

A Peace Research Agenda for the 21st Century: Report on an International Workshop held in Tokyo, 6 – 8 December 2019

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Introduction

What is the future agenda for peace research in the 2020s? Does peace research still have a distinct identity? What are the norms and values that peace research institutes espouse and can they influence practice in the face of the global challenges we face? A meeting of the world's major peace research institutes, convened in Tokyo by the Toda Peace Institute, addressed these questions over two and a half days in December 2019.

The meeting mapped out a new agenda for peace research, based on the main challenges which face the field. These include (1) climate change (2) populism, nationalism, authoritarianism and threats from social media (3) new emerging technologies with security implications, including cyber, AI and autonomous weapons. The workshop identified the potential for collaborative partnerships between the peace research institutes in these areas. It also identified new research directions on gender and violence and in arms control. The workshop explored strategies for better integrating research and practice, and outlined elements of a Code of Conduct for Peace Research institutes.

Questions for the Field

Three background papers identified key themes for the discussion.¹ Does the field have a centre, and if so, what is it? Has peace research become too close to policy-makers, losing its critical and normative edge? Is it too wedded to a theory of change in which top-down policymakers are expected to take up findings drawn from aggregated, decontextualised quantitative analyses?

Is the field to be conceived as research *for* peace or research *about* peace? If the latter, is the conceptualisation of peace encapsulated in the idea of 'positive peace' still persuasive? Do peace researchers agree on what they mean by peace? Do practitioners engaged in peace-building share the same understanding of the field as researchers? If not, how is it possible to overcome the research-practice gap?

The history of the field is often told as a succession of disputes. While these now lie in the past, there is still plenty of diversity in the field with regard to norms, ethical orientations and research approaches. Peace researchers have come from different parts of the world, from different disciplines and with different motivations. This raises the question of whether peace research is best seen as a single tradition with a common agenda, or a meeting ground for linked areas of work, not necessarily carried out in peace research institutes.

The workshop did not resolve all these questions, but it did demonstrate that peace research institutes and practitioners value talking together, that they can agree on a common agenda, and that they are willing to collaborate to develop that agenda further.

Mapping the Field

The workshop brought together representatives of 22 peace research institutes, from Japan, New Zealand, the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Argentina and Colombia². They included some of the most influential institutes in the world. A further four institutes from Syria, Thailand, Palestine and Sri Lanka participated

¹ The three papers are: Avruch, Kevin, 'Does Our Field Have a Centre?' *International Journal of Conflict Engagement and Resolution* 1 (1) 2013; Krause, Keith 'Emancipation and Critique in Peace and Conflict Research', *Journal of Global Security Studies*, 0(0), 2019, 1-7; Wulf, Herbert, '50th Anniversary of the German Association for Peace and Conflict Research: Key Note Address', 12 April 2018, Berlin

² The institutes were: Toda Peace Institute, Japan; National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Otago, New Zealand; US Institute of Peace (USIP), USA; Karuna Center for Peacebuilding, USA; S-CAR, George Mason University, USA; School of Peace and Conflict Studies, Kent State University, USA; Search for Common Ground, USA; Alliance for Peacebuilding, USA; Conflict Analysis Research Centre (CARC), University of Kent, UK; Conflict Research Society, UK; Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI); Berghof Foundation, Germany; Hamburg Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy, Germany; Bonn International Center for Conversion (BCC), Germany; Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, Sweden; Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Sweden; Coordinadora Regional de Investigaciones Economicas y Sociales (CRIES), Argentina; Fundacion Ideas para la Paz (FIP), Colombia; Nagasaki University (RECNA), Japan; International Peace Research Institute, Meiji Gakuin University, (PRIME), Japan; Interpeace, Geneva; Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding Graduate Institute, Geneva.

by responding to a questionnaire. The participating institutions included academic and research institutions and peacebuilding NGOs.

In order to map the field, participants were invited to complete a survey before the meeting. The questions covered current projects and future research plans, the normative values that guide research, whether peace research and practice has evolved as a separate field, the extent to which external funding drives research, the challenges to the field and the conditions which favour a positive impact on peacemaking. The results are summarised here and fuller details are available on request.

Current Research Topics

The research interests of the institutes were diverse but the most common topics of research (in order by the number of institutes working on them), were:

Conflict resolution, prevention and transformation (7)
Non-violence, violence reduction, prevention (7)
Reconciliation (6)
Development and peacebuilding (6)
Arms control and disarmament (6)
Climate change, conflict and security (6)

The next most common topics, with at least three institutes working on them, were:

Gender and peacebuilding/ gender inequality (4)
Denuclearisation (North Korea, NWFZ) (3)
Security sector reform (3)
Social media, technology and peacebuilding (3)

The following topics had two institutes working on them:

Defence industry and arms transfers (2)
Preventing violent extremism/critical terrorism studies (2)
Youth, peace and security (2)
Regional peace and security (2)
Participatory action research (2)
Non-state armed groups (2)
Mediation, dialogue (2)

A large number of other topics attracted only one institute.

Challenges to the Field

It is interesting to compare the most popular topics in current research with those identified by the institutes as challenges for the field over the next 50 years. The main challenges were seen to be:

Climate change and conflict (14)
Emerging technologies, cyber and social media (8)
Nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction (7)
The rise of populism, authoritarian leadership and ethnonationalism (5)
Division and polarisation, identity crisis and inequality (5)

This shows a clear direction of travel for the future agenda of peace research.

A number of participants also expressed concern about more immediate challenges to peace research as a field: the quest for independence and sustainable funding, the risk that the field could become dominated or supplanted by security experts with a state security agenda, the difficulty of preserving interdisciplinarity, and the erosion of peace research norms.

The Geographical Focus of Research

The main geographical areas that were the subjects of the institutes' research were Africa (12), Southern and Southeast Asia (12), Northeast Asia (10) the Middle East (8), and Latin America (7). Another group of regions attracted some attention: Europe/EU (6), Oceania/Pacific (5). Russia, North America and Central Asia attracted three institutes each. Others reported a global focus (6) or a focus on the UN (2). It was striking that most institutes work mainly on issues in regions other than the one where they are based.

Has Peace Research and Practice Evolved as a Separate Field?

More than two thirds of the participants felt that peace research and practice has evolved as a separate field of academic or practical endeavour.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Field

The strengths of the field were perceived to lie especially in its breadth, diversity and interdisciplinarity. However, participants felt that it is difficult to maintain interdisciplinarity in the face of pressures, especially in universities, from discipline-based research metrics and the vagaries of the student market. The domination of journals published in English was seen to affect the geographical balance of the field.

Extent to which External Funders Drive Research

Participants estimated that 38% of the work in the field is determined by the priorities and interests of governments and external funding agencies, and this raised grounds for concern about the independence of the peace research agenda.

Methodologies Used

Qualitative methods were used in most of the research (85%), though quantitative methods were reported in 40% of the work and problem-solving in 40% (many projects use more than one of these methods). A concern was expressed that peace research has become extractive, reflecting the domination of the field by northern publishers and funders. Many

researchers had withdrawn from researching their own countries to focus on macro-level issues or conflicts in other countries, and were only now beginning to turn back to look at conflicts in their own societies. Participatory action research and co-creation of knowledge were urged as methods to overcome the divide between researchers and research subjects.

The Balance Between Research on Peace and Violence

Asked about the balance in the field between work on conflict and violence, on the one hand, and on peace and resilience on the other, the majority of participants felt that more emphasis was needed on the peace and resilience side, though some rejected the dichotomy and argued that work on both is essential.

Conditions Favouring Peace Research Having a Positive Impact on Peace Building

With regard to conditions that favour or impede the impact of peace research and practice on making peace, participants pointed to the need for good communications between researchers, practitioners and policy-makers, and the chilling effects of authoritarian politics and toxic geopolitics.

In summary, many of the old issues remain as challenges for peace research, including nuclear weapons, the military-industrial complex, and armed conflicts. But a new layer of issues has evolved, including environment and security issues, emerging technologies, and populism, nationalism and authoritarianism. Peace research has to sustain a capacity to respond to both sets of challenges.

Peace Research, Norms and Values

How are the values and norms of peace research reflected in our research and practice? And is there a consensus on what the values and norms of peace research are?

There was a general agreement that peace research institutes do have a normative commitment to peace. But what they mean by peace is not agreed. Respondents to the questionnaire identified a range of values that guide their research and practice: nonviolence, respect, pacifism, harmonious relationships, do no harm, humanity, human dignity, peace and justice, compassion, inclusivity, local ownership, inclusiveness, respect for cultural diversity, and alleviation of suffering.

For some, a commitment to pursuing positive peace and to interdisciplinarity is a sufficient basis to define the discipline, even though researchers may differ on exactly how they define positive peace. Others find the idea of positive peace problematic and prefer security as their main focus. This implies a norm of pursuing negative peace, in the sense of avoiding violent conflict, or negative peace plus.³ Some researchers feel that peace research and practice should be transformative. Others prefer to work as insiders, engaging with and influencing governments, through feasible, incremental steps that are relevant to current

³ This phrase was not defined, but Bellamy's idea of 'negative peace plus civic order' is a similar concept: Bellamy, Alex, *World Peace (And How To Achieve It)*, Oxford: OUP, 2019.

policy. Combining these approaches would be a gold standard for peace research. In Krause's words,

there can be a critical approach to peace and conflict that is both intellectually robust and practically relevant, and that [...] can lead to effective political engagement with existing structures and institutions and provide local actors with understandings of the potential for emancipatory sociopolitical change.⁴

While peace research should be norms-driven, it was agreed that it must be based on high research standards, sound methods, transparency, publicly available evidence and a commitment to putting findings into the public domain.

Even in practitioner organisations, a normative grounding is not necessarily shared. When peacebuilding organisations talk about peace, it is often not clear what peace and whose peace they are talking about. There is a lack of agreement about what positive peace and peace with justice really mean. Peacebuilding is sometimes represented as a short-term and top-down enterprise but it should be long term and bottom up. Practitioners believe it is better to see it not as a field of its own, but as an approach, which should be shared with existing stakeholders. Peacebuilding is a way of engaging with local actors in setting up processes. As such, it needs to be multi-partial rather than neutral.

Three types of research could be distinguished. *Pure research* aims at fundamental knowledge. *Research with a purpose* aims to be policy-relevant or to advise societal actors. *Research with a purpose involving practice* aims at effective collaboration between scholars and practitioners. The location of peace research and practice in universities, think tanks or nongovernmental organisations influences which mix of these research types is adopted.

There is a 'local turn' in peace research, with efforts to engage with local actors' views about peace building and develop everyday indicators of peace informed by local communities⁵. This requires working cross-culturally in contexts with different norms and values.

The choice of partners in society for research institutes and peacebuilders is sensitive. Resilience programmes can endanger local people. For example, empowering local communities can end up empowering older males. If one empowers women and youth, one becomes a radical partisan.

International relations started as the study of peace, but then turned to the study of war. Peace research is the discipline that international relations should have been. Yet some of the normative zeal of the early field has now moved back into international relations, which has co-opted some of the vocabulary and concerns of peace research. Critical security studies is better established in some universities than peace studies, perhaps because it avoids an explicit normative commitment. However, international relations is in danger of

⁴ Krause, Keith, 2019, op.cit.

⁵ Roger Mac Ginty's Everyday Peace Indicators project is based at the University of Manchester.

being co-opted by the securitisation of its scholarship. Similarly, there is a risk of peace-builders and peace researchers being co-opted as the research arms of aid and development agencies.

In summary, the relationships between peace research, policymakers, practitioners and societal actors are crucial to the field's success, but finding ways to adhere to peaceful norms while navigating the dilemmas of co-optation and research autonomy are continuing challenges. We need to take a systems view of our collective impact, bearing in mind the range of actors involved, and reinvent the role of the academic community in a much bigger ecosystem of actors with similar purposes.

Peace and Security: Conceptualising the Basis of the Field

In defining the field, the concepts of peace and security are central. Some researchers prefer to label themselves as peace researchers, others as security researchers, some as both. In Germany, the Science Council has suggested merging the two fields. But they retain distinct conceptualisations.

Does the field have sufficient coherence that we recognise each other's concepts of peace? Most peace researchers broadly agree with the goal of pursuing positive peace, but there is not yet a consensus on what positive peace means. There is a new turn underway in peace studies, to reconceptualise peace and to seek indicators of peace, moving beyond the traditional preoccupation with measures of violent conflict. Examples are the Peace Continuum⁶, Quality Peace⁷, the Many Peaces project⁸, and the Positive Peace Index⁹. The efforts to find measures of peace are at an early stage. Researchers prefer different measures, in the same way that political scientists champion different measures of democracy. For now, peace researchers may only be able to agree on 'negative peace plus', but promising work is underway. The everyday indicators of peace are a particularly fruitful approach, since they are based on inductive rather than deductive methods.

Security is another contested concept. On the one hand 'hard security studies' are seen to work in the service of the state. Critical security studies and peace studies both reject the assumptions on which state security is based, though both are also concerned with hard security issues. The idea of common security seized imaginations in the 1980s, but it has lost traction since. Europe, which was to have been the home of common security, is now beset with rivalries and unilateral approaches. Human security offers a framework that should bring together peace studies (with its emphasis on human needs) and critical security studies, although this concept has also been co-opted by those who favour a 'stabilisation', top-down approach to peacebuilding. A broader conception of cooperative

⁶ Davenport, Christian, Erik Melander and Patrick Regan, *The Peace Continuum: What it is and how to study it*. Oxford: OUP, 2018.

⁷ Wallensteen, Peter, *Quality Peace: Peacebuilding, Victory and World Order*. Oxford: OUP, 2015.

⁸ Dietrich, Wolfgang's 'Many Peaces' series includes, *Interpretations of Peace in History and Culture*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2012; *Elicitive Conflict Transformation and the Transrational Shift in Peace Politics*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2013; and *Elicitive Conflict Mapping*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2018.

⁹ Institute for Economics and Peace, 'Positive Peace Report', 2018, <http://visionofhumanity.org/reports>.

security, embracing societal, economic and environmental security, can be linked in principle with the idea of positive peace.

Practitioners tend not to see themselves as peace researchers. For them, what is crucial about the idea of positive peace is not a concern with measuring outcomes, but the process of building positive peace. They see participatory action research, and co-creation of social alternatives with local partners, as the key to their approach. Many peace researchers too feel that processes, such as trust-building and relationship-building, are crucial to building positive peace, and are badly needed, in East Asia and in other regions. Researchers and practitioners have common cause here.

There is scope for new thinking about how these approaches fit together, to further clarify the commonalities and differences between peace studies, critical security studies, and peacebuilding approaches.

Funding, Autonomy and Accountability: The Need for a Code of Conduct

Can peace research institutes be independent if their agenda is determined by the funding agencies? What drives their strategy, and to whom are they accountable? Participants agreed that peace research institutes tend to respond to funders' priorities. What is 'hot' for funding agencies tends to drive research, even if the institutes have resources of their own. SIPRI was initially funded wholly by the Swedish parliament, but now it finds 50% of its funding from other funding agencies, which influences its research strategy. In Germany too, external funding tends to drive strategic direction. In order to be truly independent in pursuing their normative goals, peace research institutes would need their own funds. Some ideas for raising such funds were discussed, including 'Impact Bonds', setting up organisations with a private sector wing, and obtaining funds endowed by philanthropists – though philanthropists also have their own agendas.

Peace research institutes may turn down funding when there are strings attached or when the funding comes from dubious sources, but this is a matter for judgement of each institute. In practice, peace research institutes are not accountable to anyone, other than their own boards. Some feel a sense of accountability to their peers. Others feel accountable to the public. There is accountability to the funders. Academic researchers are accountable to their universities, but stand firmly for the principle of academic freedom. In some countries, university researchers are required to obtain ethical approval, but this is not the case everywhere (for example, it is not routinely required in Germany). There is no code of conduct for peace research institutes, no 'do no harm' ethic, no equivalent of the Hippocratic Oath. Practitioner organisations have adopted codes of conduct, and the meeting suggested that a Code of Conduct for peace research institutes might be desirable too.

Regional Differences in Peace Research

Peace research evolved along different tracks in the US, Europe and Japan, and its evolution continues today in other regions.

In the US, the early focus was on preventing a nuclear exchange, and the field was oriented to conflict management rather than conflict resolution or transformation. Its focus was on conflict, as indicated in the name of the flagship US *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, which took a very different approach to its European counterpart, the *Journal of Peace Research*, when this was under Galtung's editorship. The differences between peace researchers famously came to a head in the crisis over Vietnam, when US conflict researchers were criticised for supporting the state, and several left the field. After this, the field in the US became more cosmopolitan, and as scholars moved to and fro between the US and Europe, peace studies courses came to reflect both conflict management and positive peace traditions in their curricula. In the process, peace studies became marginalised from the US mainstream. The conflict management approach remained dominant and still influences US approaches to state-building and development. Work on responding to violent extremism is now well supported, and the counter terrorism and counter violence agendas are prominent. Much of the research is on the state, great power politics, and security actors within the state, and much of the thinking is realist, rationalist, and informed by IR perspectives. Researchers who work on resilience and peacebuilding, which are the province of USAID and State, do not necessarily meet with those who work on nuclear weapons, which are the province of the Pentagon. The USIP sees itself as situated between both communities, and uniquely positioned to convene meetings between them.

Latin America differs from North America. Given its own particular context, work on security sector reform and peacebuilding are important themes.

The European participants did not see the framing of security issues as hard or soft as relevant to their region. They rejected the view that peace or resilience are soft issues, and they do not want to leave the hard security issues to the hard security experts. The Hamburg Institute for example has Peace Research and Security Policy in its name, and aims to avoid a divide between them. On the whole the European peace research institutes have embraced a broader conception of security than their US counterparts. They are critical of the securitisation of development and acutely conscious of how peace research thinking tends to get co-opted and incorporated into work on stabilisation and state-centric agendas.

Europe is not a uniform region and the situation of peace research differs between national contexts. Scandinavian peace research is well respected and partly funded by the state. German peace research is publicly funded, and is sometimes criticised for being too mainstream and too close to the concerns of the state. Geneva has a distinctive ecosystem for peace research, strongly influenced by the UN's agenda on inclusion, peacekeeping and the Sustainable Development Goals. In the UK, peace research is not publicly funded and remains more marginal, critical and outside the mainstream. In the rest of Europe, the progress of peace research has been uneven. Spain, Italy and France do not have a strong peace research tradition. There is even less in Poland, eastern Europe and Russia.

Japan's peace research association has 800 members. Researchers are committed to the norm of avoiding any further use of nuclear weapons, while upholding objective, evidence-based working methods. In the face of mounting nationalism in East Asia, participants noted the lack of well-established mechanisms for dialogue with neighbouring countries, to overcome regional antagonisms, mistrust and remnants of the Cold War. There is also little

dialogue within Japan between policy makers and civil society. Security experts have access to more power and resources than peace researchers, and peace research centres in Japan are tending to hire US scholars who often come from a security research rather than a peace research tradition. The Japanese participants highlighted the need for more work on positive peace, trust building, confidence building, and defensive defence, which could lead to a redefinition of the Self Defence Force's role.

Peace Research and Gender

Gender issues are central in peace research, because of the link between masculinity and conflict dynamics, the extent of gender violence, and the example peace research institutes and practitioner organisations set in gender sensitive practice.

Looking back over the last 30 years of research on gender and violence, the discussion has moved on from initially talking about women as casualties of conflict, to then essentialising the genders by equating men with violence and women with peace, and now to thinking about the role of hegemonic masculinity in perpetuating military structures and violent conflicts.

The Global Burden of Violence project found that indicators of violence based on violent deaths fail to capture the extent of violence against women, and of non-somatic forms of violence.¹⁰ In some cases, lethal violence is low but violence against women and sexual violence is extremely pervasive. We know little about how these are related. Some societies have got rid of war and large-scale intergroup violence and reduced interpersonal violence, leaving the domestic sphere in which women are still victimised. In Scandinavia, for example, while the level of violence is very low, the proportion of violence which is directed against women approaches 50%. Similarly, Japan has low overall violence but it is a patriarchal society with a high level of domestic abuse. In Guatemala, a correlation has been found between the overall level of violence nationally and trends in femicide, suggesting that internal violence and violence against women influence one another. It is difficult, however, to collect good data cross-culturally on intimate partner violence, and more work is needed to better understand the relationship between societal violence and sexual violence. This is an important area for research, especially since there are indications that sexual violence against men and women and gender violence may be predictors for armed conflict. Gender identities and expressions of masculinity vary by individuals. There is also a need for research to identify why some men are more prone to act violently than others.

Gender issues tend to be left to women to research, but the results are then ignored, as though this is not a valid field for knowledge production. Gender issues are often discussed at conferences in a way that has no influence on the rest of the conference agenda. Male researchers are now coming to work in this field (including some participants in the workshop). Their findings too tend to be ignored in literature reviews on civil wars in the fields of international relations and political science. This may be because the dominant

¹⁰ Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 'Global Burden of Armed Violence 2015: Every Body Counts', Cambridge: CUP, 2015.

approaches in international relations, based on methodological individualism and rational-actor frameworks, systematically ignore gender issues. They also leave emotion and affect out of the picture.

It is important to develop a more gender-inclusive approach in research teams, conferences and research content. This must go beyond mere box-ticking, such as making a reference to gender sensitivity in a research proposal. SIPRI has a project in which a mixed team are studying the paths female fighters take after coming out of conflict, since men and women face different challenges in making the post-conflict transition. The Hamburg Peace and Security Institute has a code of conduct on diversity which includes a restriction on male-only panels. A similar rule is enforced by UN panels in Geneva. Besides panels, there is the matter of gender balance in audiences. Some institutes have pioneered practices such as offering the first question or round of questions to women, to better balance conference discussions. There is scope here for sharing good practices between institutes.

The same issues that hold back women's careers in society generally also affect peace research institutes. In the peace studies field, courses with 'peace' in the title tend to attract women students, while those with 'security' in the title attract men. As many women as men may be recruited initially, but far fewer women occupy senior positions. Interpeace has a yearly gender audit, and there may be a case for peace research institutes to carry out internal checks, to determine whether they practice what they preach. They could make use of software packages that detect gender bias in job descriptions.

Women need to be systematically included in peace negotiations and disarmament efforts. The preamble of the Treaty for the Prevention of Nuclear War notes that the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons 'have a disproportionate impact on women and girls' as a consequence of ionizing radiation, and recognises that 'full, equal and effective participation of women and men' is essential for promoting disarmament, peace and security. UNIDIR has a full-time staff person working on gender issues and has published an analysis of the gender balance in national delegations to the NPT conference. There would be value in more historical research on the important role women have played in peace negotiations in the past. It would also be worthwhile to explore how feminist foreign policies, such as those promoted by Sweden and Canada, affect foreign policy execution and peacemaking.

In summary, gender issues are more prolific and important across our field than is generally recognised. We need to understand why research in this area has been ignored and how its profile can be raised. We need to better understand the links between societal and gender violence, and the links between masculinity and militarisation in our own communities. This gender lens can be applied fruitfully to all the topics in our field and we need to give it more explicit attention.

Responding to Populism, Nationalism, Authoritarianism and Threats from Social Media

The rise of populism, nationalism and authoritarian leadership raises new challenges for peace research. How should the field respond?

Populism and authoritarianism are now a worldwide phenomenon. They have contributed to regional instability in Latin America, where governments with weak capacity are failing to respond to popular grievances. A drift to militarisation is underway, for example in Brazil where the armed forces deployed to the cities in 2019. Similar trends are underway all over the world. The US is experiencing populism, polarisation and authoritarian government. Extremism is spreading in Europe and the Middle East. Social capital is under attack and there is less appetite for compromise.

Three examples of responses by peace research institutes were presented. In the United States, the Karuna Institute for Peacebuilding has facilitated dialogue between liberal-minded communities in Massachusetts and Trump-supporting communities in Kentucky, pairing families who stayed in each other's houses. This led to increased empathy and mutual understanding. A participant reported, 'We in Hands Across Hills believe our country is not divided beyond repair. Our fate is bound up with one another.' Follow-on dialogues were arranged with black communities in South Carolina and with Muslim Americans. The initiative was favourably reported in the press.

The USIP has been exploring the role of education in sustaining civil values and critical thinking, playing a transformative role in transitions from conflict, providing a safe and normal space and fostering respect for others.

Lisa Schirch of the Toda Peace Institute introduced her research on the impact of social media worldwide. This technology has had a cascade of impacts ranging from privacy violation and social isolation to election stealing and a dangerous spread of polarisation and hate speech. It is driven by the emergence of surveillance capitalism, in which the public's data is harvested and sold to advertisers. This is reinforced by the attention economy, which generates revenue from people logging on to websites, and by algorithms that link attention to emotional responses triggered in the limbic system. As a result, there is a profit motive in circulating extremist ideas, because they gain attention which produces revenue. A cross-country analysis indicates that government-run troll factories are operating in many countries and attacks on the integrity of elections are widespread. In response, there needs to be a new approach to leveraging our experience of building peace in divided societies into the digital domain. Social media has been used effectively for peaceful purposes by platforms like Ushahidi, but we have yet to work out how to move active listening and facilitated dialogue on to the digital format. There are online sites such as 'Dangerous Speech' that disseminate methods to counter hate speech. Alternative media can also be used. Podcasts have become a popular medium with young people and USIP has an excellent podcast series. There may be scope for peace research institutes to cooperate in producing podcasts promoting a peacebuilding approach.

These are pressing global problems and further analysis is needed to understand the trends driving populism and polarisation and to develop adequate responses.

Peace Research and Climate Change

Peace research institutes are already responding to climate change in a variety of ways. Volke Boege presented the Toda Peace Institute's work on climate change and conflict in the Pacific Islands.

Together with nuclear weapons, climate change is one of the biggest threats to human survival, and to the survival of many other species. Its effects are diffuse, and play out in different areas and at different scales, but peace research needs to engage with it because of its conflict-prone consequences.

At the international level, there has been some movement. UNDP established the Climate Change Mechanism in 2018 which aims to strengthen the UN's capacity to address the links between climate change, peace and security. Germany leads a Group of Friends of Climate at the UN, with over 50 countries. The Pacific Island countries managed to get a UN Rapporteur established and have asked for a UN Special Adviser. SIPRI, Clingendael, Adelphi and other think tanks are active on this issue. There is a continuing debate on the securitisation of the climate change issue which tends towards a 'fortress' mentality aimed at keeping refugees out.

Studies of the relationship between climate change and conflict focus mainly on Africa and the Middle East, but the Pacific is a climate hotspot now, and it may prefigure the destiny of other regions. In 2018, the Pacific Island Forum, held under Toda Institute auspices, declared that climate change is the greatest threat to the wellbeing and security of Pacific Islanders. Toda has organised two workshops bringing together international experts and Pacific Islanders. The Pacific Islanders see the issue in the context of their spiritual and cultural beliefs about the connections between the material and immaterial worlds. For them, 'human security' is an anthropocentric idea.¹¹ They have a distinctive understanding of the relationship between peace and climate change, which acknowledges the spirit world, nature, ancestors and unborn generations. This is a case where local conceptions of peace and traditional indigenous knowledge can be linked with western methods and approaches to peacebuilding. The project is based on fine-grained ethnographic research and aims to yield context-sensitive policy insights that can be carried up to the international level.

The Hamburg Institute for Peace Research and Security Policy is developing research that moves away from securitised perspectives on climate change and towards finding space for peaceful political solutions. They aim to move on beyond the debate on whether there is a causal connection between climate change and violent conflict, which has pitted Europeans (especially in Norway and Germany) who are sceptical of a link against US researchers who accept it. The Institute has four current projects, which examine (1) how UN Security Council members' perception of climate change issues are connected to security policy (2) the implications of extreme weather events for cooperation or conflict (3) the knowledge politics of security in the Anthropocene and (4) the way that societies prepare for future

¹¹ Peace researchers at Kent State were also concerned about this, and developed the term 'life welfare' as an alternative, to reflect the idea that the goal is the welfare of all planetary life.

climate change risks, focusing particularly on cooperation. The projects take interdisciplinarity seriously, drawing together urban studies, geography, agent-based modelling and international relations. Peace research brings the strengths of its own interdisciplinary tradition to the table, and speaks to the transformation, adaptation and mitigation that is required.

USIP has recently started to develop a significant new programme on climate change, focusing on how it exacerbates existing sources of conflict, especially over access to land and water resources. There are natural entry points for peacebuilding on these questions. Their work will draw on governance and resource management strategies that build resilience. They are also examining conflict resolution approaches that have been successful in managing natural resources. The programme also looks at early warning systems and means of amplifying the efforts of civil society and grassroots groups.

SIPRI too is expanding its work on climate change, so that it now has more researchers working on climate change than on nuclear weapons.

The Alliance for Peacebuilding is helping its members consider how peacebuilding approaches can help to protect forest wardens in Brazil, a form of environmental peacebuilding. Its peacebuilding approach to social resilience and work with marginalised communities offers an alternative to the notions of climate preparedness and intervention that are being developed by the Department of Defense.¹²

In Geneva, the peacebuilding and climate change networks are starting to come together in preparation for the Geneva Peace Weeks of 2020 and 2021.

There is also scope for an environmental arms control agenda. The melting of the Arctic may soon open sea lanes across the polar basin. At least three great powers would have interests in protecting these new sea lanes. In order to avoid a militarisation of the Arctic, a demilitarised regime should be established in a timely fashion.

There are other links between climate change and the core concerns of peace research. There is a natural tie between peace research and climate justice. The immediate threat from climate is not the risk of armed conflict but the slow, invisible silent deaths that are taking place now, that constitute a form of structural violence. Peace research should avoid returning to a thin version of violence in analysing this issue.

Our work on nonviolence and social movements could inform the public response, and this should be linked with approaches that are critical of the international political economy that led us to this point. There is scope for linking work on conflict transformation to climate change mitigation and adaptation and to work in international political economy.

¹²For insight into the Pentagon's approach, see: Klare, Michael, *All hell breaking loose. The Pentagon perspective on climate change*. New York: Metropolitan Books. 2019.

In summary, climate research is becoming a popular topic in peace research and there are natural links between the two fields.

Emerging New Technologies

Emerging technologies present significant challenges to peace research. The rate of innovation and complexity of potential interactions between these technologies and existing weapons systems makes arms control even more challenging than it was.

It is in the nature of the military that they look for the latest technological development – the submarine that can fly, the plane that can dive. Rather than focusing on any one technology, we need a broader perspective on emerging technologies and on how these new technologies interact with each other. For example, the prospective interaction of Artificial Intelligence with command and control networks raises disturbing questions. To research into them, one needs to combine scientific and technical understanding, a grasp of international law, and an understanding of the context in which new technologies appear.

Emerging technologies are inherently dual use, and are much more difficult to regulate than existing weapons. Cyber, for example, is already worldwide, and difficult to deter, and yet it may destroy a society without killing anyone. AI is similarly impossible to ban. Delinking AI from weapons may be possible, but that will not be easy.

Emerging technologies may present new opportunities for arms control (for example by improving verification) and may suggest new arguments for disarmament, but it is difficult to see how to control them in light of their dual use and generic character.

The Future Peace Research Agenda

The workshop identified a number of gaps where future research is needed and where the research institutes present intend to work. In order of popularity, the five leading topics were:

- Climate change
- Social media and populism
- Gender, peace and violence
- Conceptualisation of peace
- Emerging technologies (including cyberwars)

Participants also highlighted the need for more work on the international political economy of peace and conflict (including sanctions and economic warfare). In regard to methodologies, they highlighted participatory action research and scenario methods. Overcoming the researcher-practitioner gap was another key priority.

A number of possible collaborations between peace research institutes were floated.

On climate change, Toda, Hamburg, USIP, SIPRI, and the Alliance for Peacebuilding are among those with ongoing projects. SIPRI is involved in the Climate and Security Experts Network which brings together think tanks close to government. The Planetary Security Initiative focuses on feeding in to the UN system. The Environmental Peacebuilding Working group in the US engages with practitioners. Sharing findings and collaborating across institutes could build a consortium of climate peace researchers.

On populism, social media and authoritarianism, Interpeace, PRIME, Berghof, and USIP are considering work in this area, and Toda has an ongoing project.

On emerging technologies, SIPRI, Hamburg, RECNA, BICC, Kent State and the Toda Peace Institute are planning work. Toda may be able to convene a study group to promote cooperation between Institutes.

In order to improve links between researchers and practitioners, practitioners need to think about theories of change and their research needs, and researchers need to communicate with practitioners and apply their research skills to their priorities. Directories of who is doing what in research and practice would help, as well as interactive knowledge exchange around particular themes, which could be developed online. In some cases, it might be useful to bring researchers and practitioners under one roof, or to develop hybrid partnerships in which people move between organisations. Regular meetings between the two communities are vital. Organisational learning and reflection can be one good way to build bridges. BICC has advisers seconded to intergovernmental organisations, which makes a bridge with policymakers. The EU's Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Consortium, which brings together think tanks, researchers and practitioners, is another useful model.

It is important to bring the funders into discussions and for researchers to present a research agenda to the funders, rather than being driven by the funders' priorities.

Conclusion

Overall, the workshop examined how peace research is responding to some of the big challenges to the field. It identified new research directions and possibilities for collaboration. It addressed the questions of the identity of the field, not so much by establishing new conceptual definitions, as by mapping the field as it exists now and by allowing a rich conversation between peace research institutes. Future meetings might benefit from more diversity (both in terms of gender and geography), more emerging scholars, and more discussion of the field's collective impact. However, participants appreciated the audacity of the vision behind the workshop, the breadth of its discussion, and the opportunity to think about the big picture in responding to the challenges facing the world and peace research.

The Author

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Toda Peace Institute

The **Toda Peace Institute** is an independent, nonpartisan institute committed to advancing a more just and peaceful world through policy-oriented peace research and practice. The Institute commissions evidence-based research, convenes multi-track and multi-disciplinary problem-solving workshops and seminars, and promotes dialogue across ethnic, cultural, religious and political divides. It catalyses practical, policy-oriented conversations between theoretical experts, practitioners, policymakers and civil society leaders in order to discern innovative and creative solutions to the major problems confronting the world in the twenty-first century (see www.toda.org for more information).

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