth about the good as the *sine qua non* of moral proficiency.

In Haidt’s case, the term “righteous mind” means something different: the habit of preaching to people (members of a social group) based on one’s moral convictions. In his arguments, the problem of the objectivity of good is a closed topic. Instead, we deal with the notion of a broader cognitive perspective after leaving the moral matrix, and this (if we consider the meaning of the term “matrix”) is only something virtual, not objective. It is a kind of configuration of the elements of culture and biology – because Haidt’s entire argument follows the Darwinian line (evolution made us moral entities). According to Haidt, “Moral systems are interlocking sets of values, virtues, norms, practices, identities, institutions, technologies, and evolved psychological mechanisms that work together to suppress or regulate the self-interest and make cooperative societies possible” (Haidt, 2012, 284). Along the evolutionary path, religions have played a significant role in uniting people into moral communities, perpetuating in groups the common pursuit of higher goals. Politics is governed by a similar mechanism.

Haidt interprets the relationship between feelings and reason in terms of the two-processuality of cognition: automatic cognition is accompanied by controlled cognition. He includes emotions and intuitions in the former and reasoning in the latter. The former is also characteristic of animals, while the latter emerged as the next stage of evolution and is oriented at explaining the “why” type. To designate the former, he uses the symbol of “elephant” (a strong, wise animal), and for the latter – “rider” (someone who sits on an elephant). His explanation of the existing relationship between the two is that the rider evolved to serve the elephant. The elephant is the master, which is why Haidt says that if one wants to change someone’s mind on a moral issue, one must first turn to the “elephant” (Haidt, 2012, 64).

Rational argumentation is doomed to failure. He writes, “moral reasons are the tail wagged by intuitive dog” (Haidt, 2012, 62). Reason is the servant of intuition; it serves to justify them *post hoc*. It is not logic but emotion that can influence someone’s mind to change. Reason seeks to justify intuition (the “elephant”). Over the millions of years of evolution, which was accompanied by the development of language and advanced reasoning skills, we have evolved into an inner advocate, not a judge or scientist seeking the truth.



We use the power of the mind (according to Haidt: brain function) to find evidence to support what we want to believe in (Haidt, 2012). We are able to lie effectively and hide even our real motives from ourselves. According to Haidt, reason is our “spokesman”, providing us with good PR. It is hard not to see in such a statement Haidt’s psychological interests; it is also difficult to deny him a certain right.

He contrasts his intuitionist ethics, devoid of normativity, with the philosophers’ cult of reason (Haidt, 2012). He argues:

If you ask people to believe something that violates their intuitions, they will devote their efforts to finding an escape hatch – a reason to doubt your argument or conclusion. They will almost always succeed.

*(Haidt, 2012, 64)*

He further states:

[...] human minds, like animal minds, are constantly reacting intuitively at all times to everything they perceive, and basing their response on those reactions. Within the first second of seeing, hearing, or meeting another person, the elephant has already begun to lean toward or away, and the lean influences what you think and do next. Intuitions come first.

*(Haidt, 2012, 73)*

For the American scholar, the formulation of moral judgements resembles the instinctive behaviour of animals: it is a quick and automatic process that primarily involves the “elephant” (Haidt, 2012).

Although there is no place for this type of “moral instinct” in classical philosophy, it sees the need for efficient moral orientation and the process of forming moral convictions (intuitions) determined by the community (Ślipko, 2021). Excluding major life decisions that require reflection, our days pass at a fast pace, which forces us to respond adequately – and therefore quickly. What prepares us for this? The upbringing (“self-training”) of feelings. It is meant to provide mental factors with the constant assistance of sensory factors by improving them with virtues so that they cooperate with reason and the will (Woroniecki, 1986). However, it is not a matter of automating the evaluation process. Moral virtue is not a habit, although like a habit it is perpetuated by the repetition of the same moral acts. The difference between the two is that virtues arise consciously and are used consciously, as habits do not, and so their action is automatic and reflexive. Virtues are activated when we want them to: virtue (and vice) only prompts us to certain acts; it does not force anything on us. Classical philosophy emphasises that through the participation of consciousness, we retain freedom in moral action.

By contrast, in Haidt's intuitionist theory, there is no room for freedom of choice – there is automatism. Is reason rightly ignored? Although it is difficult to resist the impression that the reactions of crowds chanting at rallies are pre-programmed or to question the immunity of participants in “matrices” to rational argumentation described by Haidt, any consideration of human action without taking into account the attribute of freedom will prove degrading to it. Is freedom embedded in instincts?

The fact that moral judgements are quick does not necessarily mean that they are instinctual. The role of moral virtue is to provide certainty and speed to our judgements, and rationality is an important component of it. Virtue is about feelings; it does not exclude or suppress them but integrates them with the actions of reason and will. There is a certain amount of automatism in our behaviour: virtue always produces around itself certain habits, which can sometimes also act reflexively without it (Woroniecki, 1986). Nevertheless, virtues should not be reduced to habits.

The “elephant-rider” model proposed by the American scholar is meant to be a counter-proposal to the Platonic one and to argue that the formulation of moral judgements is not a purely intellectual process, involving the consideration of arguments about harm, rights, and justice (Haidt, 2012). As I have tried to point out, in philosophy we can find solutions that – while remaining intellectual – appreciate the emotional sensitivity of human beings. While giving the “elephant” more power than the “rider” and seeing the display of empathy as a remedy for political rabidness, Haidt himself is ultimately ready to concede that the “elephant” is not a ruthless dictator, and so reason also has something to communicate. He indicates: “Intuitions can be shaped by reasoning, especially when reasons are embedded in a friendly conversation or an emotionally compelling novel, movie, or news story” (Haidt, 2012, 86).

Again, it is hard not to agree that a friendly atmosphere or an engaging narrative are not irrelevant factors in gaining distance from one's beliefs. But is this a sufficient argument for disregarding reason in a moral life? Or does it merely testify to the complexity of our existence, including its social and psychological, biological, and supra-biological determinants?

### **Moral foundations as a consequence of adaptation challenges**

Why do some people associate with conservatives and others with liberals? Haidt answers in line with the proper spirit of evolutionary psychology:

People whose **gens gave them brains** that get a special pleasure from novelty, variety and diversity, while simultaneously **being less sensitive** to signs of threat, are predisposed (but not predestined) to become liberals. They tend to develop certain ‘characteristic adaptations’ and ‘life narratives’

that make them resonate – **unconsciously and intuitively** – with the grand narratives told by political movements on the left (such as the liberal progress narrative). **People whose gens give them brains with the opposite settings** are predisposed, for the same reasons, to resonate with the grand narratives of the right (such as the Regan narrative). Once people join a political team, they get in its moral matrix. They see confirmation of their grand narrative everywhere, and it's difficult – perhaps impossible – to convince them that they are wrong if you argue with them from outside of their matrix [all bold – MMB].

*(Haidt, 2012, 326)*

The genes written into the programming of the human brain settings are thus the solution to at least part of the puzzle of the determinants of social peace. The structuring of the brain gives a person's inclinations a kind of primordial cut that is further subject to modification. It is innate in the sense of "organized in advance of experience" (Haidt, 2012, 146).

The second (and secondary) part of the peace conundrum is the diverse cultural interactions that trigger certain judgements and moral systems. Haidt explains that the brain is like a book, the draft of which was written by genes during foetal development and the detailed content is filled in by the social environment (Haidt, 2012). There are no blank pages in the book brain. Every moral system is based on a pre-existing genetic foundation. Hence, it can be inferred that there is a chance for good people to turn to social peace; however, in view of cultural differences that exclude universal norms, this will not happen without nourishing mutual empathy. A full, genetic, and cultural perspective on the matrix is helpful in gaining understanding. Let us repeat, moral foundations are innate, but their flexibility offers the possibility of a variety of moral legacies: specific virtues and rules arise from the differences of individual cultures. According to Haidt, the undermining of Manichean attitudes is an important educational task in which both psychologists and political scientists should engage (Haidt, 2012).

Is the solution proposed by the American scholar not too idealistic and simplistic? For it completely locks a person's moral convictions in the moral-forming force of society (here: e.g., a political party), leaving no wicket for their objectification. After all, according to Haidt, stepping outside the moral matrix (through the realisation of moral foundations and empathy) does not involve measuring oneself against objective truth (which, by definition, does not exist). The proposed solution also lacks reference to the human experience of freedom that determines responsibility and moral development. The desired state is to be a moral pluralist, as if the choices one makes have no power to improve or degrade oneself and are devoid of social impact. It suggests that feelings are the overriding

driving force and their upbringing cannot be grounded in an objective good recognised by human reason.

### **Conclusion: towards the common good**

Although the relationship indicated by Haidt between partisan (ideological) morality and certain moral foundations is an interesting research hypothesis, the reduction of culture to biology is questionable. Even if we were to suspend all the researcher's efforts to indicate the linkages between the theory of evolution and anthropological observations, it is difficult to agree that the phenomenon of life in the matrix exhausts the entire issue of concerns that are destroying democratic societies.

On the one hand, we observe growing uncertainty in the face of axionormative chaos in Western societies. In such a situation, identification with a group (party) provides a sense of stability in life goals. On the other hand, the ideology of liberalism accompanying capitalism has strongly articulated the slogans of individualism, obscuring the value of the ethos of social solidarity, with its inherent imperative to subordinate particular (also in the sense of party) goals to the common good. For example, Ślipko considers the restoration of the idea of the common good to social consciousness as a prerequisite for any detailed discussion on responsibility in public life (Ślipko, 2021).

In Poland or in the countries that emerged from Soviet domination, the situation is additionally complicated in that the value of the idea of the common good is not only being eradicated by individualism but was previously distorted by Marxism. The common good was reduced to a party good because of the ideology of class struggle; the supra-class good did not exist. The Polish Solidarity movement was seen by many scholars as the first step towards positive socio-political-economic change beyond the communism-liberalism divide (Rojek, 2016).

This alternative was expounded by John Paul II in his teachings. His dream of a new Poland was embedded precisely in the idea of the common good, which is neither a party good nor the good of the ruling elite, but the good of the political community as a whole. It is the integral (cognitive, moral, and creative) development of the person, the identification of which is not a matter of empathy or feelings but stems from a cognitive effort in the field of philosophical research.

The prudent realisation of the common good is the nerve of political life as subject to ethical norms. The idea is that the common good should be realised in the coordination of the goals of the human community, that it should not be distorted by partisanship or the egoism of individuals, and that its achievement should be equitable, aimed at a more dignified life for all community members. The community (e.g., through a state organisation) is to provide the effective (legal and economic) means necessary for the

realisation of the common good. The subject of the good thus realised is always a real existing human being (personal being). Polish philosopher Mieczysław A. Krąpiec explains this as follows:

The ultimate goal of the state cannot be its functioning alone, but its functioning for the realisation of the good, which is the personal development of the members of the state community. Therefore, the personal good of the human being – as sovereign – is the measure of the health of the state as sovereign in terms of providing effective means for the realisation of the common good. The health of the state organism that is not measured by the measure of the good of the supreme sovereign – the person – is subject to constant contamination and deformation, as evidenced by the history of states creating exuberant, unnecessary institutions, such as political police, a plundering banking and economic system, excessive administrative power interfering in the personal lives of citizens. All this leads to a limitation or even a deprivation of the sovereignty of the human person, to their instrumentalisation, and thus to a reversal of the natural order, when the means for the realisation of the end become the end itself, and the ends are treated as means.

*(Krąpiec, 2008, 169)*

When considering the social behaviour of people, including their political choices, is it possible to abstract from the value of the individual as a human being? Is it possible to save social harmony by going beyond the personalistic norm (related to the recognition of the essence of humanity)?

Responsibility has two orientations: the first is causative (the human-subject acts), and the second is resulting from moral order (human freedom is moral freedom) (Ślipko, 2021). In the former, which consists of the formation of moral judgements (conscience), it is important to notice the conditioning imperative “do good”! (the so-called *synderesis*), constantly actualising in people the moral necessity to improve themselves “through the realisation of moral values and the specific precepts of the moral law as general rules of conduct” (Ślipko, 2021, 123). The universality of these rules is seen by classical ethics as a deeper level of moral life than the one outlined by Haidt in the “moral foundations-moral matrices” pattern.

A person is an individual before engaging in social activities, and therefore “the moral order of their personality determines the moral basis of social life, and not vice versa” (Ślipko, 2021, 123). A person is called to become fully human by the realisation of the highest ideal they are bound by because of objective moral order. Is this tantamount to realising social order as a measure of the common good? Of course not. We know well that although John Paul II encouraged Polish democracy to go its own way, this did not happen. What happened to the papal project? Let us consider the

answer that Polish philosopher Paweł Rojek tries to give, which is very laconic about our political choices:

It seems that it is not the Pope who has changed, but the Poles. After the fall of communism, we no longer had any desire for any theological-political experiments. We no longer wanted to continue the mission of Solidarity or listen to the Pope. The new papal programme, clearly outlined during the 1991 pilgrimage, was simply rejected. Afterwards, we admittedly recognised John Paul II as an outstanding figure, but one who belonged only to the history of the struggle against communism.

(Rojek, 2016, 276)

Do not the acrimonious political wars taking place in Poland today echo that choice?

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# 10

## AXIOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF EDUCATION FOR PEACE IN “PACEM IN TERRIS” BY ST. JOHN XXIII AND ITS RELEVANCE TO CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES

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The encyclical “Pacem in Terris”, proclaimed on April 11, 1963, by St. John XXIII, addresses peace in the modern world and remains the only papal document of this magnitude dedicated to the issue of peace. It is evident that 60 years have just passed since its publication. The context of its creation was the ongoing Cold War and the arms race between superpowers, the United States, and the USSR. This period was accompanied by the awareness that, in the event of an open conflict between these sides, their possession of nuclear weapons would suffice for the total destruction of our planet. The reigning pope at that time belonged to the generation that vividly remembered the course and consequences of both the First and Second World Wars. Additionally, in October 1962, the Cuban Missile Crisis occurred, with American and Soviet forces facing off. The situation was so tense that the possibility of another war breaking out seemed very real. Although the conflict was prevented at that time, the desire to maintain peace was a compelling need among all inhabitants of the Earth. This fervour contributed to the exceptionally enthusiastic reception of the “Pacem in Terris” encyclical worldwide, even in Eastern Bloc countries subject to Soviet influence.

Examining this document does not solely stem from a desire to recall history and understand it in the context of the past. Given the profound changes in power dynamics occurring in the contemporary world, questions arise about what insights this encyclical can offer today as we seek to understand the causes of ongoing conflicts and, consequently, find a key to educating humanity for peace. Referring to this document also holds significance in the pursuit of an axiological, possibly universal foundation for education, providing a platform to build the coexistence of different communities based on

the principles of peaceful living. This point of reflection is preceded by an attempt to outline contemporary challenges related to various hotspots and forms of conflict. A more in-depth examination of this issue contributes to a better understanding of the tasks faced by advocates of education for peace (EFP). The concluding section of this analysis attempts to outline conclusions and demands that need to be addressed at various levels of societal organization.

### **Contemporary wars and their faces**

According to the data presented by the Berghof Foundation in 2022, there were 28 wars and armed conflicts worldwide (Frieden Fragen, 2023). These conflicts spanned various countries, ranging from Europe (such as the war in Ukraine) through Asia and Africa to South America. Although there were two fewer than the previous year, the fact that new and bloody conflicts, like the October 2023 one between the Palestinian armed organization Hamas and Israel in the Gaza Strip, continue to emerge is noteworthy. In many cases, politically involved states play a role in the military actions taking place in a given area. This is evident in the war in Ukraine, where the United States and European Union support its defence against Russian aggression. Similarly, other global powers are involved in conflicts in the Middle East (in Syria or the Palestinian territories). They influence the global situation, making these phenomena not merely local or regional.

War remains a tool in the international politics of major powers, aiming to gain control over resources crucial for economic development, especially strategic resources like energy sources (e.g., crude oil) or essential natural materials. Conflicts also arise concerning access to water, which is becoming a scarce commodity (e.g., between Israel and Jordan). The interests of arms manufacturers play a role in escalating armed conflicts. Despite occasional minor fluctuations, their revenues have consistently grown in recent years. For instance, the top 100 arms companies worldwide earned nearly 600 billion USD in 2022 (Hasselbach, 2023). It is crucial to note that modern conflicts are changing in character. After the end of the Cold War, the spectre of a global atomic catastrophe was pushed aside. Contemporary military operation strategies involve actions using equipment capable of precisely targeting distant objectives. Digital technology, achieving close to 100% effectiveness in attacks, plays a particularly significant role in this regard. These actions are planned and executed with minimal human resources, aiming to limit direct warfare through the use of drones or unmanned vehicles. The future may bring even more sophisticated solutions, possibly introducing robot soldiers (Mickiewicz & Kasprzycki, 2022). Operational activities in cyberspace, evolving into cyber warfare, also gain increasing importance for military actions. These include gathering information about the enemy (as an



example, during the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, the tracking of mobile phone signals enabled the Ukrainian military to successfully eliminate several high-ranking officers of the Russian army), propaganda, and manipulative actions within the enemy's territory, as well as paralyzing or taking control of the functioning of the attacked information systems. Cyber warfare precedes or accompanies military actions, contributing to their increased effectiveness (Górka, 2022). In our information-driven society, information becomes a strategically significant factor, influencing the thinking and actions of entire communities.

The global virtual network acts as a kind of nervous system for our civilization, facilitating the efficient functioning of international and national institutions and private individuals using the internet. Consequently, it becomes a highly sensitive area where various levels of activities resembling brutal warfare occur, from media attacks, hate speech, fraud, and data theft to hacking into bank accounts, destroying information resources, or electronic devices. Ordinary internet users, hackers, and even the special services of specific states can be behind such actions. In such cases, one can speak of a kind of war capable of effectively destroying the lives of individuals and complicating the functioning of companies, state institutions, or financial entities. The online space currently remains largely undefined in ethical terms. The lack of established and recognized principles for the "peaceful" functioning of users in this space, as well as creating the semblance of anonymity, encourages a significant portion of them to engage in actions aimed at attacking other individuals or institutions.

Changing concepts and forms of war lead to the blurring of boundaries between the notions of war and peace. This is not a random development, as seen in the nomenclature used in international law, where terms like "special operation", "armed intervention", or "state of emergency" replace the term "war". This also has crucial psychological implications, as not defining a situation as a state of war acts as a sedative on society, giving the aggressor an additional advantage. This blurring of boundaries is associated with the introduction of hidden forms of warfare, such as economic, energy, cybernetic, and hybrid warfare (e.g., causing influxes of migrants), interference in the political life of a specific state, etc. In this situation, some researchers have pointed out that Russia's aggression against Ukraine has brought about a manifestation of the Third World War, where, alongside military actions, economic, hybrid, and cybernetic operations are present (Wróblewski, 2018; Kowalski, 2022).

It is crucial to emphasize at this point that if there is difficulty in defining what war is and what the boundaries between peaceful and aggressive actions are, the subject of educating for peace becomes similarly blurred. If we don't know what the true face of war looks like, how can we educate young people

to consciously resist it? Therefore, it is essential to expand the classical notion of war, signifying a military conflict between two or more states (which can also be a conflict between a state and a terrorist organization), resulting in the hostile occupation of the enemy’s territory. Tangible consequences of such actions include the destruction of infrastructure and the death or displacement of hundreds or thousands of people. Currently, war also encompasses all non-military (non-kinetic) actions aimed at the economic or political subjugation of specific states or nations. Its manifestations can also include actions compelling the civilian population to abandon their homes. This perspective does not allow for a clear distinction between war and politics practiced using regular tools but is directed towards hostile domination over other entities.

### **Contemporary challenges in peacebuilding**

The delineated evolution of the concept of war (or more precisely, the concept of conducting politics by fostering the dependence of a country with limited use of military aggression) can also be regarded as one of the challenges in the field of peacebuilding. The question arises: What are the other challenges in this field that may give rise to wars and conflicts? Territorial disputes between states, often fuelled by ethnic communities seeking independence or annexation, are one such issue. Examples include the conflicts over South Ossetia between Georgia and Russia-backed North Ossetia. More pertinent to our consideration are the geopolitical issues.

A fundamental global challenge is the stark and escalating disparities in living standards among different regions. Economic development is uneven, resulting in the rapid enrichment of the wealthiest individuals and countries, accompanied by the progressive impoverishment of the poorest nations. Reports from Oxfam (an international humanitarian organization dedicated to combating global hunger and providing assistance in developing countries) indicate that in 2019, the wealth of the world’s 2,153 richest individuals equalled the combined wealth of 4.6 billion of the world’s poorest inhabitants (Business Insider, 2023). Underdeveloped countries grapple with malnutrition, lack of access to water, high levels of illiteracy due to underdeveloped education systems, and challenges in providing stable employment and healthcare. Regions like Central Africa and South Asia, experiencing the fastest natural population growth, foresee significant demographic shifts. The populations of affluent Northern nations will increasingly age and maintain a relatively balanced demographic status, while African and South Asian countries will experience dynamic population growth, forming communities with a predominance of young individuals (Marzec & Marzec, 2005; Klima, 2016). This implies that the young inhabitants of these regions are compelled to leave and seek better prospects

in wealthy countries. This is one of the reasons why hundreds of thousands of people from the “poor south” migrate towards the “affluent north”, especially Europe, the United States or Canada.

The wealth disparities between regions overlay powerful ethnic, racial, cultural, civilizational, and religious divisions. These divisions are often instrumentally exploited for political purposes, as seen in the case of terrorist groups with Islamic affiliations. Such divisions make it relatively easy to instigate a sense of threat in society and incite a social group or nation to attack others in the name of religious beliefs or by attributing responsibility for evil, poverty, hunger, and economic exploitation to the perceived enemies. In this context, religions, playing a vital role in shaping the identity and social consciousness of specific communities or nations, can contribute to establishing principles for the peaceful coexistence of followers of different religious denominations.

Among the most significant contemporary challenges with relevance to maintaining peace is the issue of climate change and environmental protection. The perceived impacts of global warming, such as the expansion of desert areas, force migrations from affected regions. Additionally, environmental pollution, littering, and exploitative extraction of natural resources (e.g., in Africa) contribute to the degradation of these areas. Ecological imbalances lead to the worsening of living conditions worldwide, potentially resulting in conflict situations due to environmental destruction in certain countries caused by non-eco-friendly activities of companies representing foreign interests (e.g., transportation and storage of toxic waste, dumping sewage into rivers flowing through other countries, air pollution, mining operations, and industrial plants in border areas). Pope Francis addressed many aspects of the connection between global ecology and the situation in the poorest regions of the world in his encyclical “*Laudato si*” from 2015 (Francis, 2015). Moreover, this affects the limitation of the potential for producing healthy food.

The challenges mentioned above do not exhaust the list of all possible problems that can be considered potential sources of armed conflicts. The purpose of this study is not to provide detailed descriptions of them but rather to highlight the most important ones. The awareness that we live in a world of profound contrasts and divisions should prompt reflection on finding ways to mitigate them. Therefore, it is crucial to interpret this as a task of shaping the responsibility of residents of the rich and industrialized North to ensure opportunities for development and improvement in the quality of life in the poorest regions of the world. A shift in mentality that involves refraining from exploiting the privileged position of residents in the wealthiest countries in relation to the poorest is also a factor in educating for peace.

### ***“Pacem in Terris” as an encyclical on fundamental principles serving the cause***

In the introduction, the circumstances surrounding the creation of the encyclical have already been outlined, recognizing the world standing on the brink of war. Saint John XXIII, in his encyclical, emphasized socio-moral issues, especially natural law, which has a dimension of appealing to universal values. He sought frameworks that would allow everyone desiring peace to find common ground, irrespective of political, religious, or national identity systems. Drawing from the richness of the Catholic tradition, he posited that world peace is contingent upon maintaining order and principles that ensure proper relations between nations and ordinary people. He distilled these principles into four values: truth, justice, love, and freedom, reflected in the full title of the document (John XXIII, 1964; Skwierczyński, 2010). He also formulated them into a configuration of rights and duties, turning them into a task requiring constant creative effort.

The key thesis of the encyclical is the statement that peace on earth directly depends on maintaining the “order established by God” (John XXIII, 1963, 1). The pope primarily related this order to the preservation of morality based on the foundation of natural law. Experiences from both world wars and the ongoing “Cold War” indicated that acts of international law alone are insufficient for maintaining peace. John XXIII advocated for a return to the principle of the supremacy of natural law over positive law and the connection of politics with ethics. It is not an exaggeration to state that these statements remain relevant in our times. In exploring the thoughts of the “Pope of peace”, it is worth trying to address axiological problems affecting our civilization, including the realm of education. Due to the synthetic nature of this work, this perspective will only signal specific areas.

### ***Rights and duties***

We live in a world where there is a growing awareness of people’s rights and the benefits that can be derived from enforcing them. Legal firms play a significant role in this, as they specialize in pursuing various claims for any failures related to contractual agreements or damages suffered by individuals. This can lead to a stance of opportunism on legal grounds. Utilizing knowledge of various legal loopholes can be employed to gain advantages at the expense of others. This legal opportunism can lead to gains at the expense of others. Pope John XXIII’s teachings represent a clear opposition to such an attitude. The emphasis on the relationship between law and duties indicates the need to complement law with morality. In “Pacem in Terris”, the Pope devoted much attention to identifying the basic rights of humans derived from their nature. After listing the most important rights, he proceeded to

discuss corresponding duties. He observed that, first and foremost, possessing these rights requires a person to take care of fulfilling them (the right to life imposes the duty to care for one's own life and safety). Second, the person has a duty to respect the rights of others. He expressed this idea in his encyclical:

From the above it is clear that in human society every right of one human being is also a duty for others – namely, the duty to recognize and respect that right. For every fundamental human right draws its indestructible moral force from the natural law, which in conferring it imposes a corresponding obligation. Such individuals, who insist on their own rights while simultaneously either completely forget about their obligations or perform them negligently, must be compared to those who, with one hand, erect a building and, with the other, demolish it.

*(John XXIII, 1963, 30)*

This comparison made by the Pope can be related to the situation in our civilization, where there is a dominance of thinking in terms of having rights with minimal obligations. Such an approach does not contribute to building a lasting order but rather degrades it. This situation can be observed at different levels of life and social relations, from the education of children (reinforcing their sense of rights without instilling in them basic responsibilities) through workplace relationships to the world of politics. Adhering only to the law does not guarantee the resolution of real conflicts if it is not accompanied by a sense of responsibility for the greater good. In other words, morality should precede the law. The aim is to cultivate a sense of responsibility in individuals because the person with high moral standing will effectively use the law for their good and the good of others (Wielgus, 2006).

### ***Truth in social relationships***

The fundamental importance of truth for human existence in the world requires no further justification. In his encyclical, St. John XXIII pointed to the application of this principle as a key to establishing peace in the world. He referred to ideologies primarily based on the rejection of truth about God and humanity, including their dignity, nature, and ultimate destiny. Despite the dissolution of the Soviet empire over 30 years ago, the issue of ideological presence in politics persists.

The question of truth has various implications for building peaceful relations worldwide. One aspect is the presence of truth in the media space. Media, currently among the most powerful tools shaping social awareness, becomes highly dangerous when subjected to direct political influences. Media freedom and access to genuine information are key factors in

peace-building. Another dimension of truth in international relations involves the proper shaping of historical memory. Many conflicts stem from a past where truth is either concealed or blatantly falsified through pseudoscientific publications or film productions presenting an inaccurate version of history (e.g., referring to “Polish concentration camps” instead of “German, Nazi concentration camps”). The need for truth in international relations is evidenced by documents like “Dabru emet” (Speak the Truth), signed by around 160 rabbis and published on September 10, 2000, in “The New York Times”. This document represents a statement from the Jewish side concerning Jewish-Christian relations (Chrostowski, 2001). It is just one example of such a voice, as there are many similar issues addressing the challenging historical relationships between nations. This also confirms our (Polish) historical relations with neighbours, while globally, it pertains to the brutality with which many European powers conducted their colonial policies, the consequences of which are still felt today.

The issue of truth also extends to the matters mentioned in the first two points of this elaboration. A significant challenge in peace-building involves accurately naming actions that bear the hallmarks of war, even if they do not involve direct aggression. As mentioned earlier, deliberate obfuscation of the term “war” aims to lull the vigilance of opponents or avoid international reactions. Openly acknowledging when someone has violated the security boundaries of another state (similar principles should apply in interpersonal relations) becomes a crucial factor in deterring aggression. Truth is also a vital element in establishing just relations between nations and addressing shared problems, including those related to environmental protection.

### *Principle of social justice*

The concept of justice is multifaceted but fundamentally rooted in morality. This papal postulate aligns with an appeal to follow one’s conscience in international relations. It emphasizes a moral value safeguarding social equilibrium, allowing for the protection of both the common good and the well-being of individuals, especially the vulnerable. Justice enables the adequate enforcement of laws (including penalties), prevents potential abuses and criminal acts, and aligns with honesty. It embodies a stance where individuals fulfil their duties conscientiously, pay bills and taxes, compensate others for damages caused, and take responsibility for their mistakes (Kleszcz, 1999). On an international scale, justice involves the pursuit of balance through supporting the poorest countries, organizing humanitarian actions in war-torn or disaster-stricken regions, mediating between conflicting parties, sending peacekeeping missions (military units under the UN flag), and collectively addressing global issues such as hunger, human trafficking, disarmament, and climate change.

***The law of love in social relationships***

The above category may seem utopian, distant from social realities, an artificial addition transplanted from Christian doctrine referring to the commandment of love as the foundation of interpersonal relationships. Such an approach may stem from the belief that true love can only apply to relationships with strong emotional ties, such as those between lovers, friends, or family members. In this context, it is difficult to speak of “love” as a feeling in relationships between nations. However, this category emerges as a platform for creating vibrant social and international bonds. One of the advocates of such bold thinking in social matters was Blessed Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, who in 1967 proclaimed the “ABC of the Social Crusade of Love” to overcome various divisions and antagonisms arising from difficult personal relationships or differences in worldviews.

Referring to love in social or international relations means going beyond ordinary justice. It involves the ability to forgive various debts, including moral wrongs. Operating with this concept also serves to view others (racially, religiously, and culturally) as our brothers and sisters, not as potential enemies. This applies to both individual thinking and entire nations. While modern education emphasizes the value of tolerance or acceptance of other views, it mainly entails avoiding acts of dislike or discrimination against others due to their differences. Indeed, one can perceive a certain indifference or a kind of distance towards such individuals in this context. However, the semantics of the word “love” suggest creating relationships where caring for the well-being of the other person is essential while overcoming one’s own selfishness. Therefore, there is a need for education in the perspective of social love to break away from thinking focused solely on meeting one’s own needs and interests, thereby building a stance of social responsibility and a sense of responsibility for the needs of others.

***Freedom as an essential sphere of social life***

Freedom has fundamental significance for maintaining peace in the world. It is a basic value in the lives of individuals and entire societies, and its violation should be considered an act of aggression (Karasiński, 2007). However, it is sometimes absolutized as the right to fulfil any possible whims. It is crucial to remember that the boundary of my freedom is the freedom of the other person. This means that the right to maintain independence of thought, expression, and action cannot justify violating the same right of another person. Freedom also includes the right to one’s property, religious beliefs, or movement. Any interference in these areas of individuals’ and societies’ lives is an attack on the space of freedom.

### **Pedagogical-theological postulates**

The reflection conducted above allows for formulating several pedagogical-theological conclusions regarding EFP. The first is the need to remind people of the axiological and ethical foundations of education in general, especially in matters related to peace education. Considering that over 60 years ago, Pope John XXIII drew attention to this in his encyclical, it is necessary to recognize that this task requires renewed consideration.

Yet, peace remains an empty word if it is not closely tied to the arrangement of social relations that, filled with great hope, we outlined in a general overview in this encyclical of ours. This arrangement – as we have stated – is based on truth, constructed according to the dictates of justice, animated and complemented by love, and realized in the atmosphere of freedom.

*(John XXIII, 1963, 167)*

The proposed principles in “Pacem in Terris” in the form of truth, justice, love, and freedom provide broad possibilities for applying them to creating peace in the world. Each of these values, besides its reference to natural law, also has strong connections to the sphere of spirituality, giving them a spiritual dimension.

Education on the axiological foundation proposed by St. John XXIII appears as a task particularly suited for religious formation. In this field, the collaboration of educators, institutions serving the promotion of peace, and all possible religious communities becomes crucial. It is necessary to rise above divisions, especially among religious leaders, and collectively make real efforts to build consensus for the defence of peace in the world. There should also be a decisive and effective response to any calls for aggression motivated by religion. It is unacceptable for the name of one’s faith to lead to brutal attacks on representatives of other religions. This further emphasizes the importance of religion and interreligious dialogue in the world. Christianity has a special role to play in initiating such dialogue and engaging in joint prayers for peace. The role of the Church should also aim to integrate people dedicated to the cause of peace (even those who are non-believers) and contribute to their moral formation. There is an urgent need to combine the efforts of various institutions working for peace to ensure that the effects of their work are lasting.

Against this backdrop, it seems advisable to create a new encyclical dedicated to the theme of peace. Considering the changed political realities and emerging challenges, the Church’s voice is needed to provide a perspective from the Gospel. An expression of such expectation is the publication in 2022, in the Italian language, of a collection of statements by Pope Francis



devoted to the war in Ukraine, titled “Un’enciclica sulla pace in Ucraina” – Encyclical on Peace in Ukraine (Vatican News, 2022). Perhaps this is a kind of signal that soon a document of appropriate rank and scope will emerge, once again stirring the hearts and consciences of people concerned about peace in the world to take fruitful action.

Education on the axiological, moral, and religious plane serves as the foundation for building the structure of peace. However, it is essential to coordinate this activity with the efforts of governments that will contribute to establishing peace in the world and resolving the problem of glaring disparities in the standard of living between rich and poor countries. EFP itself, without simultaneous real actions to improve the situation of those suffering from war, lack of means to live, medical care, or job opportunities, will not contribute to establishing real peace. Another important postulate is to ensure access to education for children and youth in developing countries. The prevailing illiteracy there practically hinders rapid progress in those countries.

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# 11

## THE WORLD OF VALUES IN PREVENTIVE EDUCATION OF ST. GIOVANNI BOSCO

Peace as a condition of justice

*Beata Krajewska and Jan Niewęglowski*

### **Introduction**

In the history of Italy, the 19th century was a time of great revolutionary movements and political and social changes. The dominant goal of the politicians' activity was the unification of the country and the creation of a new state. The idea of the union came out of Piedmont, and its author was Count of Cavour, who was the prime minister from 1852 to 1861. Political matters and urban expansion of Turin overshadowed the real problem of the city, which was the poor and abandoned Turin youth (Braidò, 2003). In search of work and better conditions for their existence, boys from the Piedmonian villages went to Turin. A small number found work, but most formed criminal groups and engaged in criminal activities. Due to the lack of justice in social relations, there was no peace in the Turin community. An attempt to remedy this situation was undertaken by, among others, Father Giovanni Bosco.

### **Giovanni Bosco – educator for social peace**

The founder of the Salesians was Fr. Giovanni Bosco (1815–1888). He was born in Becchi, in a small town near Turin. Due to his father's premature death, he had a very difficult childhood. As a young boy, he was forced to take various jobs to earn a living. This experience sensitised him to similar situations during priesthood. After graduating from high school, he decided to join the Major Seminary in Turin, where he graduated in 1841. He then undertook additional studies in pastoral theology. During this time he became friends with Fr. Giuseppe Cafasso, the director of a Catholic boarding school,

who guided his interests. His field of interest was the abandoned and poor youth who came to Turin from nearby villages in search of work. Father Giuseppe Cafasso also drew Don Bosco's attention to the situation of young people in prisons and borstals (Braido, 1988, 2003).

The community in which Don Bosco studied and began to work had the character of a preindustrial structure. At that time, most of the inhabitants of Piedmont, about 10 million, worked on the land, while the remaining part, about 4 million, worked in industry. Changes in the technical field progressed very slowly. The main factor inhibiting its development was the division of Italy into many principalities, states, and autonomous regions (Misiaszek, 2012). As a result of the industrial revolution in Turin, a new phenomenon occurred: a new social group, the city proletariat, was created. The majority of this group came from the rural population, which left the backward countryside in search of work and better living conditions in the city. However, the living conditions of the urban proletariat were much worse than the rural population (Braido, 1988). In addition to moral misery, young people also faced cultural and educational neglect. The first pupils of Fr. Bosco were recruited from that multitude of workers looking for work and better living conditions in Turin (Misiaszek, 2012).

Certainly, Fr. Giovanni Bosco can be included among thorough observers of Turin's social problems at the time. Although he did not have ready solutions, he tried to address them. One of his attempts was the creation of the Mutual Assistance Society for young workers. To this end, he maintained contacts with similar organisations in other Italian cities. At the same time, he claimed that all people were equal before the Creator, and everyone has the right to personal development according to the gifts received from God. According to Giovanni Bosco, many people's departures from the Church were caused by a lack of social welfare and the absence of priests in work environments (Braido, 1988). His interest in the needs of young people resulted from social needs as well as from his own observation of the lives of Turin's youth, who were often abandoned, wandering the streets and committing acts of theft, robbery, and other violations of law. The initial motives for working with the street boys did not have ecclesial causes (although social and charity assistance is the responsibility of the Church) but emerged from social needs (Braido, 1988). Later activities, once organised and institutionalised, became part of the tradition and life of the church for good. The first educational initiative of Fr. Giovanni Bosco was to organise the so-called oratory. It was an institution known to the tradition of the Piemoncy Church and became part of the traditional parish structure. Don Bosco, combining elements of culture and religion through the oratory, aimed to raise Turin's youth in a spirit that we can today describe as the inculturation of faith, integrating cultural and religious values. For Fr. Bosco, the starting point was culture and all its experience in the field of human education (Misiaszek, 2012).

He complemented cultural values with religious and Christian ones, giving them a new dimension and meaning. To confirm this practice, one of the statements of Don Bosco can be cited,

Never mind where new formulas of upbringing and teaching appear and who inspires them: if they are good in themselves, let's try to give them a Christian direction and watch them so that they do not lose anything from the Christian spirit.

*(Biographic Memories, 1898–1948, vol. 2, 144)*

Elsewhere, Don Bosco speaks directly about the need to combine faith and reason in education. He sees the priority of human values, their effectiveness, and their importance for the entire education process, especially religious:

The foundation of the entire educational system is reason and religion. The educator should be convinced that all pupils are fundamentally open to good and endowed with heart capable of gratitude. When they accept the main truths of faith, they will understand the love that God has given to humanity and learn gratitude for His gifts and the fact that the essence of faith is to fulfil God's will and observe the commandments, then, please believe me, most educational work has already been done.

*(Biographic Memories, 1898–1948, vol. 7, 761)*

In 1846, in the suburbs of Turin, in the Valdocco district, Giovanni Bosco acquired a piece of land with a modest building requiring renovation. Creating a permanent oratory, he began gathering boys there, offering them time for play and prayer. A meal was also provided. Soon he built pitches, student houses, and boarding schools, mainly vocational ones. By taking a pragmatic approach, he aimed to provide specific help to his pupils. Completing a school with such a curriculum enabled boys to quickly enter the workforce. In his works, he strove to create a family atmosphere. As Misiaszek notes,

Shaping such a family way of upbringing stemmed from Don Bosco's own experiences from seeing the situation of pupils, often devoid of family home, from confrontation with other oratories at the time which were largely characterised by pedagogical rigor as well as from personal religious experiences, which he usually described as dreams. In this case, it was a dream, it seems in some sense a prophetic one (quite often he returned to it at a later stage of his activity), in which the basic boundaries of educational work with boys were outlined. During sleep, young Bosco was instructed that goodness and gentleness is the best educational method.

*(Misiaszek, 2012, 232)*

Father Giovanni Bosco, writing his *Memories of the Oratory (Memorie dell'Oratorio)*, stressed that in connection with working with boys, he faced a number of difficulties. He was charged with the possible use of pupils for revolutionary movements and defending the interests of the Church (Bosco, 1991). Similar events also took place after 1870, following the unification of Italy and the occupation of the Holy See. These events included various forms of surveillance of his works. John Bosco was clearly distanced from politics. When he talked about political education, he emphasised that he meant civic education focused on the formation of an honest citizen. A good Christian and an honest citizen, in his opinion, is a person who respects the law and conducts themselves honestly (Braido, 1988). In *Il giovane provveduto*, turning to his pupils, he wrote,

I present to you a method of life easy and short, and at the same time enough to become a consolation to your parents and relatives, the pride of your homeland, good citizens on Earth to become happy residents one day Heaven.

(Bosco, 1977–1988, vol. 2, 187)

Don Bosco often repeated that he would like to be a priest who, regardless of the political or social situation, aimed to work in educational institutions and thus fulfil the duty of a useful citizen. He understood public work as pastoral and educational help to a young person in their overall development. Political and social conditions should not hinder the implementation of this important process. The state's duty is to help those who work on raising young people on a daily basis. In a letter to the Minister of the Interior, Urbano Rattazzi, he wrote,

I am asking for moral support and help, so that, with mutual agreement, I could support and give the necessary development to the work which only aims to prevent abandoned youth from finding themselves in prison, and help the part which came out of it not to find themselves there again.

(Amadei, 1940, 472)

### **Main ideas of preventive education and its role in social peace building**

Christian education has always been accompanied by the idea of prevention. It was understood as prevention, protection, security, and anticipation.

Currently in various educational systems, there is concern for full intellectual education and relatively integral formation of the pupil's personality. It aims to protect them on the one hand from evil, and on the other hand,

to free their will to perform tasks in society and the Church. In charity institutions, it is present as an educational activity aimed at satisfying the material needs of man, so that he is not destined to obstruction of personal development by poverty.

*(Miasaszek, 1987–1988, 37)*

In 1988, the Salesians of Don Bosco commemorated the 100th anniversary of the death of their founder. On this occasion, John Paul II authored a letter to General Superior Fr. Vigano in which he characterised Giovanni Bosco's educational system:

When it comes to priest Bosco, the founder of a great spiritual family, it can be said that the characteristic feature of his “genius” is associated with the educational practice, which he called the “preventive system”. This is somehow a synthesis of his pedagogical thought and a prophetic message left by him to the spiritual sons and the whole Church, at the same time arousing the interest and recognition of scholars and pedagogues. The term “preventive” used by the saint should be understood not so much in a literal sense, but rather as a definition of the richness of the characteristics of his educational art. He emphasises, above all, the will to prevent the emergence of negative experiences that could weaken the enthusiasm of a young person or expose them to a long and arduous making up for losses. This term also contains deep intuitions, strictly specific choices and methodological criteria, such as the art of positive education, showing the good and engaging experience, captivating with nobility and beauty; the art of helping young people in the “internal growth” by awakening their inner freedom and by overcoming external conditions and formalisms; the art of acquiring young hearts to light them with joy and satisfaction. Straightening distortions and adopting them to future tasks by reliable work on their character.

*(John Paul II, 1988, 8)*

Don Bosco applied this understanding of prevention in the first oratory, and later in all educational institutions. A characteristic feature of his work with young people was the constant search for methods, assumptions, means, and forms of upbringing to shape a full man in human and Christian dimensions. This is confirmed by the words of Don Bosco, who said, “I am not aimed at something other than to strive for your good, moral, intellectual, physical” (Biographic Memories, 1898–1948, vol. 7, 57). In every pupil, he saw good and his educational role: “In every boy, even the worst bastard, there is a spot available to good. Then the first duty of the educator is to discover it and build upon it” (Biographic Memories, 1898–1948, vol. 5, 367).

The main area of Don Bosco's work was specific educational efforts. It is also noted that he was familiar with the contemporary directions of

upbringing and maintained numerous contacts with the Turin environment of educators. Since the 1930s, a number of new initiatives in the field of education and upbringing have been recorded in Turin. Numerous orphanages for children were created; a number of dormitories, schools, lower seminaries, colleges, and oratories increased year after year (Braido, 2003). In 1855, Giovanni Bosco organised an experimental general class for his pupils in the oratory, which over time transformed into a regular junior high school. Giovanni Bosco and Ferrante Aporti exchanged views on education, and there is some convergence in their views on religious and humanistic education and in priority methods of goodness and love, persuasion, and prudence (Braido, 1988).

In the field of oratory, Don Bosco used the pastoral practice of Saint Carlo Borromeo (1538–1584) and his *Constitution and Regulations of the Christian Doctrine School Society*. He was familiar with the oratory activity of St. Filippo Neri (1515–1595) and cooperated with Fr. Giovanni Cocchi, a pioneer of the oratory renewal in the Turin diocese. The character and style of the oratory of Don Bosco were also influenced by the Brothers of Christian Schools and the educational practice of their founder, Saint Jean-Baptiste de la Salle. The activities of the Christian school brothers aimed at raising a good Christian and an honest citizen and emphasised the importance of assistance. Fr. Bosco was guided by the same goals (Biographic Memories, 1898–1948, vol. 2, 3, 4). There were certain differences in terms of the educational atmosphere. The Lasalian oratory focused on the internal organization of the oratory, while Don Bosco recommended creating a family atmosphere (Niewęglowski, 1997). Don Bosco also used the existing textbook *Regulations for Schools* from 1822, by Carlo Felice. Particularly, Fr. Bosco used the educational method proposed by the author, especially in relation to religious education (Misiaszek, 1987–1988). In applying the principle of kindness towards the weakness of the nature of a young man and the place of God in the centre of upbringing, Don Bosco was influenced by Jean Baptiste Duchasne, a French educator of the Enlightenment. The preventive method also incorporates the pedagogical thoughts of Aleksander Tepp, the superior of the Barnabits. Tepp presented his pedagogical assumptions in the book *Avvertimenti per gli educatori ecclesiastici della gioventú*. Don Bosco followed the recommendations: educational love, goodness, and patience in improving and shaping the pupil, avoiding physical punishments, and understanding the pupil's mentality. Describing his preventive system, Fr. Bosco wrote,

Whoever wants to win the heart of young people should try to be loved. One who is loved is also eagerly listened to and it turns out to be obedient. To become a loved one, there is no other means than to love yourself.

(Tepp, 1868, 21–22)



The characteristic feature and novelty of Don Bosco's educational work is certainly cutting off from pedagogical rigour in the 19th century. He refused to belong to the Roman Oratory Federation due to the too-large repressive system that prevailed in those oratories (Biographic Memories, 1898–1948, vol. 3). In the oratory he created at Valdocco, he emphasised that there should be no distance and a strict attitude of educators towards pupils. He expressed this in his publication dedicated to the first oratory at Valdocco, *Memories of the Oratory*. Additionally, in a small brochure, *Il giovane provveduto*, he wrote in the introduction,

My dear, I love you all with all my heart and all you have to do is let me love you. I can assure you that you will find books written by people more virtuous and more spiritually formed, but it will be difficult for you to find someone who would love you more than me and who would desire your true happiness more.

(Bosko, 2019, 22)

Discussing the preventive system of St. Giovanni Bosco, another original aspect can be discussed, namely the working goals of upbringing. The Turin educator skilfully combined the ecclesial *praxis* with upbringing and the belief that educational work with young people is one of the basic and most important issues of social life. Don Bosco aimed to form young people so that they consciously and responsibly join social life. Alongside this, Fr. Bosco courageously marked a realistic path for his pupils to the holiness of life. An analysis of his entire educational activity shows that the environments he created provided living conditions that allowed pupils to achieve holiness to the best of their physical and spiritual abilities. In forming future saints, Don Bosco's approach was free from schematism or naive piety. He was aware of each pupil's individuality and uniqueness, which is why he treated everyone in accordance with their character traits, personalities, and development criteria (Braido, 2003).

### **Preventive system and the creation of peace in Poland after the First World War**

The Salesians of Don Bosco began educational activities in Poland in 1898. The first institution was Oświęcim in Galicia, where a vocational school and a junior high school were created (Krawiec, 2004). Regaining independence in 1918 created very favourable conditions for the development of the Salesians of Don Bosco and their educational work. In 1933, from the existing province of St. Stanisław Kostka with headquarters in Warsaw, the second province of St. Jacek with headquarters in Cracow was established (Pietrzykowski, 2007). During the interwar period, the Salesians implemented their charisma in various areas: vocational schools, junior high schools and high schools, orphanages, and small seminaries. Oratory

activities were also conducted at 13 Salesian facilities. Scout teams operated in many schools and educational institutions (Niewęłowski, 2011).

The outbreak of the Second World War inhibited and disorganised the school and educational activities of the Salesians. However, as the authorities' permissions were obtained, either in German or Russian, they continued to conduct educational work. They looked after children and young people in several orphanages, providing them with food, clothing, quarters, and regular learning. They carried out feeding campaigns, enabled secret education, hid Jews, and supported the actions of sending parcels to concentration camp prisoners. When the Germans liquidated all educational centres, the Salesians remained the only opportunity to work in parish structures (Wilk, 1998).

After the end of hostilities in 1945, the Salesians of Don Bosco immediately began to rebuild destroyed facilities and reactivate school and educational activities. In the first years, cooperation with political and educational authorities was quite proper. Salesian schools received state rights and even a financial subsidy for rebuilding. Due to the extensive destruction and educational needs of the state, in 1948, the Salesians already operated 8 vocational schools, 4 junior vocational schools, 6 junior high schools and general high schools, 4 lower seminaries, 23 boarders, 16 orphanages, and 2 dormitories (Misiaszek, 2012; Pietrzykowski, 2007). Oratories were conducted at almost every parish. In the spirit of the founder, youth from poorer environments or deprived families were always prioritised (Markiewicz & Misiaszek, 2021).

The situation in the field of education and upbringing began to change at the beginning of the 1950s. In 1961, the Parliament adopted an act on the education system, which decided on the secular nature of the Polish school and upbringing. Salesian schools and other educational institutions were closed or taken over by the state authorities. The Salesians of Don Bosco were only allowed to keep one vocational school in Oświęcim, which has operated to this day.

In 1989, Poland underwent numerous democratic changes. These transformations affected politics, economics, social, and cultural life, as well as education and upbringing. With the transformation, the Salesians began to dynamically reactivate their educational efforts. Currently, the Salesians of Don Bosco conduct 65 educational and upbringing institutions throughout Poland in four provinces (data from 2023). In all their works, education refers to the principles of the preventive system and contemporary pedagogical thought, especially focused on Christian personalism.

## Summary

Peace is always a fragile value. Each generation often faces the danger of its loss. Its absence usually means social anxiety or armed conflict. These, in turn, bring plenty of human suffering and countless material losses.

The reasons for losing peace can vary. The above text only pointed out the social problem of Piedmont in the 19th century, where a lack of concern for the young generation was blatant social injustice. In practice, this neglect resulted in high crime rates. Repairing social relations and addressing the problems of Turin youth restored social peace and facilitated the peaceful coexistence of the whole community.

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# 12

## LIVING TOGETHER IN HARMONY AND PEACE

The message of Pope Francis in the encyclical  
*Fratelli tutti*

*Stanisław Chrobak and Tadeusz Lewicki*

### Introduction

Peace is a very complex matter. It covers many dimensions of human life. We distinguish peace within the human individual, peace in our close relationships with other people, peace on the socio-political level and in relationships between individual peoples and nations, as well as peace with God. These multiple forms of peace are sometimes closely linked and sometimes exist side by side. Christian peace is based on four fundamental principles: truth, justice, freedom and love. Truth distinguishes good from evil. Justice establishes rights and duties and upholds them. Freedom serves to protect the dignity of the person. Love creates conditions of peace: helping those in trouble (defense, support, solidarity, etc.) and forgiveness. It is very difficult for an individual to live in peace when war is raging all around them. However, one's inner peace is an indispensable condition for all other forms of peace, starting with that which occurs in our everyday lives (Bazzichi, 2008).

Humanity's innate vocation to peace is rooted in the natural desire to live a full and happy life. The desire for peace coincides from many points of view with the desire for integral development of oneself and the development of other people, the human family. Ultimately, it corresponds to the first moral principle, which is the duty and right of human social, communal fulfillment, open to transcendence. Since the integral development of every person and nation is at the center of the common good and constitutes its reference point, it can be concluded that peace is the guiding star of the common good.

*(Toso, 2013, 22)*

The process of building peace takes on particular importance in the modern era. Although the world has been living in peace since the end of World War II, there remains a state of constant international tension and threat to peace. It is no exaggeration to say that peace is the main task of our times. It is therefore necessary to involve everyone in creating peace. The demands of peace are not limited to the abandonment of military arsenals or the arms race.

For decades – Pope Francis emphasizes – it seemed that the world had learned a lesson from its many wars and disasters, and was slowly moving towards various forms of integration. For example, there was the dream of a united Europe, capable of acknowledging its shared roots and rejoicing in its rich diversity. We think of »the firm conviction of the founders of the European Union, who envisioned a future based on the capacity to work together in bridging divisions and in fostering peace and fellowship between all the peoples of this continent«. There was also a growing desire for integration in Latin America, and several steps were taken in this direction. In some countries and regions, attempts at reconciliation and rapprochement proved fruitful, while others showed great promise. Our own days, however, seem to be showing signs of a certain regression. Ancient conflicts thought long buried are breaking out anew, while instances of a myopic, extremist, resentful and aggressive nationalism are on the rise. [...] »Goodness, together with love, justice and solidarity, are not achieved once and for all; they have to be realized each day. It is not possible to settle for what was achieved in the past and complacently enjoy it, as if we could somehow disregard the fact that many of our brothers and sisters still endure situations that cry out for our attention«.

(Francis, 2020, 10–11)

### ***Fratelli tutti* – challenges in building peace**

In the face of each new challenge, the Church proposes adequate responses to reality and the signs of the times. Since the presentation of John XXIII's encyclical *Pacem in Terris* (April 11, 1963), the social doctrine of the Church has repeated the paradigm of creating and functioning of a society commensurate with human dignity. The proper perspective in which to understand the reality of Christian peace is not the event of war, but the truth about God. From the fatherhood of God arises the brotherhood of humanity. This human brotherhood was reborn in Jesus Christ and from Him, from His death and resurrection. Jesus Christ is the one who reconciles all people in himself. In this context, Pope Francis, in his message for the World Day of Peace 2014, referring to the social encyclicals of Paul VI, John Paul II, and Benedict XVI, emphasizes that fraternity is the basis of peace and the path to it (Francis, 2014). The encyclical *Fratelli tutti* is therefore another document in the

catalogue of important documents of the social teaching of the Church. Building harmony and peace requires a new, creative, broad and complex commitment. Therefore, analyzing the content of the encyclical, we clearly see the context of social values derived from fundamental values according to the paradigm of Catholic social teaching: see – judge – act. When reading the social encyclical of Pope Francis, a question arises about the perception and acceptance of this document in the world, including the Christian world. It is about instructions on how to approach the encyclical *Fratelli tutti* in order to better understand what Pope Francis wants to convey to “the city and the world” to live together in harmony and peace. In this context, when analyzing the papal teaching, we can notice the following methods of action.

### ***Begin from the truth***

The path to peace, as Pope Francis teaches, must lead through the defense and promotion of basic human rights. Peace embraces the whole human person and assumes the involvement of the whole person. The denial of what constitutes the true nature of the human being, in its essential dimensions, in its proper capacity to know truth and goodness, and, ultimately, God himself, constitutes a threat to the building of peace. Without the full truth about man, it is difficult to respect and support human life in its many aspects. Therefore

if society is to have a future, it must respect the truth of our human dignity and submit to that truth. Murder is not wrong simply because it is socially unacceptable and punished by law, but because of a deeper conviction. This is a non-negotiable truth attained by the use of reason and accepted in conscience. A society is noble and decent not least for its support of the pursuit of truth and its adherence to the most basic of truths.

*(Francis, 2020, 207)*

Awareness of human dignity, inalienable rights, indivisible unity, social nature and openness to transcendence is the foundation of a culture of peace.

There is an inextricable link between commitment to peace and respect for truth. Truth is the foundation of peace if each person honestly realizes not only their own rights, but also their obligations towards others. Even the smallest good deed by a single person mysteriously influences the transformation of society and contributes to the growth of all.

Truth should not lead to revenge, but rather to reconciliation and forgiveness. Truth means telling families torn apart by pain what happened to their missing relatives. Truth means confessing what happened to minors recruited by cruel and violent people. Truth means recognizing the pain of women who are victims of violence and abuse [...] Every act of violence

committed against a human being is a wound in humanity's flesh; every violent death diminishes us as people [...] Violence leads to more violence, hatred to more hatred, death to more death. We must break this cycle which seems inescapable.

*(Francis, 2020, 227)*

In a world of growing connections and solidarity, peace should be extended to all people. No state can deny anyone the right to a decent life and integral development. Pope Francis notes that all political programs should lead to a more dignified human life. Politics, in his understanding, is based on the foundation of respect for the inalienable dignity of the human person and brotherly love, defined as the highest law. This requires effort and creativity, not popular slogans that are catchy at a given moment and short and fleeting. Looking at the present and the future, he emphasizes that:

inherent in the nature of human beings and society there exist certain basic structures to support our development and survival. Certain requirements thus ensue, and these can be discovered through dialogue, even though, strictly speaking, they are not created by consensus. The fact that certain rules are indispensable for the very life of society is a sign that they are good in and of themselves. There is no need, then, to oppose the interests of society, consensus and the reality of objective truth. These three realities can be harmonized whenever, through dialogue, people are unafraid to get to the heart of an issue.

*(Francis, 2020, 212)*

### ***Peace cannot be based on a false sense of security***

Political meetings at national and international levels only contribute to the cause of peace if the shared commitments made are then respected by all parties.

Rules by themselves will not suffice if we continue to think that the solution to current problems is deterrence through fear or the threat of nuclear, chemical or biological weapons. [...] International peace and stability cannot be based on a false sense of security, on the threat of mutual destruction or total annihilation, or on simply maintaining a balance of power. [...] Growing interdependence and globalization mean that any response to the threat of nuclear weapons should be collective and concerted, based on mutual trust. This trust can be built only through dialogue that is truly directed to the common good and not to the protection of veiled or particular interests.

*(Francis, 2020, 262)*

The obligation to respect and implement human rights applies to all human rights and does not allow for arbitrary choices that would lead to forms of discrimination and injustice. “Those who work for tranquil social coexistence should never forget that inequality and lack of integral human development make peace impossible” (Francis, 2020, 235). Pope Francis, challenging the world, encourages it to move beyond its current state of disorder and invent new forms of international order that are worthy of human dignity. Therefore

that is why it is so necessary to stop supporting terrorist movements fuelled by financing, the provision of weapons and strategy, and by attempts to justify these movements, even using the media. All these must be regarded as international crimes that threaten security and world peace. Such terrorism must be condemned in all its forms and expressions. Religious convictions about the sacred meaning of human life permit us »to recognize the fundamental values of our common humanity, values in the name of which we can and must cooperate, build and dialogue, pardon and grow; this will allow different voices to unite in creating a melody of sublime nobility and beauty, instead of fanatical cries of hatred«.

*(Francis, 2020, 283)*

### ***Make a personal transformation***

Pope Francis repeatedly repeats that violence is born in the human heart. In this regard, it recalls that the rejection of violence is not a purely tactical move for Christians but a way of being a human attitude. “Everything, then, depends on our ability to see the need for a change of heart, attitudes and lifestyles” (Francis, 2020, 166). It is therefore important to maintain the appropriate culture and spirituality of peace, because it is not so much about structures, although necessary, but about people. Everyone in their own family, professional and social circles should feel it is their duty to expand the room with personal gestures.

Negotiation often becomes necessary for shaping concrete paths to peace. Yet the processes of change that lead to lasting peace are crafted above all by peoples; each individual can act as an effective leaven by the way they live each day. Great changes are not produced behind desks or in offices. This means that »everyone has a fundamental role to play in a single great creative project: to write a new page of history, a page full of hope, peace and reconciliation«.

*(Francis, 2020, 231)*



Therefore, a peacemaker is one who brings goodness into the lives of other people. They are individuals who take specific actions: promoting truth, justice, dialogue, respect for differences and helping the weakest. That's why the Pope emphasizes:

To be sure, it is no easy task to overcome the bitter legacy of injustices, hostility and mistrust left by conflict. [...] Each of us should realize that »even the harsh judgment I hold in my heart against my brother or my sister, the open wound that was never cured, the offense that was never forgiven, the rancour that is only going to hurt me, are all instances of a struggle that I carry within me, a little flame deep in my heart that needs to be extinguished before it turns into a great blaze«.

*(Francis, 2020, 243)*

By delving into the psychological and moral dynamism of human life, he comes to understand that the “dream” of a new, more fraternal world results from the moral structure of individuals, who fully realize themselves only in freedom and a sincere gift of self.

Peace is not just a gift to be accepted but also a work to be created. To create peace, one must learn compassion, solidarity, cooperation and brotherhood. Brotherhood is the principle of social organization that allows equals to be different and therefore allows people who are equal in dignity to implement their life plans or charisms in different ways. Peaceful thoughts, words and gestures create a mentality and culture of peace, an atmosphere of respect, honesty and cordiality.

In these pages of reflection on universal fraternity – Pope Francis emphasizes – I felt inspired particularly by Saint Francis of Assisi, but also by others of our brothers and sisters who are not Catholics: Martin Luther King, Desmond Tutu, Mahatma Gandhi and many more. Yet I would like to conclude by mentioning another person of deep faith who, drawing upon his intense experience of God, made a journey of transformation towards feeling a brother to all. I am speaking of Blessed Charles de Foucauld. Blessed Charles directed his ideal of total surrender to God towards an identification with the poor, abandoned in the depths of the African desert. In that setting, he expressed his desire to feel himself a brother to every human being.

*(Francis, 2020, 286–287)*

This attitude gives rise to mutual trust, the ability to conduct constructive dialogue, the possibility of forgiveness, mutual love, compassion for the weaker as well as the readiness to sacrifice.

### *Value and meaning of forgiveness*

Forgiveness is an action, an activity that a person undertakes in a certain situation. The essence of the activity of forgiveness is therefore transformation, conversion and metanoia, which includes self-understanding as well as thinking, behaviour and existence itself. The transformation of a person is accompanied by the transformation of his entire existence. In acts of forgiveness, individuals participate in the creation of a new world. This means that not only is a new person revealed, but also a new world is created. My forgiveness not only creates anew a person who has committed evil and harm but also creates a new world and transforms the current form of the world. It can be said that in the human dimension, thanks to forgiveness, a person is restored to authentic humanity, while in the metaphysical dimension, reality is restored to its authentic form of being and its false dimension is negated (Szulakiewicz, 2016).

Forgiveness – Pope Francis emphasizes – does not entail allowing oppressors to keep trampling on their own dignity and that of others, or letting criminals continue their wrongdoing. Those who suffer injustice have to defend strenuously their own rights and those of their family, precisely because they must preserve the dignity they have received as a loving gift from God. If a criminal harms me or a loved one, no one can forbid me from demanding justice and ensuring that this person – or anyone else – will not harm me, or others, again. This is entirely just; forgiveness does not forbid it but actually demands it.

*(Francis, 2020, 241)*

Mutual forgiveness should not eliminate the need for justice, much less close the path to truth.

Forgiving does not mean forgetting. Or better, in the face of a reality that can in no way be denied, relativized or concealed, forgiveness is still possible. In the face of an action that can never be tolerated, justified or excused, we can still forgive. In the face of something that cannot be forgotten for any reason, we can still forgive. Free and heartfelt forgiveness is something noble, a reflection of God's own infinite ability to forgive. If forgiveness is gratuitous, then it can be shown even to someone who resists repentance and is unable to beg pardon.

*(Francis, 2020, 250)*

Forgiveness is both the most rational and the most prudent act because it encourages the guilty person to take responsibility for their actions and to acknowledge that they are ready to compensate society or other people for

the damage caused. To forgive means to “give”. To become capable of forgiveness, one must become capable of giving.

Those who truly forgive do not forget. Instead, they choose not to yield to the same destructive force that caused them so much suffering. They break the vicious circle; they halt the advance of the forces of destruction. They choose not to spread in society the spirit of revenge that will sooner or later return to take its toll. Revenge never truly satisfies victims. Some crimes are so horrendous and cruel that the punishment of those who perpetrated them does not serve to repair the harm done. Even killing the criminal would not be enough, nor could any form of torture prove commensurate with the sufferings inflicted on the victim. Revenge resolves nothing.

*(Francis, 2020, 251)*

In this way, true forgiveness in the depths of every heart creates bonds and extends existence, leading a person from themselves to others.

### ***Awakening spiritual forces – dialogue between people of different religions and cultures***

From a Christian perspective, peacemaking is not the sole responsibility of national or international institutions but demands personal responsibility from everyone. Humanity achieves its human fulfilment when people and nations experience true relationships, bonds of faithfulness, a communion of feelings and brotherhood.

Love of neighbour is concrete and squanders none of the resources needed to bring about historical change that can benefit the poor and disadvantaged. [...] This demonstrates the need for a greater spirit of fraternity, but also a more efficient worldwide organization to help resolve the problems plaguing the abandoned who are suffering and dying in poor countries. It also shows that there is no one solution, no single acceptable methodology, no economic recipe that can be applied indiscriminately to all. Even the most rigorous scientific studies can propose different courses of action.

*(Francis, 2020, 165)*

Today’s globalization and significant migration flows bring diverse cultures and religions to our societies. According to Pope Francis, discernment regarding the contribution of cultures and religions to building a just, peaceful society is, above all, an obligation addressed to everyone, because everyone is

responsible for the development of the human family and the universal common good, which are based on justice and peace.

Education and upbringing, concern for others, a well-integrated view of life and spiritual growth: all these are essential for quality human relationships and for enabling society itself to react against injustices, aberrations and abuses of economic, technological, political and media power.

*(Francis, 2020, 167)*

The Pope emphasizes that the cause of peace should not be threatened by unjustifiable clashes between civilizations, and even more so, between religions. It is particularly important to establish contact with people who were formed in a different culture or profess a different faith. It is in such contacts that peace is experienced, and favourable conditions are created for its introduction.

The different religions, based on their respect for each human person as a creature called to be a child of God, contribute significantly to building fraternity and defending justice in society. Dialogue between the followers of different religions does not take place simply for the sake of diplomacy, consideration or tolerance. [...] the goal of dialogue is to establish friendship, peace and harmony, and to share spiritual and moral values and experiences in a spirit of truth and love.

*[Francis, 2020, 271]*

Peace is a value, a good that must be protected and nurtured through bold decisions and good works. In this context, we can support and empower people who are working for peace in their countries and in conflict regions around the world.

Good politics combines love with hope and with confidence in the reserves of goodness present in human hearts. Indeed, »authentic political life, built upon respect for law and frank dialogue between individuals, is constantly renewed whenever there is a realization that every woman and man, and every new generation, brings the promise of new relational, intellectual, cultural and spiritual energies«.

*(Francis, 2020, 196)*

All citizens, whatever religion they belong to, have the ability to seek truth, goodness and God. Each type of knowledge contributes to illuminating and deepening a comprehensive knowledge that is more in line with the richness of a concrete historical reality. On this basis, they can build communion in the universal human good and fraternal cooperation between believers

and non-believers in the perspective of a common commitment to peace. The Church, then, as Pope Francis emphasizes:

she cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the building of a better world, or fail to «reawaken the spiritual energy» that can contribute to the betterment of society. It is true that religious ministers must not engage in the party politics that are the proper domain of the laity, but neither can they renounce the political dimension of life itself, which involves a constant attention to the common good and a concern for integral human development. The Church »has a public role over and above her charitable and educational activities«. She works for »the advancement of humanity and of universal fraternity«.

*(Francis, 2020, 276)*

### Conclusion

On February 24, 2022, the war reached the borders of Europe. The Russian Federation, by attacking Ukraine, initiated a war that resulted not only in military operations and the destruction of the infrastructure of an independent state but also in millions of refugees and thousands of victims among the civilian population, including children. The invasion of Ukraine, which in Russia is called a “special military operation”, was presented with a messianic and civilizational dimension. Patriarch Kirill spoke not about a war that kills children and innocent people, but about the metaphysical fight between good and evil between Russia, the bearer of spiritual principles, and the materialistic West. At the Moscow stadium, Putin quoted the Gospel of John to justify the war he waged. The risk of this situation is the militarization of human conscience. This should be contained and controlled. This is the task of politicians, diplomats, peace movements and all people of good will who try to put order in the chaos of passions and private interests. We cannot allow the militarization of our consciences. Adopting a hostile attitude towards another human being would be a serious mistake, also towards Russian culture and citizens (Sokołowski, 2022; Toso, 2023). A Christian should, above all, be a person aware of their dignity and, in particular, of the role of their faith in creating social awareness, including – which is important in our reality – European awareness.

Others – Pope Francis states – drink from other sources. For us the well-spring of human dignity and fraternity is in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. From it, there arises, »for Christian thought and for the action of the Church, the primacy given to relationship, to the encounter with the sacred mystery of the other, to universal communion with the entire human family, as a vocation of all«.

*(Francis, 2020, 277)*

Catholic social teaching proposes objectivity, taking into account historical experience and detachment from ideological disputes between opponents. A positive definition understands peace as a selfless activity for the benefit of other people, states and nations; the fruit of justice, love, mutual cooperation and respect for human rights. The Catholic Church stands for dynamic peace, which means that it is not only given to humanity but also asked. It is a value that should be built between people, as well as in the heart and mind of a person (Cynarzewska-Właźlik, 2011). Peace is one of the central values of the social teaching of the Church. In the perspective of *Fratelli tutti*, peacemaking is not solely the task of national or international institutions but requires the personal responsibility of each person. At the center of the reflection on peace is the human person. Peace is therefore primarily a human attribute and a human choice.

Certainly – Pope Francis emphasizes – all this calls for an alternative way of thinking. Without an attempt to enter into that way of thinking, what I am saying here will sound wildly unrealistic. On the other hand, if we accept the great principle that there are rights born of our inalienable human dignity, we can rise to the challenge of envisaging a new humanity. [...] For a real and lasting peace is only possible »on the basis of a global ethic of solidarity and cooperation in the service of a future shaped by interdependence and shared responsibility in the whole human family«.

(Francis, 2020, 127)

A person cannot give up being themselves and cannot be themselves only by themselves. By considering humans as a whole in their material and spiritual, individual and social dimensions, one makes their development and that of all humanity a matter of truly “being” human. Peace is therefore one of the values that can create moral and institutional wealth capable of supporting complex processes of global coexistence.

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# 13

## TO MAKE PEACE

### Christian inspirations for peace pedagogy

*Zbigniew Kulesz*

#### **Introduction**

Less than 100 years after the end of World War II, the world once again faced a global threat of loss of peace, in addition to the state of tension of the so-called “Cold War” based on the arms race in the 1950s and 1960s. The war between Russia and Ukraine in 2022 and the armed conflict in the Gaza Strip in 2023, have created tension in communities around the world. In both cases, we see many countries being directly and indirectly involved in these conflicts. Despite the strong commitment of international actors to peace, unfortunately, their actions are not producing the intended results. The powerlessness of peace initiatives and the negligible effectiveness of the decisions and actions taken indicate the need for deeper reflection on the complex issue of peace. Searching for optimal ways out of the crisis and analyzing the sources from which attitudes of peaceful coexistence are born is an extremely timely challenge.

There is a correlation between world peace and individual peace. The two dimensions are closely interconnected. It is not states or institutions, but a particular individual, as a representative of a group or system, who makes the decisions that cause conflicts and wars. Individuals, as extremely complex beings, who, while seeking to ensure their own security, may do so by violating the security and rights of others. Here, we encounter a peculiar paradox – the one who seeks peace often does so by means of war, violence and crossing the boundaries of others. On the one hand, it seems necessary to analyze the structure of individuals and their internal and external motivations, which underlie their decisions and determine their attitudes towards reality and other people. The pursuit of security in the world should begin with



individuals if peace is indeed to be a lasting good. The transformation of thinking, self-awareness, and responsibility of entire communities depends on the upbringing and motivation of individuals. On the other hand, the road to peace should lead through external initiatives – such as law and negotiations, and based on work at the grassroots, i.e., the formation of attitudes in the process of education and upbringing. The difficulty of building the security of humankind on the basis of common values embodied in the cultural heritage is the task facing those responsible for peace in the world and every individual as a beneficiary of this good.

Looking for ways out of the impasse, it is necessary to pay attention to the content of the Christian religion system. Indeed, the issue of peace is an essential and integral part of the Gospel preaching. Representatives of most Christian denominations are involved in peace initiatives. The Roman Catholic Church is constantly making an effort, in the pursuit of peace through the proclamation of the truth of the Gospel. The tradition of the Church, the teaching of the universal councils, the statements of the popes documents and writings constitute an important heritage and show the sources of peace and the ways and means to achieve it.

The task of peacemaking is carried out through education in the broadest sense – education for peace and the initiatives and actions taken. Paying attention to the sources of peace teaching is intended to serve to deepen the analysis of the phenomenon and lead to a new view of the issue. At the present time, in the era of postmodernity, when, on the one hand, there is a desire to find permanent points of reference (a fixed system of values) and, on the other hand, a fascination with diversity, variability of judgements and ethical ambivalence (confusion in the area of axiology), it is necessary to seek inspiration on how to take action to achieve and maintain peace in order to be effective. This study will analyze the biblical and theological sources, the main theses contained in the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, and the possibilities of applying the *acquis* in teaching and educating for peace.

### **Biblical basis**

In lexical studies in the area of theology, we find definitions based on the etymology of the word, descriptive and functional. The concept of peace derived from the Bible (in Hebrew *shalom*, in Greek *eirene*, in Latin *pax*) indicates the inner condition of man based on trust in the relationship with God. It is expressed in a sense of security and allows one to build benevolent good relationships among people and with all creation. Peace is also described as the opposite of war, fighting and a state of unrest. The word peace occurs 343 times in the Bible (Flis, 1996). In the Old Testament (mainly in the Pentateuch), the theme of peace occurs in the sense of God's gift, divine providence, promises and covenant (Gen. 15:15; Leviticus 26:6; Lev. 25:12).

It occurs in individual relationships and between communities (Gen. 26:29; 37:4). The word is used in greetings, wishes (Ex 4:18; Deut 2:26; 1 Sm 25:6) and blessings (Lev 6:24–26). We read about peace in the books of history when it was concluded between feuding peoples. It is an expression of security and God's action. Yahweh grants this gift (Judg 6:23–24), but it is not obtainable by those living apart from God – the ungodly (Is 48:22; 57:21; 59:8). Also in the psalms, the dependence of peace on God's action is emphasized and linked to blessing (Psalm 29:11). Peace will come with the coming of the Messiah (Ps 72:3.7; 85:11). Peace is attributed to the humble (Ps 37:11). The prophets foretell the peace that is associated with the Kingdom of God, and its absence is the result of Israel's deviation from God, i.e., sin. Perfect peace will occur during the reign of the Prince of Peace (Isa 9:5–6; Mich 5:4; Zech 9:10) (Jasiński, 2011).

The content of the Old Testament books reveals the layer of meaning of the concept of peace, which can be described in several important points. It can be described as a gift given by God, which is an invitation to interaction and requires an appropriate response from humanity. External peace between nations flows from the state of God's inner peace that individuals possess. Such peace is attainable through the supernatural help of God, who grants grace. We are dealing with three degrees of peaceful existence. There is peace arising in the soul of an individual, which is building peace in human relations, which in turn leads to the introduction of peace on a global scale. In the message of the prophets, lasting peace signifies the coming of the messianic times. God's messenger – the Lord's Anointed – will bring about God's ultimate kingdom of peace. For the Israelites, war itself was only one cause of the loss of peace. The real enemy of peace was death because peace was equated with life. It represented for the Hebrews the greatest value, which they pursued and desired to achieve as the ultimate goal.

Achieving peace was only possible in a relationship with God. A man who rejects God cannot become a beneficiary of peace, the supreme good, which is God and who is also its giver. Peace, in the sense of the writings of the Old Testament era, contains an aspect of aspiration and unfulfilled hope. The feature of peace shows the necessity of abiding in a relationship with God, without which experiencing it is impossible (Dąbek, 2017; Homerski, 1988).

In the New Testament, the theme of peace is found in the account of St. Luke and in the letters of St. Paul. The priest Zechariah prophesies about the path of peace to which God is directing (Luke 1:79). The angels at the birth of Jesus announce peace on earth to the people in whom God is pleased. Peace is brought by Jesus, who is King (Lk 2:14). The old man Simeon prays that he may depart from this world in peace (Lk 2:29). Jesus defines as blessed those who make peace (Mt 5:9). God's peace is proclaimed during Jesus' entry into Jerusalem (Luke 19:38). There is a difference between God's peace and earthly peace (Lk 12:51, Jn 14:27, Rev 6:4). Jesus, after the resurrection,

addresses the disciples, “peace to you” (Lk 24:36 Jn 20:19. 21. 26). Jesus’ peace deprives one of fear and allows one to live according to the laws of the Gospel. There was peace in the communities of believers. As a gift of God, it was a testimony to the life of Christians and contributed to the development of faith and the leading of life in the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:31). St. Paul points to the connection of peace with the sacrifice of Christ on the cross (Colossians 1:20), with salvation defined as peace with God (Romans 5:1), with the performance of good deeds (Romans 2:10–11). Christ defines our peace (Eph 2:14–18). In his letters, there are numerous references to the theme of peace – in greetings, wishes, endings and advice (Rom 1:7; 1 Cor 1:3; Gal 1:3; 2 Thes 1:2; Tit 1:4; 2 Thes 3:16; Phil 4:9; Eph 1:2). Christ brings peace, and He is the giver of peace. The work of the Spirit in the lives of Christians leads to new life and peace in contrast to the desires of the old man, which lead to death (Rom 8:6; 2 Tim 2:22; Heb 12:14). Peace creates unity of spirit (Eph. 4:3). Christians preach the Gospel as good news of peace (Eph. 6:5) and are called to persevere in peace until the end of the world comes and a new order is established (2 Peter 3:13–14) (Flis, 1996; Jasiński, 2011).

### The teaching of Augustine

The teaching of peace has been shaped over the centuries of the Church’s existence. Attitudes towards war and peace have undergone transformations. Each generation of Christians living in specific cultural conditions has measured itself against the implementation of the Gospel’s indications of peace. Among the many studies of the subject, St. Augustine’s theology from the fifth century is noteworthy (Augustine, 1998).

His teaching emphatically reveals the dualism and rift between the human and the divine, the internal and the external, the sacred and the temporal and sheds new light on the issue. Drawing on the Bible and the apostolic tradition, the theologian emphasizes the positive aspect of peace. His theology includes a social dimension (the teaching and preaching of the Church) and an individual dimension (the personal relationship to peace). The lack of peace in humans, created as a result of original sin, leads to a loss of relationship with God. This inner split in individuals is an obstacle to achieving and maintaining a state of peace. Despite emphasizing that humankind will find peace only as eternal peace (*pax aeterna*), the Saint points to earthly paths to peace and reminds us of its realization, which is the responsibility of all individuals.

Peace is in the process of creation, while the fulfilment of hope will take place in eternity, of which earthly life is a part, just as earthly peace is perfectly united with peace in union with God in heaven. Augustine opposes the prevailing Roman understanding of peace in his time as the opposite of war in the spirit of the words of Vegetius: *si vis pacem, para bellum*. He criticizes the evils of warfare (Budzik, 2022).

In his work “The City of God”, he presents and explains the dimensions of peace. The order is common to all forms of peace: the principle of conformity. According to Augustine, the essence of peace in humans is based on the subordination of the body’s and senses’ actions to the authority of the rational soul (what connects humans to other living beings). Inner peace concerns the orderly harmony between cognition and functioning. Because humans err, they need help – divine instruction – to choose what is God’s will. Obedience to God is the basis of all virtues and is realized in fulfilling His laws (Augustine, 1998; Budzik, 2022).

Peace in the social area is based on the consistency between the peace of an individual person and peace with other people. It is combined with the love of neighbor, which applies to every person. The purpose of love is to help one’s neighbor to be able to freely receive God’s love. If a person provides help and is able to benefit from the help of others, they can live in peace, which is orderly concordance. This concordance is summarized in a short rule: do no harm to anyone and try to help everyone. The rule applies both to peace in family relations and in the state since the family is the basic, constituent part of the state. Similarly, peace should be treated in the dimension of political relationships. Trying and fighting for peace in external actions is closely connected with maintaining internal peace. In order to be able to transmit it, a person has to experience peace within themselves, which means peace of heart that comes from a good conscience (Augustine, 1998; Budzik, 2022). A commitment to peace here and now is necessary. Every believer is called to shape the reality in which they live. To reach perfect peace, it is not enough to perfect virtues (faith, hope and love); it must be concretized through good works. Consent, which keeps people at peace together, is essential, just as health serves the existence of the body. Similarly, Augustine emphasizes the role of justice in relation to peace. The two realities are interconnected. Another equally important condition for preserving peace with others is reconciliation with oneself and inner integration (Sylwestrzak, 2018; Budzik, 2022).

### **Theological and social perspective**

The concept of peace in Christianity has undergone many transformations, starting from the Old Testament era through the apostolic period, the times of persecution of Christians, the era of the Church Fathers in the Middle Ages and up to modern times. From St. Augustine’s understanding of peace based on order (*tranquillitas ordinis*), there has been a shift to a more dynamic understanding of the phenomenon today. Peace can be described as a process in a state of constant creation. The nature of peace, the position towards war and the Church’s tasks in this regard were outlined in the Second Vatican Council’s Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World.

Peace has always been the supreme value, while war was considered an evil. The Church calls for the cooperation of the international community in the concern for peace by formulating concrete indications (CCC, 2002).

Since the time of John XXIII, the Church's teaching has emphasized the indissoluble link between spiritual peace and the efforts of the faithful to achieve peace in social and political life. Peace is a gift of God, begins with the human heart and is to lead to peace in social relations. It is necessary to take into account the limitations of human nature and point out the obstacles to peace and the need to fight evil until the end of time. Humans carrying the effects of original sin are the authors of destructive and aggressive behaviour, resulting from selfishness and pride.

Sin constantly affecting an individual person has consequences in social life as well. Recognition of this truth is to build a realistic attitude and realization of the need for the help of Christ, the One who brings peace. Peace, then, is a gift and, at the same time, a task. Its fulfilment through love is a process of building justice, order and security, both in oneself and in one's surroundings (KRK). Humans, as social beings, are to create the good that serves both themselves and society as a whole. The common good requires specific conditions for its realization. These are respected for the person, social well-being, community development and peace, defined as "the permanence and security of a just order" (Gocko, 2016).

It is impossible to build true peace without the truth of God's existence, without recognizing moral principles and values and without an order concerning the global community. The rejection, in the age of secularization, of references to the Transcendent introduces the absence of a stable foundation for peace. Likewise, volatility and temporariness – the denial of enduring principles and values – deprive peace efforts of reference points. In striving for peace, the Church constantly points to the value of every human being, in his or her deepest essence, regardless of his or her views or professed values (Piwowski, 1986).

Above all, the Church's teaching emphasizes the unquestionable dignity and value of every human being who is called to develop. Integral consideration must be given to the needs of the whole human being, arising from his physical-psycho-spiritual structure. In his encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, John XIII lists the main values that constitute peace and determine the principles of social coexistence: truth, freedom, justice and social charity. John Paul II elaborates on the importance of these fundamental rights (John XXIII, 1963; John Paul II, 2003). Referring to these four factors creates a common perspective for thinking about the good on the basis of a well-understood humanism.

The family is a necessary actor in peace education, as it forms the first and natural environment for fulfilling this task. Additionally, cultural institutions, schools and universities play an important role in this regard.

This framework outlines the pedagogy of a peacemaker. To promote this effectively, one must lead a developed inner life, and have a clear moral system, supported by a way of life. The Pope points out the importance of words and acts of kindness, which create a culture of peace, a climate of respect and good relations. He urges not to remain at the level of tolerance based on justice but to teach people to love and educate for peace. It is essential to personally embrace and continuously learn the way, which he describes as a pedagogy of forgiveness. False peace leads to indifferent consciences and isolation. A pedagogy of peace requires commitment, perseverance, sensitivity and cooperation (Benedict XVI, 2012).

### Peace pedagogy

Peace pedagogy involves the creation of theoretical constructs as well as the design and implementation of interactions that serve this purpose. In 1969, Pope Paul VI used such a term, calling for the promotion of values related to an attitude of peace in schools. The idea and name of peace pedagogy were spread by UNESCO, and in Poland, the first studies were created in the 1980s and 1990s. Education and upbringing in this area focus on promoting the values of peace, knowledge of the causes of conflict, skills and the formation of attitudes to oppose conflict and violence (Mydłowska, 2021; Suchodolski, 1997). An important reason for tense relations and open interpersonal and inter-community conflicts is the difference in their value systems. This situation often triggers fear and insecurity. The process of realizing that being different does not necessarily mean the enemy is to lead to a broader view of reality in a spirit of tolerance while maintaining one's own beliefs. This includes teaching conflict resolution through dialogue. Pedagogical activities for peace aim to develop pro-social attitudes based on a humanistic, universal system of values.

In view of the crisis of values and the lack of uniform moral norms in the modern world, it becomes necessary to educate for peace based on universal values. Motivations in decision-making are a complex process, and for the decisions to be optimal – serving the good of the individual and society – they require adequate knowledge and education for responsibility (Bałandynowicz et al., 2023; Wojnar, 2000). The situation today requires a response to the ongoing processes of globalization and migration by fostering attitudes of tolerance and the ability to integrate. In preparing for education and upbringing, one cannot naively think that programs or the introduction of a teaching subject will suffice. The issue of peace education requires an interdisciplinary and holistic approach. It is important to understand the process as the penetration and assimilation of the subject with the value of peace (Piejka, 2015).

The direction of education and upbringing understood in this way aligns with the teachings of Christian education. With the goals of peace pedagogy

in mind, it is possible to point to the need to broaden the perspective and seek solutions adequate to the dynamically changing reality. The concept of peace education was included in the main theses in the encyclical *Pacem in Terris* (John XXIII, 1963) and developed by subsequent popes – Paul VI, John Paul II, Benedict XVI and Francis. Recalling the main truths of the Church's teaching on peace can serve to strengthen common efforts for the good of humanity, revitalize concern for peace and give hope for its fulfilment.

An integral concept of humanity should be the starting point in the process of education and serve as a foundation in the formation of deep human relationships and the construction of a stable world order. The answer to the question – who is human? – should be preceded by thinking about action on his behalf. The Christian concept of peace is grounded in personalistic anthropology. This fundamental reference should be recalled when building educational programs and undertaking peace initiatives.

Education for peace should start with the individual and be focused on them. Peace, as a good, is a need rooted in the psyche of every human being (John XXIII, 1963). In the process of creating peace, the complexity of the human structure must be taken into account when planning and sharing activities, paying attention to the physical and spiritual entities. The spiritual dimension is the discovery of the meaning of existence and allows you to create a perspective open to other good, beyond own or temporary benefits.

Access to the application is the isolation of such values that lead to the creation of a culture of peace as common and basic. Education of connection, transfer and consolidation of individual value systems of individuals, both in mutual relations and in the forum of international connections. These include respect for the truth and a specific man, respect for his full dignity, reconciliation, freedom, truth, equality, freedom, love, honour, trust, dialogue, social existence, brotherhood, patriotism, love for the homeland and world solidarity (Cynarzewska-Właźlik, 2011; Mazurek, 1989). It is necessary to distinguish the category of internal peace. It is a state of spirit resulting from perfect internal coherence obtained by aligning the relationship with oneself, with other people and with God. "There will be no peace in the universal human community unless it takes deep root in the heart of every person" (John XXIII, 1963, 165).

In the area of pedagogy, accompanying the peace education process is intended to achieve intrapsychic and interpersonal coherence. Christianity strives for unity of relationships in life, referring to the commandment to love God and neighbor (Mark 12:28–31). Working on oneself to achieve internal peace translates into the quality of the functioning of the state and the law in that country. Thanks to the inner peace achieved by individual people, authentic dialogue based on truth and sincerity is possible (Baładynowicz, 2022). Humans are born and remain in a state of disturbance of external balance and inner turmoil (KDK, 2002). Existential anxiety is a natural state

resulting from the effects of original sin, and it is ultimately overcome thanks to deep union with God “resting in the Lord” (Augustyn, 2022, I, 1). Peace is constantly at risk of being lost. It is required to repeat initiatives and not get discouraged despite failures and setbacks. In the upbringing process, the attitude of being able to forgive and build relationships with other people anew should be developed. The pursuit of peace means striving for an ideal and is therefore a process that will not achieve the ultimate goal. Pedagogical effort in this area makes sense and should be undertaken while recognizing human limitations and external conditions.

## Summary

The words written in the Constitutional Act of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in the year of the end of World War II: “(...) since wars begin in the minds of men, the defense of peace should also be built in the minds of men” (Konwencja, 1945) remain current. Education for peace should start with individuals and serve individuals. Education for self-determination and striving for internal control in functioning is a challenge faced by educators. Learning to find internal coherence and meaningfulness of existence leads to inner peace and results in lasting pro-social attitudes. An internally harmonized person is able to create a climate of harmony and peace around themselves. The attitude resulting from the teaching of the Gospel (“love your neighbor as yourself”) clearly shows the direction of striving to achieve lasting peace in relationships with others.

Working on integrated self-shaping in all dimensions of humanity will result in adequate and deep interpersonal relationships. Peace begins with meetings and conversations in the immediate environment and is not something abstract. This is confirmed by the teaching of the Church resulting from the biblical message and tradition. Building peace begins in a person’s heart and is expressed in the testimony of their everyday life and in the treatment of the people they encounter. Moving closer to achieving complete world peace is the pursuit of a goal that is inherently an ideal value. Therefore, it assumes long-distance effort and awareness of failures along the way, due to the frailty of human nature, as well as negative experiences occurring in the process of broadly understood socialization. Therefore, it is necessary to take into account factors that inhibit the achievement of internal and external peace in peace-making efforts and in the process of peace education. We need to arouse hope and strengthen the will in rightful pursuit of the goal, which requires patience and recognition of the realities and limited functioning capabilities of individual people.

The Gospel message serves the process of building peace within oneself, with others and with the natural world. It shows the right path from the



inside of a person to the outside and the means of working on oneself. For believers, this is achieved through conversion, practicing love for one's neighbor, assistance in the field of support (God's grace) and dialogue with others based on respect for the freedom of every human being. The call to make peace results from the task of evangelization, i.e., conveying the truth about the right to live in harmony and security based on justice. Pope Francis emphasized the power of dialogue:

Let us pray that more humanitarian aid will reach Gaza and that dialogue will be insisted on: it is the only way, the only way to achieve peace. Whoever does not want to engage in dialogue does not want peace.

(Francis, 2023)

Building the foundation of peace is expressed in listening to oneself and listening to others in an atmosphere of openness to new things.

This encourages us to overcome our own prejudices and fears and to meet other people with curiosity. Peace begins when we create personal relationships, meet others and exchange thoughts. In this way, we participate in creating peace. Public debates at various levels teach and test the ability to practice the ability to remain in internal and mutual peace. Learning about personal differences and diverse cultures in an atmosphere of openness is to be combined with what is cross-cultural and common. Peace is such a subjective and social good and the goal we strive to achieve. Consistent, integral and lifelong upbringing and self-education on the individual, social and international levels lead to the formation of a peace-bringing person and the building of a new, peaceful order in the world.

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# 14

## ACCOMPANIMENT AS A STRATEGY FOR PEACE EDUCATION

*Anna Walulik*

### **Introduction**

The terms in the title – peace, accompaniment, and education in the spirit of peace – are defined in pedagogical reflection in various ways. The common element is found in the concept of happiness. In Greek philosophy and early Christian theological thought, the concept of peace was directly associated with happiness, akin to life, joy, rest, and blessing (Dola & Rusecki, 2007). Accompaniment is usually understood as an interpersonal relationship based on the mutual presence and shared existence (Dubas, 2016). Educational accompaniment aims to develop a sense of happiness among participants in this process, encapsulating variously formulated and understood goals of education (Kulczycki, 2016).

Education in the spirit of peace involves both education “to” peace and “towards” peace. The preposition “to” suggests an aspiration, up to a meeting (e.g., “go home”), while “towards” indicates more the direction of the goal rather than the intention to reach it (e.g., “head towards distant houses on the horizon”). Adopting this kind of interpretation of directional prepositions, it can be stated that education “to” peace aims at experiencing the knowledge and acquisition of the value, i.e., peace, while education “towards” peace emphasizes supporting the students in realizing it in individual and social aspects (Chalas, 2018). Education in the spirit of peace is not just about recognizing, experiencing, and educating “to” peace or “towards” peace but also about “grasping” the value, i.e., peace. Spirit in this context denotes the ability to reflect, constituting the basis of all discoveries, and the act of understanding. The expression of human spirit is creative thinking, life creation, and conscious and responsible decision-making. The goal of

spiritual activity is to move “from knowledge to wisdom”, which involves arranging numerous partial elements into a harmonious, logical, and meaningful whole (Mielec, 2009, 52).

The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate how educational accompaniment in the Ignatian tradition develops the understanding of the value of peace and how this process contributes to shaping a happy life. A happy life is immersed in a world of creative values.

Different scientific disciplines, and even pedagogical trends, emphasize different aspects of the accompaniment process, but the Jesuits have been sharing it with undiminished success for over four hundred years in various fields of activity. It finds broad application in education. Educational accompaniment in the Ignatian tradition has its roots in the spiritual exercises proposed by St. Ignatius of Loyola (Marek & Walulik, 2022). The prototype of accompaniment, in which participants refer to Transcendence, can be considered the story recorded in the Gospel of St. Luke about the journey of two disciples to Emmaus after the resurrection of Jesus.

### **The experience of the Emmaus disciples as a source of understanding educational accompaniment**

The Evangelist recounts the disciples who experienced the “defeat” of Jesus on Good Friday and, on Sunday of the resurrection, go “to” and return “from” Emmaus. The Evangelist does not tell of another appearance of Jesus to his disciples but shows the “way” that must be travelled to discover the source of a happy life. For a better understanding of the meaning of the experience accumulated by the protagonists of this story, it is presented in the present tense.

Now that very day two of them are going to a village seven miles from Jerusalem called Emmaus, and they are conversing about all the things that have occurred. And it happens that while they are conversing and debating, Jesus himself draws near and is walking with them, but their eyes are prevented from recognizing him. He is asking them: “What are you discussing as you walk along?” They stop, looking downcast. One of them, named Cleopas, says to him in reply, “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know of the things that have taken place there in these days?” And he replies to them, “What sort of things?” They say to him, “The things that happened to Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people how our chief priests and rulers both handed him over to a sentence of death and crucified him. But we were hoping that he would be the one to redeem Israel; and besides all this, it is now the third day since this took place. Some women from our group, however, have astounded us: they were at the

tomb early in the morning and did not find his body; they came back and reported that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who announced that he was alive. Then some of those with us went to the tomb and found things just as the women had described, but him they did not see". And he says to them, "Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have said! Is it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interprets to them what refers to him in all the scriptures. As they approach the village to which they are going, he gives the impression that he is going on farther. But they urge him: "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over". So he goes in to stay with them. And it happens that, while he is with them at table, he takes bread, says the blessing, breaks it, and gives it to them. With that their eyes are opened and they recognize him, but he vanishes from their sight. Then they say to each other: Did not our hearts burning [within us] while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us? So they set out at once and return to Jerusalem where they find gathered together the eleven and others with them who announce to them: The Lord has indeed risen from the dead and appeared to Simon. They also tell what they encountered on the way, and how they met Him in the breaking of bread.

*(Luke 24:13–33)*

Presenting the text in the present tense emphasizes the relevance of this experience. In the analyzed fragment, the disciples' despondency, confusion, and discouragement stand out. The disciples heading to Emmaus seem to be convinced that the experience of failure has become the fate of all Jerusalem residents. The scale of failure suggests that it is a defeat. This further diminishes the ability to open up to a new reality. The attitude of the man who joins them is completely different. The companion on the road is interested in the situation of the people he meets: he asks about the reasons for their mood, encourages them to present their point of view, wants them to name their feelings and experiences, and allows them to express themselves fully, making them feel heard and accepted.

In contrast to the one-sided attitude of the disciples, the companion on the journey takes on the role of a guide. Starting from the shared experience, the companion shares their own experience with the disciples, leading them to discover the truth behind these events. Jesus' initiative takes the form of collaboration. He doesn't begin by confirming the news of His resurrection but by explaining the meaning of His suffering and death on the cross. In this way, Jesus encourages the companions on the journey to utilize their natural reasoning abilities. He respects their freedom by allowing them to continue evaluating everything that happened in light of the explanations provided.

Jesus' activity transforms the disciples' reactions. Even if the disciples don't understand the words of the companion on the journey, they bestow trust upon him. Trust becomes the causal factor for subsequent events that completely change their thinking and actions. Trust in the companion on the journey leads them to invite him to a shared meal. During the meal, Jesus takes the initiative as well. The gesture of blessing the bread (blessing being synonymous with peace) makes the disciples aware of their earlier experiences. This experience liberates the disciples from the fear that forced them to leave the place of tragic events. The meeting brings them inner peace (Marek & Walulik, 2020).

Peace is a gift that the resurrected Jesus bestows upon those He encounters. Jesus greets the disciples after the resurrection with the words, "Peace be with you", and explains its nature, saying, "My peace I give to you, my peace I leave with you, not as the world gives" (John 14:27). The peace offered by Jesus is not a mere interval between wars (*pax romana*) nor the stoic peace (*pax pernicioza*) that maintains inner tranquillity even when everything around is falling apart. It is not peace that allows a person to live peacefully as a slave to their own or someone else's selfishness (Mędala, 2010). Jesus' peace is born in a love stronger than death. Love is characterized by a constant responsibility for values, primarily the value of the person and the values associated with human relationships (Chudy, 2009).

From the text, it is evident that a human being, understood as *homo viator* (Marcel, 2010), is on a journey. The metaphor of "the way" explains human life. It poses a challenge for humans: to build peace or to strive for war. The described process of companionship shows that the source of a happy life is peace. In understanding the value of peace, personalistic thinking plays a primary role (Kiereś, 2010). At the boundary between "being" and "having", external and internal realities intersect (Wojtyła, 2001, 154).

A person builds their identity around who they are and what they possess. Educational accompaniment, built on recognizing the subjectivity of all participants in this process, follows this principle. Jesus proposes an accompaniment strategy that enables the recovery and development of peace. Therefore, it can be applied in various fields of knowledge and life.

### **Building peace through educational accompaniment in the Ignatian tradition**

The model of educational accompaniment in the Ignatian tradition stems from the experiences of Ignatius of Loyola (founder of the Jesuit Order – Society of Jesus). St. Ignatius was aware that a person undergoing spiritual exercises experiences various feelings and related internal states of consolation, desolation, or unrest. This led Ignatius to establish a formula for accompaniment, adapted to education. It assumes that accompaniment occurs in

specific everyday contexts, based on the life experiences of the student, which undergo reflection, leading to action and evaluation. The overarching goal of such accompaniment is to support the individual in their integral development (Marek & Walulik, 2022).

The relationship between the educator and the student plays a significant role in accompaniment based on the Ignatian tradition. The educator's task is to provide support to the student in discovering the truth about themselves and the surrounding world. Support does not involve instructing or imposing one's own opinions but rather listening to what the student wants to share. The educator must not constrain the internal freedom of the student but should assist in understanding the mechanisms the student experiences. In this way, the educator protects the student from various illusions, helps in discovering truth, and exposes falsehood. This is possible only when the educator personally engages in serving the students. The educator must recognize the strengths and weaknesses of the students and act accordingly. The relationship built in this way creates a sense of security and sensitizes individuals to discover values (Ignatian Pedagogy, 1993).

The space where values are found is multidimensional, stretching between the triad of enduring values such as goodness, beauty, and truth (Denek, 1994); universal human values such as democracy, humanism, solidarity, dignity, human rights, work, freedom, justice, conscientiousness, honesty, peace, and personal values such as health, religion, and family (Ostrowska, 2006). Building a world of values is inseparably linked to scientific and technological progress. Progress can be not only a condition for prosperity and a higher quality of human life but also a source of threats and unrest. The ambivalence of progress creates the so-called *human gap* (Klim-Klimaszewska, 2011). This has significant implications for educational companionship in the spirit of peace.

Granting a significant role to the relationships between the student and the educator in mentoring based on the Ignatian tradition is associated with the necessity for the educator to define their own perspective on perceiving reality and the paradigm of the collective to which they belong. The educator's self-awareness in this regard not only protects the student from indoctrination but, above all, opens up a multi-aspect, multi-subject understanding of the reality that they explore and experience together with the student. This implies that at different stages of mentoring (experience, reflection, action, and evaluation), meta-features of this process can be identified, which is crucial for peacebuilding.

The relationship between the educator and the student imparts a specific character to mentoring in the Ignatian tradition by drawing on experience. Experience belongs to the fundamental categories that construct the mentoring process. The meaning of the concept of experience is not unambiguous. Researchers are interested in various types of experience, including cognitive,

aesthetic, religious, moral, existential, scientific, and everyday experiences. Some scholars argue that everyday experiences most fully express human experience. Differences in views on experience relate to its structure, types, its role in knowledge creation, and the varied role of the subject in the act of cognition (Tatarkiewicz, 1988). What is common in understanding experience is immediacy and perceptibility (Podsiad, 2000).

Due to the processes of globalization, the diversity and intensity of experiences associated with the development of information technology, mass media, and global tourism are expanding. The emergence of new types of experiences related to rapid changes, innovation, difficulty in predicting the consequences of actions, a variety of perceptions, and differences in points of view and interpretation can lead not only to terminological chaos but also to relativizing one's own feelings. However, this trend indicates cultural and historical conditioning of experiences (Bukusiński, 2001). Awareness of this new dimension of experiences is particularly important in the mentoring process in education "for and of" peace. Referring to experiences highlights the educational potential of various types of experiences, starting from primary experiences, through real experiences, secondary experiences, recalled experiences, to artificially generated experiences.

In the Ignatian tradition of mentoring, the necessity of determining the understanding of this concept by the educator and establishing how the student understands it is emphasized. The understanding of what lies behind the concept of experience shapes the cognitive activity of the individual and their everyday life. Therefore, for education in the spirit of peace through mentoring, a hermeneutic approach to experience, emphasizing the relationship between memory, perception, and interpretation of the individual, is valuable.

From the hermeneutic understanding of experience, it follows that the subject is active towards the world and accumulates their experience as a result of relationships with others. The current experience involves the memory of past experiences as well as personal and socio-cultural conditions. The relationship between the past, present, and expectations for the future allows a better understanding of the processes of education, development, teaching, and learning, as well as their conditions. Consequently, this leads to the conviction of the necessity of seeking internal harmony and order in the external world by the individual. Recognizing the source of internal and external harmony in experiences leads to an understanding of the value of peace in everyday life (Walulik, 2011).

Discovering the meaning of peace in the life of an individual and community takes precedence in the mentoring process because it relates to the fundamental human need for a sense of security. This is achieved through reflection on accumulated experience. Reflexivity is the ability to go beyond provided information, i.e., the ability to generate knowledge about oneself



and the surrounding world. The result of reflection is understanding, i.e., the ability to analyze one's own experience, which goes beyond its observable attributes. Understanding can be at an elementary level, i.e., it is related to the person's experience. Based on understanding oneself, understanding other people and their experiences becomes possible. Above the elementary level, a higher level of understanding can be built, i.e., hermeneutic understanding. It is critical understanding, focused on rationally penetrating meaningful relationships. Hermeneutic understanding arises from reflective consideration that extracts elements from surrounding contingencies and places them in a broader context (Ablewicz, 1994).

Education in the spirit of peace serves to unleash in students the ability to understand the accumulated experiences. Reflection in the accompanying process is intended to shape beliefs, thought processes, evaluative skills, and the ability to adopt specific attitudes. In Ignatian mentoring, reflection is characterized by three interrelated processes: internalization, selection, and absolutization of values (Ignatian Pedagogy, 1993). In peace-oriented education, these processes play a crucial role, as theoretical knowledge of values does not merely involve an intuitive connection with that value (Gorczyca, 1987).

In the stage of reflection, mentoring in the Ignatian tradition leads to understanding the explored truth and recognizing impressions and reactions that arise during the search for truth. Reflection aims to deepen the understanding of the significance of the learned truth for oneself and other people. The acquired understanding assists in forming one's judgement about events, ideas, truth distortion, and truth manipulation. A new understanding of reality arouses a readiness to reconsider one's needs, ways of satisfying them, as well as one's potential and ways of developing it. Reflection supports understanding of who I am, what drives me and why, and who I could be in the future. It also allows the recognition of one's reactions to other people (Marek, 2017).

Knowledge of the truth is fundamental to peaceful coexistence and collaboration. Lack of knowledge and readiness to understand oneself, other people, and the surrounding reality leads to the spread of idolatry (Halik, 2011). In a religious sense, idolatry involves worshipping objects representing divinity. It is evident that in postmodernity, there is an increasing number of personal and non-personal objects of worship. These become the subject of fundamental, ultimate concern for humans, i.e., faith (Tillich, 1958; Archer, 2019). Unwillingness to know the truth also leads to self-worship, i.e., self-adulation. In this sense, idolatry is the lack of any criticism regarding one's own flaws or the decisions and actions taken. Self-admiration leads to considering others as enemies, directly leading to war, not only on a micro scale.

In Ignatian mentoring, recognizing experiences and reflecting on them is insufficient for peacebuilding. Reflection on experience should inspire the

student to take actions that contribute to changing reality. Action is understood not only in a practical dimension as performing a specific external activity for others. The action also involves making mature and responsible decisions regarding one's own development. Understanding the significance of accumulated experiences leads to making choices that take the form of gradually clarifying one's priorities. At this stage of mentoring, the student makes the acquired truth their own but remains open to where this truth may lead them (Ignatian Pedagogy, 1993). Understanding oneself, other people, and the contexts in which experience is gathered equips individuals with tools to discover the value of peace, build peace within themselves, and act for peace in everyday life.

Adopted attitudes and recognized and internally accepted values incline individuals towards action, acting in accordance with "new" convictions. Action is subject to an assessment based on trust and respect shown to each other by educators and students. The assessment covers both the intellectual achievements of the student and integral development perceived as "living for others". For education in the spirit of peace, particular importance should be attributed to the assessment in the area of acquiring new knowledge, adopting attitudes, and prioritizing values. Such an assessment requires a creative approach to life experiences by both the educator and the student. Creative living is the ability to solve problems in atypical situations, which is particularly crucial for education in the spirit of peace. Creative evaluation of actions in the peacebuilding realm emphasizes that each person's life can be a work of art (John Paul II, 1999). This stage of mentoring in the Ignatian tradition indicates that education in the spirit of peace is possible only when the individual feels or develops the need for creative living. Creative living is associated with the value of peace. Human life is creative when it is based on values. Creative living is a conjunction of many activities undertaken for personal and social development. These activities create a new quality in the form of peaceful coexistence on a micro, meso, and macro scale.

## Summary

The foundation of educational mentoring in the Ignatian tradition is a worldview characterized by theocentrism. This expresses the belief that God is the author of all reality, all truth, and all knowledge. Theocentrism, on the one hand, points to the religious nature of mentoring and, on the other hand, realizes that mentoring inspired by the Gospel is not limited to religious education. The goal of the strategy proposed by Jesus and practiced by mentoring in the Ignatian tradition is to assist humans in understanding the reality they explore and experience. This process extends beyond religious mentoring – quite the opposite – it broadens other forms of mentoring with a valuable perspective of contemplating reality, referring to Transcendence.

Education in the spirit of peace through mentoring in the Ignatian tradition leads to affirming the reality of the world; supporting and developing dialogue between faith and culture; participating in the full formation of each person within the human community; emphasizing care and effort for each individual; developing attitudes and desires for lifelong growth. By referring to Transcendence, freedom, trust, love, and service, the educator gives the student a sense of security and certainty that a life built on the foundation of the value of peace is a happy life.

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# 15

## INTERNAL ANXIETY AND PEACE OF HEART AMONG YOUTH

Exploring the role of religiosity and spirituality

*Marzena Chrost and Sławomir Chrost*

### Introduction

The feeling of anxiety (which can be colloquially called internal anxiety or existential anxiety) is a growing phenomenon among the young generation in times of unrest and tension in Europe and around the world. At the same time, the modern “city without God” is transforming into a “city with many deities”. These two trends influence the lives of today’s youth. It is therefore worth asking the question: What is the relationship between the occurrence of anxiety symptoms in the independent perception of high school graduates and their declarations of religiosity and spirituality? According to Stanisław Gład, there is a visible lack of research on the connection between existential anxiety and religious feelings or involvement (Gład, 2008).

### Basic concepts

Internal anxiety is commonly associated with the feeling of threat or danger. For the purposes of the research, it has been assumed that anxiety is understood as a personality trait, understood as the individual’s tendency to perceive situations as threatening or to predict future events in terms of danger, which is manifested through characteristic symptoms at the cognitive, emotional, behavioural and somatic level (Spielberger et al., 1983).

The concept of peace of heart (which can be an antidote to anxiety) is often associated with religion and spirituality in human life. You can find texts from the Bible, from the works of spiritual masters, from church documents or from those used by various religious communities, testifying to the

soothing effect of peace of heart on internal states of anxiety in human life. Here are some examples:

My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him.

*(Psalm 62, 1–2)*

First keep thyself in peace, and then shalt thou be able to be a peacemaker towards others. [...] but to be able to live peaceably with the hard and perverse, or with the disorderly, or those who oppose us, this is a great grace and a thing much to be commended and most worthy of a man.

*(Kempis, 1986, 2)*

Hence peace is likewise the fruit of love, which goes beyond what justice can provide. That earthly peace which arises from love of neighbor symbolizes and results from the peace of Christ which radiates from God the Father.

*(Gaudium et Spes, 78)*

My Lord You will give me peace of heart, because You are my salvation. Thus in You my soul will find peace and be calm.

*(Kanon z Taize)*

In the postmodern world, religiosity and spirituality mix. Both forms do not have to oppose each other, on the contrary, and in fact they often interpenetrate each other. Church-oriented religion is still present in the lives of individuals and societies (especially in Poland). In turn, the non-religious *sacrum* appears and develops in areas where religion is not active.

Janusz Mariański states that:

While in the past religiosity and spirituality were defined as complementary to some extent, and religious and church institutions defined the limits of the manifestation of spirituality and its forms and shapes in which it could appear, now both realities are diverging, and the new spirituality no longer refers to any religious doctrines. To some extent, it is shaped inside a person, tailored to his or her individual needs.

*(Mariański, 2021, 42)*

Spirituality includes a very diverse content: self-acceptance, searching for the meaning of life, the ability to sacrifice yourself for people and values, intense experience of beauty, recognition of the sacredness of nature, connection with people, nature and the cosmos, meditation experience, psycho-changeable energy and connection with deity.

Religiosity is related to internal, mental processes connected with experiencing a specific relationship with the *sacrum*. We can infer religiosity based on elements such as religious awareness and feelings, religious decisions, bonds with the community, religious practices, morality, religious experiences and forms of religious life (Walesa, 2020). Religiosity, colloquially speaking, has two aspects: “supernatural”, which cannot be examined empirically, and “natural”, which can be the subject of observation and empirical scientific research.

When examining religiosity, Mariański lists the following aspects: denominational and religious affiliation, religious beliefs (a matter of dogma), religious practices (obligatory, such as participation in Sunday services or confession; optional, such as prayer or participation in religious classes) and issues of marital and family morality (Mariański, 2023).

### **The state of research**

The results obtained in Jacek Śliwak’s research prove that there is a relationship between the level of general, overt and hidden anxiety and religious relationships to God. People whose unrest (general, overt and hidden) is higher are characterized primarily by a more negative relationship with God, manifested in rebellion, fear and guilt. In turn, these types of relationships are less visible in people with lower anxiety (Śliwak, 2006). Research conducted among young people by Józef Bazylak (1982) indicates that an extensive religious life makes a person’s personality more mature and thus has a greater sense of security.

### ***Methodological assumptions***

The main research problem has been expressed in the question: Is there a correlation between the occurrence of anxiety symptoms in the independent perception of high school students and their declarations of religiosity and spirituality?

The following detailed research problems have also been formulated: Are there noticeable differences in the scale of anxiety among youth from public and Catholic schools? Are there any noticeable differences in the scale of religiosity among young people from public and Catholic schools? Are there any noticeable differences in the scale of spirituality among young people from public and Catholic schools?

In my own empirical research, a diagnostic survey method with survey technique has been used. A standardized tool for examining the intensity of anxiety as a personality trait, SL-C has been used (Piksa, Kosiorowska, & Golonka, 2020) together with an original survey on the religiosity and spirituality of young people based on the publications of Janusz Marianski and Halina Mielicka.

The SL-C scale is an attempt to balance various aspects of anxiety, taking into account emotions, beliefs and reactions. The authors' goal was to develop a simple, easy-to-use tool for measuring unrest that can be used in online research. The SL-C consists of 15 items, each of which is an extension of the question "Please rate how often do you feel the following condition...". Answers are given on a 4-point scale from *Often* to *Never*. Each answer is scored accordingly: *often* – 3, *sometimes* – 2, *rarely* – 1 and *never* – 0, except for items 9 and 11, in which the scoring method should be reversed: *often* – 0, *sometimes* – 1, *rarely* – 2 and *never* – 3. The SL-C score is the sum of all points, the possible scores range from 0 (minimum intensity of the anxiety trait) to 45 (maximum intensity of the anxiety trait).

The author's questionnaire for research on religiosity and spirituality is based on religiosity research conducted by the state center CBOS (Public Opinion Research Center) and Janusz Marianski (Mariański, 2023) and also on spirituality research conducted by Halina Mielicka-Pawłowska and Sławomir Chrost (Chrost 2013). For the purposes of our own research, a 4-step measurement of selected three aspects of religiosity (participation in community and individual religious practices and contacts with religious communities/groups or organizations) and four selected aspects of spirituality (bond with God, meaning of life, bond with people and bond with nature and space) have been adopted. Answers are given on a 4-point scale from *Often* to *Never*. Each answer is scored accordingly: *often* – 3, *sometimes* – 2, *rarely* – 1 and *never* – 0.

The research was conducted in October and November 2023 in compliance with all national and international ethical standards. To conduct research in selected Cracow high schools, consent from the relevant authorities was obtained. The survey questionnaire was prepared online, posted and made available on the Google platform. The request to complete the survey questionnaire was preceded by a letter presenting the purpose and scope of the research and a link to this tool. Participation in the research was anonymous and voluntary, and participants could resign from completing and sending responses at any time.

After verification and selection of the received data, a total of 555 correctly completed survey questionnaires were qualified for quantitative statistical analysis. Statistical analysis was performed using the PQStat statistical package version 1.8.4.152. Another statistical analysis was conducted using descriptive statistical methods and appropriately selected tests. Quantitative variables (e.g., anxiety, spirituality and religiosity) were compared between the two groups using Student's t-test. The relationships between anxiety, spirituality and religiosity were analyzed by estimating Pearson's coefficients of linear correlation. A test probability at  $p < 0.05$  was considered significant, and a test probability at  $p < 0.01$  was considered highly significant.



It was assumed that there are significant differences between the feeling of anxiety as well as in the scales of religiosity and spirituality among young people from public and Catholic schools (in favour of the Catholic school), as well as a significant relationship between religiosity, spirituality and anxiety.

### *Characteristics of the study group*

People were purposefully selected for the study, so the request to complete the survey questionnaire was addressed to young people studying at selected Catholic high schools and a public high school in Cracow. A total of 555 high school students participated in the research, including 341 (61.44%) students of a Catholic high school and 214 (38.56%) students of a public high school (Table 15.1).

There were more women in the studied youth group, constituting 58.74% of the total number of respondents, and there were more women in the Catholic school – 62.17% of the total number of respondents. However, a

**TABLE 15.1** Basic characteristics of the respondents

<i>Variables</i>	<i>In general</i>		<i>School type</i>			
			<i>Public</i>		<i>Catholic</i>	
	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Gender						
Man	229	41,26%	100	46,73%	129	37,83%
Woman	326	58,74%	114	53,27%	212	62,17%
Age						
19	3	0,54%	2	0,93%	1	0,29%
18	55	9,91%	30	14,02%	25	7,33%
17	109	19,64%	40	18,69%	69	20,23%
16	148	26,67%	54	25,23%	94	27,57%
15	141	25,41%	55	25,7%	86	25,22%
14	92	16,58%	30	14,02%	62	18,18%
13	7	1,26%	3	1,4%	4	1,17%
Religious affiliation						
Deeply religious	94	16,94%	29	13,55%	65	19,06%
Believer	305	54,95%	86	40,19%	219	64,22%
Indifferent	93	16,76%	51	23,83%	42	12,32%
Non-believer	63	11,35%	48	22,43%	15	4,4%
Belief						
Catholic	474	85,41%	151	70,56%	323	94,72%
Agnostic	5	0,9%	5	2,34%	0	0%
Atheist	29	5,23%	20	9,35%	9	2,64%
Other	21	3,78%	17	7,94%	4	1,17%
Not given	26	4,68%	21	9,81%	5	1,47%

*Source:* own research.

total of 41.26% of men participated in the research, and there were more of them in public schools – 46.73%. The youth ranged in age from 13 to 19. Most respondents were 16 years old – 26.67%, followed by 15 years old – 25.41%, and 17 years old – 19.64%. Taking into account religious affiliation, the majority of respondents declared that they were believers, constituting 54.95% of all respondents; in a Catholic high school it was 64.22% and in a public school 40.19%. In turn, the largest number of people declared they were Catholic – 85.41% of all respondents; in a Catholic school, this religion was declared by 94.72%, and in a public school, 70.56%.

### Analysis of the obtained results

In order to investigate the internal anxiety of the surveyed youth, it was assumed that it manifests itself in the feeling of fear. The research used an anxiety scale, and the obtained results were subjected to statistical analysis using the Student's t-test. Detailed data is presented in Figure 15.1.

The analysis of the obtained data shows that the t-test did not reveal any differences ( $t(553) = 0.9949$ ;  $p = 0.8632$ ); it can therefore be concluded that the anxiety scale [SL-C] does not differ significantly ( $p < 0.05$ ) between groups of youth from public and Catholic schools. In order to examine the religiosity of young people, an original survey was used. The results are presented in Figure 15.2.

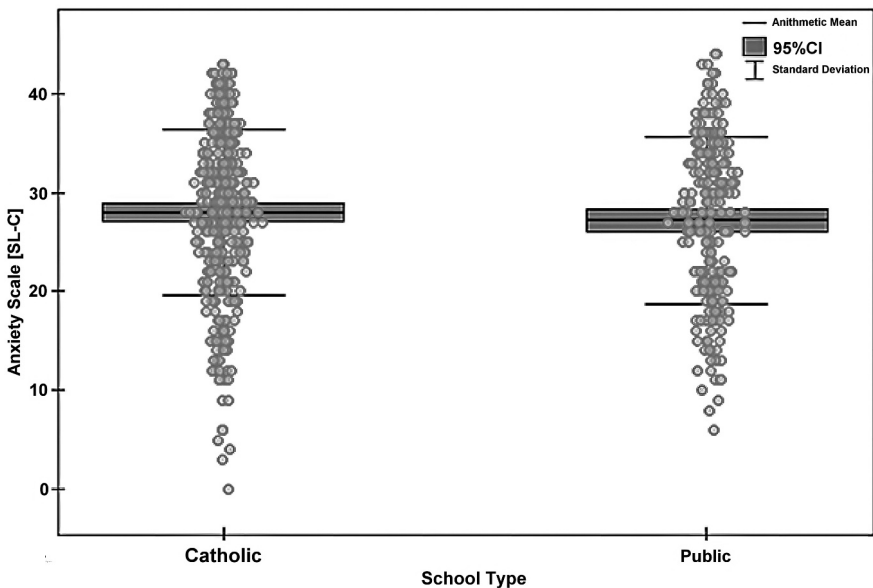


FIGURE 15.1 Anxiety scale [SL-C] in the surveyed group in general and by school type. Graph by the authors.

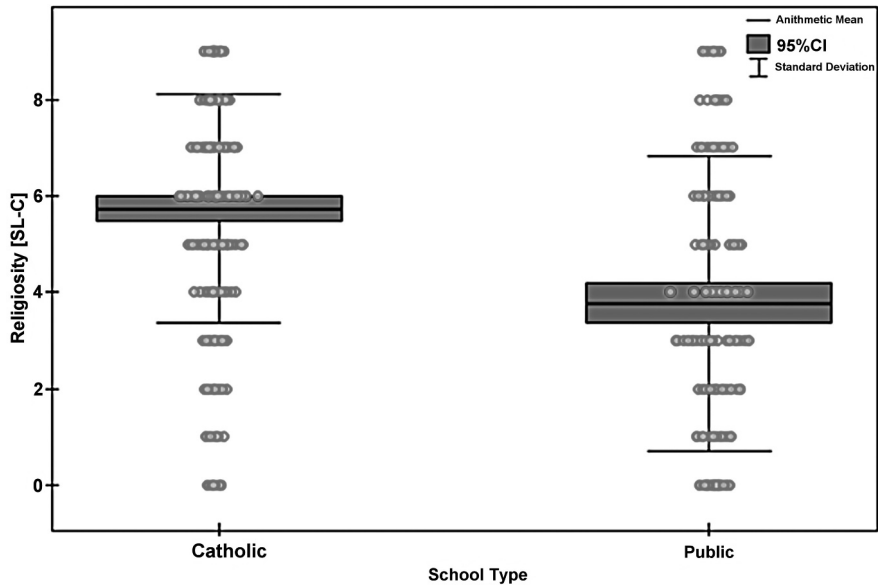


FIGURE 15.2 Religiosity in the surveyed group in general and by school type. Graph by the authors.

The analysis of the data shows that the arithmetic mean of the results in the group of public school students was  $M = 3.77$ , and the standard deviation was  $SD = 3.06$ . However, in the group of Catholic school students, the arithmetic mean was  $M = 5.73$  and the standard deviation was  $SD = 2.37$ . The t-test revealed differences  $t(553) = 7.991$ . It can therefore be concluded that the scale of religiosity differs highly significantly ( $p < 0.01$ ) between groups and is higher in Catholic schools.

Youth spirituality was also examined using an original survey. Figure 15.3 shows the results.

The analysis of the obtained results shows that the arithmetic mean of the results in the group of public school students was  $M = 6.48$ , and the standard deviation was  $SD = 2.433$ . In turn, in the group of Catholic school students, the arithmetic mean was  $M = 7.029$  and the standard deviation was  $SD = 2.462$ . The t-test revealed differences  $t(553) = 2.54$  and  $p = 0.0113$ . Therefore, it can be concluded that the results on the spirituality scale differ significantly ( $p < 0.05$ ) between groups and are higher in Catholic schools.

To find out the relationship between anxiety, religiosity and spirituality, the obtained results were analyzed by estimating Pearson's coefficients of linear correlation for individual scales. These calculations also took into account the division of the group into public and Catholic school students. Detailed data are presented in Table 15.2.

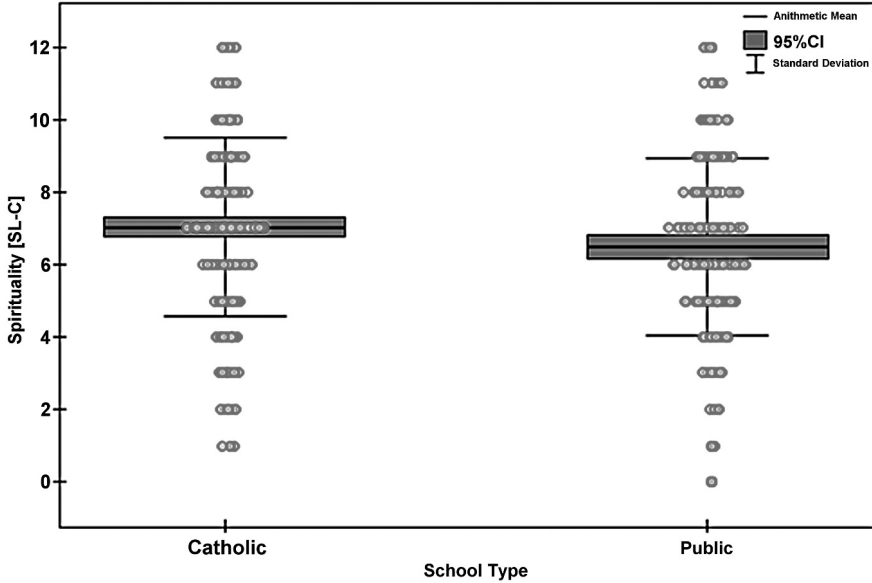


FIGURE 15.3 Spirituality in the surveyed group in general and by school type. Graph by the authors.

TABLE 15.2 Correlations of anxiety with spirituality and religiosity in the surveyed youth

	<i>School type</i>			
	<i>Public</i>		<i>Catholic</i>	
	<i>Religiosity</i>	<i>Spirituality</i>	<i>Religiosity</i>	<i>Spirituality</i>
r Pearsona	-0,0518	-0,152	-0,0287	-0,173
Error for r	0,0686	0,0679	0,0543	0,0535
-95% CI	-0,1846	-0,2804	-0,1345	-0,2741
+95% CI	0,0829	-0,0182	0,0778	-0,068
Statistic t for r	-0,7547	-2,2388	-0,5285	-3,2333
df	212	212	339	339
p	0,4513	<b>0,0262</b>	0,5975	<b>0,0013</b>

Source: own research.

The analysis of the presented data shows that in the case of religiosity, there was no significant ( $p > 0.05$ ) relationship with anxiety. However, in both types of schools, a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) relationship between spirituality and anxiety was found.

### **Research limitations**

The research results should be considered in light of the following limitations. First, the study involved only people studying in one city in Cracow and in selected general secondary schools, therefore the study has only a local dimension. Second, the results only represent the opinions and declarations of those students who agreed to participate in the study; therefore, the results cannot be generalized to the entire population of young people, both in Cracow and in Poland. Third, the examined issue concerns very personal, internal, difficult and sensitive issues. Despite these limitations, it is worth conducting further research in the future in order to more thoroughly and precisely understand the feeling of anxiety among young people and its determinants. It also seems advisable to deepen research, especially in relation to gender differences and references to the relationship with a personally understood God (e.g., in the dimension of the sacrament of reconciliation).

### **Summary and pedagogical implications**

A detailed analysis of the research results provided answers to the formulated research problems. No differences were found in the anxiety scale among adolescents from public and Catholic schools. However, differences were noticed in the religiosity scale, as it differs highly significantly ( $p < 0.01$ ) between the groups and is higher in the Catholic school. Significant differences were also found in the spirituality scale ( $p < 0.05$ ) between the groups, and they are higher in the Catholic school.

When looking for a correlation between the occurrence of anxiety symptoms in the independent perception of high school students and their declarations of religiosity and spirituality, it is worth noting that in both types of schools, there was no significant ( $p > 0.05$ ) relationship between religiosity and anxiety. However, in both types of schools, a significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) relationship between spirituality and anxiety was found.

It was noted that the adopted hypothesis was partially confirmed. First, a significant relationship between spirituality and anxiety was demonstrated. Spirituality may have a beneficial effect on the feeling of anxiety among young people, while a declaration of faith has a positive effect on the development of spirituality. The research also showed that the scale of spirituality differed highly significantly ( $p < 0.01$ ) depending on religious affiliation in public and Catholic schools, and the differences are a highly significant trend ( $p < 0.01$ ), i.e., the higher the declaration of faith, the higher the spirituality score.

Internal anxiety in a person's life causes lower physical and emotional resilience and may influence experiencing difficulties in making intellectual decisions. In turn, inner peace is a challenge and a task for every person, so you must first shape it within yourself. It is worth emphasizing that both in

terms of anxiety and development, religiosity and spirituality give a person hope for survival and enable the achievement of many goals. Undoubtedly, religiosity and spirituality are important components of the human resources needed for the development of young people (Chrost, 2017). Thanks to them, it becomes possible to give life a fuller dimension, purposefulness, meaning and stability. Religiosity and spirituality are related to motivational factors that play an important role in feeling satisfaction in life, happiness and experiencing positive emotional states. Additionally, they may also be linked to mental health and overall well-being. Religiosity and spirituality are important and necessary conditions for proper upbringing because, without their development, a person is unable to manage his or her life in a conscious and responsible way. Spirituality is not exclusively innate but thrives as a result of actions taken by a developing person. Achieving spiritual maturity is an important element of personal growth, which is why a person should make efforts to flourish it. Therefore, as a conclusion from the research, from a pedagogical point of view, the statement about the need to develop the religious and spiritual sphere of a young person (“education for peace of heart”) seems justified.

Thanks to “peace of heart”, understood as a high level of religious and spiritual life, a person can develop integrally towards the fullness of life, without feeling threats and dangers that “paralyze” the process of making choices.

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## **PART 3**

# Contemporary Strategies and Applications in Peace Education





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# 16

## ACADEMIC EDUCATION FOR PEACE

### Role and opportunities for practical implementation

*Anna Fidelus and Janusz Surzykiewicz*

#### **Introduction**

The current international situation necessitates a redefined political philosophy, one that fosters a new consciousness, dispositions, attitudes, and behaviours aligned with the principle that peace must be primarily achieved through non-violent means. The continual cultivation of this mindset and the reinforcement of corresponding dispositions must be integral components of peace education and societal socialization. This is not a new category. In the past, this topic was addressed by various philosophical, pedagogical, religious, and social movements. However, nowadays, education for peace takes on a different dimension and a distinctive significance tailored to contemporary challenges.

Peace education transcends mere moral obligation; it emerges as a vital necessity dictated by the structure of international relations and the enduring humanitarian crisis spanning decades. Current challenges are global in nature. Never before have we experienced such a clear interdependence of societies worldwide as in the last two to three years: the Russian aggression in Ukraine or the conflict in the Middle East are characteristic actions of states ruled by an increasingly tightening dictatorship and are manifestations of a broader, noticeable trend worldwide – the development of autocracy.

The ramifications of warfare require no elaborate argumentation. The traumas of war impact both present-day individuals and future generations. The enduring legacy of the Second World War continues to shape upbringing and familial dynamics in numerous Polish households.

In the founding act of UNESCO, the following provision was included: “Wars begin in the minds of human beings; therefore, in the minds of human

beings must the defences of peace be constructed” (UNESCO Convention of 1945). Just two years ago, in a context of relative peace, education and upbringing for peace were considered secondary. However, there is now an urgent imperative to prioritize intensified education for peace and reinstate its rightful place in socio-economic life, workplaces, and civic activities, as well as in Polish education and science, including at the higher education level.

Loreta Navarro-Castro and Jasmin Nario-Galace, in their book “Education for Peace: A Pathway to a Culture of Peace” (2010), summarize the model of understanding education for peace outlined by international UN agendas into five fundamental areas of peace care:

- 1 Ensuring personal order based on self-respect, love, hope, and a variety of personal and material resources.
- 2 Fostering peace in interpersonal relationships through respect for others, justice, tolerance, and cooperation.
- 3 Promoting social peace among different groups, including national, religious, and professional communities.
- 4 Advocating for global peace, acknowledging the rights of states to self-determination, and promoting harmony among nations.
- 5 Addressing the need for peace between humanity and the natural environment is achieved through actions such as sustainable development, respect for nature, and reduced consumption.

These five areas constitute a model of peaceful relations. Disruption in any one of them can lead to negative consequences in the subsequent areas.

The implementation of this model is based on three pillars: knowledge, skills, and attitude.

Knowledge encompasses awareness of one’s own needs and comprehension of the nature of conflicts and peace processes, with a particular emphasis on non-violent conflict resolution methods. It requires an understanding of social and group dynamics, familiarity with rights and the corresponding responsibilities, recognition of cultural heritage, as well as knowledge of the various types and mechanisms of prejudice development.

Skills are linked to various aspects of communication, including active listening, articulating one’s opinions and emotions, paraphrasing, summarizing, drawing conclusions, assertiveness, collaborating with others, critical thinking, recognizing and critically analysing prejudices and stereotypes, managing emotions, problem-solving, generating alternative solutions, adapting to a changing world, participating in social life, displaying friendly and peaceful behaviours, and de-escalating conflicts.

Attitude primarily entails cultivating a positive self-image, fostering respect for others, promoting tolerance and acceptance of differences among individuals and entire social groups, upholding the rights of both children and

adults, and embracing a sense of responsibility towards them. It involves being conscious of personal beliefs, advocating for gender equality, fostering empathy, valuing reconciliation, promoting solidarity, embracing social responsibility, and advocating for equality and justice. Additionally, it involves finding joy and affirmation in these principles.

Within an academic setting, the process of disseminating knowledge and cultivating attitudes, skills, and behaviours that support peace education can unfold across multiple levels and in a variety of contexts.

### **The educational dimension as the space for academic education for peace**

The most direct solution in the academic education offer is the organization of study programs that are inherently related to peace and conflicts, such as programs in political science and international relations, where there are subjects directly addressing the issues conducive to education for peace. Additionally, in other courses, topics related to human rights studies are included, aiding in understanding the significance of respecting human rights and freedoms within the framework of peacebuilding. Across various academic disciplines, one can encounter courses that impart knowledge, foster skills, and cultivate attitudes that reinforce the process of education for peace.

At the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, there are university-wide subjects in the fields of humanities and social sciences, which correspond to the knowledge characteristics of the second degree of the National Qualifications Framework (knowledge in context – conditions and consequences). These are university-wide subjects for students in bachelor's and master's degree programs:

P6S\_WK – *[the student] demonstrates an advanced understanding of the fundamental dilemmas of contemporary civilization.*

Meanwhile, at the second-degree level, this translates into the effect as follows: P7S\_WK – *[the student] demonstrates an in-depth understanding of the fundamental dilemmas of contemporary civilization.*

Additionally, university-wide subjects conducted in English align with the skill characteristics of the second degree of the National Qualifications Framework (communication skills in a foreign language, knowledge dissemination):

- University-wide subject for students in bachelor's and master's degree programs:

P7S\_UK – *can communicate with the environment using specialized terminology; can participate in debates – present and evaluate various opinions and positions and discuss them; can use a foreign language at the*

*B2 level according to the European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).*

- University-wide subject for students at the second-degree level:  
P7S\_UK – *can communicate on specialized topics with diverse audiences; can conduct a debate; can use a foreign language at the B2+ level according to the CEFR and specialized terminology.*

These subjects fulfil the requirement of the Regulation on Studies (Journal of Laws 2021.661, as amended), where among the mandatory elements of the study program in paragraph 3(1), it is specified that

the number of ECTS points that a student must obtain within classes in the field of humanities or social sciences shall not be less than 5 ECTS points – in the case of study programs assigned to disciplines within fields other than humanities or social sciences, respectively.

The structure of certain study programs incorporates elements of knowledge from other scientific fields, alleviating the necessity for students enrolled in these courses to utilize the university-wide offerings, although they still have this option available. Within study programs in the humanities and social sciences, modules covering the aforementioned content (e.g., pedagogy, psychology, and sociology) are included. However, special attention must be given to study programs outside of these areas, where students are mandated to engage with content from the humanities and social sciences. At Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University, the university-wide course offerings include subjects conducive to the implementation of content relevant to peace education. Additionally, a subject titled “Study Culture” has been introduced for all students, focusing on effective communication skills and the constructive expression of thoughts, feelings, and needs. This course emphasizes the importance of listening to others and understanding their perspectives.

Outside of formal academic programs, additional training opportunities are provided to both students and staff, encompassing areas such as mediation, negotiation, and diplomacy. These sessions aim to instil effective conflict resolution skills, empathy, tolerance, and appreciation for diversity. Within pedagogy study programs and programs preparing students for the teaching profession, curricula incorporate elements of education for peace. This equips future teachers and educators with the necessary tools to impart these values to their students. Students are taught conflict resolution strategies grounded in respect and understanding, as well as techniques for managing stress and negative emotions in a healthy manner to prevent aggression. They also learn how to teach these skills to children. Furthermore, multicultural education is emphasized to foster an understanding of cultural differences, respect for diversity, and readiness for dialogical interactions with individuals from other cultures. The primary goal of these courses is to cultivate positive

attitudes towards other cultures and foster openness to individuals from diverse backgrounds. An integral component of these classes is anti-violence education, which promotes knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values aimed at preventing conflicts and violence at both interpersonal and intergroup levels, including the international sphere. Particularly within programs preparing students for the teaching profession, the emphasis is placed on anti-violence measures within schools and among culturally diverse groups.

The study program also integrates elements of anti-discrimination education, global education, civic education, and environmental education. Anti-discrimination education entails deliberate actions aimed at enhancing knowledge and skills and influencing attitudes to combat discrimination and prejudice-motivated violence while promoting equality and diversity (Web 1, n.d.). These principles are embedded across all university activities. Global education focuses on illustrating the interconnectedness between individuals and phenomena worldwide. Lectures addressing these topics demonstrate how individual decisions in everyday life can impact phenomena in distant parts of the world, including the environment, human rights, and the economy. Civic education, as defined by the European Union, aims to prepare individuals for active participation in social life by equipping them with the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes to contribute significantly to the development and well-being of society. This objective is primarily realized through university-wide subjects, which address global education issues and sustainable development. Environmental education, aimed at fostering a society that values caring for the natural environment, is primarily integrated into the environmental protection study program. However, elements of environmental education are also incorporated into subject blocks across other fields of study, and they are also proposed as separate subjects for student choice.

### **Conducting scientific research**

A crucial aspect of education for peace for students involves engaging in scientific research. Depending on the field of study, research topics may encompass a range of issues revolving around this theme. For instance, in political science, research may delve into the root causes of conflicts, their origins, and potential preventive strategies. In psychology, studies may examine the mechanisms underlying human behaviour in situations of danger or conflict. Scientific research can be conducted through external projects or within internal resources, such as scientific circles or thesis work. It is essential for lecturers and supervisors to guide students and facilitate research topics that foster the cultivation of peaceful attitudes.

Studying conflicts from diverse perspectives offers a comprehensive understanding and potential solutions. Conflict analysis can encompass psychology, sociology, economics, and environmental science, enabling a multidimensional approach to resolving issues.

Academic education for peace aims to equip students with the skills necessary to engage in conflict resolution, promote peace, and counteract violence at both local and international levels. Fostering a society grounded in peaceful values and mutual understanding is imperative. Furthermore, academic education can foster an appreciation for different cultures and nations, contributing to the cultivation of peaceful international relations.

### **Internships and volunteering**

Study programs can facilitate participation in volunteering or internships with social organizations dedicated to conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Encouraging students to engage in professional internships or volunteer work with organizations involved in mediation, humanitarian efforts, or other peace-related fields is essential. These opportunities may be integrated into the study program, particularly in disciplines such as special education, pedagogy, family studies, and social work. Additionally, students can pursue internships outside their designated study program. The Career Office at UKSW coordinates internships across various sectors and locations, providing students with opportunities to advance their engagement in peace education.

### **Supporting student and social activities**

Student councils and students engaged in scientific circles actively promote peace through organizing conferences, seminars, and collaborative events with external partners. These activities prioritize assisting those in need, as demonstrated by the immediate response to the conflict in Ukraine. UKSW students and staff swiftly mobilized to provide aid, including operating information points for Ukrainian residents and organizing food drives and fundraising efforts. Additionally, initiatives such as holiday events for the children of Ukrainian soldiers, organized in collaboration with the Bielany District, underscore the commitment to supporting marginalized individuals. Furthermore, student-led efforts extend to various marginalized groups, including prisoners, the elderly, and people with disabilities, demonstrating the tangible impact of these initiatives. Scientific discussions on socially relevant topics also contribute to fostering peaceful attitudes. For instance, the Faculty Debates provide a platform to address significant social issues, with recent debates focusing on the war in Ukraine and life during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, conferences organized by student scientific circles play a vital role in promoting peace, offering opportunities for peaceful discourse on various topics. Notably, the annual conference on children's rights organized by the Law Students' Scientific Circle serves as an example of the impactful discussions facilitated by student-led initiatives.

### **Student exchange, presence of international students**

The opportunity to form friendships with individuals from diverse backgrounds is integral to peace education. International exchanges provide occasions for conscious reflection and the reassessment of one's own attitudes and values. Through such experiences, students expand their worldview, enhance self-awareness, and develop a greater understanding of the needs of others. Facilitating friendships between individuals of different nationalities is a crucial aspect of peacebuilding. Despite existing agreements with foreign partners, there is limited interest among UKSW students in participating in temporary study-abroad programs. Individual discussions and numerous informational meetings are necessary to encourage UKSW students to pursue studies at partner institutions abroad. However, it is noteworthy that UKSW students are enthusiastic about mentoring incoming students. They serve as tutors, offering individual support to visiting students and organizing cultural events to showcase cuisines and customs from around the world. Collaborative efforts between foreign and Polish students aim to foster an inclusive environment. Foreign students actively participate in sports events, engage in academic circles, and contribute to student self-government initiatives.

### **Pedagogical and psychological support for students and staff**

An integral aspect of peace education within academic settings is the operation of the psychological counselling centre. The collaborative presence of a pedagogue, psychologist, and clergy member is of paramount importance, ensuring availability to students, doctoral candidates, and staff during designated hours. The on-call specialists are easily accessible, providing assistance both in-person and online to address the everyday existential challenges of those seeking support. A noticeable rise in the number of individuals seeking professional help has been observed in the aftermath of the pandemic. While often a conversation proves sufficient, there are instances where more specialized treatment, such as psychiatric care, may be required.

### **Organizational solutions strengthening peaceful attitudes**

At the university, conflicts among both students and staff are resolved with respect and understanding. To foster such an environment, procedures have been revised, emphasizing the importance of cultivating a welcoming atmosphere for every member of the academic community. A policy has been implemented to promote a congenial work and study environment while preventing any detrimental behaviours. This policy aims to enhance the cohesion of staff teams and foster positive relationships among academic teachers,



non-academic staff, doctoral students, and students. Central to this policy is the recognition that a friendly university environment cannot be achieved solely through the expansion of research and teaching infrastructure; it also necessitates the cultivation and reinforcement of healthy relationships among staff, doctoral students, and students, who collectively form the university community.

The university serves as a space where aspiring scholars interact with individuals possessing substantial knowledge and experience, who evaluate their progress. Every interaction and assessment should be conducted with a spirit of dialogue and respect. The university environment thrives on the collaborative efforts of individuals with diverse characteristics, abilities, and beliefs. The pursuit of truth often involves lively discussions and debates, extending to the process of achieving organizational excellence, where diverse management styles, teaching methods, and differing visions for the university's development may collide. In such instances, tensions and interpersonal conflicts may arise. It is the responsibility of university authorities to ensure that such divergences, controversies, or disputes do not escalate into unrest or hostility that could violate the personal rights of members of the university community. To address this, teaching workshops are organized, particularly targeting novice lecturers. Newly appointed academic teachers are provided with a mentor assigned by the dean of the faculty, who offers support, guidance, and assistance in navigating teaching responsibilities and resolving any challenges with colleagues or students. Furthermore, training in essential peace skills, including communication, conflict resolution, personal conflict management, promotion of positive attitudes, and dialogue, is offered to all students, doctoral candidates, and staff, regardless of their tenure. These training sessions are highly sought after, aiming to reduce the reliance on external authorities, such as courts, to resolve disputes within the university community. Moreover, the appointment of a Student Rights Ombudsman, in collaboration with the Student Council, facilitates the resolution of emerging issues involving students. This initiative is particularly valuable, as dialogue with the Student Rights Ombudsman, who is also a student, often leads to the amicable resolution of many issues.

## **Conclusion**

Academic education for peace endeavours to equip students with the skills and knowledge necessary to engage in conflict resolution, promote peace, and mitigate violence at both local and international levels. Central to this objective is the cultivation of a society grounded in peace values and mutual understanding. Education for peace seeks to foster a harmonious society where conflicts are addressed constructively, and relationships are built on principles of understanding and respect. It is important to educate future

professionals and leaders who will play pivotal roles in resolving global challenges through peaceful means.

This endeavour is a long-term process that necessitates the collective engagement of the entire academic community. Working towards peace is an ongoing endeavour, and each individual's actions have a cumulative impact. Even small contributions by individuals can lead to significant progress on a global scale.

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# 17

## THE SPARKS OF WAR AND SOURCES OF PEACE

An individual's perspective

*Witold Starnawski and Hüseyin Serçe*

### **Understanding peace – interpreted at the level of the individual (person)**

Establishing and maintaining peace proves to be a difficult – sometimes even seemingly impossible to implement – practical problem. Upon closer examination, it becomes evident that the issue of peace is also theoretically challenging. The formulation of questions alone leads us to a specific vision of humanity and the world determined by the understanding of basic concepts. The understanding of peace turns out to be dependent on more fundamental issues – and I am not solely referring to the issue of justice. An example is the concept of power, inherently undefinable and allowing for a number of meanings, leading to varied valuations of related concepts such as conflict, opposition, protest, struggle, or rebellion. This does not imply that the understanding of peace is merely a derivative of other concepts, as it apparently has its own specific content, albeit difficult to grasp due to the complexity of the phenomenon.

When we consider the issue of peace, we usually refer to relations between states or social groups, yet we also discuss it in relation to interpersonal and intra-personal relations. Peace has various facets. Typically, we mean a relatively stable and equitable state of society that guarantees order and the successful development of its members. However, peace can also be only illusory when it carries invisible, unresolved, and accumulating conflicts that could erupt at any moment. Peace can be coerced, false, or deceptive, agreed upon under the threat of force. Peace tends to be negatively described as a state of “no-war” or a non-engagement attitude in conflicts, sometimes referred to as “neutral”, often resulting from subservience or a desire to secure particular

interests. Fighting and war, similarly, do not have a clear face, as sometimes they may become a necessity, for example, when it comes to defending against an attack or terrorist actions. In such cases, calling for peace may be an expression of simple cowardice or, even worse, an act of internal betrayal, the work of collaborators liaising with the aggressor. The terms war and struggle, like peace, do not have unambiguous faces; sometimes, they may become a moral necessity, for example, when defending against aggression or terrorist activities. John Paul II clearly distanced himself from pacifist positions, stating, “Fighting is sometimes – how often! – *a moral necessity*, a duty. It reveals the strength of character, and sometimes genuine heroism [...] There is a vast area of affairs and actions where *fight is combined with justice, truth – it is combined with love* [...]” (Frossard, 1982, 236). Armed struggle against the genocidal totalitarianism of Hitler and communism is rightfully recognized in Polish tradition as the defence of fundamental human values. This has nothing to do with promoting the cult of force or endorsing war.

The description of the phenomena of peace and war alone points out two things. First, they have their concrete and practical forms. We are not doomed to discuss peace solely in abstract terms, within the realm of concepts or theories. Second, understanding the essence of peace and distinguishing its forms is not possible without an additional criterion. When dwelling upon peace, we must inevitably enter the world of the individual. Taking this humanistic aspect into account, it seems crucial to seriously consider the thesis that individual human beings, not states, institutions, or social groups, are the subjects who build peace (Ratzinger, 2011). Therefore, we should first consider what peace means within a person and its significance in interpersonal and intra-personal relations. Only then can we proceed to examine what peace means in terms of structures, social relationships, and politics.

This is not easy because finding a common basis for understanding peace concerning individual and social (interstate) relations is prone to oversimplifications. It often leads to a moralistic attitude, rightly criticized for its ineffectiveness. Additionally, it is essential to note that, unlike politicians, ideologues, or war strategists, the voice of many religions seems almost unanimous on this issue – the most dangerous sparks of war lie within individuals, in their attitude toward others, the world, and themselves. I write “almost” because contemporary times forcefully remind us that there are many “sowers of war” capable of more or less skilfully exploiting religious beliefs or ideologies to justify violence, terror, and the atrocities of war. It suffices to point out three such hotbeds: the persistently resurgent Israeli-Palestinian conflict, aggressive Islamic fundamentalism reinforced by the lack of a decisive rejection by Muslim religious leaders of the practice of terror, and finally, Russia and the involvement of the Russian Orthodox hierarchy in war propaganda. However, this is a separate topic, although the continued deliberations, in my opinion, are bound to shed light on this issue as well.

Nonetheless, returning to the main theme – the role of the individual in building peace and “sowing” war – it is worth referring to an argument rarely invoked in this matter but theoretically significant, although it may be annoying for practitioners. It is about the question: what exactly are we dealing with when we talk about peace and war? Who and what is the subject here? Too easily and too quickly have sociology and political science forgotten that the foundation of every community lies in individuals. In the real world, the most robust status is held by individual and concrete entities, while others derive from them. Collective entities are always secondary, never having as strong an ontological position as an individual human being (see Swieżawski, 1948). This is the foundation of any realism, not only theoretical but also based on experience and the testimony of common sense. Therefore, the fundamental role of the individual cannot be overlooked in identifying causes. Moreover, research on peace should aim to privilege this aspect. However, this cannot lead to oversimplifications, as cooperation and shared responsibility are the most challenging elements of human actions. Viewing peace and war from this perspective, I would like to draw attention to a crucial, albeit non-obvious, relationship between the individual and the truth. This issue will be the main subject of the subsequent reflections.

### **Peace within oneself – the significance of integration**

Understanding peace in relation to the individual should focus on the positive aspect, that is, identifying factors that promote the unity of the person and build their internal order. The order through which the individual becomes a fully autonomous and active subject means utilizing the available sphere of freedom to engage in sovereign actions for which they take full responsibility, thus enabling them to direct their own development (Wojtyła, 1994). Peace in this sense (order) within a person cannot imply passivity or indifference, and therefore a peculiar “non-action”, as this would ultimately lead to the annihilation of agency and the destruction of individual subjectivity. The “establishment of peace” by the individual within themselves should be seen more as a form of activity involving the integration of various forces, factors, and opposing, even conflicting, aspirations within a person in such a way that they do not disrupt the unity of the individual. Here, the ability to know oneself and “listen to oneself” is necessary to perceive what serves “being oneself”, that is, a holistic integration around the good of the individual person and the good it serves, which also builds the individual oneself (Wojtyła, 1994).

It is crucial to recall at this point the distinction between given unity, which is the ontological unity of the subject, and imposed unity, that is the “built” unity through the spiritual and psychological acts of a person – an identity often referred to as selfhood. The former is the lasting foundation of

every being-substance, the ontic “reference point” that allows us to say that every individual remains “the same”, despite changes and the passage of time (this is also the condition for human responsibility for one’s actions). On the other hand, the “identity” based on (self)consciousness is dynamic and variable, and additionally, in a person, it may manifest as if they have several “selves”. Individuals “self-create” themselves through their choices, through the acceptance or rejection of their thoughts, experiences, or feelings that arise within them, as well as through the agency of their actions. Such self-determination – through control (or its absence) over what happens within or around them, through their own deeds, and at times through the struggle with themselves – is what morality refers to as “self-determination” and is the actualization of freedom in a person, thereby constituting the subjective realization of morality. This reveals the dynamic aspect of the self and the need for integration. Conflicts and struggles are inherent in human beings, as well as in any human community. It can even be said that they are a condition for human development; they should not be concealed, bypassed, or pretended not to exist. However, in self-awareness, one must first learn to recognize them.

Attention must be drawn to the dangers of misunderstanding integration. We encounter deceptive integration when a person does not see the contradictions within themselves, is deaf and blind to them, succumbs to those that are currently stronger, or selectively removes those that are uncomfortable, unpleasant, or troublesome. Such an attitude of apparent tranquillity (holy calmness; I am content with myself; I have nothing to reproach myself with) hinders development because it is based on illusions and ineffectively ignores the forces that – remaining beyond control – can erupt at any moment, destroying the unity and subjectivity of the individual.

It is important to recognize the creative role of unrest, which allows the transformation of experienced crises into factors serving the maturation of the individual. The split caused by inconsistency and falsehood, arising from existential problems such as the search for truth, the meaning of life, feelings of guilt, issues related to evil, suffering, and the fear of death can and should be factors stimulating the spiritual life of the individual. Awareness of the lack of unity, anxieties, and dissatisfaction with oneself is, from this perspective, a positive sign, provided that they are not only an expression of the individual’s sensitivity – and even more so, of some oversensitivity to oneself, excessive self-focus – but are based on a realistic recognition of oneself. In other words, they serve the recognition of the truth about oneself.

### **Internal reference to truth**

At this point, it is crucial to note that self-knowledge is fundamentally different from understanding all other “objects” in the world, including other

individuals. It can take place in a manner described by Karol Wojtyła as subjective, essentially occurring “from within” (Wojtyła, 1994). However, this does not mean that the rigour of truth is avoided in this process. In self-knowledge “from within”, truth still prevails and is not “created” by the subject. Furthermore, it is only in this “internal” self-awareness – and of the entire spiritual world, which is distinct from the world of psychological experiences and emotional feelings – that the individual experiences and intellectually understands how strongly they are connected to the truth. The word “strongly” does not imply the strength of subjective experiences but the durability of an objective relationship – “objective” here means “independent of the subject” that recognizes it rather than creating it. John Paul II emphasized that the reference to truth constitutes the person precisely “from within” (Wojtyła, 1994; Starnawski, 2008). It causes the person to be capable of freedom (self-determination), being given the ability to choose good or evil after recognizing them.

It is essential to address a misconception frequently used to discredit this standpoint. It is not about the attitude of a “holder of truth”, treating truth as if it were the possession of the subject (Starnawski, 2020). Truth, both in cognitive and ontological senses, is not and cannot be anyone’s “property”. It is fundamentally something “beyond” and “above”, transcendent to both the one who recognizes it and the one who accepts it. If someone claims to “have” the truth, they can sensibly and rightly do so only in the sense that they have recognized it as truth, but only perspectively (partially). They can never consider themselves its “possessor”, someone who can “dispose” of it and change it, especially someone who (as an owner) can do with it “whatever they want”.

When Wojtyła speaks of constituting a person through the truth, it should be understood in at least two ways: structurally (ontologically) and dynamically, as an element of their development. In the first sense, it means that a human would not be themselves as conscious and free beings if they did not have an “inbuilt” ability to recognize the truth. It is important to note that the ability to recognize the truth is a condition for freedom – the necessity of accepting and acknowledging the recognized truth (its internalization) is not automatic. The individual should naturally accept and “acknowledge as their own”, with all the consequences in action, the truth they have recognized. However, paradoxically and against themselves, they also have the ability to reject such truth, “suspend it”, or in some way “neutralize it”, introducing a deep discord, almost a rupture, between their knowledge and their freedom (Styczeń, 1994).

The second understanding is a consequence of the first – individuals develop, mature, and integrate with themselves, so they “become themselves” currently, not just potentially. This means that they are in a dynamic relationship with the truth, seeking it, “following the truth”, and also defending

it and being ready to testify about it when found. This understanding of “possessing the truth” is not contradictory to a continuous search for it. Even when found, it is never complete truth; it raises new questions and opens new perspectives. Human knowledge should always be open to constant verification, accepting shortcomings, and even abandoning the current perspective if it proves to be too narrow, distorting, or false.

Properly understood, the relationship with the truth is a condition for well-understood inner peace in an individual, as long as it is not naively understood and when based on good self-recognition (realism). It is accompanied by the ability to listen to oneself and the willingness to overcome oneself, introduce changes, and eliminate mistakes.

### **Truth as a condition for dialogue and as the “third factor”**

It is important to emphasize that the term “truth” is used here based on a classical definition in a broader sense, encompassing both cognitive and ontic aspects. In each of these cases, the foundation is always the objective, transcendent reality. Truth transcends the level of each subject (transcendence), stands independent of them, and is not a “product” of any of them (objectivity). Simultaneously, it is accessible to each cognitive subject according to their cognitive abilities (universality). These three properties of truth condition all knowledge, assuming that knowledge is a “gaze upon reality”, an acceptance of it, and even, in a conscious (mental) sense, a merging with it. Nonetheless, knowledge does not involve creating, imagining, or experiencing something. It is crucial to recognize the practical consequences of such an approach. For someone seeking knowledge, the importance lies in “that something exists”, “what it is”, or “how it is”. The actual reality holds significant value, while someone’s imaginations or experiences on the subject are of little value. Objective, intelligible, that is, “open to knowledge”, reality is the foundation of every dialogue but also of every dispute (unless it is not about reasoning but becomes a struggle for positions, influence, and privileges of the disputed winner) (Styczeń, 1994). Effective communication becomes challenging when there is a lack of acceptance of a common reference point when a shared language is not acknowledged and when there is no reference to a “shared reality” that remains free from arbitrary fluctuation or domination by one side. Conversations are not genuine if each participant only expresses “their truth” (“in my opinion...”) without recognizing the need to confront it with the interlocutor and, above all, with objective reality. These are then, at most, expressions of experiences, emotions, or loose thoughts, and they can hardly be called individual positions or opinions, as these would require the application of rational, and thus shared, codes and common meanings. Such monologues are barren in their ineffectiveness in conducting dialogue (*dia-logos*; *logos* – what we talk about, argue about,



what we refer to), and even more so, they are not suitable for reconciling positions or resolving conflicts.

Meanwhile, it is worth noting that truth (referring to truth) constitutes the “third factor” in any dialogue or dispute, in addition to its two participants. As an independent, objective, and universally accessible dimension, it enables the conduct of effective dialogue and fair dispute and offers hope for lasting and fair resolution of conflicts. Common criteria of truth, a shared language, and reference to a common world are factors that constitute the enduring foundations of unity within any community.

A separate practical and theoretical problem remains as to whether one can create an “evil community” or can a lasting social bond be built on lies, hatred, or revenge. History shows that such attempts have been made and are still being made. However, the question arises about the durability of such a bond and, more importantly, what consequences it brings. Is it not a smouldering spark of harm and acts of injustice on an individual scale and, on a societal scale, a source of conflicts and wars? Similarly, one cannot avoid the question: what remains if the principle of *plus ratio quam vis* is questioned?

### **Eliminating/questioning/discrediting truth – three steps**

Contemporary “seeds of conflicts” lie not only in the world of practice – the power of lies, the dominance of desires, and the arrogance of pride – but also in the world of theories, in human minds, in what is preached and what kind of worldview and image of humanity are presented by those who disregard or eliminate the importance of truth in individual and societal life.

The interpretation of the term “ideologies of evil” used by John Paul II in “Memory and Identity” (John Paul II, 2005) does not only refer to Nazism and communism. This term also points to the sources of errors lying in human thought that laid the foundations for various ideologies directed against humanity, distorting the truth about it and leading it onto paths of lost freedom and self-destruction. In the field of philosophy, according to John Paul II, such a cardinal error, with far-reaching consequences, was the subordination of reality (existence) to thinking (consciousness) (John Paul II, 2005). As a result, the individual drama of existence – of every specific individual and every community – lost its reality and became the subject of subjective speculations. The individual also gained (in one’s own opinion) a position they never had in history. “Human being was left alone: alone as the creator of their own destiny and civilization, alone as the one who determines what is good and what is evil [...]” (John Paul II, 2005, 19). In this sense, a contemporary civilizational crisis is also the responsibility of those philosophers and scholars who betrayed the calling to seek the truth. This led, at least since the Enlightenment, to a constant and systematic discrediting of both the truth and foundations of civilization.

In a broad simplification, three stages of this process can be identified: questioning the truth, intellect (reason), and human nature.

First step: undermining and rejecting the concept of truth and its essential properties: transcendence, objectivity, and universality. Subjectivization of knowledge and relativization of truth have become a new dogma of modernity, regardless of theoretical contradictions and practical consequences that such a stance brings. The removal of objective truth as a platform for communication makes room for stories and “narratives”, that hold equal (in)validity locally. The spread of such a position is largely the work of postmodernists. A synthetic – and somewhat grotesque – summary of this annihilation process is contained in the title of Jean Baudrillard’s “last essay”: “Why hasn’t everything disappeared yet” (Baudrillard, 2009).

Second step: Undermining and Rejecting the Sole Path (the only “tool”) to grasp truth – Intellect (reason). Truth cannot be captured by the senses; it is achieved through the judgment of intellect. Contemporary philosophy, influenced by scepticism and postmodernism, as well as other currents such as pragmatism – not to mention the still lively Marxist tradition, especially in the social sciences – systematically questioned and undermined rationality. This was done by appealing to vaguely understood experience, subjective experiences, or practices, while erroneously attributing a narrow and reductionist definition of rationality to the classical tradition. John Paul II addressed these issues in his encyclical *Fides et ratio*, pointing out that reason has its value but also its limitations (John Paul II, 1998). In the classical tradition (in the Christian current), there was never an absolutization or a peculiar deification of reason, as occurred in the Enlightenment era, nor was there such an extreme negation and rejection of reason as seen today. Questioning rationality also leads to the rejection of the need to justify one’s position – the *ratio* includes not only “reason” but also “rationality”. This allows for arbitrariness, and inconsistencies or contradictions are not obstacles – they can be treated as expressions of individuality or originality (Melosik, 2006).

Third step: The consequence of the previous two steps is the third step, which involves questioning the shared nature common to all people, and consequently leaving the understanding of humanity as an element “open for discussion”, in extreme cases, subject to individual, subjective assessment. Let us remember that the nature of a human being, understood here as their essence, comprises two elements: rationality, which is the ability to perceive the truth, and freedom, which is the ability to create oneself, that is, to choose between good and evil. The shared “human nature” is the fundamental bond that connects people: everyone is a human being. It is also the basis for equality – from an ontological perspective, there are no “superhumans” or “subhumans”.

### Consequences of rejecting the truth

Conscious and systematic discrediting of truth leads to severe practical consequences in various aspects of individual life and societal space, thereby becoming the source of dangerous conflicts and unprecedented forms of discrimination. Here are several crucial examples:

- 1 Personal disintegration: If we question the human's ability to perceive truth, what remains of the human being? Freedom itself, without a foundation and purpose, as Friedrich Nietzsche envisioned? Without the capacity to understand oneself, recognize one's mistakes, and find proper ways to self-improvement, a person cannot help oneself, just as they cannot assist another person. What would their identity be based on – their own imaginations, dreams, inherently unverifiable? And why not on deceptive, overpowering, demonic imaginations? The question "who am I" would lose any sense, much like the question "do I exist"? It is evident that such radical detachment from reality is as barren as it is dangerous.
- 2 Undermining the power of words: the word is a symbol; it points to something other than itself, indicating reality, even if occasionally inaccurately. If we question this intentionality, what remains? Is a code established each time? With whom? According to what principles? Perhaps just a set of sounds or strokes? Words emanate from the world of individuals; they are spoken by individuals and for individuals, expressing reality.<sup>1</sup> Through words, people can create a shared world of thoughts, knowledge, and feelings, to the extent that such mutual understanding is possible. Sometimes communication can happen without words, but never without meanings – without the presumed conviction that "something" matters (even if it is something unsaid).
- 3 Hindrance to dialogue: communication between individuals without reference to truth is impossible in two senses (excluding the telling of fictional stories). First, because the message itself should be coherent and implicitly truthfully describe things. Second, since differences of opinion are natural, any agreement would be difficult without the possibility of appealing to a "higher instance", independent of the interlocutors, either through theoretical means ("this is illogical, senseless, contradictory") or practical, empirical means ("see, this is how it looks").
- 4 Disintegration of community: a community cannot be built without truth. One can rely on lies, manipulation, and fabrications, but their power exists only to the extent that they pretend to be true. There always remains a possibility of coercion and terror; however, it does not seem that a group of people based on such a bond can be labelled a community, let alone a society.

- 5 Discrimination: questioning the truth, challenging the objective and universal nature of human essence, as well as accepting that humans can determine what is good and what is evil, can lead to unprecedented discrimination of certain groups – depriving them of their human (or personhood) status. The voices of philosophers (and ethicists!) emerge, proposing their own invented criteria for humanity, usually denying it to those who are too old, too small, not valuable enough – always innocent and incapable of defence. Let us recall that this concerns evil in theory – far more dangerous than evil in practice. People have always committed murder and cruelty, but glorifying such practices, considering them good and justified, has never occurred. Justifying crimes (consciously calling evil good) is as bad as the crime itself, even worse in the sense that it destroys the discernment of good, introduces chaos, and opens up the way to committing evil without any sense of guilt.

### **Epilogue – “the dark side” of scepticism (agnosticism)**

It is worth mentioning an attitude that distances itself from decisive conclusions regarding truth, aiming to appear neutral and avoiding involvement in disputes – the sceptical (agnostic) stance. In science, this is considered an exemplary attitude, rightly so when it implies a justified caution in formulating judgments. However, especially in the humanities, it sometimes signifies something more: a reluctance, or even prejudice, towards the spiritual aspects of human beings. This includes the light present in intellect enabling knowledge, the (though limited) freedom of will that challenges the allegedly omnipotent influence of external determining factors or other implicit (sub-conscious or unconscious) forces, and ultimately, towards goodness and values whose objectivity is not recognized, as this sphere is believed to be governed solely by subjective emotions and experiences. Scepticism is not a modern invention, but today it has become an unquestionable virtue. The neutrality and programmatic lack of commitment resulting from this sceptical stance also lead to a failure to perceive many significant threats, inadequacy in identifying their causes, as well as helplessness and impotence in resolving conflicts. The symbolic and transcendent actions of a man – remembered in human history from a question asked two thousand years ago – seemingly naive, cynical and provocative: “What is truth?” – reveal the dark side of such an attitude. Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, describing the trial of Galileo before the Roman governor from the perspective of the prevailing law at the time, points out that Pontius Pilate had many reasons to believe that the one standing before him was not guilty of the charges brought against him (Ratzinger, 2011). Pilate even repeats the assertion of the innocence of the accused – according to the known account – three times: “I find no guilt

in him” (John 18:38; 19:4; 19:6). He tried to free the Innocent One. He wanted to show that he was beyond this conflict, neutral, washing his hands of it. And what does he do? He condemns the Innocent to death, and earlier, to cruel flogging. This is how the neutrality of the sceptic ends.

## Note

- 1 The intentional, imagined world, as seen in fields like art, constitutes a creation of humans. However, here we are discussing the real world, a reality that we do not regard as a product of imagination, especially the one of a single person.

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# 18

## EDUCATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

A way to overcome conflicts

*Peter Mlynarčík*

Social changes, technological changes, and various epidemics or pandemics have created conflicts in various parts of the world locally, as well as globally, at the beginning of the twenty-first century. This is causing a threat to peace, which is essential for the development of every human being. The Organization of the United Nations (UN) opposes such a trend with diplomacy, resulting in the creation of international agreements. The adoption of the foundational one – the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – celebrated its 75th anniversary on December 10, 2023. In spite of this, as a result of aggressions and conflicts, the rights of individuals and entire social groups are increasingly being violated, including the right to education.

Among other rights, the right to education has particular specifics. Ensuring it and filling it with appropriate content can lead society to deepen its awareness of human dignity. This then results in the acceptance of human rights and the assurance of peace in the world. That's why education to human rights is becoming increasingly urgent. For this reason, the UN General Assembly, at its session on December 19, 2011, adopted the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training.

This chapter is divided into four parts. The first part shows how the right to education relates to the fundamental right to life and how it relates to the concept of adaptation and biological evolution. The second part highlights the impact of globalization on education, resulting in social problems that are carried over from generation to generation (discussed further in part three). The subsequent section explores the requirements and practice of the modern upbringing, including human rights and focusing on the activities of Salesians of Don Bosco.

### **Foundations of the right to education**

The right to education is derived from the fundamental right to life. One of the basic characteristics of life is adaptation (inheritance and adaptation to the environment). Learning includes the ability to adapt, as well as the ability to cooperate and transform the environment. The ability to adapt is also possessed by lower life forms than humans and is particularly evident in mammals. Therefore, we can assert, along with biologists, that survival and learning are closely related. Cognitive abilities entail the potential to create mental representations and use them to control behavior (Le Doux, 2020). Learning in this manner induces changes in the nervous system of the individual and enables steps to be taken to adapt to changes in the individual's environment, which in turn causes the individual's development. Adaptability can be said to rule evolution.

In turn, what explicitly stimulates human adaptability and the ability to learn is everything encompassed by the concept of learning – education. This is how education becomes the basis and foundation of ecology and human development. (Muñoz Villalobos, 2009). It can be stated that: “Those who do not learn – do not develop, degrade and die!”.

If we consider the origin of education as if it were a law, it is necessary to state that education does not derive directly from natural law – a concept developed by St. Thomas Aquinas on the basis of eternal law (“It is therefore evident that the natural law is nothing else than the rational creature's participation of the eternal law”) (Aquinas, n.d., ST, I-II, q. 91, a. 2, corp.).

The concept of natural law was not acceptable to the international community preparing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Therefore, expert group member Jacques Maritain developed the metaphysical basis of the concept of “human rights” in his work *Human Rights and Natural Law* (*Les droits de l'homme et la loi naturelle* – 1942) from the position of Christian thinking. In his work *Man and the State* (1951), he then systematically defines the balance between the interests of the individual and society (individual freedom and the common good) (Gavendová, 2023).

The right to education and upbringing, as we see, creates a certain language that leads to a deepening of the quality of life of individuals and society. Therefore, education as one of the basic human rights protects the processes of human adaptation and development.

### **Global development in relation to education**

Global influences, such as communication technologies, access to information, emphasis on innovation, and creativity and biotechnologies, are causing changes in modern culture. One of the negative characteristics of these changes is the relativization of values, leading to insecurity and fragmentation

of human life. The consequences include conflicts, disinformation battles, irresponsible use of weapons, and up to armed forms of resolving tensions between states. As a result, people in various situations are re-examining the fundamental questions: What is the meaning of humanity? What does human dignity mean?

To find sufficient answers to these questions, not only at the theoretical level but also in practice (solving life's problems, or social and personal conflicts), it is necessary to create conditions at different levels (by: economics and politics, culture, thinking, and social coexistence). Among them, education occupies an important place. Analyses of modern culture indicate that education is not only a basic human right but also a requirement) of the modern era. It is both the way and the condition not only for ensuring the very survival of humanity on Earth but also for fostering further (sustainable) development (Nanni, 2009).

The expression of such attitudes and program of action is evident not only in Article 26 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)<sup>1</sup> but also in Article 1 of the Second Vatican Council's Declaration on Christian Education *Gravissimum educationis*.<sup>2</sup> According to the UDHR, education should be accessible and compulsory, ensuring the integral development of the human personality and oriented toward respect for human rights, understanding, tolerance, and friendship among all people on Earth. Paul VI stresses that the right to education derived from the dignity of the human person is oriented toward fraternal coexistence with other peoples, promoting unity and peace on Earth. Therefore, it is necessary to develop the entire field of education and, as soon as possible, make an adequate level of education and upbringing available to all people (mainly the youth) of the world. Preamble to UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training reaffirms (UNDHRET), "that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society and promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations" (UN, 2011, preamble).

The right to education itself falls under "cultural and social rights". The first enables individuals to realize themselves within the conditions of culture as its subjects and creators, and the second ensures the protection and inclusion of individuals in the community at the local and global levels.

### **Education in relation to social problems**

Education can also take on negative roles at the local level in relation to humanity as a whole. All social, political, economic, and cultural relations are transmitted through education and teaching. These relations are governed by the states. This is how we witness the drama when, through the processes of teaching, education, adaptation, stereotypes, superstitions, or



injustices are transferred from generation to generation. It is through education that social structures of injustice are maintained and developed. A typical example is the violation of human rights such as prohibiting access to education for women or maintaining fundamentalism in matters of racial and religious differences.

A special case of deformation transmitted through education (not only in the third world but also in developed countries) is the consumerist, utilitarian, and economic focus on human life. Consumer culture results in the primacy of “having” over “being” and reduces individual to the role of “only” *Homo consumens*. Moreover, the widespread culture of consumerism is associated with the so-called throwaway culture, dominated by a disposable mentality, exploiting things and people, and causing devastation of natural environment (Sadowski, 2021).

First of all, in this case, education depends on macroeconomic development. On the one hand, it is a question of financial resources to provide the education system (often the lack of education is explained by a shortage of financial resources). On the other hand, the content of education is oriented only to the ability of economic exploitation of a person. Such a reductive approach causes huge inequalities and injustices in the world. According to statistical dates, 244 million children and adolescents between the ages of 6 and 18 worldwide were still out of school in 2022. Of that number, nearly 60 million school-age children were out of school in 2021. Compared with 2008, when 120 million children did not have access to education, we see a positive trend. In countries with low average income, 70 percent of children aged 10 in 2022 could not read or understand simple texts (UNESCO, 2023, 2015).

A significant problem in the world is the exclusion of girls from education. Worldwide, 129 million girls are out of school, including 32 million of elementary school age, 30 million of lower secondary school age, and 67 million of upper secondary school age (UNICEF, 2023). In contrast, a huge investment is going into weapons of various types and financing of wars. In recent years, about half of the victims of wars are made up of children (Muñoz Villalobos, 2009). This trend continues and grows with the increase of war conflicts in the world. The problems shown in statistical data are causing a fundamental crisis in local education in many countries around the world. Therefore, education for this millennium requires fundamental changes.

### **Strategies for education to and for human rights**

The central intention of all educational strategies should be the integral development of the human being as an individual, group, social community, nation, and humanity. On the sociological side, it can be said that the goal of such education is “to build a new social personality” (Orlando, 2008, 21),

which is determined by voluntary participation in the construction of social good and also by the degree of independence so that it becomes itself, not lost in something “common” that bears disorientation in an anonymous collective. Social good can be expressed in the form of the ability to guarantee everyone access to the fruits according to the criterion of equality in assessing personal needs and sources. It is about a certain balance between creative participation in society and not depending on it. Such an attitude leads to responsible participation on the construction of a society that transcends the framework of place, nation, and continent positively assessing the values of diversity: the differences associated with the person, with cultural roots, age, and religion (Orlando, 2008). UNDHRET also demands from state authorities creation “a safe and enabling environment for the engagement of civil society, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders in human rights education and training” (UN, 2011, art. 7/2).

Such education requires:

- Continuity (throughout life, includes all stages of life, and all life situations).
- Cooperation and synergy (in a network between school, family, nongovernmental organizations, universities, local authorities, and religious communities).
- Developing the values of the entire human species (criticality, freedom, responsibility, and solidarity) (Nanni, 2009).

Continuity includes not only the chronological dimension of person’s life but also the ontological one concerning all dimensions of the person and their abilities. Continuity thus protects individuals from the postmodern fragmentation of history and the individualistic meta world. According to UNDHRET, there is a need to involve all available partners representing all educational and cultural environments (see also UN, 2011, art. 3). The interest is the cultivation of values that integrate the social environment, respecting the natural environment, and developing a culture of sustainable consumption (Sadowski, 2021), supported by a lifestyle built on Christian values. The question of values arises at the supra-religious level that characterizes global society.

The focus in relation to education remains society, as a good for itself built with the participation of all concerned according to the specific gifts of each participant. The common good means the discovery of each person’s own dignity in its basic social dimensionality: the interdependence of people. It also entails the vocation of each person to cooperate for the good of all. This is how a future for all people can be guaranteed (Orlando, 2008).

The basic reference in the process of building and implementing new educational strategies (at the interreligious level) is served by human rights

conventions – as a certain “secular Bible” or supra-religious Bible, says Carlo Nanni and others (Nanni, 2009, 51). Declared and taught, human rights have the ambition to take on the roles of a value base of understanding among nations and building a new culture of education, a new social ethic.

### **The practice of human rights education – Salesians of Don Bosco**

The World Program for Human Rights Education (2005–ongoing) was established by the UN General Assembly’s resolution 59/113 on December 7, 2004. It continues and builds on achievements of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995–2004). Basic strategies of ongoing long-term programs for human rights education were founded on The World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna (1993). Its declaration and program of action (adopted from UNESCO International Congress on Education for Human Rights and Democracy – Canada 1993) states that “human rights education, training and public information are essential for the promotion and achievement of stable and harmonious relations among communities and for fostering mutual understanding, tolerance and peace” (OHCHR, 1993).

The World Program for Human Rights Education is structured in consecutive five-year phases focused on specific sectors:

- 1 Human rights education in the primary and secondary school systems (2005–2009).
- 2 Human rights education for higher education and human rights training programs for teachers and educators, civil servants, law enforcement officials, and military personnel (2010–2014).
- 3 Strengthening the implementation of the first two phases and promoting human rights training for media professionals and journalists (2015–2019).
- 4 Youth empowerment through human rights education (2020–2024) (OHCHR, 1996–2024).

In addition to international activities organized by governments and international structures, non-governmental institutions inspired by UN initiatives also play a significant role. During the first phase (2005–2009) of the World Program for Human Rights Education was introduced in the Salesian family environment by the Superior General of the Salesian of Don Bosco Society. In the “strenna” (a traditional slogan with extensive commentary on the beginning of new year) for 2008, he invites all members to build a culture that respects human rights through education: “Let us educate with the heart of Don Bosco to develop to their full potential the lives of young people, especially the poorest and most disadvantaged, promoting their rights”. He proposes educational methodology composed of at least three

dimensions: 1. Cognitive – critically thinking, judging. 2. Affective – having experience, making friends, empathy. 3. will – morally motivated behavior, making choices and acting (Chávez Villanueva, 2008).

Subsequently, with the aim of exchanging ideas and experiences of education in the field of human rights, an international congress called Preventive System and Human Rights was organized by Salesians in Rome in January 2009. It brought together 285 participants from 129 countries around the world. Some practical steps emerged from the meetings and discussions:

- Awareness of the influence of the Salesian family in the world of education has emerged. Working together with other organizations, it is possible to decisively influence the spread of a new mentality for human rights.
- A need to combine teaching and education for human rights for the benefit of all humanity.
- One way to spread the new mentality is to integrate the topics of rights into individual subjects at the primary and secondary school levels.
- Offer specialized courses at the college and university level. An example is the University of Padua, where there is a UNESCO Chair for Human Rights and also an Interdepartmental Center for Research and Information on Personal and Human Rights.
- An international internet portal [donbosco-humanrights.org](http://donbosco-humanrights.org) (in Italian, English, Spanish, and French) has been established for the exchange of ideas and literature. Nowadays it is part of the portal Don Bosco Youth – Net: Preventive System, Citizenship & Human Rights Education.

On the last-mentioned platform, an analysis of the compatibility of Don Bosco's preventive system in education and the UDHR has emerged. The conclusion was that "Don Bosco's preventive system and the UDHR have the same basic inspiration. UDHR does not speak about religion, but the voice of conscience would be in religious terminology the 'voice of God'". The preventive system does not use terminology of rights because it was not common in Don Bosco's time. Secular language used in UDHR enables on the other hand a real dialogue on the international level (Stoehr, 2015).

### **Conclusion and remarks**

Education and learning form adaptability, ecology, and human development: "Those who do not learn – do not develop, degrade and die!". By guaranteeing education as a basic human right, human social marginalization can be effectively countered only if the basic ethical content of education is human rights themselves. From the world's religions point of view, the human rights conventions could serve on interreligious level as a certain "supra-religious Bible" or "secular Bible".

Such education not only gives information about human rights but also ensures that people themselves become promoters of their rights. This way individuals themselves become co-guarantors of the peace in the world and the sustainable development of the social environment.

The language of human rights is not very compatible with pedagogical language. However, from the point of view of content, pedagogy can describe almost all problems of human rights. This can be demonstrated through Strenna – Letters of Pasqual Chavez Villanueva. His commentary of Strenna 2008 explicitly includes the concept of human rights and its implementation in education. In contrast, his two older comments on Strenna 2007 and Strenna 2006 do not use the concept of human rights, but underline some related issues: defense of human life in all dimensions (Letting ourselves be guided by God’s love for life – 2007) and education in family on how to be human (Ensuring that special attention be given to the family the cradle of life and love, and where one first learns how to become human – 2006) (Chávez Villanueva, 2008).

## Notes

- 1 Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit. 2. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace. 3. Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

(UN 1948, art. 26)

- 2 All men of every race, condition and age, since they enjoy the dignity of a human being, have an inalienable right to an education (5) that is in keeping with their ultimate goal, (6) their ability, their sex, and the culture and tradition of their country, and also in harmony with their fraternal association with other peoples in the fostering of true unity and peace on earth. For a true education aims at the formation of the human person in the pursuit of his ultimate end and of the good of the societies of which, as man, he is a member, and in whose obligations, as an adult, he will share.

(Paul VI, 1965)

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# 19

## IN FAVOUR OF PEACE

### Maria Montessori against social inequalities, exclusion and injustice

*Beata Bednarczuk*

#### **Introduction**

At the end of the 19th century, Maria Montessori (1870–1952) – doctor, specialist in children’s psychiatry, anthropologist and educationalist – undertook various forms of social work and assistance. This includes representing the issues of women and children with disabilities, the socialisation and education of poor children and the rehabilitation and therapy of children with post-traumatic stress disorder (Babini, 2000; Casas-Cortés, 2019a, 2019b, 2020; Fresco, 2020; Kahn, 2013; Montessori, 2005, 2021; Moretti, 2020, 2021; Phillips et al., 2022; Quarfood, 2022, 2023; Trabalzini 2009a, 2009b). According to Maribel Casas-Cortés (2019b), Montessori’s work to counteract inequality, exclusion and discrimination proves her radical attitude based on contesting the political and social *status quo*. This took place in a historical period when the inhumane use of violence was not only common but authorised in both colonised territories and large industrial enterprises. Injustice and inequality were a result of the patriarchal organisation of a society which discriminated against women and children, particularly those who were socially excluded because of their disabilities, including mental disabilities (Casas-Cortés, 2019b).

Montessori was engaged in many initiatives in favour of social transformation and the realisation of basic human rights. Her participation reflected various ways of interpreting the idea of humanitarianism and making peace. This participation was voluntary yet conscious and conducted according to the scientific principle, leading from the perception and identification of a problem to the identification of ways of overcoming it by confronting reality. The effects of her contribution were both applicative and epistemological in

nature. Based on the knowledge gained in the course of her experiences, she developed new quantifiable outputs, for example, sensorial materials for mentally disabled children (1899–1901), a methodology of practical life exercises for the socialisation of culturally neglected children (1907–1908) and a living and learning environment for rehabilitation following a trauma (1908–1909 and 1916–1917). These were used and improved upon in pedagogical and therapeutic practice. All the threads of Montessori's work discussed in this paper are merged into the concept of the child as a source and creator of peace, hope and promise for humankind (Montessori, 2021).

The aim of the paper is to present Maria Montessori's early work, particularly her contributions to social and political transformations, problem-solving in public life for justice and common welfare as a context for crystallising the conception of education and the idea of education favouring peace. The professional and social activities conducted by Montessori in the period beginning when she earned her medical degree (1896) until the presentation of her idea of education for peace (1917) indicate not only the way of interpretation but also the idea of working for peace.

Montessori believed that the reconstruction of society, fundamentally reforming it through scientific advances and cultural progress contributed to peace. She interpreted the reconstruction of society as forming a stable order, building a just world and establishing an 'authentic community among people' (Montessori, 2021, XV), whose members put into effect the objectives for the welfare of others. This is possible thanks to 'constructive education' (Montessori, 2021, 25). The personal social reconstruction carried out by Montessori represents a two-way approach, with both ways overlapping. On the one hand, it involved helping excluded, marginalised and rights-deprived children, particularly the weakest ones and their mothers (e.g. Italian feminism as 'maternalism' (Moretti, 2021, 36), the first Children's House (Casa dei Bambini) as a place of cultural socialisation of families or help for war refugees). On the other hand, the reformation of society consisted in creating an original tool of education that would provide the conditions for experiencing peace, and consequently contributing to peace in the future. That tool is called the Montessori learning environment, or a child-centred environment.

### **Peace-building through social activism**

Maria Montessori studied medicine and psychiatry at 'La Sapienza' University of Rome (1893–1896). She developed professional competences and had an interdisciplinary background in such activities as research, diagnosis and treatment, as well as education. She was also imbued with 'a specific image of medicine entering into important social themes in the spirit of positivistic ideas' (Fresco, 2020, 53). At that time, a transformation towards an



experimental approach to medicine was emerging among university workers (Moretti, 2021). This change coincided with a surge of scientists presenting a socially engaged attitude and supporting social and liberal reforms (Quarfood, 2023). The scientific atmosphere at the university proved to be of pivotal importance. First, it shaped Montessori's interpretation of the role that medical care and tools played in improving the living conditions of people being marginalised (Moretti, 2021). Second, it formed her conviction that popularising knowledge is a key incentive for improving various aspects of society. This attitude resulted in the popularisation of a scientific approach to the issues she was engaged in early in her career and in proactivity in those areas.

### **Issues related to women's affairs**

As a doctor and a scientist, Montessori was interested in women's issues. The struggle for women's rights between 1895 and 1908 was a characteristic feature of her early campaign for peaceful social and political transformation (Babini, 2000; Fresco, 2020; Moretti, 2021). The feminist views were related to the way that children's welfare was defined (Moretti, 2021). Montessori regarded the relation between mother and child as exceptionally strong, inseparable and fundamental for the child's growth (Trabalzini, 2009b). She perceived the fate of women and children as intertwined, not only in mutual interdependence but also in the exclusion of both social groups (Osgood & Mohandas, 2022). Thus, the emancipation and education of women and the protection of and change in mothers' living conditions became the means of improving children's health and welfare.

A characteristic feature of the Italian feminist movement at the end of the 19th century was 'maternity' or a 'culture of maternity' (Moretti, 2021, 36). Conscious maternity (supported by scientific knowledge) and the resulting responsibility for maintaining a healthy generation/'species' were intended to elevate women's status within familial relationships and society (Moretti, 2021, 38). Montessori undertook social and educational initiatives. Her social engagement included taking part in women's international and national congresses (Berlin 1896, London 1899 and Rome 1908), where she expressed opposition to the exploitation and hard work of women and suggested drafting suitable legislation to ensure women's rights to education, employment and choice of partner (Babini, 2000; Fresco, 2020; Moretti, 2021; Trabalzini, 2009b). To support and encourage women to actively participate in social and political life, to stimulate their voting aspirations and to legalise voting rights, Montessori founded the Association of Thought and Action (*Società Pensiero a Azione*) (Fresco, 2020). The deprivation of public rights as well as poor living and working conditions were decisive in the health of not only women but also their children, as already mentioned. According to Montessori, these conditions prevented women from fulfilling themselves as

human beings or citizens, excluding them from participation in social progress and work in favour of peace – understood as creating the common welfare (Trabalzini, 2009b).

Moreover, Montessori found women's education the best way to enhance their personal and social awareness (Fresco, 2020) which was tantamount to the 'protection of humankind' (Trabalzini, 2009b, 23). For instance, during her hygiene classes at the Higher Educational School for Women in Rome (Istituto Superiore di Magistero Femminile di Roma), she focussed on basic knowledge about the biology and physiology of women's and children's bodies and on protecting their health in order to be prepared for conscious birth control, which in her opinion should be an intentional, independent choice in both biological and social aspects (Trabalzini, 2009b, 24).

Montessori's feminism was connected with achieving the basic rights and freedoms of women as well as reliably forming and exploiting women's identity, specially determined by maternal functions (Moretti, 2021).

As soon as she [the woman] becomes a free human being with her own social rights, she *will begin to work for peace*: she will know how to ignite the divine light among the minds that lose it in selfishness, and instill in the hearts the holy love of humanity – which is widespread maternal love in the world.

(Moretti, 2021, 34)

Love was an indispensable element of life, a guarantor of peace and sustainable development of both the human being and society (Bednarczuk, 2021).

At the same time, Montessori worked to restore dignity and secure a qualitatively good education of another social group that needed help and had been excluded from society: children with intellectual disabilities. She saw addressing women's social and economic problems, introducing progressive laws and providing education for children as the starting point for solving social and political inequalities (Casas-Cortés, 2019b).

### **Rights of children with intellectual disabilities**

As a young doctor, Maria Montessori joined the university staff of San Giovanni Hospital and also opened a private medical practice (Gutek & Gutek, 2016; Quarfood, 2022). In 1897, she was recognised as a competent clinical psychiatrist and expert in the field of children's mental diseases (Phillips et al., 2022). Her studies Montessori on mental diseases contributed to her appointment as an assistant in the Psychiatric Clinic of Rome University in 1897 (Phillips et al., 2022), where she worked with the eminent specialist Professor Clodomiro Bonfigli. Bonfigli and other Rome University workers – Giuseppe Ferruccio Montessano, a future eminent psychiatrist, Sante de

Sanctis, a pioneer of children's psychology in Italy and Maria Montessori, a clinician and scientist with good prospects – founded the National League for the Care and Education of Mentally Deficient Children (*Lega nazionale per l'educazione e la cura dei deficienti*) with the support of the Minister of Education (Fresco, 2020).

At that time, the situation of mentally disabled children was tragic. They were treated as incurable (Fresco, 2020; Casas-Cortés, 2019b; Trabalzini, 2009b). They were abandoned by their families and placed into psychiatric institutions, where they were deprived of any support and frequently experienced emotional and physical violence (Fresco, 2020; Montessori, 2005). Montessori learnt about mistreatment of children in psychiatric settings whilst searching for patients to participate in research conducted by the team headed by Professor Bonfigli (Montessori, 2005; Fresco, 2020). The observations and results of her first examinations made Montessori believe that intellectual disability was more a task for psychiatry than medicine and that children with mental disorders need help of an educational nature. Consequently, she joined the League, whose objective was to persuade the educational authorities and the public of the immediate need to set up therapeutic/educational institutions for children with minor mental handicaps. Montessori was given the task of popularising the League and its projects in Italy (Fresco, 2020). At the first National Educational Congress in Turin in 1889, she recommended establishing additional classes for children with intellectual deficits in public primary schools and special educational institutions for those with serious problems (Montessori, 2005; Trabalzini, 2009a; Fresco, 1993).

Taking into consideration the results of Montessori's work, the League management opened the above-mentioned Institute of Special Pedagogy (which began as a course), the first institution of teachers' education in the field of special pedagogy in Italy. She was a co-manager of the Institute (Montessori, 2005) and conducted classes in hygiene and anthropology. In this capacity, she organised one of the first classes in Rome for socially marginalised children with intellectual deficits, as well as an institution for the education of specialist pedagogical personnel.

### **Work on behalf of poor and neglected children**

Montessori returned to the San Lorenzo quarter in late 1906, joining the social project of a housing estate renovation (Foschi, 2008; Montessori, 2014; Trabalzini, 2009b). Its objective was to restore tenements and build houses with flats to rent out to workers, enriching the district with services and educational institutions. The Children's House (*Casa dei Bambini*), placed in Montessori's care, was conceived as a place of both education and social support for children deprived of parental care during the working day. This initiative affected the community indirectly by contributing to the

cultural socialisation of the district's inhabitants including, the unemployed, workers, beggars and former prisoners (Montessori, 2005, 2014).

Trabalzini (2009b) puts forward the thesis that Montessori realised a social mission of serving children in need, and in the course of the work she unexpectedly learnt about the educational reality. The renovated quarter became a kind of comfortable and spacious environment for life (Kahn, 2013). The employer, the Institute of Real Estate, wanted to 'furnish each family with a home, but its desire is that home should be clean' (Montessori, 2005, 41–42). A cleanly flat meant personal cleanliness (Montessori, 2005). When Montessori organised classes for children about personal and household hygiene, she discovered 'their educational value: control and coordination of movements, concentration, growth of independence, self-consciousness and social relations' (Trabalzini, as cited in Kahn, 2013, 7). At the same time, she was carrying out a scientific project verifying the value of sensorial materials for the education of children within the intellectual norm. She also began action research connected with the construction of a learning environment: an innovative tool of education, cultural and cognitive socialisation and – as it soon proved to be – a valuable tool in therapy and re-education.

In the San Lorenzo quarter, Montessori was one of the first to build a positive, protective educational environment resembling *school-at-home* for children between the ages of 3 and 6 years (Montessori, 2005, 2014). She carefully planned the equipment, adjusting it to the children so that they would be able to find everything necessary in a household rather than things suitable for an institution. She paid attention to the beauty of the interior, tasteful decorations, warm colouring and decorative plants. The classes, combined with care about the place of everyday life and personal hygiene, provided the essential anthropologic and cultural conditions for the education of children, 'in which school should be assigned a room for a bath, wardrobe or a piece of ground to be farmed by the children' (Montessori, 2005, 43). Montessori took great care so that beauty was a characteristic feature of the *school-at-home* environment. However, the basic rule organising the life and learning of a child was freedom of choice, as the educational expression of respecting a person's dignity (e.g. freedom of choosing tasks, strategy of action, movement, freedom of communication, cooperation, being free from 'looking from the top' and being constantly instructed) (Bednarczuk, 2022, 248). Montessori conducted an 'interesting pedagogical experiments consisting in sowing awareness in the child in a quiet, peaceful environment full of friendly feelings' (Montessori, as cited in Trabalzini, 2009a, 169). The methods and techniques confirmed in the educational work with culturally neglected children became the basis for the therapy of those who had experienced life-threatening events or physical and mental well-being due to the natural and generational catastrophes, as Montessori called the First World War.

### **Work for the benefit of children exposed to traumatic circumstances**

In 1908, a devastating earthquake struck Sicily leaving thousands of orphaned children found themselves in monastery-adjointing schools in various Italian towns (Fresco, 2020). Montessori was invited by the Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady in Gesuiti Street in Rome to visit a class that included children from the regions struck by the earthquake. She was moved by what she saw.

Some sixty of these little tots were found alone among the ruins. No one knows their names or their social conditions. A terrible shock had made them all very much alike, depressed, silent, indifferent. They were hard to feed and to put asleep. At night they could be heard crying and weeping.

*(Montessori, 1972, 140)*

Montessori did not remain indifferent and again she began studying how to address this problem. ‘With the nuns we decided to use tools different from those applied for the children in San Lorenzo. We made use of the wonderful garden attractions, where there was a special cultivation of flowers’ (Montessori, as cited in Fresco, 2020, 143). Moreover, practical life exercises related to personal hygiene and housework (setting the table, serving food, washing the dishes, etc.) were applied in a different function than in the Children’s House. They became a substitute for the family life that the children had lost (Fresco, 2020). As before, the outside and inside environments of the school were designed with great care (Montessori, 2019). This approach provided the children with a sense of security and met their basic needs (Bednarczuk, 2016). The individualised approach respected their personal needs. It proved that the children had regained the joy of life (Montessori, 2014).

Montessori’s methodology was again successful in France, which was overwhelmed with war. It served as a form of modern therapy for exceptionally destructive mental disorders causing serious, long-lasting consequences for the child’s mental health, as well as the condition of successive generations.

In the first months of the First World War, Paris became home to refugees – mostly women and children who had escaped the offensive of the German army in Belgium and northern and eastern France (Moretti, 2021). The American philanthropist, Mary Rebecca Cromwell who lived in France from 1902, was impressed by the results of Montessori’s work and visited Rome several times. In response to the many children in Paris who were without care, she opened five Montessorian schools in Saint-Sulpice and Fontenay-aux-Roses in 1915 (Moretti, 2021). Cromwell found that the pedagogical approach helped to overcome post-traumatic disorder. She noted that ‘The method has a wonderfully calming influence on nervous children’

and ‘allows for a moderate, continuous and pleasant activity that keeps the children engaged without tiring them – thus organising their perturbed mental functions’ (Moretti, 2021, 77).

In the case of special disorders that today are labelled post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) (Moretti, 2021; Phillips et al., 2022), Montessori became aware that the tool she had developed in the form of the learning environment was insufficient to restore mental health in children. She concluded that additional specialist help of a therapeutic nature was required. She was ahead of her time, as in the medical world the phenomenon of mental welfare had been considered, but only in reference to soldiers, not civilians – let alone children. Very few social reformers believed in taking care of children stricken with wartime traumatic experiences (Moretti, 2021). She intended to find an innovative international organisation to provide help and psychological support for young war victims. The White Cross (La Croce Bianca) was to offer help around the world. The colour white was to be a symbol of the nervous system, in contrast to the colour of the Red Cross, which symbolised the blood of wounded soldiers. The task of the new organisation was to implement the educational assumptions she had developed in the institutions founded in the war-torn regions. The pedagogically qualified staff was to be assisted in their work by nurses and psychiatrists. She arranged for the Red Cross workers to treat mental and physical injuries, particularly of children and their mothers, which was a revelational and novel suggestion at the time (Moretti, 2020, 2021).

However, due to a lack of financial support, the White Cross was never established. Nevertheless, Montessori initiated international discussions about the need for psychological therapy of civilians, which were continued in the following decades. These discussions have since become a part of the modern approach to helping in the case of catastrophes or wars (Moretti, 2021).

## Conclusions

According to Casas-Cortés (2019b), the assistance given by Montessori entailed risks to her personal welfare and scientific career. Her actions demonstrated great courage in contesting the predominating culture of the time – colonialist, patriarchy, ‘wild capitalist’ and authoritarian – whose practices were exploitation and discrimination. The ‘countercultural imperative’ made Montessori engaged in numerous initiatives aimed at achieving the ‘triumph of justice and love among people, building a better world in which harmony prevails’ (Montessori, 2021, 6). Some projects and designs were meaningful in her time, and their value is verified now, for example, the feminist movement and campaign for women’s rights, the struggle for social justice for the intellectually disabled or the initiation of international debates on behalf of

those who need help. Montessori was ahead of her time, for instance, establishing procedures for support and aid institutions and therapy for victims of war and catastrophe, particularly children. Her proposals and activities still remain relevant: organising inclusive education, popularising and establishing qualitatively good schooling for each child, providing a learning environment that enables individual study and considering education as a tool for making peace and international cooperation (Casas-Cortés, 2019b; Moretti, 2021; Phillips et al., 2022).

Montessori's peace-building methodology serves as the foundation for setting up schools across all continents (Debs et al., 2022), for all children, regardless of their origin, gender, religion, health, social and economic status, etc. (Bednarczuk, 2014). It can thus be assumed that the model of Montessori education does not consolidate social inequalities in education (Osgood & Mohandas, 2022). Montessori's idea was used and verified as suitable for working with hospitalised and intellectually disabled children, those suffering from violence, abandoned children and orphans and those with dysfunctions and affected by traumatic experiences. The potential of the Montessori model of education should be considered in a broader context as a source of inspiration and help for parents, social and child care workers, family advisors and those working with elderly people (Baligadoo, 2014; Casas-Cortés, 2019b; Camp & Shelton, 2023; Cunningham, 2019; Duckworth, 2006; Fidler, 2014; Gorzelle, Kaiser & Camp, 2003; Graham et al., 2019; Hellbrugge, 2002; Quarfood, 2022; Montessori, 1989a, 1989b, 2021; Moss & Epstein, 2023; Moretti, 2021; Neise, 2002; Orem, 1969; Phillips et al., 2022; Phillips, 2023).

Montessori took 'care about humankind and civilisation for whom there exists only one motherland: the world. Thus for such an essential reason all those who contributed even a little to improvement of the situation [...] deserve respect by the society' (Montessori, 2014, 13).

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# 20

## RESPECT FOR NATURE AND THE SPECIFIC DEVELOPMENTAL FEATURES OF A SMALL CHILD AS THE BASIS FOR PEACE EDUCATION

*Lidia Marszałek*

### **Introduction**

World peace is one of the highest-ranking values in various hierarchies. The entire civilised world and its peoples recognise it as important and valuable for human development. The past centuries have been filled with wars – battles for territory, dominance and power. Though this situation seemed to have quieted after the Second World War, there are still conflicts and confrontations going on in the world, perhaps more locally than globally. However, with access to various media (particularly the internet), we can easily get updated news. The most glaring example is Russia's current armed aggression in Ukraine; however, Palestine, Israel, Syria, Afghanistan and other countries, such as those in Africa, should not be forgotten either. The most common cause of conflict is a divergence of interests and goals between countries. However, not all conflicts necessarily lead to armed struggles – some can be resolved peacefully through negotiations. The sources of armed conflict are mostly rooted in economic, political or ideological factors. Typically, conflicts are complex, with numerous causative factors. The African continent, where territorial, religious and ethnic disputes dominate, can serve as a perfect example. Economic factors, such as access to oil deposits, play a crucial role in conflicts. Some researchers predict that drinking water will be a subject of future conflicts. Armed conflict also arises out of ideological and religious factors; the former originated many a conflict between the superpowers during the Cold War, while the ongoing Israeli-Arab conflict in the Middle East has a religious background. Moreover, the causes of conflicts can be traced to external interference, armaments or the aspirations of regional powers for domination (Web 1, n.d.). Great world

powers sometimes foment these conflicts by, for example, supplying weapons for immediate pecuniary benefits or possible unrestricted access to the natural wealth of the country supported in the armed conflict, leading to substantial future profits.

The question then arises as to how such situations can be prevented. How can aggression and willingness to engage in armed conflict be nipped in the bud? The answer seems simple – parenting by respecting the child’s natural inclination to pursue goodness. The current generation of youth and adults, in this context, already seem “lost”, as they have already been “soaked” in evil. One can only try to educate them through external methods, followed by planned and purpose-oriented efforts to instil the right values in them. However, there is hope for educating the next generation, starting with the youngest children, by respecting and nurturing their natural inclinations. This, then, is the current challenge for educators in the context of peace education.

### **The specific nature of the child and the pursuit of peace and goodness**

J.J. Rousseau first vested a child with the right to free, natural development, indicating the uniqueness of this period of life. A child, in his theory, is an intrinsically good being, and this goodness, to develop, only requires proper care from adults. Rousseau recognised that any interference by educators in this development could only cause harm. Upbringing, then, is merely to protect the child from the destructive forces of the world. Rousseau thus emphasised the primacy of the child’s nature over all pedagogical influences (Waloszek, 2005). Other great thinkers soon joined the discussion on values and the specific character of childhood. J. Locke, H. Pestalozzi and J. W. David presented their own visions of childhood and proposed various approaches to early childhood education.

Janusz Korczak’s views also contributed to this discussion, significantly influencing the image of the child and childhood. In his perspective, the child is a person, inscribed in history and culture, a partner of the adult who, by no means, fills up deficiencies of a child nor protects its innate qualities. Korczak thus attributed the feature of subjectivity to the child, and that of dialogical relationality to education. The adult not only teaches the child but also learns from the child, listening to the child with a respectful attitude. The child is who he or she currently is, with his or her difficult, childlike world, while the adult, in a symmetrical, partnership relationship, is the guide through this world (Smolińska-Theiss, 2005).

Childhood, as a period of human life, carries the feature of nurturability and the need for upbringing as an aid to the realisation and “bringing out” of humanity, co-creating the individuality of the child. In these activities, the natural reality of childhood must constitute the fundamental value as the one

that directs the child towards universal values, in a specific way inscribed in the child's nature. In its essence, the child embodies these universal values in a particular way that is natural to its development.

The child lives in a space of Goodness, manifested in its disinterested love for the physical and social world, "naive" trust, kindness, simplicity and confidence. The child lives in what in theology is called faith, hope and love, which stimulate its reason. Childhood life, though it may seem naive, is nevertheless the essence of human experience, where faith, hope and love are complete. Carrying genuine reserves of goodness and love, the child is also at the same time a specific "catalyst" for the development of these feelings in the closest to them, awakening caring, cordiality, love and tenderness. It is therefore both the embodiment of goodness and its purpose and source. The child realises the vertical aspect of goodness, demonstrating far fewer needs concerning material possessions of sensual or utilitarian value, and externalising more the emotional, social and spiritual aspects concerning the entire animate and inanimate world, thus experiencing its freedom – "freedom from" evil, a sense of lacking, weakness and the pursuit of current needs towards "freedom to" that which allows the child to fully realise (Rusiecki, 2010, 241).

For many adults, goodness, truth and justice are abstract values, "polished" by culture. Love, kindness and nobility are "unfashionable", and "not trendy" concepts in today's reality. Healthy selfishness, the pursuit of one's own needs and individual success, even at the expense of other people, is important. Sometimes people even sacrifice good, friendly relationships for material gain. However, the child, following its nature, chooses and tries to realise what is good repeatedly. Thanks to ignorance, creative courage and imagination, occupying different spaces in the world, without caring to separate reality from fantasy, the child gradually acquires the ability to order the characteristics of things, people and phenomena (Denek & Dymara, 2006). In the goodness and love of the world, the moral life of the child finds its fullest, purest and most specific expression, being both the core of this morality and its effect.

Consequently, the child is a reflection and natural source of values, considered universal, bringing with it into the world the unique specificity of experiencing and realising them, which is unfortunately suppressed in the later stages of its life through the adults' incompetent behaviour. Children's approach to the issue of value recognition is different from that of adults – they fearlessly enter the axiological sphere, defining values, resolving their conflicts and determining the sense of duty, although they display problems with relating their findings to facts, that is, evaluation and self-esteem (Morszczyńska & Morszczyński, 2003).

The child, as a free, unique, individual person, open to values, has something more within, some aspiration to the fullness and perfection of being, in which its possibilities are highlighted. The child is at the stage of a

constant search for values that can satisfy its existential needs in the biological dimension, the personal dimension – as cognition and realisation of the self, the transpersonal dimension – which translates into the search for bonds and the transcendental dimension – going beyond oneself.

*(Michałowski, 2003, 176)*

Childhood has a specific significance for “being human”, for the reason that it is in childhood that those modes of behaviour belonging to the “healthy” existence of man are clarified in a particular way: trust in one’s own being, openness to all that the encounter entails, readiness to be at one’s disposal, transcending oneself, the first ways of thinking and feeling, fantasy, the anticipation of the future, a basic turn towards reality and a fundamental feeling for good and evil (Wilk, 2001). Besides its “instrumental” value of preparing for adult life, childhood, also has intrinsic value, like any of the unique periods of a person’s life, in promoting multifaceted curiosity, triggered by amazement at what the child does not know or understand, an unmet need for knowledge, spontaneity, sensitivity and a natural capacity for empathy, creativity and fantasy. The survival of these childhood values in the adult, modern world can be particularly difficult, which makes them all the more worth striving for (Appelt, 2001).

Young children almost infallibly find kindness in their surroundings and characterise it through the daily activities of caregivers, allowing the child to gain a sense of security, acceptance, kindness and being loved. Even for the youngest children, being guided by love is an attributive characteristic of human kindness. During this period, due to the child’s strong egocentrism, “being good” vis-à-vis the environment is strongly linked to the child’s personal feelings. The change takes place only at an early school age, when children begin to interpret kindness as a trait, concerning a person’s attitude to the world as a whole. A similar shift can be observed when analysing attitudes to evil – in early childhood, “doing no evil” belongs to the characteristics of a “good person”. In the following years, goodness is understood as the power to prevent evil, remove and destroy it, to prevent oneself or others from doing evil. Young children obviously – due to their inability to think abstractly – differentiate between good and evil primarily by describing behaviour. Already, in the later pre-school period, the ability to bring out the different “shades” of these qualities by grading them, to distinguish between indulging in evil and doing evil, or to consider the intention of the act and the consciousness of the action in the moral assessment, is emerging. A moral consciousness is then born in the child.

The morality of the young child, despite its partially developed ability to differentiate between the ranges of abstractly defined good and evil, can thus be based on a spiritual love of the world – what is good is that which arouses awe, enchants, brings deep, positive inner experience, provokes joyful

expression or deep contemplation. It can therefore be assumed that the child's morality during this period grows directly out of its spirituality, understood as relational sensitivity (Hay & Nye, 1996).

### **Educational measures aimed at preserving the child's nature**

Contemporary early childhood pedagogy in successive systemic studies consistently omits the sphere of child morality, either by assuming that it is of little relevance to educational theory and practice or by assuming that to speak of morality concerning the young child would be to over-interpret the concept in the light of psychological knowledge of this developmental period. However, a proper understanding of the term in precisely the same psychological theories enables us to isolate aspects of the child's functioning that demonstrate that, during this particular developmental period, the child is characterised by a specific, natural morality that is revealed in many areas of child activity. Adopting a slightly different perspective from the classical one (such as in the psychosynthetic approach or Gestalt theory – a contemporary evolution into character psychology, or in the light of developing theories of child mind development) allows an even deeper grasp of the essence of the child's spiritual nature as a person with a deep awareness of its *Self* and others, the ability and desire to integrate and find meaning between itself and the world, a person with numerous categories of experience representing spiritual awareness.

Even the youngest child is not a “blank page” to be written down, the predispositions of spiritual sensitivity emerge from it in the course of its development, because they are already present in the child – and the period of early childhood is a particularly intensive developmental period for the manifestation of this sensitivity. The child still possesses at this time the ability to perceive itself and the world directly, free of stereotypical thought structures that separate one from the direct perception of oneself and the environment – whereby the child's experience is more than a sensation, a feeling or impression caused by external physical stimuli; it is the whole range of experiences related to the perception of everyday phenomenal reality, which cannot be reduced to the sum of its components (Śliwerski, 2010). This specific experience of material and immaterial reality by the child becomes the basis of its deep morality, which can be revealed in the appropriate external conditions created in the process of development and upbringing.

What should an educator do in this case to preserve these natural inclinations of the child to strive for goodness and to love the world and other people? First of all, following the thinking of J.J. Rousseau – don't interrupt! Allow the child to develop these inclinations without “oozing” the venom of evil – show evil but also call it by its name. Show the good and the beauty and

also call them by name. Allow the child to develop its natural inclinations towards goodness and love. Respect children and support these inclinations in every way possible, creating opportunities to do good and exhibit the child's specific morality.

For, morality, as a sphere encompassing the problems of good and evil, of universal values, linked to the specificity of humanity, is a special area of existence for every person, and therefore, for the child too. The young child has a tremendous capacity not only to distinguish between good and evil but also to pursue goodness in its actions, higher than the assumptions of modern developmental psychology. They treat the child as "intrinsically" good in the simplicity of its feeling and behaviour (regardless of the ways of explaining this phenomenon), who, to further realise this characteristic in its life, needs the right personal role models, to experience love from the social environment, to trust its moral intuition and to create opportunities for ethically correct behaviour. Contemporary early childhood pedagogy does little to address the issue of moral education, grounding it in outdated theories and infantilising the scope of its expectations. This, therefore, gives the impression that educators do not want to employ the child's unique qualities in this area to form a person who finds the fullness of their humanity in choosing the good. A proper approach to this issue would require verifying the knowledge of the child's real capacities in the moral sphere, as well as extending this scope in the educational programmes of the young child to include aspects hitherto considered inaccessible to them at this age – such as creating situations to act according to the principle of helping other people in their difficulties in life or the ability to intuitively empathise with their psycho-spiritual states. A teacher, an educator, aware of the child's natural inclinations in this area and trusting in its abilities, instead of "implementing values" and moralising, would only have to create situations conducive to their manifestation in the child's everyday actions and positively motivate the "unveiling" of these moral aspects of its existence. At the same time, a teacher should demonstrate to the child positive behaviour, realising the universal values – Goodness, Truth and Beauty – in their behaviour and attitude towards the child and, above all, be an "unequivocal" person in every sphere of their life and beautiful in their moral qualities, manifested in the educational relationship.

### Summary

The above reflections on the peculiar nature of the young child, full of love for the world and people, a deep aspiration for goodness, inscribed in its primordial, innate inclinations, can contribute to new thinking about peace education. Children are not born bad – their original nature is to strive for goodness and love. So, there are no bad children – there are only bad adults who bring them up, and unfortunately, it is to them that all the child's bad

behaviour must be attributed to the natural processes of identifying and modelling behaviour in the parenting process. It is our responsibility as adults to develop in our children a peaceful attitude towards the world and other people, regardless of race, nationality, culture or religion. It is enough to respect these natural inclinations of the child, not suppressing them with one's behaviour, views or opinions, but freely – by organising opportunities to do good – to support the development of these tendencies.

Unfortunately, this is not always possible and not in every culture. Without entering into political or cultural quandaries, it can be said, however, that in some cultures or religions, “education for evil” is even inscribed in the upbringing of young children. In some cultural circles, young children as young as three years old are forced to watch the execution of cultural or religious “enemies” by their older counterparts and then pose for photographs with the severed heads of the “enemies”. Children as young as six or seven years old are executing themselves, boasting of their “achievements” in the name of religion or culture. Thus, children become desensitised to evil and consider it their “vocation”. Unfortunately, our calls for peace education will probably never reach such parents and change their ways of raising their children. Thus, our world will probably never be free of local armed conflicts, although not involving many countries, which nevertheless pose a threat to world order and peace. This is a sad finding of this text, but seems most true in today's world.

However, an educator should never despair, recognising some challenges as impossible to achieve. Teaching is not only a profession but also a vocation that steers young children and youth towards the highest values to bring out the best and the most valuable qualities in them. Educators should always cherish the hope that they can change the world and enrich their pupils in the pursuit of the highest values. Therefore, despite being aware of the existing difficulties in educating for peace in different cultures, every educator should strive in their pedagogical activity to respect the child's natural inclinations towards goodness and nurture these inclinations.

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# 21

## SOCIO-MORAL APPROVAL OF INTERPERSONAL AGGRESSION VERSUS WAR ANXIETY AND PERSISTENT THINKING ABOUT WAR IN YOUNG ADULTS

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### **Introduction**

One of the areas of research about the mechanisms of aggressive behaviour in interpersonal relationships aims to answer the question: why are some people inclined to behave aggressively, including attacking others physically or verbally, under certain circumstances while others in similar circumstances do not present such behaviour and do not show a desire to harm others?

When analysing the knowledge concerning the causes of aggression in interpersonal relationships, it is important to point to biological, psychological, and environmental/social determinants. There are already research reports and evidence that genes can determine the readiness for aggression, but this relationship is also determined by other factors (Zahn-Waxler et al., 1991; Krahe, 2005; Halicka-Masłowska, 2021). Sociobiology, on the other hand, analyses human phylogenetic development as a background for explaining intergroup and interpersonal aggression. This approach focuses on describing aggressive behaviour from the perspective of psychological mechanisms and their determinants.

Without delving into historical findings on the origins of aggressive behaviour, the authors of the present study adopt as a theoretical framework the concept of the Polish psychologist Adam Frączek (2002), who developed the regulatory theory of interpersonal aggression. This theory integrates various approaches and psychological mechanisms underlying the occurrence of aggression in social life. Interpersonal aggression as defined by A. Frączek (2002, p. 50) includes

physical, verbal, symbolic, mediated reactions and actions that meet the following criteria: they are motivated by an intention to harm (emotional

state, intention); they lead or potentially lead to negative consequences for the victims (suffering, loss of valued values); in psychological and social terms they are an alternative to pro-social activities (cooperation, help, altruism).

Frączek identifies socialisation mechanisms, temperament and personality traits that form a constellation of factors responsible for the emergence of a readiness for aggression. In this context, the author proposes three main patterns of aggressive behaviour in social relationships. The first pattern is reactive-emotogenic aggression, in which aversive, harmful impulses triggering emotional reactions such as anger, rage, and frustration play a central role. The formation of this pattern is favoured by high emotional reactivity as a temperamental trait and childhood socialisation factors such as over-protectiveness and lack of ability to defer gratification. The second pattern is task-instrumental aggression associated with the formation of cognitive schemas and scripts from early childhood because of modelling and imitation of patterns observed in the immediate environment. Cognitive scripts refer to the formation of beliefs that aggressive behaviour is not only acceptable in relationships with other people but also, under certain conditions, desirable and admired (e.g. criminal subcultures). The formation of cognitive scripts regarding the acceptability of the use of aggression is associated with low emotional reactivity, low levels of capacity for empathy. This type of aggression is focused on achieving specific goals and benefits that are important from the point of view of the aggressor and is habitual and planned in nature. The third pattern of aggressive behaviour is immanent-sadistic aggression, the use of which brings emotional satisfaction to the individual, satisfies the need for stimulation, and leads to an increase in self-esteem.

The present chapter focuses, among other things, on the search for an answer as to whether, and if so to what extent, an individual's beliefs, norms, and values may be relevant to the readiness for aggression manifested in relation with other people. The research adopted a socio-normative-cognitive approach to the issue of aggression and violence. Other theoretical models explaining the emergence of aggressive behaviour focus on the description of social information processing and its role in the emergence of aggressive behaviour tendencies (Crick & Dodge, 1996). Anderson and Bushman's (2002) conceptualisation focuses on analysing how these processes become automatic over time. The General Aggression Model (GAM – General Aggression Model) (Anderson & Bushman, 2002) is based on the idea that habitual activation of aggression-related knowledge structures (i.e. scripts) shapes how an individual interprets and reacts to others in social situations.

Social-cognitive models of aggression evolved from early social learning theories and developed the idea that aggressive behavioural tendencies

emerge from the development and activation of cognitive scripts associated with aggression. More generally, scripts are the product of learning through observation and experience in social environments and are stored in a person's long-term memory. They can be activated in interpersonal situations when incoming impulses are interpreted as threatening and the person considers that aggressive behaviour will be acceptable. From a social-cognitive perspective, aggressive scripts develop because of learning and form the basis of beliefs that the use of aggressive strategies is an effective way to achieve goals that are important to the person.

Beliefs about the approval of violence are analysed in the context of acceptable or unacceptable behaviour/attitudes of an individual in specific circumstances. The socio-moral approval of aggression expresses the moral evaluation of a particular behaviour in relation to the prevailing standards in a given culture and normative patterns: legal, social, and moral (Ramirez, 1991). It refers to those beliefs, norms, and values held by an individual according to which it is permissible to inflict mental and physical suffering on another, to destroy, to kill, and to torture. Moral norms and beliefs can operate and apply to an individual, a group, a given community or culture. The approval of these values determines the extent to which certain violent behaviours can be accepted or condemned on both micro and macro scales. The social context in which different forms of aggressive behaviour take place is also important; in some circumstances, aggressive behaviour may be accepted, while in other situations, the same behaviour does not find social approval (Malak & Frączek, 1986). Research shows, among other things, that aggressive behaviour is more likely to be justified in social evaluation in situations where there is an altruistic rather than an egoistic motive (Lagerspetz & Westman, 1980), as well as in circumstances involving self-defence against an attacker or because of retaliation for a previously suffered harm (Feshbach, 1979; Frączek, 1977). Cross-cultural studies have found that drastic forms of behaviour such as torture or murder are the least socially acceptable (Frączek, 1985; Lagerspetz & Westman, 1980). In European culture, verbal aggression is more often accepted than physical aggression in the sphere of social contact. Acceptance of different forms of aggressive behaviour is also gender-dependent – women approve of aggression resulting from emotional arousal to a greater extent than men (Lagerspetz & Westman, 1980; Burton et al., 2007), while men are more likely to justify the use of violence in relationships with others as retaliation for an attack or insult (Vagos et al., 2021).

This chapter attempts to establish whether the socio-moral approval of interpersonal aggression is related to war anxiety and persistent thinking about war. This issue is particularly topical in view of the war in Ukraine, which has been going on for two years and whose consequences Poland, as a neighbouring country, experiences directly. In a more global context,

the ongoing conflict in the Gaza Strip is also relevant. Numerous negative mental health consequences of experiencing wars, terrorist acts or natural disasters have been identified, including anxiety disorders, acute stress reactions, depressive episodes, cognitive disorders, personality changes or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among veterans and refugees. The potential negative effects of wars do affect not only those directly involved in war conflicts but also wider groups exposed to continuous war information. This exposure can contribute to psychopathology, mental health problems, psychosocial dysfunction, self-harm, and other mental health problems (Rozanov et al., 2019). Overexposure to information from various media sources may increase the intensity of anxiety. Significant exposure to news about the extent of morbidity and mortality due to COVID-19 infection has been cited as one potential cause of increased fear of a coronavirus pandemic (Florek et al., 2021). Research suggests that dysfunctional situational anxiety and associated persistent negative thoughts related to war may be negative indicators of psychological functioning during a crisis (Surzykiewicz et al., 2022). Dysfunctional anxiety is a process representing a physiological response resulting from non-specific feelings of psychological tension and insecurity, accompanied by stimulation of autonomic nervous system activity and a range of psychosomatic symptoms (Hamm, 2020). Persistent thinking is related to passively maintaining attention on experiencing negative emotions (Langlois et al., 2000). Although appropriate levels of anxiety are beneficial to the individual, exaggerated and uncontrolled forms of anxiety cause maladaptation. During the COVID-19 pandemic, anxiety and persistent thinking were shown to be strongly associated with negative religious coping, alcohol and drug abuse, feelings of extreme hopelessness, increased generalised anxiety, suicidal thoughts, increased depression, malaise, and psychiatric disorders (Skalski et al., 2020). It can be assumed that anxiety and persistent thinking may indicate the psychological state in the face of experiencing directly or indirectly the effects of war (Surzykiewicz et al., 2022).

Although there are studies indicating links between aggression and anxiety (Neumann et al., 2010), no attempt has been made so far to verify whether the socio-moral acceptance of interpersonal aggression can be associated with negative war-related feelings of anxiety and persistent thoughts especially in the current geopolitical situation, such as the war in Ukraine. Attention should be given to young adult, as those in this stage of development represent a particularly vulnerable population in relation to mental health – symptoms such as anxiety and depression typically appear before the age of 24 (Kessler et al., 2007; Patten et al., 2017). Individuals at this stage experience challenges and changes in education, living arrangements, and relationships (Arnett, 2000).

## Research Strategy

The aim of the study was to establish the relationship between socio-moral approval of aggression and war anxiety and persistent thinking about war in young adults. The research questions were as follows:

- What is the level of socio-moral approval of the six forms of aggression in different social circumstances in the opinions of young adults? Does gender and place of study (Lubelskie and Mazowieckie voivodeships) differentiate significantly statistically the intensity of socio-moral approval of interpersonal aggression, and if so, what are the differences?
- What is the extent of war anxiety and persistent thinking about war among young adults? Does gender and place of study (Mazowieckie and Lubelskie voivodeships) statistically significantly differentiate war anxiety and persistent thinking about war among young adults, and if so, how?
- Is there a relationship between socio-moral approval of aggression and war anxiety and persistent thinking about war, and if so, how?

A total of 389 people participated in the study, of which 55.50% were women ( $N = 216$ ), and 45.50% were men ( $N = 173$ ). The mean age was 21.50 years, with a standard deviation of 4.14. Among the respondents, the largest group lived in the countryside (35.48%,  $N = 138$ ), followed by those living in a city of up to 500,000 inhabitants (20.57%,  $N = 80$ ) and a city of 20,000 to 99,999 inhabitants (19.02%,  $N = 74$ ). The least numerous groups were respondents living in a city of 100,000 to 499,999 inhabitants (9.77%,  $N = 38$ ) and a city of up to 19,999 inhabitants (15.17%,  $N = 59$ ). Respondents studied in the Lubelskie (52.70%,  $N = 205$ ) and Mazowieckie (47.30%,  $N = 184$ ) Voivodeships.

*The Interpersonal Aggression Socio-Moral Approval Inventory (IAS-MAI, Authors: Frączek, Dominiak-Kochanek & Kulawska)* was used to measure socio-moral approval of interpersonal aggression. In the version of the inventory used, six forms of aggression are assessed (expressing irony, expression of rage, using threats, hitting someone, use of torture, and killing the perpetrator) that can occur in six possible circumstances (in self-defence, in defence of someone, lack of agreement, situation of anger, property protection, and as a punishment). Each form of behaviour is assessed by the subject about the distinguished circumstances, that is, we ask to what extent it is justified and acceptable to behave aggressively (six categories) in different social situations (six types of circumstances). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.77 for the entire scale, and for the individual subscales: approval of irony – 0.84, approval of threatening – 0.82, approval of torturing – 0.92, approval of hitting – 0.78, approval of rage – 0.89, and approval of killing – 0.82.

The second questionnaire was the *War Anxiety Scale* (WAS) by Surzykiewicz et al. (2022). The scale was constructed to assess war anxiety and consisted of seven statements describing the most common symptoms of anxiety disorders according to DSM-5 (dizziness, sleep problems, anxiety, lack of appetite, nausea, fatigue, and dyspnoea). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the scale was 0.90.

The third instrument was the *Persistent thinking about war* (WPTS) scale by Surzykiewicz et al. (2022). The scale was constructed to measure negative persistent thinking about war and contains seven statements relating to engagement in thought operations about war in the past two weeks. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the scale was 0.93.

## Results

It was found that 44.5% of the sample had a low approval of interpersonal aggression, and 35% of the subjects were classified as having a medium level of approval, while 20.5% of the subjects showed a high level of approval of aggression in social relationships.

Answering the first research question regarding the level of socio-moral approval of interpersonal aggression among young adults, it was found that males scored higher on global approval of aggression ( $M = 115.05$ ;  $SD = 22.34$ ) than females ( $M = 106.96$ ;  $SD = 19.36$ ) and this difference was statistically significant ( $F(1,387) = 14.63$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). The most acceptable form of aggression among both women and men was expressing irony, while the least acceptable form in both groups was the use of torture. An interesting trend was observed – regarding expressing irony, men scored higher ( $M = 12.53$ ;  $SD = 3.06$ ) than women ( $M = 12.00$ ;  $SD = 2.74$ ). On the other hand, regarding another form of aggressive behaviour, which involves the expression of negative emotions such as the expression of rage, no differences were observed between men and women. In the other forms of manifestation of aggressive behaviour in social relationships (using threats, hitting someone, use of torture, and killing the perpetrator), men were more likely to approve of aggression than women.

In the next step, the six forms of approval of aggressive behaviour were divided into two categories: mild forms of aggression (expressing irony, expressing rage, and using threats) and extreme forms of aggression (hitting someone, using torture, and killing the perpetrator). Based on the test of differences between means (t-test), it was found that males were more accepting than females of both mild forms of aggression ( $t(389) = -2.07$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) and extreme forms of aggression ( $t(389) = -5.20$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ).

Regarding young adults' approval of the circumstances in which aggressive behaviour occurs, it was possible to establish an order of justification: self-defence came first, followed by defending someone, protecting someone

else's property, then aggressive behaviour was justified in situations of punishment for the offence, in situations of anger and in lack of agreement. Based on the results of the t-test, it was concluded that men are significantly more likely than women to approve of aggressive behaviour in these six circumstances.

It was also shown that the respondents' place of study (Lubelskie and Mazowieckie Voivodeships) was a factor significantly differentiating socio-moral approval of interpersonal aggression in the global dimension ( $t(387) = 2.89; p < 0.01$ ). Young adults studying in the Lubelskie Voivodeship obtained higher mean scores on interpersonal aggression approval ( $M = 113.46, SD = 22.85$ ) than respondents studying in the Mazowieckie Voivodeship ( $M = 107.33, SD = 18.51$ ). The results showed significant differences between the two study groups in the approval of the use of threats ( $t(387) = 2.07; p < 0.05$ ), hitting someone ( $t(387) = 2.58; p < 0.01$ ) and the use of torture ( $t(387) = 4.09; p < 0.001$ ). In all three forms, young adults studying in the Lubelskie Voivodeship obtained significantly higher mean scores than those studying in the Mazowieckie Voivodeship.

To answer the second research question, the mean values for WAS and WPTS were analysed. The strongest symptom of dysfunctional anxiety among the respondents was feeling anxious when thinking about war, while the strongest symptom of negative persistent thinking was involuntary thinking about war. The largest group comprised respondents presenting low levels of fear of war (79.18%) and persistent thinking about war (86.63%). However, in the study group, every fifth respondent indicated symptoms of fear of war of average or high intensity. It was analysed whether gender and respondents' place of study (Lubelskie and Mazowieckie Voivodeships) were differentiating factors for war anxiety and persistent thinking about war among the respondents. Women presented higher intensities of war anxiety ( $t(389) = 5.61; p < 0.001$ ) and persistent thinking about war ( $t(389) = 2.82; p < 0.01$ ) than men. The place of study was a differentiating factor only in the case of persistent thinking about war ( $t(389) = -3.22; p < 0.001$ ). Respondents studying in the Mazowieckie Voivodeship presented significantly higher mean scores in this variable than those from the Lubelskie Voivodeship.

Correlations were analysed between the variables: socio-moral approval of interpersonal aggression (six forms of aggression and the total score), war anxiety, and persistent thinking about war. A strong positive correlation was found between war anxiety and persistent thoughts about war ( $p < 0.01, r = 0.80$ ). In contrast, no correlational relationships were noted between the forms of socio-moral approval of interpersonal aggression: expressing irony, using threats and torture, expressing rage, killing the perpetrator, and war anxiety and persistent thinking about war. However, there was a negative relationship between socio-moral approval of hitting another person as a form of aggression and war anxiety ( $p < 0.01; r = -0.14$ ) and persistent



thinking about war ( $p < 0.05$ ;  $r = -0.13$ ). An increase in the approval of hitting someone was accompanied by a decrease in the manifestation of war anxiety and related persistent thoughts. It was analysed whether there were correlations between the approval of interpersonal aggression in different circumstances (in self-defence, in defence of someone, in a situation of lack of agreement, in a situation of anger, in protection of property, and as punishment for the offence) and war anxiety and persistent thoughts about war. It was found that there was a negative correlation between the approval of interpersonal aggression for protecting property and both war anxiety and persistent thinking about war ( $p < 0.05$ ;  $r = -0.13$ ).

Cluster analysis using the  $k$ -means method was applied to determine if distinct profiles could be identified among young adults regarding war anxiety, persistent thoughts about war, and approval of mild and extreme forms of aggression. The analysis resulted in the identification of two profiles (clusters) differing in terms of the intensity of fear of war and persistent thoughts related to it, as well as approval of mild and extreme forms of interpersonal aggression were distinguished (Figure 21.1).

Cluster number 1 (grey line in Figure 21.1) consists of 109 students (28% of respondents). We can describe these students as a group with a 'peace' attitude. They scored significantly higher mean scores for war anxiety and persistent thinking about war, with lower mean scores for approval of both forms of aggression – 'mild' and 'extreme'. Compared to the respondents forming cluster 2 (the 'aggressive' group), these students experienced

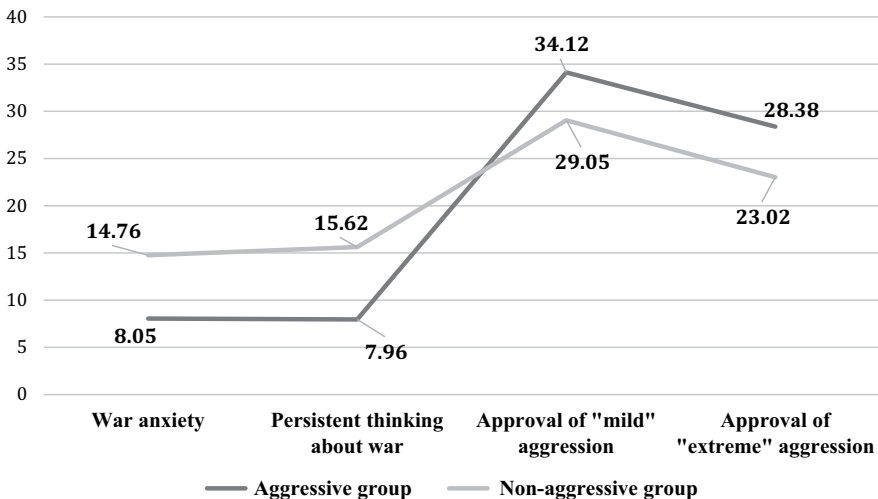


FIGURE 21.1 Cluster analysis using the  $k$ -means method for the variables: fear of war, thinking about war, approval of mild aggression, and approval of extreme aggression ( $N = 389$ ).

negative somatic symptoms such as sleep problems, loss of appetite, fatigue, or shortness of breath to a significantly higher extent because of war anxiety. Respondents in this group are also more likely to involuntarily think about the war than respondents representing cluster 2, and these thoughts can take up all their attention and make it impossible to focus on other matters. Cluster 2 (black line on the graph) includes 280 students (72% of the respondents), who are characterised by low levels of anxiety and thinking about war, accompanied by a high approval of aggression in mild and extreme forms in relation with other people. The group of students belonging to this cluster can be described as 'aggressive'. There are statistically significant differences between the students classified into the two groups in terms of fear of war ( $F(1,387) = 233.4; p < 0.001$ ), thinking about war ( $F(1,387) = 262.6; p < 0.001$ ), approval of 'mild' aggression ( $F(1,387) = 57.00; p < 0.001$ ) and approval of 'extreme' aggression ( $F(1,387) = 60.58; p < 0.001$ ).

The final step in analysing the results of the study was to determine whether predictors for the approval of interpersonal aggression could be observed in the range of variables analysed. In the linear regression, two explanatory variables (predictors) were entered into the model: gender and respondents' place of study. The explained variable in the model was the endorsement of 'extreme' aggression. The strongest predictor of approval of 'extreme' aggression was the gender ( $\beta = -0.27; p < 0.001$ ). Men approved of aggression in its extreme forms (hitting someone, killing the perpetrator, and use of torture) to a higher degree than women. Also the place of study of the subjects proved to be a significant predictor ( $\beta = -0.16; p < 0.001$ ). The regression model was a good fit to the data and predicted the endorsement of extreme aggression based on subjects' gender and place of study ( $F(2,386) = 19.95; p < 0.001$ ). Based on the adjusted  $R^2$  coefficient, the constructed model explains 9 per cent of the variance in the explained variable, that is, 'extreme' aggression.

## Summary

The research aimed to describe the socio-moral approval of interpersonal aggression in its various forms and circumstances, to verify the extent of war anxiety and persistent thinking about war, and to establish the relationship between these variables. It also aimed to determine whether gender and place of study were differential factors in the severity of the variables in question.

In general, men are more accepting of the use of different forms of aggression in social relationships than women, as well as more likely to justify engaging in aggressive behaviour in different circumstances. This finding is in line with the results of other empirical studies and is well supported also in meta-analyses and cross-cultural studies showing that men are more often perpetrators of physical aggression than women (Archer & McDaniel, 1995;

Krahe, 2005; Morton & Rafto, 2006; Zastępowski & Grabowska, 2010; Wojciszke, 2011). This result confirms previous empirical reports in Poland. In a study by Konopka and Frączek (2013), individuals identifying with the psychological male gender showed higher levels of habitual-cognitive and personality-immanent mechanisms of aggression than people identifying with the female gender. However, the same study highlighted that women were more likely to identify with an emotional-impulsive mechanism of aggression than men.

In our study, there were no differences between women and men regarding the approval of aggression in the form associated with the emotional response of expressing rage. It may be that over the last 10 years, there have been changes in the perceptions of gendered properties of social behaviour among Generation Z. In the traditional view, aggressive behaviour in the form of physical attack is part of the male gender role, while aggressive behaviour associated with emotional response, relational, and verbal aggression is more often attributed to women. Milder forms of aggression were found to be more often accepted, by both men and women, than extreme forms, which include hitting, killing the perpetrator, or torture. Respondents were significantly more likely to justify aggression in situations of self-defence and defending someone or someone else's property than in circumstances of lack of agreement or when feeling angry.

Women showed higher levels of war anxiety and war thinking than men. While we do not have research to support this conclusion in the aspect of war, empirical reports of gender differences regarding COVID-19 anxiety are not consistent. Some studies indicate a relationship between gender and anxiety (Wang et al., 2020), while others do not (Huang & Zhao, 2020).

In addition, young adults from the Lublin Voivodeship manifested a higher endorsement of interpersonal aggression with lower levels of anxiety symptoms and persistent war-related thoughts than those from the Mazowieckie Voivodeship. This finding does not correspond with the results of Surzykiewicz et al. (2022), who observed no territorial differences in their study on anxiety and negative feelings related to war. It is possible that the above result is influenced by the proximity of the Lublin Voivodeship to Ukraine and the fact that the study was conducted one week after the Hamas attack on Israel, which may have induced a higher tendency to approve of aggression, especially for students from the Lubelskie Voivodeship. One possible explanation for the higher approval of aggression in the Lubelskie Voivodeship may be the readiness of young adults for self-defence in the face of a direct threat. In contrast, respondents from the Mazowieckie Voivodeship may feel a higher level of fear of war due to the threat to the national capital of a possible attack from an aggressor. Due to the strong link between persistent thoughts related to war and symptoms of war anxiety, one in five students is at risk of experiencing negative effects on their physical and/or mental health.

Importantly, it is women who should be particularly supported, as they are more likely than men to experience adverse emotional states related to armed conflict. Furthermore, the analyses conducted lead to the conclusion that respondents who accept being hit by another person, particularly when an individual's personal property is at risk, are less likely to experience war-related anxiety or persistent thoughts about war.

Approximately 72% of young adults (university students) exhibit an aggressive profile in social functioning. This suggests that due to their upbringing and socialisation in the given environment, norms conducive to building peaceful attitudes towards others and forming social relations without violence have not been internalised. Aggression and violence towards others are understood as an 'error' of socialisation and upbringing leading to the formation of socially and normatively undesirable behaviour (Frączek, 1993). In the process of shaping so-called 'negative socialisation', behavioural regulation mechanisms are disturbed, which can lead to the formation of antisocial, aggressive behaviour patterns (Malak & Frączek, 1986). It is particularly concerning that such a significant percentage of the students surveyed show approval of interpersonal aggression, that is, in the process of upbringing in the family and school education, so-called cognitive scripts have been formed, which can pave the way for aggressive behaviour towards other people in adulthood.

Summarising, it was found that there were no significant correlations between approval of interpersonal aggression and war anxiety and persistent thinking about war in the young adults surveyed. Only in the context of property protection was a weak negative correlation observed between approval of interpersonal aggression and fear of war and persistent thinking about war. It is important to emphasise that the escalation of anxiety and persistent thinking is not stable and depends on various factors. The magnitude of these phenomena should be assessed at different times and under different circumstances. In the study by Surzykiewicz et al. (2022), which was conducted within one month of the start of the war in Ukraine, significantly higher scores of war anxiety and persistent thinking about war were obtained compared to the results in this study in 2023.

The study results allow several implications to be formulated for practice, especially regarding Education for Peace. In the process of upbringing, from the earliest years of life, the importance of fostering attitudes of empathy, compassion, and cooperation as a basis for peaceful coexistence should be emphasised. It is necessary to implement intervention programmes aimed at developing these attitudes from early childhood to late adulthood. Young adults who are particularly vulnerable and exposed to the negative effects of war anxiety should be supported in maintaining their mental and physical well-being. It seems important to rethink the country's information policy in the context of promoting aggressive patterns in the media. There is a need to

regularly organise reports on war conflicts and to describe the reality in all its aspects in a credible way. This is more so because the modern world does not appear to be safe, peaceful, and predictable, which can generate maladaptive emotional states in the form of increased fear of war.

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# 22

## THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN SHAPING PEACEFUL ATTITUDES

*Mariola Żelazkowska and Magdalena Żelazkowska*

### Introduction

Media can successfully be [...] utilized for pro-social activities – and it is not solely about so-called social advertising [...]. It is also about the fact that media – especially new ones – become a tool for presenting one's arguments, exchanging information, and integrating individuals around common needs and interests. The impact on the attitudes of recipients thus becomes increasingly sophisticated and simultaneously perilous.

*(Pucek & Bierówka 2011, 10)*

The contemporary world, replete with modern technologies and increasingly complex means of communication, presents both challenges and numerous opportunities. In this regard, social media, which have become an integral part of life, can significantly influence our social, political, and cultural attitudes. However, the potential of these platforms is not always consciously and fully harnessed for shaping peaceful attitudes and building a more understanding, accepting, and tranquil society. Social media profoundly influence lifestyle, human awareness, and personality development. In the context of promoting peace and tolerance, they play a diverse, intricate role, serving as platforms for education, dialogue, and opinions. In the era of global digitization, they can become, on the one hand, a tool for cultivating peaceful attitudes, promoting the values of peace and tolerance on both an individual and a societal level. On the other hand, they pose challenges and threats associated with conflicts arising from imprudent and excessive use (Jankowska 2019).



Social media fulfil various functions. The most crucial is its ability to integrate people from different environments and cultures. They enable communication and the exchange of thoughts between individuals from various parts of the world, thereby creating a communication network that provides opportunities for building the foundations of peaceful attitudes, such as mutual understanding and respect. Another important aspect pertains to the educational value of social media. They convey information, promote the pursuit of peace and intercultural dialogue, and shape attitudes of tolerance and understanding, simultaneously influencing broad social awareness (Marody, 2014). Through educational projects or community campaigns conducted on platforms like Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram, social media have the ability to reach a significant group of people. Hence, peace organizations and activists use these platforms to organize peaceful protests, solidarity actions, and rapid social mobilization. Through them, interested parties can express their protest against violence and wars, significantly contributing to building public awareness for peace. In addition to the positive aspects, social media also entail certain threats. They are places where hostility, misinformation, or rebellious views can spread, often causing conflicts and tensions.

The aim of this text is to deepen the understanding of the significance of social media in shaping peaceful attitudes. Currently, information and various types of content reach users at an extraordinarily rapid pace, influencing their perception of reality, beliefs, and actions. The authors analyze the impact of social media on the attitudes of recipients and examine how they can serve social, legal education, and peace promotion.

### **Social media as tools for social communication**

Since their inception, social media have undergone significant transformations, becoming an integral part of everyday life and broad social communication. They enable individuals, interested in connecting remotely, the expression of opinions, ideas, building relationships, and sharing achievements, thoughts, or memories. Presently, their role extends well beyond the private sphere. Social media have proven to be a significant tool for social communication, shaping attitudes and beliefs. Initially, they were simple platforms such as Friendster or MySpace, allowing for the creation of personal profiles and establishing contacts (Goban-Klas, 2004). Over the years, they evolved into advanced and versatile tools like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and TikTok, offering various functions such as content sharing, live video streaming, and targeted advertising. The latest advancements focus primarily on integration with mobile technologies, content personalization, and mutual interaction. Statistics on social media usage unequivocally demonstrate their growing popularity worldwide, with the

number of users currently surpassing half of the global population (Digital Report, 2022).

Contemporary social media serve various functions, undoubtedly vying for the status of an information medium. They convey news, updates, and user perspectives. Through social media, people learn about events worldwide and follow public life. However, it is crucial to selectively interpret the information selectively, as it does not always reflect reality objectively. Moreover, social media shape social opinions, influence beliefs, and allow for a diverse perspective on reality. Nevertheless, these abilities can lead to societal polarization, complicating dialogue, as users' views and knowledge, supported by online information, may be limited concerning specific details.

Social media also possess unique capabilities for promoting social engagement (Goban-Klas, 2005). They facilitate expressing opinions, signing petitions, organizing protests, and various fundraisers for charitable purposes. This tool, in a way, mobilizes and impacts society as a whole, influencing emotions and behaviours. Information appearing in comments can positively or negatively affect the user's mental state. Negative influences may induce anxiety, depression, low self-worth, and even isolation, while potentially weakening the capacity for empathy and understanding – essential aspects for promoting peaceful attitudes (Kowalska, Kalinowski & Bojakowska, 2013). Users themselves should consciously control the consumption of the information they encounter.

In conclusion, social media have become an inseparable element of daily communication and culture, playing a significant role in shaping social opinions and behaviours. In the context of social communication, they not only facilitate the exchange of information and opinions but also influence private and public interactions among users. A conscious understanding of these activities is essential for the effective use of social media in various areas, from education and marketing to social functioning.

### **Social media against social, political, and legal attitudes**

Social media is a significant tool shaping the perception of the world and the attitudes of those engaged. In today's times, many users express their beliefs, participate in public debates, and support various initiatives through various platforms.

One key aspect of social media's impact on views is that these platforms often deliver content based on algorithms. This means that users may be inundated with information that aligns with their beliefs or evokes strong emotions. The role of these algorithms is to keep users on the platform for as long as possible, reinforcing their beliefs and causing rejection of others (Batorski, 2015). Social media, to achieve their own goals, often create a distorted or altered reality (Juszczak, 2000). "It exerts influence, shaping

public opinions. It can be argued that their omnipresence in daily life somewhat shapes it” (Kosmalska, 2019, 301).

Another characteristic of social media is the potential for societal polarization by strengthening divisions and creating so-called information bubbles. Users bombarded with content confirming their beliefs often close themselves off to other perspectives. Research shows that this can lead to misinformation and hinder dialogue between different societal groups (Szpyt-Wiktorowska 2018).

The phenomenon of societal polarization, considered from a structural-functional perspective, is treated as the possibility of a deviation (dysfunction) of the structural system, i.e., one that the socialization mechanisms of the social system cannot straightforwardly eliminate. [...] it is a situation where value patterns are not shared by the majority of society. The result [...] is the transition of the social system from a state of equilibrium to a state of imbalance.

*(Ruszkowski, Przystalski & Maranowski, 2020, 7)*

An important aspect of social media is their contribution to mobilization and social engagement, from protests and petitions to raising awareness in various areas. Through these tools, users support social and political actions, contribute to the creation or promotion of peaceful projects, and serve as a source of education and information on environmental threats, human rights, or social inequalities. This tool contributes to greater civic, legal, and political awareness, as well as strengthening a sense of community and solidarity, shaping civic attitudes (Pyżalski, 2012). The role of social media in shaping attitudes is complex and diverse. Platforms can be used to create and reinforce not only understanding and dialogue but also conflicts and misinformation. It is crucial to use social media consciously, critically analyze, and create content in a positive and responsible manner.

The cyber space in which a significant portion of society navigates today enables the acquisition of large amounts of information, which can also be helpful in education, such as increasing legal awareness. It is a significant tool in the realization and fight for human rights (Michalska 2022). “Undoubtedly, access to social media allows individuals to exercise their fundamental, constitutionally granted rights, such as freedom of speech and thought. In contemporary times, the mere use of social media is recognized as a human right, as confirmed by numerous opinions of international institutions, such as the United Nations, which acknowledged that “access to the Internet is a fundamental and inalienable human right” (Michalska, 2022, 31).

However, in addition to the positive characteristics that social media possess in the legal aspect, they also have their dark sides. The use of social media has become one of the main causes of addiction among the youngest

and older age groups. Engaging with media exposes users to numerous manipulations by other individuals, groups, or businesses, through strong influence on the recipient.

The development of social media in today's world can also be seen as one of the forms of social pathologies, influencing the perception of the world, decisions made, or relationships formed with others. Furthermore, in addition to the potential for realizing human rights provided by social media, they can also lead to their violation. The source of human rights itself, namely, the inherent, inalienable, supernatural dignity granted to individuals, is particularly susceptible to reprehensible actions of users. Communication, education, or the development of moral and social attitudes, facilitated by social media, may be jeopardized when they begin to disrupt and negatively impact the foundation of all values – dignity. Increasingly, individuals, through the significant and not always favourable influence of social media, forget about its respect and protection.

In conclusion, social media has a tremendous impact on the attitudes of every individual. They allow people, on the one hand, to express opinions, acquire, and share information, or organize social campaigns. On the other hand, they are a place for the spread of misinformation and reinforcement of polarizing opinions. Therefore, it is essential for social media users to use them consciously and critically.

### **Medial education in the context of fostering peaceful attitudes**

In the era of flourishing social media and digital communication platforms, media education becomes crucial. It is a process aimed at shaping critical thinking, understanding media content, and building awareness of safe, valuable media consumption, especially in the context of promoting peace (Drzewiecki, 2010). Media education can also aid in comprehending the cultural diversity present in the media, both socially and politically, reducing stereotypes and prejudices. This may lead to greater acceptance of existing differences and the cultivation of attitudes such as sincerity, sensitivity, openness, and tolerance (Drożdż, 2018).

In the context of social media, the role of media education in developing critical thinking about presented content is significant, particularly when it comes to promoting peaceful attitudes and countering hate speech and misinformation. It allows a better understanding of the mechanisms of social media functioning, including the ways opinions and social attitudes are shaped, as well as the recognition of false, often manipulative information, in terms of making informed, thoughtful decisions. Furthermore, in the world of social media where conflicts can easily escalate, media education should develop factual, creative communication and the ability to engage in dialogue, teaching people to listen to others, discuss challenging topics, and seek

common solutions. All these skills should contribute to the peaceful resolution of conflicts. Such education can also encourage social activism. Through social media, people can organize social actions, fundraisers, or peace campaigns.

In a world where social media play a significant role in shaping our beliefs and attitudes, media education becomes an indispensable tool in building a more peaceful society. It supports the necessity of conflict resolution, acceptance of diversity, and building dialogue between people with different perspectives and can change the world for the better, making it more tolerant, open, and conflict-free. Regarding the formation of peaceful attitudes, media education, on the one hand, raises awareness about the role of social media in conflict creation, and, on the other, helps in conflict resolution. As part of educational activities promoting peaceful attitudes, many schools and non-profit organizations implement teaching programs that integrate media education with peace studies. Students learn, among other things, how to recognize and respond to hate speech on social media and understand that these platforms can be effective tools in emphasizing tolerance and respect (Nowicka, 2021).

Currently, social media are becoming platforms for innovative and interesting community projects contributing to the formation of peaceful attitudes in society, tolerance, and mutual understanding. Trying to reach a broad audience, these initiatives aim to bring about positive social changes (Digital Report, 2023). Examples include the #HeForShe campaign to fight gender inequalities and promote equality and the #BlackLivesMatter movement drawing attention to issues of racism and racial inequality. Activists and supporters of these movements use social media to organize protests, educate, and promote peaceful actions. The #TrashTag Challenge is a community project that uses social media to engage people in cleaning the natural environment, inspiring others to act for the common good. Another project “PeaceTube”, involves creating and sharing video content on platforms like YouTube and Facebook, presenting stories of people from different cultures and countries discussing their experiences with conflicts and reconciliation. The goal of this project is to promote dialogue and integrate different communities. The “Global Voices” initiative is another example, bringing together an international network of bloggers and activists who use social media to address issues in local communities. This platform addresses the topics of cultural diversity and respect for human rights. The last two initiatives have a significant impact on shaping social awareness and promoting peaceful attitudes, contributing significantly to understanding and empathy among people from different parts of the world.

These examples confirm that social media can be a significant tool for promoting peace, equality, and social change (Nçcek, 2016). They give a voice and initiative to communities, allowing mobilization and contributing

to building a more understanding and accepting society. The ability of community projects to reach a wide audience significantly influences public attitudes and opinions. It is an effective tool in building a more united and peaceful world, developing empathy, understanding people from different backgrounds, and shaping peaceful attitudes.

On balance, media education in the context of shaping peaceful attitudes plays a crucial role in today's society. Developing critical thinking skills regarding content on social media is essential for creating a more aware and tolerant world. Practical educational activities, both at the local and at international levels, have the potential to significantly contribute to promoting a culture of peace and mutual understanding. In the era of continuous technological progress and a changing media landscape, adapting and innovating media education is necessary to meet challenges and effectively utilize all the possibilities of social media.

### Summary

A breakthrough in social communication, offering significant possibilities in human interactions and shaping social attitudes, is the intensive development of social media, which brings both benefits and risks. Social media serve as a tool that can promote empathy and cooperation and build interpersonal connections. They are used for educational, social, and political purposes, contributing to the development of society. In the context of these positive arguments, it is essential to remember the challenges and risks associated with social media. For many people, they become a source of addiction, impacting mental health, contributing to the spread of misinformation and manipulation, and violating users' privacy.

Social media are also a tool that can be used to build peaceful attitudes and a society based on empathy and understanding. However, to achieve this, education in this area is necessary, along with conscious efforts to promote positive social values in the online space. These values can change the world for the better and shape a more understanding, accepting, and peaceful society. Social media have the ability to connect people, promote intercultural dialogue, and educate on a broad scale. Social projects can be used to spread ideas of peace and tolerance, emphasizing their significance in building understanding and empathy among global communities. However, alongside the positive aspects, social media also carry risks associated with misinformation, opinion polarization, hate speech, and cyber violence. These negative trends can undermine efforts to promote peace and harmony, creating obstacles to building a more understanding and tolerant society. Addressing these challenges requires a coordinated approach ensured by media education.

In conclusion, social media represent a potent instrument capable of fostering both peace and understanding, as well as exacerbating conflicts and

animosity. The key to harnessing their potential for the common good is the conscious and critical use of social media by users and concerted efforts towards media education, equipping people with the skills necessary to recognize and counteract negative content. In this way, social media can motivate positive social changes and contribute to building a more peaceful and understanding world.

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# 23

## UPBRINGING FOR PEACE IN EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

*Agnieszka Klimska and Kathrin Maier*

### **Introduction**

The threats to civilization that we are currently facing make us aware of the need to modify educational programs and guidelines for sustainable development and security. Creating educational strategies in response to current problems, threats, and related challenges is considered a priority task facing various sciences, including pedagogy and philosophy. The emphasis is on the need to shape a person who will not be indifferent to global problems, is responsible, and is aware of the dangers of civilization. Education is one of the more effective tools for implementing the objectives and realization of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) adopted in the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, including goal 16 on peace issues. The first sentence of the document's preamble states: "This Agenda is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. It also seeks to strengthen universal peace in larger freedom" (Web. 01). The category of peace, understood as a value, a goal of common aspiration, and a condition for the existence of sustainable development resounds in the document. "We are determined to foster peaceful, just, and inclusive societies which are free from fear and violence. There can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development" (Web. 01). The rather strongly emphasized issue of striving for peacemaking is not currently reflected in Polish programs and strategies, neither political nor educational. Education for sustainable development promotes values for implementing peaceful and just solutions. While the category of security is included, the issues of peace both globally and locally are treated marginally, especially in educational practice.

### **The category of peace as determinant for sustainable development efforts**

The global idea of sustainable development expresses the need to pursue social and economic progress that is in harmony with the environment, considering the interests of both present and future generations. Many years of efforts to create the basis for the realization of sustainable development have, in many respects, given this idea a multidimensional character and made it the subject of interest of various scientific disciplines. Thus, numerous proposals for new solutions (including educational ones) have emerged in the form of concepts, strategies, or programs. These proposals advocate for the adoption of a direction of development that would reconcile the following planes: economic, social, environmental, and often additionally technical, legal, political, or axiological.

The idea of sustainable development is the idea of rebuilding a world in which the limits of Earth's system have been transcended by humanity. We have entered the Anthropocene era with a vision of a less secure and less just future (Rockström, Gupta, Qin et al., 2023). The result is the existence of "non-separate crises": there is an environmental crisis, a development crisis, an energy crisis, but there is one overall crisis – dictated by the misuse of natural resources, not considering the capabilities of ecosystems, but also the result of vested interests or human selfishness (Klimska, 2019). There is no longer any escape from such a reality. Instead, it must be recognized and dealt with, as called for in the late 1980s by the World Commission on Environment and Development (*Our Common Future*, 1987).

From a theoretical perspective, the idea of sustainable development has been developed so well that, starting with the guidelines of the Brundtland Report, the strategy of corrective actions has steadily expanded over time. Currently, the determinant of these actions is the 17 sustainable development goals, to which 193 UN member states have committed themselves. The global nature of the goals reflects the aspiration to eliminate poverty, ensure world peace, and ultimately realize the demand for a decent life for all people. The literature emphasizes the importance of implementing each of the goals. However, some opinions have arisen suggesting that priority should be given to goal 16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions). "While this goal mentions peace more explicitly, peace is essential to achieving the SDGs as a whole" (Takian & Rajaeieh, 2020, S23). The goal is specified as: "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels" (Web. 03). In defining the tasks to be accomplished under this goal, data was cited that illustrates the scale of the risks faced by children, among others. In 2019, more than one billion of them experienced violence. Half of the world's children are affected by violence each year, and 1 in 10 children is

a victim of sexual abuse before reaching adulthood (Caparini et al., 2017). One child dies every five minutes worldwide due to violence. Violence against children is also a phenomenon present in schools and in cyberspace. Children are victims of stigma and intimidation by their peers both in the school environment and online (Web. 02).

In addition, armed conflicts, which have escalated due to the war in Ukraine and in the Middle East between Israel and the Palestinian group Hamas, are a serious threat to peace. The Russian invasion of Ukraine has caused the civilian death toll to rise by more than 50% in 2022. There has been an unprecedented increase in civilian deaths in conflicts – the first since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda (The Sustainable Development Goals Report, 2023).

The category of peace in the literature has come to be defined in positive and negative terms (Brantmeier & Lin, 2008; Navarro-Castro & Nario-Galace, 2010). Figure 23.1 presents the understanding of peace in both approaches.

Navarro-Castro and Nario-Galace further propose an understanding of peace by moving through different levels of relationships, as ever-widening circles (Figure 23.2).

The beginning is the need to take care of bringing harmony to one's personal life through self-respect, hope, and love. Harmony with others, on the other hand, is provided by the next two circles – peace in relations with others, understood as respect for them, expressed through justice, tolerance, and cooperation; and intergroup, social peace through respect for others within one's own nation. The fourth circle is international peace expressing the need for respect for other countries and global relations based, as in the earlier circles, on tolerance, justice, and cooperation. The last circle encompasses the environment and signifies the need for concern for peace between people and nature. Taken together, these five circles can be considered a model of peaceful relations, in which the disruption of one circle causes negative consequences in the subsequent circles. Given the current situation in the world, it is difficult to disagree with its veracity (Ciesiołkiewicz, 2022).

In the face of the phenomena of inequality, injustice, violations of human rights, the demands of sustainable development proclaim the urgent need to restore the distant vision of peaceful and inclusive societies. However, peace is not merely the absence of violence. This category of peace can be considered in the sense of the absence of social unrest, security, and internal order. It is further linked to health (mental, physical, and spiritual) and quality of life. “Currently, and in the era of SDGs, peace is considered as a prerequisite of quality public health and a resilient health system” (Takian & Rajaeieh, 2020, S24). Thus, it is not only about promoting the values of peace, but first and foremost about responding to dangerous phenomena that limit freedom, take away a person's sense of security and even dignity. What is needed is

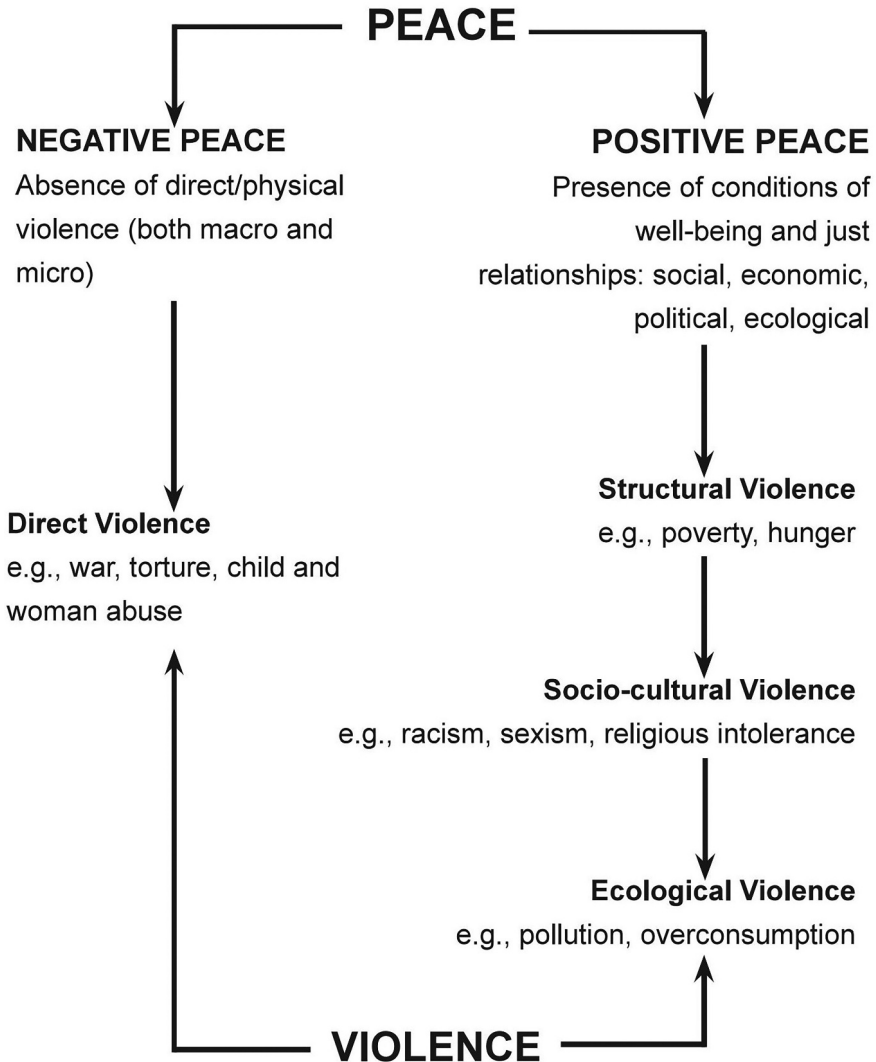


FIGURE 23.1 Defining Peace.

Source: Navarro-Castro & Nario-Galace, 2010, 19.

concrete action that expresses opposition to such threats as murder, violence against minors, human trafficking and sexual violence, and any others that prevent peace from occurring.

The category of peace is linked to the concept of security, which is nowadays considered one of the most important values. It is understood as a sense of certainty, security, absence of threats. In addition, security is shown in its

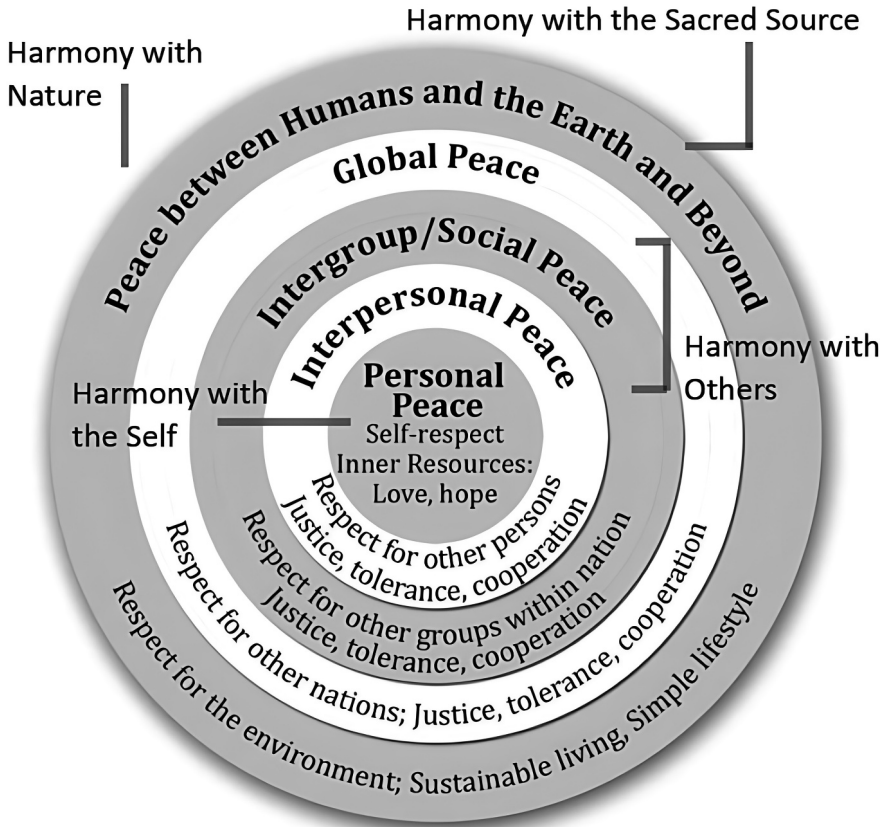


FIGURE 23.2 Levels of Peace.

Source: Navarro-Castro & Nario-Galace, 2010, 21.

broader, holistic sense, that is, considering the specifics of international relations. It then means more than a sense of freedom from threats and fear. Additionally, it is understood as the absence of political or economic pressures, the possibility of realizing one’s own development, maintaining or improving the quality of life, or the ability to survive in the face of existential threats (Klimska, 2021).

Peace in the broad sense (as in the Navarro-Castro and Nario-Galace proposal) and security are absolute conditions for development. Sustainable development in its assumptions implies the pursuit of peace and restoration of security. It treats both categories as a need and a value necessary to realize all the sustainable development goals and the introduction of international stability to ensure the development of the present and future generations.

## Education for peace in the context of sustainable development

Education for peace is a field of study in which education focuses on issues of countering all forms of violence. In practical terms, it seeks to create structures that build peace and sustain social justice and global equality (Baładynowicz, 2022; Wolińska & Büssing, 2023). It also means promoting peace skills, which include the ability to communicate, transform conflicts, manage personal conflicts, promote positive attitudes, and have dialogue (Web. 04).

The fundamental goal of education for peace is to disseminate the values that are key to creating and maintaining peace in society. Additionally, it aims to create awareness of the need to seek peaceful ways to overcome conflicts, which not only concern human relations but also include environmental issues within their scope.

Education for sustainable development accommodates the category of peace within which one considers, discusses, and teaches about ways to stop phenomena that significantly limit the establishment and maintenance of peace, to counteract any form of violence, etc. Education for peace developed and implemented according to the idea of sustainable development also focuses on issues of peace in the context of access to scarce natural resources. Education for peace, in this view, is closely linked to environmental protection and sustainable development. It is a direction that promotes the need to raise awareness of the symbiotic relationship between peace and sustainable development (Bajaj & Chiu, 2009). All armed conflicts are crimes not only against humanity but also against the natural environment. The loss of life is indisputable and arouses strong emotions in public opinion. However, information about the impact of warfare on nature, supported by data, is increasingly coming into the public consciousness. Referring to Russia's attack on Ukraine, Chojnicki, stressed: "This aggression is irreversible damage to the environment as well. We will feel the consequences of this aggression for decades to come" (Web. 05). As a result of military action, greenhouse gases are emitted into the atmosphere in the form of carbon dioxide or methane from damaged gas pipelines. "It is estimated that the total volume of greenhouse gas emissions caused by the Russian invasion in the first seven months of the war (February–September 2022) could amount to 98.1 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent in the minimum emissions scenario, 212.7 million tons in the moderate scenario and 326.9 million tons in the maximum emissions scenario" (Lipiński, 2022, 5). This confirms words once spoken by former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, "We must understand that a threat to some is a threat to all, and needs to be addressed accordingly" (Web. 06). This was a challenge to comprehensively combat threats to peace. There is no mention of local consequences for the socio-environment. "The wounds and scars of war will remain not only on the bodies and souls of people, but also on Nature" (Niedek, 2023, 195).

Bajaj and Chiu, recognizing the complexity and incredible speed of global change resulting in widening inequalities among rich and poor, environmental degradation, proposed that education for peace should be viewed and developed in an interdisciplinary way. This approach aims to insulate us from the predominant perception of this education as solely the prevention of violence and armed conflict (Bajaj & Chiu, 2009). The authors distinguished the co-disciplines of education for peace (Figure 23.3).

Peace education consists of several fields, developed by scholars and practitioners, whose concepts are not synonymous with peace education but constitute its “co-disciplines”. Among them are, for example, educational aspects of global security, social responsibility, environmental education, or human rights education. Peace education, when implemented multidimensionally, includes learning methods and processes that involve teaching critical thinking, tolerance, foresight, inquiry, critical thinking, and dialogue for greater equality and social justice. As such, it can be part of education for sustainable development. Combining education for sustainable development with education for peace is a goal that the United Nations has been pursuing for several decades. This is done by promoting values that are important for both the course of education for peace and education for sustainable development – values that are essential for educating for peace in today’s world of threats, fear, and uncertainty.



**FIGURE 23.3** Framework of peace education and its co-disciplines.

*Source:* Bajaj & Chiu, 2009, 444.

### **Building a knowledge society as a way to bring peace**

“It seems high time for the pedagogy of violence to be seriously opposed to education and education for peace” (Ciesiołkiewicz, 2022). A pedagogical alert is sounding from both the academic and business signifying a challenge to global cooperation for preventing all kinds of conflicts, phenomena of violence, injustice, and mitigating the effects of such practices. The traumas and wounds of today’s generations will be passed down to future generations, affecting them in the long term. Therefore, what is needed is education for peace and therapy, which in the context of education for peace would serve as reformatory method of healing, even in the psychological sense (Read, 2012). “Therefore, education for peace – the search for peaceful ways to overcome conflicts, as well as the social and individual conditions for peaceful coexistence of both individuals and nations – are topics that increasingly define pedagogical reflection and activity today” (Maier & Michalski, 2023, 40–41).

The methods and ways of educating to form minds and consciences present a huge challenge for educators who feel responsible for creating a culture of peace. One of the elements of educating for peace should be integrating people around the value of peace. Peace is an intrinsic value, conditioning the possibility of human development. It is combined with other values that determine the nature of education for peace, such as the value of responsibility, justice, solidarity, tolerance, or the common good. It is worth emphasizing the importance of humanistic education in this education, enriching recipients with the ability to “read and internalize meanings and values, interpretation, communication, and orientation in the world” (Milerski, 2011, 7). This requires building a knowledge society that promotes a culture of peace. Without education, there will be no culture of peace, and a society of ignorance will be susceptible to false information that generates fear and encourages unreflective imitation of attitudes based on panic or withdrawal.

Implementing the principles of education for peace requires the transmission of reliable knowledge. However, it is worth acknowledging that in the conditions of changing social, economic, and cultural space, as well as intensifying environmental changes, knowledge about the reality of human beings is rapidly becoming obsolete. At the same time, it is emphasized that knowledge is the basis of individual and collective success. Therefore, it is necessary to promote an “intellectual climate of development” (Kiwak, 2007, 12) and provide knowledge of “know-how” processes. Factual, “know-what” type knowledge – such as the transmission of information about events – may not be sufficient at present. Knowledge of processes provides an opportunity for individuals to adapt to current conditions, develop in them the ability to think heuristically, and ultimately acquire hermeneutic competence. Such competencies “concern socio-cultural life, the ability to interpret human



existence, as well as to read the ambiguities of the world” (Ratajczak-Parzyńska, 2020, 144). With hermeneutic skills and competencies, a person has a predisposition to identify problematic situations, but at the same time to respond actively, even to those that cause a sense of cognitive and practical uncertainty. This is important because of “one’s dormant sensitivity to the far-reaching negative consequences of current actions [...] and the pitfalls of civilization, created as a result of naive fascination with projects of pursuing the well-being of humanity” (Łepko & Sadowski 2020, 7). The desire to possess and multiply goods is often combined with taking these goods away from others (as in the case of natural resources, the realization of imperial goals), diminishing the quality of life, for example, for people already living in extreme poverty in Fourth World countries.

The knowledge possessed by a person affects the system of relevance of the actions they take. Hence, it is important to socialize knowledge of the kind that would not run the risk of, for example, misinterpreting facts about the real world that may be the result of people’s colloquial experience. The interpretation of reality, which is usually subjective, supplements human knowledge of global world problems (Gawor, 2010). If this interpretation is inappropriate, erroneous, or made through an emotional reading of events and threats, it can hinder a person’s actions or cause indifference to the fate of others.

Practice means deciding and choosing among given possibilities (Gadamer, 2008). Human life is constantly undergoing quantitative and qualitative changes, creating ever newer patterns of thinking, deciding, and acting. Without reliable knowledge of, for example, the effects of war on those experiencing it directly, as well as on future generations and the environment, or the livelihood situation of individuals in Fourth World countries, people will fail to see the necessity – projected within the framework of education for peace and sustainable development – of remedial and auxiliary actions. Assessing the prioritization of designed activities is influenced by the motives of the individual planning the activities. The transmission of knowledge in the form of scientific facts should be supplemented with justifications that motivate people to undertake certain activities.

It is, and will forever remain, a distinction whether argumentation appeals to our feeling and to our ability to take an interest in specific practical goals or cultural forms and contents, or whether it appeals to our conscience when the validity of ethical norms becomes an issue, or finally, whether it appeals to our skills and needs.

*(Weber, 2004, 141)*

The effectiveness of peacemaking activities occurs when the goals based on them motivate a person to take further or repeat the implemented actions.

Duplication of actions leads to their routinization, and then the individual evaluates their own actions as important (value rationality) and urgent (rationality of the goal) (Adamczyk, 2003) and implements them according to the plan. It is worth emphasizing that convincing someone of the rightness of – and sometimes even the necessity of implementing – the proposed solutions involves transmitting reliable knowledge based on truth, which is often hard to disseminate in the conditions of a socially entrenched *doxa*. The pursuit of peaceful education and the implementation of education for peace implies a policy focusing on specific goals and values. However, the specific means of achieving these goals depend on their interpretation, on the living conditions, culture, or interests of particular groups. Mansell and Tremblay, authors of the report “Renewing the knowledge societies vision: towards knowledge societies for peace and sustainable development”, stress that knowing about one another is not a guarantee for peace. Therefore, learning about the history and fate of others helps to understand their choices and behavior, which is the first step to respect, tolerance, and a high regard for diversity (Mansell & Tremblay, 2013; Navarro-Castro & Nario-Galace, 2010). Acquiring skills for peace, nonviolence, communicating through dialogue, resolving conflicts without violence, and respecting freedom and differences all require the formation of a knowledge society. This is the way to properly read educational activities, not as imposing and forcing anyone to change their views, but rather building peaceful attitudes toward others and making the individual a conscious participant in the development of the world in a peaceful and sustainable way.

Education for peace should be included in pedagogical activities for sustainable development, thereby overcoming stagnation and a certain numbness in the area of the struggle for freedom and justice for the now-living and future generations. Shaping a person mentally, but especially morally, requires considering the axiological component in the process of education and teaching in the spirit of values. When educating for peace in a world of diverse norms and customs, one can refer to values in their universal meanings; although these too are subject to discussion due to civilization and cultural transformations that sometimes cause the societal understanding of them to deteriorate.

A sense of the value of peace, justice, or responsibility is a necessary condition for feeling motivated to realize these values. J. Filek, citing N. Hartmann, emphasizes that this sense of value is a human moral capacity that requires training, because there is a risk of its disappearance. As a peculiarly human “axiological organ” it can also reach full maturity (Filek 1996) Furthermore, it can contribute to a change in human behavior, which is an expression of rational and voluntary choice, justified not by compulsion or necessity but by personal desire, which seems particularly important in the creation of a culture of peace in a knowledge society.

## Conclusion

Education for peace, whether implemented independently or as part of education for sustainable development, has so far been treated marginally. The war in Ukraine and armed conflict between Israel and Hamas have caused “more than ever ordinary citizens [to] become aware that they have a role to play for peace and they need to play a role for peace” (Brantmeier & Lin 2008, xii–xiv). Experience has shown that the threats of the Anthropocene era include phenomena that are more the antinomy of pacifist attitudes. Peace, on the other hand, should be considered the essential, if not the only, way to protect human beings from the danger of war, all forms of violence, aggression, intolerance, or hatred based on national, ethnic, racial, religious, or other differences.

The proposed direction of implementing education for peace (including as part of education for sustainable development), understood as the formation of a knowledge society, can contribute to building a culture of peace. The 16 sustainable development goals statement commits us to world peace. It provides guidelines that in theory can be implemented almost algorithmically. “An algorithm simplifies, fragments, and often trivializes our lives” (Szpunar, 2019, 32). Therefore, in practice, the tasks proposed for implementation may turn out to be wishful thinking if educational activities that presuppose the formation of minds and are supplemented by ethical-axiological indications are abandoned. Thus, countering injustice, intolerance, and violence, thanks to axiological references, can motivate activity or bring the goals of education for peace to concrete values such as responsibility, community, justice, or the common good.

Designed in this way, education for peace does not prescribe the adoption of certain attitudes but seeks to increase social self-knowledge, understanding, the development of global awareness, and the formation of peace competencies. Therefore, knowledge correlated with values is of strategic importance in this education.

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