KEOUGH SCHOOL OF GLOBAL AFFAIRS

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

Embracing Integral Human Development: What difference does it make?

A research, policy and practice agenda for global affairs

Edited by Scott Appleby

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Foreword

Dean Mary Gallagher, Keough School of Global Affairs

It is an honor to introduce this volume, which represents a remarkable moment in the life of the Keough School of Global Affairs—an institution founded with the conviction that the world's most urgent challenges demand both intellectual rigor and moral imagination.
At the heart of this work is the Keough School's foundational commitment to Integral Human Development (IHD): the belief that human dignity, the common good, and solidarity must guide how we understand and engage with issues of conflict, inequality, governance, and sustainability. Over the past decade, this commitment has shaped our research, teaching, and partnerships across the globe. This volume—deeply interdisciplinary and unflinchingly honest—offers a snapshot of that work in action.

Collected here are the voices of scholars and practitioners grappling with the real-world complexities of translating values into policies, research into practice, and global ambitions into local realities. These essays and dialogues reflect both the possibilities and the limits of our current knowledge. They name the gaps, embrace the tensions, and—above all—demonstrate the humility that comes with serious inquiry on behalf of the most vulnerable.

As the new Dean, I am deeply moved by this legacy and energized by the road ahead. This volume, introduced by my predecessor, Dean Scott Appleby, invites us to learn not just from what has been accomplished, but from what remains undone. In that sense, it is both a landmark and a launchpad: a testament to the Keough School's first ten years, and a call to carry forward the work of Integral Human Development with renewed urgency, creativity, and courage. As we begin our second decade, we are strengthened by the accomplishments captured in this volume and we are emboldened to continue. I invite you to read, reflect, and join us.

Mary Gallagher
Marilyn Keough Dean, Keough School of Global Affairs
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A global research agenda serving a normative mission

In 2024, the University of Notre Dame's Keough School of Global Affairs celebrated its tenth anniversary. As a multidisciplinary, degree-granting policy school, the Keough School conducts research, educates and mentors undergraduate and graduate students from dozens of countries, and trains international professionals to work in the public, private, and non-profit sectors. It does all this in service to an explicit normative commitment to advance integral human development.

During the Keough School's first decade of existence, it aimed to become "recognizable yet distinctive." The faculty and staff of the school's nine constitutive interdisciplinary institutes strived, that is, to make the School familiar to our scholarly and policy peers, including the faculty and deans of the dozens of excellent global or international affairs schools and institutions in the U.S. and around the world. We teach many of the same subjects, credential faculty in similar ways, depend on a first-rate professional staff to co-create and implement programs, fish in the same pool of potential graduate student recruits, and attend the same professional conferences.

And yet, we also claim to be distinctive, to stand out in some respects from our peer institutions. Wherein lies this mark of distinction? Not quite in the multidisciplinary profile of our faculty—though we are relatively distinctive among peer institutions in counting theologians, literary historians, and other humanists as crucial to our success. Not so much in focusing on questions of development, poverty, and sustainability within the realm of global affairs, with less attention to more traditional IR areas such as security studies or international state-to-state diplomacy. Nor are we set apart in bringing academics and high-level practitioners together in a policy school.

Rather, we claim a certain distinction in upholding as our mission an explicitly normative claim that "development," and global affairs more broadly, should be driven by a moral commitment to prioritize the inherent, irreducible, transcendent dignity of each person and every person on the planet. Suitably ambitious and sufficiently radical is this mission, we hope, in order to advance the development of the whole person, who is always embedded in a particular society, culture, language, and belief system that deserves respect and engagement on its own terms.

In short, the Keough School is "the IHD global affairs school" in the mix. We can briskly define IHD—Integral Human Development—as the state of a society in which the irreducible dignity of the human person and the cultural and spiritual as well as economic and material requirements of human flourishing are central to political and social life and upheld by the rule of law.

Admittedly, this is a lofty—some might say quixotic—aspiration, and the Keough School's potential partners and interlocutors from outside Notre Dame might reasonably raise an eyebrow at the apparent hubris on display in sallying forth under this banner. The proof, as they say, must be found in the pudding. Does the embrace of this normative mission enhance the quality and outcomes of our research, teaching, and policy-relevant scholarship? Does a commitment to IHD change anything we actually do in the "real world," that is, in devising solutions to how food is produced and distributed to a starving planet or how the transition away from our current heavy dependence on fossil fuel-based energy unfolds over the next decades, or how we think about migrant and refugee policy, or how we build peace accords that will endure in ending wars and reducing deadly conflicts? In short, does a declared commitment to IHD actually make any significant difference?

Addressing this question head-on was the substantive theme of an international conference held in May 2024, when approximately 50 scholars and practitioners gathered for three days in Rome to discuss papers and presentations by 33 of the Keough School's 75 faculty. The conference was, in part, a stock-taking event, a select review of what we have accomplished to date and what we aspire to accomplish over the next several years. The blueprint for that trajectory is the Keough School's Strategic Plan 2030, which sets forth four research programs that are structuring faculty research and its translation into concrete policy and practice recommendations— scholarship that will, in turn, inform our teaching and mentoring of undergraduate, Master's and doctoral students, as well as our public communications and outreach.

The four research programs, grounded in the collective expertise of our faculty, address the following interrelated challenges facing humanity and the planet in the 21st century: poverty, marginalization, and inclusion; sustainability and environmental justice; threats to democracy, governance, institutions, and human rights; and, systems and structures of violence and peace. Informing each of these research themes is a focus on their religious, cultural, and legal dimensions, which is why the Keough School includes on our faculty ethicists, legal scholars, historians, philosophers, theologians, scholars of religion and other humanists as well as social scientists and engineers.

The faculty papers, which average 2,500 words each, provide a succinct description of the author's major research topic(s) and methods, their relevance to policy and practice outcomes, and reflections on how said research does (or does not) take on an added dimension by virtue of being a piece of a larger IHD-related puzzle being assembled collectively at the Keough School. The papers were circulated in advance to 17 distinguished scholars and practitioners who acted as respondents and discussants during the 14 conference sessions. Most of these outside interlocutors were encountering the Keough School's approach to these topics, and perhaps the Keough School itself, for the first time. We asked them to spend perhaps less time in voicing words of appreciation than in picking apart the Keough School scholars' research designs and ideas, illuminating any flaws in conception and analysis, and sending the researchers back to the drawing board when necessary. Collectively, the external interlocutors served as the Keough School's unofficial external review team, a task they performed superbly and for which we are grateful.

The contents of what follows is drawn from the 33 papers and 17 written or spoken presentations delivered at the conference. While we did not replicate the papers word-for-word in what follows, most of the material is taken directly from the papers or presentations. Although these papers were not expected to report original research—and many of them draw on previously published work—they do advance arguments, raise compelling questions, and reflect the excitement of being part of a larger, involved, vocational conversation about why we do what we do and how we might do it better. Given the quality of these brief essays, we kept the editing "light," cutting lines or passages rarely and reluctantly, and composing new transitional sentences and paragraphs sparingly, for the purpose of underscoring the common themes that kept arising across the sessions, disciplines, topics, and queries of the three days. As a result, this is less a volume of "conference proceedings" than it is a coherent display of Keough School research, deliberations, and responses at a pivotal moment in both its young life and, we feel, in the unfolding story of how human dignity can prevail amidst an unprecedented convergence of global crises.

It remains to be said that these papers and presentations were delivered in 2024, seven months before the inauguration of President Trump and the ensuing dismantling of USAID and the immediate termination of hundreds of millions of dollars in federal grants that had been funding development and peace research and programs around the world. That includes approximately $20 million in grants that enabled the Pulte Institute for Global Development to fight poverty around the world, as well as separate grants from the U.S. State Department that supported the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies' Peace Accords Matrix in its crucial work monitoring the implementation of the 2016 Colombian Peace Agreement. While these ill-advised and disruptive interruptions or terminations of federal funding have caused the Pulte Institute, in particular, to reorganize and restructure its global operations, the Institute's research into the causes and alleviation of global poverty continues, as does the research, teaching, practice, and policy work of the Keough School faculty.

Indeed, a robust commitment to integral human development continues to inspire the faculty, staff, and students of the Keough School, perhaps more than ever, at a time when the inherent dignity of billions of women and men around the world, and the health of our planet, has come under renewed threat.

I am grateful to the Keough School Advisory Council for their friendship and mentoring over the years, with a special thanks on this occasion to Mr. Tarique Ansari for his generous support of the Rome conference.

Scott Appleby
Keough-Hesburgh Professor of Global Affairs
May 9, 2025

Rethinking Poverty and Poverty Alleviation

Disasters triggered by climate change and environmental degradation make the headlines, as do wars in Ukraine, the Middle East, Sudan and dozens of other settings. Democratic backsliding and the proliferation of authoritarian regimes, rising inflation and growing economic inequalities, and the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic—these are not far from our collective awareness in these politically fraught times. Poverty, however, lurks behind every story of human travail, almost taken for granted as a global structural condition silently shaping these multiple crises, and in turn being exacerbated by them.

In their papers and presentations for the Rome conference, Keough School professors set the most recent data on global poverty into social and historical context. In March 2024, the World Bank estimated that 689 million people were living in extreme poverty, subsisting on less than $2.15 a day. The burden of poverty is not distributed equally among all countries: 88 percent of the world's poor live in the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. The trends are not promising. Between 1990 and 2014, more than a billion people escaped extreme poverty; the global poverty rate fell by an average of 1.1 percentage points each year, from 37.8 percent in 1990 to 11.2 percent in 2014. However, between 2014 and 2019, the pace of poverty reduction slowed to 0.6 percentage points per year— the slowest rate seen in the past three decades.[1] **Tracy Kijewski-Correa** argued that this was "an early indication that our strategy was incapable of uniformly eradicating extreme poverty."

Lakshmi Iyer called attention to the disproportionate effects of poverty on women, particularly those in the age group 25-34. Data on human development and economic progress, she reported, show that women are disadvantaged at almost every stage of the life cycle. In some countries, gender-based marginalization begins very early, with many girls not even being born due to practices such as sex-selective abortions. Data from India and China show that 112 boys are born for every 100 girls. Globally, such population discrepancies amount to 142.6 million "missing women."[2] Practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation harm several million women, and women and girls are frequently provided less medical care and have worse nutritional status compared to men and boys. While women and men have now achieved parity in secondary school enrolment rates, access to education is not yet enough to overcome the gender gaps in economic participation. Women participate in the labor market at lower rates than men and, when they do work, they earn lower wages than men. They are also under-represented in political and business leadership positions: only 27 percent of national political representatives are women, and only 52 of the large Fortune 500 companies are headed by women.

What policies can countries implement to address these gender gaps? More than 100 countries have implemented measures to increase women's representation in political office through different kinds of gender quotas.[3] Comparing across countries, research finds that the adoption of a gender quota leads to increased health spending and a reduction in maternal mortality; within-country evidence similarly finds reductions in infant mortality when more women are elected to public office.[4]

Despite these documented benefits of political gender quotas, such measures may not be enough to address the myriad forms of gender inequality, Iyer said. The effects of gender quotas varies widely by context; for example, the effect of India's 1993 gender quota that mandated one-third of all local councils to be staffed by women representatives was mixed, at best, with some studies finding that the quota improved the provision of public goods such as toilets, water facilities, and schools, with other studies finding no effect and yet other studies finding lower quality of water, sanitation and education provision in areas reserved for women leaders.[5]

Similarly, the presence of women city mayors improves health and education in Brazil, but has no effect on employment or crime in the United States. Moreover, while the presence of women leaders leads to greater interest in politics among the younger generation, there is no effect on greater women's candidacy or electoral success in the short run.[6] This suggests that we cannot rely on a virtuous cycle by which gender quotas can provide a permanent boost to women's leadership representation in a reasonable time frame, Iyer noted. In fact, once a gender quota is in place, further increases in the extent of the quota may not result in additional improvements.[7] Even worse, in some settings, women's progress in certain careers results in a "two steps forward, one step back" situation.[8]

A basic first step towards gender equality is to make overt discrimination illegal. Unfortunately, the legal system is still biased against women in many countries. The World Bank's database on *Women, Business and the Law* shows that, in 2023, 28 of 190 countries still did not have explicit laws that prohibit employment discrimination based on gender, 41 countries did not mandate equal inheritance rights for men and women and 96 countries did not prohibit gender discrimination in access to credit.[9] Research finds that prohibiting employment discrimination is correlated with higher permanent employment for women, but only in richer countries.[10]

Several researchers at the Keough School have examined the challenges to achieving gender equality globally. Using data from Myanmar, Iyer and her coauthors find that providing women legally documented land rights increases their access to bank credit, but affects their decision-making agency only in places where local leaders hold more gender-equal views.[11] The Keough School's Julia Kowalski's ethnographic research documents how international laws and understandings of women's rights are modified and reassessed in a local Indian context.[12]

Research by Keough School faculty has also highlighted some ways in which policies can change societal attitudes and behaviors. Aware that simple income support or child support policies are likely to be ineffective if social norms are the primary cause of the observed labor market penalties, Iyer has examined the interplay between social context and gender-targeted policies, finding that India's gender quotas have led to women victims being treated better by police officials.[13] Abby Córdova's work shows that the presence of women's police stations has the potential to change men's views on violence against women.[14]

The data on gender inequality suggests several important dimensions for research progress, Iyer noted:

> The first is to clearly identify the social and political contexts in which policies such as gender quotas may improve the gendered pattern of human development, and where such policies may be ineffective or even have negative consequences. Second, we need more research on the long-run effects of policies such as gender quotas or legal reforms. Third, long-lasting progress on gender equality requires changing prevailing social norms and practices. Both research and policy design must consider how and when such norms may change in ways that are beneficial for gender equality. Finally, we need to consider the inter-relationship between different types of policies, which requires a more systemic view of societal inequalities. The methods and insights from examining gendered development may enable similar analysis for other societal divides as well.

The Keough School's strengths align well with this research agenda, she concluded, thanks to the School's multidisciplinary faculty with expertise in a wide range of research methodologies and the focus on integral human development.

In pursuing this research agenda, it is important not to lose sight of signs of progress and the promise of smart policy solutions. **Ray Offenheiser** called attention to "one of the world's best kept secrets," namely, "that we have dramatically reduced global extreme poverty over the last 25 years." According to the World Bank and other monitoring agencies, global extreme poverty has fallen from 36 percent of the global population in 1990 to only 9 percent today, with only 1 in 10 people living on less than $2.15/day.[15] This is a remarkable and historic accomplishment, he noted, that exceeded even the UN's Millennium Development Goals targets, set in 2000. Extraordinary economic growth in the economies and income in China, India and a number of the other emerging economies has reshaped the map of global poverty.[16]

How did this happen? In the 1990s, the globalization of markets gained momentum, as China and India introduced major reforms that improved agricultural productivity and opened their economies to global trade and foreign investment. Their governments also undertook major infrastructural projects extending roads, electricity and water supply into rural regions. Large numbers of workers left their farms and moved to the cities taking on factory jobs and sending money back to their home villages. Elementary education was made free to all, launching a real demand for higher education and training. These investments paid off handsomely, as China's GDP grew 9.5 percent for 40 years. According to the World Bank, this was the fastest sustained expansion by a major economy in history. And today, only 0.3 percent of China's rural population is living under $2.15/day.[17] Progress was made in other parts of the world as well, Offenheiser continued. Many countries experimented with creating new forms of social protections or safety nets. Mexico and Brazil raised living standards by giving cash directly to the poor in exchange for regular school attendance by their children and health checkups for all the family. Others saw the positive effects of initiating social pensions and meals in schools. While not likely to have the impact of rapid economic growth, these programs did make a difference and do drive demand in the domestic economy. Americans saw the same kinds of impacts on demand growth and poverty alleviation during Covid-19 when the government extended unemployment benefits and provided $1 trillion in stimulus payments to 85 percent of US households. The World Bank estimates that social safety net programs were responsible for 36 percent of the global reduction in poverty.[18]

The progress made to address extreme poverty, however, is inadequate. The World Bank's current metric of $2.15 per day does not tell the whole story. Just above this threshold are 70 percent of the global population who live on less than $10 per day, an amount that may just barely allow a family to meet their basic needs in many countries. There is clearly work to be done to tackle persistent poverty for half the world's population living below $10/ per day. Growing inequality is a new and rising challenge that further complicates efforts at poverty alleviation. Inequalities are often measured by income but are determined by a variety of other factors, including gender, age, ethnicity, disability, class, religion and sexual orientation. Since 1990 incomes have risen, and inequality across all individuals in the world and between countries has declined. However, the more worrying trend is that income inequality *within* countries—the inequality that is most obvious to citizens in their daily lives—has risen dramatically. People measure their progress relative to their family members and the rest of society. Today 71 percent of the world's population lives in countries where inequality has increased—not just the more developed industrialized countries but also many emergent economies as well as India and China. [19]

A better way to conceptualize poverty

Tracy Kijewski-Correa set forth an understanding of poverty that offers a crisp alternative to the received scholarly wisdom on the topic. Despite real progress, the flaws in poverty alleviation efforts are many, she noted. Progress was often short-lived, in that individuals could not sustain their improved economic conditions without perpetual reliance on assistance. This is due in part, "to poverty's multifaceted symptoms and root causes." While they may manifest as a dearth of material needs such as food or clean water, these symptoms of poverty recur when root causes, such as limited access to education and exclusionary practices that deny participation in societal decision-making, are not addressed.

The consequence of neglecting root causes of poverty, Kijewski-Correa added, became apparent with the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused the biggest reversal of global poverty reduction in decades. In 2020, 71 million more people were living in extreme poverty than the year before.[20] The rapid backsliding was perhaps unsurprising, considering that 53 percent of the world's population – 4.1 billion people – do not benefit from any form of social protection. "The Covid-19 reversal was clear evidence that our gains were not only unsustainable, they were highly vulnerable to shocks, begging the question of whether it was time for a different approach."

A different approach might focus not solely on money and material wealth, but on the broader, deeper, "richer" metrics of human *flourishing* in the first place, as Kijewski-Correa argued:

> The false pretense that wealth is the primary determinant of flourishing is not only at odds with Catholic Social Teaching, but has been widely disproven. However, I don't wish to debate the claim that material prosperity is the precondition for flourishing, or even naively assume we could dismantle a world order that prizes material wealth over a possibly more expansive view like flourishing. Instead, I ask that we recognize the implications of our operational definition of poverty—living on less than X-dollars per day— and its sole focus on material deprivation and then ask how we can advance an alternative view, one that promotes human flourishing, while still operating within the realities of a society that was not built to do so.

What prevents us from complementing the study of the physical and material dimensions of poverty with its spiritual, psychological, and social dimensions?

What difference does IHD make?

An IHD approach presses home this question, Kijewski-Correa noted. In 2008, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) released its *Guide to Integral Human Development*, an attempt to operationalize IHD into their programs. CRS defined IHD as a state of society in which people are "able to lead full and productive lives, meeting their basic physical needs and living their lives in an atmosphere of peace, social justice and human dignity," with emphasis on "an individual's cultural, economic, political, social and spiritual wholeness — a wholeness that we all want to experience and that, in concern for the common good, we want others to experience as well."[21] The emphasis on the *common good* ensures that individual well-being is not at odds with the well-being of others and the well-being of the planet. Notably, the World Bank's concept of "well-being" and Catholic Social Teaching's goal of "flourishing" appear compatible, Kijewski-Correa added. CRS viewed IHD as the vehicle through which its programs could achieve these aims.

But how to implement the values of IHD in practice? Kijewski-Correa acknowledged that every development and humanitarian intervention operates under constraint. Even if a multi-faceted outcome like flourishing could be agreed upon as the goal of a project (and also accepted by its funder), we still have to optimize how we will achieve that outcome under the constraint of limited resources (time and money). That generally encourages finding the most efficient mechanism to achieve our desired outcome. That has one of two implications: (1) focusing on the least vulnerable, as they often require less investment to achieve a targeted state of flourishing or (2) deliver programming in the most cost-effective manner to the most people, which generally favors interventions that address symptoms rather than root causes. In either case we can see how Pareto efficiency works contrary to the preferential option for the poor, who are both the most vulnerable and those likely needing the most attention to root causes.

A shift away from material deprivation toward flourishing, Kijewski-Correa cautioned, will require more than changing *what* we hope to achieve, but also *how* we will achieve it. We cannot claim to fight for the flourishing of all without an uncompromising commitment to the most vulnerable. Nobel Prize winning economists Abhijit V. Banerjee and Esther Duflo agree that it is time to restore human dignity — a central element of flourishing— to its rightful place through a "profound rethinking of economic priorities and the ways in which societies care for their members, particularly when they are in need."[22] So how do we get there? The Pulte Institute promotes a systems' view that embraces complexity as a means to identify where and when we should intervene to best promote flourishing. How can we best measure flourishing to ensure our interventions are effective? Thinking in a more integrated or systems view, which entails overcoming the tendency to compartmentalize various types of expertise and knowledge into silos of specialization and embracing the interconnectedness and complexity of our world. The lack of a systems-view leads, at minimum, to interventions that are ineffective in delivering lasting change and that may perpetuate or even amplify poverty and inequality. A systems approach reveals root drivers and consequences as well as how dependencies can create vicious cycles that might undermine programs and even perpetuate poverty.

> A systems view is the only way to meaningfully deliver on the promise of human flourishing, as it is fundamentally multi-faceted and touches every aspect of our lives. Understanding a system and its complexity does not mean that you have to attack the entire system inclusive of all the legal systems, market systems, political systems, social norms, and religious beliefs that we operate within a given society, but it does require you to minimally understand and proactively address the potential implications of interventions within a more expansive context. At minimum, a systems approach limits the potential to accelerate vicious cycles; at its best, a

> systems view might identify a completely different intervention point that could spur virtuous cycles that promote flourishing in a far more cost-effective way.

While the systems view can show us *where* to intervene, Kijewski-Correa explained, the question of *when* to intervene remains. Interventions can be delivered under three conditions: in response to crisis, in non-crisis settings with the aim of advancing development, and in non-crisis settings with the aim of building resilience. The three are fundamentally different. Acute crises have a particular power in that they reveal vulnerabilities, expose root causes, and create an impetus to act. In my work, Kijewski-Correa explained by way of illustration, a major disaster "serves as a stress test that literally exposes all of the vulnerabilities we failed to address, especially for those who live in conditions of poverty and marginalization." In the wake of these shocks, newfound awareness is generally accompanied by larger infusions of capital for recovery, that if leveraged properly, can be a chance to "build back better" and in a manner that is more just and equitable. Unfortunately, these moments of opportunity are generally subject to the highest constraints.

The quest to promote flourishing and the importance of intervening through a systems lens may be discarded due to the challenges of coordination during a humanitarian response and the pressure to meet acute needs, she acknowledged. "We may have the best potential to promote flourishing on 'blue sky days,' when constraints are lessened and there is greater time and space to envision how IHD can create more sustainable pathways to flourishing." While "blue sky" days don't have the urgency to act or the capital that a crisis brings, she added, explicitly connecting humanitarian responses with long-term development investments can at least leverage the powerful motivations of a recent shock to drive change within a longer-horizon development effort, a strategy commonly used by CRS. "We just have to avoid the trap of assuming we only need to achieve flourishing today, under the normal operating conditions of daily life. In a world increasingly gripped by climatological shocks and conflicts, our work on 'blue sky days' must imagine a tomorrow when skies are gray." Only then can we ensure our interventions will deliver flourishing that can be preserved or at least quickly restored after the shocks that will inevitably come.

Building adaptive capacity or resilience requires a level of proactivity, investment and integration that is less common in our conventional approach to development but something organizations like CRS are working to mainstream. She writes:

> Notably, interventions that build resilience have important corollaries to flourishing. Building individual, community, and societal resilience requires much more than physical assets and productive capacities; social cohesion and cooperation are essential to rebounding when skies are gray and they equally promote flourishing when skies are blue. Achieving this aim is inherently more complex and often requires contending with unjust policies, systems and practices pervasive in our

> society, but I argue, is increasingly vital for the most vulnerable who have the least capacity to absorb shocks and even lesser capacity to rebound into a state of flourishing.

Perhaps the greatest challenge in designing interventions, she continued, lies in the fact that our knowledge is incomplete and our assumptions uncertain (especially when it comes to a concept like flourishing)—a gap that is only closed by data. Achieving the paradigm shift away from poverty as solely material deprivation and toward a more encompassing goal of flourishing will therefore demand new tools to measure, predict and evaluate these more amorphous concepts. In a world built on measuring productivity, revenues, debts and monetary worth, we have ample instruments and data to measure our material world. We can measure assets like physical possessions and shared infrastructure, financial capacity, and even natural resources.

We have greater challenges measuring the immaterial dimensions of well-being for an individual or even a collective, for these include spiritual and human assets, our social assets, and our political capital. Valuing these assets also means we cannot simply monetize them and feed them into our existing frameworks conceived to value money and material goods. After all, these have no way to realistically value the good that comes from relationships, meaning and purpose. How would our neoclassical economic models even monetize the value of cultural and spiritual goods? While there are clever efforts to create indices to do just that, we may need to completely rethink our conceptual frameworks, models and mechanisms to generate data in order to capture the different dimensions of flourishing truly. Doing so will not only enable us to design and continually refine our interventions, but will provide the rigorous evidence necessary to prove that IHD does deliver superior outcomes for society.

The most daunting challenge to rethinking what poverty is and how we measure it may be one of scale. Concepts underpinning well-being are highly contextualized. What constitutes whole-person flourishing undoubtedly varies across cultures and contexts, and thus while a minimum income defining the poverty line could be universalized, with convenient adjustments for cost of living by country, a minimum well-being threshold hardly can. Accepting that well-being is highly contextualized and even personalized will challenge us to conceive of new means to measure, model and predict what are highly subjective and personalized beliefs and experiences. Yet it will be vital to do so since studies show that concepts like a sense of purpose and a sense of community are superior barometers for well-being, more than income levels could ever be.[23]

Acknowledging that reforming the dominant economic model, whose emphasis is on limitless economic growth, and operationalizing value-driven concepts like "flourishing" will be an uphill battle, Kijewski-Correa argued that we should build on current effective methods that have already begun to lend nuance and humanize the dominant macroeconomic approach. The proliferation of Randomized Control Trials (RCTs), for example, has downscaled our understanding of the lived experience of poverty and its root causes. We can now start to integrate those learnings into the more complex systems view that flourishing demands, collecting more data as gaps become apparent and creating the space to animate those systems to discover interventions that can be sustained in even the darkest of days. "We inevitably will encounter failures as we move into these uncharted waters," Kijewski-Correa cautioned. "The question becomes how will we learn from those failures and not let them dissuade us from staying the course."[24]

Alleviating Poverty Through Social Mobility

Returning to the problem of inequality, **Patrizio Piraino** illustrated ways in which conventional economic methods and metrics might be developed in the direction of enhancing human flourishing. He addressed the challenges of poverty, inequality, and marginalization through the prism of social mobility. Scholars working in the social sciences have defined social mobility as the ability of individuals or families to move up or down the social ladder over their lifetimes or across generations, typically by gaining access to high-quality education, well-paying jobs, affordable housing, clean water and nutritious food, and professional healthcare. Understanding social mobility requires analyzing the broader societal structures and mechanisms of inclusion/ exclusion that affect the individual's quality of life. All over the world, Piraino noted, people are prevented from participating fully in society and from accessing market opportunities due to a variety of barriers.[25]

A large empirical literature from both economists and sociologists shows consistent evidence of positive correlations between the socioeconomic status of parents and that of their adult offspring, Piraino continued. This is true for every society for which we have data and across several measures of status (e.g., labor market earnings, total market income, welfare receipts, educational attainments, etc.). Researchers and policymakers have identified a number of "stylized facts" regarding the factors that can help explain the observed variation in social (im)mobility levels across and within countries. Yet most of the stylized facts on possible drivers of mobility are derived from empirical analyses of high-income countries; analyzing the data at hand, Piraino concludes that "even the existing theoretical contributions in the literature appear to be implicitly benchmarked on structural processes that may be more applicable to high-GDP economies." This gap in the literature, he said, provides "an opportunity for the development and application of new approaches to research." A related question: "Can the findings from these high-GDP regions be extended to the much larger pool of the world population living in low and middle-income societies?"

A starting point, he explained, is the intergenerational mobility model, which has shed light on some of the most common determinants of social mobility. In addition to the widely accepted drivers established by the standard model of the wealthier countries (e.g., inherited family attributes, parental investments in children's human capital) other factors may be of particular importance for developing economies. Barriers to social inclusion and upward mobility in developing countries, which have received less attention, are a focus of Piraino's research.

In the domain of labor markets, for standard models of mobility implicitly assume a unitary labor market where skills are equally rewarded across sectors. But this assumption is less realistic in the context of developing countries, where labor markets are often segmented and workers with similar human capital and skills can earn significantly different wages depending on the sector of their employment. Piraino continued:

> Moreover, it is plausible to expect that the capacity to access different segments of the market is itself correlated across generations, which creates an additional channel of status transmission from parent to child. This applies to segmentation across sectors (agriculture vs industry), locations (urban vs rural), and occupations (formal vs informal). The key distinction here is in the underlying driver of intergenerational persistence. That is, do children of low-income (or high-income) parents end up in low-paying (or high-paying) jobs as a result of lower (higher) productive endowments and human capital, as in the standard models, or are they destined to remain in the same segment of the labor market as their parents because of barriers to mobility across sectors?

We know that labor markets in developing economies face significant "frictions," or barriers to employment, including imperfect information on available job vacancies and the skills required of workers, as well as geographical constraints to labor mobility. These misalignments may affect the selection of employees and the wages of employed workers, contributing to decreasing mobility in low- and middle-income countries.[26] Hiring firms can reduce information asymmetries for young jobseekers through referrals from previous employers. Former employers, Piraino noted, have valuable information about workers' skills that would otherwise be unobservable in the hiring process.

Evidence from experimental studies on the role of information frictions in other contexts shows that programs that help jobseekers signal or certify their skills can have positive effects on employment outcomes. These types of interventions are shown to be particularly useful for those with the least education and experience, suggesting that information frictions disproportionately affect people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.[27]

To take another example, several studies suggest that credit constraints play a larger role in developing countries as compared to high-income economies.[28] In addition, due to significant earnings volatility and imperfect insurance against shocks, many households from developing countries are more risk-averse, therefore underinvesting in the education of their children. If credit and insurance markets are more likely to fail in these contexts, the chances of upward mobility for children at the bottom of the income distribution may be lower than in rich countries. Societies with well-functioning credit markets should have fewer constrained families and, consequently, display higher levels of overall intergenerational income mobility. Maoz and Moav argue that less efficient credit markets may partially explain why intergenerational earnings mobility is higher in high-GDP economies.[29] This intuition has direct policy relevance. If credit constraints are an important determinant of intergenerational mobility, easing credit market access for targeted groups would have desirable effects in terms of both equity and efficiency. Piraino's research looks at ways to break such "liquidity traps" in the context of humanitarian crises.

In short, the unique circumstances in the Global South provide promising avenues for novel research on social mobility. In some cases, the state of the art in the North can lay the foundation for research; for example, the recent studies of the "geography of mobility" in high-income countries can be replicated in parts of the developing world, where data allows. This replicate-and-extend method, Piraino argued, could be coupled with a more narrowly focused investigation of various barriers to sectoral, geographical, and occupational mobility to understand the unique impacts of labor market segmentation on mobility in specific contexts.

Such a multiple-methods approach can help policymakers design effective interventions that can level the global economic playing field, Piraino argued. "Thanks to the distinct set of skills and expertise in the Keough School, we are well positioned to stimulate contributions that can help advance this important literature," he concluded. "Our distinct focus on HD in understudied contexts, often using novel data and testing unproved theories, is bound to produce insights that are applicable to the most vulnerable populations, ultimately offering a more complete picture of how social mobility can more effectively chart a path out of poverty."

Patrizio Piraino's affirmation of IHD as a framework for analyzing social mobility led the discussant back to the Rome conference's central question: what difference, if any, does it make to place human dignity at the center of one's research and teaching?

Paul Perrin addressed this question enthusiastically but also warily, from a perspective that might be summarized by the precept, "Whatever you do, do no harm." He warned the assembly of the "benevolent indignities" trap.

Human dignity, he asserted, is "the inherent value that every individual possesses equally by virtue of being a human being, independent of one's abilities, characteristics, or actions."[30] Despite the central importance that major global institutions have placed on the concept, violations of or assaults on human dignity referred to as "indignities" remain pervasive. The ultimate indignity is genocide and other forms of murder; other global indignities include incidences of violence, assault, subjugation, injustice, humiliation, and disenfranchisement. Human rights advocates are concerned with addressing such "malevolent" indignities–or violations of human dignity perpetuated purposefully with ill intent towards a person or groups of people.

While the 16th Sustainable Development Goal calls for building "effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels,"[31] even institutions that might be considered strong or free from corruption can fail to affirm or even violate the human dignity of those under their care. "Indeed," Perrin observed, "even though dignity is a pervasive idea in global institutions, few if any have been able to operationalize this concept effectively in their policies and programs."

Although many scholars have studied the concept of dignity across disciplines, research on the operationalization of dignity-affirming approaches to global affairs practice is in its infancy. In *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis, acknowledging this gap, suggested that indignities can be imposed even by well-meaning actors with respect for the dignity of each person.[32] Such "benevolent indignities" are violations of human dignity perpetuated unintentionally and despite the best of motives.

Why do benevolent indignities occur? The Western paradigm for development, Perrin explained, has placed a central emphasis on the material, observable world, often at the expense of the immaterial aspects of human existence. This materialist approach, which informs classical economics, allows specialists to tackle problems within a clear sphere of expertise such as the physician, the psychiatrist, the social worker, and the cleric. Utilitarianism has provided a broad framework for measuring the success of social change efforts; for example, it has shaped Perrin's field of monitoring and evaluation of development projects by judging the merits of interventions predominantly in terms of maximizing impact at the aggregate population level. Finally, Maslow's hierarchy of needs informs the priorities of development and humanitarian enterprises, which rush to meet basic, biophysical needs by expanding access to incomes and other material goods and services. "This all makes a certain sense, of course," Perrin writes, "while also serving to eclipse a fuller picture of the human person as a spiritual and psychological as well as a material being."

These exclusively materialist ways of thinking, however, are often at odds with the framework for social change suggested by IHD. The pernicious implication of one popular reading of Descartes, Smith, and Maslow, Perrin argued, is that people in various forms of deprivation or vulnerability are somehow less human than those who are better able to meet their fundamental human needs. Moreover, utilitarian views which conceptualize success in the aggregate can mask and exacerbate inequality, as they tend to disincentivize efforts that focus on the most marginalized.

Over 20 years designing, implementing, managing, and evaluating hundreds of global development programs in a wide variety of settings and technical sectors, Perrin has become aware of certain indignities that tend to recur, even when organizations successfully achieve significant objective impact:

> The status quo approach to improving well-being worldwide can actually contribute to power imbalances, dehumanization and instrumentalization of people in poverty, leaving marginalized populations feeling inferior that they have been treated unfairly or even condescendingly by well-intentioned people or organizations meant to serve them.[33]

To illustrate, Perrin listed ten commonly occurring benevolent indignities that arise in the practice of Global Affairs. These include *reductionism* or the reduction of the complex richness of individuals or groups of people to a singular characteristic or label—labels that are sometimes prejudicial and dehumanizing, intentionally or not.

> When people are monolithically labeled as "refugees," "the poor," "homeless," "vulnerable," or with any given disease label they often feel as though that is the only aspect of their lives that is observed, considered, and approached. A growing body of research is demonstrating that the way we have historically conceptualized and spoken about vulnerable populations is contributing to and perpetuating the problem of vulnerability itself. For example, the discourse around poverty can be heavily politicized and stigmatizing, with different beliefs about poverty's root causes and solutions.[34]

While some narratives are more stigmatizing than others, all these beliefs and discourses set "the poor" as distinct and different from "mainstream society."[35] Research in many countries consistently finds that the poverty discourse leads to a sense of shame and stigma, which in turn contributes to chronic issues such as social exclusion, social withdrawal, self-loathing, "othering," despair, depression, thoughts of suicide, limited social capital, low feelings of self-worth and self-efficacy, low motivation, and feeling a lack of agency and autonomy that could all contribute to perpetuating poverty.[36]

Infantilization, another unintentional indignity, is fostered by the perception that a person or a group of people is not capable of meeting their own needs and therefore require intervention by a supposedly more endowed and enlightened outside actor. Clemens Sedmak describes this as stemming from a mindset that people are not capable of making decisions or exercising agency on their own behalf.[37] Infantilization (how a person or organization sees others as *inferior* in resources, understanding, and ability) goes hand-in-hand with "*Saviorism*" (how a person or organization sees oneself as *superior* in resources, understanding, and ability).[38] Closely related, *Instrumentalization* occurs when a person or group of people are seen as a means of achieving a goal of an outside party (for example, a social service organization). This becomes a benevolent indignity when the instrumentalized individual has no means of providing consent for the process, is dehumanized through the act of extracting benefit, and does not share in the positive result for the instrumentalizing party.[39] It is not uncommon in Global Affairs to see the logos of various benevolent actors emblazoned on provided goods and activities as a way of making work visible and promoting success. Pictures of purportedly happy "beneficiaries" are plastered across organizational annual reports. Critics of these practices claim that this "carnival of names and flags and logos"[40] is demeaning to people who participate in development programs, that it reinforces the colonial nature of global development, that it inhibits sustainable solutions, or that it undermines the critical work of national and local governments and humanitarian groups.[41]

Other types of benevolent indignities, according to Perrin, include *Distancing,* which occurs when organizations based upon Western models of professional ethics, reluctant to risk "unobjective" familiarity with those they serve, err on the side of social distance; *Disregard,* which refers to an organization's passive disregard of the feedback and input from participants, who might otherwise contribute to design and implementation of programs intended to support them, assume ownership of social processes, and participate in evaluating the success of such programs and organizations; *Opacity,* the hoarding of data and information, a violation of global transparency principles which declare that information on aid should be published proactively, but should be comprehensive, timely, accessible and comparable[42]; *Favoritism*, a violation of impartiality, that opens the way for discrimination against on the grounds of status, including age, gender, race, color, ethnicity, sexual orientation, language, religion, disability, health status, political or other opinion, and national or social origin;[43] and, *Constructionism*, which encourages emphasis on the built environment: annual reports are filled with evidence of their commitment to physical infrastructure such as the investments in building schools, medical facilities, power supply systems, communication systems, roads and other transportation infrastructure, water systems, and buildings that serve as locations for providing other public services.[44]

Addressing Obstacles to IHD: Keough School Initiatives

The Keough School, Perrin reported, is leading the charge in supporting organizations in becoming more aware of benevolent indignities and providing tools to address and eradicate their occurrence; the field of global affairs is primed to accept this kind of translational research.[45] The School's Pulte Institute for Global Development has established a research and policy track record in this space through partnerships with Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Harvard University, and ID insight, among others. After performing an in-depth literature review of the empirical evidence around human dignity that encompasses various technical and faith traditions, along with measurement frameworks, a team of Pulte Institute researchers extracted more than 40 concepts related to the affirmation or violation of human dignity, and is now creating a "dignity database" by mapping measurement tools for each of these associated concepts.[46] The Pulte team is also working to expand the database to encompass non-English language literature.

This body of scholarship has demonstrated that while the concept of human dignity seems to be universal, the manifestations of what constitutes an affirmation of human dignity tend to vary by context, although some concepts seem to be more universal than others. This tool can serve researchers and practitioners alike in better understanding human dignity in context. The Pulte team, for example, is partnering with CRS to design and validate a pair of survey tools for assessing the extent to which development services are provided in a dignity-affirming way.[47] The tools are designed to be incorporated into larger assessments of program and organizational impact. In partnership with CRS, Pulte has tested and validated this tool in India, the Philippines, Zambia, and Niger. The tool showed strong psychometric properties both within each country and across the four countries, prompting CRS to seek to incorporate this tool into routine evaluations in other programs and settings.[48] Respect for dignity has inherent value but can also contribute to the achievement of other desired outcomes.[49] For example, a recent Dignity Symposium brought together nearly one hundred scholars and practitioners with an interest in the science of human dignity, who articulated a global learning agenda to deepen the evidence base. The learning agenda lays out a set of questions around the nexus between the measurement and application of affirmation of human dignity and its relationship with desired social and individual outcomes. The symposium called for a home for the study of dignity, "where new collaborations might be struck up and progress in its study be tracked."[50]

The University of Notre Dame is well-positioned to fill this gap by providing an institutional home for an alternative approach to poverty and well-being using the lens of IHD and human dignity. The Keough School has advanced a concept–called the Dignity Lab–to build upon these successes and assert a leading role in advancing a dignity-lens approach to global affairs. It adopts the lens put forward by Paul Farmer when he said that "the idea that some lives matter less is the root of all that is wrong with the world."[51] Indeed, Perrin concluded, perhaps global challenges such as poverty and income inequality are symptoms of something more profound: inequity in how each person's human dignity is differentially perceived, valued, and affirmed by individuals and especially by institutions.

In the vein of "turning evidence into action," **Ray Offenheiser** described the paradox in how we think and act with regard to achieving sustainable economic growth in the 21st century. On the one hand, he noted, mainstream economics holds that economic growth would have to increase fourfold by 2050 to meet the challenge of global poverty. On the other hand, "we are realizing that the resources necessary to sustain growth and ensure a sustainable future are more and more scarce and we must reduce consumption and strive for a more circular economy."

> Traditional economics has little time for the incorporation of normative principles that might interfere with the logic of utility and price. Yet this logic puts contemporary capitalism on a collision course with planetary biophysical limits. To redress this contradiction, schools of public policy with a normative foundation and inter-disciplinary approach and culture are uniquely positioned to challenge the dominant paradigm and join with those scholars and institutes that are seeking a path toward a sustainable capitalism.

One of the most overlooked areas in development studies, Offenheiser maintained, is the role of institutions and their effectiveness in delivering quality outcomes. Programs of social protection, healthcare, and education, which can be delivered on scale only by effective states, constitute the foundational infrastructure, as it were, that is required for sustainable development goals to be realized. There is a specific role for universities in this cause, namely to shed light on issues of institutional performance, capacity and accountability.[52] At the heart of building effective states are leaders who model the required levels of sophistication, excellence and integrity. Training that leadership is one contribution of universities, but more could be done through research in institutional economics and organizational sociology and in building tools to monitor performance and institutionalize accountability practices.

Sustainability is still a nascent field; in many universities, it is a highly technical science-based field. "Yet in practice sustainability particularly as it pertains to issues of poverty must of necessity be an interdisciplinary field," Offenheiser said:

> The Keough School has built a strong interdisciplinary faculty that span the sciences, social sciences and human rights domains. This unique composition allows us to conceive of research initiatives that cross disciplinary boundaries and allow for studies of human rights and water or food security and poverty, global business and conflict, climate change and mass migration et al. There is a wide array of complex problems with clear policy and practice implications that might be explored creatively under the broad frame of sustainability. The challenge for us is whether our mission and operational incentives will allow us to grow into this new, more permeable notion of how disciplines may collaborate across traditional boundaries. This is clearly both a challenge an opportunity.

Our deep commitment to IHD, Offenheiser added, opens a variety of unique ways we might contribute to poverty related work. The work on dignity described in Paul Perrin's paper, for example, represents a real challenge to development practitioners and policy makers to seek greater self-awareness of their implicit biases and behaviors that may prejudice their efforts.

> Taken to another level, IHD would suggest we explore more deeply how dignity translates into agency and into capabilities and into full ownership of the development process at the community, regional and national level. One might imagine, for example, that the national official dealing with the foreign aid bureaucrat feels the same sense of indignity as the small subsistence farmer confronted with an impatient ex-patriate development worker. If we are going to decolonize the aid process, we are going to have to name and confront such behaviors and change the social dynamics that are entrenched in the cultures of northern-based development institutions. Lurking beneath the social relations between donor and recipient are complex and often invisible or hidden power dynamics that are seldom discussed when analyzing development failures. Adding analysis of power, who has it and who does not, to our IHD framework will allow us to begin to see deeper systemic and structural barriers to poverty alleviation that will need to be addressed through strategic policy and practice reforms.

Perhaps the biggest challenge to this Keough School vision and aspiration, Offenheiser concluded, is the minimal impact that research evaluating the human impact of development initiatives and recommending improvements has on higher-level policy discussions on aid effectiveness. "It is a little-known fact outside Washington, D.C. that the US government foreign aid architecture still operates under the Kennedy-era Foreign Assistance Act of the 1961, drafted in the depths of the Cold War," he explained. Efforts have been made to introduce a 21st century version that reflects 75 years of learning and the contemporary context, but there is still much to be done to bring the US government as the world's largest foreign aid donor into the 21st century. "This is a meaty policy agenda that has multiple dimensions extending from the implementation of the localization agenda to the role of public-private partnerships to the future of the World Bank and Bretton Woods financing institutions to rights-based as opposed to needs-based approaches to development."

Finally, the essential role of markets and the private sector in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals has been recognized by the UN, which has created the Global Compact to engage and challenge corporate leaders to step up and recognize their responsibilities and roles. Increased flows of private capital as foreign direct investment into emergent economies and low-income countries are already setting the opportunity horizon for the poor in the 21st century. Visionary CEOs under pressure from diverse stakeholders are recognizing that climate change is a direct threat to the very viability of their industries and are taking steps to not only lower their carbon footprint but to explore ways they might improve their social and ecological impacts all along their value chains. They are actively building sustainability units charged with implementing annual sustainability plans dealing with initiatives on water security, labor relations, environmental impacts, human rights, and transitioning to a renewable energy future. Universities with strong sustainability units have a real opportunity to provide critical professional guidance to these companies in defining their roles and goals, assessing opportunities and risks, targeting areas appropriate for strategic investments that may produce win-win outcomes for society and companies, and preparing students to assume roles in these new sustainability units.

These are but a few areas where university-based research and scholarship can find unique niches from which they can support a wide array of programs directed at poverty and inequality, Offenheiser concluded. There is no shortage of interested potential partners.

Sr. Helen Alford began her response to the papers and presentations by Professors Kijewski-Correa, Iyer and Piraino by picking up on Tracy Kijewski-Correa's point about the challenges of operationalizing an IHD-informed or "human flourishing" definition of poverty—in contrast to the World Bank's definition. She agreed with Kijewski-Correa that emphasizing humility and courage are the virtues that must inform the daunting task of putting into practice—operationalizing—ideals like IHD and "human flourishing."

Sr. Helen made three additional points: First, dealing with the vast material dimensions of the global situation is difficult but important (even within a human flourishing perspective): annually, in a $100 trillion world economy, $27 trillion is saved, $27 million is invested—and the world needs to invest $4-5 trillion each year to achieve the SDGs by 2030. How to incentivize such investment? One challenge: The time lag between investments in economic development and the full return on investments—in education, most crucially, when "returns" may not be evident for 30-40 years—is a strong disincentive. We could conceivably deal with such challenges, but how to come up with a system that addresses the material dimensions in a more holistic and humane manner? It is not impossible.

Second, in the operationalization efforts, measurement is crucial but also tricky. If one seeks to advance "transformational" projects, for example, people need to see how such transformations could be possible. In this regard, developing appropriate measurements are crucial. Beyond material metrics, spiritual dimensions are of course harder to gauge. Composite measures are important in this regard, in that they can challenge other big measures. Can GDP be displaced or at least contextualized? Amartya Sen came to believe that human development composite measures could dethrone GDP. Composite measures have a role, Sr. Alford affirmed, though they can misguide us if they lose the specificity that comes with the data and other information that comes with a conventional, materialist approach to metrics. Equally important then, are multidimensional measures (e.g. "gross national happiness"), which do have a spiritual dimension (e.g., "time for prayer and meditation"). So, third, for a Catholic context, some way of measuring "spiritual capital" would be important, as well as the policies and structures that would support the decision to bear children, for example, or other means of deepening community and relationality.

Turning to Iyer's paper, Sr. Alford wondered whether the focus on gender quota research is a bit like the focus on dollar-level cutoffs mentioned by Kijewski-Correa—does it push us in the right direction, in that we get conflicting results—are we getting to the roots? Likewise, does focusing on paid work and careers really get at the heart of the matter? Well, yes, it is true, the decision-makers are usually the ones in these paid positions. But the CST idea of putting the human person at the center of these systems may change our perspective. For example, what would it mean to acknowledge the disabled as contributing in their way to a flourishing economy, measured in a holistic way? Why not focus on valuable work that helps normal people? Work, for example, that provides care, including childcare, for women and families who have their own jobs. Finally, Sr. Alford observed that some ideas derived from Christianity have stirred opposition and criticism, including from within the Church, that has led to constructive debates and dialogues about gender inequality.

Piriano, she continued, is correct to emphasize the need to look at different institutional cultures. Italy, for example, was once derided as "backward" for its persistent focus on small farms, but that Italian sociocultural preference has contributed an important element to the trends in food security solutions. It is great news, Sr. Alford underscored, that some parts of the world did not go all out for the mass production system. That said, she continued, in addition to institutional variability, we also do need some basic shared human systems, which are good for us *as humans*. This is what we used to call a matter of "natural law," which asked: what do we need for human beings qua human beings? What do we need to leave free for cultural diversity? Happiness research helps us here, Sr. Alford suggested. At low levels of income, increasing people's incomes increases happiness. But at a certain point—not a very high level of income, in fact— the correlation to happiness is with other factors, such as the quality of peoples' relationships. The game analogy might be relevant here as well, she said by way of conclusion. Once everyone is included within the basic parameters and rules of the game, there is great flexibility for how one actually plays the games, takes various decisions, etc.

Iyer engaged Sr. Alford's remarks by picking up on Sr.'s distinction between paid work and the quality of the work. Placing emphasis on paid work alone is certainly flawed, Lakshmi agreed, whether it is a flaw in the research, or in society's tendency to judge that "Care work is not compensated monetarily so it must not be valuable." But is the paid work meaningful? Lakshmi agrees that we do need a new measure for the value people bring to a society. Sr. Alford asked a very important question, as well, about gender quotas, which are ubiquitous worldwide. While more than 100 countries have gender quotas, it is not clear that they were designed very well or adjusted to specific contexts and local norms. Indeed, a quota is often a simplistic formula: "We have gender inequality? Let's impose a quota." This approach, Iyer continues, can also lead to complacency: well, we've taken care of the problem by establishing a quota."

Iyer concluded by emphasizing the point that metrics can be tricky: we want to measure not only what workers produce for society but also how society serves their flourishing as well.

Piraino appreciated Sr. Alford's notion of the shared rules of a game. He added that, at a Catholic university, we are comfortable speaking of normative values, so once the norms are clear and agreed upon, we can focus on how to realize and implement them. If there is a rationale for why the policy is in place, then we live with the outcomes and consequences, including the fact that there are "winners" and "losers" in any policy debate and decision. If I have agreed to the rules (norms), I agree to live with the outcomes.

In response to a question posed by Keough School Advisory Council member **Rafat Ansari** about the ways natural disasters, wars and other external factors exacerbate the poverty that billions of people are already experiencing, Kijewski-Correadescribed these as "shocks" to the system, and noted that her research and policy work calls for building more durable systems that can minimize the impact of these shocks and, equally important, Kijewski-Correa's work emphasizes the crucial importance of shifting the focus of government, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations from a reactive mindset—let's clean up the disaster we just experienced—to an anticipatory, proactive attitude, as in "let's prepare for the disasters we know are coming and put better structures and processes in place, in order to minimize their impact on the poor and others."

Neela Saldanha and Duncan Green responded to the papers and presentations by Offenheiser and Perrin.

Neela Saldanha asked: What would a more ambitious development agenda look like? Operationalizing a definition of human flourishing would be a place to begin. Dignity, of course, is not a new notion, she noted, nor an exclusively religious one, from 1948 to the Gates Foundation today, whose motto is "Every life is of equal value." Dignity, she added, is inherent, not earned or bestowed by someone else. That said, poor people do not have the power to reject development assistance help even if it comes with one or more of the benevolent indignities described by Perrin.

We are policing ourselves in the development world, Saldanha acknowledged, but what are the institutional checks and balances on us? What incentivizes us to avoid benevolent indignities?

She cited three marks of dignity being recognized. The first is "representativeness": Do people feel seen and heard (or not, as they choose)? Do we reduce people to a single story or see them in their distinctiveness? The second is "agency": Do people have control over their experiences? The infantilization sometimes practiced by (often well-meaning) development actors, for example, does not respect one's agency. Finally, "equality": Not that everyone has the same but people feel treated fairly. But programs that do not meet these standards, and commit benevolent indignities cannot necessarily be rejected by the poor; the power relations cannot be overlooked.

We need a grammar to speak about dignity and human flourishing, Saldanha continued. The move "from evidence to action" here is important, and development of a prose, a language about dignity, is a necessary condition for this—and this is what universities should be doing. As Offenheiser mentioned, we must rethink our relationships and partnerships with the Global South. Research shows that developing programs at scale requires governments and states. Here research and RCTs are important but more important to the recipients of development assistance are the answers to these questions: Was the research conducted in my country or one similar to mine? Does a local expert recommend this research? In short, the research, programs and practices must be tailored to the local context. Partnerships between the Global North and South must take power relationships into account. This tailoring of Western practices to local global south contexts will be hard, especially at a time when corporations are watering down their commitments to DEI and to sustainability. Updating the neo-liberal agenda will be bumpy along the way, but it is necessary.

Values-based leadership is essential, Saldanha concluded. She reported that her book on *Marketplace Dignity* has received a positive response; "people want to do this, to adopt a dignity lens; they just don't have the tools, vocabulary and the measurements to think about it, so the Keough School is doing a great job in providing this."

Duncan Green opened his comments with an appreciation of the panel's focus on positive assets, on value beyond numbers and income, and on Offenheiser's focus on inequality and on institutions. The notion of multi-dimensional poverty (Sen) assumed correctly that poverty is linked to indignity and inequality to the erosion of social cohesion.

He then turned to weaknesses and oversights in the papers and presentations beginning with the "China Problem," namely, the dilemma raised by the fact of a non-democratic authoritarian state achieving astounding success in lifting millions of people out of poverty. The conventional wisdom behind books like *Why Nations Fail?* Green noted, is that prosperous, developed nations must be like the US or Denmark (the West). By this reckoning, the three signs of successful development states are: an active and engaged citizenry, a responsive and effective state, and open and inclusive markets—but China, which scores low on each, is by many measurements the model of successful development. So, is the answer: "Be more like China."? The papers and presentations, Green pointed out, do not really grapple with this challenge.

A second puzzle: Who are the "we"? The papers imagine a global community, but does such a global community really exist or is it no more than a shrinking Western aid bubble? In terms of the flow of resources devoted to getting people out of poverty, the money from domestic sources is only growing, Green noted. Just one source of money— Zakat, a 2.5 percent wealth tax on Muslims—amounts to $1 trillion per year, five or six times the amount of total global aid; and remittances account for three times the amount of global aid. "We"—the international development community— are increasingly irrelevant, it seems, Green remarked. In political terms, more and more countries are graduating out of aid dependence. The rise of regional powers is also making western development less central to eradicating poverty.

And Perrin's notion of benevolent indignities is spot-on, he added, with top-down Western development agencies, inadvertently or not, fostering these consequences.

Green then turned to the animating question of the panel: how do we translate research into policy, and what is the role of the academy in this process? Green acknowledged that formulating and refining a grammar and vocabulary of poverty and dignity is important, but so, too is one's "theory of change." Is there more than just critiquing and analyzing the situation? What shifts the paradigm? We need a really big idea, Green said, and the skill to communicate it. How to seize the attention of the academy? For better or worse, Hayek and Friedman, et al, at Chicago did so, as did Sen. They made very deliberate moves to shape the field. Identify positive deviance, like the idea of dignity, and see how it can be scaled. So, Green's advice, in short: Step outside the Western bubble, which is shrinking, and ask ourselves "awkward questions" about who we are and what we should be doing.

In the discussion that followed, **Kyle Jaros** asked about the trade-off between "dignity" and other goals, including the practical need in crises that demand massive, large-scale immediate relief, such as disasters and public health emergencies, to treat people a bit like objects or numbers, as it were. Can new technologies of aid address this dilemma? Perrin responded that it is not an either/or formula but a both/and, or should not become one. Other metrics are also important. Researchers at the Pulte Institute are addressing this question by asking people around the world who have been recipients of aid: what works? How have your interactions with development workers been? Are they respectful, collaborative, etc.? With partners at IDinsight, based in the UK with offices across the Global South, we have identified several "quick wins," adjustments that can make a modest but important difference in the short term.

Rafat Ansari observed that successful corporations practice respect for human dignity as a way of advancing their reputation among both their employees and clients. Offenheiser asked Perrin to reflect on the implications of the connection between dignity and human rights, a connection which Perrin affirmed, even as he urged the development, within the interdisciplinary Keough School, of new questions that would lead to actions that advance rights.

Jenna Ahn of Catholic Relief Services, who is a member of the Keough School Advisory Council noted that CRS receives money from donors who bring their own metrics, which are and are not compatible with IHD. These donors are not all Catholic, she said, but they might be open to a persuasive argument about the "development benefits" to be garnered from an IHD-inspired approach and metrics. In short, she concluded, the Keough School is positioned to bring such an argument to bear on the field.

ENDNOTES

[1] "Global Progress in Reducing Extreme Poverty Grinds to a Halt," *World Bank Group*, October 5, 2022, https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2022/10/05/global-progress-in-reducing-extreme-poverty-grinds-to-a-halt.

[2] United Nations Population Fund [UNFPA], *Annual Report 2020* https://www.unfpa.org/annual-report-2020

[3] The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance documented that, in 2022, 27 countries specified a percentage of seats in the legislature that must be filled by women, 61 countries required a certain percentage of electoral candidates to be women, and political parties in 23 countries had voluntarily chosen to have gender quotas. On average, such gender quotas result in women comprising 24.7 percent of the national parliament, compared to 18.4 percent in countries without a quota. See Melanie M. Hughes, Pamela Paxton, Amanda B. Clayton and Pär Zetterberg, "Global Gender Quota Adoption, Implementation and Reform," *Comparative Politics 51 no. 2* (2019) 219-238.

[4] See the review in Irma Clots-Figueras and Lakshmi Iyer, "Gender and Natural Experiments in Developing Countries," in *Handbook of Experimental Development Economics*, edited by Utteeyo Dasgupta and Pushkar Maitra (Edgar Elgar, 2025).2025.

[5] See details in Ibid.

[6] Christina Wolbrecht and David Campbell, "Leading by Example: Female Members of Parliament as Political Role Models," *American Journal of Political Science* (2007) https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2007.00289.x Also see Sonia Bhalotra, et al., "Intimate Partner Violence and the Business Cycle," SSRN Electronic Journal 2018.

[7] Lakshmi Iyer and Margaret Triyana, "Gender Quotas and Crimes Against Women: Is there an Intensive Margin Effect?" (2022) https://www.isid.ac.in/~epu/acegd2022/papers/Lakshmi_Iyer.pdf

[8] For instance, women who win mayoral or parliamentary elections in Sweden are twice as likely to get divorced than men who win such elections; a similar widening of divorce rates happens for women who become CEOs; see Ollie Folke and Johanna Rickne, "All the Single Ladies: Job Promotions and the Durability of Marriage," *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* (Vol. 12, no. 1, January 2020): 260-87.

[9] In 2000, 31, 43 and 105 countries did not prohibit employment discrimination, inheritance inequality and credit discrimination, respectively. Thus, some progress is being made on the legal dimension, but the pace is slow.

[10] Mohammed Amin and Asif Islam, "Are Large Informal Firms More Productive than the Small, Informal Firms? Evidence from Firm-Level Surveys in Africa," *World Development*, Vol. 74, October 2015: 374-385.

[11] Alexander Fertig, Alexandra Hartman, Lakshmi Iyer, and Edmund Malesky, "A Field of Her Own: Property Rights and Women's Agency in Myanmar," *Journal of Politics* (2025). https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/epdf/10.1086/734236

[12] Julia Kowalski, *Counseling Women: Kinship Against Violence in India* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2022).

[13] Iyer et al., 2012

[14] Abby Córdova and Helen Kras, "The Politics of Private Violence: How Intimate Partner Victimization Influences Political Attitudes," Latin American Politics and Society (2022) https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/latin-american-politics-and-society/article/abs/politics-of-private-violence-how-intimate-partner-violence-victimization-influences-political-attitudes/EFC84D1672C2BF8F9275538956150DAD

[15] World Bank, Poverty and Inequality Update, Spring 2024. https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents

[16] Homi Kharas and Meagan Dooley, "The evolution of global poverty, 1990-2030," Brookings Institute 2022.

[17] Lucy Tompkins, "Extreme poverty has been sharply cut. What has changed?" *New York Times*, December 2, 2021, https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/02/world/global-poverty-united-nations.html.

[18] Ibid.

[19] UN75 Shaping Our Future Together, Inequality—Bridging the Divide, 2020 https://www.un.org/en/un75/finalreport#

[20] "Ending Poverty," United Nations, https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/ending-poverty#:~:text=From%201990%20to%202014%2C%20the,to%2011.2%20percent%20in%202014.

[21] Geoff Heinrich, David Leege, and Carrie Miller, *A User's Guide to Integral Human Development (IHD): Practical Guidance for CRS Staff and Partners*, Catholic Relief Services (2008).

[22] AbhijitV. Banerjee and Esther Duflo, *Good Economics for Hard Times* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2001).

[23] Anthony Annett, *Cathonomics*, (Georgetown University Press 2022): Chapter 3.

[24] As philosopher Michael Sandel argues, "...shrinking from our [moral and spiritual convictions] does not leave them undecided. It simply means the markets will decide them for us. This is the lesson of the last three decades." Michael Sandel, *What Money Can't Buy: The Moral Limits of Markets* (NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013).

[25] Piraino's presentation draws upon Patrizio Piraino, "Drivers of Mobility in the Global South," in Vegard Iversen, Anirudh Krishna, and Kunal Sen, eds. *Social mobility in developing countries: Concepts, methods, and determinants* (Oxford University Press, 2021).

[26] This intuition is corroborated by a series of recent studies on how various types of labor market frictions in different African countries can result in worker misallocation and higher inequality.

[27] Martin Abel, Rulof Burger, Patrizio Piraino, "The value of reference letters: Experimental evidence from South Africa," *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 12 no. 3 (2020): 40-71.

[28] A related literature looks at a different type of market imperfection: credit market failures. If credit markets were perfect, all parents could borrow sufficient funds to optimally invest in their offspring's human capital. In the presence of borrowing constraints, however, some parents are unable to gain access to credit and the optimal amount of human capital investment will not be realized. As a result, there will be a higher degree of intergenerational persistence for families with high-ability children but insufficient credit. Allowing for systematic variation in access to credit thus

creates a pathway of intergenerational persistence in the form of higher human capital investment by richer parents.

[29] Y.D. Maoz and Omer Moav, "Intergenerational mobility and the process of development," *Economic Journal*. 109 (1999): 677-697 https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-0297.00468.

[30] Paul Perrin, et al., "Upholding Human Dignity: A Literature Review" (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame and Catholic Relief Services), accessed April 18, 2024, https://doi.org/10.7274/76537082b53.

[31] "Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions," United Nations, United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, accessed April 18, 2024, https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/peace-justice/.

[32] Pope Francis, "Fratelli Tutti" (Dicastero per la Comunicazione - Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2020)

[33] Paul Perrin, "MAP Chagas Project Evaluation Report" (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2019); Danice Guzman, Lila Khatiwada, and Paul Perrin, "Research to Policy: A Long-Term Impact Evaluation of the Partnerships for Enhanced Engagement in Research Program," 2022, https://doi.org/10.7274/vx021c2224g; Kerrie Holloway, "Dignity in Displacement: Case Studies from Afghanistan, Colombia, the Philippines and South Sudan" (Overseas Development Institute, March 1, 2019), https://search.proquest.com/docview/2213872111.

[34] See Theresa Miller et al., "Talking About Poverty: Narratives, Counter-Narratives, and Telling Effective Stories" (FrameWorks and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, September 2021), https://www.frameworksinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Talking-about-poverty.pdf . Rosenthal et al., "Poverty Narratives in Popular Culture" (USC Annenberg Norman Lear Center, May 2021), https://learcenter.s3.us-west-1.amazonaws.com/PovertyNarrativesinPopCulture_FinalReport.pdf; "Narrative Shift: From The War on Poverty to 'Ending Welfare as We Know It,'" *The Opportunity Agenda* (blog), accessed September 28, 2023, https://opportunityagenda.org/messaging_reports/shifting-the-narrative/case-2/.

[35] Nancie Hudson, "The Trauma of Poverty as Social Identity," *Journal of Loss and Trauma* 21, no. 2 (2016): 111–23, https://doi.org/10.1080/15325024.2014.965979.

[36] See, inter alia, Naimah Talib, "The Poor Know They're Poor: The Roles of Shame and Stigma in the Everyday Lives of People in Poverty," *New Mandala* (blog), August 29, 2019, https://www.newmandala.org/the-poor-know-theyre-poor/; Robert Walker, "Poverty, Shame, and Stigma," in Robert Walker, ed., *The Shame of Poverty* (Oxford University Press, 2014); https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199684823.003.0004; Robert Walker et al., "Poverty in Global Perspective: Is Shame a Common Denominator?," *Journal of Social Policy* 42, no. 2 (April 2013): 215–33, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047279412000979.

[37] Clemens Sedmak, *Enacting Integral Human Development* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2023).

[38] Gbedoah Richard, "On Colonialism and Development – Why the Underdevelopment of the South Cannot Be Delinked from the Experience of the Past," *African Journal of Governance and Development* 7, no. 1 (2018), https://journals.co.za/doi/pdf/10.10520/EJC-f655b453b.

[39] Sedmak, *Enacting Integral Human Development*.

[40] Irwin Loy, "Why It's Time to Stop the Aid Logo 'Arms Race,'" The New Humanitarian,

August 17, 2023, https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/interview/2023/08/17/qa-why-its-time-stop-aid-logo-arms-race.

[41] W. Gyude Moore, "The Case Against Branding Development Aid in Fragile States," *Center For Global Development*, May 16, 2018, https://www.cgdev.org/blog/case-against-branding-development-aid-fragile-states.

[42] In light of the evidence and corresponding principles, when benevolent actors engage in opaque practices, data collection thereby becomes an extractive and often duplicative process, which in turn can erode trust and respect for dignity. See: The Global Campaign for Aid Transparency, "Why Aid Transparency Matters, and the Global Movement for Aid Transparency," Briefing Paper (Publish What you Fund, 2017), https://www.publishwhatyoufund.org/app/uploads/2017/01/Briefing-Paper-1-Why-Aid-Transparency-Matters.pdf.

[43] Christian Bommer, Axel Dreher, and Marcello Perez-Alvarez, "Home Bias in Humanitarian Aid: The Role of Regional Favoritism in the Allocation of International Disaster Relief," *Journal of Public Economics* 208 (2022): 104604, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2022.104604.

[44] "This benevolent indignity," Perrin writes, "arises not in the idea of infrastructure construction in itself, but in how it tends to be implemented by benevolent actors. Populations participating in evaluations by the Pulte Institute have often pointed out that while the infrastructure is appreciated when it is built, there is far too little thought provided to the maintenance and use of this infrastructure over time. When infrastructure is constructed with outside expertise, outside resources, and outside technology, it can be difficult if not impossible over time to maintain the infrastructure in a resource-constrained setting." For an extended discussion of these and other "benevolent indignities, see Paul Perrin, "Benevolent Indignities," in *World Development*

[45] Wein et al have demonstrated that there is empirical demand for more dignity-affirming work in the global affairs space. In a survey of non-profit professionals, nearly 80 percent of respondents felt that their organizations could do a better job at carrying out their work in ways that better respected human dignity, with around half of these same respondents also saying they would be willing to take a pay cut if it meant working at an organization that was more respectful and dignity-affirming. Tom Wein, Heather Lanthorn, and Torben Fischer, "First Steps toward Building Respectful Development: Three Experiments on Dignity in Aid in Kenya and the United States," *World Development Perspectives* 29 (2023): 100485, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wdp.2023.Affirming dignity may also have a positive impact on donor behavior: one study found that prospective donors are willing to donate up to $30 more if an organization mentions investing in efforts to recognize the individuality, equality, or autonomy of program participants. Tom Wein, "The Dignity Report: Three Years of Research on Dignity and International Development" (The Dignity Project, 2021), https://dignityproject.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/The-Dignity-Report.pdf.

[46] Perrin et al., "Upholding Human Dignity."

[47] Paul Perrin, John Hembling, and Tony Castleman, "Measuring Respect for Human Dignity among Project Participants" (Catholic Relief Services, February 21, 2024), https://www.crs.org/our-work-overseas/research-publications/measuring-respect-human-dignity-among-project-participants.

[48] The tools are publicly available, and peer-reviewed publications on the literature review

and tool validation are forthcoming. In addition, the Pulte Institute launched a partnership with IDinsight to conduct research on dignity-affirming practices in the poverty alleviation and global development fields to identify the most promising programmatic practices in this area.

[49] Mary Catherine Beach et al., "Do Patients Treated With Dignity Report Higher Satisfaction, Adherence, and Receipt of Preventive Care?," The Annals of Family Medicine 3, no. 4 (July 1, 2005): 331–38, https://doi.org/10.1370/afm.328; Kerrie Holloway, "Dignity in Displacement: Case Studies from Afghanistan, Colombia, the Philippines and South Sudan," ODI Global, March 1, 2019; Jeremy Shapiro, "The Impact of Recipient Choice on Aid Effectiveness," World Development 116, (2019): 137–49, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2018.10.010; Wein, Lanthorn, and Fischer, "First Steps toward Building Respectful Development."

[50] Dignity Symposium Attendees, "Dignity Research Agenda: Consensus Statement."

[51] As quoted in Tracy Kidder, *Mountains Beyond Mountains: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, a Man Who Would Cure the World* (Random House Publishing, 2003.)

[52] Harvard's Kennedy School has contributed to this field since the 1960s through its Mason Program, a one-year Professional degree program for mid-career civil servants. They have trained scores of such professionals who today hold senior roles often as First Secretaries in ministries across the world, providing quality leadership within the civil service.

Sustainability and Environmental Justice

The Keough School strives to address the contested relationship between poverty, climate change and environmental degradation, including the increasing loss of biodiversity and the ravaging of forests and the soil upon which farmers depend. At Notre Dame, as **Daniel Miller** noted in introducing the first panel of this section of the conference, we emphasize Catholic social teaching, which embraces a "preferential option for the poor"—and yet, it is the poor who are most affected by environmental change. What does "sustainability" mean in this context, and how might sustainable and just practices and policies be identified and implemented?

In her paper and presentation on "Sustainability and Environmental Justice in the Energy Transition,"[1] **Emily Grubert** first reviewed the cause of climate change and the extreme threat it poses to human thriving. We have understood the basic mechanism of the greenhouse gas effect for well over a century, and international policy attention has focused on climate change for over 30 years, she noted. Many have already experienced loss of life, loss of homes, loss of loved ones, loss of culture, and many other consequences of climate change.

Greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere – the driver of continued and accelerating climate change – continue to grow, with record emissions in 2023. The large majority of these anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) are the result of burning fossil fuels for energy – accounting for roughly 80 percent of gross global emissions, in the form of carbon dioxide (CO_2) and methane (CH_4). "These emissions drive devastating global change, with massive international and intergenerational injustices driven by the spatial and temporal mismatches between emissions and effects of climate change," Grubert said. International agreements have focused on attempting to limit the impact of climate change to the damages to the natural environment that we experience when global warming stays below 2° Celsius of preindustrial averages, and preferably below 1.5° Celsius. Yet January 2024 marked the end of the first consecutive 12-month period where global temperatures exceeded 1.5° Celsius, though breaching this threshold permanently is not yet locked in.[2] People, other species, and ecosystems are already feeling the disastrous effects of this level of warming, she added, including through devastating and costly storms, heat waves, floods, droughts, and human displacement.

As has been true for decades, about 80 percent of the global energy system relies directly on fossil fuels – oil, coal, and natural gas.[3] Energy consumption, which is positively correlated with standard of living, remains highly unequal globally: 675 million people have no access to modern energy systems, and many more have very limited and/or inconsistent access.[4] Energy access and extreme poverty are problems not only in Low and Medium Income (LMI) countries, but also in High Income countries, where many do not benefit from their countries' high incomes. In the US, about one-fifth of adults were unable to fully pay an energy bill in the last 12 months[5] —an energy insecurity phenomenon sometimes described as the "heat or eat" dilemma.[6] In short, Professor Grubert said,

> Energy access – and particularly the ability to secure and use sufficient nonpolluting, ecologically manageable, and socially acceptable energy to enable both surviving and thriving – is a major international justice issue. Beyond climate change, energy systems – and especially fossil fuel-based energy systems – are major drivers of localized pollution with significant and sometimes severe impacts on human and ecosystem health. This, too, is a major justice problem: not only are such harms in general undesirable, but they are also highly unevenly distributed, often creating and reinforcing generational patterns of overburden and vulnerability.[7]

Institutionally, fossil fuel companies are implicated in significant and troubling patterns of injustice, Grubert contended. Significant evidence, she noted, now supports claims that major oil and natural gas producers have long been aware of the climate implications of burning fossil fuels and have taken steps to delay or halt global response.[8] Coal producers are internationally known for their antagonistic roles in labor history. In the United States, which allows for private rather than public ownership of mineral resources like fossil fuels, companies have abandoned pension and environmental obligations through bankruptcy, leaving communities impoverished and ravaged.[9] Noncompliance with pollution controls is common, as are patterns of extraction that contribute to the "resource curse," wherein countries whose fossil fuel resources are extracted do not see expected development benefits; instead, the wealth is exported and concentrated beyond producer countries.

In considering questions of international justice, which is a mandate of the Keough School, there are "major opportunities" to improve energy systems, Grubert noted, and to envision and implement policies and practices that will serve current and future generations. Transitioning away from fossil fuels, while technically challenging, is clearly possible, she affirmed, owing to rapid technological progress enabling the development of alternatives to fossil fuel systems. But this challenge is inextricably linked to questions of social justice; technological progress, Grubert insists, is not enough. Institutions must also ensure justice and correct historical injustices in apportioning resources as well as burdens.

One of the core challenges of transition, she explained, is that new clean energy systems need to operate together with and alongside existing, older fossil infrastructures.[10] Moreover, the new systems "enter into market and other contexts that we know are insufficient for achieving ambitious goals." Utility rate structures that force people even in wealthy countries into "heat or eat" dilemmas do not change simply because the electricity is now made from wind rather than natural gas, for example, and installing solar panels does not remediate the long-term health effects from the refinery that operates nearby. The urge to seek out one-to-one replacements, like personal electric cars in place of internal combustion engine cars or solar jobs in place of coal jobs in the same town, can mask opportunities to identify and implement something better. System redesign that integrates new structures and older structures, including those being phased out, is complicated by the fact of different starting parameters, challenges, and constraints around the world. The "mid-transition" period could last decades, even at top speed.[11]

In the energy transition— which occurs with the backdrop of decades of disinvestment and deferred maintenance, significant technological change, and accelerating climate change— it is possible that the beginning point (a mostly fossil fuel-based system) and the end point (a non-fossil-fuel-based system) are both significantly more stable and easier to operate than the dynamic hybrid systems we will rely on in the middle. Again, Grubert emphasized, this is a call to accelerate, rather than decelerate, the transition.[12]

Current research on the energy transition, Grubert explained, tends to focus on what we need to build: renewable electricity generation, the ability to use electricity to provide services that currently rely on direct use of fossil fuels (e.g., heating and transportation), decarbonized fuels for industrial and commercial applications that cannot electrify, and more controversially, potential geoengineering capabilities focused on removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere (carbon dioxide removal, CDR) or on reducing the heat that reaches the Earth (solar radiation management, SRM). However, there is far less research that identifies explicit and specific strategies for phasing out fossil fuels in a way that is safe, allows for continuity of services, and avoids saddling already-burdened host communities with additional environmental, social, and financial liabilities associated with abandoned and un-remediated infrastructure. Although fossil phase-out must be done as quickly as possible, it must also be done safely, which likely requires both significant planning and ongoing access to the expertise of workers who are increasingly aware that their industries have limited futures. For critical services like heat, phase-out cannot be completed until a new, reliable way of delivering services is in place and trustworthy.

In the overall context of the global energy transition, the US presents a particularly important target of research and execution. Not only is the US a long-term industrialized country with aging fossil infrastructure that is ripe for replacement[13] and substantial wealth available to fund transition, but it is also a critical participant in the global context. The world's largest cumulative emitter of fossil fuels, at about 25 percent of all anthropogenic greenhouse gases emitted to date, the US is also a notable laggard or, often, non-participant in global action on climate change. In a globalized energy economy, the US is also the world's largest producer of oil, the largest producer of natural gas, and the fourth-largest producer of coal. (For many years the US was the largest producer of coal, before standing by as the industry collapsed in a haphazard and unregulated manner— a cautionary tale of an unjust transition.)

Institutionally, the US is extremely unusual, Grubert added, in that fossil fuel resources are often privately held, as are critical energy service providers like refineries and many utilities. The country has no legally binding climate targets, and policies have so far focused primarily on subsidies without explicit plans for how transition might (or might not) occur. The US remains a major international proponent of natural gas use, expecting to be a provider to international markets even as global understanding of climate change reinforces the need to reach net-zero emissions by mid-century in order to improve chances of remaining below negotiated temperature thresholds. It is also a global leader in the development of hydrogen and carbon dioxide removal technologies, both of which could be critically important for meeting international climate goals but could also create major and long-lasting injustices and harms if poorly implemented. However, she added, US policy, which is influencing other countries seeking to develop these potentially major industrial sectors, is so far allowing for significant capture by oil and natural gas interests. "For all these reasons the United States is a particularly important target for identifying and then demonstrating how a just energy transition can occur."

In the US context, where there is no explicit federal energy policy and no real authority for domestic energy system planning, one major transition question stands out: how can this undertaking be orchestrated in a way that efficiently and effectively delivers a successful transition to a more just, less polluting, and climate-preserving energy future? Some centralized coordination is almost certainly required, given the normative and directional nature of the transition. Market forces have proven to be insufficient: one estimate suggests that for all but one of the US' coal-fired power plants, it would be cheaper to replace the plant with brand new clean energy systems than to continue to operate the plant – and yet, coal continues to supply about 20 percent of US electricity, in part because of regulatory structures in the utility sector, and in part because of the fundamental reality that decisions are driven by profitability rather than cost.[14] Implementing a carbon tax, often held out by economists as the most efficient way to decarbonize, is unlikely to deliver a transition, Grubert added. Aside from the enormous administrative challenges (including those associated with appropriate greenhouse gas accounting), there are many situations where emitters would likely choose to pay even a very large tax rather than stop emitting.[15]

Overall, Grubert concluded, a justice-centering energy transition needs to be coordinated, with careful attention to which systems are available to provide which services. This need points to a deeper design principle, which is that a true justice focus for the energy transition also requires a focus on service provision:

> The goal of energy systems is not to ensure that electricity reliability exceeds 99.999 percent (a common design standard), or to guarantee specific transportation fuel throughout: it is to ensure that people have access to heat, light, mobility, and other services. It is service reliability rather than energy supply reliability that should therefore be the focus, a reality that also implicates questions of how all people

> can access other critical needs – like housing, healthcare, and many others – as fundamental to the energy transition. Service-first design allows for more visioning about what the world would need to, and could, look like if people's needs were met and allows for creative recognition of alternative strategies. For example, efficient housing might be able to serve heating and cooling service needs as well as additional electricity generation; density and public transportation might be able to serve mobility needs as well as affordable electric vehicles. In general, a reorientation of energy transition research toward services and away from supply-first strategies can support justice goals, context-aware implementation of effective strategies, and a true focus on what we want out of an energy system. Moving away from a paradigm where energy is a group of commodities that can deliver profits and instead is a crucial enabler of human thriving, is core to the potential for a truly just energy transition.

In his paper **Paul Winters** recommended a similar focus on consumers and justice in his argument for transformation in the agriculture and food sectors. Proposals to transform food systems to address climate change and nutrition often ignore vulnerable populations and could worsen their plight.[16] Even country-level proposals included in Nationally Determined Contributions documents under the Paris Agreement on climate change would increase global poverty by an estimated 4.5 percent if implemented as described.[17]

Innovations will be central to transforming food systems and will need to be taken to scale. Unfortunately, the global institutional architecture "is not well set up to develop and scale innovations at the level needed." Even though half the world's population now lives in urban centers, the majority of people living in extreme poverty and food insecurity are in rural areas, Winters explained. They directly or indirectly rely on agriculture for their livelihoods. Accordingly, rising productivity growth in the agriculture sector has been seen as central to success.[18] Yet growth in the agricultural sector does not guarantee poverty reduction or ensure food security. Proactive policies and investments are necessary to ensure the inclusion of rural households living below the poverty line, women, indigenous people, youth, and other vulnerable groups in the development process.[19]

With this in mind, development efforts over recent decades have focused on inclusive rural development in the midst of continued and growing issues with climate change and malnutrition. Estimates suggest that climate change could push more than 100 million additional people into extreme poverty by 2030, with half of this increase due to the impact of climate change on agriculture.[20] Under high-emissions scenarios, climate change will make some current areas unsuitable for food production due to hazards that impose hard limits on any type of production.[21] These challenges are particularly problematic in lower-income countries where agriculture contributes an important share of GDP and is a significant employer, and where the capacity to respond to hazards is limited.

Complicating matters, Winters writes, the gains in agricultural productivity and production have come at an environmental cost, including increased GHGs. Many modern production practices (such as soil management, synthetic fertilizers, and the expansion of agricultural land use) increase emissions. The overall food system—from production to consumption—contributes 25-35 percent of total greenhouse gas emissions, making the sector second only to energy in terms of total emissions.[22] A number of factors contribute to this, including the loss and waste of 33 percent of food globally[23] and agriculture-based deforestation. Although low- and middle-income countries are not considered primarily responsible for GHG emissions, he added, there is a concern that if they follow a similar agricultural path as other countries, this could lead to an agricultural and food system that is high in emissions and result in future problems.

Along with climate change challenges, the manner in which food systems operate creates nutritional challenges. The historic focus on staple-crop productivity (rice, maize, wheat, potatoes, etc.), the manner in which food is processed, and changing lifestyles have led to a nutritional transition in low- and middle-income countries that has resulted in a need to simultaneously address different forms of malnutrition (undernutrition, micronutrient deficiency, overweight/obesity, etc.). A quarter of global deaths are caused by dietary risk factors and low levels of physical activity).[24] Rural people are not immune from dietary issues. With rising urbanization in lower-income countries, 64 percent of the population lives within the catchment areas of towns and cities.[25] This greater access to urban food markets has caused the increase in obesity in low- and middle-income countries to be the greatest in rural areas.[26]

With these issues in mind, there have been calls for creating new strategies, policies, and investments for transforming food systems to make them more climate friendly, nutritious, and inclusive of people living in poverty.[27] A key element of these calls is to take a broader food-systems approach that considers the synergies between biophysical and human systems. Incorporating food consumption patterns into new approaches is critical. Consumer behavior is closely linked to nutrition, but also determines production, processing, and food delivery, and thus leads to climate and environmental impacts.

While recognizing the need for broad food systems transformation, a focus on food security and poverty objectives must remain central to any discussions, Winters advised. Proposals to transform food systems to address climate change and nutrition often ignore vulnerable populations and could worsen their plight.[28] Even country-level proposals included in Nationally Determined Contributions documents under the Paris Agreement on climate change would increase global poverty by an estimated 4.5 percent if implemented as described.[29] There are significant potential trade-offs, as well as synergies, between achieving inclusion objectives and other objectives of food system transformation; the question is how to transform food systems in low- and middle-income countries to simultaneously address climate change, improve nutrition, and ensure inclusion. Put simply, the manner in which productivity growth is achieved needs to change. It is essential that the scarce resources used for agricultural production and food systems, especially land and labor, are used wisely. Reductions in greenhouse gases are unlikely unless current resources are used as efficiently as possible.

> The emphasis on productivity growth should shift from a strong focus on staple crops to a broader focus on diverse and nutritious diets. In doing so in low and middle-income countries, specific actions must be taken to ensure inclusion, since inclusion will not happen automatically.

As mentioned, innovation is central to food system transformation. At present, agriculture provides enough food for the world's 8 billion people, although many do not have adequate access. To feed the world in 2050, croplands would need to expand from between 171 million to 301 million additional hectares (relative to 2010).[30] Eliminating harmful practices such as deforestation and the use of synthetic fertilizer without alternative solutions would lead to a decrease in the world's food supply and in farmers' incomes.

To address the dilemma of ensuring sufficient production while minimizing GHGs, innovations must be developed and taken to scale so they reach hundreds of millions of people. Fortunately, Winters noted, numerous biological, technological, and social innovations have already been developed, and additional innovations are in the pipeline. For example, enhancing weather forecasts would have huge benefits for farmers, who are increasingly vulnerable to weather uncertainty due to climate change and need short- (0-3 days), medium- (4-10 days), and long-range (beyond 10 days) forecasts. Multiple studies find that farmers adjust their behavior and investment decisions in response to accurate weather forecasts. New technology and delivery systems allow more accurate, timely, high-quality, local forecasts, but most farmers in low- and middle-income countries currently lack access. As an illustration, the benefits of providing all state-level forecasts of the monsoon seasonal rainfall totals in India would exceed $3 billion over five years.[31]

Commercial incentives to develop and scale these innovations, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, fall far short of their social value, leading to underinvestment. Innovation funding's track record of generating very high social rates of return creates an opportunity for public and philanthropic investment in innovation.

Of course, Winters cautioned, innovations are not silver bullets given to countries to solve their problems. Any potential innovation must be identified, developed, and scaled in a manner consistent with—and driven by—national strategies, in conjunction with the government, the private sector, and civil society. Promising local innovations should be considered for further development and scale via analysis to determine their impact, costeffectiveness, and potential for scaling. Any action on innovations must be based on existing evidence of what works.

From evidence to action for food system transformation

Food and agriculture took center stage at the UN Climate Change Conference in Dubai (COP28) in December 2023, where Winters played a behind-the-scenes intellectual leadership role. The *COP28 UAE Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems and Climate Action* commits signatory countries to make food systems a focal point in national strategies to address climate change—a necessary localization of effort, given the context-specific nature of appropriate agricultural practices, land use changes, and consumer behavior.

Supporting the development of agricultural innovations and providing large-scale funding to transition innovations to scale will be vital, Winters said. However, the global institutions currently in the food and agriculture space are ill-equipped to take on this role, he acknowledged. None of them meet the criteria for being a fund that can meet the objectives of scaling innovations, such as having a clear thematic or issue focus with distinct, numerable objectives; being results-oriented; having a degree of autonomy from their institutional home; and including public-private partnerships in the governance of the fund and/or in the implementation of services.[32] There is precedent for the kind of necessary transformation that is required, however:

> Just over 20 years ago, global leaders expressed frustration that vaccines, HIV/AIDS drugs, tuberculosis treatments, and malaria responses were not reaching hundreds of millions of people who needed them the most. The world responded with the creation of Gavi, The Vaccine Alliance, and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria — along with billions of dollars to take innovations in these areas to scale. Gavi alone has helped to immunize over 1 billion children and prevented more than 17 million deaths helping to halve child mortality in 78 lower-income countries. Today, the world may need a "Gavi' to scale agricultural innovations to address climate change, improve nutrition, and ensure inclusion of people living in poverty and food insecurity.

Krister Andersson built on Winters's presentation by discussing ways to promote more inclusive governance of rural landscapes. People living in rural areas in the Global South often lack access to clean water, healthcare, and other public services, he noted, making them extremely susceptible to suffer from environmental injustice, that is, a disproportionate exposure to pollution and environmental hazards such as heat, drought, and floods. To address environmental injustice, environmental activists and scholars often call for public policy interventions that can help reduce people's exposure to hazards and improve poor people's socioeconomic conditions so that they become less vulnerable.

To achieve such improvements through public policies has turned out to be quite difficult, sometimes even counterproductive, Andersson said, when policies aiming to reduce vulnerabilities end up causing increased marginalization and widening inequalities. For example, governmental recovery programs that seek to help areas affected by hurricanes or cyclones often target property owners and offer little or no help to renters or landless people who are often much more vulnerable and in need of assistance, thereby contributing to the *increased* marginalization of the non-owners of property.[33] "Existing policies often fail to help more vulnerable members of our societies because those policies were created and designed by a decision process that excluded the voices and concerns from marginalized groups," Andersson writes. "More inclusive governance is needed to address environmental injustice more effectively."

Environmental injustice, he argued, is a symptom of systematic governance failure. It is not surprising, then, that when economic and political elites dominate the policymaking process, policy interventions tend to benefit mostly the elites. The tragedy is that such benefits can come at the expense of more marginalized members of societies. To address such inequities, researchers can make at least two important contributions: (1) Conduct research to uncover environmental injustices and socioeconomic inequalities, and (2) Engage stakeholders in research about inclusive governance.

Research to uncover environmental injustice and socioeconomic inequality

One of the paradoxes in efforts to promote sustainability, is that well-intentioned policy interventions to promote greater sustainability sometimes contribute to greater socioeconomic and environmental injustices. One example of such paradoxical outcomes comes from the research by Andersson and his colleagues about public policies that support programs that support community forestry.

Nepal's community forestry program, for example, has contributed to significantly reduced average deforestation rates as well as average increases in wealth in participating villages. However, a closer look at sub-village levels, however, reveals that these positive changes in the aggregate mask a more troubling pattern beneath the surface. The sub-village analysis shows that minority and low-caste groups, who are often among the most vulnerable members of villages, were not helped by the reform; they were left behind.[34] Likewise, a quasi-experimental study of 174 community groups in four countries found that local villages that were exposed to forestry decentralization reforms were more likely to experience lopsided distributions of forestry products such as timber, fuelwood, and fodder.[35] Elite members of villages retained a disproportionate share of forest products harvested, leaving the more marginalized households relatively worse off. A plausible explanation is that to benefit economically from forestry activities villagers need access to substantial capital and labor – to log and sell timber requires equipment, hired help, and contacts with markets and poorer members of rural villages often lack access to such assets.[36]

Taken together, these and findings of similar studies underscore the importance of examining the distribution of outcomes resulting from policy interventions, not just the central tendency, or averages. These policies led to what Perrin terms "benevolent indignities," unintended negative effects of policies intended to help marginalized groups in rural areas.

Policies that can support reduced inequality in local governance

Of course, Andersson added, public policies can also make significant positive contributions to advance environmental justice. For example, in a recent paper, Andersson and colleagues show that forest user groups that hold formal collective titles to forest lands enjoy stronger group cohesion, intragroup trust, and more effective cooperation, even outside the forestry domain.[37]

Compared to similar groups who do not hold such formal rights, these user groups also exhibit significantly higher levels of benefit sharing of forestry goods and products among group members (more equal distribution of benefits). Interventions that provide economic incentives for forest conservation can also help sustain cooperative behavior and reduce intragroup inequalities.Andersson cited an experimental study, using behavioral games, which showed that collective payments for forest common conservation ushered in significantly more forest conservation behavior, an effect that was sustained even after payments stopped.[38] The collective payments helped participants realize that there is a better way of doing things that make them all better off, a strategy that became their dominant strategy even after payments stopped.

Another set of behavioral experiments demonstrated that even better outcomes may be achieved when collective payments are combined with progressive gender quotas (ensuring gender parity). Such interventions resulted in significantly more forest being conserved and more equality in the distribution of forest income.[39] These findings suggest that just as some policy interventions widen the gap between the richer and poorer members of societies, other policy interventions can help to close this gap.

Andersson reported his finding that local institutional arrangements that exist among the targeted beneficiary groups are crucial for implementing successful policies. For example, the extent to which forestry decentralization augments existing inequality patterns depends significantly on the strength of the local groups' cooperative institutions in forestry; when groups have strong collective institutions, decentralization does not widen the inequality gap.[40]

Paying attention to local institutional arrangements on the ground, Andersson concluded from these findings, will therefore help researchers understand the complex effects that public policies often have on human behavior and resulting patterns of inequality.

One policy design feature that may contribute to greater socioeconomic equality is targeting the group (village, user group, or community) rather than the individual. The interventions for collective land rights and conservation payments followed this design feature. Future research would benefit from testing this hypothesis.

From evidence to action on more inclusive governance

These findings, Andersson said, have helped to develop a more nuanced understanding of how the effects of public policies are filtered through local institutional contexts. Policy interventions appear effective when examining average effects in the aggregate, for example, but such averages can mask an unintentional widening of socioeconomic inequalities. While this knowledge about the impact of specific policies seems useful for policy analysts concerned with sustainability and environmental justice, it is not obvious that this new knowledge has influenced public policy and action.

Has this evidence led to any new policy or practice on the ground? It is hard to say. The strategy that Andersson's team has taken to encourage such reforms is to engage with boundary spanning organizations, such as the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), and other members of the Consortium Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)—organizations whose researchers stand with one foot in the research world and another one in a variety of policy arenas.

CGIAR Research Centers are non-profit research organizations that employ more than 9,000 scientists, researchers, technicians and staff with a physical presence in 48 countries in the Global South, conducting research that aims to "transform food, land and water systems in a climate crisis" (CGIAR 2022). These CGIAR researchers represent one of the primary target groups for Andersson's research team, which collaborates with several individual CGIAR researchers, often involving them as co-authors. These collaborations have provided more visibility for our research in more policy-oriented venues and meetings, Andersson reported, and have arguably shaped the messaging of these organizations vis-à-vis decision makers. "We have some evidence of such messaging, especially when it comes to issues surrounding industrial tree plantations, collective payments for forest commons conservation, gender quotas, and the use of multistakeholder platforms (MSPs) to promote more inclusive governance in forestry," he added.

"Forests worldwide are vital to achieving many of the 2030 United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals and the larger imperative for humanity to shift rapidly toward a just sustainability transition," writes **Dan Miller**, in his paper on "Forests and a Just Sustainability Transition." Such a transition, he said at the conference, will require moving away from our current unsustainable path and toward decarbonized, ecologically sustainable societies and economies that share equitably in the burdens of environmental change while ensuring no one is left behind. The classic Brundtland Commission (1987) definition of sustainability – "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" – challenges us to maintain Earth's life-supporting ecosystems while also enhancing human well-being and advancing social equity.

The environmental contributions of forests are generally well-established, Miller noted, even as there is much to learn in this era of rapid change.[41] Forests are popularly understood as "the lungs of the earth" —they perform essential climate regulation functions and store about one-quarter of all terrestrial carbon. They also harbor some 80 percent of terrestrial biodiversity and help ensure water quality and supply from local to global scales.[42] That forests are under threat across the globe is well known, he added. Fire, agricultural expansion, logging, and urban sprawl, among other drivers of deforestation, are rapidly degrading the ability of forests to deliver these critical ecosystem services and functions.[43]

The global community has increasingly recognized the importance of forests and developed goals and policies designed to protect them. In 2021, 145 countries holding over 90 percent of the world's forests committed to halt and reverse deforestation by 2030 and donors have pledged nearly $30 billion to help realize this goal.[44] Forests also feature prominently in the environmentally-focused SDGs, especially Goal 15 (Life on Land), which includes targets that explicitly refer to the protection and management of forests, but also Goal 6 on water and sanitation, and Goal 13 on Climate Action. Mangroves and coastal forests are also clearly relevant to Goal 14 (Life Below Water). "But forests have relevance to achieving most, if not all the other SDGs as well," Miller writes. Eleven SDGs, including 19 targets, are explicitly related to forests and forestry. Other SDGs are also clearly relevant.[45]

While forests can help advance many SDGs, Miller added, some forest-related activities may inhibit the achievement of others. At the same time, some efforts to advance the SDGs can have a negative impact on forests. For instance, increases in agricultural production needed to achieve SDG 2 (No Hunger) or bio-based energy SDG 13 (Climate Action) will put further pressure on forests. However, forest conservation may constrain the land available for such production. Extraction of valuable forest resources, such as timber or gold or other precious metals, may increase inequalities, contrary to SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), as local communities suffer the consequences of resource loss while the benefits accrue in distant capitals.

Professor Miller proceeded to introduce three interlinked research areas in relation to forests: poverty, trade-offs, and financing.

The Role of Forests in Poverty Alleviation

Forests have an important but overlooked role to play in eliminating extreme poverty globally by 2030 (SDG 1). Such was the main conclusion of a global synthesis report published by the International Union of Forestry Research Organizations (IUFRO) and presented at the UN (virtually) during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020.[46] Since then, research, if not policy action on this topic has moved quickly. For instance, advances in remote sensing, computing power, and machine learning are enabling new insights about poverty and forest dynamics across scales, from 1-square-meter-pixels to the globe.[47]

These advances promise to help address one of the major research needs identified in the IUFRO report: *how and under what conditions might forests provide a pathway out of poverty and prevent people from slipping into poverty?* Answering this question, Miller averred, will require a range of methods, from large-scale spatial analysis to in-depth qualitative research in specific locations to randomized controlled trials (RCTs) of poverty-related interventions in forest landscapes. Regardless of method used, research must be designed to examine the temporal dimensions and dynamic nature of forest-poverty relationships, particularly over longer time periods and across different contexts and spatial scales. Doing so will fill a major need given that available research mostly consists of observational cross-sectional analyses.[48]

Such research, Miller argued, must also take seriously poverty as a multidimensional phenomenon comprising health, safety, food and education, social relations, and other aspects beyond monetary measures. Approaching this topic from the perspective of human well-being and prosperity rather than deprivation is a promising analytical and rhetorical strategy.[49] Doing so directs attention not only to the most disadvantaged but also to people across the poverty/well-being spectrum and may help bring forests into larger discussions about human development while directing greater attention to inequality (SDG 10). Such an approach must not gloss over real material and other deprivations facing vulnerable, forest-reliant communities.

A new project on “Innovating Pathways out of Poverty in Rural Forested Landscapes,” funded through the Pulte Institute and the Notre Dame Poverty Initiative, directly responds to the above research needs, Miller reported. This project seeks to carry out a large-scale RCT of forest-related interventions designed to reduce poverty while conserving the resource base coordinated across tropical forest regions in three countries: Peru, Kenya, and India.

Navigating Trade-offs in Relation to Land and Power

If further research is needed on how forest conservation, management, and restoration can be synergistic with poverty alleviation, Miller stated, there is also a need to understand potential trade-offs. This need extends beyond the relationship between forests and poverty to include most of the other SDGs and larger land use policies and practices.

Take climate action (SDG 13), for example, Miller suggested. Forests are unique in that they can both cause climate change and support solutions. Standing forests capture and store carbon from the atmosphere, while clearing forests for agriculture or buildings releases GHG – but also might be necessary for land-intensive renewable energy like wind and solar farms or to mine minerals necessary for a clean energy transition. Forests are also critical for adaptation to climate change. They help stabilize local climate, protect coastal areas and mountain slopes, and provide food, fuel, fiber and other resources for forest-adjacent communities in the face of climate threats.

Governments, corporations, and civil society organizations around the world are increasingly embracing "nature-based solutions" like sustainable forest management, conservation, and restoration to tackle climate change while also delivering other benefits to human development.[50] "Yet these solutions remain controversial due to extensive land use and questions of sovereignty – including when, where, how, and for whom proposed solutions are effective and just," he writes. Such concerns have long been present in land management. For example, the founding of national parks and other protected areas on the traditional lands of Indigenous Peoples and local communities has led to human rights violations and other forms of injustice.[51]

Realizing the SDGs and making a just transition to sustainability will require identifying potential trade-offs and synergies as well as careful analysis of power relations — who might stand to benefit or lose as they are negotiated.

> Priority must be given to those who are most vulnerable to climate and ecological crises and to actions proposed to address these crises. Research from political science and other disciplines can help understand possible means to dislodge and disrupt powerful vested interests that are acting in ways detrimental to people and the environment.[52] More generally, such research can help identify governance arrangements for navigating trade-offs in light of the demands of justice.

Systematic analysis of joint social, economic, and environmental outcomes and the processes that generate them across space and time is also needed to underpin and inform such research, Miller added. Such analyses remain rare. Instead, the vast majority of research in multiple social and environmental disciplines focuses on single outcomes.[53] This work can enable assessment of trade-offs over time—through discount rates, for example—but provides little guidance to understand and navigate trade-offs across the different dimensions of sustainability.

New research in progress seeks to address this gap by bringing together studies of two or more joint social, economic, and environmental dimensions in forest and other terrestrial social-ecological systems. It examines how heterogeneities in social, economic, and environmental sustainability domains are distributed spatially, how they relate to each other (e.g., joint positive outcomes - synergies; or positive outcomes in one dimension accompanied by negative outcomes in another - trade-offs), and how they change over time in relation to policy, socio-economic and biophysical changes.

A deeper understanding of relationships across sustainability domains, and their co-benefits and trade-offs, is especially important in the context of unprecedented financial commitments governments, international donors, and private foundations are making to support sustainability agendas (e.g., the Glasgow Climate Pact at COP26, the Loss & Damages fund at 1 COP27 and the 30x30 agenda at the CBD COP15). These investments typically focus on single policy objectives, often with assumptions about multiple co-benefits with little evidence for how outcomes in one dimension relate to outcomes in other dimensions. For example Miller noted, it is unclear if forest restoration efforts will yield predominantly positive social outcomes in addition to expected environmental outcomes. Similarly, investments in social protection may improve economic wellbeing but lead to environmental degradation that undermines climate and biodiversity goals.

Financing a Just Sustainability Transition

Stabilizing the Earth's climate while safeguarding biodiversity will not be cheap, Miller acknowledged. However, recent research shows it is far less expensive than the alternative. For example, the likely economic damages of climate change during the next quarter century are estimated to be six times the costs of mitigating global warming (e.g., holding it to *2°C* above preindustrial levels). Similarly, funding to protect and restore fragile ecosystems worldwide will need to jump to almost $1 trillion annually by 2030 (from about $166 billion per year now), but this is much less than the $2.7-5 trillion in expected economic costs due to biodiversity loss.[54] Such figures are likely to be underestimates and do not account for non-monetary values or possible tipping points which may lead to potentially catastrophic change. "Nevertheless," he argued, "they help give a sense of the stakes and need for urgent action."

To date, resources to effectively counter deforestation trends and effectively manage, conserve, and restore these forests have been woefully inadequate. National governments and, in low- and middle-income countries, international aid agencies have historically been the most important sources of support for forest conservation. While these sources remain critical and donors like the World Bank are increasing their climate-related lending, private foundations and the private sector are increasingly important in shaping what happens in the world's forests and to those who rely on them.[55]

In addition to dramatic increases in spending, investments need to be better spent to support forests in advancing the SDGs and larger sustainability transition. For example, only a miniscule amount of funding committed makes its way to the Indigenous Peoples and local communities who have been shown to be so effective in stewarding forests.[56]

Research on the allocation and effectiveness of forest financing remains lacking, generally. The concomitant lack of evidence, particularly on changes over time and joint impacts, constrains the ability of donors and other relevant actors to set spending priorities, address previous shortcomings, and ensure accountability and effective use of resources. There are technical as well as political reasons for the relative paucity of evidence on this topic, Miller acknowledged, but this situation must change if we are to move rapidly at the scale required for a just global transition to a sustainable future where people and nature mutually flourish.

Turning to his paper on "Forests, Sustainability and Environmental Justice,"[57] Professor Miller addressed the "evidence-to-action" question of how Keough School research on sustainability might influence policymakers. "Forests are higher on the international policy agenda than they have been for decades," he reported. "The primary reason for this attention is recognition of the critical role forests play in tackling the global challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss." As a global commons, the world's forests store **about one-quarter of all terrestrial** *carbon* and harbor some 80 percent of terrestrial biodiversity.[58] Forests are both a cause and a solution to the problem of climate change, Miller asserted. Fires, logging, and other forms of deforestation simultaneously increase CO2 emissions while also decreasing the ability of forests to sequester carbon. Forest degradation and loss lead to extinction and the erosion of ecosystem services and functioning.[59]

Without protecting forests, it will not be possible to achieve The Paris Agreement target of limiting global temperature rise to 1.5 degree C. Therefore, 145 countries holding over 90 percent of the world's forests have now committed to halt and reverse deforestation by 2030 and donors have pledged nearly $30 billion to help realize this goal.[60] Relatedly, the UN's Convention on Biological Diversity has set a target to conserve at least 30 percent of the world's land by 2030.[61] Brazil has proposed an ambitious Tropical Forest Forever fund that would allocate $250 billion annually to countries according to the amount of forest they conserve while many private sector actors have also made commitments to combat deforestation. For example, Miller noted, dozens of large agricultural commodity companies have pledged to end deforestation associated with the production of soy, palm oil, beef and cacao by 2025.[62]

This attention to forests, while promising, brings considerable risk for many people who live in or near forests, particularly in LMICs. In these mostly tropical contexts, forests are vital to the livelihoods and well-being of hundreds of millions of people, including many Indigenous Peoples and marginalized groups.[63] Despite the potential of forests to alleviate poverty and advance human development by providing income, food, and a wide range of other goods and services, national and international policy has focused on the global environmental benefits of forests while largely neglecting local socio-economic ones.[64] Very few of the recent pledges mention livelihoods or other development goals for forest proximate people. Moreover, they tend to emphasize local, site-based solutions, ignoring larger scale, indirect and harder-to-tackle drivers of deforestation, climate change, and biodiversity loss.[65] Funds thus often appear to be about "fixing" local people, rather than supporting them.

At worst, new forest conservation efforts in many LMIC directly cause heartbreaking injustice, human displacement, and even death. For example, members of the Indigenous Ogiek community in Kenya have recently been evicted from their land in the Mau Forest in the context of a carbon offsetting project supported by a United Arab Emirates-based company. This kind of "carbon colonialism" is occurring in many African countries and Indigenous Peoples and local communities across the continent and elsewhere increasingly fear such projects.[66]

> The big question in this critical and highly complex space is: How can the world's forests be managed to stabilize the climate and conserve the Earth's rich biological diversity while enhancing the well-being of those who rely on them the most? This question requires moving beyond a narrow focus on the environmental dimensions of forests, challenging as those are, to explicit consideration of socioeconomic ones. Crucially, however, this question does not merely concern survival or "doing no harm." Rather, as Pope Francis argues, it demands a focus on justice and richer notions of human flourishing aligned with integral human development and ecology.

From research to action on forest livelihoods

Research is therefore urgently needed, Miller declared, on the socio-economic contributions of forests, the environmental justice issues surrounding them, and how these aspects, in turn, connect to biophysical aspects. Conceptual advances and robust evidence from a more representative range of the world's forests, along with the social, economic, and political contexts in which they are embedded, are vital for enduring solutions to climate change, biodiversity loss, and other challenges such as poverty. Such new thinking and knowledge are needed to help identify synergies and navigate trade-offs as well as provide insights into what works and what does not. From a pragmatic perspective, policies and practices designed to address environmental challenges that do not promote human dignity and capabilities or, worse, violate human rights are costly and are unlikely to last. From an ethical perspective, they are profoundly unjust and intolerable.

The Forests & Livelihoods: Assessment, Research and Engagement (FLARE) Network[67] has emerged in response to this challenge. Established in 2015 at the Paris Climate Summit and based in the Keough School since 2021, FLARE seeks to advance knowledge at the intersection of forests and livelihoods and facilitate its application to policy and practice. FLARE is now a vibrant community of more than 1200 researchers, practitioners, and policymakers around the world. The Network leverages existing expertise and catalyzes new efforts to develop and share leading-edge research and conversations on livelihoods related to forests and tree-based systems. In so doing, FLARE seeks to support policy development, on-the-ground action, and learning to help bring about more just and sustainable futures for both people and forests worldwide.

One of the reasons why land use policy in so many countries has failed to prioritize conservation, sustainable management, and restoration of forests, Miller explained, is the relative paucity of evidence on the role of forests in supporting human development goals. FLARE researchers have sought to address this gap through new empirical studies and evidence syntheses. For example, studies from Nepal, India, and Liberia have taken advantage of large-scale household survey data combined with forest cover data to shed new light on the nature and scope of forest contributions to household income and consumption.[68]

A global synthesis of evidence on the contribution of forests and trees outside forests to poverty alleviation noted the existence of many site-specific case studies but found little evidence at the regional and national scales, which hold particular relevance for policymaking.[69] That report led to advances in conceptualizing forest-poverty dynamics while highlighting a glaring gap in knowledge on how and under what conditions forests might provide pathways out of poverty.[70] It did, however, identify 21 policy levers having potential (i.e., a plausible theory of change) for poverty alleviation based on forests.[71] Evidence was the most robust for ecotourism, agroforestry, payments for ecosystem services, and community forest management levers, with the last of these found to be especially promising. Community forest management occurs when communities have some degree of rights and responsibilities over forests in a given area.[72] This form of management has existed in various forms around the world for centuries, but has increasingly been promoted formally by governments, donors, and community organizations alike as a means to conserve forests, enhance rural livelihoods, and recognize the traditional rights of local forest users in relation to forests.[73]

Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendant Peoples, and local communities now number some 2.5 billion worldwide and customarily hold and use at least 50 percent of the Earth' lands.[74] These groups have been shown to be among the most effective stewards of the world's forests. "For this reason, as well as reasons of self-determination and (restorative, transformative) justice," Miller writes, "strengthening their rights and resources must be at the center of forest-related policy."

Yet, while recent research has demonstrated that community-based approaches can improve rural communities' access to formal property rights and reduce environmental degradation, there is less evidence that they have contributed to lasting improvements in measures of human well-being. For example, there have been no randomized controlled trials (RCTs) examining the poverty outcomes of community forestry efforts in the LMIC.[75] In the few cases where RCTs have been used related to forest programs, poverty is not among studied outcomes.[76] There is, therefore, a particular need for experimental evidence to better establish poverty impacts, but also examine the relationship of such impacts with environmental one across different contexts, Miller said.

Such research, he added, must be co-produced and carried out in partnership with local communities who, in most LMICs are under enormous pressure from policy, market, and environmental change. Even as Indigenous Peoples and local communities have increasingly gained formal recognition of rights to their traditional territories (an estimated 30 percent of forests in low- and middle-income countries are formally owned or managed by such communities), countervailing trends toward "green grabbing" and other appropriation of their lands pose a growing threat.[77]

This threat has materialized in too many cases, with communities evicted from their lands in many cases and environmental defenders being killed, tortured, or subject to laws that are weaponized against them for speaking out.[78] International environmental agreements and shifting market demands (e.g., in carbon credits or for minerals like copper, cobalt, and lithium critical to clean energy technologies) are increasingly driving these human rights violations. In this context, forest-proximate communities are increasingly demanding not only formal rights over their ancestral and traditional lands but also the ability to benefit from them.

The FLARE Network is directly responding to these pressing contemporary forest, development, and justice issues— first, by using new datasets and tools to analyze relationships between human population, human development, and forests globally over time. The methodology combines global-scale remotely sensed data on tree cover, gridded human population data, and gridded wealth and human development data to identify forest-proximate people in poverty ("FP3"). Results are presented as global and country-specific maps to enhance their relevance for forest and land-use policy across scales, from particular sites or regions within countries, the national level, or internationally. Such information can inform policy design and targeting (e.g., by illustrating who and how many people would be affected by policy decisions in what social-ecological contexts) and efforts to navigate potential tradeoffs between forest conservation and restoration actions and poverty alleviation goals. Identifying areas with high levels of poverty and forest loss is of particular interest, given the need to simultaneously address these two challenges.

A second major FLARE effort to connect research to policy is through a project to rigorously establish the joint poverty-environment impacts of innovative community-level policy interventions in LMIC. The heart of this project, which is funded through the Pulte Institute and Notre Dame's Poverty Initiative, is a large-scale RCT of forest-related interventions designed to reduce poverty while conserving the resource base coordinated across tropical forest regions in Peru, Kenya, and India. Through a co-produced research process with community, business, government, and research partner organizations, FLARE is developing and testing a set (3-4) of interventions that existing theory and evidence suggest are capable of simultaneously increasing rural prosperity and equality while conserving vulnerable forest landscapes. Likely interventions will relate to community forestry enterprise support, payments for ecosystem services (e.g., water and carbon sequestration), and provision and training on entrepreneurial skills. By engaging with key stakeholders, including potential funders, from the project design phase, FLARE seeks to extend these findings to policy-relevant audiences.

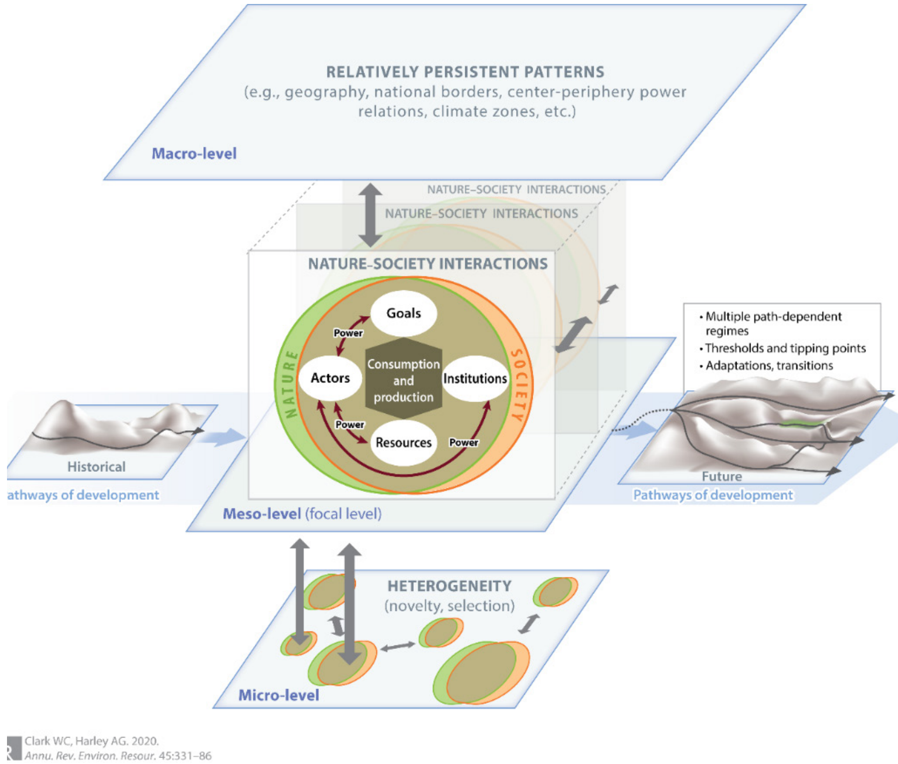
In addition, Miller reported FLARE has developed a CommFor (community forestry) tool, which builds from the International Forestry Resources and Institutions (IFRI) research program and leverages digital technology customized as smartphone and desktop-based applications to capture data at high and varying frequencies, reduce the burden of data collection, and generate real-time insights for use by local communities in forest governance.[79]

CommFor presents multiple advantages to support community-based forest governance, Miller explained. First, insights from data become available in near real-time and are directly usable by local communities and their federations in making decisions. Second, data can be shared with external actors, such as government agencies and private businesses, to build trust in community institutions for forest governance, as well as with practitioners to support communities in forest management and with researchers to advance knowledge on forest commons. Finally, CommFor can enable visibility of landscape-level outcomes for greater recognition of community contributions to addressing global challenges, such as forest landscape restoration, biodiversity conservation, and climate mitigation.

In such ways, Miller concluded, FLARE is responding to the major contemporary challenges related to forests. In so doing, the Network seeks not only to build knowledge, but also empower communities, equip advocacy organizations, and inform policymakers to cultivate a world where forests and people, especially the most marginalized among us, are able to mutually flourish.

William C. Clark of Harvard University prepared and delivered a paper entitled "Sustainability and Integral Human Development at the Keough School," in response to the papers by professors Miller, Andersson, Grubert and Winters. "The discussion of sustainability issues in the Keough School's Strategic Plan and conference presentations provides a rich and original perspective on a central challenge in global affairs," he noted. Clark then provided a sustainability science perspective on the Keough School program on sustainable development.

Sustainability science is a vibrant field of problem-driven research, he began, that has emerged over the last quarter century to support the pursuit of sustainable development. Along with his colleague Dr. Alicia Harley, Professor Clark had recently reviewed progress in the field and sketched its principal challenges going forward.[80] The synthesis presented in that review is summarized in this figure:



At the core of both sustainability science and the Keough School sustainability program Clark said, is the realization that nature and society are intertwined in a single dynamic system: one cannot advance human well-being over the long run without conserving the environment, and one cannot conserve the environment over the long run without advancing human well-being. (The Brundtland Commission recognized this reality in its seminal 1987 report on sustainable development.) The spiritual importance of embracing the fundamental intertwining of nature and society has been eloquently articulated by Pope Francis in his encyclical *Laudato Si*. The active embrace of this fundamental insight in the Keough School's sustainability work, Clark stated, positions it well to contribute to and draw from ongoing research in sustainability science. The most novel and welcome feature of the Keough School's efforts from the perspective of sustainability science, he added, is the school's focus on promotion of the flourishing of *people* as its ultimate goal:

> This [focus on human flourishing] sets the Keough School apart from almost all other global affairs institutions where the (sometimes implicit) goal more often turns out to be the prosperity of *economies* or the security of *nations* or protection of the *environment*. In contrast, the Keough School's focus on 'integral human development' not only makes it different from its cousins, but also aligns it well with the similar concept of 'inclusive human well-being' that is the core goal of sustainability science. In both cases . . . the crucial step has been to insist

> on distinguishing the ultimate ends from the proximate means of sustainable development: the ends as human-centered, the means – essential, but means nonetheless — as entailing the economic and environmental underpinnings of human flourishing. This essential ends-means distinction was clear in the Brundtland Commission's original work on sustainability but was bargained away in the UN's subsequent negotiations to create its SDGs.

The result has been a "something for everyone" approach in which (for example) "poverty alleviation" and "partnerships" are given equal status as sustainability "goals," with no accompanying guidance on how priorities and trade-offs are to be managed. The Keough School's Strategic Plan, by focusing on IHD as its ultimate goal, offers a potential way out of this mess that is entirely consistent with the "well-being" goal of sustainability science, Clark asserted. Most of the individual papers presented at this conference, he continued, have tried hard to realize that potential and have often been successful. But they "occasionally backslide toward a confusion of ends and means," allowing the appropriate attention to means for achieving sustainability to come across as looking like the ends or goals for sustainability.

In the school's focus on forests, for example, the goal of advancing the well-being of people in forests through conserving forests as resources "can too easily slide into advocacy of forest conservation as the end goal rather than as an important means for achieving IHD." This problematic tendency is accentuated, Clark suggested, by how "integral ecology" is advocated for in *Laudato Sí*. He put the challenge elegantly:

> The Keough School will have to struggle to put into practice a Strategic Plan that keeps IHD as its end goal; it will be important for the successful pursuit of sustainability that the struggle persists and succeeds.

Professor Clark articulated two concerns about the way that "Justice" —"a major and welcome component" of the Keough School efforts to advance sustainability—is presented. First, he said, the concept is "surprisingly underdeveloped" in the Strategic Plan and the participant contributions. They all "tend to read as though 'justice' were an unproblematic 'thing' like a rock or a pencil when, in fact, the idea of justice is a complex construct that is viewed differently in different times and contexts." In particular, the problem of justice for future generations deserves more attention than it gets in the Keough materials. "Intergenerational equity," Clark noted, was a central element of the Brundtland Commission's original vision of sustainability goals, and it was the subject of a highly relevant study on "intergenerational solidarity" by the Pontifical Academy.[81] The Keough School's sustainability initiatives would almost certainly benefit from drawing on this material.

A second "justice"-related concern is about the term "environmental justice." Despite the use of this term in the conference publicity, Clark noted, the individual papers almost never refer to "environmental justice" but rather develop a more general treatment of (in)justice. Taken together, the papers make a strong (if generally implicit) case for the inseparability of "environmental" justice from "social" justice and indeed from simply "justice." This is the right way to go, Clark advised, given the aforementioned intertwined character of the nature-society system: one cannot pull apart the contributions to (in)justice that derive from either part. For example, while it is true that some subpopulations are exposed to more pollution than others, this will almost always be linked to the fact that their options on where to live have been constrained by unjust redlining or wage discrimination.

The Keough School program, he averred, would be well served by ditching the phrase "environmental justice" and focusing on '(in)justice,' per se, together with the intertwined social and environmental factors that give rise to it.

Resources as the ultimate means of sustainable development

A central finding of sustainability science, Professor Clark noted, is that the ultimate determinants of sustainability – and thus the ultimate means of promoting it – are the underlying resources on which people draw to enhance their well-being. Those resources, however, include not only the familiar ones built by people (manufactured capital, human capital, knowledge capital, social capital) but also those derived from nature (minerals, ecosystems, the physical environment, solar radiation). The latter has historically been excluded from most measures of "economic development," and their inclusion in more modern measures of sustainability has been one of the great accomplishments of today's "beyond GNP" movements to capture a more human-centered view of development.

Sustainability has indeed come to be defined by scholars as development pathways along which the capacity of the *total* accessible resource stock to support human flourishing does not decline. While the Keough School Strategic Plan and conference papers include the conservation (and indeed nurturing) of natural resources in their treatment of the means to pursue sustainability, Clark noted, "they too often take this to the extreme of ignoring the full range of human-created resources that are also necessary for sustainable development." This conceptual narrowing undermines the possibility of analyzing the inevitable trade-offs among all relevant resources. For example, under what conditions is the pursuit of sustainability advanced by a decision to cut down a hectare of rainforest to build a region's first hospital? The Keough School program, Clark urged, "will almost certainly be more useful to the extent that it can foreground a balanced view of both people-made and natural resources in its analysis of means and their trade-offs for the pursuit of sustainability."

Consumption-Production Systems (for connecting ends and means)

Sustainability science sees consumption-production systems (CPSs), broadly conceived, as the arrangements and processes that people design to link their ends (goals) and means (resources) of development. Research has analyzed such systems by sector (e.g., mobility systems) or by place (e.g., rural development) or – most commonly – by a particular sector in a particular place (e.g., mobility systems in Rome).

A general consensus has emerged, Clark explained, that the sustainability analysis of such systems should address both the consumption and production aspects, rather than focusing on only one or the other. While the Keough School program and conference papers seem reasonably well aligned with these sustainability science perspectives, the paper by Emily Grubert introduces an additional "service-first" argument, which holds that in order to move beyond a descriptive characterization of the CPS toward a normative analysis consistent with goals of IHD (or "inclusive well-being"), one needs to foreground the consumption end of the CPS. This is done to ensure that the flow of services that are the core constituents of human well-being is not (however unintentionally) sacrificed in the course of changes to production processes and their use (conservation) of resources.

This strikes me, Clark said, as "a compelling addition to how we think about sustainability, with implications not only for analysis and design of interventions but also for another broader theme of the conference: the language for how we talk about things." In particular, it constitutes "an argument for foregrounding references to 'food systems' rather than 'agricultural systems,' i.e. biasing our naming the systems we study to emphasize human well-being (food) rather than the production methods we use to generate those services." Or, he continued, to take a more problematic case central to the Keough School efforts, calling them not "forest systems" but rather something like "livelihood security systems" for people who live in or near forests. "This is a perspective from the Keough School conference," Professor Clark concluded, "that I will certainly take back to my sustainability science community for collective pondering."

Actors, institutions and power for operating consumption-production systems

Sustainability science was slow to systematically address questions of who gets what from the operation of consumption-production systems, Professor Clark observed. That has recently changed, however, and a lot of writing – if not quite so much research – is being done on the relationships among actors, institutions and power:

> One insight to which the Keough program might usefully devote more attention is that because nature-society systems are complex adaptive systems, large inequalities in outcomes are the norm. Indeed, we know that with all such systems, initial heterogeneities in access to resources generate self-reinforcing feedback that leads

> to greater and greater inequalities in outcomes. Differentials in power among actors can (and do) accentuate such inequalities but are not necessary to generate them. Goals such as those of sustainable development, which emphasize more equitable and just outcomes can therefore only be achieved through strong and continuing interventions and institutions designed to counter inequitable concentration in who gets what (e.g., progressive taxes on wealth, redistributive transfer payments, prohibitions on monopolies, etc.).

Above all, evidence suggests that countering inequalities in CPSs requires empowerment of those who are currently losing out. Such empowerment must begin with researchers treating actors as "agents not patients" (a phrase attributed to Amartya Sen) and helping them to achieve a meaningful voice in sustainability debates. "The Keough School Plan and conference papers do not seem at odds with these insights, but neither do they give them the central place that considerations of actors, institutions and power now hold in sustainability science," Professor Clark commented. "The Keough School's program might find it worthwhile to reflect on whether more emphasis on these and related issues would be possible and helpful." Reciprocally, however, Clark's encounter with the Keough School sustainability effort suggests that its explorations of human dignity "could well enhance how sustainability science thinks about peoples' 'capabilities' to define and achieve their own goals." [82] These linkages, he added, both potential and realized, "are some of the most thought-provoking things I will take home from the conference."

Recognition of the ways in which nature-society interactions and efforts to manage them depend on the specific social and local context has led researchers and policy actors to focus much of their sustainability work on consumption-production systems in particular sectors and places. This localization of sustainable development is entirely appropriate, Clark noted, and is well reflected in both sustainability science and the Keough School conference contributions. That said, we live in a globalizing world where local places are increasingly connected. Those connections may involve physical pollution, ephemeral ideas, biotic invasions, economic trade, human migration, transboundary negotiations and all manner of other processes.

Sustainability science was slow to incorporate systematic attention to such connections in its research. The Keough School presentations show some of the same characteristics, Clark argued. "That is, none seem to deny the potential importance for sustainability of connections for sustainability across local contexts, but few of the sustainability studies highlighted such connections in the short summaries given of their work. (One exception is the attention paid in other parts of the conference to the importance of *international* agreements on norms of human rights)." Sustainability science is beginning to remedy its early neglect of connections by increasingly addressing "nexus" interactions among different CPSs, (e.g. when an energy system and a food system in a particular place both seek to use the same water resources to achieve their goals). I suspect that the Keough program on sustainability would likewise benefit from more systematic attention to connection processes and their impacts on local contexts, he concluded.

Transitions in the development pathways of CPS dynamics

Fostering transitions from unsustainable pathways of development toward more sustainable ones that are more likely to achieve the goals of IHD is perhaps the ultimate challenge, Professor Clark averred. Too little of the otherwise welcome cheer-leading for “sustainability transitions” in political forums is grounded in science. For the pursuit of sustainability, an especially significant characteristic of the intertwining of nature and society is that their interactions result in a particular case of the more general phenomenon of a “complex adaptive system.” Such systems self-organize in a hierarchical fashion, he explained, with their dynamics at whatever mesoscales interest us being shaped by both micro-level innovations (e.g. mutations, inventions, policies) and macro-level trends (e.g. economic globalization, climate change). Those dynamics have the potential for following multiple path-dependent trajectories, some of which may be sustainable and desirable, others less so. Those alternative pathways are generally separated by thresholds or tipping points, the navigation of which should be a focus of science-informed discussions of sustainability transitions.

The Keough School Srategic Plan and presentations seem generally consistent with this view of transitions, Clark judged, although – as is the case with sustainability science more generally – more research attention could usefully be given to exploring alternative pathways (for energy systems but also demographic systems, food systems, forest systems, etc.), to assessing how likely those alternatives are to foster the goals of IHD, and to exploring the incentives for innovation that might make desirable transitions more readily achievable.

That said, “the insight from the conference presentations that most rocked my own understanding of a topic I thought I knew well is Prof. Grubert’s “mid-transition” challenge for the energy transition.” In essence, he continued, this poses the dilemma faced by society during a multi-year or -decade transition when it must maintain the capacity to deliver key human services from the old system it is trying to replace even as it builds the capacity to deliver those services from the new (presumably more sustainable) system. The challenge is that balancing on the “ridge” separating the two pathways for extended periods will be necessary but could well put society in a more precarious and less stable situation than it would face when firmly situated in either of the pathways alone. Simultaneously securing human and infrastructure resources needed for the delivery of key services from both systems is a challenge barely posed and certainly not answered in current discussions of sustainability transitions.

"I will certainly take the 'mid-transition' challenge back to the sustainability science community," Professor Clark concluded. "I very much hope that the Keough School program will find a way to foster both the deepening of Grubert's pioneering work on the mid-transition challenge for sustainable development of the US energy system and the extension of research on that challenge to other sectors and regions."

In his comments on the papers by Miller and Grubert, **Subhrendu Pattanayak** underscored "the extremely delicate balance" between meeting the goals for avoiding the most catastrophic consequences of climate change and not falling below the bar of social justice. Miller and Grubert, in addition to mastering the technical, scientific and data-driven aspects of the topic are also doing what few of their colleagues are attempting, namely, turning a critical lens on the social implications of climate solutions, especially for the working class and the poor.

He raised a few quibbles: Regarding FLARE network, Miller and his colleagues must avoid relying too much on experimental methods and RCTs, which may undermine the multidimensional approach. Using multiple methods, Pattanayak said, is necessary to address such a complex problem as forests and livelihoods under the current dire conditions. As for Grubert's paper, he cautioned, giving up "dirty fuels" is less than a straightforward process; for example, we know that people "stack," that is, they use new forms of energy and practices, while also still using some of the old ways. Grubert gets at this, a bit, in her paper, he acknowledged, but learning from her wrestling further with such psychosocial dimensions of the "just transition" problem would be instructive to us all.

Professor Pattanayak concluded with some advice for the Keough School, namely that research in this area must be based on "inclusive science," that is, perspectives and data from the Global South; ninety-plus percent of the research is currently conducted by white men from the Global North, whose perspectives and experiences are different from that of those most affected by climate change. Those who are most affected must also be included in the research itself. Relatedly, he added, scholarship shows that policy uptake is more effective if local actors are involved in the research and are continuously available to local officials.

In the discussion session that followed, **Michel Hockx** noted some skepticism within our own broader Notre Dame community about the science on climate change— which leads one to ask whether we should focus our attention as educators and advocates of just sustainability on our own respective communities of learning. Grubert concurred with the premise of the question, noting that some civil engineers, stunningly, are included in the skeptical group, which is why she has focused her efforts on the US. Ansari, noting that climate change is a political and partisan issue asked how we get around that stark reality. Miller responded by recalling a rare bipartisan agreement, during the first Trump administration, around the Natural Resources Management Act, approved by the US Senate

98-0. The term "climate change" was avoided in the debate, however, and that is perhaps a lesson for us in reaching common ground, he said. There may be more scope for agreement than we think. Yet, Miller also added, we cannot forget that power and interests drive the "skepticism," and unmasking or laying bare those interests is part of the challenge.

Along this line, Pattanayak commented that scientists and other educators would do well to connect the science and climate change to the concrete problems of humanity—migration, displacement, climate-driven homelessness, jobs, fairness. How climate affects people and living is the topic that would advance the argument more effectively.

Winters, noting Professor Clark's emphasis on justice and future generations, and many conference comments on focusing on local decision-making, raised a dilemma based on his experience representing the UN in asking local African leaders to comply with certain environmental standards and protocols, namely, that "their" issues are not always "our" issues. As one African leader told him: "I care about hunger, not climate change in itself." Do we insist on the whole package, anyway? Professor Pattanayak responded by saying that if we do not recognize the value of what [our African interlocutors] are saying, unhelpful controversies result. However, it is also our job to demonstrate the connection between climate change and hunger, climate change and poverty, etc. Unfortunately, he added, the relationship has been so one-sided, with the West telling the rest what to do, that the imperative must be to create equal partnerships.

Once you acknowledge what your interlocutor cares most about, Clark said, then you can together move on to determining what can be done about it, and that brings you into the related issues that also need addressing, in order for one's core issue to be solved.

In her comments on the papers by Winters, Andersson and Miller, **A.R. Siders** reminded the audience that "environmental justice" started as a movement and a practice, not a theory.[83] So, as researchers, are we conducting research that helps practitioners make decisions that lead to more just practices, processes and outcomes? In addition to the two ways of engaging identified by Krister Andersson—identify injustices and give priority to stakeholders on the ground—Siders added a third, namely, we can do research on what environmental justice means in different contexts so that we can assess *how* different policies are achieving those goals, and advise people how better to reach those specific goals. Greater specificity is needed; the Keough School might focus on *targetable action* for environmental justice.

Picking up on Clark's point about using the right language to advance the argument, Siders noted that the much-used term "distribution"—of opportunities, outcomes, harms, resources, risks, etc.—is often used in speaking of justice but often with procedural connotations. But we could and should also measure "recognition"—whether people have a voice to participate in decision-making processes—what do *they* want, what are *their* preferences for how they get out of this situation—and how programs recognize the historical and cultural contexts and values.[84] Not every community or group will have the same desired outcome. Advancing IHD and inclusive well-being, she said, requires following The Platinum Rule—treat others as they would want to be treated. Reparations and restorative justice are critical in this respect, as past climate and other social injustices cannot be overlooked.

Siders echoed Clark's comments on the complexity of understanding justice and what it requires. Helping people thrive is central to IHD and the Keough School proposals, but people will have different views on what "thriving" looks like, so any effort. She drew on her research on climate adaptation to illustrate how different people can disagree on what constitutes a "just" response.[85] Residents often disagree about whether to rebuild or relocate after a major disaster. Some see relocation as an opportunity to advance justice by addressing the past social injustices that drove segregation and contributed to inequities in home ownership and value. Others see relocation as continuing that discriminatory history. People are often divided on the question: should people be able to choose to live in extremely risky places? What level of risk is acceptable? Principles like "informed consent" are relevant here and have been developed in medicine and public health but have not transitioned to development and adaptation fields. What would informed consent look like for a forest conservation project? Or a food system transformation effort? Or an energy transition? She encouraged the Keough School scholars to draw insights from other fields as they advance their work on just transformations for sustainability.

Referring to Emily Grubert's "just transitions" discussion, Siders noted that sustainability might have an additional challenge. The future, Siders asserted, will not look like the past; we can no longer rely on a stable environment. Accordingly, rather than adapting by transitioning from one stable state (e.g., a coal-dependent energy system to a renewable energy system), many systems may remain in a near-constant state of transition and change. A coastal community facing sea level rise, for example, or a farmer facing increasing drought, will not transition once but rather will need to change at regular intervals to adapt to ongoing changes in the environment. What happens if a society or sector remains stuck in the "mid-point" transition that Grubert describes? Do the interventions we are thinking about allow for this kind of constant transition? Does a food security intervention support decisions by farmers to transition to other types of livelihoods? What bounds do interventions place on the available options? And how might an intervention be designed differently if it were designed to be changed again in the future, building in adaptability as well as sustainability?

Siders concluded her remarks by arguing that empowering local agency and control will need to be bounded if the local decision-makers are a narrow, privileged elite who only consider their own needs and leave others behind. Inclusion requires more voices in the decision-making process. On the other hand, just as Clark noted that justice is not an easy or well-defined widget to be adopted, community engagement also involves a challenging and nuanced set of dilemmas. While many of the Keough School scholars recognize the value of empowering community decision-makers, they could do well to delve further into the justice challenges involved in this approach. One example is that efforts to empower communities are inevitably shaped by how "community" is defined – whether the community members considered in a decision include, for example, only current residents or also future generations, only male heads of household or all individuals (including children and elderly residents).[86]

In the discussion that followed, Bill Clark asked about the Consortium Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), whose Research Centers are non-profit research organizations that employ more than 9,000 scientists, researchers, technicians and staff with a physical presence in 48 countries in the Global South, conducting research that aims to "transform food, land and water systems in a climate crisis." Clark questioned the panel's portrayal of CGIAR as wanting in terms of its pro-poor, pro-people social justice dimensions.

Winters responded that CGIAR has improved on this score, mostly owing to the criticisms that they have received from researchers around the world from the time of the Green Revolution to the present. The weakness of CGIAR, he said, is the inability to scale up and to adapt as an organization to innovations such as digital agriculture. Pressing the issue, Clark asked what institutional design *would* improve upon "CGIAR-plus"? Winters replied that he is working with colleagues at the University of Chicago and the Gates Foundation to propose options and alternate models: the innovations are there, but how do we bring them to scale?

Andersson noted that CGIAR is committed to helping researchers understand how their research can be applied in a "pro-public, pro-poor" manner, and is helping to produce innovations. However, he added, we should not be under the illusion that such research networks should be expected to bring solutions to scale. The work with multilaterals is important in this regard. But we should be a bit humble about what we can do as researchers (especially if we do not consult with the farmers and others in rural areas who we are trying to serve). We researchers are part of an ecosystem of knowledge production, but we are not all suited to working closely with pastoralists and other actors on the ground. We still have an important role to play, he said, even via "blue-sky" research, and we can contribute a good deal while staying in our own lane.

Miller pointed to the impact that we researchers also have as teachers and mentors of students who will have an impact on research, teaching, policy and practice.

Sr. Alford offered a contrast between moral principles and theories, on the one hand, and the practice of virtues on the other, citing the virtue ethics of St. Thomas Aquinas. In combatting poverty and climate change, etc. we must ask: how do we apply virtues in certain specific situations and contexts? Aquinas and others do this at a meso-level, for business, the military, etc. But we must go to the micro level by bringing the dilemmas and decisions to the people. We cannot resolve their particular problems on the general level. The people practice concrete virtue ethics, so to speak; theories are not useful to them.

In asking and expecting the community to make the decisions to solve the problems, Siders urged, one must ask, *Who is* the community—male elders? Male heads of household? Are mothers and grandmothers included? At times "the community" makes decisions that seem to undermine the common good; they recommend things that violate principles of justice (e.g., "we favor dedicating resources equally to every person," which fails to acknowledge the pre-existing structural and cultural power and privilege inequalities) In such cases, are "agency" and "dignity" goals in their own right, or do we need to place these goals in the context of the greater good of the most people? A decision might benefit a small group of people in the short term but have harmful consequences to the broader region or to people in the future.[87] How are such issues handled? Furthermore, she asked, how do we handle conflicts between community members when such thorny questions arise?

Winters objected to the assumption that we should impose our value judgements about justice on local actors (e.g., when we insist that aid is dependent on women being integrated into the discussion, an insistence that might violate community norms and customs). Andersson described projects where gender quotas had led to increased forest conservation and increased poverty reduction. If the "science" shows that engaging women leads to "better" outcomes, should interventions be designed to promote effective sustainability and poverty reduction outcomes or to empower existing male-dominated community decision-making structures? Siders replied that we will all define "the community" differently, and that is the crux of the matter. "We cannot simply say 'the community will decide' and pretend that solves the problem. That is just the start of the challenge." The questions we are raising here, she added, are a good place to begin this complex conversation and debate.

Caroline Hughes asked about scaling solutions and whether they are always unambiguously benevolent. Innovations by big biotech companies, when brought to scale, may or may not serve the common good but instead advance special interests. Power relations are always involved, as are profit motives; similar concerns accompany government scale-ups. Scaling certain centrally-developed innovations (by, say, global biotech conglomerates), in other words, may undermine social justice. There are examples of benevolent scaling, she acknowledged, but also of disastrous scaling. How do you scale up without context-specific empowerment?

Hughes made a second point, namely, that local research resources are "fragile," in the sense that many developing countries have only a handful of researchers, with less than adequate support in some cases. So, yes, Hughes said, by all means let's partner with and empower local researchers. But Keough School resources could also be devoted to helping *develop* local research bases in areas where we work, thereby helping to foster a sustainable research ecosystem.

Andersson mentioned that he is a bit skeptical about having scaling be the end-all, be all goal of our research on sustainability. Given the prevailing power dynamics in many societies where we work, we must ask ourselves, “If we use the existing governance structures to bring proposed solutions to scale, who will the scaling-up benefit?” We risk widening the gaps between the richer and poorer members of societies.

Not all innovations are high-tech or scaled up by corporations, Winters noted. Small-scale producers often rely on older practices that can be revived. The problem is that these innovations are being adapted by mid-level farmers while the poorer farmers are being left behind. In terms of engaging local actors, Pattanayak noted that mapping the community is not straightforward; the process will have to rely on intermediaries, who can “translate” in both directions, between the local and the international.

Siders expressed enthusiasm for the emerging research agenda of the Keough School. As this conference and the nuanced presentations have demonstrated, she said, Keough School research and teaching are benefitting from the multiple perspectives and disciplines of the faculty, even as they are converging on certain important shared themes and points of consensus. Andersson agreed that the configuration of the Keough School, and the interactions and collaboration among the faculty “push us all to move away from our comfort zones, in order to refine the ways we put our research in service to the poor and vulnerable.”

Winters concluded the session by cautioning us not to allow our ongoing deliberations and theoretical and research refinements to delay us in providing responses to questions that demand answers now—e.g., how do we allocate the hundreds of millions of dollars being dedicated by governments and intergovernmental agencies to agricultural and environmental innovations?

Endnotes

[1] This essay is a lightly edited version of a working paper presented by Professor Grubert on May 28, 2024 at the Keough School conference, “Embracing Integral Human Development: What Difference Does it Make?”. Parts of this essay have now been published in Emily Grubert, “Carbon markets have no future in a (net) zero-emissions world,” Dialogues on Climate Change (2024), https://journals-sagepub-com.proxy.library.nd.edu/doi/10.1177/29768659241300681.

[2] “Aljazeera News,“First time world exceeds 1.5C warming limit over 12-month period,” February 8, 2024, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/2/8/first-time-world-exceeds-1-5c-warming-limit-over-12-month-period.

[3] Emily Grubert, “Yellow, red, and brown energy: leveraging water footprinting concepts for decarbonizing energy systems.” *Environment, Development and Sustainability* 25, (2023): 7239-7260. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10668-022-02760

[4] United Nations Statistics Division 2024.

[5] Qery, “U.S. Census Household Pulse Survey Jan-Feb 2024,” February 2024, Accessed March 29, 2024, https://qery.no/u-s-census-household-pulse-survey-jan-feb-2024/.

[6] Jayanta Bhattacharya, Thomas DeLeire, Steven Haider, and Janet Currie, “Heat or Eat? Cold-Weather Shocks and Nutrition in Poor American Families,” *American Journal of Public Health* 93, no. 7(2003): 1149–1154, https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.93.7.1149. As of 2019, over three million people in the United States live in extreme poverty, or less than $2.15/day (international dollars, 2017) – more than in China, which has more than four times the population and one fourth the per capita GDP (international dollars, 2017) (World Bank Open Data 2024). See Joe Hasell, Max Roser, Esteban Ortiz-Ospina, and . Pablo Arriagada, “Poverty,” *Our World in Data*, (2023), https://ourworldindata.org/poverty.

[7] Traditional land holders have seen devastation from energy production. Whole regions are referred to as “sacrifice zones,” hosting locally unwanted land uses (LULUs) and bearing the brunt of impacts that support benefits mainly felt beyond the local areas. In the United States, burden is deeply unevenly distributed, with death and disease burdens borne disproportionately by people of color and lower incomes: Christopher W.Tessum, et al., “Inequity in consumption of goods and services adds to racial–ethnic disparities in air pollution exposure,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 116, no. 13 (2019), https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1818859116. Some effects have intergenerational impacts, with evidence of heritable epigenetic changes: Anushi Shukla et al., “Air pollution associated epigenetic modifications: Transgenerational inheritance and underlying molecular mechanisms,” *Science of The Total Environment*, 656 (2019): 760–777, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2018.11.381.

[8] Geoffrey Supran and Naomi Oreskes, “Assessing ExxonMobil’s climate change communications (1977–2014),” Environmental Research Letters 12, no.8(2017), https://doi.org/10.1088/1748-9326/aa815f.

[9] Joshua Macey and JacksonSalovaara, “Bankruptcy as Bailout: Coal Company Insolvency and the Erosion of Federal Law,” *Stanford Law Review* 71, no. 4(2019): 879.

[10] Emily Grubert and Sara Hastings-Simon, “Designing the mid-transition: A review of me-

dium-term challenges for coordinated decarbonization in the United States," *WIREs Climate Change* 13, no.3(2022), https://doi.org/10.1002/wcc.768.

[11] Emily Grubert, E., and Sara. Hastings-Simon,. 2022. "Designing the mid-transition: A review of medium-term challenges for coordinated decarbonization in the United States,." *WIREs Climate Change* 13, no.13 (3)(2022),: e768. https://doi.org/10.1002/wcc.768.

[12] The mid-transition is a global problem, Grubert said, but with highly important local differences that will require focused and specific scholarship, development, and implementation to be successful. Some long-industrialized countries and regions have relatively older fossil infrastructure and significant accumulated wealth to fund transition, while others that are newly industrialized have relatively newer fossil infrastructure and potentially less capital, making it more difficult to retire assets that still have many years of useful operating life. Still others have little fixed infrastructure and also very little capital, posing challenges for implementing anything actually or perceived as untested or unfamiliar. All have specific social contexts, legacies of pollution and extraction, and specific vulnerabilities to climate change and institutional power. Regulatory structures, conventions, and financing access also vary, emphasizing the need for specificity in identifying action that can lead to more just outcomes.

[13] Emily Grubert, "Fossil electricity retirement deadlines for a just transition." *Science* 370, no.6521(2020): 1171–1173.

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Systems and Structures of Violence and Peace

The Keough School Strategic Plan features four major, interconnected research areas. Faculty and other Keough School researchers concerned with alleviating poverty while advancing sustainability recognize, for example, that deadly conflict often hurts the poor most cruelly, and undermines efforts at achieving integral ecology. They acknowledge that some measure of peace is a necessary structural and social condition of human flourishing—even if it be a "negative peace," that is, the absence of ongoing war and other forms of deadly conflict.

When the topic is "war and peace," remarked **Hal Culbertson**, the focus is often on war, the form of violence that erupts dramatically in the shorter term, by means of a specific type of violence. However, he noted that war is only one type of violence that causes harm and stands in the way of a meaningful peace. Over the longer term, both before and after war-making as such, other types of violence create instability and cause social and personal trauma—forms of social oppression, "everyday violence" and systemic discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation. These types of violence, which peace studies scholars call "structural violence," are woven into the very fabric of a society—its laws, customs, institutions, and practices.

If peace is to be built and sustained over the long term, the roots and expressions of structural violence must be addressed. Instead, what we often see is the recurrence of violence and the cyclical nature of war itself. Peacebuilding, then is about ending wars, but also about reforming unjust social, political and economic structures. And, it is about seeing the connections between the violence of war and various forms of "everyday violence."

The Keough School, primarily but not exclusively through the work of the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, studies these forms of violence, as well as the full arc of peacebuilding. This includes work on topics from education and early warning of war, through conflict mediation and conflict resolution, to post-accord peacebuilding via practices of reparation, forgiveness and reconciliation, and the rebuilding of courts, political parties and other institutions.

Culbertson also pointed out that peacebuilding and development are inherently intertwined: recurring cycles of war and the failure to build a lasting and just peace can doom efforts to foster economic and material prosperity, and there can be no lasting peace without development. The idea and promise of IHD is predicated precisely on striving for solutions to war, peace and inequality which are holistic, inclusive and respectful of the dignity and rights of each individual in a given society.

The papers and presentations at the conference concerning "systems and structures of violence and peace" engaged the range of these issues.

In her presentation, "Prioritizing Peace Accords as a Catalyst for Integral Human Development," **Josefina Echavarría**, director of the Peace Accords Matrix (PAM), a research, practice and policy initiative dedicated to improving peace processes globally, articulated "the important alignment between our work and the orientation that IHD provides." At PAM, she said, we recognize that violent conflict is a significant threat to the advancement of integral human development, given that civil war is the leading cause of poverty and human rights violations in the world. Not only are conflict-affected societies unable to provide the economic and material requirements that foster human flourishing, the systemic impacts of violence can last for generations. If IHD is to be realized, dialogue and negotiations must lead to ceasefires and lasting agreements, and these accords must be implemented in a thorough and just manner.

"How to move away from destructive violence to constructive social engagement?" has therefore been a key question for peacebuilders on the ground and peace researchers for generations, Echavarría noted.[1] PAM frames this question as follows: "Which are the best possible ways in which we can transition conflict-affected societies from war to peace?"

Often the complexities and nuances of each conflict require solutions for both peace and development to be intertwined and mutually reinforcing, she continued. For instance, particularly in civil war contexts the opportunity costs for rebel groups to commit to a peace process can outweigh the short-term benefits they have in continuing to fight. These opportunity costs are often tied to development needs—what jobs will be available for former rebel combatants who might have been living on the fringes of society? If the insurgent groups are providing food and security for a local community, how can the community resist cooperation with the groups challenging the State? Such dilemmas often create an impasse, even when conflict parties are determined to pursue peace, and often they loom large during the phase of implementation.

The data and knowledge PAM gathers in studying and analyzing peace accord implementation is placed at the service of practitioners —mediators, negotiators and conflict parties— interested in crafting effective peace agreements fair to all sides. While the monitoring of the implementation of peace accords can be quite technical, Echavarría noted that PAM researchers realize that the human dimension of this process is central to its success. However, peacebuilding of this sort also requires the commitment of implementation agencies and civil society actors active at different levels and sectors of society. These peacebuilders strive to create processes of transformation, which are seldom linear and often surprising in their (sometimes circular) unfolding. "The implementation of peace accords is embedded in complex systems of change away from violent cycles and patterns towards the creation of institutions, the rebuilding of relations and cultural and generational transformations," she writes. "Realization of the economic, gender and political reforms following the signing of a peace accord can catalyze the flourishing of human beings in their full potential."

PAM's background

PAM was originally conceived by John Darby, Professor of Comparative Ethnic Conflict at the Kroc Institute. Taking as his starting point the provisions of peace accords that had been signed since the 1990s, Darby compared their design, content and implementation. How did the design of peace vary in its content, he asked, and how did that variation affect the commitments reached at the negotiation table?

In time, with the assistance of Madhav Joshi, Peter Wallensteen, Jason Quinn and other researchers appointed to PAM, the comparative tables used by Darby in the classroom were turned into a highly sophisticated matrix, with 51 "provision categories" and a scale from 0 to 3 for implementation completion. Provisions are goal-oriented reforms or stipulations[2] that require that one or more of the signatory parties commit to their implementation in a particular policy domain. If implemented, the reforms should help to bring an end to violence and address the underlying issues feeding the dispute and so preventing the repetition of war.

How well are the peace accords being implemented? Answers to a number of related, specific questions are necessary for a credible response to this overarching question, Echavarría noted. Which provisions are being realized, and in which ways? Which commitments are not being implemented, disappointing the expectations of the signatories, civil society and the international community? Why were some provisions implemented successfully and others not? This did not only have to do with the content of the accord but also with larger questions of its design, such as the degree to which civil society had ownership of the peace process. How did international actors accompany the agreement, and how were the implementation plans were to be financed?[3]

In response to these questions, PAM developed a novel system of measuring implementation that tracked which provisions were implemented, to what degree (initiated, intermediate, or full), and in which order. With the great amount of information available and being systematized, PAM was able to focus on dozens of cases. By 2015 PAM researchers had already analyzed 34 peace accords and were able to provide insights into best practices and lessons learned from other contexts that can be adapted to one's own. "What started as a classroom pedagogical tool at Notre Dame has now become the largest existing collection of implementation data on intrastate peace agreements," Echavarría stated.

Drawing on this peer-reviewed database, PAM researchers have supported the negotiation and implementation of peace accords around the world, regularly providing assistance to ongoing peace processes on issues of peace agreement design and implementation.

PAM in Colombia

Since 2016 PAM has played a unique role in Colombia by monitoring the implementation of the nation's historic peace accord.[4] From 2012 to 2016, while the government of President Juan Manuel Santos was negotiating in Havana with the former FARC-EP guerrillas, PAM provided key technical support on the negotiation and implementation of other peace accords. Using the PAM database and the academic research produced, PAM researchers provided a comparative perspective and reflections on best practices and lessons learned on questions that are fundamental to accords in general. For instance, how best to include the question of women's rights in a peace accord so that these are effectively implemented during the post-accord phase?

Other questions included issues of demobilization and reintegration of combatants, as well as the design of the complex system of transitional justice, the latter being especially relevant to Colombia.

PAM data also shows that the inclusion of mechanisms for verification and monitoring of peace accord implementation, together with safeguards, leads to a 47 percent higher success rate of implementation.[5] This piece of empirical evidence proved to be of the highest significance for the negotiators at the table who crafted a comprehensive system of verification, Echavarría added, including both local and national organizations, as well as international organizations like the United Nations. It was critical, as well, to the Kroc Institute's efforts to accompany, monitor and verify the implementation of the peace accord.

The PAM team has been present in the country monitoring the implementation of the peace accord since December 1, 2016. The most comprehensive agreement signed thus far between a government and an illegal armed organization, the Colombian accord brings together the major actors of the conflict, seeks to end direct violence, "and addresses deeper issues of inequalities, poverty and discrimination that have impeded the integral human development of Colombians for generations," Echavarría writes. The Kroc Institute's Peace Accords Matrix, she adds, "continues to be the only university research center that enjoys a monitoring mandate." The signatory parties to the agreement expect PAM to provide accurate, opportune and relevant implementation information, while the civil society organizations expect PAM to listen and consider seriously their perspectives on implementation (not least, as an accountability mechanism for signatory actors). Finally, the international community depends on PAM's evidence and analysis to prioritize the implementation of financing and technical support.

The detailed and lengthy nature of the Colombian accord posed challenges for PAM researchers, Echavarría noted. In conversation with the Colombian representatives of the signatory parties in the newly constituted commission for verification, they created a matrix of 578 stipulations, that is, concrete, observable, and measurable commitments to monitor, track, validate, and organize all data collected locally, nationally, and internationally. Attentive to the importance of balancing formal knowledge with experiential peacebuilding practice, PAM formed a team of specialists in Colombia who are in constant conversation with implementation agencies, civil society organizations, the international community, and others. The information collected is analyzed jointly with researchers at Notre Dame, in order to assess the information collected in light of the commitments of the accord.

Thanks, then, to the support of the University of Notre Dame, the State Department and philanthropic foundations, and in partnership with Pastoral Social / Caritas Colombia, PAM's field unit in Colombia was created; it is known as the "Barometer Initiative." The name, Echavarría explained, signals the intention to provide an impartial measurement that could provide insights to all implementation actors. The Kroc Institute reports on implementation progress present the current status of the commitments, and they also identify the bottlenecks that the process has faced, the progress made, and the opportunities that exist or can be catalyzed into existence in order to make implementation more robust.[6]

Impact and Influence

The results of PAM's work in Colombia have surpassed expectations, Echavarría reported. PAM has a significant media impact, for instance, with over 152 citations /mentions during 2023, including prominent outlets like *The New York Times,* as well as several UN reports.[7] Additionally, the Peace Accords Matrix website drew over 38,000 new viewers in the last academic year, with the actual page view for the website totaling over 93,000 in the past year.

As for policy impact, PAM has had important success in advocating for language on peace accord implementation monitoring to be included in congressional bills and in global policy frameworks. A prominent example of the latter is the new and influential United Nations Draft of the Summit of the Future. PAM researchers are also invited to brief international organizations, negotiators, mediators and conflict parties interested in finding creative ways of peacefully ending their disagreements. At the invitation of the United Nations Security Council, for example, Professor Echavarría briefed the participants on PAM's findings during an open debate on "Peace Through Dialogue" in October 2023.

In the field of peacemaking and peacebuilding, PAM's impact has been notable. For instance, in the first quarter of 2023, the project's Colombia products alone had over 4,000 views and downloads; and since October 2021, the Colombia products released by PAM have accumulated over 28,000 views and downloads.[8] "Yet, nothing can compare to the satisfaction we feel" Echavarría said, "when conflict parties seeking support in the implementation of their peace accords, find in PAM a reliable third party who can help them move from destructive patterns into the possibilities of deep social, political and ecological change."

PAM has recently received the mandate as official monitors of the Bangsamoro peace accord. After being involved in a series of trainings, academic conferences and supporting grassroots peacebuilding since 2005 in the Mindanao region of the Philippines, PAM, together with Catholic Relief Services, "has recently started working with the signatory parties to the peace agreement who are represented in commissions to implement the accord, as well as with civil society organization forums and the international community."[9]

When considering the future of peace accord research and the many interconnected IHD variables informing the research, there is still much to be examined and understood. PAM intends to be a thought leader in exploring the connection between the impact of successful peace accords and new opportunities for development and human flourishing Echavarría concluded:

> PAM's four pillars of work—research, practice, policy, and teaching—are dedicated to helping societies transition from war to peace. PAM's vision is to become a global hub for peace, where academic research provides the baseline for understanding what does and does not work in peace accords, and where the research is implemented in peace accord processes and utilized for policy change, as well as for the education and formation of students and practitioners. We hope that generations of students at the University of Notre Dame and beyond will benefit first-hand from PAM's work and contribute to creating the foundations of IHD. For integral human development to become a reality in post-accord societies, the transition from war to peace remains a necessary condition for supporting vulnerable populations in their own efforts to rebuild their societies on the basis of human dignity and flourishing for all.

PAM benefits from the insights of Keough School scholars and institutes studying specific contemporary conflicts in detail. The Keough-Naughton Institute for Irish Studies' ARINS project is a case in point. The institute's director **Colin Barr**, an historian of modern Ireland, addressed a theme central to PAM's work on peace accords, namely, the complexities of "coming out of war" and rebuilding a society devastated by many years of conflict. The setting in this case is Northern Ireland, when a peace accord, signed in 1998 after nearly two years of negotiations and almost 30 years of sustained violence, promised to end the war. The Good Friday Agreement, as it is sometimes known, was hailed for bringing into measured agreement loyalist and republican, unionist and nationalist leaders.

Yet the Agreement "was neither a victory nor a defeat," Barr acknowledged. The Irish Republican Army had fought for an Ireland united and free from British rule. But this demand "had not been subject to the vagaries of popular opinion or electoral politics." Simply put: Britain would leave and Ireland would be free. The Agreement, however, guaranteed no such thing; rather, as the British Prime Minister Tony Blair told the assembled media on 10 April 1998: "The principle of consent is absolute and is throughout the Agreement"; ". . . the breakthrough is that that [principle] is now accepted by all north and south." Indeed, Professor Barr noted, the Republicans had given up their claim that the only democratically legitimate unit on the island of Ireland was the island itself, and Dublin had agreed to remove its territorial claim to Northern Ireland from its constitution. Britain had conceded too, of course, but much less, in that "they had only to re-state what had been policy already for a generation: if a majority of the people of Northern Ireland wished to join a United Ireland, they were free to do so. London would not stand in their way. Until then, Northern Ireland would remain in the United Kingdom, *status quo ante bellum*."

Yet what happened in Belfast on Good Friday was still a breakthrough, Barr underscored. "For the first time what mattered was what the people of *Northern Ireland* wanted. Everybody else was just an observer."

Despite lingering violence, there was progress: the British Army began to withdraw from the streets; the police force changed its name, and in time its culture; the economy improved; official discrimination was reduced, and in many spheres disappeared entirely. Yet it was a cold peace, Barr noted. Disarmament proved "maddeningly slow," sectarian violence continued, albeit at low levels, and some former paramilitaries transitioned smoothly into organized criminality. In addition, Barr said:

> The political parties squabbled interminably. There was little social mixing, especially in the lower reaches of the social scale, and even less trust. Even now many Catholics can go their whole life without a Protestant friend, and vice versa. Sport is still segregated. So are schools. Belfast remains scarred by hideously misnamed 'Peace Walls.' Yet as Tony Blair himself observed on the Agreement's fifth anniversary, 'Did anyone seriously believe it would be easy?'

Over time, the IRA and its Loyalist counterparts finally disarmed. Ian Paisley, "a fire-breathing, fervently anti-Catholic loyalist," shared power equally with Martin McGuinness, a former IRA chief of staff who had overseen the assassination of Lord Mountbatten, the last viceroy of British India. No one pretended the system was perfect, Barr noted. Power sharing was difficult, at times impossible: executive government was suspended entirely from 2002 to 2007, again between 2011 and 2016 and in 2017 and 2020, and between February 2022 and January 2024. Nor were there any signs that old loyalties were softening.[10]

Yet the problems were not the whole story. The political parties did work together at times, Belfast flourished, and Derry/Londonderry became the UK 'City of Culture.' "The border was increasingly marked only by a change in mobile provider and road signage," Barr explained. "The first generation not to know active violence reached university. Young Catholics and nationalists began to join the police, although not yet in sufficient numbers. Almost no one wanted to return to the past."

Then, an "externality," known colloquially as Brexit, intervened. The departure of the United Kingdom and Gibraltar from the European Union had many consequences, not least for Northern Ireland, which shared the UK's only land border with the EU.[11] Barr listed some of the central questions raised by this sea change: How would the UK departure affect trade? Would the free movement of people continue? Would it be necessary to implement a "hard border,'"complete with immigration and customs formalities? Could peace itself be at risk?

A shared membership in the European Union had been implicit in everything that had been agreed in Belfast. Frank-Walter Steinmeier, then the German foreign minister, expressed the fears of many: Brexit would mean a border, and a border "could have the potential of rekindling a conflict that has seemingly calmed down."[12] Even now, Barr writes, "the question of where exactly the border is, where it should be, how 'thick' it is, and what it all means has not been finally or fully resolved."

The Brexit referendum also instantly re-opened the constitutional question, he continued. Within hours of the result being announced Sinn Féin, formerly the political voice of the IRA, had called for a unification referendum on the grounds that "English votes have dragged us out of Europe."[13] (In Northern Ireland, 55.8 percent of voters had opted to remain in the European Union.)

For many in the North as well as in the Republic of Ireland, Brexit made the idea of "a united Ireland" newly plausible. But what form would a united Ireland take, should the people of Northern Ireland elect to pursue it? "What changes, if any, would the Republic of Ireland be required to make to integrate the North? How would the process work? Who would pay pensions, at what level, when, and to whom? How would the respective health services operate? How would the legal systems be reconciled, and on what principles? What allowances would be made to those who retained a British identity or rejected an Irish one? What would be the status of the Irish language? What would be the implications if the voters of Northern Ireland rejected unification?"

The questions, Barr emphasized, were endless. Whatever one's position, however, almost no one believed that it would be desirable to have a vote on unification prior to a clear understanding of what it entailed. "A deal must precede a vote," as the formula went. "The spectacle of Britain's protracted and tortured exit from Europe had made that crystal clear."

Yet this near-consensus on process only raised more questions, he explained:

> Research would be needed in advance of any pre-referendum negotiation: How would it be conducted, and by whom? The research certainly could not be conducted by either government, nor by any political party. Absolute neutrality was essential, both in appearance and in reality. There could not be the slightest hint of a preference for any particular outcome, nor a presumption that a vote might occur at all. Trust could easily be lost, and the slightest misstep could be fatal. Put simply, there was no entity on the island of Ireland that possessed the necessary capacity, standing, and resources to undertake this work.

This is where Notre Dame came in. In 2019, Patrick Griffin, then the director of the Keough-Naughton Institute, and Ruth Hegarty, the Managing Editor for Publications of the Royal Irish Academy, began discussions about a possible collaboration to commission, conduct and disseminate objective, evidence-based research on the most significant questions of policy and public debate relating to options for the future of the island of Ireland, north and south.[14] The partners were perfectly matched. Notre Dame and Keough-Naughton had both academic expertise and a long history on the island of Ireland but was an external and thus neutral party. The Royal Irish Academy, an all-Ireland body established under Charter in 1785, is the island's learned society and one of the very few institutions to operate on both sides of the Irish border. "No other possible combination could command the same level of trust, expertise, and resource," Barr argued. "The result was ARINS – Analyzing and Researching Ireland North and South."

Since its inception, he continued, ARINS has met its mandate to support and disseminate rigorous, non-partisan, and independent research at the highest academic standards. The raw numbers tell the story best. Since 2020, ARINS has published over 100 scholarly articles and their associated responses and replies (a crucial contribution to the maintenance of trust) in a dedicated, peer-reviewed journal, as well as numerous podcasts that explore not only the academic research that has underpinned the published articles but also the issues and challenges of the day.[15] Yet ARINS has also extended its remit by organizing conferences (five to date), panels, roundtables, or public presentations (25 to date), and five public debates.[16]

The ARINS project has also become involved in a groundbreaking collaboration with *The Irish Times*, Ireland's newspaper of record, to produce the first sustained, scientific polling ever conducted on attitudes towards unification north and south of the border. This initiative, important in its own right, was also part of the wider architecture of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement, which provided for a border poll *only* if it "appeared likely to [the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland] that a majority of those voting would express a wish that Northern Ireland should cease to be part of the United Kingdom and form a part of a united Ireland."[17] The political importance of establishing the state of public opinion made it necessary that the polls be consistent, scientific, and impartial. It is this imperative that has driven the scale of the polling, which in its first iteration (2022) drew on a representative sample of citizens (1009 in Northern Ireland, 1,000 in the Republic of Ireland) based on 100 sampling points, as well as group discussions (two in the north, four in the south), again weighted with regard to age, gender, and place of residence, as well as (in Northern Ireland) religious background.

The results of the polling were striking, Barr reported, particularly in the north, on the headline question of unification, for example, in the event of a referendum 50 percent of those surveyed wished for Northern Ireland to remain in the United Kingdom, 27% wished to unify with the Republic of Ireland, 18 percent did not know, and 5 percent did not intend to vote. The relatively low support for unification was unexpected by many commentators, as was the relatively high percentage of Catholics (21 percent) who indicated that they did not presently support unification. These figures, which were largely repeated in the 2023 poll, have inevitably become the subject of sustained comment, critique, and investigation by scholars, commentators, and political actors.[18]

The importance of the ARINS/*Irish Times* polls has been recognized not only by commentators, who regularly refer to the results, and by scholars, who have begun to investigate in detail both the polls and the associated discussion groups, but also by the political parties of both jurisdictions.[19] That has led to a new strand of ARINS activity, Barr noted, with more than 16 formal briefings of parties and party leaders held to date, including those presently in government. These have been organized by Keough-Naughton's Dublin-based staff, and delivered by members of the ARINS polling team, which includes scholars from institutions as diverse as the University of Pennsylvania, Queen's University Belfast, and Dublin City University. Further briefings are planned on other strands of ARINS research, for example on the economy, healthcare, or security policy.

That these briefings have been welcomed by all major political parties in both jurisdictions is a tribute to ARINS' carefully won and zealously protected reputation for objectivity and impartiality. "It is no exaggeration to say," Professor Barr concluded, "that ARINS has unequivocally fulfilled its mission to inform the political future of Ireland, north and south, through the creation and dissemination of objective, impartial, and evidence-based research and analysis across multiple modes, channels, and academic disciplines. The result is the most important, wide-ranging, and measurably impactful policy work being done today on the island of Ireland. The island's future is for its people to decide. It is the mission of ARINS – and Keough-Naughton – to ensure that they will continue to have detailed, objective, and academically rigorous information to help them."

International Mediation, a professional practice crucial to transforming violent conflicts in places such as Northern Ireland and Colombia, is an area of expertise that flourishes at the Keough School's Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies through the leadership of

Laurie Nathan. For the Rome conference Professor Nathan posed the provocative question: Is there a gap between research and practice in this all-important arena?

Nathan began his presentation with a precise definition: International mediation, "a form of peacemaking in high-intensity conflict within or between states, is a process whereby a third-party assists conflict parties, with their consent, to prevent, manage or resolve their conflict through collectively acceptable negotiated agreements." In the context of armed conflict, the political and humanitarian significance of mediation is "huge," he added. "It is usually the only path from war to peace and, for better or worse, the mediated settlement lays the basis for the long-term restructuring of society and state." The academic literature on international mediation addresses an overarching set of questions: what strategies and styles of mediation, led by which actors and under what circumstances, are most likely to lead to a sustainable peace agreement?

Dr. Nathan's own research has explored the effects of mediation mandates issued by multilateral organizations;[20] the complex relationship between mediation, conflict and the emotions of the conflict parties;[21] the challenge of competition and conflict between mediation actors, which constitutes a serious impediment to successful peacemaking;[22] the particular dynamics associated with mediating ceasefires;[23] the dilemmas that mediators confront with respect to tensions between peace and justice;[24] and, the post-conflict constitution as a peace agreement.[25] In addition to doing scholarly work, he also engages in policy research. Whereas the former has the intellectual excitement of discovery, breaking new ground and deepening theoretical insights, policy research has the satisfaction of contributing to real-world efforts to make peace in situations of intense violence and suffering. "My goal in doing policy research," Nathan said "is to have a direct impact on the mediation policies, structures and practices of states and multilateral organizations that engage in peacemaking in high intensity conflict."[26]

Nathan's paper for the Rome conference presents findings from his recently published study on the research preferences of international mediation policymakers; describes the process of developing mediation policy for a multilateral organization; and discusses the differences between scholarly research and policy research.

Research preferences of mediation policymakers

International Relations (IR) scholars complain that governments and multilateral organizations do not take IR research seriously.[27] This complaint has also been expressed in relation to international mediation research.[28] "I have investigated this issue and found the complaint to be unjustified," Nathan declared.[29] "Indeed, I found that the UN and a number of other mediation policymakers are very receptive to research and that their policies have been strongly influenced by research." Researchers who wish to have a policy impact, he argued, should view policymakers as "customers" and should seek to discern and meet their knowledge requirements and preferences.

Mediation policymakers and practitioners, for example, are interested in two types of research output, he explained, which have different scope and purpose. The first is case-specific research intended to enhance the knowledge and effectiveness of a mediator in a *particular* conflict. Policymakers appreciate that mediators need contemporary and historical information and analysis concerning the conflict actors, issues, dynamics and causes. In the case of the UN, the requisite information and analysis draw on academic research, policy research and practitioner-led field research. Second, there is interest in research intended to develop operational guidance reports that have *general* applicability. These reports aim to enhance the knowledge and effectiveness of mediation policymakers and practitioners through advice on strategy, tactics, norms and/or organizational structures. They frequently have a specific theme, such as UN support for domestic mediators, mediation of natural resource conflicts, and inclusion of women in peace processes.

In terms of methodology, Nathan continued, the policymakers have a preference for comparative case studies that include interviews with mediators. This preference reflects an attempt to balance two considerations that are potentially in tension with each other. On the one hand, every conflict is unique and mediation strategies and processes must therefore be flexible and responsive rather than overly generalized. On the other hand, the quality of mediation will not improve over time, and mistakes will be repeated if there is no learning from previous experience. Case studies can potentially achieve a good balance between these two considerations, as they enable general findings and recommendations to be made without losing sight of the complexity of conflict, the uniqueness of each case, and the variation among cases. The comparative case method combined with practitioner insights can capture patterns as well as a nuanced and hands-on perspective.

Mediation policymakers, Nathan added, have little interest in quantitative analysis, which is the dominant form of mediation research in top scholarly journals. "Their resistance is partly due to the technical nature of large-N studies," he writes, "which are too complicated to assess without the relevant expertise, and they are skeptical that complex conflict and mediation dynamics are reducible to numerical data." Mediation policymakers indicate a preference for commissioned research that is bespoke rather than "off the shelf," Nathan said at the conference. This enables the policymaker to specify at the outset its requirements and the desired outputs, process and methods. The process usually entails an interactive exchange between the researcher and policymaker officials on the researcher's draft report, he explained, which may go through several iterations before finalization. The feedback process is a form of peer review, intended to enhance the quality and suitability of the output.

Regarding the orientation of commissioned research, mediation policymakers have a combination of utilitarian and normative needs; they want products and services that help them solve a particular problem or achieve a particular objective. But they also place a premium on normative desiderata. “They expect commissioned research to be consistent with their norms (e.g., respect for human rights, the rule of law and gender equality), regardless of whether these norms heighten or detract from mediation effectiveness,” Nathan commented.

Nathan offered a concrete example of the process, one in which he fully participated as a drafter of the policy documents. The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) is the multilateral organization responsible for peace, security and development in the Horn of Africa. Its member states are Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda. In 2007 the IGAD Secretariat convened a workshop in Mombasa to consider ways to professionalize and institutionalize IGAD’s approach to mediation. Over the next few years, the Mombasa proposals were refined at consultative meetings attended by researchers and government officials. In 2010 these consultations culminated in a 40-page guidance document on the conceptual, strategic, operational and organizational dimensions of mediation.

On the basis of this document, the IGAD Committee of Ambassadors approved the appointment of a mediation coordinator in the Secretariat, the establishment of the IGAD Mediation Support Unit, and the formation of the IGAD Roster of Mediators. In 2017 the Committee of Ambassadors approved the “Strategic Guidelines on Mediation for IGAD Mediators,” which seeks to ensure mediation effectiveness. In 2018-19 the Secretariat oversaw the development of an IGAD legal protocol on preventive diplomacy and mediation, approved by the Committee of Ambassadors.

The drafting of the policy documents followed a standard pattern: the Secretariat identified a need for a research-informed policy report; prepared terms of reference specifying the rationale, objectives, topics, methodologies, outputs and responsibilities; and selected a consultant to undertake the work. The consultant and the Secretariat finalized an inception report, and the consultant prepared the first draft of the report. The Secretariat provided feedback, leading to revisions of the text; the Secretariat and the consultant presented the revised report for review at workshops attended by legal experts and other officials from member states; and the Secretariat and consultant thereafter presented a revised draft to the Committee of Ambassadors for approval. Through this interactive process, “ownership” of the text passed from the drafter to the Secretariat and then from the Secretariat to the member states.

Differences between scholarly research and policy research

The IGAD Secretariat expected the policy research to identify mediation best practices based on comparative international experience and IGAD's own peacemaking initiatives, Nathan noted. To capture the latter, the Secretariat commissioned local researchers to prepare "lessons learnt" case studies on IGAD's mediations for Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan. These studies were based on interviews, primary records and published material. They are comparable with scholarly case studies in terms of their methodology and attention to evidence, but have greater emphasis on prescriptions. In certain respects, then, Nathan explained, the policy research resembled conventional academic research. "But there were also important differences," he added. "Whereas academic research aims to enhance knowledge and deepen understanding of some phenomenon, commissioned research has the more targeted purpose of contributing to the development of a policy deemed necessary by a policymaker."

In response to the need for mediation policy derived from the catastrophic inter- and intra-state wars in the Horn of Africa, IGAD adopted a strategic framework for promoting regional peace, security and development. In this context, and in line with similar developments at the UN and the African Union, the Secretariat sought to professionalize and institutionalize IGAD's approach to mediation.

Unlike academic research, Nathan explained, the commissioned research was governed by a principal-agent relationship. The Secretariat framed the research projects in the first instance and selected the consultants. The consultants were obliged to comply with the terms of reference, provide information, explanations and advice to the IGAD stakeholders, and be responsive to their questions, concerns and decisions. The policy recommendations were subject to peer review by the Secretariat and member state officials, resulting in the acceptance, revision or rejection of recommendations. The criteria for review were not scholarly standards but rather the perceived political, normative and practical appropriateness of the recommendations. The commissioned research did not entail rigorous theorizing and testing of hypotheses, he noted, but it was not atheoretical. Most of the prescriptions on mediation strategy were grounded in explicit theoretical perspectives on the effects of different options.[30]

Commissioned research tends to be light on theory and heavy on norms, Nathan noted. Policymakers insist that the research be consistent with their norms, and they select researchers on the grounds of normative compatibility. The very point of the commissioned research on mediation is to contribute to the development of new norms governing peacemaking. Whereas scholarly work on mediation has no qualms about criticizing mediators and mediating organizations, the IGAD case studies were constrained. The authors were encouraged to identify "negative lessons" from IGAD's mediations in order to improve future practice, but they were also expected to present their criticism in a "diplomatic" manner that did not offend member states.[31]

In conclusion, Professor Nathan affirmed the prominent scholarly explanation for the research–policy gap, namely, that the academic and policy worlds constitute different epistemic communities or subcultures, with diverse approaches to what counts as useful knowledge.[32] The "two communities" theory holds that "social scientists and policy-makers live in separate worlds with different and often conflicting values, different reward systems and different languages."[33] The key insight, as Dunn puts it, is that "problems of knowledge use are fundamentally cultural, that is, they depend on the subjective interpretation of meaning attached to 'knowledge' by members of particular subcultures."[34]

While Nathan's research confirms the research-policy gap in general, he argues that it does not exist in the realm of international mediation precisely because mediators adjust to the knowledge orientation and preferences of mediation policymakers. They accept the reality, that is, that

> The policymakers have a utilitarian need for research to help solve a problem or achieve an objective; they expect the research to be consistent with their higher-order norms as well as to forge norms on mediation; they want to be confident that the proposed norms and guidance are functionally sound, politically appropriate and financially feasible; and, as a result, they want the research report or draft policy to be reviewed by mediation practitioners and policymakers. In contrast to academic research that is exploratory, creative and critical, commissioned research tends to be politically motivated, goal-directed and constrained.

If researchers fear that these constraints will compromise their independence and integrity, Nathan offered by way of conclusion, they will keep some distance from policymakers. There might well be a trade-off between influence and independence. "The options are not mutually exclusive, however, since researchers can play several roles simultaneously or consecutively and can use the same research for both scholarly and policy purposes."

When anthropologist and peace studies scholar **Catherine Bolten** began her research in Sierra Leone in 2003, she sought to address pressing questions about the viability of transitional justice mechanisms such as Truth and Reconciliation Commissions, special courts of justice, and Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) programs. Initially, she examined how the transitioning of ex-combatants back into the "civilian" social world during and after official reintegration efforts became politicized in the city where the rebels had made their headquarters during the latter years of the civil war.

The success of the more-or-less spontaneous reintegration of most ex-combatants was framed by the government as a condemnation of the regional capital of Makeni, which they accused of being too “welcoming” to ex-combatants, Bolten said. Rather than being lauded, the relatively seamless reintegration experience was held up as proof that the town must have collaborated with the rebel Revolutionary United Front during the war rather than simply enduring their occupation. As a result, the government withheld development funding from the town, urged NGOs not to establish programming there, and generally, as local people explained, “under-developed” the town in comparison to the rest of the nation to show the government’s disdain for the place and its people.[35]

Professor Bolten’s research revealed that transitional justice is less about the mechanisms of peace than perceptions of those mechanisms and how perceptions become narratives that become entrenched, leading to cycles of resentment and mistrust. Her career in peace studies has been dedicated to examining how narratives that provoke or reinforce violence and stand in the way of positive peace are generated. She traces how such narratives spread and are reinforced and how the effects of these narratives are largely hidden because they seem obvious, making violence—whether “hot” or structural or, now, environmental—self-evident rather than pathological.

“In essence, conflicts cannot be transformed—and positive peace achieved—if people do not believe they are transformed,” Bolten explained. “People still hold bad feelings in their hearts because the underlying structures of violence on which conflict was fomented have not been revealed, let alone addressed.”

In the case of Makeni, the regional capital that was occupied by the RUF during the war, the town had experienced a century of deliberate neglect, beginning with its deliberate exclusion by the colonial administration from infrastructure and transportation projects, thus creating Makeni as a “poor” and “backward” place. The government, when the war crept north, did not muster the same military resources to defend Makeni as they did other capitals because, in the words of many residents, “no one cares about us.” For residents, Bolten explained, Makeni was already destroyed by the government before the war, which was why it was so easy for the RUF to invade and hold. The government, in turn, used the town’s weakness to entrench a narrative about its openness to welcoming evil.

Bolten’s subsequent research explored the relationship between narratives of conflict and their influence on social and political perceptions by examining the problem of “youth” in the urban areas of Sierra Leone. During the first project, she had observed a repeating pattern of concerns that kept people up at night, not only the short-term concerns about food, shelter, money, and the daily economy of post-war life, but also longer-term fears about “war-affected” young people. Who they were, socially and as citizens, and what did this portend for the future? Adults were concerned that an entire generation was lost to the war, that the ten years that many young people spent out of school, in refugee camps, in the bush, or separated from their families left them unable to learn, unable to understand work, unwilling to conform to cultural norms, and thus unable to be successful members of the social world. Most of them, according to the dominant narrative, were just "sitting idle" and still had a "war mentality," living by their own rules and norms. The youth, the story went, needed to be "mainstreamed."

The oft-heard mantra about these largely unemployed and undereducated young people, Bolten recounted, was "idle hands are the devil's work." The proposed solution was to get all of them into school or into technical training, put them back under adult control, and, essentially force them to accept the low position on the social ladder that they had occupied before the war. But this received narrative was flawed, Bolten explained:

> Narratives become structural, and the idea that young people were inherently dangerous because they had not been under regular supervision for the previous decade became a dominant ideology behind policies ranging from compulsory education to police surveillance and harassment of commercial motorbike riders. However, none of these fears about what youth had become were playing out as advertised in my research with a cohort of young people that I followed over ten years after the end of the war. Young people, in short, were not rebellious, uncivilized, deliberately idle, or resistant to adult control. In fact, they were quite conservative in their personal desires and dreams for the future, and they believed they had to act "serious" in order to convince their elders that they were worthy of their place in the social world. Young men dressed up in suits not because they were trying to provoke their elders in a show of an inversion of the social order; they dressed up to be taken seriously as people of consequence. Young men with only a little money to invest would sell matches and cigarettes on the street not because they lacked ambition, imagination, or intelligence but because by dealing in these small margins, they could slowly grow a business over time into something larger and more permanent. Young commercial motorbike riders were not crazy anarchists, causing accidents and inciting riots because they hated the police and the government. They were indebted to the "big men" who owned the bikes they rented; they were unable to afford licenses and yet they were still responsible for feeding their siblings and aging parents.[36]

The issue, it emerged, was not with the young people themselves being rebellious or threatening. Instead, Bolten writes, "the issue lay with the interpretation of their actions by the older generation—how they perceived the actions of young people, whose social cues they did not entirely understand. The older generation was threatened . . . and decided to come down hard on the young people, who only wanted their appreciation and encouragement."

> The world had changed drastically after the war, Professor Bolten explained. A new emphasis on education and the passing of child rights laws in the country meant that children were in school and bypassed the historic expectations of maturity achieved through manual labor performed for the family. Fashion had changed as well, with the markets flooded with cheap textiles from China and bales of used clothes from Europe and the US, meaning that youth could dress according to their tastes in ways that also obscured their social status. Students began laminating their education credentials and achievement certificates and carrying them everywhere in the hopes of being "taken seriously" by adults who might hire them into white-collar positions. They hung out in tea shops so that adults would see that they were not plotting nefarious deeds in back alley "ghettos" where smoking and drinking took place. They joined political parties and ran for council seats, as delegates for large parties, and as the hired hands of politicians.

In short, the students did everything in their power to perform their "seriousness" for adults, but all the older generation perceived was the alarming threat of upstart young people who were trying to move into higher positions in the social hierarchy before their time. As a response to their fear, elders consistently knocked the "youth" back into their place, treating them only as the problematic but energetic laboring bodies within the body politic who were useful to command in moments when violence was needed and then discarded or censured when it was not. In short, she concluded, the elders *created* "dangerous youth," to be used and manipulated in the ways detailed in Bolten's paper.

A food crisis emerging in Sierra Leone led Bolten to her related third project. The distorted narrative in this case was spread first by traders, who complained that food stocks had declined and prices had risen because the "lazy" farmers in rural areas were not producing and instead sending their youth (rather than rice and vegetables) to the city.

But Bolten uncovered a different story by interviewing people in the rural areas. Food insecurity was deepening, owing not to a lack of will to farm, but to changes in the land. The population of the rural areas increased after the war, and though the land ostensibly had ten years of rest during the fighting, the unrest caused major disruptions to both land and agricultural cycles. During the war, forests had become places of refuge for village residents, who over-utilized the forest's resources and fragmented the land as they tried to farm in secret; as a result, the delicate soil lost much of its resilience. Once farmed intensively again after the war, the soil failed to bounce back as it once had.

Meanwhile, Bolten continued, advances in medicine and declining child mortality rates meant more mouths to feed, with less rice available to accomplish this. "Parents began sending their teenagers to the city hoping they could find their own way, and most eventually returned, looking for land on which to start their own farms," she writes. The fallow period of rest historically allocated to the land began to shrink rapidly, further depressing food yields—a problem “exacerbated by climate change, where the rains come too late or too early, too light or too heavy, sometimes not really at all, and sometimes so torrentially that the land is further eroded.” Wildfires are becoming more common as the winds become stronger and gustier, and land often burns when it is not supposed to or burns so hot that the organic matter in it is lost, rather than generated. Although suffering and conflict are increasing in the villages, city-dwellers lay the blame at the village residents’ own feet. “The narrative is reinforced within Global North crisis narratives about agriculture in Africa,” she added, “by centuries-old colonial and now post-colonial racism that cites rotational farming itself as the cause of environmental decline...”

The overall situation prompts parents to try to send more of their children to school, to get them out of the farming that no longer offers the possibility of a good life, Bolten noted. At the same time, “the underfunded education system fails to deliver, especially for poor children in rural schools.” Education is expensive, and rice is one of the only ways to pay for it, but how to accomplish this when yields are declining owing to soil exhaustion? “As a result, people are now caught in a state of ‘unknowing’ as their knowledge fails, their children go hungry, migration becomes a common but unstable response, and education fails to deliver on its promises of a brighter future. The place they have known as their home is now in rapid decline, and people are becoming “de-placed”— a process of being stuck within a landscape in decline, as there are no good options for positive change either by staying or by going and no knowledge that can address the situation. “People begin to lose their sense of community, of self, and even of identity through de-placement, and it is a phenomenon that will only become more common as climate change continues.”
How does the engaged scholar respond to what she learns via her research? One of the proposed solutions for the demise of agricultural land in Sierra Leone is plantation forestry. A British company has recently taken over thousands of hectares of land on the other side of the chiefdom, Bolten reported—land that was destroyed in the mid-twentieth century by commercial tobacco farming. The company is planting eucalyptus on it for the manufacture of utility poles and plywood. “Villages are now locked into 99-year land leases for a foreign company to grow an exotic tree that is responsible the world over for the destruction of soil biomes and watersheds, and yet is beloved as an essential oil, a key accent to flower arrangements, and as a street and park tree around the world,” she writes. Eucalyptus is also touted as a key tool in the green transition and carbon sequestration, with the Kyoto Protocol advocating for eucalyptus plantations—even when they are created by clearing indigenous forests, as a carbon sequestration tool, and the World Bank has paid developing countries from Nepal to South Korea to Brazil to plant eucalyptus since the 1980s, ostensibly as a tool of sustainable national development.

In response to this—a distorted narrative, as it were, on a global scale—Bolten is now studying “how a tree that evolved specifically to adapt to the dry, ecologically-isolated ecology of Australia is now destroying indigenous forests, rural communities, watersheds, biodiversity, and livelihoods around the world in the name of Forest Stewardship Council-certified wood products."

Whereas the violence that the green transition is wreaking on poor communities around the world is only just coming to light, she notes, even in these conversations eucalyptus is rarely present, despite the fact that mass protests against eucalyptus plantations nearly brought down the government of Thailand in the 1990s, and successfully halted plantation expansion in Portugal around the same time. Meanwhile, the government of Chile has recently labeled its indigenous Mapuche people as "terrorists" because the Mapuche were burning eucalyptus plantations that were planted on land that had been seized from them by the government. (The bunkering of eucalyptus timber products is now as common in Chile as the bunkering of oil has been in the Niger Delta; and is also a consistent source of violent reprisals and community dislocation.) And eucalyptus is partially responsible for Cape Town, South Africa's perpetual water crisis because the trees planted around the city consume percent of its water supply, causing shortages that primarily affect black township dwellers. It is now being planted by the millions in Jordan as the mainstay of their reforestation campaign, even as it will cause havoc in the delicate desert environment.

"Though it may not initially seem to be a key part of questions about structures of violence, eucalyptus trees are silently creating and perpetuating suffering around the world—suffering that is only exacerbated by the Global North's unabashed love of this tree, and the demands of the green transition that render protests against it intolerable, rather than entirely rational, " Bolten concluded.

Since 2004, the research of **Lisa Schirch**, the Starmann Professor of Strategic Peacebuilding, has explored how new digital technologies, particularly social media and artificial intelligence (AI), impact conflict dynamics and democratic processes. Her paper and presentation for the Rome conference examined the roles of technology in both constraining and advancing peace and democracy.

Describing what she called "a technological Tower of Babel," Schirch began her remarks with a familiar lament regarding the new digital tools for communicating and sharing information, namely, that they enable and often promote the escalation and amplification of false, deceptive, and divisive online information, which, in her words, "undermines social cohesion and disrupts democratic societies' ability to solve complex challenges, including the climate crisis, migration, and economic inequality." She underscored the fact that, in some regions, digital content drives violent conflict and undermines peacebuilding processes.

Digital technologies, she continued, influence the drivers of democratic backsliding around the world, from populist distrust of government and toxic or affective polarization to hyper-partisanship and, conversely, a decline in civic engagement. Not least, some countries wage "influence operations" to undermine trust in democratic institutions, and social media algorithms amplify divisive "us vs. them" content. "With designs that foster user engagement and even addiction, social media distracts rather than inspires civic engagement," she noted.

From 2019 to 2021 Professor Schirch led a global research process, which produced an edited volume, *Social Media Impacts on Conflict and Democracy: The Techtonic Shift.*[37] Since then, Nobel Laureate Maria Ressa and countless other journalists and political analysts have raised the alarm that technology threatens democracy; there is now broad consensus that AI and social media amplify division and discrimination against marginalized groups. Specifically, *toxic polarization,* which undermines human agency, intergroup relationships and public trust, can reduce a society's ability to respond to complex problems like the climate crisis. Polarization occurs on a spectrum, Schirch explained. "Issue polarization" refers to a normal situation when diverse identity groups in a society disagree on issues but express differences through democratic, nonviolent processes. "Affective polarization," by contrast, occurs when individuals and groups distrust and dehumanize others and turn to violence against other groups and institutions.

Designing Technology to Support Social Cohesion

The UN defines *social cohesion* as "the extent of trust in government and within society and the willingness to participate collectively toward a shared vision of sustainable peace and common development goals." Technology has an important role to play in promoting social cohesion—but no technology is neutral. In 2023 Schirch co-founded the Council on Technology and Social Cohesion, which brings together computer engineers and peacebuilding experts to identify and support prosocial tech designs. "Technology design determines human behavior; computer coding is a form of social engineering," she stated. "Pro-social tech platforms already exist, and we can learn from the design of these platforms to enhance the role of technology in defending democracy, building trust in public institutions, and bridging polarized publics."[38]

New initiatives to bolster and defend democracy, she continued, incorporate both direct and representative democratic institutions. *Citizen assemblies* with demographically accurate mini-publics have helped to generate ideas for climate solutions and constitutions in many countries. In the EU, for example, democratic innovations utilize technology to directly involve citizens in the policymaking process by participating in digital deliberation, interacting with the opinions and ideas of other citizens, and voting to send public signals to policymakers with areas of consensus and emerging policy solutions. In Europe, countries are also defending democracy with a "deliberative wave." *Deliberation* involves people exchanging ideas on shared challenges over time to identify potential solutions.[39]

And innovations in "*computational democracy*" and a new class of technology known as "deliberative technologies" have offered digital tools for supporting public discussion on policy issues, emphasizing citizen participation and collective intelligence. As Schirch explained:

> Deliberative technologies help large groups of people listen at scale, find common ground, and generate creative policy solutions to pressing problems. We know what tech designs support human dignity. Deliberative technologies allow a *large-scale exchange of views* between the public in an *iterative discussion,* allowing participants to evolve in their understanding. Unlike traditional polls or surveys, deliberative technologies enable participants to share their unique perspectives and vote on others' proposals or statements. They incentivize listening across divides, learning from diverse perspectives, and developing creative solutions backed by representative consensus. Participants weigh different options and change their views as they understand complex ideas.[40]

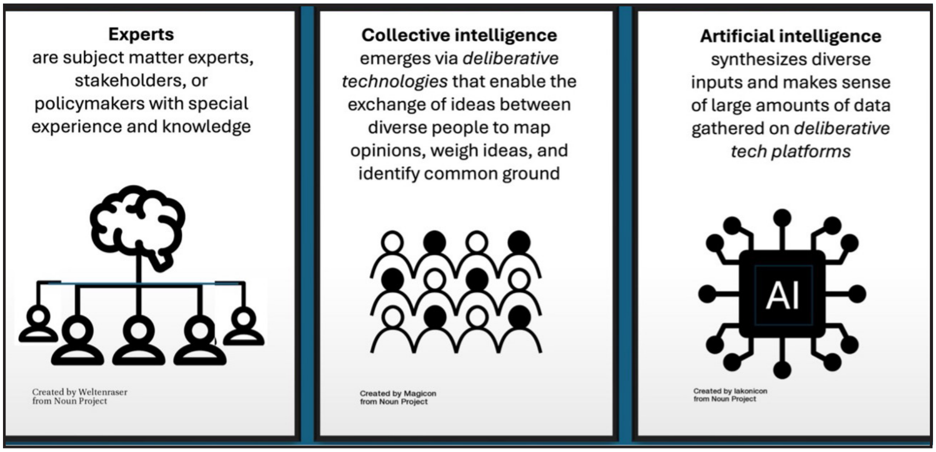
The UN Innovation Unit uses the platform Remesh in Libya and Yemen's peace processes, dubbing it an "AI mediator," Schirch reported. Civil society organizations are using deliberative technologies to identify areas of consensus among key stakeholders, she added. For example, Notre Dame's Afghanistan Program on Peace and Development uses deliberative technology to identify areas of agreement among diverse social and political organizations on issues like girls' education and the role of civil society. Policymakers and researchers typically use surveys and polling to measure public sentiment. In contrast, deliberative technologies enable participants to interact with each other's ideas; the discussion is iterative, taking place over time. In short, digital technologies offer policymakers and civil society groups a vast new landscape of tools for supporting peace processes and fostering civic engagement on various critical issues.[41]

Collective Intelligence Enhanced by Artificial Intelligence

Most policymaking, Schirch stated, relies primarily on the intelligence of elected representatives, official policymakers, small groups of subject matter experts, and corporate stakeholders. A small group may have expertise in some areas but cannot know everything there is to learn or experience related to a public issue. In addition, "group think" among like-minded experts often fails to see unintended impacts or potential solutions. Deliberative technologies, however, harness the power of *collective intelligence,* which refers to groups of people thinking together and sharing information, experiences, and ideas.[42]

Collective problems require collective solutions. Artificial intelligence can synthesize large amounts of public input to categorize themes, identify the pros and cons of a policy proposal, conduct sentiment analysis to determine the emotional tones of a public conversation, and illustrate common ground views and minority views. "This use of AI is distinct from other, more harmful uses," Schirch argued. "Mainstream AI 'learns' from all the data gathered on the internet, a vast sea of information that includes harmful or false content. In deliberative technology, AI learns only from the content generated by participating people. It serves in a distinct way to assist humans in understanding the ideas humans have created in the deliberation."

Deliberative technologies enable hybrid approaches involving experts, deliberative technology, and AI to synthesize and make sense of large amounts of information, benefitting from the strengths of each approach. On some deliberative technology platforms, AI moderates and facilitates the discussion to keep a focus on the agenda. AI synthesizes participant-generated content on some platforms to map the opinion space to show pros and cons, common ground, and minority views. The diagram below illustrates the three types of expert or specialist intelligence, collective intelligence, and AI harnessed by deliberative technologies.



The Future of Deliberative Technologies

While other leading universities are building proprietary deliberative technologies, Schirch reported, the Keough School is leading an initiative in collaboration with Notre Dame's Lucy Family Institute for Data and Society to compare and contrast different types of deliberative technologies and their roles in democracy, human dignity, and peace processes. "Assisted by Notre Dame students, we will compare and learn from the use of deliberative technologies in 15 case studies to track and understand how groups use deliberative technologies in diverse contexts through a participatory and co-productive research process," she explained. The team's research methodologies include pre-and post-surveys, interviews, and measuring context-specific variables with existing indices measuring social cohesion. The research will explore six broad questions:

1. Instrumental Policy Impact: Under what conditions will government policymakers respond to public consensus identified by deliberative technologies? What variables influence whether such public input translates to actual policy? Are there specific policy areas that should be given priority from the perspective of integral human development? Can we define metrics to provide evidence on the contribution of deliberative technologies to integral human development? Do deliberative technologies bring decision-making closer to citizens' concerns?

2. Intrinsic Value of Civic Agency: Giving people a voice in fundamental integral human development processes (such as poverty mitigation and health or education inequity) restores the dignity of the persons affected by these challenges. How can deliberative technologies contribute to civic agency?

3. Socio-technical Processes and Responsible AI: What are the ethical frameworks and decision points in designing socio-technical processes that pair AI-enhanced deliberative technologies with offline dialogue, negotiation, and governance by the institutions or groups using it? Are deliberative technologies aligned with responsible AI practices regarding fairness, robustness, transparency, privacy, and safety?

4. Evolution of Democratic Innovations: What are the opportunities and obstacles to fostering a more systematic approach to citizen deliberation and inclusion in political and policymaking processes using deliberative technologies? How could deliberative technologies support future proto-parliaments composed of enlightened citizens or mini-publics, advising and potentially gaining more authority in the future to enforce their decisions to traditional political democratic institutions?

5. Comparative Research: What are the comparative characteristics, designs, benefits, and drawbacks of different deliberative technologies?

6. Contextual Research: What considerations determine which type of deliberative technology to deploy in a given context? Do different deliberative technologies work better or worse on various kinds of problems or in other political and cultural contexts?

The research of Professor **Caroline Hughes** focuses on political change in six countries of South East Asia—Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Indonesia and East Timor. In the early 1990s, she explained in her presentation, the region was seen as poised for peace, prosperity and liberal democracy, thanks to a series of promising events: the end of military rule in the Philippines (1986), democratic mobilization against a coup attempt in Thailand (1991), a peace accord in Cambodia (1991), the fall of Suharto, the longtime authoritarian ruler of Indonesia (1998) and the early signs of democratization in Myanmar (2010). Even in one-party Vietnam, civic space was expanding. "Importantly, those three goods—peace, prosperity and liberal democracy—were regarded as mutually reinforcing." Today, however, the situation looks different, she said.

In economic terms, Hughes continued, SE Asia continues to be trumpeted as a developmental success story. Growth rates in this region have been extraordinary for most of the past quarter century, and the number of people at or below the poverty level measured by income has been reduced significantly—although the pandemic caused significant reversals.[43] Warfare is also less widespread than in the past. In the 1960s and 1970s, SE Asia was the epicenter of global conflicts, with appalling death tolls—1-2 million murdered in Indonesia between 1965 and 1967; 3 million Vietnamese dead in the Vietnam War and 2 million dead in Cambodia under the Pol Pot regime; and, 25 percent of the Timorese population killed during the Indonesian occupation. In 2024, by contrast, Myanmar is the only country in SE Asia experiencing a major armed conflict, although low-intensity conflicts continue in particular regions of Indonesia and the Philippines.[44]

But other trends are discouraging. Over the past decade, corruption has grown in Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia and Indonesia.[45] Income inequality is entrenched across the region, Hughes reported, with the gap between rich and poor widening in Vietnam, Cambodia and Indonesia over the past ten years.[46] Moreover, the "everyday violence" associated with localized conflicts over land and resources remains prevalent; a focus of Hughes' research is the ways that poor people experience these conflicts.

In 2017, a major comparative research study identified SEAsia as "the world's hotspot" for land conflict, since the region has the world's most intractable and most violent land disputes, largely driven by the displacement of farming communities to make way for infrastructure, plantation or real estate developments.[47] Between 2012 and 2021, the Philippines, Indonesia, Cambodia, Myanmar and Thailand ranked among the top twenty countries in the world for the killing of environmental activists.[48]

Throughout the region authoritarian leaders and regimes have weakened civil society, and the military has reasserted dominance in political and economic life. The Thai military, for example, has reasserted its political role following two coups in 2008 and 2014, and now sets the rules of political competition in Thailand. The Myanmar military is back in power following a coup in 2021, and is brutally suppressing a rebel insurgency in which 50,000 people have been killed. Cambodia outlawed its major opposition party in 2018, arrested its leaders and cracked down on dissent; the Cambodian military has spent much of three decades since the end of the civil war embarked upon a massive land-grabbing spree. Almost 40 years after the end of martial law in the Philippines, a Marcos is back in power there, and his predecessor, Rodrigo Duterte, is under investigation by the International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity, relating to a "war on drugs" which featured more than 6,000 extrajudicial killings by security forces over a five-year period. A Suharto-era military general linked to torture and disappearances in the 1990s was recently elected president of Indonesia, following a set of controversial decisions over electoral procedure approved by a partisan Constitutional Court. Civic space in Vietnam has shrunk, as a series of judicial measures has been used to jail civil society leaders on charges ranging from "abusing democratic freedoms" to tax evasion. Laos has recently seen a spate of extrajudicial killings in the lead-up to taking the chair of the Association of South East Asian Nations.[49]

What went wrong, Hughes asked, and what should we learn from this apparent squandering of opportunity?

In studying political change in SE Asia, Professor Hughes adopts Harold Laski's 1950 definition of politics as the study of "who gets what, when and how." As a political economist, she pays particular attention to material resources in this regard, drawing on a critical political economy approach associated with the Murdoch School in Australia, which views capitalist economic relations, including the process of development, as essentially conflictual, unstable, and actively contested by socio-economic groups. "In line with this approach," she explained, "I view political institutions, including national-level state institutions and supranational multilateral organizations, as attempting to manage these conflicts in the interests of capital over the long term." They do so, she added, through a mixture of coercion – violence, imprisonment, threat – and the manufacture of consent through ideological production and institutional devices such as electoral competition.

Hughes explores political change in the region through analysis of three types of intertwined and mutually constitutive transitions, which are contextually specific, contingent, and contested by groups of actors at different levels. They map onto the triad of peace, prosperity and democracy that was heralded in the early post-Cold War period as the key to human flourishing.

The transition *from war to peace*, she said, can be broadly conceptualized as "a consolidation of a monopoly of violence in the hands of the state and a demilitarization of politics." This type of negative peace focuses on limiting and circumscribing direct violence, rather than on the achievement of social justice (or "positive peace," which is impeded by various forms of structural violence). The complex transition *from authoritarianism or military rule to democracy* implies a shift in the mix of tactics of coercion and consent used to maintain control, with specific types of means for eliciting consent via political institutions playing a more prominent role.

The third transition is economic, *from locally oriented subsistence agriculture and modes of production to globally integrated service and manufacturing complexes*. During the era of neoliberal globalization, Hughes explained, economic transformation has also involved a transition *from strategies of state-led economic development*, in which national elites routinely organize, or intervene in, economic activity, *to a market-led neoliberal mode of development*. The latter imposes significant constraints on unilateral economic action by national elites vis-à-vis global capital: it essentially rules out, for example, imposition of tariffs, high tax rates or nationalization of foreign-owned plants. However, it by no means rules out collaborations in the economic sphere between national and supra-national actors to capture profits at the expense of poor and/or politically weak populations.

> At stake across these three transitions is the question of whose peace will emerge at the end of warfare or following authoritarian rule. Will a new order emerge that is organized around the promotion of stability in the service of capital by extracting and exploiting locally valued social, cultural and economic resources for the enrichment of a national or global elite, and inflicting structural violence on the poor? Or will there be opportunities for building a just peace that offers democratic control over political power and economic resources to poor and marginalized populations?

Over the past 25 years, the pattern of political change that has emerged in the region more closely resembles the former, elitist end of the spectrum, than the latter, democratic option. Hughes' research suggests that the two main reasons for this trend are the legacies of extreme violence that persist in the region (including the murder of dissidents and local leaders), which erodes capacities for mobilizing politically,[50] and the pattern of economic development, which prioritizes rapid integration into the global economy by luring foreign direct investment through easy terms and lax regulation.

> Across SE Asia, the growth miracle has inordinately benefited networks of elite families who collaborate with military actors and international investors to dominate politics and monopolize natural resources, land, infrastructure and lucrative contracts, at the expense of the poor. . .This has entailed asset stripping of natural and common resources, and rampant land speculation. Although there is variation across countries, the regional effect is that rural populations have been forced to uproot and seek work in factories operating by and large on the lower rungs of global value chains in cities or special economic zones, a process which disrupts families, communities and society, resembling patterns of development seen in Thailand and Indonesia a generation earlier.

This type of manufacturing-driven, export-led growth—the so-called "Asian miracle"—has left deep social and political scars. Over 25 years of surveying poor people in SE Asia, Hughes has learned that "many have experienced this transformation as onerous." The jobs in these sectors are frequently precarious and informal. In contexts where community-based social support networks have been severely disrupted by displacement, and states have been slow to invest in social protection, workers struggle and are vulnerable to severe forms of exploitation and to periodic shocks. The Global Financial Crisis of 2007-8, and the Covid-19 pandemic dealt devastating blows to SE Asian countries, as export orders dried up and millions lost jobs.[51]

How have international development actors responded to this state of affairs?

High rates of economic growth have encouraged the portrayal of SE Asia as a success story, contrasted with the "left behind" countries of Sub-Saharan Africa and the "middle-income trap" economies in the MENA region. "The fact that the widespread insurgencies of the Cold War era have largely subsided in SE Asia, even while new kinds of political movements threatened to overwhelm governments in Africa and the Middle East in the 2010s, suggested that SE Asia's development miracle had solved its violence problem," Hughes writes. Her research suggests a different framing of the situation, however. In her view, militarization and violent authoritarian repression of dissent in the context of a weak civil society have led to the silencing of critical voices, thereby allowing an extractive and exploitative approach to development "to be passed off as a miracle."

International development actors, such as the IMF, World Bank and UN system, contributed to this false narrative, Hughes argues, through advocating consistently for the development of state institutions and development policies that prioritized global integration and led to the loss of democratic control over resources and further immiseration of the poor.[52] Furthermore, this model has been promoted by international development agencies as an exemplar for the rest of the world, in line with a conception of peace that is focused primarily on stability for capital.[53]

Accordingly, Hughes' current project examines the way that conceptions of peace have changed in the discursive and conceptual frameworks used by international development agencies over the past thirty years. The first stage of this project focuses on the World Bank. Using text mining techniques alongside qualitative analysis, Hughes and her Ph.D. student Ali Altiok, have analyzed more than 16,000 World Bank documents that relate to violence produced from the late 1990s to the present. Over this time, clear shifts in language and concepts can be discerned, with three key moments of particular interest. From 1998 to 2003, the World Bank coined and promoted its "greed thesis," also known as the Collier-Hoeffler Model, which focused on producing statistical analysis to suggest that "grievances" did not explain violence as powerfully as greed.[54] Detaching violence from ideas of justice or grievance, the greed thesis reframed it as the result of opportunities awarded to conflict entrepreneurs who mobilized and armed poor young men.

The Collier-Hoeffler Model was extensively criticized in the contemporary scholarly literature, in terms of the statistical methods used, the theoretical and conceptual assumptions underpinning the methods, and the conclusions drawn from the analysis. "However, a barrage of publications and policy reports from the World Bank continued to deploy the model unproblematically," Hughes said. "This effort largely succeeded, I contend, in decoupling peace and justice in global thinking about peace and replacing this with a conceptual link between peace and prosperity."

As the War on Terror began to unfold in the early 2000s, this link between peace and prosperity became cemented, in a second key moment, into the idea of the "security-development nexus." This posed "an unproblematic symbiosis between peace, conceptualized as order and stability, and development, understood in terms of mainstream models promoted by international development organizations, and in relation to which SE Asia is regarded as exemplary."

Following the Global Financial Crisis, the Arab Spring, and the expansion of ISIS, violence began to be portrayed as endemic rather than exceptional, or as resulting from specific failures by state institutions, Hughes continued. In this framing, violence is understood as routinely promoted by transnational networks of self-interested conflict entrepreneurs, prominently including organized crime, and ready to bubble to the surface at any time, particularly where "stressors," such as mass unemployment or climate change, create "perceptions of grievance" among the population.[55]

This reconceptualization is important in three ways, Hughes explained. First, it shifts the framing of the problem onto specific actors – armed groups, conflict entrepreneurs, and criminals – conceived of as outliers and/or outsiders with respect to politics and society. Second, rather than tackling "stressors" head on, policy attention is diverted to the promotion of resilience amongst the wider population to the message of grievance promoted by these outlier individuals. Third, this framing reconceptualizes peace, which is now regarded as the sum of individual capabilities rather than as a social issue, obviating the need to pay attention to issues of social dislocation and justice in the context of socio-economic change. It regards peacebuilding as improving individual capabilities to withstand structural violence and adverse structural change in a context where social justice concerns are regarded as irrelevant rather than tackling structural issues directly to promote a more just and equitable national or global order.

> As such, the World Bank's rhetoric on peace over the period from 1997 to 2020 was highly reactionary, focused primarily on maintaining the neoliberal development paradigm and promoting security for capital by erasing the question of social justice from global governance thinking. In adopting this approach, the international development industry aligned with forces of global and national capital to promote approaches to development that neglected qualitative dimensions of human dignity. Transforming states in the SE Asian region emerging from authoritarianism and warfare to police and protect this model of development in the 1980s and 1990s have been incapable of sustaining their own democratic legitimacy, and have drifted back to oppressive authoritarian rule.

What conclusions can be drawn from this? Hughes' research follows a critical agenda, and is primarily concerned with explaining how particular problems have been framed, how policies have been identified and implemented, and whose agenda they have served. Rather than providing recommendations of specific remedies, Hughes draws three warnings, she said, from her analysis of the SE Asian experience. First, she warns against the easy conflation of peace with development and/or prosperity—a conceptualization that has prevailed in the first two decades of this century.

> "Development," "economic growth," "prosperity" and even "poverty reduction" are contested terms and conflictual processes. Metric-based evaluations of their impact are gamed by national governments and international organizations alike and are inadequate to capture the full human experience of these societal transformations. I contend that a social justice/social dislocation framework is better adapted to deliver such an understanding; however, mainstream global governance institutions have worked for 30 years to marginalize such frameworks from the mainstream inquiry. There is an urgent need to revive and apply theories of social justice in order to meet the challenges of structural change that face us, and that applies in Europe and the US as well as in SE Asia.

Hughes offers a second warning: neoliberal processes of state-building, which have focused primarily on security for capital, have been notably effective at promoting social dislocation, and notably bad at promoting social justice. To some extent the violence of the past paved the way for this, by disempowering local civil society actors and enhancing military regimes. But the lessons may be more widely pertinent, she claimed: SE Asia's experience suggests that where democracy focuses solely on empty electoral choices without significant democratization of power over economic resources, which are then carved up between elite players at the expense of the poor, democratic institutions are hard to sustain.

Finally, Hughes concluded, "scholars need to pay careful attention to how apparently uncontroversial, or even radical, ideas such as peacebuilding and democratization can be co-opted by institutions or actors into political or policy discourse as a means to uphold and/or disguise unequal and oppressive relations of power." It is important, therefore, "to develop methods of critical scrutiny to reveal the discursive structures that underpin policy deliberations, to understand how concepts are incorporated into different ideological models, and how such incorporation potentially transforms their meaning." This kind of critical research is sometimes considered overly theoretical and irrelevant to the pressing questions that policy makers face, she acknowledged. "But actions cannot be divorced from words, and if we don't understand the implications of our words, we cannot predict the effects of our actions either."

SE Asia is hardly an outlier in the struggle to prioritize peace with justice over versions of "development" that stack the deck against the poor.

As indicated in the discussion above, Keough School peace researchers cover the range of interconnected forms of violence, Traumas inflicted by violence are among the deleterious long-term consequences of war; accordingly, trauma healing is a central feature of strategic peacebuilding. In her conference paper and presentation **Laura Miller-Graff**, Professor of Psychology and Peace Studies, described her practice and research on the development, adaptation, and evaluation of psychological interventions for individuals who have experienced chronic forms of violence. Given that violence often permeates multiple layers of the social ecology, she is particularly interested in "interventions that address the complex realities of multisystem and intergenerational patterns of risk and resilience." Spanning local and global contexts, her core research centers on interventions for intimate partner violence (IPV) and on psychosocial support for individuals and families living in conflict-affected settings.

As a translational clinical scientist, Miller-Graff conducts theoretically- and empirically-driven research into applied interventions, which are then evaluated to provide an understanding of how professionals should (or should not) disseminate those forms of care to the broader public. How, she asks, do we care for individuals with an attentiveness to the systems and structures of societies trapped in war or striving to maintain peace amid conflict? How do we create systemic and structural change to enhance the wellbeing and care of children and families? How do we work reflexively across systems to ensure that these forms of care are at once compelling for policymakers and grounded in and relevant to the diverse microcosms of individual experience?

To address these questions, Miller-Graff's work has unfolded iteratively over time, moving from basic research to pilot work to large-scale RCT evaluations. She employs community-engaged approaches to data collection that integrate participant, community, and key stakeholder feedback at each phase of research design.

One of the most beneficial aspects of working in an interdisciplinary setting, she commented, is gaining a deeper appreciation of how we approach questions related to systems of violence across disciplines. Systems of violence work together in overt and covert ways to undermine both individual human dignity and prospects for a lasting, just peace. "Each of us," she said, "brings a different part to the puzzle in terms of understanding and unraveling these systems. For my part, the starting point of much of my translational work is understanding how intersecting forms of violence affect human development and social microsystems, including families within and across generations."

Providing psychological care for individuals who have experienced violence advances peace when mental health care becomes a part of a holistic, system-wide approach to peacebuilding. The damage caused by violence is systemic, social, and deeply felt at the individual level—so, too, must be the restorative, recuperative responses to the violence:

> The practice of mental health care – at its best – is community-engaged, and aims to support a number of structures and processes that strengthen peacebuilding. Framed carefully, psychological support is an exercise in solidarity, accompaniment, mutual aid, and community care. It underscores that our most powerful resource is the goodness in each other, our authentic relationships, and the ways in which sustaining these in the face of violence actively subverts what such violence often seeks to achieve.

Much of Professor Miller-Graff's work focuses on the period around pregnancy and postpartum as a critical developmental juncture for understanding the intergenerational effects of violence. Across the perinatal period researchers observe a wide range of adverse effects of violence on women and children. Women with a recent history of IPV experience significant difficulties with mental health across the perinatal period, for example,[56] and they are more likely to use substances,[57] experience sleep difficulties,[58] and stop breastfeeding within the first six weeks postpartum.[59] Prenatal IPV is also associated with more negative and less positive infant emotionality[60] and with more behavior problems in toddlerhood.[61]

But such violence, Miller-Graff emphasized, does not occur in a vacuum. In the US, we know that structural violence and intersecting experiences of poverty and housing instability compound and complicate women's ability to seek safety. "In addition, the normalization of violence against women – in the US and around the world – continues to be a problem, with some countries back-tracking on legislation to support women," she added. Abundant research demonstrates the "double-edged" sword of systems which should be supportive but in fact are not – via laws that promote men's unilateral power in family systems, religious communities that elevate the "sin" of divorce above the dignity of women, and a lack of attentiveness and willingness to exert formal and informal social controls over violence in our communities. Though encounters with such larger forces can engender a sense of despair, it is important to recognize the systems of peace that actively combat these forces, such as underground shelter systems that support women in heroic ways and peer counselors who dedicate their lives – with little material reward – to the support of women.

Recognizing not just the needs of women but the complex systems of violence and peace that they inhabit is critical for developing relevant care, Miller-Graff explained. Her team's basic research on perinatal IPV and mixed-methods work gathering perspectives of pregnant, IPV-exposed women and community service providers[62] formed the foundation for the development of the Pregnant Moms' Empowerment Program (PMEP), a NIH-funded initiative adapted from a program for IPV-exposed mothers of older children.[63] Theoretically driven and rooted in the empirical evidence on women's specific developmental needs in the perinatal period, the PMEP seeks to fill a major gap in the evidence basis for pregnant, IPV-exposed women.[64] A multi-site pilot study of the PMEP demonstrated evidence of success in reducing women's IPV re-victimization and in improving symptoms of depression out to one year postpartum,[65] while demonstrating positive effects on maternal parenting confidence, developmentally appropriate expectations of children, and observed maternal sensitive responding.[66] Recent work examining the effectiveness of PMEP 3-5 years later has shown that the effects on IPV reduction and mental health have been sustained, with additional observed benefits for children's behavior.[67] One of the most powerful components of this program," Miller-Graff noted, "is its group-based format." Rather than focus on finding a "right answer" to the problem of violence, the groups seek to provide a space in which women can wrestle with the complexity of the intersecting systems of violence in their lives.

> When I teach IPV in class, I often tell my students that from the "outside," IPV seems simple: If your partner is abusive, leave them. But it's not. If you're a mother with children, dependent on your spouse economically, and they hit you one time, do you leave? What about two times? Ten? What if the choice is between staying with them and being homeless? What if you have to leave everyone you know to stay safe – your family, friends, your job? It's not at all obvious. What we see at work in the process of our program is women wrestling with these complex realities – intersecting systems of violence – honoring that reality, and together finding pathways of hope and of change.

A problem with global scope, IPV unfolds in multiple social, cultural and political contexts, each with its own unique constellation of challenges and possibilities, Miller-Graff explained. "As we move toward dissemination, we have worked extensively to recognize shared and unique features of IPV across contexts, in order to adapt the program to effectively meet the needs of diverse populations and the unique systems and structures that surround IPV across contexts, including in Lima, Peru; across numerous states of Mexico, and most recently, considering how to adapt the program for South Asian immigrant women living in the US."[68]

In addition to her research and clinical practice on IPV, Miller-Graff works with community agencies and NGOs around the world on the development and evaluation of intervention programs designed to support individuals living in conflict-affected settings. One of her long-term projects is set in Palestine. Conducted in collaboration with Dr. Mark Cummings, the Palestinian Counseling Center, and Catholic Relief Services, the project developed and evaluated a family-based program for communication and coping, which was piloted in both the West Bank and Gaza (2015-2019).

The intervention was rooted in a comprehensive review of the research evidence in the region,[69] a consideration of theoretical models and broader evidence of intervention effectiveness and gaps in conflict-affected settings and in Palestine, along with community and provider feedback on service needs, gaps, and preferences. The pilot data, which showed promising evidence of effectiveness were used to support a large-scale RCT of the program, which is now underway.

Here again, Miller-Graff underscored the critical relevance of nesting the psychological experience of violence in the specific systems and structures in which it occurs. The priorities of the program, she explained, came out of a long series of discussions with the partners in Palestine, who wanted to develop systems of care that responded to the violence of the occupation by focusing on ways to support family relationships in the context of chronic threats to youth and their harmful effects on family systems. “The central framing of family lifted up not only the communal and intergenerational realities of the occupation, but also recognized the family unit as a key bastion of deep strength, a treasure that can be tended in the face of unspeakable harm.”

The participation of families – and particularly fathers – in care was not common, however, which became the subject of extended discussion and formation “among our Palestinian colleagues and families.” Community-based participatory methods were vital: Whereas the initial pilot group had no participating fathers, the pilot in Gaza saw high levels of participation, and fathers have continued to be successfully engaged in the larger trial. “The critical importance of community engagement and iterative development and feedback is clear,” she said. The larger program launched in mid-September 2023 – just 2-3 weeks before the Gaza war. Even before the war, hundreds of families had registered for participation in the program in Gaza. It was necessary to pause all activities in Gaza, but after a brief hiatus, the team’s work in the West Bank continued.

“As I continue to work at the intersection of psychology and peace studies,” Miller-Graff concluded, “I know that a central focus on the intersecting roles of structures and systems is particularly critical for our mission as a school.” [70]

> Taking seriously the critical inquiry of a range of scholarship on a central theme produces a whole far greater than the sum of its parts. We cannot do this alone; we must see ourselves as part of the broader systems of peace and proceed together to enhance human dignity and a sustainable just peace.

Three invited interlocutors offered responses to the various papers and presentations on violence, peace and IHD.

Responding to the papers and presentations by professors Hughes and Miller-Graff, **Susan Allen** expressed appreciation for the layered perspectives of the two papers taken together, one a regional sociopolitical and economic perspective on development (in SE Asia) and one on individual and local-level violence. These lenses give us a vision of what we know—and, also, what we don’t know about violence and peace. “Your academic souls come through in these papers,” Allen commented, which raises them above mere analysis to include the passion for justice and peace at the heart of this work.

Professor Allen then posed three main questions. First, what is required of an "engaged scholarship"? From the perspective of a practitioner-scholar, Allen suggested that the sequence "from theory to practice" and "from evidence to action" could be reversed; that is, evidence and theory could arise from sustained prior engagement with people living in the setting, on the ground, as it were. Allen's long engagement with peace processes in the South Caucasus community underscored the value of reflective practice as central to engaged research. How can the means and ends of research be connected in order to affect real-world outcomes for the common good, development and peace? Second and related, can our work benefit from studying what people are doing—both those suffering from violence and poverty, and those individuals and communities engaging in practice to counter IPV, say, or other human rights violations at a different scale?

Finally, Allen asked whether the concept of a "liberal peace" is still relevant for SE Asia and other contexts where illiberal regimes are creating systems by which elites benefit while all others pay and fall behind. Is it fruitful to draw comparisons and contrasts between liberal and illiberal approaches? The question could be adapted to personal experience on the individual level —Miller Graff speaks of a middle way, Allen noted, between overengineered systems and comprehensive theories of psychosocial therapy on the one hand, and care tailored to each individual on the other. What do we know about these options and their consequences—and what do we not know? What gaps are there? And how best to identify questions that can close these gaps?

Allen concluded her opening remarks with an appreciation of the person-centered approach taken by Hughes and Miller-Graff in their respective research and writing projects; no rigor is lost by infusing IHD values into the work, she said, and much is gained.

Miller-Graff responded to Allen's "what don't we know?" question by indicating that we know very little about the effectiveness of psychological care for children under the age of six. This is a huge gap, in that millions of children in this age range are affected by violence and live with it daily. Another major gap, Miller-Graff said: we used to think that treatments and programs that are good for the community are also good for the individual, and vice-versa, but now evidence is emerging that this is not the case, that interventions designed with community well-being in mind may end up being harmful to individuals at risk. So, some community-based programs designed to promote community social cohesion, for example, are associated with individual levels of harm. (e.g., increased depression). This is a significant tension: how do we make sure that our community-level programs do not have significant negative side effects at the individual level.

In terms of moving from action to evidence, Miller-Graff indicated that this is very much part of the approach she and her team take, by building multiple-method projects designed to provide multiple information pathways for the maximum number of people. "This approach," she added, "allows us to tap into many different perspectives and knowledge bases." Miller-Graff provided the example of monitoring the health of pregnant women subject to partner violence. At every stage, she explained, "we collected information from participating women, from the community and from the therapists and program managers—importantly, we found that the women often evaluated the content of the programs differently than the therapists and other professional care-givers did, which allowed us to make an important adjustment to the content. Integrating these multiple perspectives helps us improve care and build more evidence and 'theory.'"

Hughes took up Allen's question about the so-called "liberal peace"—a concept, Hughes said, that has been discredited by the experience of the ordinary citizens in most countries of SE Asia. "This is not peace," she noted. It is the prevalence of a combination of structural violence and oppressive systems that exclude people from access to land and subject them to low levels of everyday direct violence—beatings by police, arrests, assassinations, all designed to keep people in line."

On the question of engaged scholarship "action to evidence," Hughes explained that her fieldwork is conducted by consulting local researchers and organizations. In Cambodia and East Timor, there are plenty of research outfits, she said, allowing her to work through local organizations. In Cambodia the field of peace studies in the academy is active, which empowers local researchers to control their own narratives, rather than having the experiences of Cambodians filtered through British and Swedish interpretive lenses. Hughes herself gives occasional lectures on accountability to the Royal Administration College, which trains Cambodian civil servants on how to introduce projects for progressive social change, but she gains more from listening to them talk together about their problems—e.g., how to deal with a corrupt boss? — and from helping create a safe space for their interaction.

Hal Culbertson asked about the relevance of approaches informed by specific values such as IHD on how we conduct research and intervene in situations. Miller-Graff's work, he noted, is suffused with values associated with IHD and Catholic social teaching, including the principle of subsidiarity and the importance of working at the local, person-to-person level with the most vulnerable. But Hughes' story, by contrast, is partly about interacting with the agencies of the international community, which do not ordinarily consider "social justice" values "social justice" or worry as much about a "fake peace." It also seems easier to control smaller projects, that is, to inform them with specific value propositions. In short, Culbertson asked, "How do you preserve values as you scale up?"

Miller-Graff responded that it is harder to preserve values in the larger donor-driven organizations, which act responsibly but are also paralyzed by a "fear of failure" and take a very "safe," conventional approach as a result—this gets in the way of consistently pursuing IHD-related outcomes, especially those considered hard to measure or concepts that are more abstract. The fear of failure also inhibits such agencies and organizations from tracking data that would reveal practices and programs that failed or even did harm, inadvertently.

Hughes followed on this point by lamenting the ways in which the discursive power of international development agencies leads the local communities they serve to internalize their logic and language, even when this does not reflect and may even undermine local values and sensibilities. The resulting analysis of the situation is like a mirror in which the development agencies see their own reflection. We need to do a better job, Hughes concluded, in analyzing these power dynamics and the distortions they introduce, and in helping local researchers and citizens to reframe questions to fit their own needs.

During the discussion that followed, Keough School Advisory Council member **Julie Kramer** asked about the norms and principles by which the international development community is or should be governed in making their interventions. (She used the analogy of the well-known and time-tested conditions for waging a just war.) Are there protocols in place, she asked, requiring that local people be included in deliberations and decisionmaking, for example?

The history of development has seen waves of paradigms and protocols, Hughes replied, but these are on a macro-level and have a "rise-and-fall" pattern. The attempt by the World Bank and the IMF to impose structural adjustments on the national budgets of loan-recipient countries is a case in point. For a time, the World Bank reinvented itself in the face of criticism of this and other models it had adopted. That said, Hughes continued, the power holders and brokers in the World Bank and other international organizations of this type, look after their own interests and are reluctant to cede control. A familiar mantra is: "There is no alternative to states becoming integrated into the global economy," which, of course, is driven by capitalist elites. Under this global system, gross injustices are hardly eliminated, she added, but they are softened a bit. "If I am going to be kicked off my land to make way for an investor," she quipped, "I suppose I would rather be evicted by the World Bank, from which I may gain some modest reparation, than by a ruthless State." In short, Escape is difficult, if not impossible, for dependent societies trapped in this system and hostage to its logic."

Manuel Pulgar-Vidal asked how to challenge the tendency of illiberal states emerging from or captive to cyclical conflicts to deny the record of oppressive measures and human rights atrocities (in which some of the current governing officials may have been complicit). In Peru, he noted, we are forbidden to talk about internal conflict and past atrocitie – the opposite of what a responsible truth commission would do. The State would rather cast its critics as "terrorists."

Pulgar-Vidal also asked Miller-Graff about the effect of the pandemic on IPV and other local violence and conflicts.

William Clark returned to the point about infusing normative questions and values into development operations; he has been impressed, he acknowledged, with what he is learning about the Catholic networks and organizations in the attention they give to IHD and associated values. Does that emphasis from the top filter down to state and local level operations—and to what effect? Professor Clark wonders, he said, whether and how individuals who bring this kind of meaning and dedication to their development work are being supported by the larger organization(s) for which they work.

Hughes responded to Pulgar-Vidal's statement about navigating the legacies of conflict. If a country or region endures a period of civil war or mass violence, chances are that the State will assign blame to movements of protest and resistance on behalf of the poor and marginalized—which the state then crushed brutally. It can take generations to recover from such violence. Part of the problem is the lack of effective development or peacebuilding programs to address that reality in its complexity. Compounding the problem is the fact that some State officials engaged in torture or mass murder, but there are reckonings with such crimes. Instead, as Pulgar-Vidal indicated in the case of Peru, the State will often engage directly in suppression of memory, in "denialism," and it is very hard for local *or* international actors seeking accountability to get a hearing or open up space for a new kind of social contract. Educating people about the social legacy of mass violence is therefore of critical importance.

As for the question about the pandemic, Miller-Graff acknowledged that "we learned a lot," including about the interplay across systems. There was little in-person therapy possible during the pandemic, which pushed psychology to think about telehealth and mobile health systems. The question became: How is telehealth making care both more accessible and less accessible, depending on the context? From a policy level it became evident that legal barriers to effective care across contexts—for example, the lack of telehealth regulations, and restrictions of care across borders—are impediments to effective distant care.

In response to Clark's question about working with explicitly normative organizations and especially the Church, Miller-Graff said that her team does work in Peru with Holy Cross and has done qualitative work with them. We have to think of the Church as a mechanism, like other institutions. There is a lot of good that comes from working with the Church, of course. It is a vibrant community that people trust and a source of compassion with a holistic perspective but it is also important to recognize that the Church is made of people, and people are flawed and they can do harm as well as good. In addressing gender-based violence, for example. What does it mean to be a single mother in a Peruvian Catholic context? Is it acceptable to leave an abusive husband? Is it acceptable to get a divorce?

Different people may give women different answers, so we have to navigate the internal complexity of these local interactions, including with faith communities.

Rafat Ansari indicated that clergy have a role to play in therapeutic processes, in part because some of the problems people face are connected, for good and for ill, with religion.

Scott Appleby, mentioning that Hughes leaves open hope that the discourse and practices can change for the better, asked her: In attempting to plant the seeds of change, who do you try to reach and influence? Who is your audience? Hughes responded: "What policy would I recommend and to whom?" I seek to challenge the neo-liberal paradigm, a fundamentally unjust order that has dominated over the last 45 years and whose "miracles" sometimes masked deeply unfair and unjust outcomes. The neo-liberal paradigm or model has been undone, however, by an accumulation of obviously disastrous experiences for those it was supposed to lift up including farmers, the poor, and especially the working class. Now that the problems have come to roost in the US itself, momentum has shifted against the model.

My role as a peace scholar, she continued, is to call attention to the flaws in the model, from a peace and justice perspective so that we take advantage of a new openness to finding an alternative that is more aligned with dignity, peace and IHD.

Appleby also asked Miller-Graff to give an example of a positive intervention that reinforced human dignity and one that undermined an individual's dignity. She responded that one example did both. One proposal for delivering "emergency mental health care" at scale was a practice called debriefing, which entails a one-time session focused on talking through the negative event or trauma close in proximity to the actual event. This seems a logical approach and one that was certainly intended to respond in a supportive way that recognizes the immense gravity of traumatic experiences. But RCTs showed that while this was beneficial for some, in other cases, there were negative effects or no effects, suggesting that this intervention might inhibit normal recovery processes [71] In short, this points to the importance of not assuming that well-intended interventions will necessarily have the intended effects and that considering dignity in the development, process and outcome of programs all need to be considered.

Allen concluded the session by congratulating the Keough School on "its important and influential work, which demonstrates that IHD can be served well by both Notre Dame and non-Notre Dame scholars and practitioners collaborating from different perspectives and disciplines.

Bernardo Venturi responded to the papers by Schirch and Nathan. He praised Nathan's analysis of policy research and call for appreciation of the practical demands of policy research, which must address "immediate needs" and questions in the short run. He liked

Nathan's recommendation to imagine policymakers as our "customers": we must address their stated needs. This is quite unlike the open-ended, theory-driven metric and methods of conventional academic research, Venturi allowed. No sense in IR scholars complaining that they are not listened to by policymakers, when their message is delivered with no regard for the specific circumstances of its hearers. "In my experience," he added, "States and their diplomats and policymakers are not interested in hearing generalizations, however sound, about general patterns and trends; they seek an analysis of specific cases, informed by (not awash in) the details of the research." Only in the service of understanding specific cases, will such comparative patterns and trends be considered relevant.

As for quantitative analysis, Venturi remarked—again, if you approach policymakers as customers, you will figure out how to make the data accessible and relevant to the questions they care about. "Sell it," he urged. "Don't just give the data base— they won't use it—but create a narrative from it, tell a compelling story based on it."

The truth about "norms and values," he continued, is that policymakers can't be bothered by them, especially if they obscure straightforward, unadorned, fact-based analysis. Take the effort to consider norms governing civil war. Policymakers might consider these an unwelcome constraint. "This is not what they paid for," Venturi argued. In their reckoning, innovation trumps norms in most cases; norms are best left for "private consideration."

Turning to Lisa Schirch's paper, Venturi suggested that the key word in finding solutions through technology is *hybridity.* There will not be one solution from this app, say, or from that one. Rather, what will be necessary and called for is a combination and integration of multiple levels and methods. Bernardo said that he seeks greater understanding of new lines of "inclusion and exclusion"—of youth, women, the elderly, etc. Who is excluded from the analysis, whose perspectives and experiences are included? What about minorities? Generational analysis is also relevant; "I have students who are actually quite scared [about the use of these technologies], but perhaps youth in other countries take a different attitude?" There is great professional interest in using these platforms, however, he added. Professor Venturi also asked Schirch to elaborate on her interactions with policymakers interested in this approach.

Finally, he posed an open-ended question about AI. "Technology is not just a tool," he observed. "It is 'tooling' us. It is transforming us." The potency and expansive application of AI is really a new thing; how do we harness it for security, development and so on? Not long ago, he concluded, we thought we could guide it toward good outcomes and avoid bad ones. Now things are more complicated.

In response to Venturi's point about the liberal norms of international mediators being a constraint, Nathan agreed, but argued that they are a necessary constraint. "Do we want the African Union and the United Nations and the European Union to be mediating agreements to end civil wars that exclude women from the process and the outcomes, or that subjugate women?" he asked rhetorically. In attempting to reach an agreement between warring parties, mediators sometimes make compromises, Nathan added, and senior UN or African Union or European officials may turn a blind eye to these compromises, which also compromise the dignity and rights of people without a voice. "But those compromises cannot abrogate the norms of the organization because they are constitutive norms. What defines the African Union? Its norms. What defines the United Nations? Its norms." So, he explained, when these organizations are mediating agreements, they are not concerned solely with making peace (at any cost), but also with democracy, gender equality, respect for the rule of law and human rights—these interrelated constitutive norms and values must not be sacrificed on the altar of compromise.

We see a significant deviation from the norms-based order, Nathan continued, when the mediators are illiberal or anti-liberal. We have seen over the past 10-15 years the rise of the illiberal mediator (e.g., Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Turkey, Russia). These are not impartial mediators; they are set on abrogating liberal norms, in part by patching together elite pacts that may, for a limited time, end fighting but are not in any way transformative of the conditions that led to war in the first place or respectful of human dignity.

Nathan also posed a question to Schirch. Our search for middle ground in situations of conflict and polarization is not in any way antithetical to democracy, he averred, but on some issues—rule of law, right to vote, respect for women, climate change—do we really want to find "common ground" with extremists or reactionaries? What are the limits to common ground? If there is a shift to the right, does that mean that the "middle ground" needs to move to the right?

Schirch responded by mentioning an upcoming workshop at Notre Dame on liberal values and technologies, as well as the socio-technical process of using them. "One doesn't just 'plug in' these tools," she noted. "It's actually just as complicated as designing a mediation process—you have to decide who to include and who to exclude, and what the parameters are. The issues of inclusion and exclusion—to Bernard's point—are intensified with deliberative technologies, which enable larger-scale participation, yes, but often by young people who understand and can manipulate the technology." This advantage can exclude large swaths of stakeholders. How do we have rural women in Afghanistan participate in a national dialogue, for example? Oxfam and other big NGOs have been setting up internet cafés in rural areas trying to address this kind of problem. "The digital access divide around the world is tremendous," she concluded.

Shandana Khan Mohmand agreed with Nathan's comment that policymakers need greater clarity in the way we convey our research—but, she asked, how do we retain the complexity of the situation within the "Give it to me in five-bullet points" format preferred by policy audiences? Mohmand also asked Schirch what the digital deliberative forums are finding, because the literature on depolarization and the effect of additional information is mixed; the additional information may not be working to reduce polarization.

On the question of nuance and complexity, Nathan said that in many contexts, as in recent mediation efforts in Madagascar, they definitely wanted nuance and complexity and case-specific analysis. The other need is for operational guidance. There, too, the UN is very averse to formulaic approaches—e.g., "here are three takeaways about what works, distilled from the 100 country cases we have studied"—because they recognize the uniqueness, complexity and context-specific nature of each case. Rather, he continued, the preference of the UN and other international mediators is for comparative case research, which captures the complexity of each case and draws general findings as possible. The UN is convinced that it is possible to generate general findings that will support the effort to get better at the mediation process, and yet still simultaneously grasp the nettle of complexity for each case.

Mohmand is correct: we don't know much about depolarization, Schirch noted, but depolarization efforts have in one way or another been a part of peacebuilding research. That said, peacebuilding research is a young field, maybe 30 years old, and many peacebuilding processes have been very flawed. We just don't know enough yet about how to de-polarize a conflict. We are a data-poor field; we don't really know what is working and what is not. Harvard, Stamford, MIT and Oxford are all designing deliberative technologies and rolling them out, so we are not replicating that effort at ND but rather trying to understand the impact, what is happening through the use of these digital platforms for peace and development. Under what conditions do deliberative technologies work? We are trying at Keough School /Kroc Institute to amass evidence.

Allen asked about trust. As a facilitator and mediator, Allen said, she is always in a room with other people whom she knows and trusts. But in long-distance, remote deliberations, such person-to-person, face-to-face trust is not easy to come by. How do policymakers come to trust the researcher, and how do we come to trust the technology? "We tend to trust people, not technology," she observed.

Anne Mische, who is interested in public deliberation and democratic politics, pointed to a "consultation explosion" in deliberations conducted on a municipal scale—but these consultations seem disconnected from actual decision making. These mega-consultations can seem to be designed simply to generate buy-in for decision that have already been made by the power-holders in the next room." One facilitator, Mische reported, saw this process as akin to "pulling more feathers with less squawking." How, then, do we know when and whether there is actual discernment and listening to arguments and learning going on, rather than riding a popularity wave? Also, are there institutional links to policymakers where deliberations can have real impact?

In response to Nathan's concern about being pulled to the right by engaging in increasingly right-leaning dialogues, **Mahan Mirza** observed that people on the right might similarly avoid dialogue for fear of having their positions compromised, and he argued that there is no alternative to risking dialogue. The only alternative is entrenchment and further polarization and refusal to engage. The risk of honest mediation and dialogues is the risk of change.

In responding to the papers by Josefina Echavarría Alvarez, Catherine Bolten and Colin Barr, **Juanita Goebertus** drew on her experience as a human rights lawyer, former politician and policymaker in Colombia and, currently, a civil society advocate, to address the question: *How do we bring IHD and human dignity to the center of the conversation on development?* To Goebertus, the clear answer is through upholding the international law of human rights. "Globally we have already agreed, through the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent legal conventions, on this foundation for IHD," she declared. Sadly, she added, this common ground is now being challenged and to some degree eroded by governments of both the left and the right. So, too are mechanisms of accountability like the Inter-American Human Rights system, with Peru and El Salvador threatening to leave the system, as Nicaragua and Venezuela have done, with the US not far behind. Indeed, an increasingly popular, "pragmatic" argument from government officials of the West is that we need to do business with China and therefore must lower the human rights standards to appease the Chinese .

With this background stated and with the papers and discussions of the Keough School conference uppermost in her mind, Goebertus offered ten main ideas on the intersection between rights, peacebuilding and IHD:

1) Security policies and peace policies are not mutually exclusive; they are complementary. Echavarría Alvarez is correct, Goebertus affirmed: you must put in place a process for security, for protecting all the vulnerable parties before trying to negotiate the details of a peace accord. Some risk losing more than others in such a peace process. Peace and security are intertwined.

2) We must characterize conflicts accurately so that language is not manipulated. What issue(s) are we trying to solve via peacebuilding—Structural violence? Systematic oppression? Organized crime? Denialism is indeed real. Is it really useful to label drug gangs as "terrorists"— a term that gives governments cover in committing widespread indiscriminate abuse of human rights? In Ecuador, for example, the decision to characterize the battle against 22 organized crime gangs completely related to narcotrafficking as an "armed conflict" has justified the excessive and indiscriminate use of State force. This is an "over-comprehensive" approach to the use of force, Goebertus argued. We cannot practice effective peacebuilding without a proper characterization and exact language. (Colombia's current president is more interested in negotiating with gangs who were not part of the armed conflict.)

3) Sequence matters. To build a sustainable peace, the parties need to stop killing each other first before any meaningful reforms or reparations can be successfully implemented. Education and healthcare reforms can be truly successful only after the shooting stops. Peace processes must follow a sequence: first, we sign an accord to put an end to the armed conflict, then we decommission weapons, then we reintegrate soldiers and start building long and lasting peace.

4) Do not insist on solving the question of who started the conflict or whose fault it is; the blame game is endless and can stall steps forward. It is always a circular argument. "The historical commission in Colombia said to the twelve constituencies: submit your account of who started this and how it unfolded and we will try to reconcile various narratives. As it turned out, they ended up publishing twelve different narratives, side by side!"

5) Demonstrate early on that you are indeed taking a valued and principled approach to peacebuilding in terms of international law. In Colombia we announced our commitment to investigate, sanction and prosecute perpetrators of violence, prosecuting the crimes either in Colombia or before international courts. We would not avoid that responsibility.

6) Make it clear that war or terrorist violence is not justified by injustices in rural development—in Colombia, for the FARC, this meant the lack of roads, lack of access to water, energy, and economic opportunity. Such oppressive structural conditions must be addressed in any comprehensive peace accord—as Catherine Bolten noted, peacebuilding and development are inextricably linked—but they do not justify a return to armed violence.

7) Focus on those most in need as a result of the war.

8) Public endorsement of the negotiations at some point is crucial. Colombia took a lesson from Ireland's plebiscite on the peace process there (mentioned by Colin Barr), and we lost. Nonetheless it was a crucial step in the longer road to securing and implementing the agreement.

9) Provide security for those living in territories evacuated by combatants. This did not happen when FARC, honoring the accord, withdrew from certain lands, only to leave a vacuum that is lately being filled by new criminal actors. The lack of security and government reach into these areas means that security conditions have started to deteriorate again. Child recruitment, kidnappings and confinements are back with a vengeance. Backsliding is a constant danger, especially as time passes without the implementation of certain peace accord provisions.

10) What does it mean to find common ground with authoritarian populists and those fomenting polarization? This is very difficult, given the lies and misinformation that are spread. “But we must nonetheless continue to insist that all sides strive to find and articulate genuine common ground as a condition for protecting human rights for all,” Goebertus concluded.

During the discussion session, **Manuel Pulgar-Vidal** noted that a peace agreement is only a starting point to ending war and building a sustainable peace; the process goes far beyond that “moment”; we should expect that timeline and prepare for the long haul. How to bring discredited political parties into the process is particularly tricky. In addition to human rights and international law, we could draw on other matters of international consensus as a persuasive and binding force, such as democracy, climate change, etc.

Keough School Advisory Council member **Emily Monaghan** asked what PAM’s overall impact has been, given that it is an important project within Notre Dame’s stated mission to be a force for good in the world. Echavarría Alvarez responded by citing a series of data points tracking PAM’s citations and references in various media, indicating that the project is having positive outcomes for millions of people in Colombia and, more recently, in the Philippines. Barr and Appleby, having traveled recently to Colombia on separate occasions to meet officials, policymakers, media, and ordinary people and were “astonished” by the pervasive and positive reputation of the Kroc Institute and the PAM team and project.

Miguel Loureiro asked Goebertus how her ten ideas or hypotheses could be tested? She replied that her ideas come mostly from her direct experiences with negotiations and peacebuilding in Colombia but that they have some support in existing research and could be part of a future research agenda. We turn to civil society and to academic researchers regularly, she added, to indicate or disprove or nuance such ideas drawn from practices of peacebuilding—and to support our positions in policy debates. To Loureiro’s question about creating consensus around contested but vital issues such as climate change, Goebertus expressed some skepticism, given the deep levels of mistrust and misinformation muddying the waters, though she did indicate that one issue that could gain traction is the need for transparency and accountability, given the widespread concern about corruption in government and the lack of institutional transparency.

Endnotes

[1] John Paul Lederach, *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace* (Oxford University Press, 2005).

[2] Madhav Joshi, J.M. Quinn, & P. Regan . "Annualized implementation data on comprehensive intrastate peace accords, 1989–2012," *Journal of Peace Research*,52, no.4 (2015): 551–562, https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343314567486.

[3] Cécile Mouly, Josefina Echavarria, "A Panoramic View of Factors for Successful Peace Accord Implementation," University of Notre Dame (2022). Report https://doi.org/10.7274/cn69m329v7d.

[4] Juan Manuel Santos, Joe Broderick, and John Kerry, *The Battle for Peace: The Long Road to Ending a War with the World's Oldest Guerrilla Army*, (University Press of Kansas, 2021).

[5] Joshi et al., "Annualized implementation data on comprehensive intrastate peace accords, 1989–2012".

[6] In every annual and special report, there is always a section dedicated to international comparative lessons. Echoing the need for a creative act in conflict transformation, while other experiences might not provide a model to follow, they certainly indicate possible pathways forward and, in the best cases, alternative ways of framing problems and hence devising solutions to crucial questions of peacemaking and peacebuilding.

[7] Julie Turkewitz, "Deep in Colombia, Rebels and Soldiers Fight for the Same Prize: Drugs," *The New York Times*, April 20, 2022, https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/20/world/americas/colombia-comandos-armed-groups.html. A recent citation occurred in this report by the U.N. Council on Human Rights: https://www.hchr.org.co/wp/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Informe-Anual-2022-en-castellano.pdf.

[8] The number of views and downloads for PAM's Colombia products are routinely tracked for grant monitoring and evaluation, hence we could provide further impact metrics on all products if requested.

[9] As in Colombia, this extension of PAM's outreach was made possible thanks to the support of the University of Notre Dame, the State Department and philanthropic foundations.

[10] In the first election for the Northern Ireland Assembly, held in 1998, parties primarily identified with a particular constitutional position (and by implication with a particular community) received 85.6 perecent of the vote. In 2022 that figure was 78.2 percent.

[11] Gibraltar's situation was slightly different, as it is a British Overseas Territory.

[12] Patrick Wintour, "Irish Leader to Campaign in UK for remain vote," *The Guardian*, May,13 2016, https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/may/13/irish-leader-enda-kenny-campaign-uk-remain-vote-eu-referendum.

[13] Siobhan Fenton,"Brexit result: Sinn Fein's Martin McGuiness calls for border poll on united Ireland," *The Independent*, June 25, 2016, https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-northern-ireland-eu-referendum-result-latest-live-border-poll-united-martin-mcguinness-a7099276.html.

[14] https://www.ria.ie/arins/about-arins-analysing-and-researching-ireland-north-and-

south

[15] More of both are in preparation. ARINS will also soon publish its first books through the Royal Irish Academy, specially commissioned from leading Irish public intellectuals on either side of the unification debate.

[16] Held in Dublin, London, and Belfast, these have involved speakers and participants from all corners of Irish political and cultural life, all major political parties, and all communities/traditions. We have also begun to directly support research, including most recently a detailed investigation into the provision of cancer care on both sides of the Irish border. Again, more of both are in the future.

[17] Northern Ireland Act 1998, c. 47, Schedule 1. This formula begged the question of *how* the secretary of state would know the state of public opinion, and it certainly did not provide for any remedy. It was left to private actors to take the initiative and pay the bills. Only a collaboration such as that between ARINS and *The Irish Times*, and buttressed by the financial support of the Keough-Naughton Institute, could possibly fill the gap.

[18] For example, the then Taoiseach, Micheál Martin, proclaimed himself unsurprised with the result, noting that "Opinion polls will never unite Ireland," while the Sinn Féin leader, Mary Lou McDonald insisted that "everything" had to be open for discussion. "Taoiseach 'not surprised' at poll showing low level of support for Irish unity in Northern Ireland," *The Irish Times*, 5 December 2022.

[19] For example, Jennifer Todd, Joanne McEvoy, and John Doyle, "Time for Deliberation, not Decision, on the Shape of a New United Ireland: Evidence from the ARINS Survey Focus Groups," *Irish Studies in International Affairs* 34, no. 2, *Analyzing and Researching Ireland, North and South* (2023).

[20] Laurie Nathan, "The mandate effect: A typology and conceptualization of mediation mandates," *Peace & Change,* 43, no. 3(2018): 318-343.

[21] Laurie Nathan & Joel M. Devonshire, "Don't we have a right to get angry? Integrating emotions into international mediation studies," *International Journal of Conflict Management* 35, no. 1 (2023): 81-103.

[22] Laurie Nathan, "How to manage inter-organizational disputes over mediation in Africa," *Global Governance* 23, no. 2 (2017): 151-162.

[23] Laurie Nathan & Ajay Sethi, "Reducing and managing risk: The dimensions of strong ceasefires in intra-state conflict," *International Studies Review* 25, no. 1 (2023).

[24] Laurie Nathan, "The international peacemaking dilemma: Ousting or including the villains?", *Swiss Political Science Review* 26, no. 4 (2020): 468–486.

[25] Laurie. Nathan & Ajay. Sethi, "Reducing and managing risk: The dimensions of strong ceasefires in intra-state conflict," *International Studies Review* 25, no. 1 (2023), 25(1).

[26] This involvement includes serving as a member of the UN Academic Advisory Council on Mediation in 2012–18 and as a senior mediation adviser to the UN, the African Union, IGAD, the East African Community, the Economic Community of West African States, the EU, the Southern African Development Community and the governments of Germany, Kosovo, South Africa and Switzerland.

[27] Alexander L. George, *Bridging the Gap: Theory and Practice in Foreign Policy* (Washington DC: US Institute of Peace Press, 1993); StephenM. Walt, "The relationship between theory

and policy in International Relations," *Annual Review of Political Science* 8, (2005): 23–48.

[28] Peter Wallensteen and Isak Svensson, "Talking peace: international mediation in armed conflicts," *Journal of Peace Research* 51, no. 2 (2014): 315–27.

[29] Laurie Nathan, "The customer is always right: The policy research arena in international mediation," *International Affairs* 99, no. 3 (2023): 1973-1993.

[30] For example, discussion on the pros and cons of mediation leverage was grounded in William Zartman's ripeness theory. See I.William Zartman, "The timing of peace initiatives: Hurting stalemates and ripe moments," *The Global Review of Ethnopolitics* 1, no. 1(2001): 8–18.

[31] An example of a critical stance can be found in the study of the South Sudan mediation, published by IGAD, which observes that divisions among the IGAD member states severely undermined the effectiveness of the mediation and credibility of the mediator. See Corinne von Burg and David Lanz,, "Lessons for IGAD Mediation Arising from the South Sudan Peace Talks 2013–2015," (2020).

[32] Nathan Caplan, "The two-communities theory and knowledge utilization," American Behavioral Scientist 22, no. 1979: 459–70; WilliamN. Dunn, "The two-communities metaphor and models of knowledge use. An exploratory case survey," *Science Communication* 1, no. 40, (198): 515–36.

[33] Caplan, "The two-communities theory," p. 459.

[34] Dunn, "The two-communities metaphor," p. 516.

[35] Catherine Bolten,. *I Did it to Save My Life: Love and Survival in Sierra Leone* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

[36] Catherine Bolten., *Serious Youth in Sierra Leone: An Ethnography of Performance and Global Connection* (New York: Oxford University Press,2020).

[37] Lisa Schirch, ed, *Social Media Impacts on Conflict and Democracy: The Techtonic Shift* (Sydney: Routledge, 2021).

[38] Lisa Schirch, "The Case for Designing Tech for Social Cohesion: The Limits of Content Moderation and Tech Regulation," Yale Journal of Law and the Humanities 34, 3 no. 3 (2023).

[39] The 2018 *Oxford Handbook on Deliberative Democracy and* the 2020 OECD report "*Innovative Citizen Participation and New Democratic Institutions*" detail how deliberative processes can help to counter threats from increasing polarization and populism.

[40] Government agencies in Taiwan, the UK, Austria, Finland, and elsewhere are using the deliberative platform called Pol.is to gather public input and generate innovative policy options in polarized issues in citizen assemblies, constitutional reform, and referendums. The governments of Iraq, Lebanon, Haiti, and Bolivia use *Remesh* to support public input on critical issues.

[41] Only four other universities are working on this topic of deliberative technologies and democracy, Schirch reported. Stanford University has been developing and testing a proprietary tech platform it calls "Deliberative Polling." Oxford University just began a program to build a deliberative technology platform for European Parliaments called "DeliberAide." MIT funded and is now operationalizing a deliberative technology called "Cortico." Harvard University just bought the deliberative tech platform "Kazm." On some deliberative tech platforms, such as MIT's Cortico, Harvard's Kazm, and Stanford's *Deliberative Polling*, participants have personal, virtual, face-to-face interactions and report a humanizing experience. Some theorize this helps build empathy for people with different beliefs and experiences. On other deliberative tech platforms, such as Pol.is and *Remesh*, participants contribute anonymously with no photo or video indicating their identity. Some

theorize this creates a more equal discussion, focused on the merits of ideas rather than individual identities. Participants can vote on each other's ideas and see how their views relate to each other's views. Participants receive incentives to synthesize and propose consensus. Bridging algorithms show agreement between opinion groups.

[42] Lisa Schirch, *Defending Democracy with Deliberative Technologies*, Keough School Policy Brief Series (Notre Dame, IN: Keough School of Global Affairs, 2024) https://doi.org/10.7274/25338103.

[43] Asian Development Bank, 2022:
Fig 1: Percentage of population in poverty in developing SE Asia, 2000 to 2020. Source: World Bank.

[44] *SIPRI Yearbook 2023: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security* (Oxford University Press, 2023).

[45] Myanmar, Indonesia, Cambodia, and Laos are ranked well below average in global corruption perceptions indexes, and in this respect look more like war-torn states than miracle economies: Cambodia ranks just below Iraq in corruption perceptions, while Myanmar ties with DRC and Lao with Mali Transparency International 2023. "Corruption Perceptions Index," Transparency International,https://www.bing.com/search?q=transparency+international+2023&qs=CT&pq=transparency+international+2023&sc=10-31&cvid=83B6B77A83294496A27B04073296820A&FORM=QBRE&sp=1&lq=0.

[46] Government of Vietnam Statistics Office 2022: https://www.nso.gov.vn/en/homepage/
UNDP 2023: https://www.undp.org/publications/undp-annual-report-2023TMP

[47] Rights and Resources Initiative, From Risk and Conflict to Peace and Prosperity: The Urgency of Securing Community Land Rights in a Turbulent World (Washington, DC: Rights and Resources Initiative, 2017).

[48] Global Witness, *Annual report 2022: Rising to the challenge of a world in crisis* (2023). https://globalwitness.org/en/about-us/annual-reports/annual-report-2022-rising-to-the-challenge-of-a-world-in-crisis/.

[49] (Buchanan 2023).

[50] The intensity of Cold War era violence caused "a disorganization" of civil society across the region (Heryanto and Hadiz 2005). Although disruptive protest movements and political parties have emerged periodically since the Cold War, they have faced difficulties in securing and

entrenching redistribution of material resources and recognition of rights. States have employed a variety of tactics to maintain this state of affairs, ranging from outright violence, including periodic crackdowns and political assassinations; the use of partisan courts to impose harsh legal sanctions on regime opponents; and populist campaigns organized around patronage ties bolstered by corrupt money, and a large part of my research has focused on documenting these tactics.

[51]

Southeast Asia		
Brunei Darussalam	...	34.1
Cambodia	...	6.2
Indonesia	...	27.8
Lao People's Democratic Republic	...	12.1
Malaysia	...	27.3
Myanmar	...	6.3
Philippines	47.1	36.7
Singapore	...	100.0
Thailand	...	68.0
Timor-Leste	...	30.6
Viet Nam	37.9	38.8

Fig 3: Progress towards SDG Target 1.3 in South East Asia: Percentage of the population covered by at least one form of social protection, 2016 and 2020. Source: Asian Development Bank.

[52] Garry Rodan and Caroline Hughes, *The Politics of Accountability in Southeast Asia* (Google Books, 2014).

[53] Elliot Dolan-Evans, "Making War Safe for Capitalism," *Security Dialogue* 53, no. 6 (2022): 531-549.

[54] Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "On Economic Causes of Civil War," in *Oxford Economic Papers* 50 (1998):563-573.

[55] See, for example, World Bank Annual Report 2018 https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/630671538158537244/the-world-bank-annual-report-2018 and the UNDP Annual Report 2018: https://www.undp.org/publications/undp-annual-report-2018

[56] Julia L.Paulson, Laura E. Miller-Graff, Caroline R. Scheid, Lacy E. Jamison, Kathryn H. Howell, "Patterns and predictors of perinatal posttraumatic stress symptoms: A latent transition analysis," *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 320 no.1 (2023):108-116, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2022.09.068. ; Julia L. Paulson, LauraMiller-Graff, "Prenatal sleep quality and mental health symptoms across the perinatal period: A longitudinal study of high-risk women," *Journal of Psychosomatic Research* 116, (2019):31-36.

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[58] Laura E. Miller-Graff, & Philip Cheng,"Consequences of violence across the lifespan: Mental health and sleep quality in pregnant women," Psychological trauma: theory, research, practice, and policy 9, no. 5(2017): 587; Jae eun Park, Denis, D., Payne, J. & Laura E. Miller-Graff, "Intimate partner violence and its association with subjective and objective assessments of sleep: The potential mediating role of internalizing symptoms" *Sleep & Vigilance* (in press).

[59] Laura E. Miller-Graff, Ahmed, and Paulson, "Intimate partner violence and breastfeeding outcomes in a sample of low-income women," *Journal of Human Lactation* 34, no. 3 (2018):494-502.

[60] Laura E. Miller-Graff, and Caroline R.Scheid, "Breastfeeding continuation at 6 weeks postpartum remediates the negative effects of prenatal intimate partner violence on infant temperament," *Development and Psychopathology* 32, no.2 503-510.

[61] Laura E. Miller-Graff, Amy K.Nuttall, and Jennifer E. B. Lefever, "Interpersonal violence during pregnancy: Enduring effects in the post-partum period and implications for the intergenerational transmission of risk," *International Journal of Behavioral Development* 43, no.3(2019): 195-203.

[62] Lauren Schaefer, Kathryn H. Howell, Hanna C. Sheddan, Taylor Rae Napier, Hannah Shoemaker, and Laura E. Miller-Graff, "The road to resilience: Strength and coping among pregnant women exposed to intimate partner violence," *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 36, no. 17 and 18 (2021):8382-8408. See also Hasselle, A. J., Howell, K. H., Bottomley, J., Sheddan, H. C., Capers, J. M., & Miller-Graff, L. E. (2020). "Barriers to intervention engagement among women experiencing intimate partner violence proximal to pregnancy." *Psychology of Violence*, 10(3), 290.

[63] Laura E. Miller, Kathryn H. Howell, and Sandra A. Graham-Bermann, "The effect of an evidence-based intervention on women's exposure to intimate partner violence"*American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 84, no. 4 (2014): 321.

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[65] Laura E. Miller-Graff, Julia L. Paulson, Amanda J. Hasselle, Edward Mark Cummings, Kathryn H. Howell, "Examining the efficacy of prenatal intervention in reducing IPV revictimization and improving maternal mental health: A quasi-randomized controlled trial of the Pregnant Moms' Empowerment Program (PMEP)," *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 90, no. 11 (2022): 884.

[66] Kathryn H. Howell, Napier, T. R., Scheid, C. R., Braungart-Rieker, J., & Laura E. Miller-Graff, "Evaluating the effects of prenatal intervention on parenting in women exposed to intimate partner violence," *Journal of Family Psychology* 38, no. 1 (2024): 118. We are currently in the midst of wrapping up a larger-scale trial of the program, and are planning for long-term support and follow-up of our families as their children enter the preschool years.

[67] Howell, K.H., Gilliam, H.C., Carney, J.R., Maloney, C.A., & Miller-Graff, L.E. (under invited revision). Long-term effects of the *Pregnant Moms' Empowerment Program* (PMEP) on intimate partner violence revictimization, maternal mental health, and child internalizing and externalizing problems. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology.*

[68] Research on cross-cultural adaptations of psychological care is a contested space, Miller-Graff reported at the conference. Some think treatments should be adapted across contexts, while others disagree. Most fall somewhere on the spectrum in-between. The "middle path" , as it were, recognizes that there is substantial evidence to suggest that we do share elements of the "human experience" and also that there is meaningful cultural and contextual variation. "From the perspective of integral human development," she added, "we might say that we share the same dignity needs,

but the ways of achieving those needs are going to vary as a function of history, culture, context, and a number of other factors. This is as true in mental health as for any other dimension of our experience."

[69] Laura E. Miller-Graff, and Edward Mark Cummings, "The Israeli–Palestinian conflict: Effects on youth adjustment, available interventions, and future research directions," *Developmental Review* 43, (2017): 1-47.

[70] Laura E. Miller-Graff, L. E., & and Edward Mark Cummings,"Supporting youth and families in Gaza: A randomized controlled trial of a family-based intervention program," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*19, no. 4 (2022), https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19148337.

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Democracy, Governance, Institutions, and Rights

Questions of governance loom large in the fortunes of democracy and human rights globally. While nation-states and intergovernmental organizations form the core of the global political order, non-state actors—non-governmental organizations, religious communities, multinational corporations, and the like— also play key roles in addressing key global challenges such as climate change, international migration, infectious disease, and peacebuilding.[1]

However, as political scientist and global affairs scholar **Kyle Jaros** noted in his conference paper and presentation, the idea that subnational governments (SNGs) also have a critical part to play in tackling global challenges has gained traction since the turn of the 21st century.[2] In our globalized economy SNGs are inescapably involved in matters that cross national borders.[3] Large, well-resourced public organizations with local know-how, SNGs have policy authority in key areas such as health, education, economic development, land use, energy, urban planning, and transportation. In many cases, SNGs have higher popular accountability and public approval than national governments, Jaros added, and their leaders are usually less preoccupied with zero-sum questions of sovereignty and security.

Indeed, cities, states, and provinces around the world have already jumped into the fray across many issue domains. “They have launched local initiatives, formed new networks, or more closely aligned their work with that of national governments and international organizations,” Jaros writes. “States such as California and São Paulo have positioned themselves as advocates, innovators, and conveners on climate and environmental issues.”[4] More than 2,000 cities and local governments have joined coordinated efforts to promote sustainable urban planning and development practices, while UN-linked programs such as Cities of Migration and Cities Alliance have taken aim at issues of poverty and people movements across borders.

Despite the increasing importance of SNGs, we know relatively little about how they operate. Nearly all the information about the dynamics and drivers of subnational global engagement comes from the post-Cold War era, Jaros explained, a period of global economic integration and peace between the great powers. Then, it was relatively straightforward for SNGs, often encouraged by central governments, to forge economic ties, cultural links, and policy cooperation abroad. Yet the world today looks quite different: Geopolitical tensions between the West and its principal rivals—China, Russia, and Iran—are surging, and great power war is no longer unthinkable. “Economic globalization has paused and possibly shifted into reverse, with market liberalism in retreat and statism advancing,” Jaros noted. “Nationalism and populism are ascendant, and cultural identities are hardening, both within and across countries.”

In this context the following questions are salient: How much political and practical scope is there for global activism by SNGs? How will the concerns and the goals motivating their global engagement change? Under what conditions can we expect subnational global engagement to serve as a force for global cooperation and a counterweight to mounting tensions, and under what conditions can we expect it to further inflame international tensions?

One case where regional and local governments have already found themselves in the middle of geopolitics is the activity of states and provinces within the US-China relationship. Over the past few decades, US states and their Chinese counterparts have been at the forefront of the two countries' economic, cultural, and political exchanges.[5] But SNGs involvement has come under scrutiny on both sides in recent years, as US-China relations worsen and "low politics" and "high politics" blur together.

The US-China context offers an especially hard test for the proposition that pragmatic subnational officials can escape the zero-sum logic of nation-states and forge cooperation on areas of mutual interest. Professor Jaros' current research, conducted in collaboration with Sara Newland of Smith College, assesses recent trends in state and local-level relations between the US, China, and Taiwan and considers the prospects for constructive US-China engagement at the subnational level.[6] Using both quantitative and qualitative data, they track the changing mix of cooperation and confrontation in states' and cities' interactions with China, and explore the causes and consequences of diverging state-level postures toward China. Tracking a number of factors that affect state-level US-China relations—from states' economic links to China, to the orientations of governors to the changing nature and priorities of Chinese partners— Jaros and Newland find evidence of how state-level interactions with China can affect the larger US-China relationship, both positively and negatively.

The stakes of this research are significant. In the wake of the 2023 spy balloon brush-up, US-China relations hit their lowest level since diplomatic normalization in 1979. A growing number of officials and citizens from both parties today see US-China relations as having entered a new Cold War, and many are concerned about open military conflict between the US and the PRC in the near- to medium-term.[7] Managing the US-China relationship has become one of the leading global challenges of the 21st century, Jaros argued, noting that both the highs and the lows of the US-China relationship take concrete shape at the level of cities and states, where trade and investment relations, educational and cultural interaction, and science and technology play out.

Jaros and Newland find evidence that subnational relations represent an important site for the management of the larger US-China relationship, and that state and local officials exercise key agency in their own right. At the subnational level, as at the national level, competition and confrontation with China have grown more prominent over the past several years. "But we also find continued, if more circumscribed, cooperation and significant variation across states. While some states are adopting policies that go beyond those of the federal government in their level of hawkishness toward China, others are seeking to manage tensions and preserve important areas of cooperation with China established over the past two decades." In some cases, Jaros adds, states are simultaneously taking both cooperative and confrontational actions toward China.

For nearly all US states and localities, China emerged as a key trade partner and a key market for business investment during the 2000s and 2010s.[8] Accordingly, many states and cities sent trade delegations to China, opened state offices in China, or engaged closely with Chinese business associations. Alongside booming trade and investment ties, US states and localities also became increasingly reliant on Chinese tourists, talent, and university tuition dollars in the 2010s. Universities and research institutions formed close links with Chinese counterparts and heavily recruited students from the PRC, paving the way for large numbers of highly-skilled Chinese nationals to enter the US workforce. Other prominent areas of subnational cooperation with China included climate and environmental work, where states such as California took the lead in fostering cooperation on new technologies and policy dialogues.

Of course, Jaros acknowledged, subnational US-China relations have always had to navigate around thorny geopolitical questions (such as the status of Taiwan) and sensitive issues of ideology and human rights (in relation to Tiananmen, Tibet, religious persecution, and, more recently, Xinjiang). But during the first decade and a half of the 21st century, he noted, US governors and mayors from red and blue states alike, as well as their Chinese counterparts, often bracketed political questions as they rushed to promote cooperation.[9] National leaders, too, encouraged dialogue and cooperation between subnational authorities from the two countries.[10]

After 2017, however, rising US-China tensions at the national level increasingly spilled over into subnational relations as well. As China's government grew more domestically repressive and internationally aggressive under Xi Jinping, a growing number of US officials and experts questioned the utility of continued engagement with the PRC.[11] The bluntly anti-China rhetoric and policies of the first Trump administration, which launched a trade war, limited technology exports, and pursued increasingly close ties with Taiwan, ratcheted up bilateral tensions and suspicion. Increasingly strained US-China economic and political relations cast a pall over state and local interaction with China, and Trump administration officials warned subnational governments in the US about threats to US national security and manipulative business practices by Chinese partners.[12]

Against this backdrop, cooperation with Chinese counterparts has involved numerous concerns for state and local authorities. Fears of PRC espionage and threats to US critical infrastructure have led to growing scrutiny of Chinese talent and investment in the US. Concerns about political influence on unprepared subnational officials surged following documented instances in which Chinese officials pressured US state or local leaders to adopt particular language in discussing the Taiwan issue or to downplay human rights concerns, Jaros explained. More general anxiety about the possibility of CCP manipulation of the US public through educational or cultural forms such as PRC-funded Confucius Institutes also spiked.[13] Perhaps the greatest impact of all came from the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic, which disrupted normal travel and trade flows between the US and China for years and also aggravated mutual suspicions.

Amid worsening US-China relations, with the situation likely to deteriorate further under the second Trump administration, some argue that the role of governors and mayors in the US-China relationship has never been more important.[14] Universities and non-profit organizations such as Sister Cities International and the US Heartland China Association have promoted subnational dialogue with China and established channels for people-to-people exchange to increase mutual understanding at a time of growing hostility. For its part, the PRC government has shown a clear interest in the preservation of dialogue and cooperation at the subnational level as a way to stabilize the US-China relationship and find friendlier audiences at the state and local level.[15] Increasingly, however, such interactions are drawing criticism from China hawks in the US federal government and state capitals.[16] While some of this criticism is hyperbolic, Jaros and Newland do recognize the need to identify and mitigate the security risks that can accompany subnational US-China interactions.[17]

The research being conducted by Jaros and Newland explores what has happened at the subnational level of US-China relations since 2012. They gather and analyze quantitative data on subnational China relations for all US states and conduct in-depth case studies of four US states (California, Florida, Indiana, and New Hampshire) based on interviews and primary sources. Seeking to provide the most comprehensive analysis to date of how states' relations with China have varied over time and across states, they also explore the social, economic, and political factors that are driving different patterns of state-level relations with China. In addition, Jaros and Newland track the impacts of subnational relations on the US-China relationship, particularly on efforts to restore exchanges and communication amid increasing rivalry.

In order to track variation over time across states in subnational US-China relations, Jaros and Newland are building a State-Level Action on China (SLAC) dataset that contains data for all 50 states for the years 2012-2024 on multiple indicators of state-level cooperation and confrontation with China. By state-level cooperation, they mean actions by US state governments that directly or indirectly promote engagement with China (e.g., visits by state governors and lieutenant governors to China), official agreements with Chinese government entities, opening of state trade offices in China, and passage of legislation or legislative resolutions supportive of dialogue or engagement with China. Confrontation, on the other hand, refers to state-level actions that single China out for criticism or seek to limit interaction with China. This category includes indicators such as anti-China legislation and resolutions, executive actions and attorney general actions targeting China, and US governors' visits to Taiwan (which the PRC vigorously opposes).

Analysis of this dataset yields several interesting findings. As expected, there has been a decline in state-level cooperation and a marked rise in confrontation in recent years, particularly since 2017. Between 2012-2016, 53 governors or lieutenant governors traveled to China; the corresponding number between 2017-2022 was only 16 (affected, of course, by Covid-19 as well as rising tensions). Since China eased its Covid-19 controls in late 2022, only one US governor, California's Gavin Newsom, has visited the PRC as of this writing. States inked at least 39 agreements with PRC government counterparts in the earlier period and only 18 during the latter period. Meanwhile, the number of anti-China resolutions adopted by state legislatures rose from 24 to 46 and the number of anti-China laws adopted rose from 0 in the earlier period to 19 in the latter period. Executive orders and attorney general actions targeting China also rose sharply, climbing from 0 to 19 and 0 to 44, respectively.

Yet Jaros and Newland also find that state-level cooperation and confrontation toward China can coexist at the same moments and places. During the period between 2017-2019, US states collectively showed high levels of both confrontation and cooperation. At the level of individual states, cooperation and confrontation function as distinct dimensions of state-level action toward China that can move separately. As would be expected, a growing number of states in recent years have exhibited what they call *anti-engagement* (high confrontation, low cooperation) postures toward China, including Arizona, Florida, and Texas. However, there are also states that continue to display a *pro-engagement* posture, such as California, Illinois, and Oregon. States such as Georgia, Idaho, and Indiana display what Jaros and Newland call a *contested engagement* orientation, with both confrontational and cooperative actions toward China between 2017 and 2022. Finally, the duo identify states that score low both on measures of cooperation and confrontation, such as Colorado and Connecticut. "Our findings show that geopolitical tensions have constrained the types and level of state-level cooperation with China and contributed to more and more confrontational action," Jaros reported. "However, they also show that there is considerable heterogeneity at the state level even amid the emergence of a national-level bipartisan consensus on China, suggesting that state-level leaders still have latitude to determine their approaches to China and remain important agents in the larger US-China relationship."

Explaining variation in state-level approaches toward China

If state-level postures toward China vary widely and do not fully align with federal policy trends, what factors are driving state-level outcomes? To what extent do diverging patterns of China relations correlate with basic state-level economic and political characteristics? Do factors such as the extent of states' economic dependence on China, dominant political party, or the urban/rural population breakdown of different states appear to predict—and potentially explain—different trajectories of state-level relations with China? Once the SLAC dataset is complete, Jaros and Newland will be able to use state-year-level data (650 observations on a range of variables) to explore these relationships in a fine-grained way with enough statistical power for multivariate regression analysis. Their preliminary work takes a simpler approach, exploring how different state-level characteristics for the 50 states covary with index measures of cooperation and confrontation for the 2012-2016 period and the 2017-2022 period that lump together the various indicators described above.

This initial analysis shows that state-level cooperation with China has a positive relationship with states' level of economic dependence on China. This basic relationship holds whether we look at states' exports to China as a share of state GDP, the quantity of inbound Chinese FDI, or the number of Chinese students attending local universities, Jaros explained. "On the other hand, we do not see a clear relationship between states' economic dependence on China and levels of confrontation, suggesting that confrontation operates according to a different logic than cooperation." For the 2017-2022 period Jaros and Newland find a positive relationship between Republican vote share and confrontation toward China. This relationship is not necessarily causal, but it raises the possibility that cooperation increasingly has been driven by party-political logic, particularly under the Trump and Biden administrations.

Just as noteworthy as these individual findings, however, is the fact that state-level variation is not neatly or uniformly predicted by economic and political variables, Jaros added. The weakness of these structural predictors again highlights the importance of political agency in the subnational US-China relationship. Indeed, the in-depth case studies conducted by Jaros and Newland of four US states provide ample evidence of the importance of governors, attorneys general, and individual state legislators—as well as their Chinese counterparts—in influencing state-level US-China relations. Drawing on interviews, primary documents, and secondary sources, Jaros and Newland are analyzing the dynamics and drivers of subnational cooperation and confrontation in greater depth for California, Florida, Indiana, and New Hampshire. Their work to date provides clear evidence of the importance that key individuals and institutions have had in shaping states' relations with China.[18]

"It is clear," Jaros summarized, "that state governments are increasingly operating at the forefront of the US-China relationship, simultaneously adopting some of the most aggressive anti-China measures and pursuing ambitious cooperation on global issues such as climate change. While our research into the impacts state-level policies toward China are having on the larger US-China relationship is only beginning, it is already clear that actions by US governors, mayors, and other subnational leaders are shifting the contours of the larger relationship."[19]

Policy implications

State-level US-China relations serve as a bellwether for the more general fate of subnational global engagement in times of great power rivalry. The ongoing research by Jaros and Newland reveals that the subnational level has become an increasingly important part of the larger US-China relationship but also an increasingly volatile space. A decade ago, most US states sought closer ties with Chinese counterparts. Today, many state-level actors are now pursuing confrontational measures toward China, taking executive or legislative action to denounce the CCP, curb business and educational ties, and root out perceived risks of PRC interference in their communities.

Months into the second Trump administration, however, there were signs of continued divergence in state-level approaches to China. “While it is clear that the once-pragmatic realm of subnational engagement with China is now hotly politicized and securitized,” Jaros writes, “it is also clear that state and local leaders exercise considerable agency in the larger US-China relationship.” The variation over time and across states in subnational policies toward China “shows that governors, state legislators, and other actors have both power and discretion to influence the contours of the larger US-China relationship.” In some cases, this means states (e.g., Florida) took a harder line on China than DC, amplifying underlying US-China tensions and making the people-to-people exchange more difficult. In other cases, however, states (e.g., California) positioned themselves as bridge-builders, taking active steps to preserve or even deepen cooperation with Chinese actors on pressing global challenges such as the climate crisis.

Given that state governors, legislators, attorneys general, and various other subnational actors are playing an increasingly consequential role, Jaros argued, it is crucial that such actors recognize what is at stake in their policy choices and craft careful decisions.[20] Amid the politicization of China-related topics, some state officials are rushing to adopt broad-brush policy measures such as real estate purchase bans and restrictions on university exchanges with China without properly consulting affected stakeholders or holding robust debates. While the economic, educational, and people-to-people ties that US states and cities have built with China over the past few decades undoubtedly carry some dangers, he added, they have also brought many benefits. Responsible policymakers need to carefully weigh these risks and rewards as they impose limits on China engagement or pursue new areas of cooperation.

There is also a need for better communication and coordination on China relations across different states and between states and the federal government, Jaros concluded. State officials rarely share data or consult with counterparts in other jurisdictions as they make policy decisions about engagement with or disengagement from China, but their policy choices have externalities. National security issues such as the protection of military installations and critical infrastructure (power grids, water systems, internet, and telecommunication systems, etc.) spill across state boundaries and directly involvement federal interests, but increasingly states are adopting patchwork approaches to regulating what types of Chinese investment, business, and university contacts are permitted. “In place of this fragmented and often partisan approach,” Jaros urges, “it would be helpful for states to agree with one another and with federal agencies on common sense floors and ceilings for what constitutes appropriate business or scientific engagement with China.” It is also important, he emphasized, to build more connective tissue between state and local governments and federal actors.[21] In addition, both subnational and federal policymakers should reaffirm the important role of subnational and citizen diplomacy in promoting mutual understanding and peacebuilding with foreign adversaries.

There is no avoiding the fact that the US and China have found themselves in a protracted period of intense geopolitical rivalry, Jaros acknowledged. While this will preclude certain areas of cooperation in the years to come (particularly where critical infrastructures and cutting-edge technologies are concerned), it necessitates even more work to ensure that the two countries and their citizens understand one another's concerns and respect one another's basic humanity. It is particularly troubling that politicians in Indiana and other states are currently criticizing and seeking to limit the practice of citizen diplomacy and people-to-people exchanges on the grounds that it betrays US interests. President Dwight D. Eisenhower launched the People-to-People Program in 1956 in the early years of the first Cold War not because he was naïve about the hostile intentions of the USSR leadership, but precisely because he recognized the risk that mutual misunderstanding and dehumanization would increase the risk of another world war. "While the new Cold War may differ from the previous one in many ways," Jaros noted, "we would do well to remember this insight."

Around the world, state, local and national officials are engaged not only with their counterparts in other nations; they are also attempting to respond to a surge in disruptive activism unfolding both within and across borders. "The world is currently awash in protest activity," declared sociologist and peace studies professor **Ann Mische** at the outset of her presentation on "Unruly Citizens, Protest and Contention in Struggles for Justice and Human Dignity." In 2023, she reported, the Global Protest Tracker at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace noted the eruption of new protests in 83 countries, ranging from China and Nigeria to France, Hungary, Poland, Tunisia, Iran and Guatemala.[22] Citizen mobilization has been surging since the 2008 global financial crisis, which was followed by a wave of "protests in the Squares," from the *Indignados* in Spain and Gezi Park in Turkey to the Arab spring uprisings and the Occupy movement worldwide.[23] Carnegie's Global Protest Tracker has recorded over 700 significant antigovernment protests in 147 countries since 2017, 18 percent of which lasted over three months.[24]

To paraphrase social movement scholars, what is everyone shouting about?[25] And from our perspective at the Keough School, Mische added, what does all of this shouting have to do with IHD? "Protest doesn't sound very 'holistic' or 'dialogic,' and it can in some cases contribute to polarization, violence, suffering, and instability. Still, protests are unavoidably with us in today's world – and they point us both to deficits in integral human development and to possible ways of remedying those deficits," she said. "We need to pay close attention to the dynamics of citizen mobilization for social change, contentious and provocative as it may often be, if we take seriously our commitment to a more just and humane world."

Professor Mische defines IHD as “a normative and aspirational horizon that expresses our commitment to the inherent dignity and value of all people, as relationally embedded in communities.” For people to thrive in communities, she continued, they not only need access to sources of material survival and well-being, but also to opportunities for creativity, productive work, and community recognition. In addition, they need participatory and decisional input into governance structures in those communities at various levels, from the local to the transnational. This means going beyond just alleviating poverty or supplying basic needs.

Protesters worldwide are expressing exactly these kinds of aspirational horizons, and social movements are carriers of calls for justice and human dignity.[26] Most movements in the current protest cycle express a diverse combination of grievances, including unemployment, inequality, discrimination, precarious public services, corruption, authoritarianism, and state repression.[27] “These grievances reflect intense deficits in the conditions that contribute to integral human development,” Mische posited. “Often, the structural conditions that generate these deficits are entrenched and hard to change, involving webs of powerful interests at local and transnational levels. These structural barriers can undermine even well-intentioned policy interventions by states, international agencies, or civil society actors.”

In response to these entrenched barriers, she contended, citizen protest can be a useful, even necessary disruption—what the late civil rights leader John Lewis described as “good trouble.” Without protest, women would not have the right to vote, slavery and racial segregation would still be legal, workers would not have the pathways to the middle class that unionized jobs enabled (or used to enable), and we would likely be even further along the path to climate catastrophe. None of these social movement struggles of the past are completely resolved; most are ongoing on various fronts. But most historic expansions of democratic rights, benefits, and protections – including many that we take for granted today – have come about when those in power have had to bargain with unruly citizens.[28]

Of course, Mische acknowledged, this unruliness can also carry social and political costs. When states and powerholders see citizen demands as a threat and respond with repression, nonviolent protests can escalate into further violence and even radicalize into brutal and sustained civil wars.[29] Movements can generate counter-movements that express contending injustice claims, contributing to polarization, as we have seen in debates over abortion, LGBTQ+ rights, or climate change.[30] And protest can amplify broad citizen distrust in political institutions, including skepticism about political parties and democracy more generally, she noted. This in turn generates ripe conditions for populist appeals from both the right and the left.

Anti-partisan protest and democratic backsliding

Mische has addressed the problem of citizen distrust in political institutions in her work on anti-partisan protest, which began in 2008. In a 2024 article in the *American Journal of Sociology*, coauthored with Kellogg Institute Ph.D. fellow Tomás Gold, for example, she examines the political effects of the intense skepticism about political parties expressed in many recent protests, in which people reject not just the party in power, but political parties more generally.[31] As Argentine citizens have shouted in successive protest waves, "Que se vayan todos" – throw them all out! Similar sentiments were expressed by the Indignados in Spain who occupied Madrid's Puerto de Sol, proclaiming "No parties represent me!" We heard this fierce anti-artisan sentiment in protests in Brazil, Italy, France, the UK, Greece, Iceland, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Turkey, India, and the Philippines, as well as in the US, Professor Mische notes. Sometimes anti-partisanship is expressed by radical horizontalist or neo-anarchist activists who affirm direct democracy and are skeptical of all hierarchical forms of political organization (like states, unions, and parties). In other cases, it reflects a broader distrust of corrupt and unresponsive institutions and frustration with partisan polarization.

In their article, Mische and Gold trace how political parties and politicians in 12 countries have responded to the intense rejection of parties and partisanship from citizens in the streets. They find that partisan actors often try to deflect strong anti-partisan sentiment from the protests onto their political rivals, thus using generalized distrust of parties to gain political advantage. The coauthors identify four different protest pathways, each representing disruptive shifts in political alignments: (1) the formation of new parties (as with Podemos in Spain or Syriza in Greece); (2) the rise of new internal party factions (as in the rise of Corbyn in the UK and Sanders and the Tea Party in the US); (3) the emergence of new anti-incumbent coalitions (as in Argentina or Bulgaria); and, (4) the ascension of extremist populist leaders (as in Brazil, India, and the Philippines). These pathways, they write, are shaped both by party-movement interactions and by the structure of the partisan field (analyzed by comparing degrees of party institutionalization, party cohesion, and partisan field fragmentation). Mische and Gold use measures from the Varieties of Democracy project (a.k.a. V-Dem)[32] to compare field structures, along with in-depth case studies to trace the mechanisms and pathways that lead to these diverging outcomes.

They argue that widespread citizen distrust of political institutions – expressing frustrations tied to aspirations for human dignity and recognition – can lead to disruptive new political configurations, including those that are deeply troubling for democracy.

Mische studied these dynamics up close in the massive wave of protest that swept Brazil in June 2013.[33] Over two weeks, local protests against a transit fare hike led by small neo-anarchist groups in São Paulo escalated to over a million people in the streets across the entire country. Protesters were fed up with all sorts of things, she found, constituting "a grab-bag of demands associated with both the left and the right." Grievances ranged from inadequate social services in health and education to LGBTQ+ rights, government corruption, religious freedom, and excessive taxation. Beyond these specific frustrations, protesters also expressed a strong rejection of political parties of all stripes. “This anti-partisan sentiment was amplified in the early stages by neo-anarchist affirmations of direct democracy and rejection of hierarchical institutions,” she writes. “But it was also expressed in more broadly patriotic and nationalist terms, as in the slogan ‘My Party is Brazil.’”

As the protests progressed, this generalized anti-partisan sentiment was steered increasingly against the parties in power, especially the incumbent Worker’s Party (PT). Protesters burned PT flags and shouted party activists off the streets. On social media, these actions were egged on by shadowy figures in Anonymous masks that launched into anti-PT diatribes on Facebook and Twitter, infused with a blend of libertarian and anti-fascist themes. Increasingly polarized social media debates contributed to dueling mobilizations for and against the Impeachment of PT President Dilma Rousseff in 2016.[34] A massive corruption investigation (known as “Lava Jato” or “Car Wash”) further discredited not only the PT, but most of Brazil’s established parties across the political spectrum, amplifying the generalized anti-partisanship. In 2018, the previously marginal politician Jair Bolsonaro was able to capitalize on this heightened rejection of political parties. His presidential campaign adopted the slogan from the 2013 protests, “My Party is Brazil.” In this case, Mische noted, strong anti-partisanship amplified by corruption scandals and massive protest waves contributed to the electoral success of a racist, misogynistic autocrat and to significant democratic backsliding in Brazil.

Mische and Gold argue that similar dynamics can be seen in the Philippines and India, both of which had huge waves of strongly anti-partisan protests against corruption a few years before the elections of Duterte and Modi, respectively. In order to understand democratic backsliding in these countries, Mische added, we need to pay attention “not only to political institutions, public opinion, and digital technologies, but also to unruly citizens in the streets, and their sometimes collaborative, sometimes hostile interactions with politicians and political parties.”

Directions for the future

Social movement scholarship is rich and flourishing, Mische reported, and her research will focus on three areas of importance. First, she explained, we need more attention to the role of right-wing social movements, as well as conservative civil society organizations and networks. Studies of social movements and civil society have focused disproportionately on citizen activism that understands itself to be “progressive” or left-leaning. In the US, our most highly studied and paradigmatic case is the civil rights movement. Internationally, social movement scholarship has focused on mobilization around human rights, environmental issues, labor or land-based conflict, demands for social services, racial or gender inequality, or pro-democracy struggles. Likewise, scholarship on “civil society” in democracy, development, and peacebuilding arenas has largely focused on community-based organizations or advocacy groups associated with progressive stances toward liberal democracy, social inclusion, and citizen participation. Yet many forms of protest in the world today are ambiguous in their politics, blurring traditional ideological divides between right and left. Moreover, the focus on progressive activism risks overlooking important forms of contemporary mobilization; for example, conservative sectors are increasingly organized and networked, mobilizing grassroots activists in communities and engaging in electoral competition and institutional intervention.[35]

> They have learned from the playbook of more left-leaning movements and organizations in their tactics and framing strategies. These movements and networks are having important consequences on elections, community struggles, and organizational practices. We need more attention to the dynamics and consequences of these movements, including their influences on democratic institutions.

A second area of focus of Mische's research is the contributions of "insider-outsider" strategies that bridge social movements and institutional politics. Not all activists attempt to storm the barricades from the outside; some work for change within powerful institutions, including governments, corporations, international organizations, or religious institutions.[36] These insider strategies are often greeted with suspicion; protesters can be reluctant to engage with established institutions, either because they reject the idea of working within oppressive and power-laden systems or because they distrust politicians or fear cooptation. "We have seen ample evidence of this distrust in the recent anti-partisan protest wave," she writes. "However, collaboration between change-makers inside and outside of institutions is essential if movements want to have lasting effects that advance human dignity and justice. Insider-outsider coalitions combine the disruptive impact of protest in the streets with more pragmatic attempts to reshape states and non-state institutions in ways that address social inequalities and support democracy and community well-being.[37]

These coalitions can be difficult and uncomfortable, walking an uneasy line between cooperation and challenge. Yet they can be important means by which the demands of unruly citizens become institutionalized and sustained over time. Given that democratic institutions are under threat worldwide, understanding the factors that support or undermine insider-outsider coalitions is an important area of future research, she asserted.

Finally, scholars and policymakers need to understand how citizen participation in deliberative forums is contributing to new future imaginaries. Professor Mische's book-in-progress, *Futures in Contention: Public Scenarios and Transformative Politics in the Global Area,* focuses on the role of "futures thinking" and foresight techniques in deliberations over democracy, development, peacebuilding, and climate change. She examines how coalitions of local and global actors are engaging in public interest scenario-building exercises that aim to re-narrate collective futures amidst the entrenched dilemmas and problems of the contemporary world.[38]

Participatory scenario methodologies have been used worldwide since the 1990s to address a broad array of local and global challenges, including democracy, armed conflict, organization, energy use, food security, and climate change. “Understanding collective efforts to re-imagine futures is essential to our work at the Keough School and to the promotion of IHD and democratic engagement more generally,” Mische noted. “Such forums bring together the challenging voices and disruptive imaginaries of unruly citizens with institutional actors and policymakers concerned with pragmatics, planning, and organizational constraints. Such future-oriented deliberations – contentious and difficult as they might be – are critical to our consideration of pathways of action in an uncertain world.”

We need a much more robust understanding of the role of citizen participation and protest in building and sustaining democratic institutions, Mische argued. “More generally, attention to social movements and contentious politics expresses – and even deepens – our commitment to integral human development,” she said. Social movement analysis offers diagnostic tools for understanding the harmful social and political effects of deficits in justice and dignity. At the same time, it provides prognostic tools for considering how unruly citizens can contribute to challenging these deficits and provoking structural transformation. Finally, it can also provide cautionary tools for understanding when protest may work in the opposite direction, contributing to exclusionary politics, increased violence and repression, and democratic backsliding.

As scholars, practitioners, and policymakers, she concluded, we should not treat social movements in either a fearful way (as a harbinger of insecurity and unrest) or in a romanticized way (as heroic nonviolent advocates for justice and democracy). Rather, “we should develop a realistic, nuanced, and empirically-informed understanding of the broad range of mechanisms by which unruly citizens have contributed – and will most certainly continue to contribute – to aspirations and struggles for justice, recognition, and human dignity.”

The struggle for justice, recognition and human dignity is also at the heart of the research of political scientist and global affairs scholar **Abby Córdova**, who presented her ground-breaking research on “Women at the Front Line: Resisting Democratic Backsliding amidst Gender-Based Violence.” Across the world, she began, human rights advocates who resist democratic backsliding face a high risk of violence, including death threats and assassinations. In 2022 alone, at least 401 human rights defenders were killed across 26 countries—many of whom were standing up against authoritarianism and state repression.[39] Globally, women are at the front line of democracy and human rights protection, leading efforts to seek justice for victims of state repression and exerting “major influence on popular movements against democratic erosion around the world.”[40] Not surprisingly, she reported, women who stand up for human rights are disproportionately targeted by arrest and detention, legal actions, and death threats.[41]

In the Americas, Córdova noted, the rise of authoritarian populism has significantly increased the risk of political violence against women and, indeed, of all forms of gender-based violence. Authoritarian populist candidates and elected leaders— Bolsonaro in Brazil, López Obrador in Mexico, Bukele in El Salvador, Trump in the US, Milei in Argentina—have engaged in misogynous rhetoric or verbal attacks against women in opposition parties or members of civil society organizations. They have also crusaded against "gender ideology" by portraying demands for gender equality as a discourse of the enemy or as a threat to cultural norms.[42] This partisan political tactic, she argued, has resulted in anti-gender equality policies such as the reduction of budgets dedicated to reducing violence against women and the elimination of education materials promoting gender equality in schools. These trends have also surfaced in Europe, where "gender wars" in Poland and Hungary have undermined the implementation of policies aimed at protecting women from gender-based violence.

The authoritarian move to marginalize advocates of gender equality is part of a larger strategy to cultivate a "militarized masculinist approach to policy [by] delegitimizing challenges to it."[43] By promoting the idea that only men are capable of governing and by undermining any kind of gender-based analysis or critique, the anti-gender rhetoric of militant populists undermines a core pillar of IHD, namely that every human being "by virtue of its existence possesses dignity in equal measure."[44]

The EVAW Lab

Central to the Keough School's response to this assault on democracy and IHD is the aforementioned Eliminating Violence against Women (E-VAW) Lab—a Notre Dame research, policy, and practice initiative led by Professor Córdova. Focusing on Latin America and the Caribbean, the E-VAW Lab, headquartered in the Kellogg Institute, engages in comparative research on the drivers of gender-based violence and the effectiveness of strategies intended to eliminate such violence. Conducting multi-method research, the Lab helps to inform and accompany the efforts of local and international organizations to eradicate gender-based violence and promote gender equality, democracy, and IHD. In 2023 the E-VAW Lab was invited to share research findings with the UN Women Global Leaders' Forum. The Forum identified the "pushback" against gender equality as a primary obstacle to advancing the Sustainable Development Goals of ending violence against women worldwide. Scholars and policy-makers recognize that populist crusades against women's rights constitute a direct attack on democracy.[45] This is because an attack on gender equality, Córdova explained, is an attack on the political engagement of those who resist authoritarian populist regimes and democratic backsliding. Misogynist rhetoric and policies threaten the pillars that uphold liberal democracy and IHD. As Robert Dahl, the pioneering theorist of the modern concept of liberal democracy, proclaimed over four decades ago: “If we believe in democracy as a goal or ideal, then implicitly we must view political equality as a goal or ideal.”

Drawing from cases in Latin America, the E-VAW Lab’s research, led by Córdova and staffed by Notre Dame students, examines how democratic backsliding is affecting women in the region and identifies ways to protect women vulnerable to gender-based violence. For example, the E-VAW Lab has documented how populist authoritarian leaders’ adoption of a “militarized masculinist” public security strategy is fueling violence, not only against members of organized criminal organizations but also against civilians and anyone declared an “internal enemy,” including journalists, religious figures, political opponents, and human rights advocates—many of whom are women.

El Salvador is an emblematic case of the use of a militarized public security strategy to convey a “tough on crime” image that has also been instrumentalized to repress those standing up for democracy, Córdova said. El Salvador’s “model,” which has relied on militarization, a prolonged state of emergency, and suspended constitutional rights, has also been adopted in Honduras and Ecuador, while political leaders in other countries have praised it as an effective strategy to curb crime. Yet so-called “effective” negotiations between officials of these governments and organized criminal groups have resulted in the unlawful release of gang leaders from prison.[46]

The militarization of public security has been the preferred policy response of authoritarian populist leaders not only in Latin America but across the world, Professor Córdova noted, despite abundant evidence documenting its ineffectiveness in reducing criminality in the long run.[47] The evidence points, instead, to the tendency of the militarization of public security to escalate violence and increase massive human rights violations. The Philippines, under President Duterte’s administration, exemplified the pattern whereby wars on crime, fueled by notions of masculine toughness, result in widespread unlawful detentions and extrajudicial killings. Nobel Peace Prize laureate Maria Ressa, a renowned Filipina journalist and Senior Policy Fellow at the Keough School, experienced first-hand the connection between state and gender-based violence and human rights violations; the story of the Duterte government’s prosecution of Ressa is one of numerous examples of how women standing-up for democracy in militarized contexts are experiencing repression and/or violence under the governments of authoritarian populist leaders.

Ordinary women are also at risk of gender-based violence in contexts of democratic backsliding. The E-VAW Lab has documented this reality in El Salvador and Mexico. The militarization of public security in El Salvador results in a higher incidence of sexual harassment against women and girls perpetrated by state-armed actors in neighborhoods historically marked by criminal governance. Moreover, widespread impunity and lack of trust in the police in these territories leads to greater numbers of cases of intimate partner violence: fearful that perpetrators will go unpunished and unrestrained, victims and witnesses are less likely to report incidents to the police. The resulting increase in violence against women, Córdova reported, occurs at the same time that governments are dismantling systems designed to *prevent* violence against women.

By limiting access to specialized services for survivors and dismantling prevention mechanisms, populist authoritarian leaders in El Salvador, Brazil and elsewhere contribute to the normalization of gender-based violence against women. The implementation or dismantling of public policies, which signals to the population the issues that governments prioritize, helps to shape public opinion and social norms.[48] Consequently, Córdova explained, campaigns against "gender ideology" and subsequent gender discriminatory policies can undermine citizen support for gender equality, reinforcing attitudes, particularly among men, that tolerate various forms of violence against women. In addition, limiting programs that address violence against women and reducing specialized services for survivors, such as women's police stations and shelters, can increase women's skepticism about whether government institutions will respond to their needs in cases of gender-based victimization.

Unsurprisingly, due to the absence of protective mechanisms from their governments, thousands of women confronted with the threat of militarization and gender-based violence are resorting to international migration as their last hope for survival. E-VAW Lab research shows that women in Central America who report a high incidence of violence against women in their neighborhoods are more likely to intend to migrate compared to their counterparts living in safer environments. These women are more likely to perceive the police to be involved in crime rather than in protecting them. By adopting a militarized approach to public security, authoritarian populist leaders are increasing women's vulnerability to both sexual violence and forced international migration. This contributes to changing the demographic composition of migrants and refugees, including a rise in the number of children, she added.

Implications for policy

How can women's increased vulnerability to gender-based violence be addressed in the context of democratic backsliding? Evidence from the E-VAW Lab indicates that supporting the efforts of civil society organizations is essential for responding to and preventing violence against women. Despite state repression, civil society organizations, predominantly led by women, play a crucial role in providing services to survivors, including access to shelters, psychological support, and accompaniment for those seeking justice. Women living in militarized territories, who are particularly vulnerable to suffer sexual violence at the hands of state armed actors, are more inclined to seek help from civil society organizations than state institutions. That is one reason why the E-VAW Lab forms partnerships with civil society organizations (most recently in Colombia) to share research, practice and policy knowledge.

Relatedly, Córdova emphasized advancing gender equality and improving women's safety will only be possible if ordinary citizens embrace gender-inclusive attitudes and are willing to denounce state repression against women. Research from the E-VAW Lab shows that the implementation of media campaigns educating citizens about human rights and the rule of law, combined with victims' testimonies, can foster solidarity toward victims and mobilize the population to denounce state repression.

These perspectives, Professor Córdova concluded, echo the Catholic vision that the mobilization of civil society organizations and ordinary citizens is crucial for protecting women against gender-based violence. According to Pope Francis, in order to end violence against women "we need to unite, collaborate, network, and what we need is not just a defensive network, but above all a preventive network! This is always crucial when trying to eliminate a social scourge which is also linked to cultural attitudes, mentalities and deep-rooted prejudices."[49]

"In the twenty-first century the road to dictatorship runs through the high courts." So stated **Aníbal Pérez-Liñán**, a political scientist and global affairs scholar who directs the Kellogg Institute for International Studies, in his paper and presentation on "Protecting the High Courts in the Age of Democratic Backsliding What We Know, and What We Should (Not) Do." Most cases of democratic backsliding involve the capture of supreme courts and constitutional tribunals by elected rulers, who then employ "legal" means to deny civil and political rights to their opponents. How governments purge the high courts, why judicial purges dangerously defy our dominant theories of judicial independence, and how we should (and should not) respond to this fundamental threat to democracy—these are topics of Pérez-Liñán's research and scholarship.

For most of the twentieth century, he recounted, imperiled democracies broke down under the weight of military intervention. In the twenty-first century, in contrast, most imperiled democracies crumble under the weight of elected governments that dismantle the democratic process from the inside. Why is this the case? Traditional military coups are crude; officers suspend the constitution and impose a commissarial dictatorship in the name of national security or moral reconstruction. Contemporary leaders driving processes of democratic backsliding are more effective, Pérez-Liñán explained, in part because they are "stealthy" in that "they distort and reinterpret the constitution through loyal courts."

National security threats justified public support for military coups in developing countries trapped by the Cold War, he continued. Although coups are less common in the contemporary era, it would be a mistake to declare them a phenomenon of the past (as the countries of the Sahel remind us). Similarly, while episodes of democratic backsliding are common in the contemporary era, it would be a mistake to assume that they are "new" to this century, Pérez-Liñán noted. The demise of democracy predictably brings an end to judicial independence in both instances, he continued. But while military officers purge the high courts *after* their military takeover, using the "state of exception" to revamp the legal order, elected incumbents purge the courts *before* their executive takeover, securing the pliant justices necessary to uphold increasingly repressive legislation.

Backsliding and Judicial Purges

Pérez-Liñán's paper includes examples that illustrate the connection between judicial purges and democratic backsliding. After winning the 1998 election, Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez called for the election of a Constituent Assembly. The president's allies, riding on his coattails, won 94 percent of the seats. The Assembly dismissed more than a hundred judges and adopted a new constitution that disbanded the Supreme Court and replaced it with a new, 20-member Supreme Tribunal. Within two years, a faction in the Supreme Tribunal broke with the government, and Congress responded by expanding the Court from 20 to 32 members. Congress also changed the procedures for the nomination and removal of justices, allowing the government majority to appoint all new justices, and forcing some justices to resign. Thus, in late 2004, the legislature appointed 17 loyal justices, securing the president's control of the Tribunal. The absence of effective judicial review allowed Chávez to undermine the National Electoral Council, use public resources during electoral campaigns, and to alter electoral rules to over-represent the ruling party's vote.[50] Opposition forces would not win a legislative election until 2015, after Chávez's death. "By then it was too late," Pérez-Liñán writes. "A new purge guaranteed the loyalty of the Supreme Tribunal to the regime's successor, Nicolás Maduro. The Supreme Tribunal dismissed the acts of the opposition-controlled legislature as unconstitutional, and allowed the Maduro administration to rule unilaterally."

On the other side of the world, a regime with the opposite ideology soon followed a very similar script. After winning a parliamentary super-majority in 2010, Viktor Orbán's party Fidesz altered the procedure to nominate justices of the Hungarian Constitutional Court and to select the Court's chief justice. A later constitutional amendment expanded the size of the Court from 11 to 15 justices, and under the new rules Fidesz was able to select the new justices unilaterally. The parliamentary majority also restricted the jurisdiction of the Constitutional Court and ultimately nullified *its entire case law* from 1990 to 2011, Pérez-Liñán recounts. A new Fundamental Law (constitution) in 2011 altered the mechanisms for judicial review, reducing the number of actors with standing to challenge laws going forward. As it neutralized the Constitutional Court, Fidesz moved to attack the rest of the judiciary, Pérez-Liñán recounted. The parliamentary majority reduced the mandatory retirement age for judges from 70 to 62, forcing the departure of all senior judges, and changed the qualifications for the chief justice of the Supreme Court, also forcing his departure. These actions drew responses from the European Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights; Hungary paid compensation to the judges without restoring them to their posts. Parliament also created a National Judicial Office with latitude to appoint judges, promote and demote them, transfer them to new courts, and initiate disciplinary measures.[51]

Unconstrained by judicial review, the ruling party fast-tracked major legislation and reformed the electoral system unilaterally, adopted norms undermining the independence of the mass media, imposed parliamentary recognition for churches, and limited the rights of sexual and ethnic minorities.

Executive takeovers of the high courts, Pérez-Liñán noted, have also facilitated the erosion of democracy in Bolivia, Ecuador, Turkey, Poland, Nicaragua, and El Salvador, among other cases. Countries where supreme courts eluded capture, such as Argentina under the left-wing Kirchners and Brazil under the right-wing Bolsonaro, were able to avert authoritarian rule. Those experiences consistently underscore a few, essential points. While much of the vociferous debate in the US focuses on the politicization of judicial appointments, appointments are only relevant once court vacancies are available. In the US, some justices time their retirement strategically, but leaders engineering an executive takeover cannot patiently wait for judges to retire, they need to open court vacancies at their convenience.

How do authoritarian rulers create vacancies in the courts? Professor Pérez-Liñán explained that they open court vacancies through packing or purging. Packing involves an expansion in the size of high courts (or in the number of lower courts), while purging involves the removal of sitting justices.[52] Yet packing is only part of the story; a more common—and more effective—tactic relies on purging independent judges and reallocating their seats. Purges require enough political skill to override constitutional protections to judicial tenure. Rulers achieve this formidable feat using formal instruments (e.g., impeaching justices) as well as informal ones (e.g., deploying media campaigns against justices or their families).[53]

The use of informal instruments makes purges hard to document, he added, because the historical record only shows "resignations" from the bench. It also challenges our current understandings of how judicial independence is secured, he noted, and thus of how to protect high courts in the age of democratic backsliding.

Legal scholars and social scientists, Pérez-Liñán continued, have identified three classic conditions that guard judicial independence: constitutional protections for judicial tenure, the absence of a unified government able to impeach judges or curb their authority, and the long-term calculations of party politicians, who value independent judges as a source of "insurance" if their adversaries gain power. While relevant, those theories fail to inspire satisfactory principles to prevent judicial purges. Constitutional norms, divided government, and politicians' calculations do matter for judicial tenure, but often in ways that defy conventional wisdom.

Advocates of judicial independence emphasize the importance of constitutional designs that include provisions for judicial tenure and strong judicial review as a way of protecting the autonomy and authority of the courts.[54] Students of judicial behavior worry, therefore, about legislative bills that initiate court-curbing reforms against those provisions.[55]

In a context of democratic backsliding, however, even constitutional reforms formally designed to *empower* the judiciary—e.g., granting judges life tenure or strengthening judicial review—may have surprisingly negative consequences for judicial tenure. Why is this the case? In the short run, politicians entrusted with constitutional power can restructure the courts, reshuffling the judiciary in the name of progress, as the examples of Venezuela and Hungary illustrate.[56] In the long run, however, strong protections for the judiciary create unexpected incentives for politicians to use informal instruments, such as threats and bribes, to induce resignations since justices are constitutionally shielded from other forms of political influence.[57]

Alas, Pérez-Liñán writes, court-curbing legislation is not the only source of concern; reforms branded as court-empowering legislation may work as an equally effective subterfuge to undermine tenure protections. Because illiberal majorities pose a threat to independent courts, students of judicial politics contend that a divided government implicitly protects the judiciary. Minority presidents are unable to coordinate court-curbing initiatives and impeachment threats with loyal legislative majorities. For this reason, fragmented party systems are expected to result (by default) in more independent courts.

Once we account for the possibility of purges, however, two unexpected consequences become visible, Pérez-Liñán writes. First, presidents who lack allies in Congress have greater incentives to purge the high courts using informal mechanisms, in order to counterbalance the power of the legislature.[58] Second, opposition majorities that confront an extremely weak executive can demand seats in the high courts in exchange for legislative support or even restructure the high courts unilaterally.[59] It follows that partisan balance—the inability of government *or* opposition to command large legislative majorities—more than divided government per se, is the mechanism that most likely protects independent justices.

Finally, Pérez-Liñán explains one of the most influential explanations of judicial independence posits that incumbents respect the autonomy of the courts when they anticipate alternation in power.[60] Although politicians do not like the constraints imposed by independent judges when they are in office, they realize that independent judges will provide insurance against arbitrary policies when other parties rule in the future. The implication of this theory is that judicial purges should be less likely in more democratic regimes and, among those, in more competitive party systems, where alternation in power is more likely.[61] The problem with this argument, clearly exposed by contemporary processes of democratic backsliding, is that democracy and party competition depend, in turn, on judicial independence. Capturing the high courts allows incumbents to overturn presidential term limits, adopt biased electoral laws, and curtail independent media—that is, to undermine electoral competition—without facing judicial pushback. Against expectations, the quest for insurance leads some politicians to purge the courts rather than to respect their independence. For a populist incumbent, reducing the risk of alternation in power through electoral manipulation is a much better option than managing the risk created by alternation in power through an independent judiciary.

The Instability Trap

If institutional design, divided government, and insurance only provide partial explanations for judicial instability, how can we account for the fact that some countries experience repeated purges while others experience none? The historical record indicates that purges are a recurrent problem in the Americas, Pérez-Liñán noted, but there has been considerable variation across the region. Data on judicial stability in the Americas from 1900 to 2021, culled from various sources and presented at the conference by Professor Pérez-Liñán, includes the percentage of justices leaving office every year, in 28 courts between 1900 and 2021. While the probability of a justice leaving the court in any given year has been low and relatively constant in the US, Brazil, and, to a lesser extent, in Chile and Costa Rica, the risk of exit has been much higher and punctuated by court reshuffles in most Latin American cases. The striking patterns of judicial instability are partly explained by periods of authoritarian rule and by some features of constitutional design. However, instability has been common even in democracies that (formally) grant justices life tenure.

The data, he concludes, suggest that judicial stability is a long-term equilibrium outcome, "difficult to achieve but easy to disrupt." Political purges produce two immediate effects, he said: they bias the composition of the high courts in favor of the ruling party, and they undermine the courts' legitimacy as an independent arbiter. This, in turn, produces two subsequent effects in the medium-run: when a new party comes to power, it has good reasons to reshuffle the (partisan) court, and it encounters lower social resistance to do so. Yet, payback is not justice. A judicial "reset" usually reinforces the politicization of the judiciary and further undermines its credibility and social standing. "In the long run, then, judges come to expect that every major political realignment will mean the termination of their tenure," he writes. "They have few incentives to care about legal precedent and even to act strategically (since new rulers will displace them in any case), indulging in ideological service to the party that appointed them. This downward spiral is hard to break, and it produces a suboptimal equilibrium of high judicial turnover, low judicial independence, and squandered rule of law."

The Challenge of Constitutional Repair

Pérez-Liñán's research carries important lessons for advocates of legal reform: be suspicious of proposed reforms that revamp the courts in the name of empowering them, and for voters: keep partisan forces in the legislature balanced if you want to protect your rights. For policymakers, one might take an analogy from an arms race: the best strategy toward judicial purges is to never start them. But he cautions:

> These lessons, however, are of little use once illiberal forces have captured the courts, especially when democratic forces return to office and confront the veto of justices inherited from the previous administration. Should democrats purge illiberal justices or respect them? This question is less vexing in the context of democratic transitions, when judges who have legitimized the previous dictatorship confront lustration under transitional justice, but it is hard to answer in contexts of democratic recovery when democrats promise restoration rather than a rupture with the past.

Tom Daly of the University of Melbourne underscores the "transitional" aspect of judicial reform in contexts of democratic restoration, Pérez-Liñán notes, presenting it as a problem of "constitutional repair." But Daly acknowledges that even well-justified purges, like the one experienced by the Argentine Supreme Court during the democratic transition in 1983, can ignite undesirable cycles of judicial instability. He ultimately calls observers to assess the context of any reform, the justification for judicial purges, the availability of less disruptive options, the inclusiveness of the reform process, and the mitigation of the risk of repetition.[62]

Regardless of any sound motivations to purge the courts, Pérez-Liñán concludes, the experience of Latin America advises voters and politicians to proceed with great caution: "Like many other forms of political turmoil—including military coups, serial constitutional replacements, civil wars, and enduring military rivalries between states—judicial instability is easy to start but difficult to end," he writes. "Once a recurrent pattern of politicized judicial turnover sets in, this practice is hard to overcome. It may take decades until any semblance of judicial independence is recovered, if it is recovered at all."

Political economist and global affairs scholar **Andrés Mejía Acosta**, who leads the Keough School's policy impact strategy, devoted his paper and presentation to the policy-relevant question: "What do flawed democracies deliver?" The premise of Mejía's paper is that "democratic governance is under strain when the range and depth of governance demands far exceed the institutional and state capacities to address such needs."

Drawing from the Latin American context, he explained that growing poverty rates, persistent socioeconomic inequalities, continued environmental degradation and growing insecurity threaten the very social fabric that holds countries together. Governmental responses to development challenges have been partial, polarized, and ineffective, and state institutions lack the resources or legitimacy to provide effective policy solutions. Elected leaders, on the other hand, have tried to bridge this governance gap by enhancing their own policymaking powers, even if that comes at the expense of undermining institutional checks and balances.[63] Others have adopted "mano dura" (strong hand) policies to impose order and clamp down on dissent and violence at the expense of civil rights. Political elites have also mobilized their political parties or movements around "affective polarization" strategies to exploit hostile attitudes against opposite groups for electoral gain instead of building cross party reform coalitions.[64]

The specialized literature, Mejía reported, offers extensive accounts of how democracies are undermined through democratic means, how democratic backsliding affects political competition, and what strategies were adopted by the opposition to counter such attacks.[65] Recent work has also illustrated how democratic backsliding thrives in the context of weak states where legitimate political authority is contested by non-state actors.[66] Much less is known, he added, about how the combination of low-performance democracies and weak states affects service provision and undermines trust in the state and what are the existing entry points of policy and practice to revert this vicious cycle.

A precarious combination: flawed democracies in low-capacity states

On January 10, 2024, Ecuador's president, Daniel Noboa, declared an "internal armed conflict" against criminal groups and decreed a "state of emergency" to combat the escalating trend of gang and prison violence that had shocked the nation for the past four years. The escalating violence and drastic government response, Mejía said, marked a crisis for Ecuador, which had been known as "an island of peace" at the end of the century. Positioned between the two largest cocaine producers in South America (Colombia and Peru), "Ecuador has now become one of the most violent countries in the region, with a rate of 40 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants, including the killings of several municipal mayors and a presidential candidate in the past year."

Current research helps explain how Ecuador has gone from a model of commodity-led state expansion to an executive-led strategy of state erosion and institutional weakening.[67] Most of this institutional erosion, accompanied by democratic backsliding, took place during the Correa administration (2013-2017). "Even though Ecuador escaped the authoritarian nature of other 21st-century socialist regimes, in Venezuela, Bolivia, or Nicaragua, the return to democratic normalcy was punctured by political fragmentation and polarization, poor service provision and growing organized crime and violence," Professor Mejía writes.

The Ecuadorian example, he continued, illustrates the intrinsic connection between the quality of democracy and state capacity. Even when democratic pluralism is restored, the structural limitations of the state in providing public services, offering economic opportunities and safeguarding lives will eventually undermine citizens' trust in the workings—and benefits— of the democratic process. More than three decades ago, Guillermo O'Donnell demonstrated that a strong democracy is enabled by a high-functioning state that ensures an effective rule of law and safeguards citizens' rights and political liberties. Conversely, he coined the term "brown areas" to describe spaces where the state lacks a lawful presence, is unable to impose the rule of law, or constrain political abuses of power.[68]

Yet the literature studying democracy —and democratic backsliding— evolved along a separate track from the analysis of state capacity. The starting point of the divergence, Mejía noted, can be traced back to Latin America's transition to democracy during the late seventies and eighties. This "third wave of democratization" brought the hope for a more inclusive and pluralistic political participation in countries like Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, and Peru that endured decades of military dictatorships. At the same time, democratization coincided with the need for radical economic adjustments in the form of a market-oriented Washington-consensus type of reforms. This unfortunate sequence created the need for budget-cutting and a much-reduced state apparatus, precisely when newly democratized citizens expected greater state intervention to regulate privatizations, create employment and protect the most vulnerable populations from the consequences of economic adjustment.

For the next three decades, the combined goals of consolidating democratic governance, strengthening state capabilities, and facilitating market forces were hardly reconciled. Instead, they reinforced one another in a negative way. For example, the logic of advancing market reforms required that governments had a limited role in managing the economy, but to do this effectively, states had to develop stronger regulatory, monitoring, and sanctioning capacities. This "orthodox paradox," Mejía reported, was effectively discussed and illustrated in the literature.[69] Furthermore, the scope and magnitude of the proposed economic adjustment challenged the electoral mandate of new democratic governments. Elected leaders were tempted to reinterpret their popular mandates, expand their policymaking powers, and make decisive —and controversial—policy choices disregarding existing checks and balances, civil and political safeguards, or mechanisms of horizontal accountability. O'Donnell aptly labelled this direct governance style without horizontal checks and balances as a problem of Delegative Democracy.[70]

In the logic of democratic backsliding, democratically elected leaders can undermine democratic practices when they debilitate checks and balances, disregard or selectively apply the rule of law, and limit political competition.[71] Political polarization and extreme partisanship can hinder compromise and cooperation and lead to policy gridlock. Weak civil society and low citizen engagement can emerge if citizens feel disconnected from the political process and are unwilling or unable to hold governments to account.[72]

The unfortunate combination of flawed democracies with low-capacity states, Mejía noted, is an enduring and understudied phenomenon. Long ago, O'Donnell warned that states unable to uphold basic citizenship rights will tend to produce low-quality democracies. But political scientists Mazzuca and Munck warn about the cyclical relation between these two, as "the political actors who are powerful enough to initiate positive change – either by democratizing the political regime or carrying out reforms to increase state capacity – are opposed to such transformation, and the political actors who would benefit from change lack the power to produce it."[73]

Gradually, eroding states have also lost their capacity to maintain the monopoly over the use of force, Mejía added. First in Jamaica, Colombia, and Mexico in the past century, but more recently, several other Latin American countries are experiencing war-type levels of violence at the hands of non-state armed actors who have developed the means to control drugs, arms, mining and human trafficking of different sorts.[74] Furthermore, there is a growing literature documenting the extent to which organized crime spreads, with the consent and support of "rogue elements within the State that use their position in the State for illegal purposes and prey on citizens in deliberate ways."[75]

Can this vicious cycle be reversed? Professor Mejía asked. Given the questions raised by the complex history of democratic governance impeded by state incapacity and the resulting need to comply with the demands of the global market economy, he asserted, "it is clear that we need to understand better the structural determinants of democratic backsliding," if we are to arrest it.

Tax collection and the construction of a fiscal pact

One policy area affected by the precarious combination of a low-performing democracy embedded in a weak state, Mejía continued, is the management of a country's public finances. Analyzing public finances is a useful proxy to understand how spending priorities are negotiated, how to advance or block political agendas and where to open policy spaces to advance a more equitable income redistribution. In the absence of strong institutional checks and balances, the transparent management of public monies is also affected. When public servants are chosen by political favors instead of merit, they will have few incentives or mixed loyalties to ensure fiscal discipline, spend selectively, or collect revenues from all. Yet citizens understandably expect the state to respond and address governance challenges in exchange for the taxes they pay. The basic notion of a fiscal pact establishes mutual accountability between the state and society. If the government is unable or unwilling to deliver better services, citizens could opt-out of the fiscal pact, refuse to pay taxes and contract other agents to provide them with healthcare, education, or security.[76] But, as Mejía pointed out, tax compliance, and greater tax evasion in turn, would undermine state resources and further weaken democratic legitimacy.

States can also use fiscal resources to selectively reward or condition political support. For example, central governments use intergovernmental transfers intended for subnational governments to support and sponsor "authoritarian enclaves" at the subnational level.[77] States can also withhold or condition subnational government transfers in order to contain or promote the political careers of local mayors.[78]

Policymakers must determine how to mobilize tax reforms in a way that redistributes wealth in a more progressive, equitable manner. Following the debt crises in the eighties, Latin American countries confronted the need to increase their tax collection. Contrary to a principle of tax neutrality where the economic population is treated equally, a progressive tax seeks to collect a higher tax rate from individuals who are on a higher income bracket, whilst imposing a lower tax rate on low-income people.

The evidence from Latin America suggests that policymakers tend to privilege adopting value added (neutral) taxes rather than progressively taxing the income, property or wealth of citizens.[79] Although Latin American states could greatly benefit from additional revenues to benefit, protect, or privilege the most vulnerable groups, progressive taxes are difficult to adopt because they would antagonize the economic and political elites.[80] There are very few instances of successful tax reforms that effectively manage to redistribute wealth, promote new business entrepreneurship, or deter consumption of negative substances (tobacco and alcohol but also sugar taxes). Accordingly, Mejía concluded that we need additional research in order to understand the political economy of adopting tax reforms.[81]

Another research challenge, he added, is to understand why voters in Latin America — where inequality is rampant— have not pushed for more progressive tax reforms. Except for countries like Costa Rica and Uruguay that embraced a state-driven welfare state, the rest of Latin American countries have systematically opposed or dismantled the adoption of progressive taxes.[82] While there is no single account of why medium and low-income voters don’t favor progressive tax reforms, there are two possible explanations. One has to do with citizens' lack of trust in a larger state, particularly when ineffective, weak, and sometimes predatory states tend to be the norm. A second explanation turns on high levels of labor informality, which reflects the precarious nature of economic activities; in conditions of uncertainty, citizens would strongly prefer economic certainties and benefits like fuel subsidies, rather than an abstract promise of wealth redistribution. These are questions, Mejía argued, that deserve their own research agenda.

Crafting spaces for change to empower civil society and break vicious cycles

“Thinking about spaces for policy change is something academia does not do explicitly,” Mejía declared. Demonstrating causal effects is hard, and it is difficult to observe short term change. Identifying specific entry points for policy change precisely requires having an enabling institutional environment (state capacity) and democratic/inclusive coalitions of citizens. There are three pathways, he observed, to producing more inclusive/progressive fiscal policies in an adverse environment: focus on service delivery initiatives, engage in effective messaging to produce behavioral change, and sustain a policy-oriented debate to increase transparency and accountability.

As noted, one of the key developmental challenges for governments is how to recover a basic level of democratic legitimacy when citizens do not benefit from any form of state protection or service provision. In a context of state erosion, alternative non-state actors—legal or illegal— are likely to proliferate to occupy or capture the spaces left by the state, and create protection rackets, extortion or use violent threats against citizens for their own benefit. In other words, governments face the double challenge of disbanding non-state actors whilst gaining democratic legitimacy through effective service provision.

Much can be learned from development cooperation efforts to expand and improve service provision in low-capacity non-democratic states, where the role of the state is disputed.[83] One lesson is "to stay engaged" with civil society organizations and contribute to crafting reform coalitions with unrepresented groups beyond the usual political actors. The notion of transversal governance is fundamental to support basic service provision (health, education, and water). The challenge is to identify and build "spaces for dialogue with the government on non-contentious issues and sectors like service delivery reforms in health, education or water, or focus on uncontentious aspects like improving market supply." Infrastructures for dialogue at national and subnational level are institutions, mechanisms, resources and skills through which dialogue between the state and the people can be maintained and social cohesion sustained. Supporting spaces for dialogue and building trust may lead to improvements in (more inclusive and participatory) governance processes.[84]

In addition, governance lessons elicited from non-democratic regimes may well be relevant for countries with backsliding democracies. Strengthening program activities that mobilize local interests (associations, cooperatives, professional groups) to create spaces of inclusive participation and good governance is one of these lessons. Promoting programs that reconcile a financial with a social component, or where private interests can align with protecting public benefits, is another.

Influencing policymaking through social accountability instruments

Restoring trust between citizens and the state is a precondition to cementing a social pact, Mejía explained. One pathway towards that goal is to restore spaces to discuss credible, evidence-based and public-serving policy choices; but there is relatively little insight on how to translate and communicate knowledge about democratic backsliding and how to advance democracy in undemocratic conditions.

There are multiple instruments and initiatives, however, that could empower citizens and civil society organizations to effectively hold States to account. In this regard Mejía mentioned specific actions such as sharing public information; using deliberative technology tools to reach consensus around policy initiatives; empowering civil society organizations to track and analyze public budgets, expenditures, and procurement processes; and, facilitating a participatory approach to monitoring and evaluating public service delivery. To be effective, he added, social accountability instruments need to be embedded in and supported by government institutions so they can respond to demands.

The "State of the Nation Program" (PEN), he added, is a participative and innovative research center dedicated to advancing sustainable human development for more than 30 years. PEN's research team comes from different disciplines and shares a commitment to producing high quality and timely research to illuminate policy debates at regional, national and subnational levels. By building social trust through research, it offers a credible platform to facilitate policy dialogues across different sectors. By partnering with diverse social sectors, PEN is able to reach broad audiences of policymakers, diplomats, academics, civil society and international organizations and media outlets. The Program is defined by three core principles: academic rigor, social legitimacy, and broad dissemination. This unusual but rich combination is part of PEN's success in explaining socioeconomic progress, illustrating policy alternatives and ultimately, influencing public policies to Costa Rican and Central American audiences. "As the Keough School continues to build its global policy influence," he concluded, "it can learn from PEN-like initiatives and expand its applied research-to-policy approach to the global south where Notre Dame has an important presence."[85]

Shandana Khan Mohmand and Timothy Power responded to the papers and presentations by Anne Mische, Kyle Jaros and Aníbal Pérez-Liñán.

From her perspective as a researcher on governance at an institute for development studies with policy actors as the audience, and with a global south lens in place, **Shandana Khan Mohmand** began her remarks by highlighting several take-aways from the papers:

1) We find democratic backsliding in unexpected places—not in protests, but in organized counter-protests (to shore up the regime), not in the arrest of judges, but in the very subtle purging and packing of courts. Abstract ideas of democratic backsliding can be very misleading, Mohmand said. The fine-grained analysis provided in these papers is an important corrective, as is the attention to the subnational and local levels, as well as to citizen action in the streets. In this way, she pointed out, we start to understand how citizens actually experience a certain (good or bad) quality of life connected to democratic relationships and dynamics.

2) Closely related is another strength of the papers, namely the excellent qualitative analysis that stands alongside the quantitative work. Using this dual analysis for comparative cases helps to explain how the same type of action by the same type of leaders in countries of roughly the same type can lead to very different kinds of outcomes given differing contextual conditions and configurations. The same action or policy—a judicial purge, for example— means different things and produces different outcomes depending on whether it occurs in the US, say, or in Venezuela.

3) Many or most current states of democracy and governance are the result of negotiations between states and citizens, and, as Mische's paper notes, these citizens can be quite unruly at times. "Unruly politics" is a concept used frequently at IDS, Mohmand added, and she urged all three authors to integrate the behavior of citizens-as-voters more fully into their analyses. In this respect, she questioned Mische's reading of Indian politics, particularly of the protests in India leading up to the 2014 elections and afterwards. Mische seems to interpret these protests as expressions of anti-partisanship and growing distrust of the government. But evidence shows that those elections reflected a growing polarization, Mohmand noted, and India seems "all about partisanship . . . so how do we square anti-partisanship with an increase in polarization, which deepens partisanship?" Scholarship shows that the partisan political mobilization of women helped the BJP come to power in India.

Drawing attention to such informal networks of activists and voters complements the focus on institutions. All three papers, Mohmand acknowledged, make reference to voters in one way or another, but the analysis could go deeper. For example, why do voters allow governments to get away with antidemocratic practices (e.g., courts functioning without judicial review)? Consider S.Y. Quraishi's book, *India's Experiment with Democracy: The Life of a Nation Through Its Elections,* which highlights the fact that the Indian judiciary is socially structured, socially embedded to such a degree that judges have begun to ignore political actors and pay attention, instead, only to those they think of as their own "constituency."

Turning to the paper by Jaros, Mohmand praised it for bringing into focus subnational dynamics; here again, at the state and local levels, tracking the attitudes of the voting public is crucial, not least in understanding why politicians and government officials seem to oscillate between confrontation and cooperation with China and other nations. Teasing out the role of the voter's voice would bring further richness to the analysis.

In advising the authors to give more attention to election politics—to the people, that is, who we want to see as voters and think clearly about their preferences and behaviors—Mohmand wants us to think about them in "a differentiated way," that is, within the frame of power and power configurations in society. This lens is important, she said, "because it is social structures that give voters various and different types of bargaining power, which means in turn that governments are negotiating with very different kinds of citizens, some of whom have a voice, some of whom don't." Voter agency, that is, is differentiated across different parts of society. Understanding this differentiation helps us also understand which citizens are willing to let governments get away with undemocratic policies and practices. Why and when do citizens—potential voters—make their voices heard and participate in the debate? When the government crosses or threatens to cross a certain threshold of backsliding beyond which citizens will start to change their minds?

We have not heard enough in the conference thus far, she continued, about political economy and power structures, but thinking about the social, structural foundations of governance, and the political-economic conditions within which it operates, we gain insight into the way in which these configurations create antidemocratic coalitions. Power and the share in power by some separates citizens into political coalitions that might support antidemocratic measures like purges of the judiciary. Here, the importance of understanding the role of social movements is crucial. These social-structural dynamics can also help explain why there are different behaviors across different states when it comes to relationships with other countries, as in Jaros' case.

Finally, Mohmand concluded, while it is gratifying to see the Keough School drawing upon data from many different countries, "we need to think about countries beyond case studies because very often engaging with these countries as individual entities also means altering our lenses to some extent." For example, the left-right politics familiar to some countries like the US makes very little sense once considering countries in South Asia and elsewhere where there are many parties and the parties don't divide neatly across left and right politics. When, for example, the main issue is incredible levels of poverty, every political party has to talk about redistribution to some extent, so this is not going to be a wedge issue to set apart parties from one another. (Or in Spain, where the huge population growth rate is the biggest challenge to maintaining anything like political unity or national integrity.) Most parties speak the same language on contraception and abortion. These are not issues that are going to set one party apart from other. However, the various national and subnational reactions to the Coronavirus pandemic and the vaccine mandate (or lack thereof), she added, have much to tell us about both the continuity and the gaps between the professed beliefs and actual behavior of citizens on the one hand, and the policies of their governments and elected officials, on the other.

Timothy Power began his commentary with an appreciation for what the Keough School is bringing to the public debate on democracy —as well as on climate and poverty and peace, all within the framework of IHD. This is values-driven research, he said. Social scientists are sometimes asked whether we do research with our hearts or our heads; we often choose our research questions with our hearts and we investigate them with our heads, and that's what we see in these papers and presentations, Power said. IHD is actually an aggregation of values that promote development and dignity, and we see some of these values playing out in this session: popular participation, rule of law, peaceful coexistence—old-fashioned values, if you will, but this is evidence-based research that makes concrete the struggle for them.

Turning first to the paper by Pérez-Liñán, Professor Power acknowledged that his/their institutionalist approach to governance and politics—unlike sociological or cultural approaches, which assume that reform (of hearts and minds) will be a long and difficult process—is relatively optimistic, "in that institutionalists think that you can get democracy right if you get the institutions right— if you get the design and function of democratic institution right and sustain them, then democracy will flourish." A good deal of the research produced at Notre Dame in the 1990s and 2000s held that assumption about parties and courts, legislatures and rules, and checks and balances—so "we were looking for best designs and the best practices."

Today, however, he continued, it becomes clear, as reflected in these papers, that institutional engineering can also be used to reverse democratic gains, so institutionalism is a double-edged sword. The assumption of Pérez-Liñán's paper about the hijacking of the courts by right-wing politicians is that politicians are the actors and the courts are being acted upon. One could look at politicians and judges operating within the constraints of the established institutions and laws, Power acknowledged, but there are also cases where it seems to be the other way around. This is "normatively uncomfortable" for institutionalists when they see, say, judges in Brazil (or the US) pushing back on presidential prerogatives in order to contain Bolsonaro (or Trump).

While one can sympathize with these activists, Power acknowledged, "I do wonder about the basis for the activism; I hate to use the expression 'activist judges' (in the US today an 'activist judge' is someone whose rulings I disagree with"—and, indeed, there is something known as judicial oversight. That said, institutionalists get queasy when institutions over-reach. Pérez-Liñán, in his paper, paints a picture of the stealthy undermining of courts, which adds up to a sort of stealthy undermining of democratic norms.

Here Professor Power invoked the ratchet effect, a concept illustrating the difficulty with reversing a course of action once a specific thing has occurred. Is there a ratchet effect here? Are authoritarian politicians ratcheting downward on courts—so that this is a one-way ticket to authoritarianism, as the first sentence of Pérez-Liñán's paper implies? Once this ratcheting down begins, is there any way back? Could Pérez-Liñán cite examples of where there was a way back, where people were able to halt and even reverse this downward spiral?

Power had a similar question for Mische, whose research on protests he found to be very wide ranging and encompassing. That said, he focused on a specific article that looks at the relationship between street politics and the generalized rejection of parties and politicians. This is fascinating, Power said, because the protests in São Paulo in 2013 or Chile in 2016 were general and spontaneous, so much so that when some protestors wading in tried to hold up a sign of a political party, they were chased right out of the crowd because nobody wanted partisanship. Mische's research, Power continued, suggested that protest movements may gain from generalized mistrust, but it also suggests that this generalized approach could have the effect of perpetuating the mistrust. Hence the ratchet effect: mistrust causes protests, and protesting deepens the charge of politicians being untrustworthy. Is there a way back? Mische's paper, he noted, suggested that the creation of new parties may ameliorate some elements of the protest movements (as in cases from Spain, Syria, and Greece) and create new factions like the Corbynist faction in the UK's Labor party, etc. —but some of the ways of reversing the spiral of mistrust have already faltered after a few years. It's a different, less flexible world today. Even five years ago the dominant outcome of the intersection between street politics and anti-partisan sentiment was the kind of popular authoritarianism exemplified by Bolsonaro. Again, are there counter-examples or strategies that could give us hope of democratic renewal?

Turning to the paper by Jaros, Power noted the connection between levels of cooperation with China and the particular state's degree of economic dependence on China; there are some positive correlations of state cooperation with trade, with investment, with student exchanges, and so on. That said, confrontation is not explained so easily by the same variables. Indeed, Kyle and his co-author find a weak relationship between the Republican vote-share in a state and the state's degree of confrontation with China, but they also make the case in the paper that the role of individual U.S. state governors is paramount.

Might you have considered, Power asked Jaros, whether the political ambitions of certain governors have anything to do with accelerating the confrontational stance? In the case of Ron DeSantis, it seems clear that antipathy towards China has become a valence issue along the lines of something like gun control (standing apart in the eyes of the electorate, that is, from whatever economic benefits to the state that would accrue as a result of greater cooperation with China). In that case, shouldn't we see ambitious politicians try to out "anti-China" each other, leading both of the main parties to have opinions on China that tend toward confrontation? In that sense, the election year of 2024 recalls something we've seen before in US history during the early Cold War, with the Soviet Union being the object of confrontation then, and both Nixon and Kennedy taking a similar anti-Soviet stance. Despite their differences, they were both elected to Congress in 1946 as young men and within a few years, they had cut their teeth on anti-communism and anti-Soviet politics—and both became president.

Power concluded his comments by asking: What can we take out of these papers for the Democracy and Governance research program of the Keough School? As a general proposition, he said, "Institutional engineering can be used to reverse democratic gains, and we find that popular aspirations sometimes transcend formal democratic politics and even material needs." In that sense, he continued, popular protests resonate closely with an aspiration for what we are calling IHD because they're about decisional autonomy and people wanting to be visible—to be seen, and acknowledged. Jaros's research adds an important dimension here, in that we see quite clearly that nation-states and international actors are no longer the only players in the global political order; subnational governments have to be taken into consideration, especially in a very polarized country like the US.

The three papers taken together, Power said, show us that the terrain of democracy and governance is becoming far more complex and variegated. It's no longer "democracy and governance" in the sense we learned of them in civics class as relatively staid and stable institutions in a tidy, constitutional world, comprising a small number of actors operating within clear checks and balances. The textbook view is probably gone forever. There are multiple actors, with old and new politics meshed in a living museum, where many older actors don't disappear but new ones come along. The Spanish party system is the perfect example: it includes parties dating back to the Civil War and parties dating only from the 2000s and 2010s.

One needs multiple levels of analysis to keep track of all the actors—local, state, national and international— and the non-linear forms of change; we no longer live under the illusion that we're all moving in a single direction. If you add all these complexities together, you find that all of this requires skill sets that no one person can possibly master or comprehend. Bringing scholars from different disciplines with expertise in different regions and political systems is now what is needed, and the Keough School is providing it with its clear-cut commitment to interdisciplinarity and to normative issues, which underlie so much of what we see happening in the world. The school, Professor Power concluded, provides the necessary connective tissue between people who have these different sets of skills that are required.

Jaros, responding to the questions posed to him by the two discussants, reassured Mohmand that his research with Newland pays close attention to existing public opinion, via the use of polling data and survey experiments. That said, the topic of US relations with China doesn't resonate with voters as much as one might think, and the majority of voters, while not favorable toward China, are not extremely hostile to China, apart from a sort of hard-core of strongly anti-China voters. Some of the politicians, especially in rural districts and states like Indiana, who are catering to these hard-core anti-China types, may be correct in understanding their own electoral base. But recent polling suggests that the majority doesn't want war with China, and there's an appetite for finding ways to peacefully co-exist. Nonetheless, politicians are adopting policies that are at odds with that balanced view, arguably doing things that are not necessarily making Americans safer but instead exacerbating tensions. It's important to understand that paradox and what's motivating some politicians to stake out increasingly extreme positions and try to outbid each other as China-haters. As Tim Power indicates, national political aspirations are at work, certainly in the case of a DeSantis or a Newsom (who, unlike DeSantis, is trying to establish his international credentials).

Mische took on the question of India posed by Mohmand. The broader question, Mische said, is how anti-partisanship and the strong distrust of institutions, on the one hand, and the re-embedding of parties, on the other, go hand-in-hand. How do partisan actors use and manipulate this generalized anti-partisan sentiment and distrust of politicians in general? Often they create a new party, moving beyond party systems that are more institutionalized. The new parties tend to be less institutionalized. In the case of Argentina, for example, you get protesters in the streets rejecting parties but soon you see politicians dressing in white intermingling with the protesters, starting to build a new anti-Peronist coalition. They try to turn anti-partisanship into anti-incumbency. In the Indian case you have the BJP and the

RSS as Modi's base, but he wins the first time by moving beyond the base and relying on a valence issue like corruption with a much broader, middle-class appeal. He turns generalized frustrations with corruption and the political system into a broad authoritarianism that transcends his own base. This is what some of these new populists are able to do—use the general mistrust of parties to expand beyond their base and create a more inclusive support.

If this is one of the lasting legacies of this particular protest wave, what do we do with that? There are two kinds of polarization, Mische noted— polarization between right or left, but also polarization within movements themselves, which is between institutional and anti-institutional politics. "And my recommendations is that institutional reformers not be afraid of movements and protests, and that protesters not abandon the state and institutional politics." Insider/Outsider coalitions would be my answer to the question: How do you transcend polarization? It's a little bit different from Schirch's discussion of how you talk across divides, which is also important. Rather, it's about how to engage in "full-field politics" and political interventions. For example, you may need disruption at times, but also at different times the patience that comes with institution-building.

Aníbal Pérez-Liñán responded to Tim Power's query about "racheting-down" judicial independence. Once a president purges the Supreme Court and puts all his people on the court, he said, a precedent is set so that whenever there is political realignment, the next government feels not only that they have the right but the duty to pack the courts again in their favor, because this court is illegitimate. But the key point about voters is that they perceive that now the court is delegitimized because they see it as partisan, and they start understanding every tribunal almost as an extension of the cabinet. In this situation every government has the right to create its own judiciary, and so it creates a political equilibrium in which everybody expects the court to be manipulated when a politician has the opportunity to do so.

We do have some historical examples where that cycle is changed, Pérez-Liñán continued. I think it happens because there is a particular political context in which the new government would like to capture the court. However, for whatever reason they can't and so they change the court partially and all of a sudden you have a rebalanced court again. Or, even better, they don't have the political capital to pack the court at all, and then they are forced to deal with an independent court. These historical reversals of "ratcheting downwards" trends are rare, he admitted.

In the discussion that followed, the audience was invited to make comments or ask questions. **Sue Mirza**, a member of the Keough School's advisory council, said she wondered if political scientists have created or could create a matrix or typology of citizen protest movements that might demonstrate the relative success or popularity that comes with an overt focus on human rights and human dignity—on IHD values, that is. In response, Mische noted that there are a number of different attempts to catalog movements and think about their outcomes, but nothing that looks specifically into the question of affiliation with IHD-resonant values or goals. But this idea, and how it could be done is worth considering, she added.

Rafat Ansari, also a member of the Keough School Advisory Council, brought up what is known as “the China problem,” namely the stunning economic success of the undemocratic Chinese regime, especially in lifting millions of people out of poverty in a relatively short time. If China had been a democratic government 50 years ago, Rafat suggested, we might not have seen such progress. What do we make of that? Ansari also raised the specter of the failed US attempt to democratize Iraq and influence Libya. Then, he added, there are countries that have a pseudo-democracy in that they are run by the military for all intents and purposes. How do we think about them on the democracy scale?

Jaros responded by noting that democracy definitions are on a sliding scale; China calls itself a democracy, for example. He referred to a Master’s class on research design which he taught recently and which featured a lively debate over who gets to choose what is and what is not a democracy, with some of the students, from sub-Saharan Africa in particular, objecting to the assumption that the West or the Global North has a monopoly on what constitutes a democracy. Of course, one can be a democratic relativist and allow every country, including North Korea and China, to define what democracy means in a way that suits their interests, or the interests of their leaders. “I don’t think that most citizens in China share Xi Jinping’s definition of democracy,” Jaros added, “but you do find yourself at an impasse if you have no common metrics or baseline.” Finding consensus is important but very difficult when voices from all over the world and from different political cultures are involved in creating working definitions of democracy. There is actually a strong commitment in most parts of the world to the idea of democracy, Jaros added, but the term itself has become hegemonic and its meaning varies culturally. One cannot assume that the same political system is appropriate in every case, but we do want a core set of commitments (like IHD) that is somewhat context-independent, or is able to be applied and defined and given substance within each context. Unfortunately, democracy as a term has been hollowed out in some ways.

As we’ve seen in this session, Mische noted, there is disagreement about the degree to which democracy is about institutions or about popular participation, or about other things. During the protests she studied in Brazil in 2013, when the strong critiques of the political parties began to surface, representatives of the parties screamed that “Anti-partisanship is Fascist,” because Mussolini banned political parties. In response the neo-anarchist version of anti-partisanship said, “No, parties get in the way of democracy; anti-partisanship is direct democracy and we need to deepen direct democracy.” Historically, Mische continued, we do know that all democracies are incomplete, and need to be continuously challenged by those that are excluded.

Mohmand commented that the connection between democracy, citizenshipm, and IHD is that if you cannot give citizens what they want under democracy, they are certainly not going to get it under other forms of governance. In my classes, she said, students will bring up Singapore, not China. I respond that if you get a benevolent authoritarian system in power, how do you guarantee that it remains benevolent if you cannot put those safeguards and guardrails in place? If you cannot do that under democracy, another government isn't going to be able to do that. "What it comes down to is the structures of power in which democracy is embedded, and thus the question becomes, 'How do we fix those structures rather than move away from the principles of democracy altogether?'" As with democracy, few will disagree that human rights are important, but they disagree on the practice of it, because power interests and configurations of power in society get in the way.

Power noted that from 1990 until Xi Jinping, China was a form of consultative authoritarianism with rapidly rising living standards. As Ronald Reagan once said, "You can't argue with success." People's material lives improved. Ansari cited Libya and Iraq, Powers said, but those countries have a very different standard of living than China. "That said, if we were to judge governance only by some material criteria, as with Singapore as well as China, we wouldn't need values at all; we wouldn't need to inject them into our debate," he continued. "But my concept of human development is similar to Amartya Sen's, namely, that human development is about the continuous expansion of human choice. Progress in China—its consumption revolution— has vastly expanded people's choices about their lifestyles, and where they can send their children to school, and when they can travel. That's all wonderful, but I think another aspect of human choice is being able to replace your government. That is not possible for a Chinese citizen." So, what if your government falters, would you be able to replace it? Cubans ask the same questions about themselves, and so do lots of other citizens, "so we need to be able to incorporate values regarding both the material and the aspirational aspects of political engagement," Power concluded.

Pérez-Liñán added that Rafat's question is uncomfortable, but a great one that we have been asking for decades. An earlier version of it came in the 1960s when political scientists wondered whether military regimes were more effectively promoting economic growth, and economists have also been dealing with this question for some time. The basic answer was that, on average, democracy and dictatorships grow at the same rate—for every China, you have a catastrophe like Cuba—but dictatorships bring much more instability and uncertainty in what they deliver—sometimes they may be extraordinary, sometimes catastrophic. Recently the consensus has shifted toward the view that democracies tend to outperform dictatorships because of their institutional guarantees of the rule of law, property rights, and of other core requirements of consistent economic performance.

What Power was saying, Pérez-Liñán emphasized, is very important: If we think about development in a comprehensive way, in the sense of IHD, then respect for human dignity must be a fundamental characteristic of political regimes and forms of government. "When respect for human dignity and the rule of law are the center of the government, then even if and when they underperform, they are delivering other forms of goods."

What we must remember, he said by way of conclusion, is that democracies are moving targets. We tend to be unsatisfied with democracy, as Mische's work on protest movements reminds us, but that dissatisfaction, history shows, can lead to reforms that foster democracies more and more in line with the values of IHD. Up until the early twentieth century, for example, democracy meant voting by men only. "So we must keep in mind that the very nature of our definition of democracy will change over time, hopefully for the better."

Miguel Loureiro and Jorge Vargas-Cullell responded to the papers and presentations by Abby Córdova and Andres Mejía Acosta.

Miguel Loureiro, addressing Andres Mejía Acosta's analysis of the relationship between democratic backsliding and erosion of state capacity, noted that if you map out countries on an X-axis ranging across from authoritarian regimes to democracies, you'll see countries all across the spectrum, exhibiting varying degrees of characteristics associated with the ideal types. If the Y-axis tracks state competence or capacity, you see a similar scattering across a wide range—non-democratic countries that are incompetent or of weak stake capacity; outliers like non-democratic China and Vietnam with strong state capacity; democracies that are weak states with low capacity; and, finally, democracies that deliver to a certain extent. What we're seeing lately, however, he noted, is state capacity getting worse and many countries becoming less democratic. (Loureiro here cited, with gratitude, the Variety of Democracies data that provides countries' trajectories and trends over their histories.) In short, he said, "We know there are different types of, and paths to, democratic backsliding. These kinds of nuances and details make for a fascinating study and make generalizations difficult to come by. However, the papers and discussion in this and the earlier session are suitably nuanced and cautious, including being wary of blanket definitions of democracy—an academic temptation which is difficult to avoid."

The paper by Mejía Acosta, Loureiro continued, recognizes that there are different types and causes of democratic backsliding. It's not just the effect of voter authorization of weak democracy; sometimes, those who are elected on a pro-democracy platform eat away at democracy's foundations. And/or elected leaders simply start behaving like Leviathan and feed polarization as a way of hanging on to power. This diversity of paths away from democracy, he urged, must be studied from a comparative perspective, as the Keough School and others are doing.

On the question of state capacity, Loureiro cited a study on the intersection between state fragility and authoritarianism which argues that the social contract within each state best indicates the actual levels of state fragility.[86] Moreover, the capacity of a given state may not be comprehensive or coherent but appears scattered and arranged in bits, given the architecture and infrastructure of the state in question. If Mejía Acosta were to probe a bit deeper into this point, into the fine grain of the particular cases, Loureiro recommended, it would make for a richer analysis.

In terms of "quick wins" for the state, service delivery is one, but not always assured in the long term. Health care and especially education are not as amenable to "quick wins." A recent study for the Foreign Ministry of the Netherlands which looked at service delivery for weak states—Afghanistan, Sudan and Mali— documents this point.[87] At IDS, Loureiro continued, we work with NRAs—national revenue authorities, which are units within governments dedicated to increasing revenues from taxes. When anticorruption campaigns are proposed, the key to their efficacy is transparent and accountable financial management. But how do you implement such measures when you have fragile social contracts where transparency, and accountability are not required? Why would states do it, if the social contract with the citizens does not demand such provisions?

Turning to the paper and presentation by Córdova, Loureiro agreed that in contributing to the normalization of gender-based violence against women, authoritarian leaders shape public opinion in order to reinforce hegemonic masculinity. They increase the distrust of women in the state, by the state. This is a problem not just for Central America, he added, but for North America as well because women are migrating up north (or trying to migrate). In terms of militarized masculinity as central to public security strategy (e.g., male leaders being tough on crime), Loureiro and others have studied the literature on "strong men" ruling in Burundi, Egypt, Rwanda and elsewhere; security concerns often trumped up, are a justification for authoritarianism and democratic backsliding. How does one counter this? The solution that Córdova brings up in her paper is to form preventive networks. The literature on policy coalitions and advocacy networks is relevant here, and could be integrated more into the paper, in that it suggests that civil society organizations led by women gain traction because they are trusted and they can mount campaigns fostering solidarity. But who are their allies? This may depend in part on which categories state policies are targeting—are they targeting gender? Class? What about allies within the state, what Guillermo O'Donnell called "the softliners"? These bureaucrats can actually resist backsliding, as studies of their involvement in civil society organizations in Brazil show. Studies by Raewyn Connell or Alan Johnson on patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity are relevant here, as are studies of feminist bureaucrats.

Jorge Vargas-Cullell opened his remarks by commenting on the panel's title, "From Evidence to Action" and asking, in other words, 'Will knowledge set us free?' The assumption behind this title, Vargas-Cullell averred, is that good evidence and information, expertly disseminated, will persuade people to engage in collective action for good. But is it true that evidence persuades people? "This is my question from 25 years of bridging academia with civil participation in public life and with power brokers, and in trying to connect research, data and analysis with improving the quality of participation and the quality of public policymaking."

Vargas-Cullell acknowledged his skepticism about the assumption that good evidence triggers normatively meaningful action. The flaw in this reasoning, he argued, is the typical academic's idea of what evidence is and what counts as "evidence." Data is part of evidence, of course, he continued, but it's not the whole story. Vargas-Cullell then recounted that he once was talking to a powerful power broker in a Central American country. The power broker was told that 70 percent of the children in his country are malnourished. His response was to point to the "good news" about the 30 percent who received sufficient nourishment. "He and I walked away with entirely different stories about the same data," Jorge noted. "The lesson? Know your audience; know your policymaker. In order to understand what counts as evidence, you must know who you are talking to. Your research is virtually useless if it is not meaningful from a practical perspective. What is the mindset of your interlocutor?" Some government officials really want to solve development problems, he added, while others just want to cling to power. "We academic researchers tend to be driven by data; we don't take a demand-driven approach. What does your audience want to learn? Producing relevant data requires that you incorporate the needs and goals of your policy audience(s) into the research design *from the very beginning*." You have to build the audience into your design, he urged. This does not mean that you bend your data or research design to meet policy officials' needs; to the contrary, Vargas-Cullell said, you will not always be bringing him good news. Rather, you may be saying: "You need to increase taxes by X percentage if you want to fund Y, but the political climate makes X unfeasible." You have to address the questions *he* is asking to capture *his* imagination, not only talk about your data.

A second problem, he continued, with the seemingly straightforward proposition "evidence leading to action" is that, unfortunately, evidence does not speak for itself; it has to be interpreted. This requires bowing to cognitive capabilities. "Sometimes people don't know percentages, they don't know what regression is. That's just like Martian language to them. You have to sit down and be aware of your report potentially being lost in translation. It is not that people are not intelligent. They are highly intelligent people. They are simply working within another type of reality, so given that the data does not speak for itself, we need to ensure it does not become irrelevant to your audiences."

We humans, from the most sophisticated to the most ordinary, think by metaphors and stories, Vargas-Cullell insisted. You have to have a good story; narrative is important. What is the story you are trying to tell? "I've found that most academics don't have a story to tell. They have a research tool or method or finding to convey. They do not have a meaningful story for people who are often enmeshed within very complicated situations, often power games (e.g. 'X is advising me to raise taxes, but I have this coalition partner that's going to kill me, and then if the guys who funded my campaign get wind of this . . . how do I sell this?') Find the narrative that addresses such dilemmas as well as your date without bending it; that is crucial. We use our data, of course, and need to be loyal to it, but we need to embed it within a meaningful story for a human being that thinks in and through images and metaphors."

A third challenge, he noted, in moving "from evidence to action": What does "action" mean? Know your limits here. Your audience knows what kinds of actions they can take, or not, in response to the information and the stories you provide them. "You must also ask yourself: What is my borderline in crossing from evidence to action, how far can I go in recommending certain steps that may not comport with my own values (or with Notre Dame's values and interests)?" At the Keough School and Notre Dame, Vargas-Cullell observed, you are working in some very difficult countries. "Where do you stop when you engage with actors that need you and may use you because they need your reputation and your name?"

In response to Loureiro's comment that allies for social change can be found even within authoritarian regimes, Córdova said that, yes, but these potential allies from within may be fearful, so when and how we engage them is related to Vargas-Cullell's comment that we researchers are always speakingto two players. One is the political elites within governments, but based on my personal experience and my research and also on case studies, I feel that once the government crosses a line and empowers a president who repeatedly defies the constitution and laws and who has a majority in Congress, we no longer can hope that the evidence you show to that government is going to change their minds unless it is beneficial for their political gain.

And so, Córdova continued, my other audience and my focus as a scholar is on citizens and the mobilization of citizens who favor justice and equality in general, not just gender equality and can become advocates for human rights. "From public opinion polls we have evidence that once the high rate of popularity that these leaders have among the population begins to decline, citizens can make a difference," she said, "maybe not dramatically in the short run by bringing back democracy fully, but at least by shortening the period that these strong men are going to be empowered." Once you identify citizens as your audience, "the evidence suggests that you can change their hearts and minds based on specific information and cultivate in them a normative commitment to support human rights and to oppose authoritarianism. Some of my work shows experimentally that you can change the narrative and citizens minds, about the aggressive role of the military by providing quite specific information, for example, on the nefarious collusion between the military, the police and organized crime." Citizens tend to romanticize these institutions in these authoritarian countries, she noted, so evidence is important, but it's not any kind of evidence, as Jorge said, it's evidence that has been tested and that shows what works and what doesn't in terms of undermining this collusion.

Vargas-Cullell then asked, "Where do you want to stop trying to intervene with your research?" "As a faculty member at Notre Dame," Córdova responded, "I feel that I am part of civil society, global civil society—a very privileged member, of course. We are a non-partisan institution, but Notre Dame's mission calls for my contribution as a scholar to make a difference in the world. Since I came to the Keough School I've learned more about how to translate this research into a tool that can help others— and not only using it as a top-down mechanism but in studying and reporting the needs and aspirations of regular citizens on the ground."

Mejía Acosta offered a quick caveat on the limits of disclosing evidence because "when you are talking with organized armed groups, showing too much evidence in denouncing collusion can get you killed or imprisoned, and that is the real constraint within which we operate. Last year, a presidential candidate in Ecuador was assassinated a few days after saying he had the list of who is colluding with whom and who is receiving campaign funds from drug-dealing cartels."

Mejía Acosta continued by thanking Loureiro for recommending thinking in two dimensions about how the patterns of backsliding evolve, "particularly because I'm trying to document patterns of executive-led state erosion, so we talk about the dismantling of national democratic institutions, but there is also a trend whereby executives see it in their interest to dismantle state institutions, including the judiciary, but also the bureaucracy and reach of local governments, which opens another area for research that we need to understand." Mejía Acosta also thanked Loureiro for the shout-out to V-Dem (the Variety of Democracies project and data), which, he commented, "is probably an underutilized resource for policy-specific research."

Vargas-Cullell is right, Mejía Acosta continued, that it is essential to think about who the policy scholar's audiences are. When it comes to taxation, for example, local mayors are a very interested audience because it is in their interest to collect more taxes, a choice that is unpopular with the central level. (Interestingly, mayors don't organize along party lines but in mayors' associations, which organize across party lines to demand more taxes, more use of property taxes for investments.)

So: How do we identify our audience? And how do we tell a story about the issues that concern them? In my research, Mejía Acosta said, we're looking at national allocations to subnational governments. The pattern is very difficult to change because there's a lot of policy inertia. Once you set a trend in how the central government allocates intergovernmental transfers, it's hard to break. In Colombia in 2012 President Santos managed to strike a coalition with some native leaders from non-producing districts in order to redistribute the spoils from hydrocarbons, and passed a reform to distribute these revenues across producing and non-producing districts. The image he used in justifying this move was "let's spread the jam across the whole toast," which meant, essentially, "let's be fair to everybody."

William Clark then posed a question for Vargas-Cullell. Professor Clark said he has been spending a great of time in the last ten years trying to build an evidence base to answer your question of when knowledge leads to action and when it doesn't. "So what I want to raise," Clark continued, "is the question of where the Keough School programs, with their very appropriate focus on human dignity, come into this analysis of what needs to be the relationship between expert evidence and action. “In our own work (on sustainability), we have to start with the person who is going to be acting and work back to determine the problem they have, rather than the one you want to sell them on. So the evidence you present needs to seem to them to be credible and truthful—you show evidence and you know what you’re talking about.” However, he added, “we also found that a big difference between evidence that was influential and evidence that was not, was whether the user saw it as consistent with her dignity.” By accepting this evidence, she wasn’t caving into experts who were above her or thinking themselves smarter than her—’as if I don’t know what I’m doing.’ Instead, we want her to say that ‘the experts are finally telling me what I need to do in a way that acknowledges or even enhances my self-respect.’” Frankly, as Vargas-Cullell said, Clark continued, “the way that many academics bring their evidence into a discussion with decision-makers is inconsistent with the decision-makers coming out of the meeting with their dignity intact.” So, “if the researcher tries to give their story while also engaging the dignity concerns of the Keough School, what will come out of it?”

Vargas-Cullell responded that there are many ways of doing that. One is involving the stakeholders from the very beginning of your research and even in the framing of the topic that you are going to research. And within the topic you want to research, what are the specific areas that interest the people you are consulting? Academics tend to think: “Well, I will investigate democracy because that’s my preference.” But you have to bring in the target audience from the very beginning and understand their perspective and viewpoints and identify the potential points of conflict from the beginning, Vargas-Cullell insisted, “because at the very end, all the people who are engaged power-plays have to have a good reason to kill you and another good reason not to kill you. That is, research lands within a social-political process. You bring the people in when you’re discussing the preliminary results so there is no surprise when you present final results—that allows people even to take some data and begin to consult with their specific constituencies and get their reactions.” The researcher and the audience can then strike a balance in the research report between what will be well-received and not so well-received.

“We can speak in the terms of human dignity in the abstract, of course, Vargas-Cullell continued, “but it comes across concretely in your applied research when we take people and their specific issues seriously. That means defining your research after getting their viewpoints and engaging them in dialogue along the way. Your research then proceeds alongside constant consultation and participation so you don’t surprise people. If people at the end tell you your data is shit, that means you didn’t bring them in from the beginning and walk with them along the way.” It’s like buying an insurance policy at the outset, he noted. “It’s not that you’re going to cave in to some power broker because sometimes you’re going to give them bad news. All the more reason, then, not to give them a reason to kill you or your research.”

In Guatemala 20 years ago, he concluded, we had to go ask permission to dig into homicides, a topic that could get researchers killed. One of the top powerful powerbrokers told us “no” initially, but reconsidered and struck a deal with us. “OK,” he told us, “you can investigate human rights as long as you also do research on property rights in Guatemala,” which is a very important right in the country. He was allowing us to investigate human rights, “but give me something in return.”

P.S., Vargas-Cullell added: “And never tell the officials or policymakers who commissioned or who are receiving the research: ‘What we really need is more research.’ You will quickly be shown the door.”

To the point about respecting the dignity of the policy or government official, Bill Clark used the analogy of presenting instructions to one’s children, who are tired of simply being told what to do “because I say so.” “To get my child to accept my argument, I had to leave the kid with some of sense of agency and autonomy,” Clarkrecalled. “If it’s just one more time of ignoring my dignity, then ‘the hell with you, I won’t do it,’ no matter how reasonable the instruction.”

Mahan Mirza emphasized the importance of how we tell the story of democracy promotion around the world. One perspective is that “this is not a story of spreading human rights and human dignity, but of enhancing the power of the Western world that wants to enrich itself.” According to this perspective, widespread in some regions of the world, when it serves the power interests, they go for democracy promotion, and when it serves the power interest, they go for democracy prevention. In short, there have been different kinds of outcomes for so-called democracy promotion. “So,” Professor Mirza concluded, “when you bring evidence of, say, Russian war crimes to support the US and the Western allies in their claims against Russia in its war with Ukraine because, you know, ‘democracy is good and dictators are bad,’ people of this perspective are going to need a lot more than ‘this is good for democracy’ to convince them, because they have a different story about what the West’s ‘promotion of democracy’ means.”

In the Peace Accords Matrix project, Echavarría commented, we think about what is a good story and how to embed our research data within a narrative. “But we’ve found that the question cannot be about the actors necessarily or your interlocutors; the story has to be about a certain process that would be good for the country. How do I make the implementation of peace accords more robust work for us?” Similarly, she added, Córdova’s question is, “how can I contribute to improving the conditions for gender equality?”

How, then, she asked, do we contribute with our stories to building or strengthening a process, to a systemic process and to just structural conditions?

Independent funding, Professor Echavarría added, is crucial to this advocacy work. "Research that makes political actors uncomfortable is inevitable, which is why we need the support of the advisory boards, the boards of trustees and independent donors, which allows us to contribute to a public and social debate that is democratic in its purest possible form and not being coopted by economic and political interests." Respect for human dignity also arises, she noted, when we interact and negotiate with former combatants, and with politicians with deep respect for the person (not always for the actions of the person), and of course people feel that you respect them and value them in their dignity beyond their specific actions. But when it comes to negotiating with political actors and formerly violent actors, "there are other ways of getting your message across."

Echavarría ended her intervention with a story. "When we were in Columbia recently, we were near the Darién Gap meeting with victims' organizations. We asked them about the violence that was happening in the territories and about their fears.'How do you manage to survive? Are you able to do your work?' And they responded: 'Only because of the protection the Church provides us.' (Not the people with the vast UN resources.) "The moral of that story," she concluded, "is that you can also look for mediators and partners, and for other gatekeepers, that are not necessarily political actors or violent actors."

Vargas-Cullell concluded the session by indicating that the images we push forward can be simple and powerful. "The stories underneath can be complex, but using metaphor and image does not mean that you are being simplistic. As Echavarría knows, trust is essential and building that trust through powerful images and stories makes the research meaningful."

Endnotes

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[3] See Rodrigo Tavares, *Paradiplomacy: Cities and States as Global Player*s (Oxford, UK and New York, NY: Oxford University Press,2016).

[4] David Vogel, *California Greenin’: How the Golden State Became an Environmental Leader* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018), Chapter 7.; Oswaldo Lucon and Jose Goldemberg,“Sao Paulo—The ‘Other’ Brazil: Different Pathways on Climate Change for State and Federal Actors,” *Journal of Environment and Development* 19, no. 3(2010): 335-357.

[5] For an overview, see Czeslaw Tubilewicz and Natalie Omond, *The United States’ subnational relations with divided China: A constructivist approach to paradiplomacy* (Routledge, 2021).

[6] See Kyle A. Jaros and Sara Newland, “Paradiplomacy in Hard Times: Cooperation and Confrontation in Subnational US-China Relations,” Forthcoming at *Publius: Journal of Federalism*, (2024).

[7] Patricia M. Kim et al., “Should the US pursue a new Cold War with China?,” *Brookings Institution*s, September 1, 2023, https://www.brookings.edu/articles/should-the-us-pursue-a-new-cold-war-with-china/.; Christopher Carothers and Taiyi Sun, “Bipartisanship on China in a Polarized America,” *International Relations* (2023), https://doi.org/10.1177/00471178231201.

[8] Indiana, for example, exported $5.2 billion in goods and services to China in 2021, making China the state’s third largest export market after Canada and Mexico. See “US Export Report 2022 [Data set],” *US-China Business Council*, April 20, 2022, . https://www.uschina.org/reports/us-export-report-2022.

[9] (Tubilewicz and Omond, 2021)

[10] In 2011, for example, the US federal government and Beijing launched a series of US-China Governors Forums at which subnational leaders could mingle and discuss cooperation opportunities. See Emily de la Bruyère and Nathan Picarsic, “All Over the Map: The Chinese Communist Party’s Subnational Interests in the United States,” *Foundation for Defense of Democracies*, November 15, 2021, https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2021/11/15/all-over-the-map/.

[11] See, for example, Kurt M. Campbell and Ely Ratner, “The China Reckoning,” *Foreign Affairs* 97, no.2 60-70.

[12] See Anna Gronewold,. “Pompeo to governors: China is watching you,” Politico, February 8, 2020,. https://www.politico.com/news/2020/02/08/mike-pompeo-governors-china-112539.; Christopher Wray, “The Threat Posed by the Chinese Government and the Chinese Communist Party to the Economic and National Security of the United States,” FBI, July 7, 2020,. https://www.fbi.gov/news/speeches/the-threat-posed-by-the-chinese-government-and-the-chinese-communist-party-

to-the-economic-and-national-security-of-the-united-states.

[13] Such cases are discussed in Larry Diamond and Orville Schell, eds.,*China's Influence & American Interests: Promoting Constructive Vigilance. Report of the Working Group on Chinese Influence Activities in the United States* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press,2019).

[14] Cheng Li and Xiuyue Zhao highlight the valuable economic, educational, and cultural links US states and cities have formed with China, and express hopes that steady subnational engagement might calm the bilateral relationship. Cheng Li and Xiuye Zhao, "America's governors and mayors have a stake in US-China relations," *Brookings Institution*, January 14, 2021, https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2021/01/14/americas-governors-and-mayors-have-a-stake-in-us-china-relations.

[15] (de la Bruyère and Picarsic, 2021).

[16] See, for example, US Senator Marsha Blackburn's critiques of sister-city relations with China. "Blackburn exposes Chinese partnerships across USA." Website of Senator Marsha Blackburn, April 18, 2023, https://www.blackburn.senate.gov/2023/4/issues/china/blackburn-exposes-chinese-partnerships-across-usa.

[17] Jaros and Newland elaborate on these risks in a recently published policy report. See Kyle A. Jaros and Sara A. Newland,"Bridges or Battlegrounds? American Cities in a Changing US-China Relationship," Truman Center for National Policy, February 26, 2025, https://www.trumancenter.org/news-posts/truman-center-launches-new-report-american-cities-in-a-changing-us-china-relationship.

[18] In the case of California, which has pursued far-reaching and durable engagement with China, the personal role of governors looms large. Jerry Brown traveled to China in 2013 and again in 2017, not merely to strengthen economic relations but also to institutionalize climate cooperation between the state and Chinese central and subnational government actors. Brown's successor, Gavin Newsom, took his own high-profile trip to China in October 2023 to sustain such climate cooperation and to encourage the rebuilding of official dialogue between US and Chinese officials. As the first US governor to visit China since Covid-19 and the leader of the largest US state and the world's fifth largest economy, Newsom was received exuberantly and granted an audience with Xi Jinping. On the other extreme, Florida governor Ron DeSantis made combating CCP influence in the state a centerpiece of his agenda. DeSantis has enacted multiple executive orders and signed multiple pieces of legislation that curb Chinese real estate purchases, limit university cooperation with China, and limit government procurement from China.

Even governors operating between these poles of cooperation and confrontation can generate a significant personal influence on states' China relations, particularly when they play to both sides or pivot sharply. In Indiana, Republican governor Eric Holcomb maintained close and cooperative relations with Indiana's sister-province Zhejiang after taking office, hosting Zhejiang's leader in 2017 and leading a trade mission to China in 2019 during the thick of the Trump trade war. As Covid-19 travel restrictions eased, Holcomb revamped economic relations with the PRC by hosting Chinese ambassador Qin Gang at Indiana's Global Economic Summit. Later in the year, however, he angered the PRC government by leading a trade delegation to Taiwan, the first by an Indiana governor in almost two decades. As anti-China sentiment mounted in Indiana, Holcomb avoided inflammatory rhetoric but quietly signed off on new laws restricting Chinese investment in the state and divesting Indiana's pension fund from the PRC.

[19] Jaros adds: "One indication of this is the way 'paradiplomacy' by state leaders, can pave the way to national-level diplomatic breakthroughs. The positive sentiment fostered by Gavin Newsom's 2023 China trip is credited by many of our interviewees as having set the stage for Xi Jinping's visit the following month to the San Francisco Bay Area, where he attended the APEC summit and held high-level meetings with US President Joe Biden. On the other side of the ledger, a recent parade of US governor visits to Taiwan has strengthened de facto US political and economic ties with Taiwan and increased the PRC's anxieties on cross-strait issues."

[20] This section draws on ideas from Kyle A. Jaros, "State-level US-China Relations at the Crossroads: Predicaments and Prospects for Subnational Engagement," *2022-2023 Wilson China Fellows: Essays on China and U.S. Policy* (Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2023); and, from Kyle A. Jaros and Sara Newland, "Federal anti-China sentiment is increasingly seeping into state laws," *The Hill*, April 28, 2023, https://thehill.com/opinion/international/3975855-federal-anti-china-sentiment-is-increasingly-seeping-into-state-laws/ .

[21] The Biden administration's creation of a State Department Special Representative for City and State Diplomacy to provide diplomatic assistance and resources to states and cities was a helpful step in the right direction. This unit should be expanded, but is currently at risk of being discontinued.

[22] Thomas Carothers and Brendan Harnett, "Protests in 2023: Widespread Citizen Anger Continues, With Sources Multiplying," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, December 18, 2023, https://carnegieendowment.org/posts/2023/12/protests-in-2023-widespread-citizen-anger-continues-with-sources-multiplying?lang=en.

[23] Paolo Gerbaudo, *The Mask and the Flag: Populism, Citizenism, and Global Protest, Illustrated edition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

[24] The Global Protest Tracker of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace is a terrific resource for researchers.

[25] Doug McAdam,Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press,2001).

[26] The slogan of the 2011 uprising in Egypt was "bread, freedom, and social justice," expressing grievances and hopes that spanned economic, political, and social domains. Mona El-Ghobashy, *Bread and Freedom: Egypt's Revolutionary Situation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2021).

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[28] Charles Tilly, *Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511804922.

[29] Paul D. Almeida, "Opportunity Organizations and Threat-Induced Contention: Protest Waves in Authoritarian Settings," *American Journal of Sociology* 109, no. 2 (2003): 345–400.; Charles Tilly, and Sidney Tarrow, Contentious Politics, 2nd edition. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015).

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[31] Gomás Gold, and Ann Mische,"Channeling Anti-Partisan Contention: Field Structures and

Partisan Strategies in a Global Protest Wave (2008-2016)," *American Journal of Sociology* 129, no. 6 (May 2024).

[32] The Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) is a multi-dimensional index for conceptualizing and measuring democracy. Information and data can be found here.

[33] Angela Alonso and Ann Mische, "Changing Repertoires and Partisan Ambivalence in the New Brazilian Protests," *Bulletin of Latin American Researc*h 36, no. 2 (2017). Mische has also written about the Brazilian protests in two extended blog posts in Mobilizing Ideas, shortly after the protests in 2013 and during Bolsonaro's campaign in 2018.

[34] Angela Alonso, *Treze: A política de rua de Lula a Dilma*, 1st edition (Companhia das Letras, 2023).

[35] Richard Youngs, ed., *The Mobilization of Conservative Civil Society* (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2018), https://carnegieeurope.eu/2018/10/04/mobilization-of-conservative-civil-society-pub-77366.

[36] David Pettinichio, "Institutional Activism: Reconsidering the Insider/Outsider Dichotomy," *Sociology Compas*s 6, (2012): 499-510.

[37] See two public facing essays by Mische: Ann Mische, "Pathways toward justice: Protest and the disruptive imagination," *Dignity and Development Blog, Keough School of Global Affairs, University of Notre Dame*, July 20, 2020, https://keough.nd.edu/news-and-events/news/pathways-toward-justice-protest-and-the-disruptive-imagination/ ; Ann Mische, "Between Disruption and Coordination: Building Insider-Outsider Strategies," *Peace Policy Blog, Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, University of Notre Dame*, September 15, 2020, https://peacepolicy.nd.edu/2020/09/15/between-disruption-and-coordination-building-insider-outsider-strategies/.

[38] Scenario exercises convene heterogeneous (and sometimes adversarial) groups of participants, ranging from academic or professional experts to government and corporate leaders, social movements, civil society organizations, and local residents or citizens. Some are national in scope (the future of Kenya or Indonesia) while others have global, regional, or municipal foci (the future of global climate governance, democracy in Latin America, or urban informality in Bangkok). These projects have been supported by transnational networks of researchers, consultants, and donors. Some involve broad public or stakeholder dialogues, while others rely on expert consultations. They vary in the degree to which they understand their work as "political," that is, as engaged with public advocacy, institutional reform efforts, or broader movements for social change. "Global Analysis,"

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[83] Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC, "Governance in Authoritarian Contexts, A Policy Note," (2022): p. 6, https://backend.sdc-pge.ch/fileservice/sdweb-docs-prod-sdcpgech-files/files/2024/01/09/116f5902-0430-43ba-b71b-968f9bc6ed0d.pdf.

[84] Ibid

[85] The Central American "Estado de la Región" report is another fine example of a practical policymaking instrument, offering high quality, accessible information to motivate public dialogues with broader audiences around public policy issues that affect everyone, particularly the most vulnerable.

[86] Robin Luckham, "Do Autocracy and Fragility Connect?," SDC Topic Paper (2021).

[87] Christoph Zürcher, et al., "Evidence on Aid (in)effectiveness in Highly Fragile States: A synthesis of three systematic reviews of aid to Afghanistan, Mali and South Sudan, 2008 - 2021,", WIDER Working Paper, No. 2022/160, The United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER), (2022).

Religion, Region, Culture, and Ethics

Central to the Keough School's mission to advance integral human development is expertise in the study of religion, culture, and ethics as these dimensions of social life and thought shape and are shaped by the specific histories and present-day realities of different regions of the world. Religion, culture, ethics and region therefore cut across and inform the four core research topics of Strategic Plan 2030: poverty, peace, democracy and governance, and sustainability and environmental justice. Three sessions of the conference explored these variables in the context of IHD.

Session I: Advancing IHD: Religion and Ethics

Opening the session with a reflection on "the integrating force of disruptive questions," **Clemens Sedmak** quoted from *Ah, But Your Land Is Beautiful*, the novel by the South African anti-apartheid activist Alan Paton: "When I go up there, which is my intention, the Big Judge will say to me, 'Where are your wounds?' and if I say I haven't any, he will say, 'Was there nothing to fight for?' I couldn't face that question."

The quote "encapsulates in a nutshell the idea of integral human development—the development of each person and the whole person. No one is to be left behind," Professor Sedmak remarked. The struggle for justice inevitably comes at a great cost, insisted Paton: Where are your wounds? What got you out of bed in the morning? Who are the wounded and vulnerable? Why engage in the fight against injustices? Could there indeed be "a big judge" or "a final judgment"? "These are all questions," Sedmak noted, "about purpose, vulnerability, injustice, and, yes indeed, 'the last things.'"

Questions of ethics and religion are important lenses for an approach to human flourishing and development. "Indeed, integral human development can be understood as an invitation to ask normative questions about the why and the how and the whereto."

Ethical discourses explore the questions of how we should live, as individuals, as a community, and as humanity. Advocates of IHD are committed to the view that there is no morally neutral ground in politics, economics, and social lives. Ethical inquiry is not an add-on to substantial questions, Sedmak argued. Rather, "it poses a set of substantial questions itself: What is the point of prosperity? Which kind of economic growth can be justified? Why are global inequality and moral issues, and local injustices important to correct? How can we best describe and address the moral challenges of climate change, migration, violence and conflicts, artificial intelligence and misinformation? Which is the kind of society that we have reasons to aspire to?"

Religious traditions invite similar questions about the why and how of our societies, institutions, actions, and lives. They, too, ask "first questions" and "last questions." As Sedmak put it: "Where do we come from? Where does all that exists come from? Where are we going? Is there life after life? Is there something beyond 'the natural'?" Committed to a holistic understanding of human persons in all their dimensions, advocates of IHD take seriously the category of "openness to the transcendent." Given that 80 percent of the world's population has some kind of religious affiliation, the religious dimension of the human person has to be taken into account by those committed to "the whole person" and to "global affairs."

Such questions fall into one of three types, Professor Sedmak suggested: W-questions, P-questions, and L-questions.

"W-questions can be expressed in a simple word: why? For example: Why growth? What are good reasons for the desirability of economic growth?" In *Laudato Si* Pope Francis writes that

> . . . given the insatiable and irresponsible growth produced over many decades, we need also to think of containing growth by setting some reasonable limits and even retracing our steps before it is too late. The behavior of those who constantly consume and destroy, while others are not yet able to live in a way worthy of their human dignity, is unacceptable. That is why the time has come to accept decreased growth in some parts of the world, in order to provide resources for other places to experience healthy growth.[1]

The simple question "why" gives us pause: Why limit growth? Why global solidarity? Why a commitment to sustainability? Why consider future generations? The story of Bhutan's "Gross National Happiness," Sedmak continued, is, in a sense, a political translation of Why-questions inspired by the Buddhist tradition.

Already by 1968 Robert F. Kennedy had already anticipated the "Beyond GDP" movement by arguing that

> . . . the gross national product does not allow for the health of our children, the quality of their education or the joy of their play. It does not include the beauty of our poetry or the strength of our marriages, the intelligence of our public debate or the integrity of our public officials. It measures neither our wit nor our courage, neither our wisdom nor our learning, neither our compassion nor our devotion to our country, it measures everything in short, except that which makes life worthwhile.[2]

I

HD is an invitation to ask the systematic questions that help us examine the meaning and purpose of our individual and collective lives, structures and policies.

P-questions arise, Clemens continued, from respecting the particular. As a commitment to “the development of each person” IHD implies a special consideration of particular circumstances, local conditions and respect for the uniqueness of each person.

Harriet McBryde Johnson, for example, used a motorized wheelchair due to a neuromuscular disease and worked as a lawyer and disability rights activist. In a widely discussed article entitled “Unspeakable Conversations” (*New York Times Magazine*, February 16, 2003), McBryde Johnson reflects on her encounters with the Australian moral philosopher Peter Singer and her struggle to reconcile Singer’s “pleasant personality” with his secular, utilitarian views. His rejection of the principles of the sanctity of life and of human dignity, and his advocacy for voluntary euthanasia of certain categories of people, including the disabled, are views that Singer was not prepared to change and did not change on the basis of his dialogue and encounter with McBryde Johnson. She describes herself as “a shield from the terrible purity of Singer’s vision” and promises: “To justify my hopes that Singer’s theoretical world—and its entirely logical extensions—won’t become real, I’ll invoke the muck and mess and undeniable reality of disabled lives well lived.”

McBryde Johnson’s words, Sedmak writes, express both a moral and an epistemological struggle about “the cost and power of interconnectedness” and “the denial of disruption.” “Singer’s abstract, consistent, logical, universal position does not give way and does not make space for the messiness of real experiences with their particularities, inconsistencies, and concreteness.”

In his essay “Terrible Purity,” Mark Hopwood, reflecting on the moral significance of the particular, reads McBryde Johnson’s text as an attempt “not to advance general conclusions but rather to reveal the full humanity of the individuals concerned—not only herself but also Singer.” What is “terrible” about Singer’s approach, Hopwood argues, is not that it relies upon abstract argument, but that it implicitly regards anything that cannot be translated into abstract argument as irrelevant to the business of moral reasoning”[3]

The debate, Sedmak notes, raises the urgent questions: “What value and weight do we assign to particular experiences? And how and when do we allow the particular to disrupt the general, universal, abstract, consistent theory?” IHD, committed to P-questions, “will allow for the disruptive force of the particular, in the spirit of a principle of subsidiarity which encourages the particular to shape the general,” he writes. “The point of doing ethics is then not so much the construction of general principles, but the understanding of the particular in all its dimensions.”

Finally, L-questions are last questions, questions about last things, ultimate goods and ultimate purpose. A sense of the ultimate will inform choices and decisions. Thomas Aquinas holds that a prudent person assesses the proximate ends in the light of the ultimate good and the final end.[4]

Even though there is no consensus on questions of ultimate goods (and no universally accepted method to create consensus on that matter), Sedmak explained that advocates of IHD do not shy away from questions about moral goods and the ultimate good. Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights suggests moral goods such as freedom, equality, rights, and dignity, he noted, and the development economist Amartya Sen's "capabilities approach" establishes freedom as the highest moral good. In addition, a Rawlsian reading may suggest a certain understanding of justice as entwined with the German concept of *Grundgesetz*: dignity.

Questions about "last things," which can arise in the consideration of high and even the highest moral goods, can help to identify and critique structural injustices and moral evil, Sedmak added. IHD is an approach dedicated to these fundamental questions—an approach "that includes respect for people's religious traditions and practices, and a recognition of their relevance for understanding 'the whole person.'"

But there is an additional aspect of L-questions in that they remind us of the limits of rationality, arguments, and analysis, and they express respect for the possibility of a religious dimension "beyond ethics."

To illustrate this point, Sedmak recalled the tragic story of Rabbi Kalonymus Shapira, the spiritual leader in the Warsaw Ghetto, who was confronted with the total destruction of the Jewish people. Before his death, Rabbi Shapira buried a manuscript entitled *Esh Kodesh* (Holy Fire). At the beginning of the war the Rabbi had used the language of "God is testing his people," but his language changed significantly when the situation became more and more hopeless. In a lecture given in February 1942, Rabbi Shapiro began to talk about "divine weeping." Citing Isaiah 63:9, which describes God's pity for his people, he argued that because God is eternal, his pity must also be eternal. Divine pity, infinite and endless, goes beyond anything we as humans can imagine and even transcends anything in this world since everything here is finite and has an end. According to this reading of the scriptures, God keeps his suffering and pity to himself, there is no outward display: "But if you will not listen, my soul will weep in secret for your pride" (Jeremiah 13:17). "The Rabbi invites his people to be with God, to assist God in God's weeping," Professor Sedmak explained. "This is a dimension 'beyond ethics.' It is a dimension developed under the direst circumstances, a dimension only religions can give."

IHD may not be able to judge the validity of this approach, Sedmak acknowledged, but it will respect this mystical approach and be willing to learn from the teachings of a deeply religious person confronted with the end and extermination of his people.

"Integral human development, in a nutshell, will pay special attention to the instrument of questions, why-questions, questions of the particular, and last questions."

Professor Sedmak concluded his remarks with three stories (about fishermen and fisheries) to illustrate the concern underlying an IHD approach for the dignity and uniqueness of the human person and the dignified lives of all.

Story One: Louis Joseph Lebret spent the years 1929–40 "as a priest amongst French fishing communities and as a researcher-campaigner, eventually studying the fishing industry worldwide during 1937–39. His pastoral work exposed him to the pressures, disruptions and suffering in fishing towns and villages, caused by mechanization within the fishing industry and global competition in uncontrolled markets, exacerbated by economic crisis."[5] Confronted with these struggles he rediscovered the importance of the idea of the common good.

Another version of the same story: Lebret "began his ministry in Brittany, where he competed with Communists for the allegiance of dockworkers, and observed with dismay the threat posed to local fishermen by multinational companies claiming the most productive waters. In 1942, he founded a think tank focused on development issues—***Économie** et Humanisme*—dedicated to understanding a world with a growing gap between developed and 'under-developed' nations. Lebret moved away from a single-minded focus on economic growth toward a wider view, one that acknowledged 'the human need for transcendence.' Development meant not just 'having more' but 'being more.'"[6]

In other words, the concept of IHD was born with the question of sustainable fisheries. "This is a story about human-centered economies," Clemens remarked.

Story Two is about fisheries and has been told by Hans Lucht, a Scandinavian anthropologist who has studied the migration dynamics in the Ghanaian fisher village of Senya Beraku. Lucht witnessed and researched the dramatic decline in catches there, due to the overexploitation of fish stocks amid growing pressure on fish stocks by foreign vessels. He described the lack of opportunities that await fishermen put out of business by the depletion of marine resources; they turn to high-risk emigration, trying to make their way to Europe.

"Integral human development is an invitation to look at the whole person," Sedmak noted, so we must ask, "Why do people migrate and take immense risks?" Lucht provides a thick description and offers a rich understanding of the particular situation of this village – in order to understand the moral complexities. People leave their villages, also because of their "dignity needs," their needs to be recognized and to have social status. Young men leave the village not because they are starving but because they want to have a dignified life, where they are recognized as adults able to sustain a family. Tragically, in search of their dignity needs, they died or ended up in much worse situations in Libya or Southern Italy. "This is a story about dignity needs," Clemens remarked.[7]

Story Three is about the destruction of fisheries in Ukraine. In June 2023, Russian forces sabotaged the second-biggest reservoir in Ukraine, the Kakhovka reservoir on the Dnipro River. After they destroyed the Kakhovka dam, thousands of dead fish washed up on the shores on the Kakhovka reservoir. The ecological catastrophe is gigantic, the basis of the local fisheries was destroyed.[8] Sedmak commented:

> What we are witnessing in Ukraine after the Russian invasion in February 2022 can be called "integral human destruction" – the destruction of tangible infrastructure, but also the destruction of the intangible infrastructure through the erosion of trust, misinformation, and the creation of a climate of terror. This is also a religious dimension, since the conflict expresses conflicts between different Christian churches. You cannot understand "integral human destruction" without considering this religious dimension. This is a story about integral human destruction calling for nothing less than integral human development.

These commitments to human-centered economies, dignity needs, and resistance to integral human destruction, Sedmak explained, inform and animate IHD. These commitments, will shape the Keough School's approach to its core research area, he added:

> Researchers committed to IHD will tell stories about poverty, about democracy, about conflict and peace building, and sustainability in a certain way. A dignity-centered approach will recognize dignity needs and the need to ask hard moral questions about justice, inequality, redistribution, integral ecology, and about those who are left out and left behind. IHD may not be primarily a source of responses, but clearly a source of questions, including questions of ethics and religion. Integral human development is enacted through questions that disrupt any one-dimensional way of thinking. Paradoxically, it is through asking the questions emanating from religion and ethics that integration can happen through disruption.

In Alan Paton's novel the interlocutor, listening to the statement about meeting the Big Judge, "felt a burst of hope for the future." This desire for hope may be considered the main driver of IHD. "It asks simple questions, relevant both for ethics and religion: Where are your wounds? Where are the wounds of the earth? Where are the wounds of the poor?[9] What gives us hope? Where does our hope come from?"

Mahan Mirza affirmed that centering IHD makes a difference in the questions we ask:

> In economics, for example, a non-IHD approach might be concerned more with concepts like "growth" and "efficiency," whereas an IHD approach would be interested in terms like "equity" and "subjective wellbeing." In politics or international relations, a non-IHD approach would likely prefer a realist framework concentrating on raw power and influence, while an IHD perspective might prefer law, institutions, and fairness. In science and technology, a conventional approach would focus on discovery and innovation, while an IHD-centered approach would ask the question: "To what end?"

Indeed, advocates for IHD position value-laden norms at the center of policy-making in a world that expects "neutrality"—the descriptive rather than the prescriptive—as a default orientation. "We know well that secularism comes with its own set of values, which secular fundamentalists mask as neutral," Professor Mirza writes. "The true value of secularism, however, is not in providing neutral prescriptions. Indeed, there is no such thing. Rather, it is in creating neutral spaces where contending "oughts"—moral imperatives— that stem from disparate sources (whether scripture or tradition, science or experience) can be fairly debated. In order to be debated effectively, these moral imperatives must be expressed in public language that is intelligible to all."

Underlying such policy debates are explicit or implicit assumptions about how the world should be. Are our policies serving the "goods" we desire? What role should religious actors, in particular, play in these debates and in global affairs more generally?

With these questions in mind, Mirza proceeded to explain and defend the following theses:

1. *The world is experiencing a crisis.* One framework for analysis yields that the human race has never had it better. In *Enlightenment Now: The Case for Reason, Science, Humanism, and Progress*, Harvard's Steven Pinker argues that despite gory headlines and prophecies of doom, violence is on the decline and prosperity on the rise.[10] Bill Gates blurbs the book as "My new favorite book of all time." Best-selling historian Yuval Noah Harari, concurs. After affirming that we have, by and large, solved all our major problems—war, plague, and famine—he asks: "Like firefighters in a world without fire, so humankind in the twenty-first century needs to ask itself an unprecedented question: what are we going to do with ourselves?"[11]

Such analyses take little or no account of the inclusive priorities of IHD, which suggest that the human race is experiencing an unprecedented crisis, largely of its own making. "We have depleted the world's resources, blown past planetary limits, driven countless species to extinction, left far too many people behind in the path to prosperity, and we may soon find ourselves in a losing struggle to survive on an inhabitable planet," Mirza writes.
Among the noteworthy representatives of "the crisis school" is the economist Jeffrey Sachs, a

leading figure in advancing the UN's agenda for Sustainable Development. The current world system is failing humanity, he argues. "We must spend 3-4 percent of the global economy, which is on the order of $100 Trillion, to meet all of the UN's sustainable development goals (SDGs) by 2030. We are falling far short, even as we spend over four-to-five times of the needed amount (about $14 trillion) on arming ourselves with weapons of war. [12]

"Step by step," cautions Pope Francis, another leading figure of the crisis school, "we are moving towards catastrophe. Piece by piece the world risks becoming the theater of a unique Third World War."[13] The climate crisis, he argues, is actually one of myriad interrelated crises afflicting our inner and outer worlds:

> [W]e can see signs that things are now reaching a breaking point, due to the rapid pace of change and degradation; these are evident in large-scale natural disasters as well as social and even financial crises, for the world's problems cannot be analyzed or explained in isolation. There are regions now at high risk and, aside from all doomsday predictions, the present world system is certainly unsustainable.[14]

As if to concur, *The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*' Doomsday Clock, "a universally recognized indicator of the world's vulnerability to global catastrophe caused by man-made technologies," is currently set at 90 seconds to midnight, the closest it has ever been to "doomsday." [15]

2. *We may not be able to avert total collapse.* Ahmed Afzaal, a Muslim scholar, has written eloquently about our interconnected global crises, focusing on the responsibility of educators who are living through what he calls "the age of collapse." Afzaal sees no hope in humanity's ability to change course. For him, it is too late for that. Instead, humanity must come to terms with the unthinkable—a breakdown of global systems with a catastrophic reduction of human population in the years ahead. Since it is our responsibility as educators to prepare the next generation for the world they will likely inhabit, not the world that we currently live in, we must teach them about the looming disaster so that they can develop the skills to adapt.

Afzaal, Mirza writes, bases his arguments on complex systems analysis. When a complex system operates for any length of time beyond sustainable boundaries, a precipitous collapse follows. We have reached this point, contends Afzaal, as a natural outcome of the world's operating system—industrial capitalism—that sees "growth" as an end unto itself. "Business-as-usual" means we work ourselves to death, despite ourselves, in utter disregard for our own wellbeing or the wellbeing of the interconnected webs of life around us. Unless we change our operating system, the crisis will amplify, with each of us functioning as a cog in the wheel. But we cannot change course, argues Afzaal, even though we recognize the problem, because the institutions we have created exercise a kind of "soft determinism" on our individual agency.[16]

Many religions have faced the idea of collapse for centuries, Mirza noted. In the Islamic tradition, for example, the Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said, "If you are planting a tree, and you know the world will end tomorrow, still plant it."[17] This teaching typifies deontological ethics that center on "the right thing to do" rather than "the consequences of one's acts." A believer's duty is to plant; it is up to God to make the tree grow. Nobody knows for sure when the world will end, so we should not lose hope that our efforts to do good will yield fruit. To the question, "Does Interreligious Understanding Matter if the World Is Coming to an End?" Rabbi Rachel Mikva responds: "Our diverse spiritualities… cultivate deep roots for hope."[18]

3. *Any chance of averting collapse requires a paradigm shift.* In his final work, the sociologist Robert Bellah investigates the origin and development of religion in the context of the deep history of human evolution.[19] At every threshold of cultural development, he observes, "breakdowns precede breakthroughs." We seem to be standing at another such threshold, Mirza continued, as expressed in the famous verse by William Butler Yeats:

> *Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;*
> *Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,*
> *The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere*
> *The ceremony of innocence is drowned;*
> *The best lack all conviction, while the worst*
> *Are full of passionate intensity.*
> *Surely some revelation is at hand;*
> *Surely the Second Coming is at hand.*[20]

But "breakdown" doesn't necessarily mean "total collapse," Mirza argues. As Sachs has written, "We have a system, but we need a different system."[21] The philosopher Thomas Legrand calls for a "politics of being" that invites us to focus less on *having* more and more material goods to *being* in the world in ways that make us happy and fulfilled, without destroying the world around us.[22] Legrand draws on his training as an economist, experience in the development sector, understanding of global governance, wisdom from our many world religions, and the latest insights from scientific research to offer paradigm shifts in various sectors of human activity, from economics to childhood and family, food and agriculture to work and organization, education to health.

A core part of LeGrand's framework, Mirza explains, is the need for strong if not "virtuous" institutions. Institutions, like humans, can orient their actions toward virtue or vice. Again, Sachs makes this point eloquently: "The virtue or virtues required to enact and sustain the SDGs are virtues of nation-states or international political institutions (and in the case of happiness and well-being measures, virtues of these international institutions plus local communities and nation-states), rather than of individuals."[23] "A nation governed by excellent laws and institutions can withstand, for a time, widespread vice and selfishness among its people."[24]

According to Legrand, individual virtue and the virtue of institutions feed on each other, one amplifying the other in a positive cycle in culture. Take governance, for example. Legrand argues that adversarial democracy is hard-wired for vice: opponents, in order to distinguish themselves, must paint each other in the worst possible light. Cooperation with opponents is generally disincentivized during elections, which leads to damaging rhetoric that tears societies apart. Given the short-term thinking of politicians from election cycle to election cycle, democracies have demonstrated an inability to resolve long-term intergenerational problems on a planetary scale. Legrand affirms, however, that an alternative virtuous democracy is indeed possible. Thought experiments and scalable examples in the real world of such a system already exist.[25] Technology can also be harnessed for this purpose. Algorithms to generate policy solutions using online platforms for widespread consensus—as opposed to algorithms that promote polarization for the sake of maximizing profit—have been used successfully in places like Taiwan.

In the economic sector, Legrand agrees with Pope Francis that we need more attention to the common good and less to materialism as a measure of success. A focus on sustainability rather than growth, and a rejection of the "technocratic paradigm" are paramount. Following Bellah, Legrand sees our current breakdown as a harbinger of a breakthrough, a paradigm shift that could possibly lead us to "the good life." We have solutions, he believes, but we need a powerful movement to get us there.

4. *It is imperative to ramp up interreligious cooperation in a post-secular world.* Interreligious cooperation and good global governance are two keys to unlocking the new paradigm, Mirza posits. "The only way we're going to have a civilized world," Sachs proclaims, "is if we have a strong UN."[26] It has been over 30 years since UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali published his landmark "Agenda for Peace."[27] That document, Mirza contends, is radical in arguing that "the time of absolute and exclusive sovereignty . . . has passed; its theory was never matched by reality. It is the task of leaders of States today to understand this and to find a balance between the needs of good internal governance and the requirements of an ever more interdependent world."[28]

The interdependence of nations and peoples and all of creation is affirmed by science and by the teachings of the world's many religions and wisdom traditions, Mirza added. In a "post-secular" world, religious actors partnering with each other and with secular actors must collectively reimagine and then publicly articulate normative visions of the good relevant to mitigating or transforming the effects of the global crisis. Joint statements by Pope Francis and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, other collaborative pronouncements such as the Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together in partnership with the Shaykh of Azhar, singular powerful proclamations in papal encyclicals, or the public teachings of the Dalai Lama—these are only the first step.[29]

The Ethics in Action working group, an assembly of religious and secular leaders convened by the Vatican, recommends "the creation of an interreligious contact group for the UN secretary-general and UN Security Council."[30] Many obstacles stand in the way of creating such a contact group, Mirza acknowledged in closing. Foremost among them is the internal diversity and fragmentation of religions themselves. Not all are organized around an authoritative Magisterium. Which voices are to be included and which voices are to be excluded? How will dissent that emanates from the margins be managed? These are not easy questions to answer, Mahan admitted, but they are matters of no little urgency as the global crisis deepens.

Gerard Powers shifted the conversation to Ukraine by taking up the specific case of the relevance of Catholic peacebuilding and ethics to the future of that war-torn nation.[31] Powers began working on Ukraine in 1987 as an advisor to the US Catholic Bishops on religious freedom in the Soviet bloc. That year he met Cardinal Myroslav Lubachivsky, the exiled head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, which was liquidated by the Soviets after World War II. Like today, Powers recalled, that was a dark time for the church. While Gorbachev's glasnost brought some hope, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church was still operating clandestinely.

When asked about the situation in Ukraine, the cardinal responded, "Well, it all began with Catherine the Great…" Vladimir Putin seems intent on becoming the contemporary Catherine the Great, Powers continued – or perhaps Peter the Great, who founded the empire she enlarged. Putin has reconstituted an aggressive imperialist Russian regime that seems bent on destroying Ukraine if it cannot subjugate it. Russian aggression began with its illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014. More than two years into the most brutal stage of the aggression, it is hard to envision when and how it will end. Yet it is not too soon to think about some norms that must ground a just peace for Ukraine and the world, Powers suggested. "A just peace has many components. At minimum, it must guarantee a negative peace – genuine security, free from constant threats of renewed war," he writes. "But it must go much further and seek a positive peace – a peace based in justice, freedom, truth, and reconciliation."

The focus of Professor Powers' paper and presentation was on norms and policies related to the most urgent question – an existential one for Ukraine: how to guarantee a negative peace. Norms are the foundation for the regional and international collective and cooperative security structures necessary for sustainable peace in Ukraine. Two sets of norms must be embraced, Powers said, especially by the world's major powers, if Ukraine and other countries are to be safe from future coercion and aggression: 1) A restrictive interpretation of norms governing the use of military force and, 2) A prohibition on any use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Addressing these normative concerns should be done in tandem with a renewed commitment to the peaceful settlement of disputes and a revival of arms control measures to restrict the kinds of weapons currently being used against Ukraine. The larger, more important, and more difficult challenge is to find ways to strengthen institutions of cooperative security rather than relying primarily on collective security mechanisms.

Ukraine, preventive war, and Catholic debates on the ethics of war

The age-old debate on nonviolence versus just war has been reinvigorated in recent years with Pax Christi's nonviolence initiative, the Pope's 2017 World Day of Peace Message on the same topic, and, most importantly, the section on "War and the Death Penalty" in Pope Francis's encyclical *Fratelli tutti* in 2020. In Ukraine, nonviolent resistance has played a role since the Russian invasion. Noncooperation with Russian occupiers, blocking roads, fleeing Russia to avoid military service, and on-line hacking have disrupted Russian military operations. Nonviolent actions like these should be celebrated, Powers explained, because they witness an alternative vision and put in stark relief the moral depravity of Russia's violence. But, he added, "Nonviolence is not a moral imperative in the face of aggression of the kind Ukraine faces."

The nonviolence-just war debate is less relevant to the Ukraine case than the debate among just war advocates between the highly-restrictive approach of official Catholic teaching and the more permissive approach of traditionalists. In Catholic teaching, the strong presumption is against war; war is a failure of politics. "If the Popemobile had a bumper sticker, it would say, 'War is not the answer.' The answer is work for justice and IHD, dialogue and diplomacy, and efforts to strengthen international institutions and laws so conflicts can be resolved short of war."

Powers indicated that traditionalists such as George Weigel reject the Church's approach as "functionally pacifist." They insist that the presumption is not against war but for justice; war is not a failure of politics, but a tool of statecraft. Work for justice and development is important, but resorting to military force will always be a necessity in a quasi-anarchic world. Appeals to strengthen the UN and international law are naïve, the traditionalists hold, even utopian, since the "international community" is an oxymoron, and international institutions with real power could threaten national sovereignty and the rights that sovereignty guarantees.[32]

"Into this debate comes Pope Francis," Powers explained. In *Fratelli tutti*, the Pope concluded a discussion of the ethics of war by saying, "It is very difficult nowadays to invoke the rational criteria elaborated in earlier centuries to speak of the possibility of a 'just war.'"[33] Many commentators across the theological and political spectrum concluded that, as with the death penalty, the Pope has declared the just war tradition to be obsolete. Powers believes, however, that Francis has not abandoned just war but is reinforcing the

Church's highly restrictive approach against the traditionalists, who take "an overly broad interpretation of this potential right."[34]

This debate between official teaching and its traditionalist critics has been relevant to Ukraine. Some Ukrainian scholars and church leaders, Powers explained, believe the Church's restrictive approach is hampering Ukraine's ability to defend itself against Russian aggression. "In fact, the opposite is the case," Powers writes. "Ukraine is a victim of the permissive approach to just war." Putin, with strong backing of the Russian Orthodox Patriarch, has offered multiple rationalizations in vain attempts to legitimize Russia's hegemonic efforts to restore the Russian empire. One example is Russia's claim that preventive war is justified to defend against potential threats allegedly posed by Ukraine, including Ukraine's so-called "fascist" regime, its desire to join the European Union and NATO, and even the spread of Western gender ideology.

Powers underscored the argument that precedents matter when global norms are at stake. In response to critics of its aggression, the Kremlin is quick to remind of the 2003 US intervention in Iraq. According to the Bush administration, traditional notions of self-defense had to be expanded to permit military action not just to defend against actual aggression but also to defend against potential or "gathering" dangers. It claimed that unilateral military intervention in Iraq was justified to prevent the gathering danger posed by a "rogue" Iraqi regime that allegedly had WMD and ties to terrorists. As a result, Powers said,

> In the past two decades, the world's two largest military powers have embraced preventive war. In response, Pope John Paul II and other Catholic leaders were outspoken in their opposition to US intervention in Iraq, and far from rejecting just war, Pope Francis and other Catholic leaders have repeatedly condemned aggression against Ukraine and supported Ukraine's right to self-defense.

Preventive wars, he added, are wars of aggression. "That was true when Hitler used the concept to justify his invasion of Poland, when Bush used it to justify invading Iraq, and now when Russia uses it as a rationalization for invading Ukraine." Preventive war is not based on legitimate self-defense against aggression but on speculative claims about long-term threats. It is a might-makes-right doctrine that cannot be a basis for international peace and stability. "If Ukraine and other countries are to enjoy the security they deserve, dangerous doctrines of preventive war and other permissive approaches to the ethics and laws of war must be rejected."

Regarding the norms governing war, there is a close relationship between the ethics of war and the ethics of a just peace. The Putin regime has demonstrated over and over again – by its indiscriminate targeting of civilians, its destruction of whole cities, and its torture of prisoners – that it has no regard for the laws and ethics of war, Powers noted. Ways must be found to hold accountable those responsible for these war crimes through the ICC or national courts.

When faced with an enemy that resorts to total war, it is very difficult not to respond in kind. But, as challenging as it might be, Powers urged, it is important to maintain the moral and legal high ground by using only discriminate and proportionate force, and not acting out of hatred and vengeance. In 1991, when Serbian forces were committing ethnic cleansing against Croats and indiscriminately attacking Croat cities, Cardinal Franjo Kuharic of Zagreb succinctly summarized the moral challenge Croats faced. He said, in effect, that if a Serb kills your father, protect his father; if he kills your child, protect his child. Cardinal Kuharic, Powers explained, was appealing to Croats to reject an eye-for-an-eye morality, even in the face of a brutal aggressor. “But what he was imploring them to do was also wise. International support and solidarity depend on it. Moreover, indiscriminate attacks only strengthen the resolve to resist, create new grievances that prolong conflicts, and make post-war reconstruction and reconciliation much more difficult.”

Nuclear weapons

Long-term security for Ukraine depends on universal compliance with the norm in the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons that prohibits the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and on reviving and strengthening arms control and nuclear disarmament mechanisms. “Russian aggression against Ukraine has made the risk of nuclear war greater today than at any time since the Cuban Missile Crisis – and perhaps since Nagasaki,” Powers argued. “The world has been lucky – and luck is the appropriate term – that nuclear weapons have not been detonated in war since 1945. But nuclear weapons are very much being ‘used’ against Ukraine. Russia has used its nuclear hegemony and threats of use to cover for and enhance its aggression against Ukraine.”

The Kremlin has been widely condemned for its nuclear saber-rattling. In September 2023, the G20’s New Delhi Declaration said the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is “inadmissible.”[35] Unfortunately, such condemnations of Russian threats of nuclear use lack credibility when made by NATO, the UK, Britain, and the US. Their national security doctrines mirror Russia’s insofar as they hold open the option of using nuclear weapons first, even against non-nuclear threats. “At a minimum, it is long past time for all nuclear states to adopt no-first-use policies,” Powers writes. “An even better approach would be to increase dramatically the number of state parties ratifying the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which prohibits the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.”

A secure peace for Ukraine also requires a revival of the nuclear arms control regime, which has been mostly dismantled over the past 20 years. Tactical and intermediate-range nuclear weapons pose the most immediate threat to Ukraine. The INF Treaty banned all intermediate-range nuclear weapons in Europe, the first treaty to eliminate an entire class of weapon. Unfortunately, Powers noted, amidst allegations of Russian cheating, the US withdrew from the Treaty in 2019. “When political circumstances make it feasible, negotiations to revive the INF Treaty and to reduce or eliminate smaller, tactical nuclear weapons would be important steps in enhancing Ukraine's security."

A just peace architecture for Europe can contribute to a just peace in Ukraine, Powers stated. Clearly, Ukraine needs security guarantees in order to prevent a replay of the aggression it has suffered. That might involve joining NATO or some other form of security guarantees stronger than those contained in the 1994 Budapest agreement. The end of the Cold War offered an historic opportunity to deemphasize Cold War collective security structures, such as NATO, and strengthen cooperative security structures, such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. The OSCE includes many more countries than NATO and it has a much broader mandate that includes human rights, good governance, and other issues that are essential for a just peace.

For many reasons, not least the rise of Putin, the opportunity to strengthen cooperative security mechanisms was mostly missed. "If political developments, especially but not only in Russia, make it more feasible, a just peace for Ukraine would be enhanced if new efforts could be made to strengthen the OSCE," Powers explained. "NATO has its place but it is, first and foremost, a nuclear alliance concerned with military security. A just peace requires not just military security but human security, something NATO alone cannot offer but something the OSCE is designed to promote."

How will Ukrainians build a just peace following the war? "Their efforts will succeed," Powers concluded, "only if broader collective and cooperative security issues are addressed so that Ukraine will be free to chart a new, more just and peaceful future."

In responding to the panelists **Svitlana Khyliuk** harkened back to the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, when "our allies in Germany sent us helmets but said that they expected us to be dead within three days." At that moment, "the Ukrainian people had nothing else except hope and the attitude that you need to do the right thing, no matter what." The Ukrainians are still fighting and are going to survive.

Our panel has pointed toward my first point, Khyliuk said, namely, that religion can offer hope. "And hope is a powerful tool to change global affairs. It is difficult to define a source of hope inside you or in this world; you need something more or bigger than yourself in order to find hope, "and identifying the source of hope gives you power." As a lawyer Professor Khyliuk looks at religion, and the world, from a legal standpoint, but ethics and religion are instruments that regulate human behavior on interpersonal, local, national and international levels, she noted. Lacking mechanisms of coercion or implementation, ethics and religion are not strong or weak instruments in themselves but they have the potential to reach human personality in such depths, unattainable for any law or lawyer. Law cannot provide hope, but religion and ethics do. Svitlana illustrated her second point—that religion and ethics have the crucial role and capacity to identify and proclaim what is right and what is wrong in a specific situation—

with a story about the experience in the occupied territory of Ukraine. The account, published by the Voice of America, is of a Baptist pastor who was tortured for 25 days by Russian soldiers in the presence of a Russian Orthodox priest. During the torture of the pastor, the priest sprinkled the whole procedure with holy water in an effort “to help the poor man to be released from demons.”

This story, Khyliuk commented, reflects the fact that the war between Russia and Ukraine is also a war between two Christian churches and two different visions of what is at stake for human dignity. This reflection underscores the importance of telling the truth, she added, and the obligation and privilege of ethics and religion to make a clear distinction between what is wrong and what is right:

> Sometimes when we try to communicate what is right and wrong, we tend to wrap the truth of evil-doing in layers of insulation from its brutality. This opens the door for propaganda, and the messages become distorted and confusing. This in turn leads to social fragmentation because dialogue is not possible without a clear understanding of the truth. Overwhelmed with misinformation, we no longer are able to perceive the difference between the victim and the aggressor. The power of truth is undeniable, even if it angers the liars. “Fear not,” Pope St. John Paul II often said to the courageous Poles and other Eastern Europeans who contributed to the collapse of the Soviet system in the 1980s.
>
> All of us on this panel seem to agree that the current state of human development is in crisis and that religion might be able to offer some kind of solution to the ongoing crisis, Encouraging people to tell the truth, even unpleasant truth, is one way religion can help us to address the crisis.

For over a decade Khyliuk has been a legal consultant for the intergovernmental Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which did a great job, she said, in Ukraine and elsewhere, promoting human rights, the rule of law, democracy and democratic values. But nowadays, she reported to the Rome conferees, we do not have a special representative of the OSCE in Ukraine because in order to extend the mandate of the OSCE commission in Ukraine, unanimous consent is required, and Russia vetoed the extension. Therefore, the OSCE is absent in the country, even while witnesses of Russian aggression and atrocities were captured by Russian soldiers. These monitors are still in jail, and diplomats can do nothing about this.

What does our rhetoric about solidarity mean in such a situation? Svitlana asked. “On a global level,” she argued, “it means that there are collective and cooperative security structures in place to make solidarity not merely theoretical but practical.” Cooperative security structures are easier to maintain in peacetime, she observed, but in order for them to be effective, rule-breakers should be excluded from making major decisions about their fate.

"When we face aggression or risk of aggression, we need collective security structures that make solidarity practically effective."

With regard to Ukraine becoming a NATO member, she continued, the current situation could be transformed by such a "practical solidarity" and stand as a model for occupied territories around the world. Regarding nuclear weapons, nations "can make a lot of agreements and declarations and sign papers —but the concrete results of the Russian-Ukrainian war will have a huge implication in this field."

Ukraine once had the largest nuclear weapons potential in the world, she reminded the audience, but gave up its nuclear capacity voluntarily in exchange for security guarantees and guarantees of its sovereignty and territorial integrity from its international partners, including the US. "The occupation and defeat of Ukraine and annexation of its territory by Russia, would not only be a shameful breach of those agreements," she said, "it would signal to each country of the world that building up a nuclear arsenal is the only reliable means of guaranteeing territorial integrity."

Russia is quite successful in blackmailing the Western world, Professor Khyliuk noted, with their threats of using nuclear weapons against Ukraine and NATO member countries. "If these threats stand unchecked, it means that there are different rules for nuclear states, and therefore I dare to say that the results of the Russian-Ukrainian war will have huge implications for global security."

In conclusion Svitlana acknowledged that "we have a lot of problems," but religion and ethics can offer hope, solidarity, and truth to address these problems. As educators we can teach the next generations of students and bring global perspectives into our teaching and our research. "That is exactly what the Keough School is doing and I'm so grateful for our partnership," she said. "As educators, we have to teach not only knowledge and skills, but values as well. This is a big challenge, but I am confident that by doing this together, we can accomplish it."

Discussion session

Sedmak asked Mahan Mirza where he sees the role of religion in the new global world order that we desperately need. Mahan responded that religions are powerful; they can be subversive and "dangerous," given the situation, and they are also ambivalent, given the situation. When religions are held to firmly and organized in communities in which faith leaders exercise their authority responsibly, however, religions can be uniquely, helpful and constructive in generating hope, and at the same time avoiding harm in the quest to fulfill their respective visions of the good. This constraint on religion's destructive power, he explained, arises in part because religious actors do not limit their calculus to this world alone.

Sedmak then asked Powers to comment on whatever he found relevant to his presentation in the other conference papers, presentations, and discussions. Powers spoke to the constructive role of Catholic bishops in peacemaking and peacebuilding, not least in Colombia. The Peace Accord Matrix and its Barometer Initiative gained respect and support in Colombia because the Catholic Bishops Conference of Colombia sponsored and hosted the project for the first six years, Powers noted, which gave the Kroc Institute institute team legitimacy. The Kroc Institute has also been working on the truth commission reports and setting up a new database on peace accords and on truth commissions in Colombia. In doing so, they can draw upon the international experience of the Catholic Church and Catholic mediators like the Community of Sant'Egidio in Mozambique, South Sudan and other conflict zones.

Sedmak noted that religious and ethical concepts like human dignity and IHD are sometimes criticized for being unrealistic, lofty, aspirational, and not grounded in "reality." "Love your neighbor—Love your enemy," for example. In the context of Ukraine, he asked Khyliuk, how unrealistic are such teachings from your perspective? From our perspective in Ukraine, Svitlana responded, it is very hard to love your neighbor. She referred to a speech given by Ukrainian Catholic University's former vice president of mission, who was a prisoner of conscience during Soviet times and spent ten years in Siberia for proclaiming that a human being has human rights. In his speech, he said that to love and to forgive, does not mean that justice is no longer necessary. The crimes of the communist regime challenged his Christian values and obligation to love and to forgive, which is hard to do without the "missing ingredient" of justice. This means that crimes should be assessed as crimes, aggressors should be addressed as the aggressors, and victims clearly recognized as the victims. Only then is there the potential to forgive and to build peace, which takes time and a lot of effort. But before this, he rightly insisted, we need truth, we need to recognize what has happened and who committed those crimes and atrocities. Only then might a space be opened for building peace.

Svitlana also gave an example from her own life. Her son is seven and her daughter is 14. "The main fear of my children," she said, is to be the only survivors of the war. They are ready to die. The only thing that they were afraid of is being left alone. They are quite aware who is responsible for the situation and to make peace, given this generational awareness, will require a lot of work. But justice should be done first."

Michael Driessen of John Cabot University in Rome asked Mirza about Mirza's vision of religion as a revolutionary force for peace. There are, however, longstanding religiously driven animosities and reactionary responses, particularly in Eastern Europe. How do we think about that, and see the solution or response to these longstanding hatreds through the lens of IHD? How does an IHD approach enable us to resolve or get over the ambivalence toward the "neighbor" to some degree? Is this even a fruitful conversation to have with traditionalists?

We have an institutional problem, Mirza responded. Or perhaps a systemic problem, in that our systems channel first and foremost the voices that are going to strengthen the needs of the operating system—the institution—so that, for example, religious voices that are promoting the state, especially in regimes that demand institutional loyalty from the religions, are going to be amplified and get attention and traction. Or if you think about politics, he continued, we have an adversarial political system and so we're seeing that that civil deliberation, deep reasoning, and sustained arguments are not the hallmark of political discourse. Educated people who might know better, whether in religion or politics, see that the system rewards what would be considered bad behavior from an IHD perspective. They capitulate to merely self-interested behavior. Can enlightened religious actors and voices rise above the fray? In order to have better debates and deliberations we need to break and remake the systems that curtail IHD voices and are open to the deep wisdom embedded in these religious traditions.

Scott Appleby then asked the panel how this "leveling up" of constructive religious voices scan be accomplished. Who is to "police" or critique religious behavior and discourse that undermines IHD values? How might internal critics of the traditions be supported or empowered? Are any external actors (sympathetic to IHD, that is) poised or available to this task? Who has the authority or the possibility to make a sustained critique against religious actors who are violating the norms associated with IHD?

Powers responded that the government is one potential enforcer, but that role has to be very limited to religious actors who are violating laws. Unfortunately, we've seen numerous cases of governments trying to interject themselves into internal religious debates, determining who's right and who's wrong. Governments should have no role there. I think you just have to rely on the internal debates within each religious tradition, to which anybody in the tradition can join, he said. You don't have to be from within the religious tradition to critique it, he added, but you definitely don't want any entity from outside the religious tradition becoming an enforcer, for that would violate fundamental religious freedom—and then you won't have religion very long.

In order to strengthen commitment to IHD within religious communities, Sedmak remarked, theologies of peace and justice in the respective religious traditions must be strengthened, if only to curb the dangers and subversiveness that can impede religious ethics. What religious studies, political theology and religious ethics can gain from integrating an IHD approach is the emphasis on Dignity as sacred and, therefore, the centrality of a dignity-centered focus on theological and ethical education and action.

Ray Offenheiser asked about the ethics of warfare and whether we think that ethics, and particularly the ethics coming from the Catholic tradition, are up to the challenges posed by the way war is rapidly evolving via incredible new technologies, from drones to cyber to "iron domes" and weapons launched from space. We're seeing this already unfolding in Ukraine in wholly new ways. We've gone well beyond World War II-era thinking. Are we anticipating what the challenges of battlefield warfare will be tomorrow and how we can contain or resist unethical applications of the new technologies? How might we prevent the new kind of warfare and disable the systems that enable it? Even the infiltration of our financial systems or energy and communications structures is now a form of warfare that could shut the country down. Where would the Catholic Church be on the ethics of preventing not only the use of nuclear weapons but also of pernicious technologies in space? "We clearly need an advanced and more sophisticated form of thinking that is up to those challenges," he concluded.

Powers responded that there are indeed gaps in the Catholic ethical tradition of war and peace—areas that need to be developed. That said, there is progress to report. The annual World Day of Peace statement by Pope Francis was devoted this year to the ethics of AI. Work is being done in the field of cyber warfare and, now, more and more on artificial intelligence and its implications for warfare. Similar developments are unfolding in Catholic teaching and research on international law. But it is true that official teaching on the ethics of war is not adequate to deal with these "new forms of warfare" questions. That's why we need a major effort to address the gaps in the ethics of development, war and peace, and international law.

Emmanuel Katongole responded to Appleby's comment about displacing bad religious actors by arguing that we must encourage religious literacy. All religions working for the good have to be prophetic, bringing to the public attention an imagination from and for the margins. There you find an IHD perspective illuminated by a concern for the poor, the weak, the orphan, and the stranger. The prophetic is built within the very understanding of religion, and once it is evoked, then there is at least a chance that, within the various religious communities who are literate, religion can stand up for human dignity.

Sedmak invited each panelist to speak a final sentence. Mirza simply quoted Jeffrey Sachs, to the effect that you cannot have a peaceful global order without a strong UN. Svitlana Khyliuk responded to Appleby's question by worrying that attempting to police religion is too dangerous. Addressing the problem of religious extremism or even religious ambivalence, she suggested, requires honest dialogue between representatives within religions and among religions—such dialogue might be possible via some kind of advisory board or council of religious leaders and representatives. Strengthening solidarity within and among religious communities would be a good start, she suggested, on the way to the religion(s) gathering the strength to become prophetic against an inhumane or intolerant state, or other government, or religious faction.

Jerry Powers brought the session to a close by commenting that "whether you like it or not, religion matters and norms matter."

Session II: Insights from Asia and Africa

Michel Hockx, Professor of Chinese Literature and Director of the Liu Institute for Asia and Asian Studies in the Keough School, delivered a presentation on Chinese Studies and Global Affairs. The presentation traced his personal experience as a scholar of China working across three continents in the past 30 years, with an eye on the question of how Chinese Studies fits into Global Affairs, especially in the context of the Keough School's thematic focus on "integral human development." During those three decades, he noted, China has changed beyond recognition, but the way in which the Western world, including the academic world, looks at China has also changed considerably.

In 1982, Hockx enrolled at Leiden University in The Netherlands to study what was then known as "Sinology." The curriculum included four years of language training in both modern and classical Chinese, a set of introductory courses on Chinese history, literature, and politics, a range of elective "text reading courses" in the upper years, taught on the basis of Chinese-language materials by political scientists, economists, anthropologists, geographers, historians, and literature scholars specializing in China, and a full year abroad at a university in China. All scholars at the university working on China, he explained, were faculty members of the Sinology department. In other so-called "disciplinary" departments, there were no scholars of China. "Those disciplines were completely Eurocentric," he said, "and their practitioners had no interest in knowing if their disciplines had any relevance to the study of China."

From 1986 to1987 Hockx spent a year in China, the first of several visits throughout his career including extensive visits when he was an undergraduate, a PhD student, and a postdoc. Fortunate to take classes with some of the best professors in the field of modern Chinese literature, he learned to integrate their knowledge and perspectives into his own approaches and ideas. "Of course, my knowledge and understanding of Chinese literature was, and always will be, only a fraction of theirs," he acknowledged, "but they appreciated my efforts, they did not judge me by the standards they set their own students, and they were interested in what I could tell them about cultural theories that were becoming popular in the West around that time." By the late 1990s, Hockx had transformed himself into a sociologist of literature, and some of his publications in Chinese journals made new approaches to that discipline available to Chinese scholars and students.

In 1996, Professor Hockx moved to the UK and taught for 20 years at the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), a small and unique institution where all faculty members do research on regions of Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. At SOAS, all scholars were divided across disciplinary departments. The standard disciplines (politics, economics, history, anthropology, business, law, etc.) were taught by people whose research specialized in those regions. They taught the basic theory and methods of each discipline, but by combining it with their own research expertise, they made it less

Eurocentric. All scholars of a particular region, for instance China, across all disciplines, also actively participated in an interdisciplinary "Centre of Chinese Studies" which later became a "China Institute" with Professor Hockx as the founding director.

As Hockx progressed in his career, he was increasingly invited to sit on review panels in Chinese Studies or Asian Studies. For three years, for example, he was on the jury to select the winner of the prestigious Levenson Prize, which is awarded by the U.S.-based Association for Asian Studies to the best scholarly book on China published by US and European presses in a given year. In the UK, he also sat on "Research Assessment Exercise" (RAE) panels that assessed all research on China by all British universities over a six-year period. Hockx sat on a similar panel for universities in Hong Kong. What all those panels had in common was that they brought together academics specializing in different disciplines, but all with an interest in China and Chinese Studies.

"What I remember most vividly about being on those panels is how quickly we agreed about the minimal standards for good research on China," Hockx recalled. "Both the social scientists and the humanists agreed within minutes that we would not consider any scholarly work on China that did not cite Chinese-language material and Chinese-language scholarship. Only after checking that that basic requirement was fulfilled did we move on to consider disciplinary excellence, as well as wider contributions to the study of China beyond their disciplines."

In 2016 Hockx moved to Notre Dame."Notre Dame in 2016, like my university in The Netherlands back in 1982, was characterized by the fact that the majority of its disciplinary departments in the humanities and social sciences were singularly uninterested in studying the world beyond the US and Europe," Hockx recalled. Some Notre Dame scholars, he reported, "seemed to think it was okay to say that they were 'only teaching the Western tradition' —a tradition from which they were obviously excluding the cultures and traditions of immigrants from places such as Asia."

Hockx moved to Notre Dame, he explained, "because I sensed that something was about to change, and I wanted to be part of it." That "something," he continued, "was the Keough School and its stated aim to study Global Affairs from the perspective of 'IHD' which emphasizes genuine interdisciplinarity ('integral') approaches common to the social sciences (especially those focused on 'development') and the humanities (focused on what makes us 'human')."

Professor Hockx takes a dim view of the age-old debate about "disciplines versus areas," as if the two are somehow mutually exclusive. "I have always enjoyed working with scholars across all disciplines and I understand their work and their approaches well enough to be able to judge the quality of what they produce," he explained. "Outside academia, when engaging with policymakers, business leaders, and representatives of the media, I have rarely met anyone who really cared about what my discipline was, as long as I could tell them something useful about China."

At the same time, he continued, it has to be acknowledged that the area-focused approach, or "area studies," has been losing its appeal to students for a long time now. Students are no longer interested in comprehensive programs dealing with only one region or one country. They no longer want to do a whole year abroad in one place. They want to take on the world and learn skills that help solve global problems. This shift has been driving the trend for US universities to establish schools of Global Affairs (sometimes called Global Studies or International Studies). Some of those schools of Global Affairs have gone in the opposite direction from area studies and offer virtually no regional specialization at all, Hockx explained, suggesting that regional knowledge is irrelevant to solving global problems.[36]

Compare this to the Keough School as it has developed over the past ten years. On its website, the School identifies more than 20% percent of its faculty as having expertise on Asia. "It's still less than is warranted, given that 60 percent of the Earth's population lives in Asia," Hockx noted, "but it's a great start and so much better than what is being done elsewhere. We have developed exceptional strength across a range of disciplines, through a consciously non-Eurocentric hiring policy which prioritized candidates working on Latin America, Africa, and Asia for faculty positions that were not necessarily defined by country or region."

Within the Keough School, the Liu Institute for Asia and Asian Studies, has as its task to generate collaboration and community among all Asianists at the University, but especially in the Keough School. The institute gives grants to faculty and to students who need support to travel to Asia for research or learning and supports courses about Asia, including a minor in Asian Studies housed in the Keough School. Moreover, the Liu Institute organizes many events, especially public lectures and discussion panels, typically attended by around 40-50 people, including many undergraduate students.

Whereas the focus is, of course, on contemporary events in Asia and the majority of what we do relates to social science in some way, he continued, the institute does not neglect the humanities, especially the study of history, religion, and Asian languages. It also actively supports Asian American studies as well as cultural events related to Asia. "The generosity of the Liu family, Professor Hockx emphasized, "has made it possible for us to make a real difference to the experience of many students and to support our faculty, and we look forward to doing more."

But what more does the Liu Institute need to do? "We need to promote a form of Asian Studies, and especially of Chinese Studies," Hockx asserted, "that is founded on real knowledge of the region, its history and its culture; on a real proficiency in the language and a real familiarity with the work of Asian scholars; and genuine engagement with universities in Asia." Simple things go a long way, he added. Global Affairs students should all take at least one course on Asia, and whenever possible have an immersive experience in Asia as part of their studies. Global Affairs classes ("and not just the classes about Asia!") should incorporate Asian perspectives on global problems.

In his introductory class called "Approaching Asia," Professor Hockx assigns the weekly news in newspapers from Asia just to get a different perspective. "And my dream is that one day the Keough School will have enough students who can read Chinese so that we can read texts about Global Affairs in the Chinese language, rather than do everything in English."

As for China, Hockx noted, "we cannot solve global problems without engaging with China. And we cannot give in to the current negativism about China that seems to have bipartisan support in the US Congress, and that seems to reign supreme in the US media – to the extent that US media coverage about China is at times just as uniform and lacking in diversity as Chinese media coverage about the US." This kind of mutually shallow and negative coverage is unprecedented in his lifetime, Michel noted. "In recent years, I feel that as a scholar of China I am constantly treading a very thin line. I know that I have the expertise to challenge much of what is being said about China in the public domain, but at the same time I also know that there are people out there who are speaking on behalf of the Chinese regime and who are making some of the same challenges that I would like to make – and I don't want to be associated with those people." Professor Hockx is neither pro-China nor anti-China, he explained. He calls out disinformation when he sees it, regardless of which side it is coming from. As he put it:

> Being in a School that champions "integral human development" and that refuses to reduce people to products of their government or of whatever ideology is what gives me the strength to walk that thin line, and I'll continue to walk it.

Hockx's next book analyzes censorship in modern Chinese culture. "If you believe what our media has told you, then you may think that Winnie the Pooh is banned in China; that Google is banned in China; that you cannot say 'human rights' on the Chinese Internet; or that Chinese literary writers all must write what the Party tells them to write. These views are widely held but none of them are true, and I say this based on research, not because of bias or partisanship."

For region-focused scholars like Michel Hockx, Global Affairs offers opportunities to continue to study the world from the perspective of a particular part of that world. "If we

study global problems from as many angles and perspectives as possible," he concluded, "perhaps we might be able to help solve some of them."

Sharon Yoon, Associate Professor of Korean Studies in the Keough School, presented he paper on “Understanding Race in Asia.” Rapidly developing East Asian economies face a major social, economic, and political crisis, she began. Fertility rates are rapidly plummeting as women delay marriage or remain single altogether. At the same time, she explained, perpetually under-employed young men facing a precarious labor market have turned to political extremism and online hate. With the decline in marriage and birth rates, the proportion of the elderly has begun to accelerate at unprecedented rates. In South Korea, government statistics project that in 50 years, more than half of the population will be elderly. “As the number of elderly relying on government pensions quickly outpaces the tax-paying employed population, the state has increasingly turned to migration for answers,” she reported.

These dramatic demographic shifts in the Asia-Pacific suggest the significance of Yoon’s work on race, ethnicity, and migration in the region. In Asia, the states’ ability to successfully avert major social, economic, and political upheaval largely depends on how deftly they can integrate a sudden influx of foreign migrants into their national borders. “In recent years, however, migration has been the cause of much political strife, as evidenced by the rise of nativist hate speech, extremist violence, and political polarization,” she writes. “Whether nations in the region can overcome these urgent social problems will test the limits of their relatively new democratic regimes.”

How do people in Asia understand the meaning of racial and ethnic identities? How do these interpretations change over time? In addressing these questions Professor Yoon pays special attention to the relationship between skin color and racial classifcation. While race is largely defined by subjective markers of distinction that vary widely across national contexts, skin color embodies a sense of objective materiality, she notes. “Sociologists often take for granted that clear differences in skin color cannot be as easily affected by cultural interpretations of race as other more subjective behavioral markers.”

Yoon’s earlier work sought to challenge this assumption that skin color was a central and immutable component of race. In doing so, she traveled to Japan, where an imperial legacy founded upon similar Western presumptions of racial superiority continued to shape mainstream attitudes towards former colonized populations. Whereas the West reached outside the bounds of its continent to expand its colonial power, she noted at the conference tht Japan attempted to colonize countries within its region. “Accordingly,” she writes, “whereas skin color defines race and racial identities in the West, in Asia, even minorities who are physically indistinguishable from members of the host society are institutionally and discursively treated as racialized Others.” Yoon provided an example to illustrate the point:

> Kaneyama Yuki, a thirty-five-year-old Japanese national of Korean descent, speaks Japanese with an authentic Osakan accent, roots for Japan during international sports tournaments, and has no ethnic-sounding name. By all external appearances,

> he looks and sounds Japanese. In fact, Kaneyama only became aware of his Korean ancestry in his early thirties when his cousin accidentally discovered old legal documents while cleaning the family attic. At first, he was in denial. How could his father, who frequently made racist comments about Koreans, actually be of Korean ancestry himself? But when Kaneyama thought more carefully about his past, he vaguely recalled how his grandmother had often made kimchee in their kitchen when he was a child. He also found it suspicious that he had grown up in Sumiyoshi, a marginalized slum in Osaka where Koreans and *burakumin* (Japanese "outcasts") lived in close proximity. When he approached his aunt, desperate for answers, he learned that his parents had made a blood pact when they married, swearing to each other that they would never tell their children that they were Korean so they could live more "ordinary" lives as Japanese.[37]

By all external markers, Kaneyama was Japanese and did not identify as a Korean. Yoon pondered what meaning a person's Korean ancestry had when all markers of distinction—culturally, socially and institutionally—seemed to have disappeared. While Kaneyama had navigated the world as a Japanese person for most of his life, he realized that he had been unable to escape the trauma of being a descendant of a colonized class.

In the 1930s, Korean men were forcibly recruited as migrant laborers, while young Korean girls were trafficked as sex slaves for the Japanese military. Farmers, stripped of their land and harvest, became an exploitable supply of labor, working in dangerous conditions for meager wages. "Indeed, the unspoken yet conspicuous gaps in his family's history served as part of his racialized trauma—Kaneyama did not know why his parents' lives had been shaped by poverty, violence, and marginalization during postwar Japan. Understanding that he was part of a historically oppressed class filled in the missing pieces of his childhood that, in many ways, felt liberating." When Professor Yoon met Kaneyama in Seoul, a few years after his discovery, he made several trips to Jeju Island in Korea to visit the grave where his ancestors were buried and learn more about his roots.

Following Japan's defeat in World War II, Koreans who remained in the Japanese archipelago continued to be severely discriminated against, Yoon reported. Korean ghettos, which still remain today, were stigmatized spaces characterized by joblessness, poverty, mental illness, crime, and violence. As an undergraduate student working on a senior thesis, Sharon Yoon started conducting ethnographic fieldwork in the largest historic Korean slum in Osaka, and spent much of her time as a graduate student, postdoctoral fellow, and later as a professor, volunteering in various NGOs and building relationships with activists in the community. Twenty years later, Osaka's Koreatown is the center of her current book project, *Grounding Digital Activism: The Fight Against Hate in Osaka's Koreatown.*
Today, there are about 800,000 ethnic Korean minorities living in Japan who can trace their roots to Japan's annexation of the Korean peninsula between 1910 and 1945.[38] In recent years, 300,000, or a little less than half this population, have naturalized, taking on

Japanese citizenship.[39] The Koreans in Japan constitute less than 1 percent of society and are currently outnumbered by a rapidly growing—more visibly "foreign" population of Chinese, Filipinos, and Vietnamese migrants. Yet, Yoon's research demonstrates how Koreans remain the "symbolic" Other and the favored target of far-right nativist groups in Japan.[40]

While Yoon's earlier work analyzed how phenotypically indistinguishable minorities in Asia were stigmatized as racial Others, more recently she has studied how this postwar history of ethnocentrism continues to shape popular discourses on race and national identity despite significant demographic changes. *Grounding Digital Activism* illuminates how ultranationalists and right-wing conservatives in Japan perceive the dwindling number of Korean postcolonial minorities as more threatening to political and economic stability than more visibly "foreign" migrants.

Since the founding of online far-right organizations in Japan known as the Action Collective Movement (ACM), she explained, "Korean minorities have become the target of anti-Korean street protests, bestselling revisionist books seeking to cast the colonial legacy of Koreans as fictive, and widespread online hate in social media outlets." Objectively speaking, given their high levels of assimilation and the small size of their population, the Koreans in Japan have a negligible impact on the national economy, she added. Yet, they have become "prominent scapegoats as tax-evading, undeserving welfare queens in the national imaginary because of their symbolic prominence in Japanese national identity narratives."

By analyzing how the far-right has shaped the popular discourse on other ethnic minorities more generally, Yoon's work with Yuki Asahina demonstrates how perceptions of threat are more influenced by symbolic resonance with historical narratives than by actual material circumstances.[41]

But as her involvement in the field deepened, Yoon could not ignore "a gnawing feeling that skin color, in certain circumstances, did matter in defining racial categories and experiences of racialization in Asia." More deeply aware of this framing of race, she noticed a growing presence of African migrant workers filling 3-D (dirty, dangerous, and difficult) jobs in South Korea and Japan. While the vast majority of Africans have traveled to former colonial countries in Europe in the past, more Africans have set their sights on rapidly developing East Asian economies in recent years, particularly due to the closing of national borders in the West following the refugee crisis in 2015. However, compared to the extensive literature on African labor migrants in the Western Hemisphere, relatively little has been written about Africans in Asia, with perhaps the exception of China.

For the first time in its recent history, Yoon noted, Asia has become an attractive destination for foreign labor migrants, more generally, who are, in turn, inter-marrying with members of the mainstream, complicating national identity myths of ethnic purity. In Korea, 13.5 percent of all marriages involved a foreign-born spouse in 2015.[42] Although this figure has since declined, the growing numbers of international unions and biracial offspring have irrevocably changed the social fabric of Korean society.

Professor Yoon started probing more explicitly into how skin color affected the experiences of newer waves of labor migrants with Rita Udor (SD Dombo University, Ghana), a Ghanaian woman who had lived and worked in South Korea for several years. Dr. Udor was uniquely positioned to study members of her own community. During their first few meetings, she spoke of how many African men arrived in Seoul as asylum-seekers and accepted “the jobs that others [Asians] rejected”—the most precarious and dangerous jobs working with toxic chemicals and heavy machinery—because Korean brokers and employers often singled them out as racially visible migrants. Of the 30 African men who were interviewed for their research, four men had passed away during the two years their study took place.[43] Only five men did not have serious permanent injuries. Many continued to work in Korea even when they had lost or injured fingers or limbs or were otherwise suffering from chronic illnesses such as heart disease, kidney failure, and weakened lungs. “Moreover,” Yoon reports, “as we became more involved in the project, we became aware of a less visible but equally concerning epidemic of loneliness, mental illness, and alcoholism pervading the African community in Korea.”

The long-term research project she is now conducting with Udor has opened Yoon’s eyes to how global racial hegemonies stemming from the US and Western colonialism profoundly influence how migrants are treated in the labor market, even in countries across the Pacific. Anti-black racism and popular stereotypes of Black masculinity stemming from slavery continue to shape global perceptions that African men are “naturally” built for hard labor. “The White-Yellow-Black racial triangle needs to be assessed on a more global, rather than narrowly domestic or regional, scale,” she argued.

Professor Yoon remarked, in conclusion:

> Balancing these two paradigms of racial formation—one, which is more locally embedded in the history of Japanese imperialism in the Asia Pacific and the other, which is more broadly situated in narratives of Western global dominance, is something that I am seeking to articulate and frame more coherently as a sociologist with regional expertise in Asia. I believe my efforts to do so reflect a broader shift in the field of the Asian Social Sciences to steer away from tendencies of stressing regional exceptionalism but rather to recognize how global inequalities have long shaped how individuals have created perceptions of insider and outsider, deserving and undeserving, within local communities.

Emmanuel Katongole, Professor of Theology and Global Affairs in the Keough School, focused on Africa, and Uganda in particular, in his paper and presentation “Sowing Hope: Ecology, Place, Theological Peacebuilding and Integral Human Development. Fr.

Katongole's current research investigates the notion of "integral ecology" as the theoretical and practical nexus that connects theology, peacebuilding, ecological ethics, place and Catholic Social Teaching, especially the concept of Integral Human Development.

The research grows out of, and represents a culmination of two interrelated trajectories—one theoretical, one practical—of Katongole's scholarly interest in theological peacebuilding. From a theoretical point of view, his scholarship seeks to understand, account for, and respond to the multi-faceted and ongoing realities of violence on the African continent. In his recent book, *Who Are My People: The Invention of Love in Sub-Saharan Africa*, he extends earlier work on violence to the ecological crisis by examining Africa's ecological crisis using the categories of "slow violence" and of "structural violence."[44] In the literature "slow violence" refers to calamities that are slow, long lasting, and largely imperceptible, undetected and untreated."[45] "Structural violence" refers to forms of violence where social structures (economic, political, cultural, and religious) create risks and vulnerabilities for certain populations and prevent them from meeting their basic needs.[46]

Such analytical categories can quickly become meaningless theoretical generalizations unless they are closely attentive to "place," that is, to the specific, historically conditioned cultural, linguistic and social contexts within which abstract concepts like "integral ecology" or "IHD" unfold and take root, Fr. Katongole explained. His work, he said, is situated within Africa's "problematic modernity"— "the paradoxes and contradictions that arise out of Africa's contact and ongoing relation with the social, cultural, political and economic institutions of Western civilization."

What difference can faith, and Christian practice in particular, make in the face of the "catastrophic convergence of poverty, violence, and climate change."[47] This is the theological question at the heart of Fr. Katongole's recent work, which is in dialogue with Pope Francis' notion of "integral ecology," introduced in *Laudato Si´: On Care for Our Common Home* (2015). *Who are My People* is the first fruit of Katongole's exploration, his current project, *Sowing Hope,* addresses questions relating to the meaning, vision, and, especially, the practicability of the notion of integral ecology.

Theological scholarship, and theological peace scholarship in particular, cannot remain purely abstract, Fr. Katongole insists. "Its goal must be to transform the world rather than just explain it; to change it positively rather than just study it; to create history rather than just to interpret it."[48] The theological peace scholar "cannot but be a practically engaged scholar – a reflective scholar-practitioner." Accordingly, in 2015, Katongole founded Bethany Land Institute (BLI) as a theological experiment for the "education program" that *Laudato Si* calls for to nurture and cultivate the vision and practice of integral ecology.[49] Located in Central Uganda, BLI's mission is to train and equip young people in the vision, spirituality, lifestyle and practice of integral ecology. In addition to its residential program, BLI works with schools and local communities in programs of regenerative agriculture, creation care, and economic empowerment for women, youth, farmers and leaders in the community.

In *Sowing Hope,* Katongole pursues three broad and interrelated research questions that address the conceptualization, applicability/ operationalization, and impact of integral ecology. Conceptually, his starting point is the claim that "integral ecology" is an "integrated approach" (*Laudato Si*) that brings together the scientific, economic, cultural, spiritual, political and educational dimensions of an effective response to the twin cries of the earth and of the poor. Although integral ecology is gaining traction in the wake of *Laudato Si,* Katongole notes, the notion has not been sufficiently theorized. A deeper theoretical and conceptual clarity around the notion of integral ecology is needed.

Accordingly, *Sowing Hope* investigates the meaning and nature of integral ecology as it relates to the notion of IHD, and as it comes to life by means of education and formation designed to foster a certain "mindset" and "lifestyle." Is integral ecology a religious concept or can it be understood and practiced within a purely secular framework? Answering these and similar theoretical questions requires a close reading of the text of *Laudato Si*, and locating it within the Catholic Social Teaching (CST) on the one hand, and within an interdisciplinary approach to environmental ethics, on the other. In addition to archival research, Katongole convenes an Integral Ecology Working Group, where a group of scholars from different disciplines explores together the meaning of integral ecology in its theoretical as well as its practical dimensions.

Hand in hand with the theoretical investigation are questions around the application of the notion of integral ecology. There are not many practical models, however, which explicitly employ the notion of integral ecology, Fr. Katongole acknowledges. Bethany Land Institute, whose explicit mission is "to form leaders in integral ecology for rural transformation," provides an interesting and virtually unique test case. *Sowing Hope* studies BLI as an experiment in integral ecology by observing the way its staff and caretakers (graduates now operating their own projects, farms or businesses in Uganda) understand the concept and assess the significance of social as well as personal "formation" in BLI's education program. The book describes the rhythms and practices that shape BLI's curriculum and assesses the integration of the theoretical, practical and spiritual dimensions of integral ecology in the daily life of the students, staff and faculty. It also interrogates the ecological and economic dimensions of the BLI program and training, not least the efficacy of the relation between BLI's programs and the regeneration of land, community and livelihoods in Uganda. The research supporting this latter goal, in particular, is based on various sorts of data about BLI's programs and graduates, as well as insights from and interviews with stakeholders and participants in the activities of the institute.[50]

Crucially, *Sowing Hope* also assesses the adequacy, effectiveness and impact of BLI's programs, through a longitudinal study of the BLI caretakers, both while they are still students in the BLI training program, and after graduation, when they return to their communities. While the Caretakers, strictly speaking, are those enrolled in the BLI formation program, *Sowing Hope* tracks the development of the trainees and assesses the impact of the training program on their life, character, spirituality and practical skills. This involves ongoing interaction with the caretakers, tracking observable lifestyle changes, and periodic self-assessment of the trainees themselves.

The research is longitudinal in that it tracks caretakers following their graduation to measure the effectiveness of integral ecology as a socially and economically sustainable livelihood model. Data is collected on caretaker impacts on surrounding communities to capture second-order effects such as the transmission of farming practices. Caretakers are surveyed annually, using a structured instrument to assess their individual and community social and economic sustainability and impacts. Caretaker farm books, which account for all of their financial transactions, are examined to measure net economic output. Additionally, using the farm books, researchers collect data on agricultural productivity per hectare of area under cultivation and compare it to neighboring farms (i.e., a control group) to test the relative productivity of integral ecology practices compared to conventional, local farming practices.

The overall goal of the research in these three dimensions is to generate knowledge and a deeper understanding of integral ecology, its meaning, vision, practicability and potential for regeneration of soil, ecology and livelihoods in the community.

Research considerations

Methods and Approach *Sowing Hope* engages a scholar-practitioner mode of engagement, Fr. Katongole explained. He works with BLI as an engaged scholar, at once enacting and studying the notion and practice of integral ecology. “The underlying assumption of the research is that integral ecology is neither an abstract set of principles (that waits to be applied) nor a model (that waits to be implemented),” he said, “but a framework, an integrated approach that brings together and engages various dimensions of life (scientific, economic, cultural, spiritual, political and educational) to respond to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.”

It is, therefore, first and foremost, he continued, “a form of engagement, a poiesis, which, like a poem, ‘is not there ahead of itself, can’t be imagined before it is made, can’t be known except in the words of its making.’[51] This calls for a scholar-practitioner approach, which seeks to gain a deeper understanding of the reality of integral ecology in the very process of enacting it.”

This approach requires theologian Katongole to work with and across many disciplines. *Sowing Hope* provides a platform for this interdisciplinary collaboration and engagement, where he learns from and with colleagues from various disciplines.The inter- and multidisciplinary collaboration seeks to generate new forms of knowledge and insights about integral ecology, at the intersection of the theoretical and practical, the religious and the secular, and the theological, scientific, social and economic approaches, all of which are needed for the care of our common home. Such an "integrated" approach is a necessary dimension of integral ecology.

Global Engagement with Religion Religion plays a key role at BLI and in *Sowing Hope*, Fr. Katongole writes, in ways both explicit and implicit. First, Uganda, not unlike many other African countries, is "notoriously" religious (Mbiti) – about four-fifths of the population is Christian, one-eighth Muslim, and the rest are practitioners of traditional religions. Almost everyone at BLI has an explicit religious affiliation. Moreover, he adds, on a continent where a religious imaginary frames almost everything and where the secular-religious divide is often a foreign and forced distinction, a faith-based initiative (like BLI) offers a good case by which to study the role, possibilities, and limitations of religion in shaping attitudes, visions and practices for the regeneration of ecologies, economics and livelihoods in Africa.

In this connection, Fr. Katongole explained, the fact that the Catholic Church is one of the largest landowners in Uganda, and that BLI operates on land leased by the Catholic Diocese of Luweero and works closely with parishes in the diocese, provides another useful lens for exploring the dynamics of religion-land- ecology-development in Africa. Relevant in this regard is the fact that what BLI calls Lazarus Forest, now the only remaining natural forest in the area, was planted originally by Christian missionaries. The reclamation of the forest after a period of erosion and decline, he contended, points to the role that churches can play in preserving natural eco-systems (see the case of Ethiopia) as well as in cultivating sites for the ongoing conversation between Christianity and native spiritualities.

Beyond these specific cases, Fr. Katongole continued, religion plays a key role in the notion and practice of integral ecology. Pope Francis notes that all human life is grounded in three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships: with God, with neighbor, and with the earth itself (*Laudato Si*, 66). Thus, there can be no integral ecology without an essential religious or spiritual dimension. However, it is not clear what this means concretely, he acknowledged. This is what we are trying to learn from BLI's model, which places "spiritual" formation at the core of the BLI curriculum. What does this mean and how does it work in a religiously diverse community (BLI community has Catholics, Pentecostals, Muslims, Traditionalists)? What common practices form and nurture this "spiritual" dimension in such a religiously diverse community? Insights from BLI's case, Katongole suggested, might offer lessons not only for integral ecology but for peaceful coexistence and interreligious collaboration.

As a theologian who investigates faith actors and communities, as well as the kinds of social and practical possibilities shaped by the story of God's reconciling love for the world, Fr.

Katongole is interested in the potential of integral ecology to respond to the urgent cry of the earth and of the poor, through a renewed relationship with God, others and the earth. "That," he commented, "is the true meaning of reconciliation."

Region and Culture BLI as noted, is located in Uganda, a country and a region where Fr. Katongole was born, grew up, studied and worked. Moreover, he has studied and written about various dimensions of politics, religion and culture in Africa in general, the Great Lakes Region of Eastern Africa in particular. This inside knowledge of the culture and social, religious and political histories of "my people" framed the lament that led to the founding of Bethany Land Institute as a response to the crises of poverty, deforestation and food insecurity. The inside knowledge of culture, religion and politics of Uganda also allows Fr. Katongole to operate quite effectively in his current leadership as BLI's President. For it gives him access not only to the "public" but also the "hidden" transcript,[52] which is essential for making the right decisions regarding hiring, partnerships, and other particular challenges and opportunities at BLI. As he put it:

> Without ample cultural intelligence and skills needed to operate within the cultural, religious and political context of a place, the kind of engaged scholarship that I am pursuing in *Sowing Hope* would be quite challenging. However, I do not bring only an "insider" perspective; I also bring an "outsider" perspective as a scholar, as professor at Notre Dame; as an American. While as an insider, I am focused on specific knowledge, as an outsider and scholar, I am interested in general knowledge and broader insights; I am interested not only in the particular impact of this particular intervention within this particular context (Uganda), but also in the global implications and significance; I am not only interested in understanding, listening to and respecting the local culture, but in changing some aspects of that culture and creating new cultural patterns of IHD. And this I think is only possible through the dual citizenship of a scholar-practitioner who is both an insider and outsider.

Fr. Katongole sees his research fitting well with and helping to advance a number of areas within Notre Dame's and the Keough School's strategic priorities. First, it contributes to the articulation and promotion of integral ecology as an overarching *ethical framework* for mobilizing individual and collective efforts in service to the common good, human dignity and environmental *sustainability.* Second, BLI is a case study in the regeneration of ecology, economics and livelihoods – thus, it charts an economically sustainable *pathway out of poverty.* Finally, BLI's work with and in Kasana Luweero Diocese in Uganda is an opportunity to study and engage the reality of *global Catholicism* and the Church's role in contributing to a renewed relationship with God, community, and the land.

Discussion session

Rahul Mukherji of Heidelberg University offered commentary on the three papers and presentations. During the course of Professor Hockx's studies and scholarship in Leiden, China, Britain and the US, Mukherji remarked, he has reflected critically on the fact that what we call social science engages with theories that have been constructed on the model of the Western experience of modernity. Colonizing forces tended to ignore local social and cultural contexts, rendering these theories and propositions rather inappropriate for many cultural contexts.

Hockx's experience at SOAS and at the Keough School as a leading Sinologist, Professor Mukherji added, has helped him play a bridging role between Asian and Western thought and studies, and made him an effective advocate for incorporating more Asian perspectives and expertise into the Western academy. "We academics live in a curious world where interpretive paradigms survive to a great extent not because they have greater explanatory power, but due to Western scholars' access to funding, to superior journals and influential institutions," he noted. "This is not an argument against excellence in Western scholarship, but Western scholarship should not impose its own categories upon the non-Western world or generalize based on Western social science."

Were the modernist and Marxist theorists right, he asked, to make Asia the exceptional case and thus overlook it? In this sense, it is unfortunate that Marxist materialism was a foundational idea in Western politics and sociology, and that it generated the powerful conjecture that with the rise of capitalism, the bourgeoisie would produce democracy, citizen's rights, and welfare because capital would need to win the social peace for it to grow. Why, then, Mukherji asked rhetorically, did India adopt Democratic institutions in 1950 with the bourgeoisie as a slim minority? Leading comparativists in the US, ranging from Barrington Moore to Samuel Huntington could not comprehend India as a democracy at such low levels of per capita income. How could the Indian state win the mandate of its citizens when it had very few resources to offer?

The point that gets missed in all this, he continued, is that these scholars have derived their general theories from the experience of capitalism in the West, where democracy came after substantial industrialization. "The puzzle of Indian democracy is that apart from two years of authoritarian rule, India has a reasonable record of fair elections with military power never intervening in the affairs of the state," Mukherji observed. "But did comparative politics address this issue? No. The body of literature on transitions to democracy developed in the US has not a single serious citation on India, while it rightly gives substantial treatment to democratic transitions in East Asia and Latin America."

Instead, it was area scholars who filled the void, he noted. When leading scholars in the US such as Al Stepan and Juan Linz recognized this problem, they worked closely with material generated by the Delhi Center for the Study of Developing Societies to argue that Indian democracy has assumed the form of a state-nation rather than a nation-state, that is, India was not a state that was born out of a nation rather, it is a state that was constructed on certain political principles such as democracy and federalism, within which the idea of a nation got embedded. But even this contribution came after the end of the Cold War. Other scholars have more recently been arguing about the importance of pre-colonial ideas and practices.[53]

In short, most theories however generalizable they may be, are born in a particular social and cultural context. Often, powerful areas of the globe applaud theories born in a hegemonic context as "conventional wisdom" to be tested with respect to the rest of the world. Not surprisingly, it is only in recent times that Chinese and other Asian conceptions of the world order have become a topic of scholarly discussion. Why do most accounts of institutional change in the developing world talk about norm diffusion from the West, while those regarding the West describe gradual endogenous changes? The West is supposed to change endogenously from within, while Asia and other parts of the developing world mimic or learn from the West. Is the real story so simple? Can we not think of situations of gradual endogenous change within Asia?[54]

The work in Professor Mukherji's department on welfare politics, industrial regulation and democratic recession, finds that the Indian state certainly learned from the West, but this learning produces an Indian form and an Indian way of dealing with social and political problems. Its economic reforms were neither Western, Chinese, nor Russian in character. Ideas matter and it's important to trace their evolution, especially ideas within the state, political parties, and civil society to understand what is considered rational.

We find, he continued, that this ideation often takes a layered form that tips after reaching a certain threshold. What appears like drastic change has been gradually building; it is not as discontinuous from the past as it first seems. "Concept such as adaptive, informal institutions and layered tipping points are driven by a concern and sensitivity regarding area are nevertheless generalizable concepts," Mukherji argued. "One can look at adaptive informal institutions in India or layered tipping points in China that may even be found in other parts of the world, such as Latin America, Africa, Europe, or the US." Area studies in this way can contribute to powerful concepts and conjectures that will make it easier to comprehend the personality of diverse nations and regions from a variety of vantage points.

Professor Mukherji then turned to Hockx's "wonderful presentation and paper," and asked Hockx why it is so difficult to engage China—why does the world get China wrong, in general, and on a question like censorship? How censorship is understood in China is different from how it is understood in the US, and this gap diminishes our understanding of China and our sensitivity to the region—which is a problem for peace and democracy in the world. China looks very threatening to South and Southeast Asia at the moment. How can a better understanding of China help ease the tension and reduce the propensity for conflict within Asia?

Professor Yoon's work is fascinating, Mukherji continued. The very migrants who toil so diligently are on the receiving end of hardship. Yoon discusses the plight of the Korean minority population in Japan, and of the African minority in Korea. Both Japan and Korea need migrants to sustain an aging population. Yet apparently these powerful nations are not able to treat the migrant workers fairly. This is a very important paradox in many countries that including the US, India and Germany. I would like to learn more, he said, about what Professor Yoon's research reveals about stories of accommodation of ethnic minorities in a way that respects their identities, drawing them into the mainstream. What in her view is the way out of this problem from a perspective that takes culture and IHD seriously?

Finally, Professor Mukherji addressed the important work of Fr. Katongole by posing a question on the advantages of "insider knowledge, as he put it. Research on colonial forestry in India, he reported, reveals that the Forest Department, originally established in the colonial period, entered the forests with inappropriate knowledge that was often inferior to the wisdom of the native tribes. The department was designed to exploit the forest rather than respect the lives and knowledge of the forest dwellers, and this problematic legacy lasted long beyond colonial times. Only recently did the Forest Rights Act of 2006 try to correct some of these injustices, but now the ascendancy of the right-wing ethnonationalist party is destroying some of the legal developments that had moved forestry in a positive direction.

Mukherji wondered, in the case of Uganda, and BLI's Lazarus Forest in particular, how does insider knowledge regarding the rights of forest dwellers help to avoid injustices and exploitation?. Could Fr. Katongole say a little bit more about how the despoliation happened in the first place, and to what extent is indigenous knowledge now being respected and combined with science in order to save the environment? How should we value the forest as a resource to be nurtured?

The term "integral human development" can both be enabling and empowering, Mukherji observed, as can "integral ecology." Spiritual and therefore ethical imperatives have driven great souls, from Mahatma Gandhi to Martin Luther King, Jr. and Nelson Mandela I'm sure there are many other examples of saints in the Christian tradition, like Saint Francis, and in other religious traditions who have championed and protected nature and its spiritual dimension. And so, to Fr. Katongole, the question is two-fold: how do different spiritual traditions relate to IHD, and how does your work on integral ecology at BLI deal with persons on the ground who belong to different religious and spiritual traditions?

In response to Professor Mukherji's questions for the panel, Yoon began by agreeing that there are some similarities between migrant workers and aging populations in the US and Germany, on the one hand, and in Korea and Japan, on the other. That said, the proportion of the aging population in the latter societies is exponentially higher and accelerating, at rates not replicated in either Germany or the US. This is important, she explained, because Japan and Korea need migrants in order to survive; the problems of homelessness, poverty, social isolation, mental illness and suicide are highly concentrated among the older populations, and these problems will only get worse. Solutions will require more workers, not less. People in Japan and Korea need to understand that it's in their best interest for them to accept and be tolerant of immigrants. If they do not do so, their situation will only worsen. What is needed is a new kind of story for who they are—that is, a society accepting of people who are of different cultural and historical backgrounds.

Fr. Katongole thanked Professor Mukherji for the questions. With respect to the forest, BLI is conserving more than 220 acres of forest; after years of deforestation and other forms of devastation in the regions, Lazarus Forest is the only remaining forest in central Uganda. What I am learning in this work, he shared, is that forests during the colonial period, were threatened in a number of ways. First, that's where the rebels and colonial resistance would hide. Second, colonists exploited the land and the people living on it by harvesting the forests heedlessly. Later in the colonial period the scientific management of forests added yet another burden because, in the effort to plant the first "scientific forests," the colonists targeted the native forest because they were very difficult to manage in order to harvest the desired pine and eucalyptus trees—a commodity that is still coveted in the post-colonial regimes of Africa. In short, there was deforestation and then a scientifically sanctioned intrusion of a certain model of forest.

From a religious dimension, Fr. Katongole continued, the forests were not well served by missionary preaching and practices of the Christian missionaries, who did not fully appreciate the centrality and cosmological significance of the forests to the indigenous tribes. There was no clear distinction between the spiritual and cultural and nature. What was described as "primitive," as "heathen" by the Christian missionaries was, rather, a kind of symbolic reality according to which a tree is more than just a tree. A tree is not just timber; its significance is sacred. Some of the missionary preaching connected with the forest was not helpful, to say the least. Christian missionaries were trying to move the Africans away from this kind of natural religion within the forest to a holistic approach to Christian identity that had nothing to do with the forest itself. And yet, many of the trees we are trying to conserve were planted by the missionaries themselves, he noted; there's a long story to this, partly because of plantations that were being constructed in the Congo, so this is a mixed legacy. In short, the religious legacy is ambiguous, at best.

All that said, Fr. Katongole continued, what we are learning in this work of conservation is the deep connection, felt by many Ugandan students and graduate "caretakers" at BLI, with the forest and the work of reforestation: they are discovering a deep sense of identity, a deep sense of belonging, and a symbol-system within which the forest is connected to something real beyond the tree itself. In other words, they are rediscovering a different spirituality. "I find this utterly fascinating, how this notion of native spirituality sits alongside and intersects with Christian spirituality. If at all, how does it connect? This is a question. I'm raising and exploring. What do we learn from native spirituality and how it can advance the spirituality of integral ecology within a Christian context (or not)? In this sense, the Lazarus Forest is a great site, a great experiment in learning new ways of engaging Christian and native spiritualities in dialogue and integral humanism, if you like."

Shandana Mohmand from IDS noted that South Asia, half of whose population is under the age of 30, has the opposite problem from Japan and Korea. In both cases, we know what the solutions are, but the politics get in the way. Yoon's work on migration is important in trying to get us to understand how we might change the attitudes of receiving countries. How, then, she asked, do we take what we already know and turn it into stories, a compelling narrative—that would actually start to change behaviors and attitudes?

Along similar lines, **Miguel Loureiro** noted from Yoon's presentation that the third generation of Korean migrants in Japan helped to define who the Japanese are not. This is a very powerful indicator of attitudes of the native-born in a lot of places, he commented. In the UK, for example, what it is to be English became a big debate when immigrants forced the British to find who they were and who they were not. So the question for the Japan case is: who in Japan besides the fringe groups are helping the Japanese define their contemporary sense of identity?

Susan Allen posed a question for Fr. Katongole about moving "from practice to theory," an issue he raised that resonates with her work and teaching of peace at the Carter school, where many of her graduate students come from around the world with a lot of practice experience. How do you teach "from practice to theory"?

In response to Professor Mukherji's questions, Yoon commented that much of her work looks at the activism among civil society actors who are trying to promote a more tolerant society and eliminate hate. They provide clues as to how to change the narrative, she said, and the most important tool is education. In Japanese schools, certain topics are banned—you can't talk about the history of colonization or about issues that place Japan in a bad light and that make Japanese people feel ashamed of their history. "Opening up these occluded topics is the most important starting point for education for the youth, who have no clue what has happened in the past," she contended. "Changing the narrative, making it more critical and honest, is critical to activist communities seeking to inspire constructive change."

As for social or political actors who are trying to (re)define Japanese identity, Yoon said, her article on the subject makes the claim that, even though they are fringe communities, the extremists have been powerful in shaping the discursive narrative, the ideological narrative of how the Japanese think and talk about why they're in a period of economic crisis. Japan is in an economic crisis, the fringe group maintains, because the immigrants are taking away their resources. The so-called social welfare queens are using their position to appeal to the international community, a message that still tends to be promoted not in the fringe discourse but in mainstream Japanese circles, even among college-educated Japanese friends, who use this trope to explain why Japan is declining. The ideological staying-power of this narrative is worrisome, to say the least.

To Allen's question about teaching "from practice to theory," Fr, Katongole responded that he shares his experience with graduate students and encourages them to follow a similar path. His formal philosophical and theological training at Louvain for his Ph.D. —studies of modern political philosophy, postmodernism, literary criticism and the like, all the heavy theoretical work— was necessary. "We do the theoretical work with them, given that those coming from the field have not generally delved into the theoretical literature, and they must develop disciplined theoretical reading and the ability to articulate an argument. Likewise, we throw those armchair philosophers coming from theoretical backgrounds into the field and encourage and demand of them that they spend six months in the field—put the theories aside and delve into the world of the practitioner, and then come back and test and refine the theories. In this way, eventually everyone engages the practice to some degree, and everyone has the capacity for intellectual and broader philosophical thinking.

Session III: Why Religious and Regional Literacy Matters in Global Affairs: The Case of Israel/Palestine

Scott Appleby opened the session by proposing that "the global" refers more precisely to the collective, that is, to the sum total of local, regional, continental, international, transnational and transcontinental social patterns and movements of people, goods and ideas across time and space. Generalizations that ignore these borders are hazardous; it is sufficiently ambitious for humanists and social scientists to take on discrete regions of the world, about which some defensible generalizations can and must continually be tested and refined.

In a similar fashion, there is no such thing as "global religion"— only specific religions scattered and, in many cases, spread across the world but also rooted in a place. And yet, how we "read" religion and religions in their internal dynamics and co-imbrication with secular forces and currents is critical to comprehending "global affairs."

The ongoing crisis in the Middle East—and in Israel/Palestine, the focus of this session, places the interplay of region, nation, religion and "the global" in sharp relief, Appleby said. The questions before our panel of experts therefore include: What difference do regional variations make to our understanding of particular societies, conflicts and attempts to build peace? *and* What is "religious literacy" and why does it matter? We view these questions through the lens of Israel/Palestine and the current war in Gaza.

Atalia Omer began by noting that, as a Jewish Israeli and scholar of religion, ethics, politics and peacebuilding, what it means to be associated with a state that claims to represent all

Jews is a matter of pressing personal and professional concern. Addressing such a question is an interpretive task that engages, among other topics, religion, history, ideology and political violence (which often presents itself as secular). Professor Omer, specializes in these subjects. Accordingly, she began her presentation by critically interrogating the historical contexts that shaped and led to the genocide in Gaza.

Is this a story about nationalism and settler colonialism, she asked? Rather than going back to some biblical origin story, the current catastrophe only goes back a century. The seeds of the current crisis were planted with an early twentieth-century "cigar party," an allusion to the clubby, imperious means by which colonial forces divided up historic Palestine after World War I, without consideration of the wishes of the indigenous population. In 1917, via the Balfour Declaration, the British government announced its support for "a national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine. Lord Balfour was influenced, Omer emphasized, by a long-percolating Christian ideology about the "restoration of the Jews to the Land." This restoration theology came in handy to authorize the colonization of Palestine. Here Omer indicated that religious literacy requires taking a critical approach to Balfour's motivations, which included both sheer imperial ambition but also elements of Christian Zionism—an ideology that construes Jewish history and identity as significant because it plays a decisive role in a Christian messianic imagination that requires Jews to "return to the Holy Land" prior to the Second Coming of Christ. The Jewish-Israeli scholar Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin refers to this as "the colonization of Jewish consciousness by the Christian imagination about the Jews."

Omer underscored the critical importance of avoiding reductionism, that is, avoiding reducing complex motivations to *only* Christian Zionism or *only* imperial ambition; both were (and remain) relevant. Critically, Christian Zionism of the kind exhibited by Balfour does not contradict antisemitic sentiments which he also harbored in his rejection of Jewish refugees from pogroms in eastern Europe. What's more, the idea of bringing Jews from Europe to Palestine carries with it a logic manifested in the later genocide against the Jews; as she put it, "they are not really from England, from Europe; they belong elsewhere."

In 1917, Jews constituted 6 percent of the inhabitants of historic Palestine. Throughout history, Jews were in the region, interwoven with the fabric of Palestine or the Ottoman Empire more broadly. Part of what possessing a critical religious literacy means, Professor Omer noted, is to discover that history is constructed—in this case, "that Jewish history is presented in a very homogenizing way, obscuring the plurality of the Jewish presence and privileging one narrative about the Jews." And that narrative is teleological, as if Palestine was all along destined to be the Jewish homeland— the return to the Holy Land is the end, or "telos," of Jewish history. Zionism is predicated on the ethos of the negation of (Jewish) exile and diasporas as much as its actualization depends on the denial of Palestinian history in the land.

By 1947, 33 percent of the demographic of historic Palestine was Jewish. In that year, Omer recounted, the UN partition plan prescribed that 55 percent of historic Palestine would be given to the Jews, at a time when indigenous Palestinians actually owned 94 percent of the land. In 1948 the War of Independence erupted— what Palestinians call the Nakba ("catastrophe")—and created the first massive wave of refugees (at least 750,000) through the mechanism of ethnic cleansing. At that point 78 percent of historic Palestine came under Israeli control. The Six Day War of 1967 saw the victorious Israeli army occupying territories taken in the war, further fragmenting the political geography of Palestine. Another wave of refugees were expelled from historic Palestine.

After 1967, the whole landscape continued to transform materially, culturally, and socially as well as politically, with Palestinian names being Hebraized within a Biblical imaginary harkening back to the ancient Kingdom of Israel. Thus, for example, Omer explained, the West Bank was now referred to by many Israelis—including schoolchildren and their teachers— by their Biblical names, Judea and Samaria. "This, in short, is an ongoing process of displacement and replacement, which is what is meant by 'settler colonialism.' Palestinians refer to their experience as an "ongoing Nakba." "I say this, Omer emphasized, "not to diminish the fact that from a Jewish Israeli perspective there is a narrative and strong ethos of self-determination and refuge from the horrors of the Holocaust" (referred to in Hebrew as the Shoah, which also translates as "catastrophe")— the most horrendous of a series of catastrophes that befell European Jews. Some Jewish Israelis, like the Christian Zionists, have a teleological view of these catastrophes and see redemption in both secular and religious keys. The fulfillment of all Jewish history is in the return to the land; the ethos of the negation of exile posits a thousand years of Jewish histories in diasporas as a meaningless holding pattern, denying Jewish flourishing and roots in many locations, from London to Baghdad.

The process of displacement and replacement of the Palestinians continued with the so-called Oslo Peace Accords, signed in 1993 and 1995—which, even as it signaled the promise of "peace" and Palestinian self-determination fragmented Palestinian space, leaving Palestinians only 18 percent of the land they held before 1917 and which, for over the 30 ensuing years, ignored the rights and demands of the Palestinians being displaced from their land. There are two sets of laws governing the occupied territories, Professor Omer explained—one for Jews and one for non-Jews. For many years, there has been no distinction between the violence of military occupation and settler violence—the violence perpetrated against Palestinians by Jewish settlers in the territories occupied by Israel after the 1967 war. In the aftermath of October 7th, any distinctions between settler and military violence blurred on the ground.

Indeed, "the concept of Jewish democracy is predicated on a set of colonial mechanisms including ethnic cleansing," Omer stated. She noted that in 2018 the Knesset (the Israeli parliament) passed a law called the Jewish Nation-State Law, which says explicitly that Israel is a state for Jews and Jews only. The Law also demoted the Arabic language, a move that was contested but upheld on appeal. Most critically, the Jewish Nation-State Law refers to "the Land of Israel" rather than the State as "Jewish" thereby also telegraphing the broader territorial aspirations and the fact that Israel, as a form of a "Judaized" frontier, has not actually had permanent borders throughout its history.

Omer underscored the complicity of the British colonial administration and, later the US and the UN, in justifying and otherwise supporting this process of displacement, domination, and replacement of the Palestinians; these entities, she added, "are complicit in the current genocide against the Palestinians in Gaza," which is being referred to as the Second Nakba.

In conclusion, she underscored the importance of naming the reality of the intertwining of imperialism, nationalism, Christian Zionism, Jewish Zionism and settler colonialism, in order to think constructively about how religion matters and what justice-oriented peace requires in this context. "Unlearning" this particular Zionist narrative about Jewish history, Jewish safety, the future and "redemption" is the first step—a step some American and Israeli Jews in solidarity with Palestinians are already taking. The slogan of these Jews is "We will not be free until Palestinians are free." Another slogan is "never again to anyone."

By way of background, **Asher Kaufman** described himself as an historian of the modern Middle East, mainly focused on Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria (and Iran, by extension). Like Omer, Kaufman acknowledged, he is an Israeli Jew who is profoundly affected personally by the events of October 7th and the war that has raged since then. "This is my life," he said, "This is not just an academic project that I'm engaged in." Accordingly, his distinctive view of this crisis is "a combination of my own research and my gut feelings." "As to my positionality, I will give my own framing of this intractable conflict between Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs." He continued:

> I flew into this conference from Israel, and I'll return to Jerusalem and be joined by my family for the summer, as we do every year. Israel is a home for me, where my friends and family live and where many of my professional circles are, and I care about Israel as a Jewish state, with all its messiness and contradictions and troubled history. I would like to see it thrive in the Middle East, and I think it will thrive only if Palestinian self-determination is realized parallel to Jewish self-determination. The double challenge for Israel due to the conflict with the Palestinians, is that Israeli Jewish society is not only threatened from without but from within. It is literally being eaten from within through violent, corrupt and racist forces that are gradually taking over its flawed, sometimes very flawed, state institutions.

On October 7th, Professor Kaufman continued, "Hamas launched the most violent day in the history of this conflict, with the largest number of casualties and most heinous forms of violence ever committed on a single day since the start of this conflict in the 1880s." What followed in the Gaza Strip “constitutes the most violent period since the conflict began, with terrible war crimes committed by Israeli soldiers, some of them people I know personally.”

Until the dramatic shift from October 7th on, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict had actually been less violent than other ongoing violent conflicts if we measure violence by the number of deaths and physical injuries. “I am fully aware of the fact that there are other ways to measure violence,” he acknowledged. “Nevertheless, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains the conflict that receives the largest amount of global attention.”

We have just heard a detailed account, from Omer, of the gradual Jewish appropriation of Palestinian land, he continued, but it is also important to recognize that the dynamics of this conflict are essentially that of a violent struggle between two national communities fighting over the same piece of land and both holding legitimate claims over the land—on one hand, an Arab Indigenous population which has been living on this land for hundreds of years prior to the arrival of Zionism and which sees the land, Palestine, as its historic and national home and, on the other hand, Jews with irrefutable historical, cultural, and religious ties to the land, who since the late 19th century have been arriving in Palestine for the most part as political refugees, and taking over the land through settler colonial practices.

Both Israelis and Palestinians and their respective international supporters like to depict themselves as “the ideal victims,” to borrow a term from criminology, Kaufman said. However, it is important to recognize “that there are no angels in this conflict; throughout its history, both sides have tried the best to apply violence against each other and to delegitimize the other’s claim over this land.” Broadly speaking, Jews have been far more lethal and “effective” in exerting violence against the Palestinian Arabs, with a few exceptions during the 1948 war and on October 7th. The destructive assault that Israel has been carrying out in Gaza since October 8th has justifiably led to unprecedented criticism of Israel.

Broadly, he continued, one kind of criticism challenges Israel’s very existence as a Jewish state. According to this view, the Jewish state is a problem in itself and, therefore, should be dismantled. Another kind of criticism argues, again very broadly, that the problem lies with Israeli actions and not with Israel’s existence itself. “The former argument, in my view, is unrealistic, and it leads to an impasse as it closes the options for any constructive dialogue about the future with political institutions and much of civil society in Israel,” he commented. “It also ignores the basic fact that if Israel goes as a Jewish state, it will take down Palestinians with it. A long bloodbath would occur, likely drawing regional powers into the fray.”

We often overlook the wider regional dimensions of the conflict between Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs, Professor Kaufman observed. Since the 1920s, the conflict has been regional, and currently Israel is fighting on multiple fronts. “Its regional opponents, including Iran, have no qualms about their strategic goals; they seek the elimination of Israel; they want the Jewish state to disappear from the face of the earth." And some of these opponents, from Iran to the Houthis in Yemen, also make very clear their strong anti-Jewish/anti-Semitic views and accusations; one can just read the foundational text of the Islamic Republic of Iran. "I support many of the demands of the student protest movement in the US calling for justice in Palestine," Kaufman acknowledged.

> But when I read messages from Iran's leadership that encourage and support the protest movement, I cringe. When I listen to Hezbollah praising the protestors and also describing them as a vehicle to achieve their own political goals, I gasp. This is the same Hezbollah that assisted Bashar al-Assad in the killing of about 600,000 Syrians during the last decade's civil war. So, things are really complex, to employ an overused but apt word. Iran, Hezbollah and their proxies don't really care about Palestinian rights, in my view. For Iran's leadership it is a geostrategic fight over hegemonic power in the Middle East. And they're using the war in Gaza very effectively to advance their interests throughout the Middle East. Their vision of a liberated Palestine is one where Palestinians may be free from Jewish domination, but occupied by a different oppressive force dictated by a fundamentalist theology similar to the one that governs Iran today. And I think this also explains the strong strategic alliance between Hamas and Iran, as both share very similar political theologies, though one is Sunni and one is Shi'a. And, incidentally or not, this kind of political theology is not that different from the political theology of Jewish settlers in Israel with regards to the claim for exclusive ownership of the land.

In short, he concluded, "we are in a terrible mess, and I cannot see how to invoke IHD." Kaufman then read a poem written by an Israeli poet, Chaim Gouri, who belonged to the founding generation of Israel. He was born in Tel Aviv in 1923 and fought in the 1948 war. After the war he established himself as an important public intellectual and poet. He died in January 2018. The poem, written in the 1960s, is entitled "I am Civil War":

> *I am civil war*
> *and half of me fires its last*
> *at the walls of the defeated.*
>
> *A court-martial,*
> *working in shifts,*
> *where the lights never fade.*
>
> *And there, those who are just fire on the rest who are just.*
>
> *And later silence comes*
> *composed of fatigue and the darkness of empty bullet casings.*
>
> *I am nighttime in an unwalled city for anyone who is in need.*

Ebrahim Moosa opened his presentation by identifying himself as a Professor of Islamic Studies in the Keough School and the History Department—"with no connection to the Middle East, and I am neither Arab or Jew (though all my names are either Jewish or Abrahamic)." Moosa teaches Islamic law and ethics, and his first book was a study of Al-Ghazali, an 11th century thinker. Born and raised in South Africa, he spent six years in a madrasa in India, "studying theology in a very traditional setting," and then had a career in journalism, then political activism and then back into academia in South Africa. "I have a complex identity. I am African, I am now an American, and I have very strong connections to India," he explained. "But I think I would say that what determines my identity is that I am a Muslim. My Islamic identity is inclusive: it's not only about the Qur'an or Islam in terms of its beliefs, but also Islam as a civilization. And I belong to that Islam that went to South Asia and not to the Arab world."

With his students at Notre Dame, Professor Moosa seeks to advance theological literacy about Islam in order to render Muslim identity more complex than it is often taken to be. "When someone mentions Islam," he said, "your question must be: 'What do you mean?' For example, Fr. Katongole mentioned that Islam is moving at a rapid rate in Great Lakes area of Africa, so the next question will be, 'What kind of Islam? Is it Sufi Islam? Is it Shia Islam? An African development of Islam?'" When people in the West say "Islam," he continued, they have in mind whatever they imagine Islam to be, and there is no complex literacy about Islam, no awareness that Islam is not one thing, but many things. Moosa thus sees his vocation as a scholar and teacher as dedicated to improving people's literacy about Islam—their grasp of its multiple expressions and meanings.

Professor Moosa then turned to the conflict in the Middle East and focused on Hamas, the movement of Islamic resistance, which was responsible for the attacks and kidnappings on October 7th. Hamas has been in power in Gaza since 2007 when it took over the territory from its rival, the Palestinian Authority ruled by Fatah after a long history of Islamic political activism in the region.

The longer history of political Islam in the Middle East, he explained, goes back to the nineteenth century, when Egypt was governed by the remnants of the Ottoman families. Muslims recognized that Islam at the time was in need of reform and renewal. "The oldest and once-venerable institution of Islamic learning in the Sunni Muslim world, Al-Azhar—the Sunni Vatican, so to speak—taught the tradition the way it was handed down for centuries, with minor alterations to the tradition of what Islam is, what law is, what theology is. But the world was changing, and modernity—modern Egyptian hospitals, new kinds of forensic medicine, new legal systems emerging—was transforming Egypt and rendering Al-Azhar's approach to knowledge near-obsolete."

A reformer named Ali Mubarak Pasha, who was very critical of Al-Azhar, did two important things for Egypt, Moosa continued: he helped build the Egyptian National Library and

Archives and, in 1872, he founded the Dar-al-'Ulum, an open house of learning that introduced the best students of Al-Azhar to a range of faculty, including European faculty, and to the humanities, the social sciences, political thought, and science, all for the purpose of creating a new synthesis between the traditional Islamic learning and the modern. However, Moosa explained, politicians of all stripes were wary of "thinking religion," they preferred irrelevant religion, and were threatened by the people being empowered by Dar-al-'Ulum, who understood the modern world and wanted to have a say in how the world operates. Very soon Dar-al-'Ulum was incorporated into what is today Cairo University as its seminary/divinity school. In addition, a scholar named Muhammad Abduh, a graduate of Al-Azhar dissatisfied with its traditionalism, became a leader of Islamic reform, which took several forms, "one of which was primarily secular, one of which was a blend of tradition and modernity, and one of which was revivalist."

One of the graduates of Dar-al-'Ulum was a man named Hassan al-Banna, who had been trained there as a teacher. In 1928, he established a movement called the Muslim Brotherhood by bringing together workers at the Suez Canal company who the British were exploiting; the Brotherhood quickly became known for drawing on Islamic theology and standing up for the rights of Egyptian workers. The Muslim Brotherhood "was anti-colonial and also opposed to the secular movement in Egypt that was eroding Muslim identity and making Egypt into a version of Europe." Al-Banna preached the need for a spirituality, "the jihad of the heart," and also the struggle with the sword, that is, political resistance against the British control of Egypt—Britain's indirect rule through influence over elite families. "Long story short: the Brotherhood spreads throughout the region very quickly—establishing branches in Jordan, Syria and Iraq and parts of North Africa," Moosa noted. "Political Islam became a truly transnational and international movement." (For example, India and Pakistan underwent their own versions of the Islamic revival, triggered by the writings and activism of an Islamic scholar named Abul A'la Maududi and the movement he founded, the Jamaat-i-Islami.)

Al-Banna was assassinated in 1949, but the idea of political Islam survived him, namely to create within Islam a democratic literacy. "Political Islam," Professor Moosa said, "is a certain form of democracy—maybe not a democracy that Americans like or recognize, but it's a form of democracy. Iran, for instance, is a limited form of democracy." Why the US government and other governments in the West oppose political Islam is a large and complicated question, he added; so, too, is "the fact that the Gulf regimes—Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait, with the exception of Qatar—seek to mute any kind of political Islam in Egypt, Tunisia, Sudan and elsewhere, in favor of a pliant, traditional version of Islam."

The Muslim Brotherhood continued to wield influence in the Middle East and, in 1987, Hamas emerged in the Palestinian territories, especially in Gaza, led by Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, a quadriplegic Palestinian who was born in Ashkelon, five kilometers from the Gaza border. His family was expelled during the Nakba. He went to Al-Azhar briefly but had to return owing to his disability, and studied Islamic philosophy and theology on his own. Though Yasin was assassinated by the Israelis in 2004, "he was a charismatic figure who inspired many Palestinians who were weary of the ineptitude and corruption of Fatah, the secular arm of the Palestinian resistance to Israeli occupation."

By opposing settler colonialism, Moosa continued, Hamas grew in strength and became very powerful, especially during the violent Second Intifada ("uprising"), from 2000 to 2005, when more than 4,300 people died (three Palestinian fatalities for every one Israeli). Working with Islamic Jihad, another violet resistance movement, Hamas unleashed a series of suicide bombings unprecedented in their scope and scale. The organization was inspired not only by its founder, Sheikh Yassin but also by Yusuf al-Qaradawi, a charismatic Egyptian cleric and Muslim Brotherhood spokesperson, who ruled that suicide bombing, while normally forbidden by Islamic law, is permissible in Palestine because of the asymmetry of power there between the colonizer and the colonized. The Palestinians had no other option, his thinking went, but to resist in the fiercest way.

The attack by Hamas on October 7th, 2023 was called the al-Aqsa operation—the name is significant, Moosa pointed out. Hamas saw the attack as a direct response to over two years of Israeli aggression engineered by its right-wing political leaders that included the planting of an Israeli flag, by then-Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, on Haram-al-Sharif (the "Noble Sanctuary," which sits atop the mount where the Jewish temple once stood and is the site of the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock, holy Islamic mosques). This policy of provocation was continued by Netanyahu and his partners in government. Palestinians, for example, no longer have access to the mosques. "Desecrating the Noble Sanctuary, however, crossed a red line that Hamas would not tolerate," Moosa explained.

In conclusion, Moosa confessed that while he has lived through many conflicts in South Africa and beyond, "nothing has embroiled my soul as has this conflict since October 7th." He closed his remarks by reading from a poem, "Silence for Gaza," by Mahmoud Darwish:

> *…Because in Gaza, time is something different.*
>
> *Because in Gaza, time is not a neutral element. It does not compel people to cool contemplation, but rather to explosion and a collision with reality.*
>
> *Time there does not take children from childhood to old age, and rather makes them men in their first confrontation with the enemy.*
>
> *Time in Gaza is not relaxation at storming the burning noon, because in Gaza, values are different, different, different….*

Mitri Raheb introduced himself as a Palestinian Arab Christian, a Lutheran pastor, and a theologian at heart. He is also President of Dar al-Kalima University in Bethlehem, the first and only university in Palestine with a focus on arts, culture, and design. "For me, what's happening in Gaza is very emotional," he acknowledged. "Our university had a campus in Gaza until two months ago when it was destroyed by an Israeli airstrike. And we lost staff and students in another strike. We have 2,001 students whom we will soon be teaching online; one of these students was murdered yesterday in yet another airstrike, this one in Rafah. So, everything becomes personal for me. I ask myself how to be personally so engaged and then to be engaged in research as well."

Raheb proceeded to share comments that came out of an institute research program at Dar al-Kalima called "Religion and Society," which started in 2009 and continues to operate, "including with a conference in Cyprus next week on religion, culture and the body." The insights from the institute, he said, bear upon regional literacy, as well as on the question of how religion relates to the conflict in the Middle East. For Raheb, "a religion is not something that comes 'from above'; it is something that has to do with us." Contextual theologians, he noted, prioritize context analysis which, in the case of the conflict between the Palestinians and Israelis, calls attention to the imbalance or asymmetry of power. He contested the notion that these are two "national movements." Rather, "what we experience in Palestine is not a conflict between two powers but a conflict sparked and sustained by settler colonialism."

The difference between settler colonialism and classic colonialism or neo-colonialism, Raheb continued, is that in settler colonialism, "settlers go to a place to settle for good with the intent of replacing the indigenous people." This is not only our experience, he added; the evidence also points to this phenomenon, not least the shifting maps over time, which document the steady appropriation of Palestinian land by the Israelis.

Settler colonialism has unfolded within the broader context of global empires, Raheb noted, which is why 1917 is such an important date. With the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the British empire "started disrupting our region." We must recall that "the British created three messes, not only in Israel/Palestine but also in India, Pakistan and South Africa, with a sectarian strategy at work in each case." Worldwide, the imperial powers cultivated sectarianism—antagonism between ethnic or religious groups— as a way to retain influence and control after their former colonies won independence. But the strategy backfired in that "religions became part of the anti-colonial resistance." Empires triggered religious opposition because empires behave as if they were God. "They think of themselves as being God on earth, as possessing all the power—and this is why religions began to fight them."

The war of 1967, by Raheb's accounting was a turning point in that it led to the empowerment of militant religious movements. First, the Christian Zionists took heart at Israel's stunning victory—"God has allowed tiny Israel to defeat the Arabs!" Second, the

Arab defeat weakened Arab nationalism, leaving an opening for the Muslim Brotherhood. Finally, the war of 1967 sparked a wave of Jewish messianism and ignited the settler movement.

In addition to the militarization of religions, he continued, religion becomes an economic instrument, as when Israeli Jewish settlers commodified the land as their private property, but also when neo-liberalism in Turkey and elsewhere co-opted Islam. All this said, Raheb emphasized, this is not a religious war, although religion is definitely part of the problem. “But it also has the potential to be a part of the solution, and this is where religious leaders must step in,” he said. “Religion cannot replace a political process for peace but only complement it.”

The US played a role in creating this mess, Dr. Raheb continued, and some Americans, not least the American Christian Zionists, are experts in the weaponization of religion, “a phenomenon under which we Palestinians suffer greatly.” As a pastor, he admitted, he sometimes feels that “we have too much religion in our region; God must himself be saying, in effect: ‘This is *too much* religion; give me a break.’”

> As a contextual theologian, I cannot leave religion aside, however, because theology matters. Can religion advance the common good, social justice, equality, and gender inclusivity? These are the questions I’m interested in, and I always keep in mind that religions are not static—they are dynamic, ever changing and they demand that we keep alert, analyzing those changes in context.
>
> It is crucial to recognize that religious communities are pluralistic, internally as well as externally. The two Israeli Jews on this panel hold are at least three different opinions about any one question. Moreover, I find myself agreeing with Omer, a Jew from Israel, more than with some of my fellow Palestinian Christians. This type of pluralism and cross-religious solidarity opens surprising possibilities for dialogue and peacebuilding which we need to nurture.
> Religious texts are likewise multivalent; there are texts of colonization and texts of liberation. Often what we find in the texts says less about the texts themselves and more about us. So, we must ask: what is the interpretive key we are using in reading these texts? We could say much more about this.

Dr. Raheb concluded his remarks with a question about epistemology, history and trust:

> After October 7th, Western academia has generally depicted the situation in Gaza in a way that is unrecognizable to me, with the Western media following suit. There is growing censorship of Palestinian perspectives in universities. I start asking myself, “If this is how history is portrayed, why should I trust Western historiography? Why should I trust Western epistemology?” And so, I feel, it is important, after Gaza, to

> listen to the scholars from the Global South. And I think that people in the Global South should have the courage to take the lead in these debates. My naive trust in Western academia is gone. We are entering a new phase where we need to look at academia through the lens of the Indigenous People, the lens of the oppressed, whose stories are typically not written by the people themselves but by others.

Discussion session

Scott Appleby posed two questions to the panel:

1) Can one be anti-Zionist without being antisemitic?
2) As for IHD, what can we say about the claim that human beings have an inherent dignity that ought not to be violated? Is this true only for certain contexts and in others, such as the Israel-Palestine conflict, it is declared irrelevant? That seems a facile way of handling the extreme case. Is there a way to retrieve IHD as a meaningful concept, or to refine or revise it, in light of the extreme cases?

Sam Awad of the Keough School Advisory Council indicated that, like Ebrahim Moosa, he has a bit of a mixed background:

> My parents came from Egypt in 1962. They were part of the religious minority, as my mother was in the Church of God and my father was, Coptic but with the French Jesuit schools. My mother had advanced to being one of the more senior people in the immigration and deportation process in Egypt; she saw the blacklists, she saw the oppression. So, Ebrahim, I have trouble with your characterization of the Muslim Brotherhood, because even though they may have started as rebels against colonialism, they went beyond that cause. What resonated most with me in this panel was the admission that there are no good actors in this scenario. We have sheer bids for and exercise of power masked as religion and amplified by religion. And it's sad to me to see this. My parents chose to come to the US because they were willing to give up being a religious minority and being an ethnic minority for the concept of liberty. Shame on, Hamas for what they did to the Palestinian people even before what they did on October 7th. Shame on Israel for continually violating the Oslo Accords, and allowing settlements and basically choking off economic development that would have allowed the Palestinians to create an effective industry. Discrediting and undermining Palestinian possibilities is a self-fulfilling prophecy.

My hope, Awad concluded, is that there may still come a chance to create a dual state and change the political authorities in both countries. He asked: "Is it right for Israel to demand that Hamas be destroyed and a new government be put in place, and yet not be open to a new government in Israel as well? Is that fair?"

Rafat Ansari asked what is meant by "a new Israel"; "do you mean an Israel that does not give privilege to Jews?" These two peoples act in the name of religion, he commented, so can this be a basis for their peaceful co-existence? Ansari addressed his second question to Appleby, asking what role Notre Dame and/or the Keough School can play in resolving this conflict through peacebuilding. "We have all the tools, and no other institution in the country would try to take on this peacebuilding role."

Svitlana Khyliuk noted that at the very beginning of the conference it was said that the mission of the Keough School was to bring Catholic values to the global agenda and to contribute to peacebuilding. She referred to the forgiveness and reconciliation between Poles and Ukrainians in the 1990s, a process in which the Catholic communities in Poland and Ukraine participated. Then, later, when Russia invaded Ukraine, the Polish people were the first to send aid to the Ukrainian people. Do you foresee any potential possibility to have a formula like this to help to solve some problems between Israel and the Palestinian people, she asked?

Rahul Mukherji asked Scott Appleby how we might think about ways to resurrect the deeply spiritual dimensions of religion, as embodied in figures like King Jr., Mandela, and Gandhi, to overcome or counteract the politicization and weaponization of religion by Hamas, the Jewish settlers and others that we have been talking about?

The panelists responded to some of the questions.

Mitri Raheb returned to the point Appleby made about the relevance of human dignity. "At the end of the day, really, this is what is at stake," he said, "when we see how hundreds of people are just murdered and left on the streets in Gaza for days until they decay. Where is the sense of human dignity? Any solution without a recognition of the human dignity of every person will not get very far."

Raheb also said we should speak not of Catholic values or Jewish or Muslim values but of basic human values. "A red line is crossed when religions violate human rights in the name of divine rights." As a Christians coming from Bethlehem, where we believe that the divine became human in Jesus, "we cannot use God to fight against human rights, that is not religion." After October 7th, he added, we must ask whether the whole talk about human rights is valid. "Is the whole human rights agenda really meant for Europe or Europeans alone, or are they really universal?" To Khyliuk's comment about reconciliation, Raheb said that reconciliation is possible, but only with truth-telling as the precondition: "without truth, we cannot move to reconciliation." But as in South Africa, reconciliation between peoples also requires a political solution, he emphasized. "Resorting to religion or spirituality alone will not suffice; we have to deal with the political mess."

Finally, Raheb concluded, "don't put all the weight on the Israelis and Palestinians, as if the US is an innocent bystander." The role that the US is playing is messy, he said. "It's not the Americans who are dying in Gaza. And sometimes I feel Judaism is being instrumentalized by the West. Right now, that pays off for Israel, perhaps, but it does not exonerate the U.S. from supporting the killing of thousands of Palestinian noncombatants."

To Appleby's question about IHD, Moosa said that "IHD has everything to do with this situation." The question of human dignity is central to all faiths, as well as to the secular traditions, where dignity is vital. But dignity is not a standalone thing, he argued; it is communicated in stories, in narratives and complex political and cultural packages—and therefore one needs to unpack it, context by context. "There is no one-size-fits-all integral human development story. The question of dignity in a Chinese context is very different from the Indian context and very different from an African context. In other words, there are different ways in which respect, for instance, or honor plays out in different cultures."

Yesterday, Moosa continued, we were talking about ways of mediating where there are certain preconditions. But you're never going to be able to mediate with preconditions; the very idea of mediation is to get people to talk. If you're going to have China, Russia, India, the United States and France in a room, how can you say you're going to proceed following "the liberal, way of mediation"? The Chinese and the Russians are not going to accept that. "In this respect," he urged, "we need to rethink IHD and ask some fundamental questions. What does critical integral human development look like? What are its complexities?"

> In the Palestinian/Israeli context, for example, taking IHD seriously means that we as Americans must begin with a critical assessment of the role of our government and institutions in this context of 36,000 people dead and 100,000 injured and maimed. [As of May the death toll since May 2024 has risen to over 50,000 dead and an unknown number of injured and maimed people.] Given the diabolical role that the United States has played in abetting this carnage, how can we stand up for truth and justice and pronounce an encompassing moral judgment? Yes, Hamas must take responsibility for what they did on October 7th but the wildly disproportionate and indiscriminate response by the government of Israel is justified by our government. Universities are shut down when students are protesting and thrown into jail. Isn't that where integral human development is birthed, in the demand for justice and accountability?

To Awad's question about where democracy was taking root in the Arab world, Ebrahim noted that in 2013, the US and everybody else stood by as a pro-democracy movement was crushed in Egypt, and in Tunisia. "We aided and abetted a military coup of a democratically elected government. Today, there are 60,000 political prisoners in Egypt. Where do you think their loyalties lie? Not a word from us. So where is IHD in our critique of our government and its actions?"

Finally, people talk about a number of solutions to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, he said. "I believe both Israelis and Palestinians are entitled to the land from the Jordan river to the Mediterranean sea. It belongs to both of them." That said, there's a one-state solution, there's a two-state solution. "Some prefer ethnic cleansing, others a Bantustan solution (an apartheid-style sequestration of Palestinians into a set-aside territory). Oslo was basically a Bantustan agreement; Israel did not recognize Palestinian political rights, and only the PLO became the representative of the Palestinian people."

These solutions are flawed in various ways, he continued. Where are the two states going to be? There is no possibility of a two-state solution "unless you're going to have a mass migration of people, with severe consequences including extreme violence." Only two options remain, Professor Moosa suggested. "Either one of the two parties try to ethnically cleanse the other, and we have continuous genocide, as we have right now, or they will have to live together between the river and the sea. That's the only possible solution I see, because there's only a finite amount of land." And, he concluded, "I agree with Mitri about the need for a truth and reconciliation commission between these communities in order to sort out the wounds of 75 years."

Kaufman said that he sees no contradiction between seeing the conflict as asymmetric, as national, and as characterized by settler colonial practices. "I use these three lenses together, and see no contradiction in doing so. One does not come at the expense of the other, at least in my mind."

With regards to the question of anti-Zionism and versus and antisemitism, "clearly there are very good American Jews who are anti-Zionists and take that stance from the depths of their faith as Jews, so there is no necessary connection between being anti-Zionist and antisemitic. The flip side of this, as I mentioned in my presentation, is that we also have to take into account that adversaries of Israel conflate anti-Zionism and anti-Jewish sentiments, and there is a dialectical relationship between these two. So, when we analyze one side, we also have to take into account that it happens on the other side. And this dynamic requires some analytical thinking."

With regards to American responsibility and the global aspect of this conflict, as an historian Professor Kaufman added another date—1924—which is when the U.S. immigration restriction law was passed, at a time when the Jewish political refugees that were arriving in droves from Eastern Europe were no longer able to arrive in the US, and had to find the other places to migrate. Many of them went to Palestine. So, the demography of the land changed dramatically following 1924.

Most American Jews are descendants of these Jews who arrived until 1924, and most Israeli Jews are descendants of the Jews who arrived in Palestine after 1924, Kaufman continued.

"Today you can find many of the descendants of the pre-1924 migrants in Israeli Jewish voices for peace, while the descendants of the Jews who arrived in Israel after 1924 law are supporters of bombing Gaza, unfortunately." As a historian he thinks of the alternative histories that could have occurred globally if the US had not restricted immigration in 1924. "Apart from that, of course, he concluded, America is complicit in the 36,000 murdered and the 100,000 Palestinians injured in the current assault on Gaza."

Omer mentioned that her book, *Days of Awe: Reimagining Jewishness in Solidarity with Palestinians*, traces the kind of processes of "unlearning" that American Jews underwent in becoming critical of the history of US-abetted Israeli expulsion of the Palestinians from their historic homeland. But she tells students in her class on the Middle East and North Africa that it is a class about Europe—not the region of Europe, but the cultural, theological, ideological, and political project of Europe in colonizing the MENA region, which is also a genocidal project.

With respect to the conflation of anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism, she continued:

> As I mentioned in my opening remarks, Christian Zionism, with all its "love" of Israel and the Jewish community, is a fetish. It's not about Jews or Jewish safety; the Jews are an instrument for the Christian Zionists. They are deeply anti-Semitic. In their theological discourse about what will happen in the "end times," they teach that the Jews will perish if they are not converted to Christianity when Christ returns. Lord Balfour's embrace of restoration theology—let's return Jews to their original homeland (which already has people in it)— is actually a theology of punishment; in and of itself, it carries the genocidal seeds of the annihilation of the Jews. So Christian Zionism is actually deeply connected with anti-Semitism. And in fact, if you read Zionist figures of the early period, you can trace the internal rise of forms of anti-Semitism in the discourse, including language of blood and purity in Jabotinsky, the ideological father of Netanyahu.

Professor Omer then returned to Raheb's's comments about the academy and pointed to the deep epistemic crisis into which the universities have fallen after Gaza. "We have been confronted with evidence, time and again, that the whole geopolitical space 'from the river to the sea' corresponds to the legal category of apartheid, she noted. All kinds of evidence-based reports launched by Amnesty International and by B'tselem, a Jewish human rights organization, are dismissed—even though the irrefutable evidence of genocide is live streamed daily. "The story we hear," she said, "is that this is about 'Israeli self-defense.' With impunity, Israel has been continuing with the occupation, with the apartheid regime, with genocide, and has been rewarded for that with various forms of normalization—despite its clear violation of ethical norms, international conventions, humanitarian principles, and international human rights law.

> I conclude by referring to the great Palestinian scholar Edward Said, who wrote about the question of who has the permission to narrate. Who gets to tell the story? That question is at the center of the conversation today: who has the permission to narrate—and why? And that goes directly to the question of IHD, because it seems that some lives are valued over other lives. For me, as a Jewish Israeli and a descendant of people from Europe, from Czechoslovakia, Poland, Germany, who survived the genocide against the Jews in Europe, I am compelled to ask: Is my life and safety worth more than Palestinian safety? I think the equality of all human lives is really at the heart of integral human development.

Appleby, by way of concluding the session, thanked the panelists for having the conversation and having it so honestly. To Ansari's question about how Notre Dame might play a constructive role, he said:

> We must begin with our mandate as educators, to prepare the next generation to ask the right questions and devise enduring, workable, and just solutions. If we do that well, it is no small thing. Second, our research must be grounded in evidence, not merely in emotion or opinion, and the interpretive strategies we bring to the data must be characterized by "that noble dream" of objectivity that does not know the answer before the question is posed. Notre Dame, as a university has a national platform, and should exercise it without fear or favor. We do not always have the courage to do so, however, as we balance stewardship of resources with the political and financial consequences we face when we speak truth to power.

In response to Mukherji's question about spiritual resources for opposing deadly violence in the name of religion, Appleby said, we must elevate certain ideas and commitments above and beyond the plane of mundane criticism and negotiation. We have to claim that certain values are indeed transcendent—untouchable, irreducible—and the inherent, God-given dignity of each person and every person is foremost among these transcendent truths. Thus, however quixotic it may seem, as scholars, teachers and citizens we must resist the devaluation of this commitment by so-called "realism" or Realpolitik or just plain cynicism. Religions have in common the refusal to reduce meaning and value to what can be gleaned solely from our mundane reality. Catholics, and members of a Catholic university, must integrate the strict demands of scholarly rigor and academic excellence with the prophetic imperative that accompanies this openness to transcendence.

Endnotes

[1] Pope Francis, *Laudato Sí: On Care for Our Common Home,* 193. The Spanish version (with which Pope Francis has probably worked) contains even stronger language: "ha llegado la hora de aceptar cierto decrecimiento en algunas partes del mundo aportando recursos para que se pueda crecer sanamente en otras partes." https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

[2] "Remarks at the University of Kansas" (March 18, 1968): https://www.jfklibrary.org/learn/about-jfk/the-kennedy-family/robert-f-kennedy/robert-f-kennedy-speeches/remarks-at-the-university-of-kansas-march-18-1968

[3] Mark Hopwood, "'Terrible Purity': Peter Singer, Harriet McBryde Johnson, and the Moral Significance of the Particular," *Journal of the American Philosophical Association* 2 (4) (2016):653.

[4] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* II-II, 123, 7, resp.

[5] Des Gasper and Lori Keleher, "Investigating L.-J. Lebret as a pioneer of human development thinking and global development ethics," *Journal of Global Ethics* 17 (2021), 117.

[6] John T. McGreevy, "Integral Human Development: A brief history," Keough School of Global Affairs, March 5, 2021. https://keough.nd.edu/news-and-events/news/integral-human-development-a-brief-history/.

[7] Hans Lucht, "Violence and Morality: the concession of loss in a Ghanaian fishing village," *Journal of Religious Ethics* (2010) https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9795.2010.00440.x

[8] Viktor Vyshneskvyi and Serhii Shevchuk, "The destruction of the Kakhovka dam and the future of the Kakhovske reservoir," *International Journal of Environmental Studies* 81:275-288. https://doi.org/10.1080/00207233.2024.2320033

[9] Pope Francis talks about "the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor" (*Laudato Sí* (2015), 49).

[10] "In 75 jaw-dropping graphs," the book's promotional website boasts, "Pinker shows that life, health, prosperity, safety, peace, knowledge, and happiness are on the rise, not just in the West, but worldwide."https://stevenpinker.com/publications/enlightenment-now-case-reason-science-humanism-and-progress

[11] Yuval Noah Harari, *Sapiens and Homo Deus: The E-book Collection: A Brief History of Humankind and A Brief History of Tomorrow* (Harper Collins:2017), Kindle Edition.

[12] Jeffrey Sachs, et. Al, eds., *Ethics in Action for Sustainable Development*, (Columbia University Press, 2022).

[13] Ibid, x.

[14] Pope Francis, Laudato Sí. https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

[15] "Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists," https://thebulletin.org/doomsday-clock/current-time/

[16] Here I am drawing on systems analysis in the sociology of science; see Thomas P. Hughes, "The Evolution of Large Technological Systems," in Hughes, et al., eds. *The Social Construction of Technological Systems* (MIT Press, 1989).

[17] "Sunnah," Book 27, Hadith 4, https://sunnah.com/adab/27/4

[18] Rachel S. Mikva, "Does Interreligious Understanding Matter if the World Is Coming to an End?" in Lucinda Mosher, et. al, eds. *Deep Understanding for Divisive Times: Essays Marking a Decade of the Journal for Interreligious Understanding (2020)*, p 13. https://openlibrary.org/books/OL32513352M/Deep_Understanding_for_Divisive_Times

[19] Robert Bellah, *Religion in Human Evolution*, (Belknap Press, 2017).

[20] William Butler Yeats. "The Second Coming," *Poetry Foundation*, 1989, https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/43290/the-second-coming.

[21] Jeffrey Sachs, Remarks at UN World Food Summit, 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WZ1xc491mnU&t=198s.

[22] Thomas Legrand, *The Politics of Being* (Ocean of Wisdom Press, 2021).

[23] Sachs, et al, *Ethics in Action,* p. 66f.

[24] Ibid., *p.* 63.

[25] See Legrand, *The Politics of Being* Chapter 19, "Governance." Also see Nathan Gardels and Nicolas Berggruen, *Renovating Democracy: Governing in the Age of Globalization and Digital Capitalism* (University of California Press, 2019), which in part informs Legrand's framework.

[26] Jeffrey Sachs, Remarks at UN World Food Summit, 2021: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WZ1xc491mnU&t=198s.

[27] Boutros Boutros-Ghali, "An agenda for peace : preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping : report of the Secretary-General pursuant to the statement adopted by the Summit Meeting of the Security Council on 31 January 1992," United Nations Digital Library,

[28] Ibid, p. 9.

[29] Vatican News, February 4, 2019, https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2019-02/pope-francis-uae-declaration-with-al-azhar-grand-imam.html.

[30] Sachs, et al, *Ethics in Action*, p. 185.

[31] For a more in-depth discussion of the issues raised in this paper, see Gerard Powers, "The New Nuclear Predicament: An Ethic of Deterrence or an Ethic of Disarmament?" *Journal of Catholic Social Thought*, (Winter 2025) 22:1.

[32] See, e.g., George Weigel, "The Just War Tradition and the World After September 11th," *Catholic University Law Review*, 51, no. 3 (Spring 2002) p. 707.

[33] Pope Francis, *Fratelli tutti: On Fraternity and Social Friendship (2020)* 258. https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html

[34] Ibid. In fact, Powers adds, after saying it is "very difficult … to speak of the possibility of a 'just war,'" the Pope says, in a footnote, that "we no longer uphold in our own day" St. Augustine's [much more permissive] concept of just war. Perhaps responding to the charge that the Church's restrictive approach is "functionally pacifist," he concludes, it will not "trouble us to be deemed naive for choosing peace" [FT 261].

[35] G20 Bali Leaders' Declaration, Bali, Indonesia, November 15–16, 2022, § 4, https://www.g20.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/2022-11-16-g20-declaration-data.pdf.

[36] An overview of how faculty expertise is presented on the websites of some of our peer institutions makes this very clear. For example, with respect to the *Princeton School of Public and International Affairs* (Formerly the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs), the Faculty Directory shows 322 profiles, but the Keyword "Asia" yields 15, the Keyword "China" yields 2 more, the Keyword "India" yields 3 more, and there are no results for "Japan", "Korea",

"Vietnam", "Indonesia." In short, the grand total of faculty listing regional expertise is 20 out of 322. Similarly Harvard's *Kennedy School* lists 94 Senior Faculty and 27 Junior Faculty (totalling 121). Most of their Asia research is concentrated in the Ash Center, which lists 55 Affiliated Faculty, only 9 of whom are Asianists. Finally, *Georgetown's Walsh School* lists 167 faculty, but its Asian Studies Program has only 14 Core Faculty. Data collected by the Liu Institute staff in March 2023.

[37] This passage is taken from Yoon's earlier work. See: Yoon, Sharon J. "Colorless Racialization: Analyzing the Discrimination of 'Oldcomer' Koreans in Japan and Chinese in Korea from an American Sociological Perspective." *Korean Journal of Sociology* 50.6 (2016): 73-99.

[38] Cho 2020

[39] Tom Gill. "The Nativist Backlash: Exploring the roots of the action conservative movement." *Social Science Japan Journal* 21.2 (2018).

[40] Yoon, Sharon J., and Yuki Asahina. "The rise and fall of Japan's new far right: How Anti-Korean discourses went mainstream." *Politics & Society* 49.3 (2021): 363-402.

[41] Yoon, Sharon J., and Yuki Asahina. "The rise and fall of Japan's new far right: How Anti-Korean discourses went mainstream." *Politics & Society* 49 no.3 (2021): 363-402.

[42] Yool Choi, Doo-Sub Kim, Jungkyun Ryu, "Marital dissolution of transnational couples in South Korea," Migration and Marriage in Asian Contexts, (Routledge, 2021): https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781003240402-9/marital-dissolution-transnational-couples-south-korea-yool-choi-doo-sub-kim-jungkyun-ryu.

[43] Yoon, Sharon J., and Rita Udor. "How hegemonic masculinity injures migrant men: A multilevel analysis of African men in South Korea's low-wage labor market." *Gender, Work & Organization (2024)*.

[44] Emmanuel Katongole, *The Sacrifice of Africa: A Political Theology for Africa,* (Eerdmans, 2011); Emmanuel Katongole, *Born From Lament: A Theology of Hope for Africa* (Eerdmans, 2017).

[45] Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), 6

[46] Johan Galtung. "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research," Journal of Peace Research 6, no. 3, (1969): 167–191.

[47] Christian Parenti, T*ropic of Chaos: Climate Change and the New Geography of Violence*. (New York, Basic Books 2011), 5.

[48] See Kä Mana, *Christians and Churches Of Africa: Salvation In Christ And Building A New African Society* (Orbis, 2004), 29

[49] Emmanuel Katongole, "Rooting the Church in African Soil and the Bethany Land Institute: A Theological Experiment," in William Cavanaugh, ed., *Fragile World: Ecology and the Church* (Cascade Books, 2018): 219-232.

[50] This research requires a deep immersion and engagement, by a number of colleagues, in the implementation of BLI's programs, in its work, its day-to-day activities, and especially in its caretaker formation program. Working collaboratively with an interdisciplinary team of colleagues makes it possible to comprehensively explore, map, and measure integral ecology as a sustainable pathway to an alternative livelihood. This collaboration occurs through partnerships with the Mendoza College of Business, the Kellogg Institute and Ford Family Program, as well as with individual colleagues and graduate students from Mendoza, the Kroc Institute, Notre Dame's Environment Change Initiative, Theology department, the College of Engineering, and the Keough School.

[51] Denise Levertov, "Making Peace," Poetry Foundation, 1987 https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/53900/making-peace.

[52] For the distinction between "public" and "hidden" transcripts, see James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (Yale University Press, 1990).

[53] The most serious intervention is made by Indian scholar Rajni Kothari in describing the unique contribution of the Congress Party which, unlike a typical ideologically-derived party, was coterminous with the Indian political system itself. The Congress party had the capacity to incorporate all kinds of political ideologies within an internal system of democracy. This character of the Congress Party, argues Kothari, was born during the country's struggle for independence and contributed to India's success as a democracy.

[54] One might consider, for example, what Kellee Tsai has discussed regarding adaptive informal institutions in China. This causal mechanism deliberately permits, illegality to proceed in order to test new ways of solving social problems. If the experiment is successful, such institutions are given a new legal form.

Evaluating the agenda and the mission

Ted Beatty chaired the session, which featured three experts invited to the conference to assess the Keough School papers, presentations, and strategic plan, from their various perspectives as “champions” of sustainability, poverty reduction, democracy, and peace. Professor Beatty noted that we have given them a tall order—trying to say something meaningful in the wake of 13 panels, 52 speakers, and 24 cumulative hours of commentary, delivered over three days, on research across the spectrum of Keough School expertise.

William Clark began by noting that scholars are uniquely positioned to influence how the world can deal with catastrophes over the long term. Having run the international global affairs program at Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government for the last 15 years, he agreed to deliver, as requested, an impromptu “program review” of the Keough School at this juncture, after ten years of existence. After reading the 2030 Strategic Plan and other materials, including the papers prepared for the conference, and after listening to these three days of presentations and discussions, Professor Clark declared: “I can say that the Keough School, with its focus on integral human development and its interdisciplinary approach, is well on the way to filling an important but virtually empty niche in the schools of global affairs around the world.”

There are multiple schools that focus on nations and their security, on economies and productivity, he noted. There is overlap between these schools and Keough School in addressing basic issues of human development, but the research of the other schools is conducted primarily by individual scholars working alone. The Keough School itself is now widely known around the world, Clark added, but it’s not clear that the strategic vision or the concept of a school devoted to IHD is known as a strategic entity—and it should be. “As a result,” he continued, “the agenda for the future is to make your distinctive vision and approach better known. You should use the vision and research of the school to change the terms of the debate about how we ought to think about global affairs, so that it is not denominated just in terms of national security an economic productivity.”

While the Keough School has clearly established a space where scholars appreciate that they can do overtly normatively-driven, interdisciplinary work on major global issues of the day, Professor Clark continued, the faculty does not work across disciplinary and especially thematic lines as much as it could (and apparently would like to do). “This week we heard many of you say: ‘I didn’t know my colleagues were doing that!’ So, the challenge is to become more visibly a whole that is greater than the sum of its individual, utterly remarkable parts.”

This idea of flourishing with the central focus on dignity is central to who you are as a school, Clark noted. To operationalize this important vision, the Keough School must specify the constituents of human well-being. It is not enough to invoke a term like "human flourishing" without indicating what that entails and how it is to be measured. Respect for one's dignity is a start, of course, and we know that energy, food, housing, etc. belong on the list. Perhaps drawing more explicitly from Amartya Sen's capability approach would help in the necessary delineation of agency. How to extend these components of well-being and flourishing to particular people in particular contexts is the next question. "However," Clark insisted, "unless you mount a schoolwide effort to identify what those constituents of flourishing are, and how they may be operationalized in specific contexts, you will lose what is potentially extraordinary about your vision and the faculty you have built over the past ten years to realize it." And then, he added, you will default to the standard metrics of success (e.g., GDP), which are inadequate. Others have attempted to measure the foundations of human flourishing, of course, including the World Bank, the UN, and the country of New Zealand.[1] "But a university with staying power to pursue this? I am not aware of that. I hope you will take up the challenge."

Professor Clark also recommended that the Keough School faculty "be more concrete about the notion of justice, and how to advance justice for the most vulnerable." The quest for justice is "an admiral characteristic of the IHD program, and a good step towards changing the language in terms of how we talk about development in the broader, global affairs world." But the Keough School "seems to be treating justice as an un-problematical concept." Yet it's no secret that other scholars and practitioners have spent a lot of time exploring different conceptualizations of justice. "Keough scholars, drawing on this literature and expanding it in dialogue with the concept of integral human development—that effort seems to me central to your overall project," he said.

"One aspect of justice that was almost entirely absent from the discussions this week (though Dean Appleby assures me it does come up back at Notre Dame) is intergenerational justice—what we owe to coming generations. Whether we're emitting carbon dioxide or displacing people from their homeland—what does that mean for the dignity of those future generations of people that will inherit what we have wrought?" Professor Clark mentioned that he had learned from Sr. Alford that the Pontifical Academy of the Vatican conducted fascinating explorations of the concept of justice, but that was 20 years ago, when the question was about the welfare state and the concern for families potentially threatened by poverty, inequality, and other social and economic pressures. The conversation needs to be updated for contemporary threats to human dignity and justice, he urged, such as the greenhouse effect, anti-microbial resistance, mass migration, and so on. So, how do we do our duty to provide to future generations the opportunity for a dignified existence, rather than robbing them of that possibility? "Here Keough can draw on its historians as well as its ethicists to provide longer-term histories of the sort we saw so wonderfully portrayed in the last panel on the Israel-Palestine conflict—longer-term histories of how human dignity and individual human development has developed (or stalled) over decades. What have been the pitfalls and the traps? What alignment would give us a foundation for thinking about decades or generations into the future, along with the evolution of the concept and the reality of integral human development?"

Turning to the topic of policy impact, Clark noted that almost all the presentations mention a commitment to engagement. Research can't be done in a room and then put in an envelope addressed to policymakers; you have to engage with society, and with different power brokers and political dynamics. Accordingly, "The Keough School would be well served by a more explicit recognition that engagement is ultimately political, it involves exclusion, bargaining, and exercises of power." The panels on democracy underscored this point eloquently, he remarked.

A more glaring gap or weakness concerns measurement and evaluation, Clark continued. The topic came up on the first day and then was dropped. Kijewski-Correa's presentation on the first day challenged us to measure how much progress we're making in fighting poverty and gave some ideas in the direction, "but, frankly, beyond that opening session, the conversation on measurement has been embarrassingly shallow." We've had casual references to things like the human development index, which is demonstrably flawed and does not cover half the things we want to measure. "Yes, the HDI changed the terms of the debate, but it is not an operational metric, Clark argued. "We can surely do better than that."

Finally, Professor Clark observed that the issue of complexity and how to grapple with it came up over and over again. Taking on complexity cannot be done alone, however. "Bringing multiple perspectives to hard problems rather than having a hammer and just using that on everything—your disciplinary training gave you such tools, but they should be used in teams." Power did a good job this morning urging the Keough School to develop plenty of team projects, Clark recalled. It is interesting to note that your collaborative projects, even when guided by Keough/IHD principles, are almost all conducted with outside collaborators, not so much with one another. "For the School to build a culture of collaborative approaches to complexity you need some projects that are almost exclusively with one another, to build teamwork and reinforce your sense of shared values," he suggested. Perhaps set aside time in the summer for a workshop devoted to generating such projects and to address issues like how we should handle intergenerational equity and half a dozen other things you might think of—"and then come out with a series of Keough School canonical volumes on issues you are addressing through an IHD lens. That would be a signature set of volumes that would address the concern about disseminating not just your name but your distinctive, values-oriented interdisciplinary approach to complex problems. I for one would be reading those volumes, and would look forward to the next installment in the Keough School series—say, every two years—on a major global affairs issue of the day. This would require a consolidated effort to bring your individual disciplinary tools and the conceptual framing to bear; such a series, if well publicized and branded, might actually change the way we talk about global affairs more broadly."

Thank you for the opportunity to be here this week, Professor Clark concluded, and to have a close-up view of your important collective undertaking.

Manual Pulgar-Vidal opened his remarks by affirming the four main themes of the Keough School strategic plan as central to global affairs and intertwined with one another. He called for greater integration of these themes in Keough School research. This, he emphasized, will require an intentional process of defining the connections between the themes.

What is the vision and what is the timeframe for realizing the vision? Some papers refer to the Sustainable Development Goals as a benchmark, while others leave the timeframe and the general framework vague. "But it is important," Pulgar-Vidal underscored, "to advance your collective work within a particular timeframe—specifically, the timeframe that is adopted by those officials and policymakers and others who set the international agenda." Keough School leaders should connect researchers with the policymakers, with those who set the international agenda. What do we think should happen after 2030, when the end of the current SDG agenda has expired? Much will still need to be accomplished, and a new set of goals based on the new problems that have emerged will need to be formulated and disseminated. The year 2030 is also important in the context of the global biodiversity framework and convention. In short, he asked: "How do we better organize and systematize the 17 SDGs perhaps in the light of integral human development? How do we develop metrics beyond the old standards, like GDP?"

One of the key topics that is present in so many of the papers, Pulgar-Vidal continued, is "transitions" —transitional justice in Columbia, energy transitions, transitions for Democratic processes, and many other transitions. That is part of the agenda that deserves more attention. Transitions are not new, of course, he added. In Chile at the end of the 19th century, phosphates were replaced with synthetic fertilizers, and then there was the debate in the UK over coal during the time of Margaret Thatcher. There are additional examples of the world attempting to manage "just transitions."

Another important connective tissue is ethics, a concern that runs throughout IHD and has been raised today, directly, in the panel on the war in Israel/Palestine. At the same time, Mr. Pulgar-Vidal noted, religion is an underlying issue in that conflict—certain religious claims to the land, for example. "And religion is still one of the powerful sources of ethics among people worldwide. It can aggravate problems, of course, but religion can also be an indispensable asset for those seeking to advance IHD, as it has been through the leadership of Pope Francis on environmental issues, especially through his monumental encyclical letter, *Laudato Si*, and in subsequent documents and advocacy by the Church on the moral concerns associated with the way we are ravaging the planet."

Among other fruits of *Laudato Si*, he added, is the interfaith movement it has created, which has led to exceptional coordination between different religions to discuss how to address this planetary challenge. “That is something that we have to evaluate—how much this lens of ethics and religion is helping us bring other topics into the agenda.” For example, there is probably a valid and legitimate critique of the carbon tax to be developed—that is, a focus on carbon that allows us to wash our hands of other, newer concerns such as the oceans, the food supply, and so on. “No one expects religious leaders and communities to solve these problems technically, of course, but there is an indisputable need for moral urgency and ethical precision. The Keough School and Notre Dame should be leaders in evaluating religion’s efficacy in bringing attention and resolve to some of the new concerns for biodiversity, clean water, and sustainable agriculture, for example.”

We could go more deeply into the taxation system, as mentioned in the democracy sessions. Corruption is a bane to many taxation systems, as it is to good governance more generally. If we are to make progress on this issue, Pulgar-Vidal argued, we need metrics to quantify levels of corruption. Dictators, as we have discussed, are corrupting the courts by packing the judiciary, and yet the citizens are often passive. In some cases, this is because watchdog organizations have been outlawed. How do we make progress in restoring integrity to these systems of governance? This question was not discussed at this conference, perhaps because it seems naïve or hopeless to try to restore integrity to these systems, including in so-called democracies. “But deep levels of corruption should not be accepted as normal.” Corruption, he noted, includes the private deals that allow foreign or domestic companies to exploit natural resources and often to pollute and otherwise degrade the environment for profit without considering the health, livelihood or income of the local inhabitants.

Also missing from our discussion is the role of finance, he continued. How do we bring systems thinking into solving problems? Can the financial sector unlock resources to battle poverty, manage climate change, build peace, and strengthen democracies? These areas deserve a new, fresh approach and additional capital for the most vulnerable countries. “Researchers who want to make a difference should study the financial sector and how it makes decisions that could affect the most vulnerable.” What role are the markets playing to decarbonize our economy or achieve diversity? What economic incentives can motivate investors from simply avoiding risk to being more climate-responsible? What is that new climate economy that we can expect and how much can it be directed to removing obstacles to human security? And how can we convince decision-makers in the Global South that climate-responsible policies are in their economic interests? (The loss of GDP in Latin America due to climate change will range upwards of 25 percent by 2050 if we’re not climate responsible.)

Mr. Pulgar-Vidal concluded by underscoring the important role of data and science in an IHD approach. “The precautionary principle applied in the arena of climate change: whereas you don’t necessarily need to prove every predicted negative outcome in order to take preventative action, the data and the science can demonstrate the risk clearly." This could lead to good, responsible actions by policymakers and government officials. In this regard, the question of how we are measuring poverty, and how we *should* measure poverty, was usefully taken up on the first day of the conference, he recalled. The distinction between monetary poverty and multidimensional poverty is important. We have much to do to evaluate the multiple dimensions of property in research. Science and scientific data are helping to shape the climate debate (along with the moral exhortation by the Pope and others). "Perhaps the climate models and their risk scenarios, which can motivate decision-makers, provide a model that could benefit scholars of poverty," he suggested. In any case, Laurie Nathan's presentation is relevant here, in that he explained to us the ways researchers might better connect with the decisionmakers— what researchers must do to be effective communicators with them.

Sr. Alford began her intervention by quoting Pope Francis: "We are not in an era of change, but in a change of era." The Keough School, she declared, could be a crucial player in helping society and the Church to deal with epochal change.

Sr. Alford took as her premise this "change of era" and reflected on the mixed legacy of modernity and modern globalization, especially in relation to the world's most vulnerable inhabitants. Notwithstanding its many benefits, modernity is not equal to the new problems facing humanity, she said. Nonetheless, people from around the world, especially those from the Global South who have not experienced modern "enlightenment," come to the Church with hope in the promise of modernity. This is the case, she remarked, despite the fact that that promise has a dark underbelly.

Indeed, Sr. Alford continued, one of the themes of the conference has been the dire effects of European colonialism, including genocide and other forms of violence that accompanied the European culture heritag., Moreover, modernity was devised to deal with problems in Europe in the 1700s and 1800s. Do we have the courage that the Enlightenment figures had to face dramatic changes in knowledge and society and adapt to them? Involving the Global South and other cultures in the benefits gained in the modern era is essential, if we are to have any new ideas to meet current challenges. In this respect, as others have noted, religious communities and institutions may have a surprising role to play. Religion was privatized in the so-called secular age by the majority of Western societies, but it needs to come back into public discussion for the sake of promoting and advancing the common good.

As has been said, the deep specialist knowledge which is a strength of the Keough School must be situated in a very strong cross-disciplinary framework, and IHD could be part of creating this framework. Sr. Alford noted that in the mid-twentieth century Pope Pius XII appealed to the faculties of the Angelicum and the Gregorianum to start teaching about modern social problems, and the legacy of Catholic social teaching across many decades is an absolutely crucial part of what the Keough School can offer, given the epochal change that we are in and the depth of the crisis that we are facing. "IHD is one of the untapped resources within the Christian tradition that we could offer as a framework for the mainstream," she suggested. "That rich social tradition has been mined only partially, and there are gaps in the tradition which engagement with (post)modern problems can help to fill."

After the financial crisis of 2008-2009, she reported, a group of bankers in London formed an association called "Blueprint for Better Business," which was inspired partly by their reading of Pope Benedict XVI's encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*. The group is still operating and it focuses on the "Why" question—why are we doing x or y, to what purpose, and with what results? This is the ethics question. Businesses are brilliant in taking something and turning it into a tool and doing something with it that exhibits great skill. But these bankers and financial analysts wanted to move beyond technical prowess alone and ask: What are we doing this for? What are we trying to achieve? This is what we mean by "coming out of modernity," where the question of end goals was subordinated to the process, to the technique itself. Goals were relegated to the private level and were not to impede business or politics. Everybody decides for themselves what they want to do with their life, so having a shared social goal seemed scary—and with some justification.

In a talk she delivered to the International Federation of Catholic Universities in January 2024, Sr. Alford recounted, she said that, by 2050, one could imagine the Catholic Church, and Catholic universities in particular, being regarded not as backward-looking institutions but as sources of social innovation in service of advancing IHD. Academic freedom is part of the general freedoms to be preserved as an accomplishment of modernity. However, she added, we want to rethink freedom in a more relational context with some sense of shared goals.

From her participation in the conference, Sr. Alford said, she concluded that it would be interesting for Keough School scholars to situate their research between contrasting poles which are in tension with one another, but both of which point to truths. On the one hand are truths that claim universal applicability; on the other are truths that emerge from and give expression to particular historical and cultural understandings. These truths need not cancel one another out, or become contradictory. For example, the idea of what it means to be human can incorporate universal as well as particular metaphysical claims about human beings qua human beings. At the moment the nearest you get to a conceptual approach situated between "poles of thought in tension with one another, but not necessarily incompatible," is the human rights agenda. As several speakers at this conference have noted, however, this is an historically conditioned agenda, in that its specific elements and expressions came out of a certain part of the world with its contingent history. Going forward, however, the notion of what it means to be human could become more radically open to metaphysical ideas from other parts of the world and from overlooked or suppressed traditions of thought. This expansion would not squelch historically and culturally conditioned diversity, Sr. Alford added; to the contrary, it would enrich diversity via the inclusion of new insights and sources of wisdom.

One way this general idea has arisen at the conference, she continued, is the attempt to balance the experiences of people on the ground and the freedom of the individual on the micro level, with aggregate research. "I think this comes out very well in the bible—not the age-old Bible of 66 or 73 books, but the Keough School "bible" that Appleby mentioned on the first day" (i.e., *Enacting Integral Human Development*, by Clemens Sedmak). On page *xxviii* the author includes two columns positioned side by side—one listing the characteristic goods or virtues associated with IHD (e.g., the individual in relationship with others), the other listing ideas or behaviors incompatible with IHD. This is a little different from the two contrasting poles I mentioned, but it could be modified to serve a bit like the dialectical method of St. Thomas Aquinas, in his attempt, in the *Summa Theologiae*, to synthesize two competing and seemingly contradictory sets of claims or logics. This attempt to bring two separate logics into more fruitful interaction serves to establish the rules of the game, so to speak.

Sr. Alford also invoked Romano Guardini, an early 20th-century theologian quoted frequently by Pope Francis. Guardini explored the creative potential of this "in-between" perspective in his *Polar Opposition: essay for a philosophy of concrete living.*[2] Guardini proposes that carving out a conceptual space between two "polar opposites" is quite important, not least for the ethical application of normative ideas. Pope Francis, in turn, has affirmed that "conflicts, tensions and even groups once considered inimical can attain a multifaceted unity that gives rise to new life."[3]

Appleby invited Sean Mirza, an undergraduate student and rising junior at Notre Dame, and Maria Riberas Orjales, who graduated from Notre Dame in 2021 with a supplemental major in Global Affairs, to comment on what they had taken away from the three-day conference.

Riberas Orjales expressed gratitude for being invited to accompany the Keough School Advisory Council to the conference, and to share her views, "both as an alum and as a practitioner who is trying to implement the philosophy of IHD as a priority in our family foundation, investments, and current business operations." She continued:

> In my experience in the Kellogg Institute, and in the field doing development work, the involvement of the private sector comes up only when there has been a negative experience with a specific company or to express distrust or lack of confidence in a company's transparency or intentions. Nevertheless, we know about the limitations of governments that fail to provide for its citizens' basic rights and security, and how development agencies might also fail to provide quality impact, especially when they try to cure symptoms instead of directly targeting the source of problems.
>
> In the case of the private sector, companies have other priorities. Still, they usually need to have a good understanding of the localities where they work, for they are employers within communities where the remuneration and wealth creation capabilities of companies become a true source of wealth for many people.

> Furthermore, when companies invest, they signal the intention to stay long-term, usually looking towards much longer timelines than those of projects launched by governments and development agencies alike.

Traditionally, Riberas Orjales noted, the only concern for companies working in local communities was access to the local labor force. Now, however, in many countries in the world leaders of the private sector are no longer bystanders, but philanthropists and individuals concerned with the current state of the world. (Some choose to act outside of their circle of influence by funding projects outside of their business operations.) Now that she is specializing in impact investing, with a mandate from her father to apply principles of social and environmental stewardship to the company's business operations, Riberas Orjales seeks to demonstrate to other businesses that, as she put it, "taking care of our employees and of nature can have a positive impact on our financial bottom-line." Unfortunately, she added, there is not much literature and data to prove us right. "Consultants get involved to try to make you look better, instead of helping your business to do better," she acknowledged. "For me this is just not acceptable."

"Members of the advisory council have tasked me with insisting to the next Dean that this research needs to be undertaken, Riberas Orjales reported, "in order to complement the kind of research on social entrepreneurship being conducted by the McKenna Center, but also to recommend how big corporations can actually become part of the development community and be positive agents of integral development." She continued:

> I think that the Keough School is in a great position to convince our own Notre Dame network to start considering principles of IHD in business, especially for companies operating in impoverished or vulnerable communities. The private sector has a tremendous potential to be a source for good; we just need to learn how to effectively exploit that potential so that it can become a sustainable source of wealth creation in local communities. Businesses can be effective agents of sustainable development around the world. Please tell the next Dean that I am at her complete disposal for anything she might consider appropriate in this area.

Riberas Orjales concluded with words of appreciation for the International Development Studies program run by the Kellogg Institute. "My experience in the program as an undergrad at Notre Dame helped to make me the person that I am today," she acknowledged. "Had I not conducted research for my IDS capstone in rural Spain in the summer of 2020, working side by side with temporary migrant workers in agriculture, it is unlikely that I would have gone to work after graduation in regenerative agriculture for Bethany Land Institute [BLI], or that I would have questioned the role each of us can play in our own ecosystems to enact positive and lasting change."

> Studying and coming into physical contact with different human experiences than our own, teaches us new lessons. IDS gave me the opportunity to open my eyes and see a completely different reality from the one I was living, as the migrants were working land a mere 20 km away from where I grew up. The experience triggered an identity crisis that allowed my own humanity to flourish. The humanity was always there, but when you live among the most privileged in the world, it is very easy to ignore human suffering elsewhere. I hope that Keough will continue to provide students like me the opportunity to go out and see the real world and determine how to make it a better place.

Sean Mirza called his presentation "an undergraduate's three takeaways from the Keough School's 10th-anniversary conference."

First, he said, "I've heard from Keough School faculty that a gift of this conference other than the location, food, and wine is speaking with other faculty and hearing their research. Listening to panelists it is clear that the issues discussed are deeply intertwined with one another. Therefore, *I urge the Keough School faculty to share their research and simply have more frequent discussions on a regular basis.* The connected nature of the problems we want to tackle, he added, "demands integrated solutions that cannot be created in the absence of regularly shared research. Not least, this should lead to more integrated teaching in terms of both disciplines and issues, thereby better communicating the message of IHD to undergraduates, who are largely clueless about it."

Second take-away: The presenters and commentators have stressed the importance of the perspectives and experience of local researchers, Mirza noted, as one of the keys to creating effective and sustainable research, policy and practice interventions. He continued:

> It is wonderful that the Keough School is dedicated to decolonizing research and policy implementation, both for the sake of equity and in pursuit of practical paths to IHD. Therefore, I find it odd and concerning that we have not actually heard from these local partners at this conference. As a careful listener these three days, I now understand their importance but they are still a vague entity that seems separate from what is happening at this conference. We have been warned against being policymakers who act as doctors prescribing solutions without input from or consideration for the people on the ground. This is how we fail IHD and create "benevolent indignities." By having a conference of academics from Northern universities without direct input from local experts, we may be fooling ourselves into thinking we are decolonizing research more than we actually are, if local partners are not included in international conferences where the privileged discuss their problems. This is to the detriment of pursuing IHD.

Once the heat in the room and the sting of ego-wounds subsided, Mirza proceeded to his third takeaway.

"I am not a Keough School student," he said, "and I have not heard the term Integral Human Development used by a single professor or undergraduate student in an academic setting or otherwise at Notre Dame."

> We have to make the Keough School and its message of IHD far less isolated, particularly for undergraduates. Ideally, we could intertwine IHD into some of the courses that are taken by all or nearly all undergraduates across colleges. These courses include foundations of technology, writing and rhetoric, USEMs, and Moreau first-year experience. As well, more Keough School courses should count for core University requirements such as theology, philosophy, fine arts, literature, and foreign languages (in most colleges). By targeting these courses, the mindset of the entire undergraduate student body could be changed in just a few years. Not only are these courses taken by the highest number of students, but students take them early on, often within their first year. It is conceivable that most undergraduates would have interacted with IHD by the end of their first year, and this could be the greatest impact of the Keough School on campus.

Beatty expressed appreciation for the incisive comments by Riberas Orjales and Mirza, as well as for the panel's insights. For the three conference days, he said, he moved between two seemingly opposing poles himself—on the one hand, a spirit of celebration for all that we have accomplished in ten years, and on the other, a skepticism about the claim that the Keough School is really doing something special and distinctive in combining an explicit normative mission and a cross-disciplinary approach. Is that really true, he wondered?

It is understandable if we have an ambivalent reaction to modernity, Beatty continued. On the one hand, it has been the driver of much of the wealth the developed world enjoys, as well as the ability to stand up institutions and transport us all to Rome, where we are fed abundant calories and caffeine for three days. Modernity has delivered the technology that provides the time and the resources necessary to do the kinds of research we do and tackle complex ideas and issues. And so, there is a celebratory aspect, both explicit and implicit, in our presence here. On the other hand, modernity has also been the context for widespread inequalities and persistent poverty for hundreds of millions. Modern technologies have exacerbated violence and created the conditions for the existential crisis caused by rapid climate change and the loss of biodiversity. Democratic backsliding and the erosion of appreciation for distinctive cultures and regions—this, too, is the legacy of modernity. In teaching courses in economic history, especially the survey of global economic history, Professor Beatty acknowledged, "I wrestle with this ambivalence— how to tell the history of the 20th century, an era that's given us longer and healthier lives and greater capacity to reach across borders and make a positive impact in the world, while at the same time creating challenges to human dignity, which are not merely externalities, not merely unintended consequences, but part and parcel of economic growth itself."

Can Notre Dame and the Keough School really position itself as distinctive in aspiring to be "a force for good in the world"? Our collective vision at the Keough School rests upon the proposition that IHD is a framework that directs our research and teaching to address critical normative issues that face the world today, and that a normative commitment provides a platform for a distinctive contribution to policy and practice. That allows us to translate evidence to action in ways that enhance human dignity. So, Beatty continued: Do we really have a comparative advantage in these ways? Does a normative, interdisciplinary approach have a comparative advantage over other universities? "Of course, there are scholars all over the world over care passionately about these issues, and engage them deeply in their research," he noted. "The skeptic in me is not completely convinced that the Keough School corners the market on normative commitments in its particular approach, so I'd like to hear a little bit more about that from the panelists and/or the audience."

Manuel Polgar Vidal replied that there is a value-added dimension at the Keough School because of its Catholic setting and IHD approach—simply take *Laudato Sí* and how the school builds organically upon this analysis and Pope Francis's call to reform, not only in this or that matter, but in our entire way of life. "This is a call to action, an urgent call that the world needs to hear and heed." The Vatican is part of the climate debate and taken seriously within it, he added. In resisting the so-called technocratic paradigm, the Pope is proposing new ways of bottom-up thinking, which should be a key element in our research. In Europe, we need to determine how to develop effective governmental structures to battle environmental degradation and the suffering that comes with it. Can Latin America learn from the best models produced by Europe? There is frustration that comes with having conferences annually and putting research into papers and proposals that are not being implemented, so the governance structure is very important. That should be on the Keough School agenda, he recommended.

In response to Beatty's skepticism about the Keough School's distinctiveness, Clark assured the audience that "I had no particular investment in Notre Dame or in the Keough School. I just read the papers and yes, there was a lot more here in the plan and the presentations than I was prepared to see." Clark added that he has been frustrated for many years by the lack of traction in implementing a sustainability agenda and other international agreements that results when "top-down" and "bottom-up" approaches act as competitors rather than complements. He continued:

> What is clear is that we don't improve humanity's well-being by double-crossing one another, by forsaking our grandchildren. The problem is that "we have not had institutions taking a humanistic approach in pursuit of human well-being, and making the resulting initiatives central to international relations. We have lost track of the need to place economic activity in service of human needs and human dignity. And so, as I said, the potential niche for the Keough School, if you aspire to do more than pursue only your individual research efforts, is to build a school-wide program that

> takes an IHD-centered approach to long-term global problems. I don't think you have many competitors out there. You will find areas of overlap, but none of us take a comprehensive, integrated approach, as the Keough School's Strategic Plan aspires to do.

We are desperate for normatively defined goals with sophisticated metrics attached to them, Clark continued. Such efforts tend to get displaced by the national security people, by the economic competitiveness people. They are doing good responsible work, but they become the only voices in town. "I wish Pope Francis had used a different term than "technocratic paradigm," since technology is part of the solution, certainly (it brought us solar panels, wind turbines, etc.) but he is correct in warning that we have gotten away from placing humans at the center of what we're trying to accomplish. Economies and nations should serve humanity, not the other way around." We don't need to pick a fight with people who take different approaches, he remarked; "it would be more than enough for the Keough School to fill the human dignity gap that scholarship has left there, by addressing the question, how do humans flourish in our time? That's where you should be, and that's why the Keough School is important and distinctive."

Understanding what modernity has delivered, both good and bad, is why we need historians in the mix, Sr. Alford added. One questionable tendency that accompanied the rise of nationalism, economic growth and certain forms of secularism has been to focus almost exclusively on individual goals—the rights of the individual, obviously a good thing—to the detriment of social goals and social goods. These were left to the private sphere. "We talk about the rule of law, equal treatment under the law, building infrastructure, and economic growth—these sorts of goods that Beattywas talking about. But these good things did not always extend to the millions and generations left behind. Modernity did not work so well for them."

By contrast, she continued, those who benefited from the Western system had a strong commitment to letting people be free and markets be free—and then came globalization. But what kind of globalization? "We have no global culture, no global language, no global religion, no global sense of anything (other than a bit of international law)—we just have economic goals. The global system doesn't really have any goals. It's completely self-referential and it's driven by finance, which is self-referential. Let's just get as much money as possible. Everything else is subordinate to wealth-creation, and so if you don't have a social goal that means it becomes the end." But a system designed to allow everyone, or a subset of everyone, to achieve their own private goals, "ends up sucking us all in, making us become subject to that technocratic system. Yes, technology is fine, but not when it becomes the paradigm." As we move forward, she urged, we must restore some of what got left out of the equation as modernity evolved, not least religious traditions and wisdom traditions which for thousands of years articulated and gave concrete shape to social goals.

Discussion session

On behalf of the Keough School Advisory Council, Rick Klau, the chair of the Council, thanked everyone for an extraordinarily rich and stimulating sharing of ideas and research findings. The question facing the Keough School, he said, is: How do we measure success? Effort doesn't necessarily mean accomplishment. So, how do we know objectively that we are making the progress we need to make? How do we measure policy impact, in particular? Keeping these questions before us and continually addressing them must be our priority going forward, he emphasized.

Klau also expressed the commitment of the Council to continue to support the Keough School and its faculty energetically. "We will help in whatever way we can to advance the mission," he declared. "How should we interact better with you? What do you look for from us, to help make you more and more successful? Let's keep that conversation going." He concluded his remarks by thanking the Keough School's leadership and staff for "an incredible three days."

Susan Allen of George Mason University also thanked the Keough School "for an incredible three days" and posed this challenge: How can the Keough School share its vision and research beyond the academy and beyond policy circles? Allen suggested open access publications, free online seminars, MOOGs "and other ways that the Keough School could reach beyond the Notre Dame community, beyond the academy where people have access to the firewalls of the top journals that you're all publishing in." In short, "I want to see broader impact, because you're putting forward a huge and important vision. Go beyond the academy, beyond the elite policymakers, and make it accessible to everyone."

Andrea Kattar, a member of the Keough School advisory council, noted that a recurrent theme these past days has been "the need to develop a common vocabulary, a common language as a framework for how we discuss concepts of dignity, and human development, and poverty and sustainability." But, she asked, "how does one go about developing that common language, gaining consensus for it across institutions and then implementing it?"

Ray Offenheiser thanked the Advisory Council and Appleby "for enabling us to become the school we have become over the last ten years." We haven't talked about the tension that in some ways we feel as a new school within an established university, he noted. In that university context, there are constraints such as insistence on the priority of disciplines and their metrics for success—this is an artifact of the past in some ways, Offenheiser argued, and it may be holding us back from all the things we have been discussing this week, such as the challenges of dealing with complexity and listening more actively and carefully to the world beyond the university. Working in teams across disciplines is not easy within universities that remain defined by practices from previous centuries. At times, he acknowledged, "we at the Keough School feel as though we are an exception within the

University." Would the panel help us imagine what the postmodern university must begin to look like, if we're going to advance the kind of practices and concepts we've been talking about during this conference?"

Josefina Echavarría thanked the panelists for listening to the various presentations at the conference with an open mind and an open heart. She also acknowledged the members of the Keough School Advisory Council and thanked Council chair Rick Klau for expressing the Council's commitment to support the work of the Keough School as its new strategic plan unfolds.

These days have been like a retreat for me, Echavarría mentioned, in that it allowed me to hear the details of the work of my colleagues, in some cases for the first time. The range and excellence of the research augurs well for the Keough School's strategic plan. Our progress must be benchmarked against the plans and achievements of our peer global affairs schools. Professor Echavarría also underscored the importance of Clark's recommendation for us to create faculty research clusters to advance our work. That's very important, she said, because we don't often get to listen to the content of the research of our colleagues, and the many new ideas will spark collaboration. She concluded by thanking Appleby for "giving shape to the soul of the Keough School."

Appleby thanked the participants for performing "two minor miracles"—the first, by the faculty presenters and discussants, who delivered crisp, substantive remarks, avoided technical jargon for the sake of accessibility—and, miraculously, generally kept within their allotted times; and, the second, by the Advisory Council members, who were active participants and enlivened the discussion sessions with their thoughtful and informed questions. Appleby gave special thanks to the 17 invited international expert interlocutors, whose shrewd observations and recommendations made this a successful conference. Not least, he expressed his gratitude for the superb coordination of the conference by Anne Riordan, who received a sustained ovation.

Appleby also explained that it was not possible to include all 75 Keough School faculty and staff researchers on the already-packed conference agenda, much less bring everyone to Rome. As a result, the conference did not convey the full range and depth of Keough School research, but it did provide the most representative accounting possible.

Appleby singled out Clark for providing an objective, balanced account of the current research trajectory of the Keough School, and added that he was grateful to learn that Professor Clark, who has contributed to and led the global affairs program at Harvard's Kennedy School for several years, concluded that the Keough School's interdisciplinary aspirations and normative commitment to advance IHD is, in itself, an important and needed contribution to the field.

Endnotes

[1] See, for example: World Bank,*The Changing Wealth of Nations 2024: Revisiting the Measurement of comprehensive wealth* (Washington, D.C.:World Bank Group, 2024), https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/the-changing-wealth-of-nations; UNESCO, *Inclusive Wealth Report (IWR) 2024: Special Issue on Social Emotional Capital Accounts* (SECA (UNESCO MGIEP, 2024), https://doi.org/10.56383/QYTB2222; The New Zealand Treasury, *The Living Standards Framework 2021*, (October 2021), https://www.treasury.govt.nz/publications/tp/living-standards-framework-2021.

[2] Miguel Lluch-Baixauli, "El Contraste. Ensayo de una filosofía de lo viviente concreto," *Scripta Theologica 30*, no. 1 (1996): 298-304.

[3] Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, (Vatican 2020), 245.

Three Overarching Themes

Attentive readers of all or a large part of this volume will have noticed several themes and questions that recur across the five chapters. Here I will mention three that struck me as I re-read and lightly edited the conference papers, presentations and (especially) the discussion sessions.

First, the **gaps in knowledge** that need to be filled are huge. While it is difficult not to be impressed by the expertise on display in these essays and learned commentary, one scholar or scholar-practitioner after another underscored the inherent limitations of their understanding of their subject, owing to a lack of data on significant issues, or to episodic and thus incomplete access to and interaction with local research partners and other informants hailing from the Global South.

As to the latter, Subhrendu Pattanaya, among other conference participants, noted that mapping a community is not a straightforward process but must rely on intermediaries who can "translate" in both directions, between the local and the international. In asking and expecting the community to make the decisions to solve the problems, A.R. Siders urged, one must ask, *Who is* the community—male elders? Male heads of household? Are mothers and grandmothers included?

In terms of the data deficiency, Lisa Schirch articulated the problem unambiguously. "Shandana Mohmand is correct: we don't know much about depolarization, Schirch noted, "despite the fact that depolarization efforts have in one way or another been a part of peacebuilding research." Unfortunately, she added, "peacebuilding research is a young field . . .and many peacebuilding processes have been very flawed. We just don't know enough yet about how to de-polarize a conflict. We are a data-poor field; we don't really know what is working and what is not." Schirch's complaint was repeated, *mutatis mutandis*, in virtually all of the conference sessions.

An unforgettable moment of truth-telling came "from the mouths of babes." Our two youngest interlocutors, Notre Dame undergraduate student Sean Mirza and recent graduate Maria Riberas Orjales "gently" excoriated the planners of the conference for failing to include among the conference participants a critical mass of voices from the Global South (Mirza), and for largely ignoring the critical role that the private sector plays, and must increasingly play, in advancing human development (Riberas).

In short, there is much still to do—research to be conducted and sustained, consistent engagement with a range of partners—all under the encompassing banner of *global* affairs. In May 2024 the conference participants could not have anticipated the imminent threat to this already challenging aspiration. Only in early 2025 were they confronted with the daunting new obstacles posed by the severity of the Trump administration's upending of longstanding alliances with friendly (national, state and local) governments, its abrupt termination of hundreds of millions of dollars already dedicated for international research and partnerships, and the uncertainty about access to visas and international travel in general. These obstacles are real and will not be eliminated or even weakened overnight. Scholars and practitioners of international and global affairs are resourceful, however, and there is already evidence, at this writing, that various adaptive and innovative responses to the crisis reflect a new resolve and unanticipated paths to and opportunities for productive global engagement.

A second overarching theme was the acknowledgment of the art of translating academic research into influential policy writing and consultation (with Business and INGO leaders, as well as with government officials), accompanied by a crisp delineation of what works and what doesn't. The most explicit exploration of this theme came in the presentation by Laurie Nathan, a veteran conflict mediator who has advised the UN as well as states and opposition forces embroiled in civil war, especially in Africa. Among many other insights he shared from this experience advising government officials were lessons learned, such as: do not stint on nuance, complexity and case-specific analysis, avoid formulaic recommendations, know your audience and give it what it needs (not what you need to show off).

Variations on this theme surfaced repeatedly throughout the conference. Examples include the economist Patrizio Piraino's discussion of reforms to local and state education policies in South Africa and elsewhere as a means of addressing the challenges of poverty, inequality, and marginalization through the lens of data on social mobility; the psychologist Laura Miller-Graff's description of the social and policy prescriptions that have emerged from her studies of Intimate Partner Violence in several national and local settings; and, perhaps most unsparingly, in the political scientist Jorge Vargas-Cullell's admonition to "wait to define your research until after getting (the officials') viewpoints and then engage them in dialogue along the way. Your research then proceeds alongside constant consultation and participation so you don't surprise people." If people at the end tell you your data is wrong, he added, "that means you didn't bring them in from the beginning and walk with them along the way."

Third, most speakers took up the fundamental question of the conference: What difference, if any, does it make when a team of multidisciplinary global affairs researchers attempts to inform their questions and methods of inquiry by a commitment to promoting human dignity and integral human development? In doing so, they emphasized the potential of IHD for grounding research in the concerns, struggles and hopes of ordinary people, as well as the ways such an effort could backfire or lead to unintended consequences. Along the way, they offered suggestions for enhancing the positive outcomes of "an IHD approach," and for avoiding the negative outcomes.

Keeping the requirements of integral human development in focus opens up new and evocative questions for human-centered researchers. Clement Sedmak mentioned "Why" questions—what is the rationale for unlimited economic growth, say, or the acceptance of deep inequalities, or the pollution of the environment at the cost of health and devastating climate impacts? Or from a different angle, why commit to sustainability? Why worry about future generations when we have enough problems to occupy the current generation? There are also "particular" questions, he noted. As a commitment to "the development of each person" IHD implies a special consideration of particular circumstances, local conditions and respect for the uniqueness of each person. Finally, there are questions about last things or ultimate goods—what is our shared destiny and what kinds of questions must we ask about the relationship between particular ethical choices "in the moment" and the kind of people and society we aim to become? Are certain policies designed to reinforce national, ethnic or religious identity and exclude "outsiders" in keeping with our common humanity and our destiny on this planet?

An IHD lens challenges the way governments routinely violate the dignity and the lives of countless individuals and whole communities, as if "collateral damage" were just "the cost of doing business" on the international stage. The IHD-inspired visceral outrage over "business-as-usual" was expressed most passionately by the panelists who discussed the war in Gaza.

In the Palestinian/Israeli context, Ebrahim Moosa argued, "taking IHD seriously means that we as Americans must begin with a critical assessment of the role of our government and institutions in abetting the deaths of 50,000 and an unknown number, much higher, of injured and maimed people. [as of May 2025] . . .Universities are shut down when students protest the carnage and are thrown into jail. Isn't that where integral human development is birthed, in the demand for justice and accountability?" We can speak in terms of human dignity in the abstract, of course, Jorge Vargas-Cullel commented, "but it comes across concretely in your applied research when we take people and their specific issues seriously."

Yet there are potential pitfalls in attempting to implement the values of IHD. Although many scholars have studied the concept of dignity across disciplines, "research on the operationalization of dignity-affirming approaches to global affairs practice is in its infancy," and "even though dignity is a pervasive idea in global institutions, few if any have been able to operationalize this concept effectively in their policies and programs." Paul Perrin memorably listed and described several types of benevolent indignities which are often rooted, he said, in a Western paradigm for development that has judged the effectiveness of programs and interventions through a lens focusing exclusively on data from the material, observable world, "often at the expense of the immaterial aspects of human existence"—the unseen but palpably real psychological, emotional and spiritual dimensions of human flourishing. These exclusively materialist ways of thinking, however, are often at odds with the framework for social change suggested by IHD. One pernicious result of this exclusive materialism, he noted, is that "people in various forms of deprivation or vulnerability are somehow less human than those who are better able to meet their fundamental human needs. And utilitarian views which conceptualize success in the aggregate can mask and exacerbate inequality, as they tend to disincentivize efforts that focus on the most marginalized."

The opposite error, of course, which some may justify by an ill-advised invocation of IHD, is to subordinate material needs to elusive spiritual realities, sometimes as an excuse for failing to address the daunting lack of sufficient health care, clean drinking water, food, shelter and other basic requirements of life with dignity. "If we can't count" as one IHD skeptic put it, "all the prayers in the world will not suffice." To avoid such missteps Krister Andersson urged two operating principles: identify concrete injustices and give priority to stakeholders on the ground.

A.R. Siders added a cautionary note, however, to the repeated calls, inspired by IHD values, to engage the local community and be guided by its imperatives.

Empowering local agency and control, she argued, "will need to be bounded if the local decision-makers are a narrow, privileged elite who only consider their own needs and leave others behind. Inclusion requires more voices in the decision-making process." While many of the Keough School scholars recognize the value of empowering community decision-makers, she continued, "they could do well to delve further into the justice challenges involved in this approach." Efforts to empower communities "are inevitably shaped by how 'community' is defined – whether the community members considered in a decision include, for example, only current residents or also future generations, only male heads of household or all individuals (including children)." At times "the community" makes decisions that seem to undermine the common good, she noted. "They recommend things that violate principles of justice. For example, they might decide that 'we favor dedicating resources equally to every person,' which fails to acknowledge the pre-existing structural and cultural power and privilege inequalities." In such cases, are "agency" and "dignity" goals in their own right, Siders asked, or do we need to place these goals in the context of the greater good of the most people?

In the effort to address these and other potential disadvantages of "an IHD approach" that gives priority to the most vulnerable and their spiritual as well as material needs, conference participants offered several recommendations. First, do not overlook the many international instruments and codes already in place to protect human dignity. Dignity, of course, is not a new notion, nor an exclusively religious one. The motto of the Gates Foundation, for example, is "Every life is of equal value." And, as Juanita Goebertus reminded the conference-goers, "Globally we have already agreed, through the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent legal conventions, on the inalienable rights of the individual. This is a clear legal foundation for IHD."

While acknowledging safeguards already in place, other speakers suggested that an IHD lens could bring a needed moral depth to the awareness and thinking of policymakers and people in power. What would a more ambitious development agenda look like? Neela Saldanha asked. "Operationalizing a definition of human flourishing would be a place to begin."

A shift away from material deprivation as a metric of poverty toward flourishing, Tracy Kijewski-Correa noted, "will require more than changing *what* we hope to achieve, but also *how* we will achieve it. We cannot claim to fight for the flourishing of all without an uncompromising commitment to the most vulnerable." Echoing Nobel Prize winning economists Abhijit V. Banerjee and Esther Duflo, Kijewski-Correa declared that it is time for "a profound rethinking of economic priorities and the ways in which societies care for their members, particularly when they are in need."

Along these lines Sr. Helen Alford suggested that GDP be displaced or at least contextualized. Amartya Sen came to believe that human development composite measures could dethrone GDP, she recalled. "Composite measures such as 'gross national happiness' have a role," Sr. Helen affirmed, "though they can misguide us if they lose the specificity that comes with the data and other information prized by the conventional, materialist approach to metrics." Equally important then, are multidimensional measures which do have a spiritual dimension (e.g., "time for prayer and meditation") that can be measured. A notion like "spiritual capital" would be important, she suggested, as well as "the policies and structures that would support the decision to bear children, for example, or other means of deepening community and relationality." Also worth considering is the retrieval and updating of theological-philosophical arguments "about what we used to call a matter of 'natural law,' which asked: 'what do we need for human beings qua human beings? And what do we need to leave free for cultural diversity?' Happiness research helps us here, Sr. Helen suggested. At low levels of income, increasing people's incomes increases happiness. "But at a certain point—not a very high level of income, in fact— the correlation to happiness is with other factors, such as the quality of peoples' relationships." The game analogy might be relevant here as well, she added. "Once everyone is included within the basic parameters and rules of the game, there is great flexibility for how one actually plays the game, takes various decisions, etc."

Patrizio Piraino appreciated Sr. Alford's notion of the shared rules of a game. "At a Catholic university," he observed, "we are comfortable speaking of normative values, so once the norms are clear and agreed upon, we can focus on how to realize and implement them. If there is a rationale for why the policy is in place, then we live with the outcomes and consequences—including the fact that there are 'winners' and 'losers' in any policy debate and decision. If I have agreed to the rules (norms), I agree to live with the outcomes."

Piraino's endorsement of determining and then observing the rules of the human development game within a Catholic university is well articulated and makes great sense.

That said, the Keough School's aspirations, this former dean dares to suggest, are altogether more ambitious. In collaboration with our fellow global schools and partners around the world, we hope one day to arrive at "rules of the game" that are shared by other development researchers and practitioners, including those at institutions that are not Catholic—rules, nonetheless, that are shaped by the values associated with IHD, a norm which is embraced and upheld in its basic, albeit culturally diverse, expression by millions of people hailing from other religious, secular and cultural traditions around the world.

Scott Appleby

Appendix: Participant Biographies

Andrés Mejía Acosta is the Kuster Family Associate Dean for Policy and Practice and Associate Professor of the Political Economy of Development in the Keough School of Global Affairs at the University of Notre Dame. He specializes in the political economy of policymaking, nutrition governance, fiscal decentralization and public finance management.

Sr. Helen Alford, OP, is President of the Pontifical Academy of the Social Sciences. An economist with a PhD in engineering management, she specializes in Catholic social teaching, business ethics and corporate responsibility.

Susan Allen is the Henry Hart Rice Chair of Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University's Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution, where she directs the Center for Peacemaking Practice. A scholar-practitioner of conflict resolution, Allen has substantial expertise in interactive peacemaking, intermediary roles, evaluation of conflict resolution initiatives, and theories of change. She has engaged in long-term conflict resolution in the South Caucasus and contributed to conflict resolution initiatives in other regions.

Josefina Echavarría Alvarez is Professor of the Practice and the Director of the Peace Accords Matrix of the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies She specializes in peacebuilding, conflict; reconciliation, memory, in/security and transitional justice.

Krister Andersson is the Notre Dame Professor of Sustainable Development and a core affiliated faculty member of the Pulte Institute for Global Development. He specializes in public policy reform, institutional analysis, environmental governance and collective action and decentralization, and Latin America in comparative context.

Scott Appleby is the Keough-Hesburgh Professor of Global Affairs and the author or editor of fifteen books on the history of modern religion and on global religions and contemporary conflicts. He joined the Notre Dame faculty in 1994. From 1994 to 2002 he served as director of the Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism. From 2000 to 2014 Appleby served as the John M. Regan. Jr. Director of the Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Studies. From 2014 to 2024 he served as founding dean of the Keough School. The recipient of five honorary degrees, he is a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences.

Colin Barr is Professor of Modern Irish History and Director of the Clingen Family Center for the Study of Modern Ireland and of the Keough-Naughton Institute for Irish Studies. He specializes in the study of modern Ireland, the history of Catholicism, British political history and migration history.

Ted Beatty is Professor of History and Global Affairs who specializes in comparative economic history, the history of technology, development studies, and Latin American and Mexican history. From 2014 to 2022, her served as Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in the Keough School.

Catherine Bolten is Professor of Anthropology and Peace Studies and a core affiliated faculty member of the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies. Focusing on Sierra Leone, she specializes in development anthropology, structural violence and poverty; youth in conflict and peacebuilding; education, food security, the impact of Ebola, and ethno-primatology.

Abby Córdova is Associate Professor of Global Affairs and a core affiliated faculty member of the Kellogg Institute for International Studies. She specializes in Latin American politics and political behavior, democracy studies, measures to end violence against women and transitional justice.

William Clark is the Harvey Brooks Research Professor of International Science, Public Policy and Human Development at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. Trained as an ecologist, his research focuses on understanding the interactions of human and environmental systems with a view toward advancing the goals of sustainable development. He is particularly interested in how institutional arrangements affect the linkage between knowledge and action in the sustainability arena. At Harvard, he co- directs the Sustainability Science Program. Among his books are Pursuing sustainability: A guide to the science and practice (Princeton, 2016), Global Environmental Assessments (MIT, 2006) and The global health system: Institutions in a time of transition (Harvard, 2010). Clark co-chaired the US National Research Council's study Our Common Journey: A Transition Toward Sustainability. He serves on the editorial board of the Proceedings of the National Academy of Science. An elected member of the National Academy of Sciences, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science, he is a recipient of the MacArthur Prize, the Humboldt Prize, the Kennedy School's Carballo Award for excellence in teaching, and the Harvard College Phi Beta Kappa Prize for Excellence in Teaching.

Hal Culbertson is a Teaching Professor in the Keough School who specializes in international nongovernmental organization management, focusing on project design and evaluation. From 2014 to 2023 he served as Associate Dean for Operations in the Keough School.

Juanita Goebertus Estrada was a Congresswoman in Colombia between 2018 and 2022, dedicating her term to the implementation of the Peace Agreement between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). Previously, she was head of the transitional justice group at the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace during the Havana Peace Talks, advisor to the National Security Advisor of Colombia, advisor to the Undersecretary of Defense of Colombia, and deputy director of the Institute for Integrated Transitions. Juanita holds BAs in Law and Political Science from the Universidad de los Andes (Colombia) and an LLM from Harvard Law School.

Duncan Green is Senior Strategic Adviser at Oxfam GB, Professor in Practice in International Development at the London School of Economics. He is author of How Change Happens (OUP) and From Poverty to Power: How Active Citizens and Effective States can Change the World. His daily development blog can be found on www.oxfamblogs.org/fp2p/. Green was previously Oxfam's Head of Research, a Senior Policy Adviser on Trade and Development at the Department for International Development (DFID), a Policy Analyst on trade and globalization at CAFOD, the Catholic aid agency for England and Wales, and Head of Research and Engagement at the Just Pensions project on socially responsible investment.

Emily Grubert is Associate Professor of Sustainable Energy Policy and a core affiliated faculty member of the Pulte Institute for Global Development, who specializes in macro energy systems, socioenvironmental assessment, decarbonization policy and multicriteria decision support.

Michel Hockx is Professor of Chinese Literature and Director of the Liu Institute for Asia and Asian Studies. He specializes in modern Chinese literature and language, print culture, Internet culture, censorship and cultural policy, digital humanities, and poetry and poetics.

Caroline Hughes holds the Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C., Chair in Peace Studies. She specializes in the political economy of aid and development in post-conflict and authoritarian contexts, with regional expertise in Southeast Asia.

Lakshmi Iyer is Professor of Economics and Global Affairs and a core affiliated faculty member of the Pulte Institute for Global Development, who specializes in development economics and political economy, with emphasis on property rights and the distribution of political power.

Kyle Jaros is Associate Professor of Global Affairs and a core affiliated faculty member of the Liu Institute for Asia and Asian Studies. He specializes in Chinese politics and political economy, urban and regional development, intergovernmental relations, sub-national diplomacy and US-China relations.

Emmanuel Katongole is Professor of Theology and Peace Studies, and a core affiliated faculty member of the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies. He specializes in politics and violence in Sub-Saharan Africa, Global Catholicism, integral ecology, and political theology and reconciliation. Hal Culbertson, a Teaching Professor, specializes in international nongovernmental organization management, focusing on project design and evaluation.

Asher Kaufman is Professor of History and Peace Studies, and the John M. Regan Director of the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies. He specializes in Middle East history and politics, nationalism, colonialism, border studies and memory studies.

Svitlana Khyliuk is director of the Law School at Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv, Ukraine. Khyliuk serves as a legal expert in the projects of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in Ukraine, the Council of Europe, the U.S. Department of Justice, and EU-funded Project Pravo-Justice. Also, she is a member of the Academic Advisory Board of Ukraine's Supreme Court and Constitutional Court. As a member of the higher education sector of the Academic Council of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, she is co-author of national standards of higher education in the field of law for master studies and PhD studies. She developed a Guide on Application of Higher Education Standards in Law on co-authorship with colleagues. Khyliuk focused her research on value based legal education. Recently she completed a joint research project on Catholic Identity of Modern Law Schools within the University of Notre Dame - Ukrainian Catholic University Faculty Collaboration Grant Program. Together with other academics Khyliuk started a public initiative to discuss the future constitutional legal framework for Ukraine. Within this initiative a document called "A New Birth for Ukraine: A Constitutionalist Manifesto" was developed and published in June 2023.

Tracy Kijewski-Correa is Professor of Engineering and Global Affairs and the William J. Pulte Director of the Pulte Institute for Global Development. The academic director of the Integration Lab, she specializes in engineering for international development, disaster risk reduction, resilient and sustainable communities, and civil infrastructure and housing.

Miguel Loureiro is a Research Fellow and convenor of the MA Governance, Development and Public Policy Forum at the Institute for Development Research. He works at the state-citizen interface from both a citizens' perspective, examining accountability and empowerment relations, and the state's perspective, identifying opportunities for state responsiveness. His research focuses on what happens when poor and marginalised households interact with public authorities, the role of intermediaries, and barriers to women's empowerment in protests and in public life in general in fragile, conflict and violence-affected settings. From the state side, he researches moments when the state listens to its citizens, elements of bureaucratic capacity that contribute to better policy outcomes, including the role of evidence in policymaking, and the relationship between the recent patterns of autocracy and changes in public contestation and inclusiveness in policymaking. He has built several opportunities for engagement and impact in policy and practice—through advisory work with the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC), and through providing policy training events with the Partnership for African Social and Governance Research, Brazil's National School of Public Administration, and Nigeria's National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies. To improve the engagement between researchers and policymakers, he trains researchers on how to communicate effectively with policymakers, and trains policymakers to make better use of research in policy processes.

Daniel C. Miller is Associate Professor of Environmental Policy, the Director of the Master of Global Affairs' Sustainable Development Concentration and a core affiliated faculty member of the Pulte Institute for Global Development. The coordinator of the FLARE [Forests and Livelihoods: Assessment, Research and Engagement] global network, he specializes in environmental politics and policy, governance, international aid, biodiversity conservation, forests and agroforestry, sustainable development and poverty alleviation.

Laura Miller-Graff is Associate Professor of Psychology and Peace Studies and a core faculty member of the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies. Laura specializes in childhood exposure to violence, intimate partner violence, psychosocial care, treatment evaluation, post-traumatic stress, and resilience. She directs the undergraduate program in peace studies.

Mahan Mirza is a Teaching Professor and Executive Director of the Ansari Institute for Global Engagement with Religion. He specializes in Islamic studies in relation to science, scripture, education, history, and politics.

Ann Mische is Associate Professor of Sociology and Peace Studies, and a core affiliated faculty member of the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies. She specializes in social movements, and political deliberation and democratic politics in the Global South, with a focus on Brazil.

Shandana Khan Mohmand is a social scientist whose research is focused on the relationship between political participation, inequality and accountability, especially in fragile and conflict affected contexts. She leads the Governance research cluster and the Pakistan hub of the Institute for Development Studies. The author of Crafty Oligarchs, Savvy Voters: Democracy Under Inequality in Rural Pakistan (2019, Cambridge), Mohmand serves on the Editorial Board of the Modern South Asia Series of Oxford University Press; an Associate Fellow at the Institute of Development and Economic Alternatives (IDEAS); and, a Fellow at the Mahbub ul-Haq Research Centre at the Lahore University of Management Sciences. Her research interests include democratisation, inclusive politics, local governance, social trust, informal institutions, and the political economy of public policy and service delivery. Her research is interdisciplinary and comparative, and she has contributed to both policy and social science research using varied methodological strategies to investigate these issues in South Asia, the Western Balkans and Sub-Saharan Africa. Shandana is a lead researcher on a number of research projects, including the ESRC funded Inequality and Governance in Unstable Democracies programme and the Gendered Contentions workstream of the Action for Empowerment and Accountability Programme (A4EA). She has also designed and led on a number of professional training programmes to strengthen research communities in Africa, Latin America, and the Western Balkans.

Ebrahim Moosa is the Mirza Family Professor of Islamic Thought and Muslim Societies. A co-director of Contending Modernities, a global research and education initiative, he specializes in global religion and human development, and in classical and modern Islamic thought.

Rahul Mukherji is Professor of Political Science at the South Asia Institute, Heidelberg University, Germany. His research interests include democratic recession, welfare and environmental politics and India's foreign economic policies and globalization. Prior to arriving in Heidelberg, Mukherji taught at the National University of Singapore, the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, Hunter College and the University of Vermont. He edits Indian Politics and Policy and serves on the board of India Review and Pacific Affairs and Governance. He co-edits the Oxford Institutions and Development in South Asia book series. His books include Globalization and Deregulation: Ideas, Interests and Institutional Change in India, (Oxford 2014). Mukherji holds a PhD in Political Science from Columbia University.

Laurie Nathan is Professor of the Practice of Mediation and the Director of the Mediation Program in the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies. He specializes in mediation, conflict resolution, preventive diplomacy, United Nations peacemaking and African regional security.

Ray Offenheiser is Professor of the Practice in Global Development, Senior Advisor to the Dean, and the Director of the McKenna Center for Human Development and Global Business. He specializes in poverty alleviation and inequality, sustainable development, humanitarian assistance, human rights, food security, US foreign and development policy, and international development.

Atalia Omer is Professor of Religion, Conflict, and Peace Studies and a core affiliated faculty member of the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies. A co-director of Contending Modernities, a global research and education initiative, she specializes in religion, nationalism, and peacebuilding; diasporas, conflict transformation and peace; multiculturalism, conflict transformation and justice; theories and methods in the study of religion; and the Palestine/Israel conflict.

Subhrendu K. Pattanayak is the Oak Professor of Environmental and Energy Policy at Duke University. He studies the causes and consequences of human behaviors related to the natural environment to help design and evaluate policy interventions in low-income tropical countries. His research is in three domains at the intersection of environment, development, health and energy: forest ecosystem services, environmental health (diarrhea, malaria, respiratory infections) and household energy transitions. He has focused on design of institutions and policies that are motivated by enormous inequities and a range of efficiency concerns (externalities, public goods and imperfect information and competition).

Anibal Pérez-Liñán is Professor of Political Science and Global Affairs, and the Director of the Kellogg Institute for International Studies. He specializes in democratization and the rule of law and human rights in Latin America.

Paul Perrin is Associate Professor of the Practice and Director of Evidence and Learning in the Pulte Institute for Global Development. He specializes in international development, monitoring and evaluation, global health and epidemiology, humanitarian response, implementation science and operations research, mixed methods instrument development, and information and communications technology for development.

Patrizio Piraino is Associate Professor of Education, Labor, and Development, and the Director of the Ford Program in Human Development Studies and Solidarity in the Kellogg Institute for International Studies. Patrizio specializes in global education, and development and labor markets, with emphasis on drivers of social mobility and mechanisms of social exclusion.

Gerard Powers is Professor of the Practice of Catholic Peacebuilding and a core affiliated faculty member of the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, who specializes in the ethics of the use of force; religion, conflict and peacebuilding; and, ethics and US foreign policy. He is also the Coordinator of the Catholic Peacebuilding Network, which links twenty-one bishops' conferences, Catholic development agencies, universities, and independent peace organizations in an effort to enhance the study and practice of conflict prevention, conflict Management, and post-conflict reconciliation in war-torn areas.

Manuel Pulgar-Vidal is the global leader of Climate & Energy at the World Wildlife Fund [WWF] and chair of the IUCN Climate Crisis Commission. He has more than 35 years of experience in environmental law and policy. He served as Minister of the Environment of Peru (2011 to 2016) and President of the Twentieth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change - COP20 in 2014. Pulgar-Vidal was the Executive Director of the Peruvian Society for Environmental Law. He has a law degree from the Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, where he is a professor. He is a board member of Forest Trends, Amazon Conservation Association, Peruvian Society of Environmental Law, CARE-Peru and the Science Based Targets initiative and a member of the Assembly of the WWF for Nature - Colombia. He is also member of the Steering Committees of F20 and the Voluntary Carbon Markets Integrity Initiative as well as a member of the Aspen Institute Management and Leadership Advisory Group, the IUCN International Committee for the Nature Based Solutions Global Standard and the advisory board of the Centre for Multilateral Negotiations – CEMUNE. He has recently been appointed as Champion for the Action Agenda for Nature as part of the Convention of Biological Diversity, in an effort to develop the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

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