Intergenerational Justice Review

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To modify a famous sentence by Hobbes: In times of war, life is nasty, brutish and short. By contrast, a peaceful world order would allow today's youth as well as future generations to unlock their potential and thrive. The value of military spending globally has grown steadily in past years, reaching 2.44 trillion US dollars in 2023. In a peaceful world, more financial resources could be invested in areas such as education, health care, and poverty and climate change reduction. The gigantic financial resources needed to maintain and modernise nuclear arsenals would become completely unnecessary.

So how can mankind achieve such a state of long-term peace? The key to answering this question is understanding the root causes of war. Some scholars begin by arguing that war is hardwired into our brains and that war will thus always exist. But others contest this notion with vigour. For example, anthropologists report that about 70 tribal societies beyond so-called 'civilisation' do not know the institution of war at all. A new multi-disciplinary study by scholars Carel von Schaik, Kai Michel and Harald Meller also suggests that humans are fundamentally cooperative animals. Whereas aggression on an individual level has always been present, they suggest that in the first 99.9% of human history, organised warfare between groups did not exist at all. War is thus a relatively new phenomenon. So, if war is not hardwired into our genes, what does cause it?

In attempting to answer this complicated question, scholars point to a range of causes in the modern world. In the mid-twentieth century, for example, the 'balance of power' theory proposed by scholars such as Kenneth Waltz and Hans Morgenthau became popular. This theory suggests that states form alliances and wage war to maintain an equilibrium of power and to stop other states gaining political hegemony over the global system. Empirical research also suggests that democracies very rarely go to war with each other, indicating that war is connected to the forms of governance employed. In terms of civil wars, scholars have pointed to the construction and instrumentalisation of identity around ethnicity and religion, resource scarcity, population growth, economic inequality, and political marginalisation as key drivers of conflict.

Very soon, climate change may well have to be added to this list of conflict drivers. Recent research by the World Bank shows that climate change and extreme weather conditions increase both the intensity and likelihood of civil and interstate conflict. Additionally, in 2015 the University of California reviewed findings from 55 studies, observing that each one-degree Celsius rise in temperature is associated with an 11.3% increase in civil conflicts. The United States Institute for Peace has also emphasised that the growth of urban populations due to the climate-induced displacement will lead to more instances of localised violence and marginalisation. Other researchers do paint a less dire picture, though. Steven Pinker, for example, has argued that violence has declined significantly in the past few decades, during which time climate change was already well underway.

International cooperation is urgently required to address crises for peacekeeping initiatives, including the effects of climate change. And yet, the role of international organisations such as the UN remains controversial for some people. The need for international cooperation was originally enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations on 26 June 1945, which starts with the words "we the peoples of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind". The Charter was formulated after the Second World War and was seen by many as a crucial step towards global governance and an enshrinement of peace as an international goal. As Michael Haiden argued in the IGJR 1/2024, UN humanitarian interventions can play a crucial role in securing peace, both for their proximate benefits, but also for their ability to promote a norm of global solidarity.

However, some activists and scholars also criticise the role of the UN as a peacekeeping organisation. They list the war in Ukraine, humanitarian disasters and conflicts in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan, and the Somali civil war as examples of the UN's failures. Others criticise the patriarchal approach that the UN takes to conflicts in the so-called Global South, citing the need for regionally led and context-specific peacekeeping and aid initiatives.

The question of how to achieve long-term global peace remains complex, but it is an issue of urgent importance for present and future generations. Despite critiques of international organisations, global cooperation and solidarity will surely be vital in achieving this goal.

In the first article of this issue, Augustine Akah and Brian Chaggu offer a theoretical analysis of the causes and dynamics of contemporary conflicts, paying particular attention to conflicts that have the potential to escalate into nuclear wars. The authors compare liberal Western approaches to peacebuilding with traditional approaches from the Global South. Finally, they offer three global priorities for building long-term peace, highlighting the central role to be played by the United Nations in future peacekeeping missions.

Following this, Lukas Kiemele's article explores two conditions for establishing 'positive peace': protection from environmental crises and retribution for historical injustice. He argues that there is a close relationship between colonialism and environmental crises, noting that climate change, climate migration, and resource scarcity increases the likelihood of armed conflict. Arguably, so writes Kiemele, historical colonial injustices continue to be perpetuated today, as it is the formerly colonised nations that have contributed least to the climate disaster but bear the greatest burdens of ecological collapse.

There follow two book reviews. The first book review interrogates issues related to peacekeeping, as Gordon Hertel dissects *The Path to Zero: Dialogues on Nuclear Dangers* (2012) by Richard Falk und David Krieger. Following this, Grace Clover reviews Juliana Bidadanure's *Justice Across Ages: Treating Young and Old as Equals* (2021).

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Towards a long-term peace approach: A phenomenological analysis of contemporary and emerging conflicts

By Augustine Akah and Brian Chaggu

*I*n today's multilateral and conflict-ridden world, the prolifer- ation of nuclear weapons gives humanity the means to bring about its extinction. The war in Ukraine and other tensions around the world have made the deployment of nuclear weapons more likely than ever. Given these unprecedented threats, a conscious ef- fort towards building long-term peace is crucial. This study follows four levels of inquiry. First, it explores the theoretical views of armed conflicts, analysing their causes and their consequences. Second, it conceptualises peace initiatives in the context of peace and conflict studies, exploring these definitions in relation to their significance for future generations. Third, it reviews existing peacebuilding approach- es from different perspectives and re-emphasises their strengths and shortcomings in the face of emerging conflicts. Fourth and crucially, it proposes three levels of global priority for achieving long-term peace, ultimately arguing for the central role of the UN in peacebuilding initiatives. This study justifies how eliminating nuclear weapons and encouraging proactive diplomacy are crucial steps for achieving long- term peace.

Keywords: long-term peace; peacebuilding initiatives; global prior- ity; conflict

Introduction

As conflicts persist and evolve in our rapidly changing world, the need for an approach to building long-term peace is increasingly recognised. Unilateral methods of peacebuilding which appeal to either side of a Global North-South dichotomy often fall short of addressing the complexities of contemporary and emerging con- flicts. These conflicts encompass a range of ongoing and protract- ed disputes, some of which have lasted a long time. Some conflicts persist into the present day and are often rooted in longstanding grievances, power struggles, and identity-based tensions. Many of these conflicts – in Bosnia, Ethiopia, Sudan, the South China Sea, El Salvador, Guatemala, on the border between Peru and Ecua- dor, involving the Rohingya people, and now perhaps the con- flict in the Sahel – present unique challenges to global sustainable peace. Such conflicts delegitimise the Westphalian treaty of sov- ereignty and the territorial integrity of states. Moreover, even in the cases of perennial conflicts – Israel-Palestine, Russia-Ukraine –all attempts at resolution between the warring parties may seem to be off the table. Therefore, there is a burgeoning interest in exploring peacebuilding approaches from a range of systems and methodologies, as we seek to construct a peace which lasts for the long term. However, given the parlous state of our world today and in the recent past, what are the prospects for enduring peace in an era threatened by the potential of global war with weapons of mass destruction?

In response to this challenge, this article aims to develop a long- term peace approach grounded in a phenomenological analysis of contemporary and emerging conflicts. It pays particular atten- tion to conflicts that could escalate to nuclear wars. The need for such a long-term peace approach stems from the recognition that peacebuilding interventions must be adaptable and contextually relevant to effectively address the complexities of diverse conflict settings (Berdal / Malone 2000). To do this, this research inte- grates insights from two key approaches to peacebuilding: namely, liberal Western approaches (see Paris 2004) such as conflict pre- vention (Licklider 1995), traditional approaches which encour- age reconciliation and justice, such as Ubuntu (Auyero 2018), and those which encourage cultural and social cohesion (Galtung 1996). In doing so, this article develops a long-term approach to creating sustainable peace.

> As conflicts persist and evolve in our rapidly changing world, the need a long-term peace approach is increasingly recog- nised. Unilateral methods of peacebuilding which appeal to either side of a Global North-South dichotomy, often fall short of addressing the complexities of contemporary and emerging conflicts.

The study undertakes a phenomenological analysis of emerging conflicts and the perceptions of peacebuilding approaches. As Smith et al. argue, "phenomenology offers a unique lens to un- cover the subjective realities and meanings underpinning conflict dynamics, providing valuable insights into violence's root causes and drivers" (Smith et al. 2009). By synthesising theoretical in- sights with empirical evidence from case studies of conflicts, we aim to propose a non-reductionist approach to long-term peace. Hence, the study follows four levels of inquiry, each equally im- portant. First, it explores the theoretical and empirical views of contemporary and emerging conflicts, analysing their causes and their consequences. Second, it conceptualises peace initiatives in the context of peace and conflict study, exploring the significance of these definitions for present and future generations. Third, it reviews existing peacebuilding approaches from two perspectives, Western and traditional, re-emphasising their strengths and short- comings in the face of global conflicts. Fourth and most crucial- ly, it proposes a long-term peace approach, arguing that building trust and collaboration, whilst dealing with the nuances of global power imbalances, are crucial steps for creating a lasting peace.

Phenomenological review of contemporary and emerging conflicts

Conflicts reveal intricate layers of human interaction, power dynamics, and moral considerations when examined through a philosophical lens. At its core, conflict can be conceptualised as a manifestation of divergent interests, values, or beliefs, resulting in tension, discord, or antagonism between individuals, groups, or entities (Galtung 1969). In other words, one might say that conflicts are inherent to the human condition, stemming from the plurality of perspectives, desires, and aspirations characteris- ing human existence (Arendt 1958). In this sense, conflicts are

catalysts for competing claims to truth, justice, and power. They are sites of moral contestation, where individuals and groups confront ethical dilemmas and grapple with questions of right and wrong, good and evil (Rawls 1971).

Let us take two conflict scenarios, the Russian war in Ukraine and the Israel-Hamas war, as examples. In each of these cases, the causal factors are inextricably tied to ethical dilemmas, territoriality, and aggression. While the former conflict stems from Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and its support for separatist movements in eastern Ukraine, leading to military clashes and diplomatic tensions, the latter is rooted in longstanding territorial disputes and religious tensions. These conflicts have resulted in significant casualties and humanitarian crises, with both sides resorting to military force and retaliatory attacks. The fear of escalation, including the use of nuclear weapons, is a constant concern given the volatility of the regions and the potential consequences for global security and stability (Rynhold 2014).

In today's global landscape, conflicts take on multifaceted forms, reflecting the intricate interplay of political, social, economic, and technological factors. From traditional territorial disputes to emerging wars: the spectrum of conflict is diverse and complex. Proxy wars fuelled by geopolitical rivalries, ethnic and religious tensions, and civil unrest underscore the dynamic nature of contemporary conflicts further. Moreover, the pervasive effects of nuclear warfare and the destabilising impacts of climate change add additional layers of complexity to the ever-evolving landscape of global conflicts. "They create a foundation on which the divisions of society 'us' and 'them') and measures to define the object of disputes (i.e. the problem of the incompatibility of aims and interests) are built" (Żakowska 2020: 50).

Scholars have distinguished international conflicts from civil wars and interstate wars from imperial and colonial conflicts, and from other conflicts that involve non-state actors. Until recently, they devoted a disproportionate amount of attention to great power wars, including 'hegemonic wars'. This bias in conflict studies is decreasing; however, there has also been a shift in warfare away from the great powers and a rise of 'low-intensity wars' and 'identity wars' since the end of the Cold War (Holsti 1996). The question of what causes armed conflict can mean several different things (Suganami 1996); it can refer to what makes war possible or to the permissive or logically necessary conditions (Levy 1989: 141). In reviewing the causes of war, we shall see conflict in its generic sense as any phenomenon that threatens global peace (whether such conflicts are violent conflicts, militarised wars, or nuclear escalations).

The causal factors of armed conflicts
Individual level
Kenneth Waltz provides a good foundation for understanding the causes of armed conflicts. He proposes three levels for analysing the causes of conflict: (1) the individual level, (2) the state level, and (3) the international level (Waltz 2001). We choose to begin with this approach as it offers a multi-level framework. Moreover, Waltz's analytical categories align with three main understandings of the 'actors' in security studies – individuals, states, and the international system. At the individual level, Waltz (2001: 16-79) argues that "conflicts are often caused by human nature and the nature of particular political leaders, such as the leaders of states". That means the causes of conflict are inextricably linked to innate instincts, imperfections of human nature, and psychological factors – such as aggression and frustration. Here, Waltz emphasises the philosophy of human nature, which is prominent in the works of Hobbes, Cicero and Plautus. For instance, Hobbes argues that the origins of war lie in the traits of human nature, i.e. 'rivalry', 'distrust', and 'lust for fame', and these, in turn, inevitably lead to a war of all against all (*bellum omnium contra omnes*). The desire for fame is the cause of wars that aim to achieve or reinforce social status (Hobbes 1954: 109).

On the other hand, Cicero was one of the first scholars to point to an insatiable human desire as the root of conflict; namely, the desire to accumulate wealth and fame, which is satisfied by war (Zwoliński 2003: 18). Similarly, Plautus, who believed that human nature is hostile since "man is wolf to man" (*homo homini lupus*), stated that the intensification of this hostility across a lifetime can lead to the outbreak of a conflict (Zwoliński 2003: 18-19). Human nature, especially the negative aspects of greed, grievance, and aggression, are causal factors of conflict. Collier / Hoeffler (2004) state in their 'greed vs grievance' hypothesis that economic motivations ('greed'), such as controlling valuable resources, often drive conflicts alongside ideological and social grievances. Their empirical analysis indicates that countries rich in natural resources are particularly vulnerable to conflict due to the lucrative nature of controlling these assets. Allen / Anderson (2017) tie the causes of conflict to aggression and frustration, which includes a wide taxonomy of aggression, e.g. verbal, physical, postural, relational, direct and indirect, psychological, transient, and lasting. Hence, individuals experience a sense of frustration when they realise that their aspirations, goals, and desires are being suppressed (Dollard et al. 2017). The growing frustration seeks an outlet; thus, the tension is released through aggressive behaviour, relieving the frustrated person. Sometimes, individuals project their suppressed desires and aspirations onto substitutes, e.g. a group, tribe, or state (Żakowska 2020: 52).

State level
At the state level, Waltz (2001: 80-159) notes that the causes of armed conflicts are often very related to the nature of the state (i.e. the political systems of states, the structure of the society, and factors such as history, strategic location, culture, and ethnic conflict). Every tribe within the state has its own fundamental principles interwoven in ethnic and cultural beliefs. Violations of these principles by another tribe, often referred to as 'the other', pose a threat to the existence of the tribe. When these threats are not managed, they result in armed conflict. Horwitz (2000), Gurr (2000) and other scholars also underscore the role of 'ethnic heterogeneity' in fomenting conflict, as group identity becomes a source of division and competition for power. Marginalised ethnic groups often resort to violence when they perceive systemic discrimination and exclusion from political processes. As one group threaten the other on ethnic grounds, it creates a system of inclusion and exclusion, which results in a security dilemma in the state. Kaufman (1996) explains how this security dilemma manifests. The lack of a sense of security among the group may arise when the threat to the group from another depends exclusively on imagining the group as an enemy. Such a dilemma allows for a self-perpetuating mechanism of violence, which takes the form of retaliatory action.

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A similar process occurs between clashing civilisations as between clashing ethnic groups. Huntington (1993) refers to 'civilisation' as a large cultural unit characterised by various value systems resulting from religious and cultural differences over the centuries. Most of the conventional armed conflicts in our generation can be traced back to clashes between the 'West' and the 'Muslim world'; Islam and Christianity; capitalism and communism; as well as conservativism and liberalism. The confrontation takes place on two levels: the micro-level (neighbouring groups engaging in territorial struggle, e.g. the insurgency in the Sahel) and the macro-level (different states fighting for military power and control of international institutions). In such a civilisation clash, some factors take pre-eminence. Dougherty / Pfaltzgraff (2001: 167) identify factors such as religious differences, increasing interactions within civilisations, globalisation, and the growth of economic regionalism as weakening the function of the nation-state as the basis for group identification. This results in an increasing identification with a religious group.

One should also mention the factors fundamentalism and extremism (Smuniewski 2016: 438). Extremism has been a prominent driver of conflict in recent years, particularly in the Middle East and parts of Africa. Extreme religious ideologies provide both a justification and a framework for violent actions, as seen with groups like ISIS and Boko Haram (see Juergensmeyer 2003; Abumbe et al. 2018).

International level
The third level, and perhaps the most significant for our context, is the international system. Here, Waltz notes that armed conflicts are generated by the nature of the international system, where the conflict-causing factor is its anarchic nature, which compels states to fight for their survival (2001: 159-224). In this context, anarchy refers to the lack of a central governing authority in the international system, where sovereign states operate in a self-help environment. Waltz emphasises that anarchy does not imply chaos but rather a structured lack of hierarchy, through which all states are functionally equivalent regarding their sovereignty. However, the absence of overarching authority leads to a situation whereby states must rely on their capabilities to ensure their security and survival, driving the dynamics of power balancing. Morgenthau argued that the balance of power operates as a stabilising mechanism, through which the distribution of power among states prevents any single entity from achieving hegemony, thereby maintaining international order (1948: 170). Even though his balance of power theory oversimplifies the complexity of international relations, by focusing predominantly on material power and military capabilities and neglecting other factors such as economic power, ideology, and international institutions, it provides an insight into the perpetual state of caution and competition among states. For Morgenthau, this makes it necessary to prevent any one state from achieving overwhelming dominance.

In contrast, Cashman has argued more recently that the international system is less 'anarchic' but more 'hierarchically' organised (2014: 411-414). The dominant states create the rules regarding trade, diplomacy, and the use of force. The state takes the central position and leads the rest to form an alliance to preserve the system's status quo. In such an arrangement, conflict may break out when the challenger is dissatisfied with the 'world order' or rules established by the dominant state and, therefore, wishes to revise that system's rules to suit his interests better (see Münkler 2023 for more details on the emergence of a multipolar world order).

Hence, as the challenger or rising power develops, it conflicts with the dominant or hegemonic state in the global order. The ensuing struggle between these two states and their respective allies leads to a polarisation of the system, which increases global instability. In this case, even a minor event may spark a crisis and finally cause a hegemonic war (Gilpin 1998: 592; Cashman 2014: 429; Gryz 2011: 7; Żakowska 2020: 52).

International conflict and the potential for a nuclear war
Consequently, the international system is confronted with geopolitical rivalries between major powers. Hence, as power shifts, states are more likely to assert dominance and challenge existing norms, leading to instability and conflict (Kagan 2018: 44). For example, the competition and often disagreeing relations between the United States, Russia, and China are central to the geopolitical rivalry. The quest for global dominance and influence usually leads to proxy wars and military build-ups, increasing the risk of confrontations that could escalate to nuclear warfare (Mearsheimer 2014: 29). Of course, the nuclear states (Russia, United States, China, France, United Kingdom, Pakistan, India, Israel, North Korea) are not exactly the same states that we would consider major powers. However, the re-emergence of a multipolar world order has exacerbated global tensions and increased the likelihood of nuclear states being involved in conflict. Regional disputes, particularly in volatile areas like Southeast Asia (the Korean Peninsula, China and Taiwan) and Eastern Europe (Russia and Ukraine, see Wulf 2024), also pose significant nuclear risks. The longstanding conflict between India and Pakistan over Kashmir, for instance, has repeatedly brought the two nuclear-armed neighbours to the brink of war. Ganguly (2016: 108) emphasises that "historical grievances", "territorial disputes", and "nationalistic fervour" contribute to the persistent volatility in the region. Similarly, North Korea's nuclear ambitions have created a persistent threat to regional and global security. Cha / Kang (2018: 67) argue that North Korea's pursuit of nuclear capabilities is driven by a desire for regime survival and international leverage, making diplomatic resolutions challenging.

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Contemporary and emerging conflicts present a significant threat to international stability, especially those with the likelihood of nuclear escalation. Technological advancements in warfare, including developments in cyber capabilities, complicate the security landscape further. Integrating artificial intelligence in military applications raises the stakes, as miscalculations or malfunctions could inadvertently trigger nuclear responses (see Akah 2023: 34; Reuter 2019).

Schelling (1966: 91) highlights the dangers of 'strategic gamesmanship'; a strategy through which countries use the threat of nuclear force to achieve political objectives, potentially leading to unintended escalations. At the same time, the proliferation of nuclear weapons, by both states and potentially by non-state actors, amplifies the risk of nuclear conflict. Such nuclear proliferation destabilises international security and increases the chances of nuclear war due to misperceptions, accidents, or irrational decision-making (Sagan 1996: 79). The end of treaties such as the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty undermines strategic stability and opens the door for renewed arms races. Scholars have

discussed the threat of nuclear proliferation as an existential risk and the arms control in preventing nuclear war (see Smetana et al. 2023: 64; Kattan 2022: 4; Allison 2004: 32).

Finally, contemporary emerging conflict at the international level can occur as (1) a hybrid warfare which blurs the lines between conventional and unconventional warfare, creating complex and unpredictable conflict environments (Hoffman 2007: 37), or (2) an asymmetric Warfare, where state actors face non-state actors or weaker states. Kaldor (2012: 25) describes these conflicts as "new wars", characterised by high civilian casualties, irregular combatants, and the use of unconventional tactics. Finally, they can occur as (3) a cyber warfare which can disable critical infrastructure, disrupt communications, and undermine national security, potentially triggering military responses (Clarke / Knake 2010: 47). Figure 1 below shows that the total number of nuclear warheads as of 2024 is 12,121 with Russia possessing most of the warheads. The number of warheads is projected to double, given the rapid development of nukes and the tension around the globe. Our generation has never been so threatened as it is now.
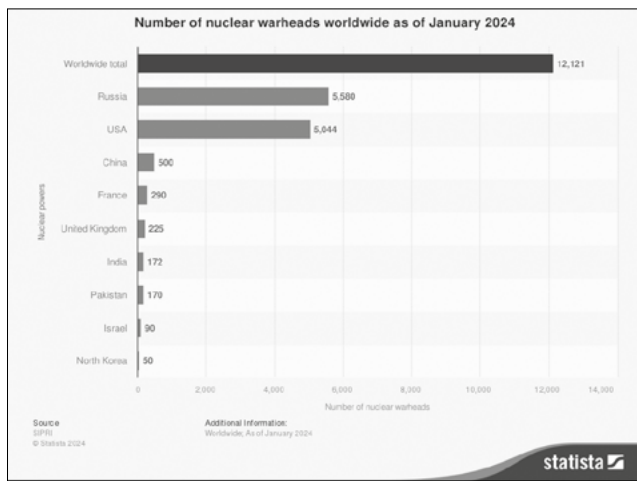

Figure 1: Number of nuclear warheads worldwide as of January 2023, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) (2023).

The likely consequences of emerging conflicts with a nuclear potential

As such a risk is increasing in probability, it is important that we understand its potential consequences. A nuclear war would have severe consequences for our civilisation and future generations, with far-reaching impacts on humanity, health, the environment, and global security. The immediate effects of a nuclear explosion include immense heat, blast waves, and radiation, leading to widespread destruction of infrastructure, loss of life, and injuries (see Toon et al. 2007). On the other hand, the long-term concerns are even more catastrophic, as radioactive fallout contaminates the air, soil, and water, posing serious health risks for survivors and future generations (see Apsley 2011). In essence, the release of radioactive isotopes into the atmosphere can cause radiation sickness, cancer, genetic mutations, and other health problems, leading to increased mortality rates and reduced life expectancy (Miller 2012). Moreover, this would lead to a profound psychological effect and trauma. At the same time, it can fuel global tensions, arms races, and the proliferation of nuclear weapons, heightening the risk of further escalation and catastrophe (Rhodes

2010). It would further disrupt and deplete the ozone layer and damage the ecosystem, which is already significantly impacted by human and industrial activities. It could have lasting effects on biodiversity, exacerbating existing environmental challenges and threatening the sustainability of life on Earth (see Turco et al. 1983). In short, a nuclear explosion would invariably release acute radiation, which can cause skin diseases, sickness and long-term health issues such as cancer. The radioactive particles would contaminate air, water, and soil, leading to widespread ecological damage.

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There is a further concern with a nuclear winter, as large-scale nuclear war could inject vast amounts of soot and smoke into the stratosphere, blocking sunlight and drastically lowering temperatures worldwide. Robock et al. (2007: 450) suggest that even a limited regional nuclear war could disrupt global climate patterns, causing widespread crop failures and food shortages. Consequently, toxic radiation, including nitrogen oxides, can severely damage the ozone layer. This depletion would increase the Earth's exposure to harmful ultraviolet radiation, leading to higher rates of cancerous cells and other health issues and negatively impacting ecosystems and crop and livestock production (see Toon et al. 2007: 236). More disturbing is the fact that future generations would suffer from the long-term health effects arising from the toxic radiation, including genetic mutations and increased cancer rates. The Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings provide historical and phenomenological evidence of the intergenerational health impacts of nuclear weapons (see Yamashita / Schull 1990: 1171). How about the psychosocial trauma of nuclear war? Survivors of nuclear attacks would experience severe trauma, which could be devastating. Becker (2001: 28) argues that the fear of radiation and the loss of family members, homes, and livelihoods would have lasting impacts on mental health and societal stability. Apart from such trauma, infrastructure destruction and human capital loss would weaken economies, creating long-term poverty, instability, and food shortages. According to Helfand (2013: 70), food shortages could lead to widespread famine, exacerbating malnutrition and causing additional deaths long after the initial conflict. The recovery from such an event would take decades, with substantial economic resources diverted towards rebuilding rather than development (Nordhaus 2011: 1). As we see then, the potential impacts of nuclear war are profound and far-reaching; we must do everything to avoid such a disastrous outcome.

Conceptualising peace initiatives

Given the consequences of emerging conflicts and the potential impacts of detonating a nuclear bomb, we find it appropriate to see any effort at achieving sustainable peace as a global public good. "If we begin with the need to survive, we immediately see that peace is a primary requirement of the human condition itself" (Galtung 1995: 110). However, what is 'peace' in the context of global sustainability, and how should it be designed to fit into the framework for resolving contemporary/emerging conflicts? In examining peace initiatives, we face two paradoxes: (1) How is it that we all desire peace but it remains unattainable in the long term? (2) Why do existing peace initiatives look comprehensive and well thought out, and yet cannot bring about long-term

peace? In other words, is long-term peace possible? If yes, how should it be approached? The present article will now definitively respond to these questions and explain the proposed peace approach.

> In examining peace initiatives, we face two paradoxes: (1) How is it that we all desire peace but it remains unattainable in the long term? (2) Why do existing peace initiatives look comprehensive and well thought out, and yet cannot bring about long-term peace? In other words, is long-term peace possible?

For millennia, philosophers, religious thinkers and political activists have written about and demonstrated for 'peace' and decried war – yet a 'philosophy' of peace is still in its infancy (Webel 2007: 4). Conceptualising peace, like many theoretical concepts such as 'freedom', 'happiness', and 'justice', is challenging, but the absence of these concepts in the real world foregrounds the relevance of such conceptualisations. Accordingly, Charles Webel likens peace to light, arguing that it is intangible but discernible either by its absence or sporadic and often startling appearances (like a flash of lightning against a black sky). Peace is a background condition for the perception of everything else, a physical phenomenon affecting all sentient beings, something whose presence or absence is best measured on a continuum or spectrum (Webel 2007:10). Etymologically, 'peace' has roots in various languages and historical contexts, each of which shed light on its very essence. Merriam-Webster traces the word 'peace' back to the Middle English 'pes,' ultimately derived from the Anglo-French 'pais,' which also stems from the Latin 'pax' (Merriam-Webster n.d.). The etymology of 'peace' reflects its historical associations with notions of tranquillity, harmony, and the absence of conflict.

The dictionary definitions of the term 'peace' can only get us so far, but they are a productive starting point. Perhaps, as Webel (2007) would maintain, peace is both a historical ideal and a term whose meaning is in flux, sometimes seemingly constant (as in 'inner peace of mind') but also noteworthy for its relative absence in the field of history (as in 'world peace'). In our case, the latter (world peace) is our point of departure. Against this backdrop, peace in the world is neither a timeless essence – an unchanging ideal substance – nor a mere name without a reference, a form without content (Webel 2007). Peace is both a means of personal and collective ethical transformation and an aspiration to cleanse the planet of human-inflicted destruction. That means that the goal is in continual, dialectical evolution, sometimes regressing during periods of acute violent conflict and sometimes progressing non-violently and less violently to actualise political justice and social equity (Webel 2007). In this sense, we argue that global peace extends beyond mere tranquillity or compliance within a subdued populace, maintained through a dominant power's provision of necessities. Instead, sustainable world peace – or long-term peace – especially in its forward-thinking or dialectical form, embodies the proactive pursuit of individual and collective self-determination and emancipation regardless of status and nationality. As Koffi Annan aptly states, "it is our job to ensure that […] peace and security hold, not only for a few, but for the many; that opportunities exist, not merely for the privileged, but for every human being everywhere" (Annan 2000: 13).

In essence, global peace is a state where all people live in security, without fear or threat of violence, and enjoy equal rights and opportunities. Peace transcends the absence of war within a Hobbesian realm characterised by perpetual violence. It represents a condition of our individual and collective beings that evolves, influenced by historical contexts and societal dynamics. Therefore, we argue that peace, like any worthy human aspiration, resides as a latent potential within us, albeit challenging to perceive and seemingly unattainable. As we embark on the journey towards long-term peace, it becomes the heroic endeavour of this age – indispensable for our survival.

> Global peace extends beyond mere tranquillity or compliance, maintained by a dominant power. Instead, or long-term peace embodies the proactive pursuit of individual and collective self-determination and emancipation regardless of status and nationality.

Categorising peace and peacebuilding process
Conceptual understandings of 'peace' and 'traditional' peacebuilding methods

While unlikely to be flawless or eternal, sustainable peace remains a significant pursuit – particularly within the confines of the present global state of affairs. Consequently, there is an increasing interest in peace and conflict research. In the following section we outline a few different conceptualisations of peace and peacebuilding processes, to provide an academic foundation. Johan Galtung, for instance, emphasised the importance of reducing structural violence and promoting social justice in achieving global peace (Galtung 1969). He categorised peacebuilding into negative and positive processes. 'Negative peace' refers to the absence of direct violence or overt conflict; it entails the cessation of hostilities through mechanisms such as ceasefire agreements or peace treaties (Galtung 1964: 167). This peacebuilding process focuses on resolving immediate conflicts but less on the underlying societal issues or causal of conflict.

In contrast, 'positive peace' encompasses broader notions of social justice, equity, and human well-being (Galtung 1969: 171). In other words, positive peace involves addressing structural violence, such as poverty, discrimination, and oppression, which perpetuate conflict (Galtung 1969: 170). Positive peace seeks to create inclusive societies where individuals can access basic needs, political participation, and socio-economic opportunities, fostering long-term stability and resilience (Galtung 1969: 174). Thus, negative and positive peace are essential for sustainable peacebuilding (Galtung 1996: 80).

In a similar but even more conceptual way, Michael Banks (1987) categorises peacebuilding processes into four distinct definitions:

1   Peace as harmony, referring to the state of tranquillity among individuals and societies – that is, the presence of interpersonal and international harmony, where conflicts are minimised, and cooperation flourishes.

2   Peace as order, emphasising the need to maintain stability and predictability within societies and the international system. Peacebuilding initiatives in this sense entail the establishing of governance structures, laws, and institutions that regulate behaviour and prevent the emergence of conflict.

3   Peace as justice, involves promoting fairness, equality, and human rights. Here, peace is intrinsically linked to social justice, where individuals have equal opportunities, rights, and access to resources.

4   Peace as conflict management, focusing on resolving conflicts through negotiation, mediation, and diplomacy. This conceptual category of peace recognises that conflicts are inevitable but seeks to manage them accordingly.

Bank's four categories are mutually co-related and contingent, offering valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of peacebuilding initiatives.

One of the peacebuilding initiatives that have received much attention in peace and conflict study for the past three decades is the 'Agenda for Peace', introduced in 1992 by then UN. At this time, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali categorised the peacebuilding process into three layers: preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping, and post-conflict peacebuilding. Ghali would refer to peacebuilding as "actions to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace to avoid a relapse into conflict" (Boutros-Ghali 1992: 1). Preventive diplomacy stresses the importance of dialogue in averting conflict escalation. That is, the need for timely and decisive action by the international community to address the root causes of conflict (Boulden 2003: 14). On the other hand, peacemaking and peacekeeping focus on negotiation and mediation in achieving peace. According to Bellamy et al. (2010: 68), these two concepts underscore the need for a robust international mechanism to mediate conflicts and deploy peacekeeping forces where necessary.

Meanwhile, post-conflict peacebuilding involves reconstructing war-torn societies, promoting justice, and fostering sustainable development. In emphasising Ghali's concept of post-conflict peacebuilding, Paris admits that this aspect of the agenda has influenced the development of comprehensive peacebuilding frameworks that address both immediate security concerns and long-term socio-economic stability (2004: 56). Even though the agenda for peace remains crucial for the United Nations' multifunctional peacekeeping missions, the models still need to catch up in the face of emerging conflicts.

Critics contend that such top-down approaches often overlook indigenous practices and can lead to resistance or failure (Richmond 2011: 27). The logistics gaps and political constraints usually render the agenda ineffective (see Fortna 2004:171). Moreover, given the present state of contemporary conflicts, characterised by non-state actors, asymmetric warfare, cyber threats, terrorism and climate change-induced conflicts, the agenda for peace needs to be updated to go beyond the traditional state-centric focus (Chandler 2017: 45).

As the global landscape continues to evolve, there is also a need to liberalise the principles outlined in the Agenda for Peace further, to remain effective in promoting global peace and stability. Hence, the 'Liberal Peace Initiative' was developed. The liberal peace initiative is a framework for peacebuilding that combines political, economic, and social reforms rooted in liberal democratic principles. This approach advocates for establishing democratic governance, the rule of law, free markets, and human rights as foundational components for achieving sustainable peace in post-conflict societies. The liberal peace approach aims to transform war-torn societies into stable, democratic, and economically viable states. One of the proponents, Roland Paris, argues, "the

international peacebuilding efforts should focus on the establishment of liberal democratic institutions and market-oriented economic policies – such democratic elements are essential for achieving long-term stability and peace" (Paris 2004: 5).

Similarly, while theorising democratic peace, Doyle alludes to the notion that liberal democracies are less likely to go to war with each other, providing a theoretical underpinning for the liberal peace approach (1986: 1152). That means the promotion of liberal values and institutions can help to create conditions for peace and stability. Such conditions have led to a focus on building democratic institutions, promoting human rights, and supporting economic liberalisation in post-conflict countries (see Newman et al. 2009).

John Paul Lederach's 'comprehensive approach' to the peacebuilding process is equally significant in peace and conflict study. While working as a scholar-practitioner, John Paul Lederach has formulated the approach to conflict that encompasses "the full array of stages and approaches needed to transform conflict towards sustainable, peaceful relations and outcomes" (Matijević / Ćorić 2015: 157). See also Ramsbotham Oliver's reflections on UN post-settlement peacebuilding (Ramsbotham 2000). Lederach's comprehensive approach entails building an infrastructure for peace, which should involve all levels of the affected population:

"*The principle of indigenous empowerment suggests that conflict transformation must actively envision, include, respect, and promote the human and cultural resources within a given setting. That involves a new set of lenses through which we do not primarily 'see' the setting and the people in it as the 'problem' and the outsider as the 'answer'. Rather, we understand the long-term goal of transformation as validating and building on people and resources within the setting*" (Lederach 1995: 212).

Sustainable peace requires addressing the underlying social and relational factors that fuel conflict (Lederach 1997: 24). In that understanding, Lederach introduces the concept of the 'peacebuilding pyramid', which includes three levels of leadership: (1) top leadership, comprising political and military leaders, (2) middle-range leadership, involving respected leaders from various sectors such as education, business, and religion, (3) grassroots leadership, including community leaders and local activists (see Lederach 1997: 38). In essence, Lederach emphasised the need for coordinating peacebuilding strategies at all three pyramid levels. In doing so, the different types of actors (levels) have to be matched with the different peacebuilding methodologies (Lederach 1997: 44-54). Here, reconciliation becomes central to peacebuilding. For that reason, Lederach suggests a move away from "a concern with the resolution of issues […] toward a frame of reference that focuses on the restoration and rebuilding of relationship [by using] the relational aspect of reconciliation as the central component of peacebuilding" (Lederach 1997: 24). Only this can provide "a set of lenses and a long-term, lifetime perspective, which sharpens and informs short-term decisions" (Lederach / Sampson 2000: 55). In Lederach's later works he focuses on the dynamic and constructive nature of dealing with conflicts, emphasising relationship building, cultural sensitivity, sustainability, and exploring the creative dimension of peacebuilding. That is the capacity to imagine a world beyond our current, conflict-ridden one, the art of sustaining paradoxical curiosity and the ability to take courageous actions in the face of uncertainty. Lederach's model combines a problem-solving approach to conflict

resolution with a process-oriented approach to peacebuilding to address the multidimensional nature of protracted social conflicts. The approach points to a qualitative way of categorising and appreciating all types of peacebuilding initiatives bringing an immense shift in the peacebuilding process.

> From a traditional point of view, conflict is perceived as an unwelcome disturbance of the relationships within the community. Conflict transformation or the 'peacebuilding process' in the traditional context aims to restore order and harmony in the community.

From a traditional point of view, conflict is perceived as an unwelcome disturbance of the relationships within the community (Faure 2000: 163). Conflict transformation or the 'peacebuilding process' in the traditional context aims to restore order and harmony in the community (which does not necessarily mean the return to the status quo but can also imply some transition to new arrangements). Like in Lederach's view, reconciliation is seen as necessary for restoring social harmony and social relationships between conflicting parties. The traditional approach is often associated with mythical entities and a spiritual aspect to reconciliation; indeed, in this traditional view, peacebuilding and restoring order are impossible without including the spiritual dimension (Huyse 2008: 10-12). Scholars such as Sarkin (2000), Rotberg (2000), Fischer (2011), and Battle (2009) have all argued that traditional peacebuilding approaches have been implemented successfully in several countries in the Global South, particularly in South Africa (apathy regime), Rwanda (post-genocide experience), Nigeria (civil war). The effectiveness of such methods can thus not be overlooked. Take examples of two popular peacebuilding initiatives in Africa: Ubuntu and Gacaca. These two initiatives are rooted in traditional African practices and philosophies, focusing on communal reconciliation, restorative justice, and healing relationships after conflict. 'Ubuntu' emphasises community interconnectedness, shared humanity, and justice. This philosophy is perhaps best exemplified by the phrase 'I am because we are'; a relational form of personhood which highlights the belief that an individual's well-being is intrinsically linked to the well-being of others. According to Desmond Tutu, 'Ubuntu' fosters forgiveness and collective healing by recognising the humanity of all individuals involved in a conflict (Tutu 1999: 35).

Meanwhile, the 'Gacaca' is a community-based court system where local people participate in the justice process to address genocide. As Ingelaere states, "the 'Gacaca' courts successfully processed a large number of genocide cases, thus alleviating the burden on the formal judicial system and fostering a sense of local ownership over the peacebuilding process" (Ingalaere 2009: 40). Phil Clark has extensively studied the 'Gacaca' courts, highlighting their role in promoting justice and reconciliation in Rwanda by providing a platform for truth-telling, accountability, and community healing (Clark 2010: 21).

How sustainable are existing peacebuilding initiatives in dealing with emerging conflicts?

Having reviewed some of the most dominant peacebuilding initiatives, it becomes clear that several authors have devoted much time and resources to categorising the peacebuilding process and advocating for harmony, order, justice, and effective conflict management. The various initiatives detailed above have transformed conflicts so as to promote and solidify stability and peace

(Boutros-Ghali 1992). These peace efforts have helped host national authorities and populations end widespread violence, re-establish security, promote economic development, and organise democratic elections in Cambodia, Liberia, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, and Timor-Leste, among many other places (Autesserre 2017). However, despite the success achieved by existing peacebuilding approaches, these approaches are still somewhat limited. We must ask the question: are these initiatives context-specific or are they generally effective in tackling conflicts today and in the future? In particular, we must consider whether such initiatives deal with conflicts with nuclear potential.

The criticisms against existing peacebuilding initiatives often point to the implementation gap, the lack of an all-inclusive mechanism for pursuing lasting peace, and the world's multi-polarity. The UN is often pulled into the latter argument, being an organisation, whose flagship activity is peacebuilding. After the end of the Cold War, hopes were raised that armed conflicts would be ended permanently. The UN Agenda for Peace became the main reference document, defining peacebuilding as an outside intervention supporting national peace processes in conflict countries, to end violence and rebuild states after wars (see Ljungkvist / Jarstad 2021: 2210). Many scholars were dissatisfied with the peacebuilding process that followed and after a short period of successful UN peace-keeping missions in the early 1990s, the UN and the international community failed considerably to maintain peace in Rwanda, Somalia and the Balkans (Paffenholz 2015). These failures were blamed on peace being too centralised or because the local context was neglected (see Leonardsson / Rudd 2015; Höglund / Fjelde 2011). As of August 2022 alone, the UN deployed 12 peace-keeping operations and 24 field missions as special envoys or special political missions worldwide. And yet tensions persist. Hence, there is an increasing discussion among scholars about the future of UN peace operations in the nascent multipolar world order (Cassin / Zyla 2021; Coleman / Williams 2021; de Coning 2021; de Coning / Peter 2019; Kenkel / Foley 2021; Osland / Peter 2021).

More diffused power structures characterise multi-polarity. States like China and Russia have become competitors to the US dominance (Paris 2014). Other powers, such as Brazil, India, South Africa, and Turkey, also play increasingly important roles in world politics (Call / de Coning 2017; Paul 2018). These states may have different views on UN peacebuilding from the ones promoted by the United States and its allies in the unipolar early post-Cold War years (Badache et al. 2022: 548).

Moreover, there are questions regarding the actions and characteristics of the international interveners such as (and primarily) the UN. Both the mandate of such organisations (Doyle / Sambanis 2006; Van der Lijn 2009) and their vested interests (Adebajo 2011; Stedman 1997; Zartman 1989) have been called into questioned. Consequently, international peacebuilding interventions usually proceed top-down, focusing on assuaging national and international sources of conflict (Autesserre 2010; Richmond 2005). At the community level, peacebuilding programs such as the reconstruction projects and disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration have failed to reach many of their intended goals (see Gilligan et al. 2012; Humphreys et al. 2012; Humphreys / Weinstein 2007). Some foreign peace efforts have even increased the number and severity of human rights violations in Uganda (Branch 2011), hampered democracy in Malawi and Tajikistan (Englund 2006; Heathershaw 2009), and amplified gender disparities and sexual abuse in Bosnia, Congo, Liberia, and Sierra

Leone (Simm 2013). They have arguably also disrupted local economies in Congo, Liberia, and South Sudan and fuelled violence in Congo and Afghanistan (Autesserre 2012; Martin 2014). Even the surest foundation of liberal peace, which foregrounds most of the democratic ways for resolving conflicts, is far from being a 'force for good'. The push toward political liberalisation often fuels violence (Autesserre 2010; Barnett 2006; Newman et al. 2009; Paris 2004), while the promotion of market liberalisation aggravates socio-economic problems (Richmond / Franks 2009; Paris 2004; Pugh 2005; Tadjbakhsh 2011).

Despite the criticisms levied against the UN, we believe the UN remains a crucial institution in global governance because member states collectively entrust it with significant authority, reflecting its continued relevance in managing international conflicts and advancing global peace. This delegation of sovereignty underscores the UN's unique position as the primary body for addressing issues that transcend national borders, such as mediating disputes and leading disarmament efforts, including the global initiative to eliminate nuclear weapons. The UN's universal membership allows it to facilitate global dialogue and consensus in a way no other organisation can match. As Dag Hammarskjöld, the second UN Secretary-General, famously said, "the UN was not created to take mankind to heaven, but to save humanity from hell" (Hammarskjöld 1954). This quote encapsulates the significance of the UN in sustainable peace, even as it adapts to new challenges. Thus, our proposed global priorities for peacebuilding emphasises the vital role of the UN in building long-term peace for the present and future generations.

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It is clear that much is still needed to develop a long-term peacebuilding approach that can achieve long-term objectives. Both Traditional and Western approaches are limited. Traditional and Western approaches differ in their conceptions of peacebuilding in that the latter emphasises national sovereignty and ownership, prefers technical cooperation over aid and mainly works with national governments rather than directly with civil society actors (see Call / de Coning 2017; Peter / Rice 2022). Such efforts towards achieving global peace will remain futile. The fact that non-Western states' conceptions have often been framed as illiberal, leading to all countries being grouped as either liberal and Western or illiberal and non-Western (Jütersonke et al. 2021; Yuan 2022), will limit the ability of the UN to contain conflict (see Osland / Peter 2021). The shortcomings of the approaches reviewed here can rather be seen as either Western and liberal (imposing external models, top-down critique, reinforcing power imbalances) or traditional (lacking universality, limiting the sphere of applicability, and potential to entrench tyranny).

Given these limitations, we now return to our initial question: Is long-term peace possible? If yes, how should it be approached? Can universal approaches to peacebuilding deal with emerging and future conflicts effectively? In the next section, we contribute to the debates by shedding light on an often overlooked but important question in peace studies: How can long-term peacebuilding be conceptualised and how the roles of major stakeholders, including the UN, be understood in the peacebuilding process? We adopt a broad approach to peacebuilding, defining it as all actions that could minimise nuclear threats and future warfare. Hence, we argue that by concurrently pursuing a long-term approach to peace, states can work towards building sustainable peace structures that address the root causes of conflict and promote a more just, equitable world for the present and future generations.

Towards long-term peacebuilding approach

In the face of growing competition at the global level and threats that are increasingly transnational, there is no longer any doubt that the peacekeeping structures which created a nuclear cataclysm during the Cold War have eroded in the past decades. Such approaches no longer keep pace in today's shifting world. We thus require a long-term peace strategy, especially among nuclear-armed states, to avoid any potential threat leading to escalation. Enhancing the transparency of military stances and doctrines, including those concerning emerging technologies, is essential. Achieving long-term peace in a world of interlocking threats demands that all regions, states, and the international system find new ways to act cooperatively and in solidarity for future generations. Cooperation does not require states to forgo their national interest but to recognise that they have shared goals. To achieve this approach to peace, we propose a series of significant steps which, if implemented by the UN and all *de facto* stakeholders in the peacebuilding process, would create the momentum currently lacking in collective action for peace. We call the following steps for creating long-term peace 'global priorities'.

Global priority one: Solidarity for peace and commitment to eliminate nuclear weapons

The world's nations must recognise every mutual and collective effort to achieve long-term peace as a global good. The asymmetries between states and the barriers that sustain them are obstacles to long-term peace, as they are to global cooperation and sustainability. Hence, redressing the pervasive historical power imbalances that characterise the international system – from the legacies of colonialism and hegemony to today's deeply unequal global status – must be a priority. Moreover, the UN should be at the centre of the commitment to eliminate nuclear weapons, prevent nuclear war between major powers, and manage the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which regulated nuclear disarmament and arms control, is near dead as states continue to reinforce their nuclear arsenals and new nuclear technologies. We should reaffirm the commitment made by the permanent members of the Security Council in January 2022, which emphasised that a nuclear war cannot be won. The existential threat that nuclear weapons pose to humanity must motivate us to engage with this issue. Reiterating the commitment not to use nuclear weapons will be a good step towards lasting peace, if the end goal is their total elimination pending the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. We recommend prohibiting lethal autonomous weapons systems that have the potential to change warfare significantly and can function without human control or oversight. Also, the UN should ensure that non-complying states face some punitive measures and sanctions at all levels (political, economic, etc).

Global priority two: Rethink the prevention approach and shift the peace enforcement paradigm

In today's interlocking global risk environment, prevention cannot apply to conflict-prone or 'fragile' states alone. To achieve long-term peace, prevention first requires an urgent shift in approach, whereby all states agree to recognise prevention and lasting peace as a moral commitment. In essence, universalising the approach to prevention means tackling all kinds of violent conflicts and tensions in conflict-prone settings and beyond. As all emerging conflicts have sources of origin, efforts towards minimising or preventing these sources from gaining momentum are crucial. Such commitment must start with trust among states and investment in conflict prevention capacities and infrastructures for peace. They should be multidimensional, people-centred, and inclusive of all the different components of society. On the other hand, there is a need for multinational peace enforcement coupled with counterterrorism and counter-insurgency operations. The UN should direct member states to consider improving such operations and provide further response to emerging threats. We recommend that all-inclusive political efforts enforce peace and advance non-military actions such as demobilisation and reintegration. Advancing these actions for peace must comply with the Charter of the United Nations and international humanitarian and human rights law and involve effective and transparent accountability measures. In doing that, the UN can reinforce state institutions and strengthen civil society and social cohesion. These efforts should be financed to achieve sustainable goals. Hence, the Peacebuilding Fund should be expanded to support these efforts as a matter of urgency.

Global priority three: Engage in proactive diplomacy and intensify efforts to end the weaponisation of rogue technologies

One of the significant contemporary global concerns is the deterioration of state relations. This concern raises the spectre of possibility inter-state armed conflicts and possible nuclear escalation. All sides must prioritise proactive diplomacy to bridge these growing divides and ensure that humanity is safe. In this sense, diplomatic engagement should be a strategy not only for minimising the risks of armed conflicts but also for managing the tensions that mark the geopolitical order and creating a fruitful ground for cooperation based on shared interests.

Diplomatic tools are detailed in Article 33 of the UN Charter. However, this article often falls short when the will of member states is lacking. Engaging in proactive diplomacy to de-escalate tensions and reduce the chances for future conflict is essential to transcend this limitation. A similar approach was used during moments of high geopolitical tension in recent history. From Suez to the Cuban missile crisis, diplomatic engagement averted a nuclear war. The Black Sea Initiative shows that diplomatic engagement and innovative use of multilateral instruments can help find common ground even in the most complex situations. At the international level, proactive diplomacy can bolster cooperation. Achieving such a level of global cooperation will pave the way for controlling and preventing the weaponisation of rogue technologies that aid the development of nuclear warheads and have the potential to transform the nature of warfare. Regulating rogue technologies is critical; such technologies may have data and algorithmic biases and can be dangerous, especially if allowed in the hands of a dictatorial regime. Therefore, we recommend that all stakeholders commit to a responsible technological development, so as to address risks posed by rogue technologies, including their intersection with other threats such as nuclear weapons. Also, the UN must intensify its capacities to undertake diplomatic initiatives for peace, bringing together global and regional actors to design new diplomatic engagement models that can address all states' interests and deliver mutual benefits. In doing that, the UN must work with regional organisations such as the European Union and African Union, to repair regional security architectures where they are in danger of collapsing, build them where they do not exist, and enhance them where they can require further development.

> Achieving such a level of global cooperation will pave the way for controlling and preventing the weaponisation of rogue technologies that aid the development of nuclear warheads and have the potential to transform the nature of warfare, putting present and future civilisations at risk.

The quest for long-term peace in the face of nuclear threats and emerging conflicts is an arduous task. While we cannot claim that the three levels of global priority proposed here are exhaustive, they are valuable action plans for building long-term peace. As peace is a call to action, a noble vision and a rallying cry – we must pursue peace in all its dimensions.

To effectively enforce global priorities for long-term peace, a multifaceted approach is essential. Sanctions are a key tool, particularly against states violating nuclear disarmament treaties, but must be applied carefully to avoid harm to humanity. Multilateral punitive measures, such as political isolation, can reinforce compliance, while conditional support and incentives can encourage positive behaviour. The United Nations must be strengthened to play a central role in these efforts, with the Security Council proactively authorising sanctions and enforcement actions. Additionally, regional organisations should be integrated into enforcement strategies to ensure coordinated and effective responses to emerging threats. The success of these measures depends on the collective will of the international community to prioritise global peace and security.

Conclusion

As conflicts intensify and geopolitical divisions widen, states are now competing to enhance their nuclear warheads, making them stealthier and more precise. New weaponry is being developed without sufficient safeguards, introducing new methods of warfare and increasing the risk of human annihilation. The UN and all stakeholders need to prioritise and renew the pursuit of long-term peace to deal with the complexities of today's multipolar world. The global priority for peace addresses strategic action plans, a recommitment to eliminating nuclear weapons, and stepped-up efforts towards proactive diplomacy and conflict reduction. It presents a view of prevention that addresses armed conflicts, especially those that threaten future generations, and it recommends regulating the weaponisation of rogue technologies. Despite the difficulty of achieving long-term peace given the global state of affairs, we expect the UN and all stakeholders to rise to the challenge. We must be clear about the magnitude of the threats before us. The possibility of a global cataclysm, whether from nuclear wars or future conflicts, is no longer in doubt. Hence, states must find new ways of cooperating in solidarity for the common good. They have the primary responsibility and more capacities than any other actor to enact the changes needed to transform peace and security. Therefore, states must partner

with the UN to re-intensify peacebuilding efforts. On the other hand, the UN must strive to reforge its commitment to lasting peace grounded in trust and solidarity.

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Challenges and prospects for long-term peacekeeping in the Anthropocene

By Lukas Kiemele

*I*n recent years, the concept of the 'Anthropocene' has increasingly become a central analytical scheme for current social and ecological crises. Based on the thesis that the structural problems of the present arise from unresolved injustices between past generations, which reproduce a life-threatening danger towards future generations, this essay calls central assumptions underlying modernity into question. This essay illuminates the relationship between ecological crises, colonialism, and the classical humanist historiography of modernity. Ultimately, this essay concludes that the possibility of securing long-term peace is only feasible with radical social, economic, and political transformations, without which our idea of peace will remain deficient in the future.

Keywords: *Anthropocene; humanity; global justice; postcolonial peace; climate risks*

Introduction

For some time now, there has been growing recognition that climate change poses a massive threat to people's everyday lives on a global scale and is therefore a key driver of armed conflict. While the short- and medium-term connection between climate change and poverty, and between the potential for violence and scarce resources, has been acknowledged, the significance of these connections for a long-term perspective on peacekeeping is yet to be recognised. A long-term perspective is slowly seeping into theories of peace with the Anthropocene discourse, but so far remains underrepresented and barely elaborated.

The term 'Anthropocene' marks the proposal for a new geological era following the Holocene, in which humans have become a force of geological proportions through their collective action.[2] This is the case because humans are interfering with Earth system processes through nuclear fallout, plastic pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, biodiversity loss by means of industrial agriculture, and many other factors. This threatens to endanger the foundations of life not only for human civilisation but for all life on the planet (Crutzen / Stoermer 2021). Some authors therefore argue that the recognition of certain epistemological and ontological shifts caused by the Anthropocene is a condition without which peace will no longer be possible in the future (Lakitsch 2023). Current international environmental law is not equipped to respond to the intergenerational challenges posed by the Anthropocene (Dijk 2021). The structures of the current political systems also fail to meet the requirements of intergenerational justice and the pressing challenges of the Anthropocene because they are based on short-term modes of action and neglect the interests of future generations (Kotzé / Knappe 2023).

> Social and environmental problems in the Anthropocene highlight that the prospect of long-term peace is only possible with a radical social, economic and political transformation, without which our idea of peace will remain deficient in the future.

At the same time, the Anthropocene discourse also goes beyond the usual practices of peacekeeping, which are based on development aid, economic cooperation, education, and humanitarian military interventions. The profound impact of humanity's collective influence on the Earth system raises the question of how to deal with resource scarcity and minimise the likelihood of war caused by ecological disasters. On top of this, it raises the question whether contemporary human lifestyles and societies are compatible with planetary boundaries and the habitability of the planet in the long term. Against this backdrop, this article analyses the challenges facing our perspective on peace in times of dwindling resources due to the climate crisis. This essay proposes the thesis that the structural problems of the present arise from unresolved injustices between past generations and now reproduce a life-threatening danger towards future generations. We must ask how the relationship between the historical responsibility for the emergence of the current ecological crises and the possibility of securing long-term peace in the present can be reconciled. For the problems in the Anthropocene highlight that the prospect of long-term peace is only possible with a radical social, economic and political transformation, without which our idea of peace will remain deficient in the future. This article contributes to clarifying the conditions for long-term peacekeeping by showing how the Anthropocene is connected to global and historical (in)justice and by challenging certain theoretical foundations of peace.

Theorising the Anthropocene in peace studies

The term 'Anthropocene' has now become an important analytical scheme, particularly in the humanities and social sciences. In the Anthropocene debate, nature is no longer just the object of scientific investigation, as humans and their collective actions have become a geological force that hybridises nature. Classical dichotomies between nature and culture or nature and technology have thus become dubious (Höfele / Müller / Hühn 2022: 130).

The term 'Anthropocene' is not officially accepted as an epoch designation, nor is it uncontroversial. As a term, the Anthropocene does not have a fixed meaning and since its introduction there have been contradictory interpretations. However, the common core of these interpretations lies in the scientific hypothesis that humanity currently exerts a dominant geophysical influence on the Earth system. The relationship between this concept and the geological facts gives rise to different interpretations. The Anthropocene is understood variably as a new geophysical epoch (Renn 2020), as a methodological problem (Mathews 2020), a master or meta-narrative (Dürbeck 2015) and much more. It is also understood and criticised as an ideological anchoring of anthropocentric dominance in the form of planetary management or geoengineering (Baskin 2015). Recently, the Anthropocene discourse has also stimulated debates on the self-understanding and future of international relations and peace and conflict

studies, which point to new research perspectives and disciplinary transformation (Ide / Johnson / Barnett et al. 2023; Hardt 2021). In this essay, I use Dipesh Chakrabarty's research as a foundation for developing a possible conceptualisation of the Anthropocene that focuses on the relationship of the planetary to the classical humanist historiography of modernity.

The Anthropocene discourse combines various strands of global history, capitalism and social theory with the scientific analysis of ecosystems and planetary boundaries. Dipesh Chakrabarty's reflections on the Anthropocene (2021; 2018) offer an important starting point for analysing this complex intersection, particularly with a view to securing long-term peace. He argues that anthropogenic explanations of climate change render the humanist distinction between natural or planetary history and human or global history obsolete (Chakrabarty 2021: 26). By contrasting global history and planetary history, he describes three interwoven but analytically distinguishable categories of humanity: First, humans in their internally differentiated plurality; second, humans as a species; and third, humans as the makers of the Anthropocene (Chakrabarty 2021: 15). Thinking of humans as a species indicates that, due to their constitution as biological beings, humanity is facing a common existential threat in the Anthropocene. Thinking of humans in their internally differentiated plurality and as the makers of the Anthropocene, on the other hand, questions the unity of humanity from a historical and political perspective. For one thing, humanity is not equally responsible for the historical course of the current global crises. And secondly, postcolonial perspectives on peace studies and international relations in particular point to the violent political relations between the Global North and Global South and thus between large parts of humanity.

> In times of climate change, the impending collapse of ecosystems and the sixth mass extinction, it is necessary to critically engage with our inherited narratives about modernity, development, and continuous peacekeeping.

Chakrabarty argues that we are living on the threshold of the age of the planetary. From the perspective of global history, humans are the subject of a modern narrative of progress that has encompassed the history of culture, trade, wars, and nations since the European expansion at the turn of the sixteenth century. Planetary history, on the other hand, encompasses all the geobiological micro and macro processes that make multicellular life on planet Earth possible. The fact that anthropogenic climate change is now taking on planetary dimensions – a global-historical effect of humans – is the stimulus for a central question of our time. That is, how does the climate crisis affect our sense of the unity of humanity, while at the same time calling into question our current historical methods by supplementing global history with the hitherto neglected planetary history (Chakrabarty 2021: 25). In times of climate change, the impending collapse of ecosystems and the sixth mass extinction (Bradshaw / Ehrlich / Beattie 2021), it is necessary to critically engage with our inherited narratives about modernity, development, and continuous peacekeeping.

Questioning the link between development and peacebuilding
An essential assumption of modernity is that civilisational progress and economic development make a constant contribution to securing peace. This connection is being challenged in the Anthropocene. A global trend is now emerging in which violent conflicts increasingly develop in tandem with progress in human development. The discrepancy between development and security may be a by-product of the way development has been conceived and pursued to date and is therefore exacerbated by the legacy of historical injustices, most notably by colonial rule (Tapia / Conceição 2022: 80). From the perspective of global history, human development and ecological compatibility with planetary boundaries are in a contradictory relationship. For example, correlating the UN's human development index with the UN's sustainable development goals index results in the long-term target range of a global sustainable development criterion, namely high human development, within resource requirements that are globally replicable. No country in the world currently achieves this goal. The countries of the Global North exceed the ecological target value many times over.[3] If one were to replicate their way of life the world over, it would require the ecological capacity of more than three Earths to provide materially for all humanity. In contrast, countries in the Global South fall well short of the human development target (Wackernagel / Hanscom / Lin 2017). The discrepancy between the Global North and the Global South is no coincidence. It is the historical result of a developmental path that has not benefited all people. Development approaches that have focused almost exclusively on economic growth and paid much less attention to equitable human development have led to growing and vast inequalities and an increasing burden on the planet. These inequalities can increase the risks of armed conflict (Raleigh / Urdal 2007; Adger / Barnett 2007). In the Anthropocene, it is even more evident that conflict is closely linked to horizontal inequalities and the accumulation of political and economic power.

> The discrepancy between the Global North and the Global South is no coincidence. It is the historical result of a developmental path that has not benefited all people.

We are now at a point where climate scientists argue that various planetary boundaries are already being exceeded, with dramatic and damaging consequences for the planet (Rockström / Gupta / Qin et al. 2023). The dangers posed by these scenarios are existential threats to basic life-sustaining community resources such as water, air, land, and forests. In the Anthropocene, human dependence on terrestrial and marine ecosystems intensifies due to anthropogenic climate change, which undermines biodiversity and ecosystem resilience and negatively impacts human health, livelihoods, and well-being. This interaction shows a close link between the climate crisis, poverty, and the resulting conflicts, which in turn illustrates how the Anthropocene generates conflict dynamics (Hallegatte / Rozenberg 2015; Hallegatte / Bangalore / Bonzanigo et al. 2014). The possible links between competition over natural resources, environmental change and violence are complex. At their core, they are rooted in the fact that humans need resources to survive and pursue self-development. This existential basis is challenged in various ways by the Anthropocene (Dalby 2013: 565). The unpredictability of intensifying natural disasters, such as the scarcity of land due to droughts or floods can intensify the scarcity of resources. This can thus motivate actors to appropriate resources by means of individual or collective violence. Resource scarcity and natural disasters can also undermine government capacities and lead to a loss of public order and infrastructure. Furthermore, the concentrated wealth of valuable natural resources can provide an incentive to appropriate these resources by force. It is often the unrestrained demand for resources by wealthy communities in the Global North that reproduces this

link between natural resources and violent behaviour (Scheffran / Ide / Schilling 2014: 375). Therefore, any reference to the unity of humanity is controversial.

The contested unity of humanity

The volatility of nature in the Anthropocene requires a broader conceptualisation of acute human-ecological uncertainty. This includes a shift to a long-term perspective on security. Human and ecological conflicts are mutually dependent. Climate change has a disproportionate impact on countries that are already affected by armed conflict (Exenberger / Pondorfer 2014: 359). At the end of 2020, almost half of ongoing UN peacekeeping operations were located in countries of the Global South, which are most exposed to climate change. Although this is mainly due to geographical location, armed conflicts make it more difficult to cope with and adapt to climate change and can even exacerbate environmental degradation. Conflicts weaken state institutions and divert attention from sustainable development to military concerns (Tapia / Conceição 2022: 84).

Consequently, the reality of anthropogenic climate change has hardened disagreement on the question of the unity of humanity. Earth system sciences use the concept of humanity as a collective unitary concept, and ecological approaches emphasise the biogeological oneness of planet Earth as well as the biological nature of the human species for coping with climate change. On the other hand, in the humanities and particularly in the context of postcolonial theory, the assertion of a unity of humanity seems "ideologically suspect and [has] always appeared to have been made in the interests of power" (Chakrabarty 2021: 17). When we talk about human development and growth within planetary boundaries, we must ask ourselves whose growth and whose boundaries we are talking about or ignoring (Sultana 2023). The assertion of a unity of humanity is thus countered by the reality of a division and fragmentation of humanity, particularly due to colonial-imperial practices of domination (Hartnett 2021: 140). Under the current conditions, we must question to what extent the liberal international order is compatible with the structural conditions of survival on the planet that have become evident in the Anthropocene (Simangan 2022: 40). This also necessitates a critique of the methodological approaches of peace research.

As Buckley-Zistel and Koloma Beck (2022: 142) point out, peace and conflict research at a theoretical level is significantly influenced by ideas of violence, conflict, and war that are by no means universal, but are shaped by the historical experience of Western Europe and North America. Nevertheless, they form the foundations of approaches to promoting peace and justice that are exported throughout the world, for example during peace missions and projects. Critical peace and conflict research has been discussing this issue intensively for some time, but the social and ecological conditions of the Anthropocene make it all the more relevant. Postcolonial perspectives in particular lament a blindness towards the contexts of coloniality in the discourses on climate and peace (Sultana 2022; Azarmandi 2018).[4] Together with the Anthropocene discourse, these approaches indicate that the notion of negative peace, which focuses on acts of conflict and their absence, is deficient. The distinction between negative and positive peace (Galtung 1996: 61) must be emphasised more clearly through an ecological and postcolonial perspective. Positive peace refers to a social relationship in which exploitation and structural violence are minimised. Therefore, it denotes the existence of a just social order and "ecological harmony" (Barash / Webel 2002: 7). The

achievement of this ecological harmony and social order is challenged by the fact of global difference.

Anthropocene, equity, and global difference

Historically unequal responsibility for and current unequal exposure to ecological crises continue to pose a challenge to the justice and effectiveness of global environmental policy. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report confirms that the causes of climate change and the associated ecological and social crises lie in the "historical and ongoing patterns of inequity such as colonialism" (2023: 31). These ecological and social crises range from conflicts over livelihoods and dealing with the threat of natural disasters to the challenges they pose in terms of climate migration, the destabilisation of communities, and the shaking of democratic principles, educational security and the like. With its history of industrialisation, high resource consumption and high emissions, the Global North has contributed significantly to the transgression of several planetary boundaries. However, the consequences are disproportionately borne by the Global South, which has contributed less to these problems but is already more vulnerable to the effects of environmental change (IPCC 2023: 16). The impending collapse of the climate and ecosystems in the Anthropocene is the result of a violent history of colonialist-capitalist resource extraction and overconsumption, which are highly unequal and unfairly distributed around the world (Sultana 2023; Newell / Srivastava / Naess et al. 2021). Against this backdrop, we need to take a critical look at our narratives of modern history, capital and civilisational progress. The Anthropocene relativises the classical humanist historiography of modernity in a significant way. We must ask ourselves: were we on the right track with our previous model of history, development, and peacekeeping?

> The impending collapse of the climate and ecosystems in the Anthropocene is the result of a violent history of colonialist-capitalist resource extraction and overconsumption, which are highly unequal and unfairly distributed around the world.

The Anthropocene forces us to take a step back from currently dominant liberal theories of peace and question their theoretical foundation (Bliesemann de Guevara / Budny / Kostić 2023). Influenced by Chakrabarty, we can argue that our notion of peace is deficient because it has been shown by the Anthropocene to be based on a false assumption: the notion that 'civilisational' progress, based upon economic development and the adoption of reason as a universal goal, brings peace. Chakrabarty describes our current model of history and development, and thereby peacekeeping, as a historical mode of consciousness that relies heavily on the notion of historicism. Historicism refers to a historiography mostly practiced by philosophers, such as Kant's philosophical draft on *Perpetual Peace*, which was influential for the United Nations Charter. It was philosophers "who have read into European history an entelechy of universal reason" (Chakrabarty 2007: 29). The self-development of reason as a historical process became the theoretical and practical basis of the self-esteem of the social sciences and humanities as well as of humanitarian practice, which mostly produce statements about the totality of humanity from a particular European perspective.

This hegemonic idea is continued in the notions of transitional justice. We must constantly remind ourselves that "international law and the assumption of its universality were developed as a consequence of colonial thinking and practice, and thus in the

interaction between the Global North and the Global South" (Jones / Lühe 2021: 5). The fact that peace is negotiated almost exclusively from the Global North where international bureaucratic infrastructures are situated, all too quickly overlooks the underlying problem that today's Western liberal democracies were explicitly interwoven into colonial patterns of domination until very recently. These patterns still defend a global hegemonic order today. In the discourse on equity and ecological tipping points, it is necessary for the Global North to come to the uncomfortable realisation that the radical change in the structural causes of the Anthropocene "requires the current system to fade (creating losers) and be replaced (creating winners)" (Pereira / Gianelli / Achieng et al. 2024: 344).

A closer look at the crises of the Anthropocene shows the existential unity of humanity today is a product of its historical inequality. As the history of colonialism, globalisation, and capitalism shows, humanity is not equally responsible for causing the Anthropocene. The colonial system and the production of capital has produced a contradiction between historical global injustice, which challenges our understanding of humanity as a unified group, and planetary unity in the face of existential crises. We must consider two levels of global inequality, one epistemic and one material.

First, epistemic inequality is based on the process of human differentiation: "Cultural and historical differences were often used by European colonisers to make subordinated peoples look like inferior and deprived versions of humanity" (Chakrabarty 2009: 24). Even today's peace research has not shed its colonial perspective. It tends to assume an over-complex concept of peace and an under-complex concept of violence based solely on social practices (Brunner 2016: 41). Indirect forms of violence, such as economic manipulation are often disregarded. As a result, there is little questioning of the extent to which certain epistemic assumptions regarding peace and peacekeeping practices may themselves reproduce violence, or whether the concepts of peace and war are being destabilised in the political reality of modernity (Neocleous 2014: 2).

Second, material inequality around the world is self-perpetuated by the environmental crises posed by the Anthropocene. The places of colonial exploitation and crime today are precisely those that are most affected by the consequences of climate change, without having sufficient epistemic, legal, and economic means at their disposal to articulate and break up this structural injustice. On the contrary, they are confronted with a continuation of the colonial history of violence, insofar as the climate crisis dramatically increases the local probability of genocidal violence due to the asymmetrical scarcity of resources between the Global North and Global South (Zimmerer 2014). The humanist idea that all people have the same right to life by means of natural law, which became constitutive of political modernity, thus remains unrealised in both material and epistemic terms. This notion has not been updated to this day because the dependency of humans on their environment is not taken seriously in humanist political theory, besides an assumption about nature's inexhaustible resources and support of human life (Lakitsch 2022: 122).

An echo of such colonial philosophy can still be heard today, which finds one of its historical origins in the natural law of the humanist Hugo Grotius. As an exemplary representative of a modern debate on natural law, he articulated not only the idea of the boundlessness and inexhaustibility of the sea, but also the distinction between a common possession of nature and a possession

through diligence and labour. He argued that those who exploit the common property of nature through diligence and labour make themselves its rightful owners (Elberfeld 2021: 56). This entanglement of law, philosophy, and capital production preserves the modern idea of a natural world created for humans and forms the justification for capitalist extractivism, which continues to this day (Chakrabarty 2021: 273).

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In the Anthropocene, it is crucial that we recognise the consequences of this tradition of thought, and in doing so acknowledge the close connection between capitalism and the climate crisis (Di Muzio 2015; Koch 2012). We must examine the fundamental assumptions underlying our modern systems and peacekeeping operations.

Questioning peacekeeping in the Anthropocene
The geological hypothesis of the Anthropocene requires us to link the global historical development of capital and political systems with the generic history of humanity and its relationship to nature. Influenced by Chakrabarty, we must question which developments of the twentieth century can provide us with the resources to deal with the challenges of our future (Chakrabarty 2009: 23). His analysis revolves around the observation that two contradictory views of human beings emerges when we view the species from the perspective of the historical development of capital systems versus from the perspective of global warming and climate change. The former views humans from the perspective of cultural plurality and historical specificity. For this reason, globalisation analyses have always revolved around the question of how the differences between human beings are to be understood. In accordance with the goals of cosmopolitan peacekeeping, such analyses are committed to intercultural approaches to tolerance that emphasise the human condition in its difference and plurality. In contrast, in the discourse on global warming, humans as members of a species have always been understood as an entity that has affected its own biosphere and environment through its diverse but simultaneous coexistence on the planet (Chakrabarty 2009: 25).

The tension between these two perspectives is preceded by a fundamental assumption about the human relationship with nature. That is, the nature of humans as a species or their "animal life" is given, remains the same, and is guaranteed by the biosphere of the planet (Chakrabarty 2021: 146). Under this assumption, the civilising project of humanity is played out as a constant moral effort to create increasingly just relations among humans. In contrast, non-human animals and the natural world are only linked to these relations insofar as they sustain human development. According to Chakrabarty, the assumption that the planet's biosphere should provide the natural foundations of life for humans indefinitely has become the hidden assumption underlying the social sciences and humanities, as well as the strict separation

drawn between anthropogenic norms and naturalised facts since the Enlightenment. Modern political life is based on the idea of safeguarding human life and property (Chakrabarty 2021: 90). In modern moral and political categories, the right to life is classically humanistic, i.e. anthropocentric, essentialist and individualised. Following Chakrabarty, we can argue that the idea of rights and the safeguarding of individual human life developed with an indifference to the total number of humans, which translated into an indifference to the biosphere as planetary boundaries have been pushed. The Anthropocene is therefore to be understood as the consequence of a scaling of the individual right to life towards the collectivist exploitation of nature, to secure the life of the autonomous individual in the course of modern capitalist societies. As Maximilian Lakitsch points out, human claims to individual autonomy and extensive use of fossil fuels – both conditions which sustain modern society in material and epistemic ways – has led to the erosion of the very preconditions underlying modernity. The confrontation with the Anthropocene reveals that human sovereignty is a "presumptuous modernist delusion" by which humans, in their striving to create just and peaceful conditions, act against the natural world which is supposed to guarantee their own survival and flourishing (Lakitsch 2023).

> As Maximilian Lakitsch points out, human claims to individual autonomy and extensive use of fossil fuels – both conditions which sustain modern society – has led to the erosion of the very preconditions underlying modernity. In striving to create just and peaceful conditions, humans act against the natural world which is supposed to guarantee their own survival and flourishing.

It is those origins of becoming modern that have led us to the current crisis of the Anthropocene. This crisis is exemplified by the fact that human civilisation has taken ecological deep time and natural resources (such as fossil fuels) for granted. In the last 200 years in particular, such resources have been considered to be at the free disposal of humanity. The assumption that the world exists for us is an epistemic perspective that has become ingrained in European and, over the last few centuries, global knowledge systems and theories of peace (Dresse / Fischhendler / Nielsen et al. 2019: 102). An analysis of the anthropological patterns of modernity, starting from the sixteenth century, is therefore the starting point for a new philosophical anthropology that consistently deconstructs how human dominion over the planet is deeply rooted in the modern self-image of humans and the separation of nature and culture. This reveals a fundamental challenge to our modern identity through which we must integrate the category of the planetary, which has been neglected since the eighteenth century, into our image of humanity. Integrating the planetary would mean decentring human beings, understanding them as just one actor among many in the network of life. Essentially, this calls for a lasting transformation of our social institutions and thus also of our idea of peace within a planetary system.

Long-term peacekeeping as ensuring planetary habitability
With the concept of the Anthropocene, Chakrabarty emphasises the geological time and the processes that make multicellular life on the planet possible, which has so far remained largely overlooked in European intellectual history (Chakrabarty 2018). His historical analysis and juxtaposition of global and planetary history introduces an aspect into the realm of the political that has been largely neglected until recently, namely long-term temporality. The Anthropocene discourse forces us to develop a new attention to the future and future people by radically questioning our past practices and current ways of life. The static thinking of theories of modernity, which have always taken the enabling conditions of life on the planet for granted, must be radically changed to allow for hope and visions of the future (Bryant / Knight 2019: 193). In the Anthropocene, it is more necessary than ever to cultivate political foresight for the prospect of long-term peacekeeping (Galaz 2019).

The far-reaching changes associated with the Anthropocene create a connection between past, present, and future people that has never been seen before. In order to adequately meet the challenges posed by the Anthropocene, it is necessary to question political practice with regard to its long-term consequences for future generations. The historical responsibility for the emergence of current crises must therefore be understood and translated by political institutions into measures that guarantee the long-term habitability of the planet for humans and nonhuman beings alike (Kotzé / Knappe 2023).

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The climate crisis, biodiversity loss, and other planetary boundaries focus our attention on the question of how to maintain the habitability of the Earth. Habitability, both in a societal and planetary sense, is based on the principle that our ability to live as a biological species necessarily depends on our relationship with other non-human actors and the shared use of limited resources. Classically, this relationship has been studied only under a paradigm of distributive justice and utility maximisation that has reproduced the vices – speaking from a planetary perspective – of the contract-theoretic natural law tradition. This tradition is based on the idea that humans must find their self-conception against the background of an opposition between nature and non-nature. Nature is understood as the independent and indestructible backdrop against which human beings unfold world history. However, the Anthropocene reveals the acute problem that the primary focus on human welfare and justice between human beings seems increasingly inappropriate today (Chakrabarty 2021: 212). Rather, the geological and environmental conditions of the Anthropocene threaten to fundamentally jeopardise the possibility of peaceful conditions, as large parts of humanity will have to live permanently under the existential threat of ecological catastrophes and the associated social conflicts.[5] This calls for a fundamental redefinition of central political practices, including the scope of humanitarian practice as we have known it up to now. Accordingly, Chakrabarty demands a theoretical shift from the humanities and human sciences, which have so far made a moral distinction between human beings and biological life. He argues that these disciplines must overcome their anthropomorphism, which conveys the illusion that human beings, although they are a biological species, are somehow outside the natural context.
Despite all theoretical considerations, we must not lose sight of the fact that the abstract ideas of global and intergenerational justice, long-term peacekeeping, and the habitability of the planet must

always correspond to the concrete, social, political, and economic world of the present in the Anthropocene discourse. Ultimately, the political commitment to emancipatory social conditions, which can and must be named in concrete terms, determines the prospects for securing long-term peace in the Anthropocene. To give just one example, Hans Lenk refers to a utopian proposal of a treaty for a different globalisation that includes, among other things, questioning the basic principles and priorities of prevailing economic practices, reorienting the influence of science and technology towards the common good, reorganising and redistributing wealth, and limiting the influence of capital markets for the benefit of the entire world population (Lenk 2023: 10).

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Regarding the cumulative emissions gap between the Global North and the Global South, Andrew Fanning and Jason Hickel (2023) propose the policy recommendation of a compensation for atmospheric appropriation, or in other words reparations for the historical and ongoing colonisation of the atmosphere. The commitment to emancipatory social relations in the Anthropocene is, as argued in this article, directly linked to the commitment to just relations between the Global North and the Global South. In the postcolonial era, these relations remain dominated by neocolonial practices that prevent the self-determination of all people (Bhambra 2021; Ziai 2020). In this sense, postcolonial theory has a material core far removed from the question of identity. What would it mean for the hegemonic system of global order if the Global South could speak for itself? The postcolonial and decolonial discourse must not remain a metaphor for justice, recognition, and self-determination in peace and conflict research either, but must be translated into concrete material conditions (Tuck / Yang 2012: 21). We must translate our state of "planetary interdependence" (Antweiler 2011: 79) into a concrete demand for a focus on the planetary, instead of clinging to models of globalisation which emphasise national identity and difference. In the Global North in particular, this requires cultivating the insight into a twofold responsibility in educational and political institutions; namely the historical responsibility for the colonial and ecological crimes that continue to have an impact today and a responsibility towards future generations and the preservation of the planet's habitability.

Conclusion

This article has been based on the thesis that the structural problems of the present arise from unresolved injustices between past generations and now reproduce a life-threatening danger towards future generations. I have contributed to a clarification of the conditions for long-term peacekeeping. On the question of which theoretical foundations for peace are challenged by the Anthropocene, I have used Chakrabarty's writings to argue that the origins of becoming-modern have led us to many of our current ecological and social crises. Becoming modern is closely linked to colonialism and capitalist extractivism, as well as certain theoretical assumptions about the relationship of humans to nature. As shown, these assumptions can be summarised in the observation that the development of human civilisation since the Enlightenment has

taken planetary deep time and associated natural resources as a given that exists at the free disposal for humans. Against the backdrop of an assumed inexhaustible natural world, the moral effort of human beings to establish fairer relations among themselves unfolds. This model of political theory, together with its idea of peace, threatens to be rendered obsolete in the Anthropocene, as the conditions for modern life can no longer be guaranteed. Climate catastrophes and climate migration call into question our current notion of fixed nation-states, political borders, and the scope of humanitarian responsibility and demand new theoretical approaches. The self-understanding of human dominance over the planet, which is deeply rooted in the self-image of modern humans and the separation of nature and culture, demands radical ways of rethinking institutions of education and politics. Since Anthropocene research has to do with global and historical justice, the relationship between the historical responsibility for the emergence of the current ecological crises and the possibility of securing long-term peace can only be considered from a postcolonial perspective. The Anthropocene illustrates that the possibility of securing long-term peace is only feasible with radical social, economic, and political transformations, without which our idea of peace will remain deficient in the future.

> Climate catastrophes and climate migration call into question our current notion of fixed nation-states, political borders, and the scope of humanitarian responsibility and demand new theoretical approaches. The self-understanding of human dominance over the planet, which is deeply rooted in the self-image of modern humans and the separation of nature and culture, demands radical ways of rethinking institutions of education and politics.

In the context of the topic of this work, further studies are required. The perspective of the Anthropocene must be elaborated more precisely regarding its relevance for the idea and practice of long-term peacekeeping and the structures of political systems on a global scale. Moreover, this perspective can be used more strongly as an analytical framework for the epistemic and ontological foundations in political, legal, social and other discourses, as is already increasingly practiced in many cases. The theoretical clarification in this work leaves the question of concrete measures for political implementation untouched. Here, therefore, lies a further field of research that relates the analytical scheme of the Anthropocene to concrete measures of humanitarian practice, transitional justice, educational and development aid measures and has a complementary effect on the theorisation of the Anthropocene.

Endnotes

1 The author thanks Grace Clover and the three anonymous reviewers for their contribution to the peer review of this work.

2 Whether the Anthropocene is officially recognised as a geological epoch initially plays a subordinate role in the effectiveness and usefulness of the concept to this essay (Della-Sala / Goldstein / Elias et al. 2018). The concept makes it possible to take a critical look at the relationship between humans and the Earth as a planetary system and the processes that make life possible in general. In view of the geological facts underlying the term, it is also crucial to take a critical

perspective on its various interpretations and uses in the humanities, cultural studies, and social sciences.

3 While it is undoubtedly true that this applies to industrialised nations in general and, in recent decades, to China in particular, in terms of annual greenhouse gas emissions and resource extraction, the following argument must be considered. When we reflect on responsibility for climate change and other ecological crises that become apparent in the Anthropocene for the international community, historical contributions must be considered relative to the planetary boundaries that apply to all. For example, Jason Hickel (2020) argues in favour of an equity-based, scale-based, and population-adjusted attribution approach for exceeding the planetary boundary set at 350 ppm atmospheric CO_2. Assuming that the atmosphere is a limited shared commons resource with the relevant criterion being "stocks of CO_2 in the atmosphere, not annual flows" (2020: e399), Hickel then calculates "the extent to which nations have exceeded or overshot their fair share of a given safe global emissions budget" (2020: e400). His analysis indicates that the formerly colonising nations of the Global North are responsible for over 90 % of excess emissions. According to an analogous analysis of the fair-shares assessment of resource use (1970-2017), the USA and the EU-28 together are responsible for 52 %, China for 15 % and the Global South for only eight percent of global excess material use (Hickel / O'Neill / Fanning et al. 2022). More recent data supports this finding and shows that all countries of the Global North, relative to fair shares of the 1.5 °C limit, "collectively hold responsibility for the majority (91 %) of cumulative overshoot between 1960 and 2019" (Fanning / Hickel 2023: 1079). Nevertheless, the drastic rise in emissions from countries such as China and India also raises acute questions of climate responsibility that cannot be overlooked.

4 Rejections of the claim of historical responsibility for causing the climate crisis towards industrialised nations based on the argument of ignorance or the assertion that, as Alexander Zahar claims, "emitting greenhouse gases was a byproduct of a technological breakthrough that benefited humanity as nothing else has before or since" (2022: 228), massively underestimate the relation between the climate crisis and coloniality. Instead, they follow a typical narrative of modernity that ignores the systematic exploitation and underdevelopment of large parts of the world by the Global North. In general, there are weighty objections to be made against the denial of historical responsibility and reparative justice (Thompson 2017). As argued in this article in particular, the relationship between the causation of the ecological crises of the Anthropocene and traditional notions of political order and peacekeeping must also be critically reflected upon.

5 The Anthropocene, inscribed in an epochal concept, poses the threat of the collapse of the liberal international order's promise of freedom and social cohesion. The social conflicts associated with the existential threat of ecological catastrophes are struggles that are increasingly inseparable from dealing with the conditions of habitability. These new forms of social conflicts "are conflicts and struggles over a wide array of earthly, material conditions of subsistence (e.g. air, water, food, land, soil, climate) that allow individuals or collectives to subsist, to survive, or to reproduce at a moment in history where such means can no longer be taken for granted" (Carleheden / Schultz 2022: 109). The 'brutalisation of geo-social conflicts' is an intrinsically intergenerational crisis that involves the destabilisation of communities and entire regions of the world, climate migration, disputes over land use, and much more. These are social conflicts, not about emancipation and freedom, but about access to livelihoods, which poses profound challenges to the traditional policies of peacekeeping, democratic institutions, and international relations.

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At the time of writing, Lukas Kiemele was a student of interdisciplinary anthropology at the University of Freiburg. He studied philosophy and psychology in Stuttgart and Hagen and is now preparing his PhD project. In addition, he is committed to science communication with the podcast "Philosophie im 21. Jahrhundert".

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Richard Falk and David Krieger:
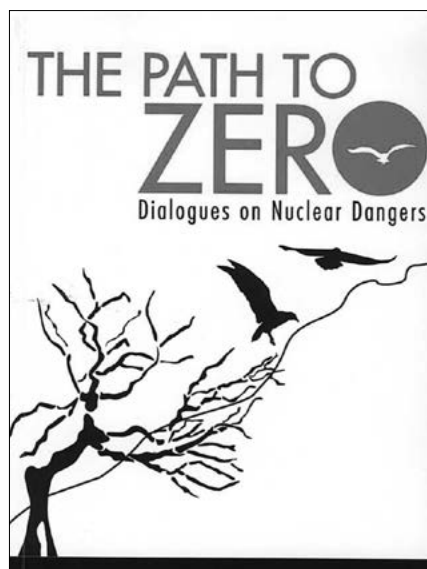# The Path to Zero: Dialogues on Nuclear Dangers

Reviewed by Gordon Hertel

It took 44 seconds for the world to enter its nuclear age. After those critical seconds, as Little Boy fell to its detonation height, the world bore witness to the greatest destructive weapon humanity had ever created. In the years since those moments, governments have expanded their arsenals to an apocalyptic sum in the name of national security. Reining in the regime of nuclear weapons is the greatest struggle young generations must face to secure a peaceful world.

The Path to Zero: Dialogues on Nuclear Dangers describes the difficulty of this struggle as well as the possibilities that lay ahead for us as a species. The work takes the form of a dialogue between the disarmament advocates Richard Falk and David Krieger. Falk has a tenure at Princeton University and has published numerous books on topics such as human rights, critical dangers to the planet, and international justice. Krieger is the founder and former president of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation and has a long history in the field of nuclear non-proliferation. He has published over forty books, the majority of which are concerned with abolishing nuclear weapons. Both authors are knowledgeable not only about the processes governing nuclear weapons in international law, but also about the steps we must take to address the threat for current and future generations. This expertise is evident throughout the discussion.

The monograph opens by declaring its overarching goal: "This book was conceived as a way to explore many of the dangers of nuclear weapons, to dig beneath the surreal surface tranquillity that has largely surrounded their existence" (xv). By demystifying the world of nuclear weapons with its strange concepts of deterrence and nuclear security, the authors shine a light on the extreme dangers that hang over us. The authors also "hope that the dialogues will be a catalyst to broader societal discussion of nuclear dangers" (xvi). With the goals of the monograph established, the introduction concludes with a positive note that personal enterprise and action can be the tool to rid the world of nuclear weapons.

The book is separated into ten chapters, each with a specific focus on one aspect of disarmament and nuclear weapons. There are several subchapters dedicated to specific points, where each author provides their insight in a few paragraphs or more. This format allows the book to cover a wide range of topics. Some sections, however, are shorter than others, with some as short as a single page. This can lead to an unbalanced reading experience, as topics shift quickly and sometimes lack in-depth analysis.

The first five chapters explore how we came to the nuclear age, how we define nuclear deterrence and proliferation, how we differentiate nuclear arms control from nuclear disarmament, and finally, how a culture of militarism influences nuclear policy. The authors begin by discussing the stakes. They state that abolishing nuclear weapons is "the most urgent struggle of our time" (21) and that "each of us who cares about the human future must act to ensure that no other cities suffer the same fate as Hiroshima and Nagasaki" (23). As the book was written in 2012, the authors examine then President Barack Obama's Prague speech made in 2009 announcing the 'New START' arms control program. In this speech he sets the US's goal for a world without nuclear weapons and a better peaceful humanity. Throughout the work, the authors refer to this speech as a critical moment in recent nuclear arms developments but are hesitant to say it led us closer to a world without nuclear weapons. Rather, they point out the differences between arms control, which is "very much in keeping with the reliance on nuclear weapons for various forms of deterrence" (66) and disarmament, which seeks absolute removal of nuclear weapons from all states. The authors spend much of the first five chapters discussing the significance of the Prague speech and its contradictions in comparison to more substantial disarmament propositions such as the McCloy-Zorin Accords.

Chapters 4 and 5 focus primarily on the goal of disarmament and what impedes our progress towards a world without nuclear weapons. As Falk states, "to achieve a breakthrough […] we need to aim above the target to have any chance of hitting it" (75). This means the aim of disarmament should be to undo a deeply rooted systemic reliance on violence and war. To achieve this goal, all nuclear states must "unconditionally declare No First Use of nuclear weaponry […] propose the negotiation of a multilateral treaty to establish an upper limit on defence spending to 1 percent of gross national product" (78) and "give the nuclear weapon states until 2015 to put forward a serious nuclear disarmament proposal" (79). These last chapters of the first half of the monograph explore viable options for long-term disarmament and how a culture of militarism can affect the disarmament process. To usher in an age of disarmament and escape the nuclear era, the authors argue that a global change must begin with the United States but requires a massive shift in the US's militaristic culture. As militarism stems from political elites, it is the average citizen who must be engaged politically and fight against this culture of war. Breaking this culture will encourage politicians to dismantle complacency and reliance on deterrence. We should not be comfortable with several states having nuclear weapons capable of ending the world, and the authors want more citizens to be aware of this fact.

In the second half of the monograph, Falk and Krieger investigate international law, nuclear energy, and democracy to see how nuclear weapons have entwined themselves with our global perception of safety and weaponry. Between the Fukushima nuclear incident and growing concerns about Iran's nuclear program, tensions about nuclear energy in 2012 were high. The authors also share concerns regarding nuclear power in general, as "in effect, a sophisticated nuclear energy program provides a country with a threshold capability to produce weaponry in a short period or by covert means" (102). The authors criticise the further developments in nuclear power in the United States, China, and India, and praise Germany for its prompt shutdown of its nuclear power program. Having discussed nuclear energy at length, the authors then move on to analysing nuclear weapons from the perspective of international law.

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) is surprisingly lax when it comes to nuclear weapons. The organisation only provides states with recommendations or official opinions. The authors consider these facts thoroughly and make numerous observations about the policy of nuclear deterrence, the ineffectiveness of global institutions at encouraging disarmament, and the role citizens play in this legal context. The authors argue for a mass movement that not only fights against the presence of nuclear weapons, but the culture of militarism in the US as well. The authors do focus primarily on the US in their criticism of militarism and would have done well to include other nations affected by this dangerous ideology. Krieger states that the "most important challenge of the Nuclear Age is to awaken people everywhere, particularly young people, and engage them in ending both nuclearism and militarism. If we cannot bring about rapid change toward a culture of peace, at least we can plant the seeds" (156). By encouraging a fight against both nuclear weapons and militarism, the authors also seek to fight the culture of complacency in everyday life. This culture was built by excluding vital details from the public eye and making nuclear weapons undemocratic.

In chapter 9, the authors critique the undemocratic approaches towards nuclear weapons: "It seems to me that nuclear weapons, by their nature and the threat posed by their spread to other countries, demand a high level of secrecy, which may simply be incompatible with democratic practice" (174). This begs the question: How can citizens in a state that claims to be democratic accept something so incompatible with this principle? Krieger acknowledges this contradiction and states that nuclear weapons damage democracy "but only insofar as the people acquiesce and are content to remain complacent bystanders. I continue to believe that the potential of democracy, but only of an active and engaged democracy, offers a way out" (178). The authors construct this point well but could have made their argument more concrete by offering potential methods to create this open and engaged democracy. The realm of digital activism and engagement, for example, has developed significantly in the last twenty years and could provide a means to engage the public in a campaign against nuclear proliferation and create this space on a large scale. The authors could have utilised this method for engaging the public as a suggestion for individuals or grassroots organisations to engage wider civil society. In the concluding chapter, the authors consider what means may be used to get the public engaged and on the 'path to zero'.

To conclude the discussion, the authors turn toward the practical means of beginning the titular path to zero. They consider the difficulty of translating the aspirational (some would even argue utopian) goal of a peaceful world to a political project. The first step is a 'No First Use Policy' implemented by the United States.

If the US cannot be the leaders of a disarmament movement, the authors are in favour of progress beginning elsewhere – such as in non-nuclear states. Beyond this political dimension, there exists a cultural one as well. For this, the authors highlight the importance of youth and their capacity for action against injustice. The book then ends with a call for action for people of all ages and nationalities, as nuclear weapons are a global threat – with potential consequences that would transcend state boundaries.

The Path to Zero: Dialogues on Nuclear Dangers is a mix of dialogue and manifesto designed to paint a picture of the movement for nuclear disarmament and its challenges. Other reviewers such as Lawrence Wittner calls the monograph "a work of great insight and wisdom – an important part of a global transformation". John Scales Avery states that the book "shakes us out of our complacency". I agree with both sentiments and can only highlight the works' power. Its passages on deterrence through nuclear weaponry help reveal why it fails as a security concept, as well as how both the decision makers *and* the civil society of nuclear states are entrenched in the military industrial complex.

Despite its slightly uneven pacing, the work flows seamlessly from point to point. Many of the observations are strongly outlined; however, there are some improvements that can be made. The authors invest much of their time outlining the illegitimacy of nuclear weapons and although this is done through different lenses such as international law, civil action, and others, it still leaves the monograph feeling repetitive. There is also only a brief discussion of practical solutions toward the end. The absence of in-depth case studies, paired with the focus on the US, gives the analysis a narrow focus. There is a brief anti-colonialist message which is appreciated, but other nations are mostly mentioned only in their capacity to obtain nuclear weapons. China's No First Use Policy is still in effect but was only mentioned in passing. A more detailed discussion of this policy could have provided an insightful case study revealing the steps other nations are taking against nuclear weapons. As mentioned, the authors are primarily focused on the United States; however, nuclear weapons pose an existential risk to both current and future generations around the globe and require a unified effort not exclusive to the US. Looking into other nations could have provided a more global perspective.

The authors also invest an entire chapter to the dangers of nuclear energy as a means for nuclear proliferation. The authors could have also considered the dangers of the climate crisis as well here. Nuclear power is a recyclable energy source that provides a means (or at least a temporary stopgap) to the encroaching climate crisis. By advocating for the complete removal of all nuclear power to prevent proliferation, is this not feeding another, slower apocalypse? Where do we strike a middle ground between preventing proliferation and still creating usable energy?

The Path to Zero is a dense discussion with a broad collection of ideas. The book is well written with strong observations made surrounding contemporary events in 2012; however, the authors could have employed more in-depth global case studies to aid the goals of the book. This book works well as an introduction to disarmament, especially for those who are still persuaded by concepts such as deterrence. Despite these critiques, *The Path to Zero* is a powerful work which serves its goal well as an open door to the diverse and compelling literature on disarmament.
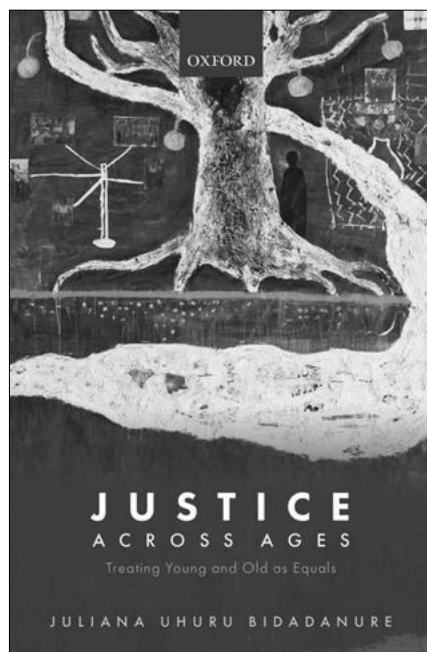
Juliana Bidadanure:
Justice Across Ages: Treating Young and Old as Equals

Reviewed by Grace Clover

Intuitively, we are much less concerned by unequal treatment of age groups than we are by gendered or racial discrimination. Whereas we would be rightly alarmed by people of a certain race receiving unequal job opportunities, we seem less bothered by, for example, the increased vulnerability of young people to precarious or poorly paid work. We all age, and thus we assume that differential treatment of age groups is unproblematic, as it may well be "compatible with equal treatment across our whole lives" (7). Does this suggest that age, as a category, is different from race and gender? And if so, how can we develop a theory of justice which considers age? These are the questions that Juliana Bidadanure – a French political and moral philosopher at New York University – poses in her monograph *Justice Across Ages: Treating Young and Old as Equals* (2021).

This monograph represents the culmination of 10 years of Bidadanure's research on intergenerational justice, relational egalitarianism, and youth policy. She proposes the thesis that "young and old [...] should be treated as equals, but not necessarily always equally, and often not the same" (7), offering a framework for assessing fair and prudent distribution of resources between coexisting generations and for distinguishing between acceptable (or even advisable) and objectionable differential treatments of age groups.

In chapter 1, Bidadanure explains the distinction between 'age groups' and 'birth cohorts'. For Bidadanure, an age group is a group of people at a specific stage of their lives (e.g. adolescents, middle age), whereas birth cohorts are groups of people born at the same specific point in time (e.g. the so-called baby boomers or millennials). Most of us will live long enough to pass through multiple age groups, but our birth cohort remains the same throughout our lives. For example, a person born in 2012 is a still a child today, will be an adolescent in a few years, and a young adult a few years after that. Thus, according to Bidadanure's definition, this person moves through different 'age groups' as they grow older. Throughout their entire life, however, this child born remains a member of a 'birth cohort' born in 2012, and also a part of the colloquially named 'Gen Z' born between 1997 and 2012. That means that whereas birth cohorts are context specific, and depend on the time of one's birth, age groups exist outside of historical context. In terms of policy, when we talk about younger people experiencing more negative consequences of climate change over their whole lives compared to older people, or people who lived in the past, this is an issue of inequality between cohorts. On the other hand, the exclusion of young people under a certain age from voting – which has existed for thousands of years – is an issue between different age-groups. Similarly, when we talk about not wanting to over-burden active workers when financing the pension system, this is an question of age-groups. Bidadanure argues that most research into intergenerational justice deals with what we owe future generations (an issue of birth-cohort equality, that is, between all currently living people and people yet to be born), whereas the relationships between coexisting age groups are relatively neglected. This monograph represents her attempt to fill this academic gap.

Having justified her primary focus on age-group equality, Bidadanure considers the question whether equality is a "diachronic value" or a "synchronic value" (8). For Bidadanure, if equality is 'diachronic' it is assessed across a whole life (the 'complete life view'). This kind of equality can be both interpersonal and intrapersonal. On the other hand, for Bidadanure, 'synchronic' equality is assessed by making interpersonal comparisons at any given time (e.g. between a person who is 20 in 2024 and a different person who is 50 in 2024). She argues that we think diachronically instinctively, as we often accept inequalities between young and old when young people can reasonably expect to reach the same position over the course of their whole life. For example, we might prioritise a 20-year-old over an 80-year-old for a transplant, as we assume that the quality and length of the 80-year-old's *complete life* impacts their entitlement in the present. Synchronic inequalities are not inherently problematic for Bidadanure, but she suggests that there is reason to believe that they can be problematic if they meet certain criteria (more on this in chapters 2 and 3).

In chapter 2, Bidadanure builds upon Norman Daniels' 1988 work *Am I my parent's keeper?* and his proposed 'prudential lifespan account' (PLA). This is understood as an ideal intrapersonal distribution of resources across one's life which neither young nor old could object to as unfair. However, Bidadanure argues that we shouldn't just be concerned with equality over one's complete lifespan, but also with making a life as go as well as possible from an impartial perspective. She thus supplements Daniels' PLA, arguing that inequalities between young and old must meet two further criteria to be unproblematic. First, she proposes her principle of 'lifespan sufficiency'. According to this principle, institutions must maintain individuals above two thresholds: an absolute minimum standard, which ensures that people can live free from deprivation, and an age-relative threshold defined as a "normal opportunity range". This is understood as a "reasonable

array of plans for a given age group in a given society at a given time" (83). This principle justifies differential treatment in response to unequal needs (e.g. greater healthcare spending on the elderly). The second principle, called 'lifespan efficiency', suggests that "institutions should allocate resources earlier rather than later […] when doing so would increase diachronic returns significantly" (64). Together, these principles form Bidadanure's own principle called 'lifespan prudence'.

As Bidadanure argues, lifespan prudence works within the grain of intersectional thought and fosters socio-economic as well as intergenerational justice. This is a key strength of Bidadanure's theory. Whereas Daniels isolates age-group issues, assuming that all other forms of justice are in place, Bidadanure's lifespan efficiency deals explicitly with the diachronic clustering of disadvantage over time, known as 'corrosive disadvantage' (82). We observe such corrosive disadvantage in the fact that young people without wealthy families are less likely to be able to take unpaid work experience and are thus more likely to suffer the long-term scarring impacts of youth unemployment. As studies show, those who are unemployed at a young age suffer a wage penalty of up to 13-21% in their forties (144). Thus, the recommendation of the lifetime efficiency principle to invest in youth employment opportunities can also be used to mitigate the entrenchment of socio-economic divides. The lifetime sufficiency principle would also help disadvantaged groups by creating a minimum sufficiency threshold, dramatically altering, for example, the experience of disability in old age.

Moving away from the 'complete life view' discussed in chapters 1 and 2, in chapter 3 Bidadanure argues that there is a category of temporary *synchronic* inequality that we should be concerned about, which cannot be explained in distributive diachronic terms. She argues that we should be suspicious of synchronic inequalities created by inegalitarian interpersonal relationships such as "domination, marginalization, stigmatization, demonization, and infantilization" (85), even if these are compatible with complete life and birth cohort equality. In doing so, Bidadanure introduces a relational egalitarian supplement to her distributive egalitarian theory – her principle of 'synchronic relational equality' (85). Influenced by Elizabeth Anderson, Bidadanure argues that purely distributive theories of egalitarianism such as McKerlie's 'simultaneous segments egalitarianism' fail to account for the structures, attitudes, and relationships which create oppression (96). She argues that such relations hinder the ability of different age groups to relate to each other as moral equals. Accordingly, we should be suspicious of the infantilisation of the elderly and young adults, the political marginalisation of youth, and the physical segregation of the elderly.

In chapter 4, Bidadanure summarises the principles of 'approximate birth cohort equality', 'lifetime sufficiency', 'lifetime efficiency', and 'synchronic relational equality' once more and addresses potential conflicts between them. While some of these principles are very unlikely to conflict, she concedes that the principle of lifetime sufficiency could conflict with birth cohort efficiency in times of demographic change. In this case, Bidadanure argues that age-group justice might come at the cost of cohort equality, meaning that younger generations are disproportionately burdened as they attempt to finance older cohorts with higher birth-rates. Unlike NGOs such as the FRFG which are concerned about such a prospect, Bidadanure argues that such a notion might not necessarily be problematic. If we are pluralist in the currency of egalitarianism we use, she argues, we

might find that younger cohorts will live longer and healthier lives than past cohorts, which would compensate them for their relative financial burden. In short, an increased financial burden might not result in decreased welfare or range of opportunities.

In *Part 2* Bidadanure applies her theory to a few key policy areas. In chapter 5, she deals more concretely with the issue of youth vulnerability in the labour market. She considers policy examples, such as the 2013 the EU Youth Employment Initiative and the French 'contrats de generations' (generational contracts) introduced in the same year. Returning to her lifespan prudence principles she argues that it is acceptable, or even advisable, to prioritise investment in youth employment as this helps avoid corrosive disadvantage and allows young people to realise normal aspirations. She rejects, however, the idea of a duty on the part of the older people to retire to 'free up space' in the labour market, arguing that such policies are generally based upon ageist stereotypes which don't stand up to synchronic relational equality. She also argues that there is very little evidence that such policies create new job opportunities. Finally, she argues that young people are particularly poorly treated by welfare contractualist systems. In France, for example, under-25s have many more requirements to qualify for the 'revenu minimum' (minimum income benefits) because it is assumed that they will receive help from their parents. Many feel that the young should be capable of and willing to work any job, and thus we normalise young people being in precarious financial positions.

Continuing the theme of welfare politics, in chapter 6 Bidadanure compares proposals for universal basic income (UBI) with the notion of basic capital (BC). UBI is a "policy proposal consisting of a regular cash payment given to all members of a community without means-test and with no strings attached" (183). Alternatively, BC involves a large cash instalment at the beginning of one's adult life. Based on lifespan sufficiency and synchronic relational equality, Bidadanure concludes that the UBI is more prudent and more just than BC, as it would raise individuals above an absolute sufficiency threshold and remove the stigma associated with benefits. The UBI would also allow individuals to find meaningful employment and avoid dominating relationships (194). Ultimately, Bidadanure proposes introducing the UBI throughout adulthood, with an attached 'baby-bond' throughout childhood, allowing 18-year-olds to plan for the long-term.

Finally, in chapter 7 Bidadanure considers the problems with the *de facto* (and in the case of the USA, *de jure*) exclusion of young adults from becoming politicians. She also notes the relative disenfranchisement of young people. For example, in the 2018 US midterms under Trump only 35% of 18–29-year-olds registered to vote compared to 65% of those over 65. Bidadanure sees these two issues as problems for democratic legitimacy, creating an "intergenerational democratic deficit" and promoting short-term decision making (210). To remedy this, she proposes lowering the voting age to 16, showing young people that they are valued citizens and moral equals. She also suggests that youth quotas in parliaments should be seriously considered, as have already been successfully trialled in Uganda, Kenya, and Morocco. There are both instrumental and symbolic reasons for this. On the one hand, having more young people in parliament would counter patriarchal assumptions about young people being lazy or apathetic citizens. On the other hand, Bidadanure argues that quotas would increase experiential diversity within parliament, inspire better youth-turn out, and likely lead to a better representation of youth interests and intergenerationally just policies.

All in all, Bidadanure offers an extremely considered, balanced, and persuasive account for justice across ages in this work. She introduces all her principles with clear thought experiments and real-life policy examples. She also takes great care to engage systematically with possible objections to her account, acknowledging the potential limitations of her own theories, whilst still convincingly arguing for their credibility.

One wonders how her policies could be implemented, however. She does argue that increasing the representation of young people in parliaments would also increase the likelihood of intergenerationally just policies, as it is young people who will be affected by presentist policies in the future. However, without legally implemented checks on policy, such as the 2015 Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act, a framework such as Bidadanure's might struggle to have wider influence.

The more fundamental objections to Bidadanure's account relate to her treatment of future generations, or what she calls 'approximate birth cohort equality'. Throughout the monograph Bidadanure does argue for the importance of equality between birth cohorts, and systematically demonstrates the ways that her principles would work within this framework. She is also right to suggest that much moral philosophy dealing with intergenerational issues focuses on future people, whereas age-group justice between coexisting groups is relatively neglected. However, I would challenge the underlying implication that birth cohort injustice is widely accepted as a problem. While a YouGov survey this year found that 84% of Britons believe that young people today will find it harder than their parents to buy a home, comments such as those of NatWest chairman Sir Howard Davies' that it shouldn't be "that difficult" to get on the property ladder still gain huge media traction.[1] A narrative which accuses younger birth cohorts of lacking resilience and frivolous spending is remarkably pernicious, despite empirical evidence that housing, for example, is much more expensive today than it was 20 years ago.[2] Evidence also suggests that 123 of the 535 elected officials in the 118th US congress deny the existence of human-caused climate change, which must be seen as a denial of the rights of future birth cohorts.[3] I'm sure that Bidadanure is very aware of this. But she overestimates a larger political community in assuming that birth cohort equality is a widely accepted priority. Moreover, I would challenge Bidadanure's argument that increased financial burdens on young people in the context of social security systems and ageing societies would not necessarily damage their well-being or opportunities. Her flexible use of egalitarian currencies is helpful in other ways, but this argument seems implausible, and conflicts with many of her other pro-early investment conclusions.

The work also seems to be lacking a developed understanding of birth cohorts taken as all people alive today, compared to all people who will be alive in the future. Such a notion is helpful when assessing our responsibilities to dealing with climate justice, for example.

That being said, Bidadanure offers an invaluable contribution to intergenerational research in offering a framework for dealing with age-group injustices. Birth cohorts are, as Bidadanure declares, not the main focus of the work. This monograph lives up to its goal to broaden the reader's understanding of social justice and to work within the grain of intersectional thought by including age and time as a category. Bidadanure's research is all the more impressive for drawing attention to many injustices that we often accept unquestioningly, such as the disproportionate vulnerability of young people to precarious or demeaning work, or the assumption that youth is a proxy for inexperience and (political) immaturity. While many people remain attached to hierarchical thinking and a narrative of lifelong upward progression, Bidadanure offers very strong reasons for us to rethink many assumptions about society and to assert justice across ages. I would wholeheartedly recommend this work for all those interested in moral philosophy, social justice, and intergenerational issues.

Endnotes

1 Smith, Mathew (2024): Compared to 2012, few think things have gotten any easier for the next generation. *https://yougov.co.uk/society/articles/48411-compared-to-2012-few-think-things-have-gotten-any-easier-for-the-next-generation.* Viewed 14 August 2024.

2 See Intergenerational Foundation (2024): Locked out: Intergenerational unfairness in the housing market. *https://www.if.org.uk/research-posts/locked-out-intergenerational-unfairness-in-the-housing-market/.* Viewed 14 August 2024.

3 So, Kat (2024): Climate Deniers of the 118th Congress. *https://www.americanprogress.org/article/climate-deniers-of-the-118th-congress/.* Viewed 14 August 2024.