

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 stipulations² 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 Tectonic 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

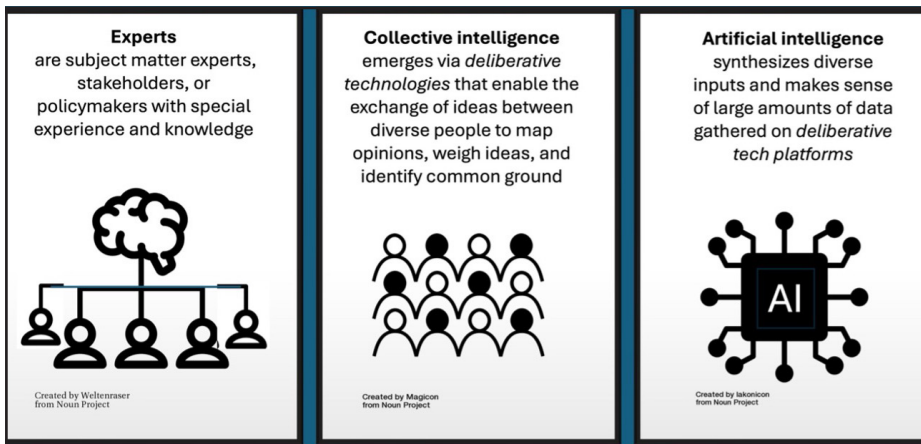
Collective Intelligence Enhanced by Artificial Intelligence

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 emotionality⁶⁰ 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 providers⁶² 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 atrocities – 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 percent 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 Féin’s Martin McGuinness 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 cease-fires 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); Stephen M. 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; William N. 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 Tectonic 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.

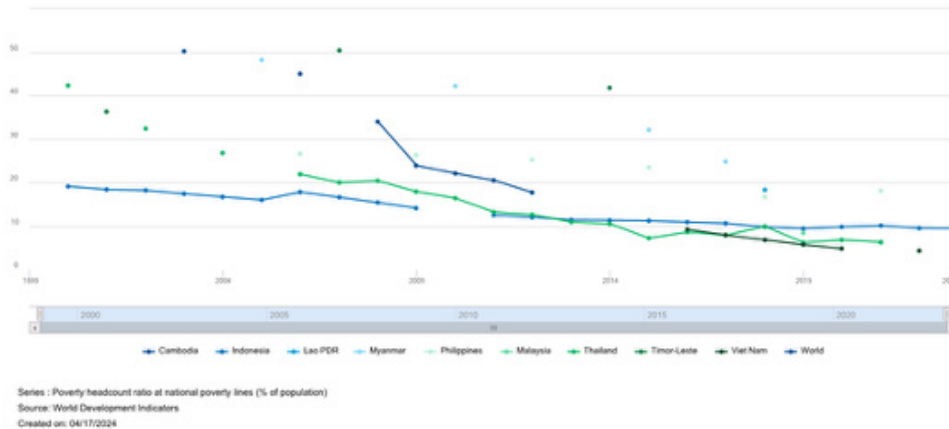
⁴¹ Only four other universities are working on this topic of deliberative technologies and democracy, Schirch reported. Stanford University has been developing and testing a proprietary tech platform it calls “Deliberative Polling.” Oxford University just began a program to build a deliberative technology 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.

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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.

⁵⁷ Laura E.Miller-Graff, Kathryn H. Howell, Katherine Grein, and Kathryn Keough, "Women's cigarette and marijuana use in pregnancy: Identifying the role of past versus recent violence exposure," *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 36, no.7-8 (2021).

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 mediates 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 inter-generational 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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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., & 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>.

See also Laura E. Miller-Graff, L. E., & Edward Mark Cummings, E. M. (2017). “The Israeli–Palestinian conflict: Effects on youth adjustment, available interventions, and future research directions,”. *Developmental Review*, 43, (2017): 1-47.

⁷¹ Bisson, J. I., McFarlane, A. C., & Rose, S. (2000). Psychological debriefing. *Effective treatments for PTSD: Practice guidelines from the international society for traumatic stress studies*, 39, 59.