

## **Introduction**

*Marc Caron*

*Candidate for M.A. degree in Peace and Conflict Studies  
University of North Carolina Greensboro*

*Melissa Henninger*

*M.A. in Peace and Conflict Studies  
University of North Carolina Greensboro*

**&**

*Jeremy Rinker, Ph.D.*

*Associate Professor of Peace and Conflict Studies  
University of North Carolina Greensboro*

The staff of the *Global Journal of Peace Research and Praxis (GJPRP)* would like to welcome you to Volume 3. We apologize for the delay in publishing between volume 2 and this Fall/Winter 2021 edition. While publishing the academic work of students and educators comes with many challenges, we enthusiastically share with you a group of works containing original research and reviews around the topic of structural inequities and systemic racism. In our current politically polarized world with an ongoing global pandemic, we are excited this volume is now ready for release and believe you will not be disappointed with the results. Our hope is that this latest volume, which reflects a revised structure and focus on student voices, will encourage close readings and collaboration among peace practitioners. We also believe that this issue reflects the future approach of our journal as a unique space for emerging scholars studying all issues related to peace. Our new structure will be open to submissions from authors who will share their research, praxis, opinions, artistic works, and film and book reviews. We welcome your submissions and hope that you will share this issue and our most recent call with friends and colleagues. In this volume, the reader will find a range of original works that address the implications of a world where injustices situate certain populations as “other.” Exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the authors share stories of trauma, resilience, and power imbalances and offer solutions for the prejudiced

treatment of marginalized populations that offers hope for a future devoid of structures that contribute to the oppression and/or the subordination of many populations. The film and book reviews that are included at the end of Volume 3 also reflect some of the same structural violence and inequalities found in the literature review and research presented beforehand but conclude with promises of hope and accomplishment in the face of unthinkable human conditions and tragedies.

Peace and Conflict Studies (PCS) is a complex field. It is multidisciplinary and incorporates disparate traditional fields of study. It is also interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary, making the question of who a PCS researcher and practitioner is even more complicated. The field has evolved through phases starting with the aspirations of returned veterans post-World War II and continuing into the tumultuous peace protests of the 1960s. Following the 1970s Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) movement, a period that helped acknowledge PCS as a professional field of study and praxis, the field has evolved as a recognized discipline of study that emphasizes human rights and human needs analysis to identify the root causes and different levels of conflict. This evolution has more recently morphed into a present-day field of study that aims to transform conflict from a negative state to a positive state characterized by equality and justice (Reimer et al., 2015; Matyok et al., 2012). The first article in this issue, co-written by Dr. Ali Askerov and Christelle Barakat, evaluates the field of Peace and Conflict Studies (PCS) by answering the following questions: how is the field of PCS defined? how did PCS evolve from its origins to the present day? what does the term PCS really mean? what areas of study fall under the umbrella of PCS? Askerov and Barakat succinctly and cleverly give the reader an inside look into the field of PCS. Their article, entitled, *Peace and Conflict Studies: Evolution, Relevance, and Approaches for Change*, provides a rich backdrop and foundation for the remaining pieces in Volume 3.

The remaining articles presented in this issue expose readers to examples of structural and cultural violence. Structural and cultural violence do not exist in a vacuum. Galtung (1969; 1990) uses the terms structural violence and social injustice interchangeably and defines cultural violence as norms and values that strengthen structural and direct violence. The articles in this issue present examples of how positive change is possible through cooperation, relationship building, changes in attitudes, and paradigm shifts (Kuhn, 1962/1996) toward a world where opportunities for positive results are available to all populations.

The second article, *Creating Zones of Peace for Undocumented Residents During the Covid-19 Pandemic: Civil Society Efforts in North Carolina*, co-written by Zulfiya Tursunova, Heide Castañeda, David Fraccaro, and Jennifer Marquez-Trejo uses storytelling to share the impact of federal immigration enforcement on undocumented populations. The authors describe how civil society has created sanctuary spaces and support for undocumented residents, protecting them from possible deportation, and providing them with vital resources needed to navigate a society that neglects this marginalized group. The local efforts were sustained despite the COVID-19 pandemic that has disproportionately impacted immigrants who often lack the economic resources and health insurance to keep them safe from illness.

The third article, *The People vs. The Virus: Food Insecurity in the U.S. and the Impacts of COVID-19*, written by Megan Severn, a UNCG graduate of the Peace and Conflict Studies program, examines the complex social patterns and common occurrence of food insecurity. COVID-19 presented both dilemmas and opportunities to fight this structural conflict. Severn applies human needs theory to illuminate the scourge of food insecurity on vulnerable populations. The pragmatic solutions provided by Severn give the reader hope that the potential exists for improving the overall health and lives of people experiencing food insecurity.

Lastly, in her work titled, *Building Resiliency and Collective Power in the Workplace Through Trauma Informed, Socially Just Conflict Transformation*, Sapphira Kelsey Lam introduces her approach to affecting change in the field of organizational behavior and organizations that are built on top-down power structures. According to Lam, workplace power structures contribute to identity-based conflict and trauma which in turn contribute to structural and cultural indifferences leaving the powerless in conflict with the powerful. Lam examines two ways in which organizations can be more democratic leading to more equitable and experience-based organizations.

This publication of the *Global Journal of Peace Research and Praxis* ends with one book review and one movie review. *The Cat I Never Named: A True Story of Love, War, and Survival*, a novel written by Dr. Amra Sabic-El-Reyes and reviewed by Vikramaditya (Vik) Joshi, highlights the resilience of a Bosnian-Muslim student to pursue her education despite the backdrop of war. For the main character, education is a powerful counterpoint to victims of inflamed rhetoric and violence. The reviewer notes the timeliness of the book's publication within present-day societies where harmful and racially motivated rhetoric is on the rise. The final piece included in Volume 3 is a film review by Denisha Shah. Shah reviews the film *The Man Who Knew Infinity* based on the book of the same name by Robert Kanigel. Shah undertakes a theoretical analysis of the classism and racism between a self-educated mathematician and his more traditionally trained critics. Her review draws from Lederach's (1997) integrated framework for building peace to find comprehensive solutions that include stakeholders at all levels of the conflict.

As the short and long-term effects of the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, are illuminated and understood, academic thinking will expand on what has been done right and where global societies have faltered in response to the many pandemic challenges. The latest volume of the *Global Journal of Peace Research and Praxis* presents the reader with issues ranging from structural conflict and how the COVID-

19 pandemic has altered life locally and nationally to how organizations might build more democratic workplaces and help eliminate cultural and structural biases. Additionally, this latest volume presents the reader with a book and a film review whose topics are pertinent in today's international system.

We, the editorial staff of the *Global Journal of Peace Research and Praxis* are pleased to share this volume of the journal. We believe our Fall/Winter 2021 volume provides meaningful and timely contributions that juxtapose conflict and the potential for justice and peace. It is our hope that the articles and reviews in this issue will expose the reader to creative and attainable solutions to structural conflicts present in our communities, locally and globally, some exacerbated by a global pandemic, others by a history of failure to act against inequality, biases, and stereotypes. Now more than ever, vigorous discourse and innovative solutions are needed to help navigate the challenges in our global community.

*Best Wishes and thank you for reading the GJPRP,*

Christelle Barakat, Candidate for M.A. degree in PCS/UNCG

Marc Caron, Candidate for M.A. degree in PCS/UNCG

Melissa Henninger, M.A. PCS/UNCG

Jeremy Rinker, Associate Professor of PCS/UNCG

### References

Galtung, J. (1969). Violence, Peace, and Peace Research. *Journal of Peace Research*, 6(3), 167–191.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/422690>

Galtung, J. (1990). Cultural Violence. *Journal of Peace Research*, 27(3), 291–305.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/423472>

Kuhn, T. (1962/1996). *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. University of Chicago Press.

Lederach, J. P. (1997). *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*. United States Institute of Peace Press.

Matyók, T., Senehi, J., and Byrne, S. (2012). *Critical Issues in Peace and Conflict Studies: Theory, Practice, and Pedagogy*. Lexington Books.

Reimer, L. E., Schmitz, C. L., Janke, E. M., Askerov, A., Strahl, B. T., and Matyok, T. G. (2015). *Transformative Change: An Introduction to Peace and Conflict Studies*. Lexington Books.