Berghof Foundation

Decolonising Peacebuilding

A Way Forward out of Crisis

Lisa Schirch

Content

1 Introduction[1]

The peacebuilding field faces a multitude of crises in the 2020s. The pandemic, climate change and weaponisable technologies could be seen as the three main threats in a global set of interacting meta calamities. A shifting state system, a dysfunctional market and a restless global society face rising economic inequality and mass migration, accelerating polarisation and extremism, and urgent demands for decolonisation, racial justice and an end to gender-based violence. This raises questions of whom the predominant state and economic system serves, and how divisions in society are changing. Current economic and political models offer little reprieve, and in some cases seem to be fuelling disorder rather than promoting the order or stability they aim to achieve. How will the peacebuilding field respond or transform given these challenges?

The peacebuilding field, including community-based organizations, international NGOs, governments, and international organizations, has tended to focus on reducing unnatural deaths from armed conflict. ACLED reports that from 2010-2020, the average fatalities from armed conflict totalled 100,000-150,000 per year (ACLED 2020). The Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) offers a rosy view of peacebuilding successes; every \$1 invested in peacebuilding reduces the costs of violent conflict by \$16 (Institute for Economics and Peace 2021). Can peacebuilding processes help to address other premature deaths, such as the estimated five million extra deaths per year from climate change (Zhao et al. 2021)?

Within each crisis, there are seeds of new ways of organising society. At a UN Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in 2015, then Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe described crisis as an opportunity to "build back better". Disasters can act as a trigger to create nations and societies that are more resilient than before (Hallegatte et al. 2018). At the World Economic Forum in July 2020, world leaders called for a "new social contract" and "a great reset" to support the recovery from the pandemic and move towards a new order based on "social justice" that honours the dignity of every human being (Schwab 2020). The peacebuilding field needs its own great reset. The current crises offer an opportunity to build back better by decolonising peacebuilding theory and practice.

"Decolonising agendas" are emerging all over the world and relate to humanitarian aid, development, anthropology, sociology and many other facets of life, including peacebuilding. Decolonialism refers to the process of undoing colonial worldviews, institutions and impacts. In the last few years, various authors have begun laying out an agenda for decolonising peacebuilding (Ayindo 2017; Omer 2019; Linklater 2014; Beraia et al. 2019). The study of decoloniality, abolition and reparations is relevant to peacebuilding, both as an analytical framework that explains global patterns of grievance against political, economic and social systems, and as an agenda for how to build peace, foster social transformation and protect human security. This article explores and opens up for discussion and dialogue how the peacebuilding field can respond to the profound sense of chaos and unpredictability in today's world by addressing the colonial distortions of governance, economy and society.

The article begins by describing the evolution of the peacebuilding field in two related categories: one emphasising social justice, and the other, at the opposite end of the spectrum, emphasising stability. It provides a brief overview of the relatively recent, acute threats posed by the pandemic, climate change and weaponisable technology. It then describes how these three acute threats magnify troubling chronic threats within the state system, the market and in society, such as political marginalisation, economic inequality, structural injustice, polarisation and growing extremism. The final section then explores an agenda for

decolonising peacebuilding. The article as a whole examines global trends affecting peacebuilding and offers provocative questions for the peacebuilding field, and its allies, to respond to: What would a "build back better" approach to peacebuilding look like, starting from the current triad of crises, which some have claimed constitute a "new world disorder"? Do these current crises offer any opportunities for healing and transformation? What would a "great reset" for the peacebuilding field look like in practice?

2 Social Justice vs. Stability Peacebuilding

There is broad agreement that the term "peacebuilding" represents a multifaceted approach to transforming conflict (Berghof Foundation 2019). It is generally agreed, too, that peacebuilding aims to address both structural and direct violence, and to achieve both negative and positive peace. Negative peace is the absence of war and direct forms of violence. Positive peace describes a broader concept of political, economic and social resilience and human security that prevents the outbreak of violent conflict by addressing structural violence. Peter Wallensteen's idea of "quality peace" suggests that a world that is sustainably resilient to shocks requires social justice (Wallensteen 2015). Positive peacebuilding seeks to design systems that do more good for more people and protect the most vulnerable.

However, in practice, there are significant disagreements over the goals, analytical frameworks, funding and implementation of peacebuilding. "Peacebuilding" has become a confusing term representing colonialism and Western military intervention to some, and local empowerment, social justice and nonviolent protest movements to others. It could be argued that the peacebuilding field has evolved into two distinct paradigms: *stability peacebuilding* focused primarily on a Western liberal negative peace, and *social justice peacebuilding* focused on local agency and pursuing positive peace.

Social justice peacebuilding grew out of civil society-led nonviolent social movements, such as those in the Philippines and South Africa which brought strides in democracy, human rights and social cohesion. From the 1960s through to the early 1990s, marginalised communities expanded peacebuilding efforts that centred on intersectional social justice ethics and collective action against repressive and authoritarian regimes. Social justice peacebuilding aims to shift power and build social, economic and political equity. Peacebuilding processes like dialogue, mediation and restorative justice grew out of the forms of governance that preceded the state, such as tribal and Indigenous methods of conflict management and transformation (Tuso and Flaherty 2016). Small peacebuilding efforts relied on minimal resources, generated locally.

This social justice peacebuilding paradigm has a long history and grew out of legacies of resistance to colonialism. Colonial *worldviews* emphasise white supremacy, the belief that people with white skin inherently hold more value and power than people with black and brown skin. Colonial *institutions* work to perpetuate the economic and political dominance of some states and corporations over others. Colonial *impacts* include the legacies of stolen land, slavery, anti-Blackness, resource extraction and other harms that came about through colonialism.

For example, Frantz Fanon's 1961 book *The Wretched of the Earth* critiqued the process of decolonialisation, observing that new African leaders reproduced colonialism and did not decolonise the minds of the new citizens of these states (Fanon 1961). Paulo Freire's 1970 *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* explored the decolonising process that began when people analysed historical and structural oppression (Freire 1970). Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's 1992 *Decolonising the Mind* described colonialism as a "cultural bomb" which removed people's beliefs, identities, capacities and histories and replaced them with Western narratives (wa Thiong'o 1986).

Decoloniality is the study of the "matrix of power" that began with colonisation, settler colonialism and slavery, and their lasting political, economic, social and environmental impacts (William and Mary 2021). A decolonial agenda drives social justice peacebuilding's analyses of colonial economic exploitation, vulture capitalism, the global arms trade and military industrial complex, economic justice and reparations for colonialism, slavery and extractive trade agreements. Social justice peacebuilding critiques the economic and trade system that left the people in resource-rich countries like Nigeria and the DRC impoverished.

In social justice peacebuilding, people who are affected by conflict and injustice design and implement their own transformative initiatives. Some of the earliest nonviolent civil society movements evolved into local peacebuilding initiatives in the 1980s in the Philippines, South Africa, Kenya and Nicaragua. These local groups used Indigenous approaches to dialogue, peace mediation and restorative justice to build the field's core set of skills and processes.

While outsiders may play a role in supporting local people, in social justice peacebuilding, outsiders are accountable to layers of insiders, particularly the most vulnerable and harmed. In social justice peacebuilding, diverse local community-based groups loosely coordinate with each other but are under no one form of leadership or control.

By the 1980s, Western interest in peacebuilding initiatives was increasing. The Hewlett Foundation invested over $160 million in building conflict resolution programmes, particularly at academic institutions in the 1980s and 1990s (Kovick 2005). This investment built wider acceptance of and legitimacy for the peacebuilding field. As outsiders began initiating humanitarian, development and peacebuilding programmes, awareness slowly grew that outsiders' good intentions could cause unintended negative impacts. The ethics of "do no harm", "local ownership" and "conflict sensitivity" became an urgent issue as more and more outsiders began intervening with the goal of building peace (Anderson 1999; Lederach and Jenner 2002).

Stability peacebuilding traces its history to former UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali's distinction between peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding in the early 1990s (Boutros-Ghali 1992). Governments and international institutions did not invent peacebuilding. Rather, they hired graduates from Hewlett-funded academic institutions and peacebuilding experts who had learned their skills on the front lines of conflict in the Global South. Official recognition of the peacebuilding field brought new funding and status. As the field of peacebuilding grew and took on more stability goals, it became distanced from social justice-based people power movements and became more militarised, with stability peacebuilding missions taking place alongside those involving security forces (Perito 2007).

Stability peacebuilding came to be known and critiqued as "Western liberal peacebuilding". States took on military-led peacebuilding efforts in places like Bosnia-Herzegovina and "conflict-affected countries", primarily in the Southern Hemisphere. In 2002, Roland Paris observed that international stability-oriented peacebuilding missions echoed the assumptions and behaviours of the colonial era, with Western powers imposing Western-style liberal democracy and free market capitalism on civil war-torn countries with the goal of "civilising" local populations (Paris 2002). Oliver Richmond asked the same questions in his 2006 article on the underlying assumptions of the "liberal peace" model. Richmond argues that this model inherently justifies Western military occupation to "correct" the problems in states abroad (Richmond 2006, 13), including an assumption that international intervention should oust corrupt local governments by military force (Richmond 2010). By the late 2010s, Séverine Autesserre's ethnography of Western interveners' cultural habits, beliefs and behaviours in her book *Peaceland* (Autesserre 2014) offered compelling testimony to the colonial echo of complex modern peace operations which she called "Peace, Inc.".

Stability peacebuilding is primarily concerned with extending state authority and strengthening rule of law. It often mirrors a colonial mindset where Western states provide "aid" to "fragile and conflict-affected countries" (FCS) instead of critiquing an economic and trade system that has left the people in resource-rich countries like Nigeria and the DRC impoverished. Instead of analysing power dynamics and their own lack of language and cultural capacity, Western stability peacebuilding "experts" tend to assume

a lack of local capacity and a need for a charity model of Western aid rather than reparations or economic justice.

Stability peacebuilding planning and strategy start with foreign and national government meetings with minimal external or local input. Local civil society organisations are referred to as "implementing partners", tasked with delivering on plans conjured up in Western capitals[2]. These implementing partners are the people most affected by injustice or conflict. Yet they have little power and are accountable to foreign donors who provide oversight to their work. When foreign-designed peacebuilding plans fail or backfire, locals have few mechanisms to hold these external actors to account. Unlike social justice peacebuilding, stability peacebuilding tends to view people power movements as a form of "civil unrest" and a threat to economic interests.

A growing literature on the "local turn" in peacebuilding now argues in support of more emancipatory, social justice-oriented local peacebuilding efforts in contrast to a more stability-oriented, top-down, military-led approach to peacebuilding (Ojendal, Schierenbeck and Hughes 2017). Atalia Omer defines a decolonising approach to peacebuilding as requiring a critique of the complicity of actors and institutions carrying out peace work with colonialist commitments to oppressive economic, political, social and cultural systems. Omer insists that a decolonising peace agenda must resist the practice of coopting indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms that "alleviate the government from taking responsibility for its roles in historical injustice". She also insists that elicitive approaches that "listen to" or "empower" local people are not, by definition, decolonial (Omer 2020). Unfortunately, a false Western history of the peacebuilding field continues to spread. For example, the book *Rising Powers and Peacebuilding* portrays the 1990s advent of Western liberal peacebuilding as normative and makes no reference to the longer history of local social justice peacebuilding (Call and de Coning 2017).

"Social justice peacebuilding" and "stability peacebuilding" exist today not as discrete efforts, but as poles of a spectrum. These two approaches need not be completely contradictory. Social justice can contribute to stability, and stability can enable social justice. The range of activities is also similar, including a shared focus on intergroup dialogue, youth empowerment, gender sensitivity, inclusion in peace processes, participatory governance mechanisms, and so on. For example, Berghof Foundation illustrates a mix of the two approaches. Many of Berghof's publications feature civil society-led peacebuilding with an emphasis on local empowerment and social justice goals. Berghof's approach is state-funded, but it does not directly coordinate with military forces to achieve state goals.

The UN's "sustaining peace" concept focuses on locally owned political solutions that leverage the UN's three pillars: human rights, sustainable development, and peace and security. This terminology and framing also suggest a fusion of both social justice peacebuilding and stability peacebuilding. Nevertheless, while the goals and activities of these two poles of peacebuilding may be complementary in some cases, the power dynamics are sometimes incompatible. As illustrated in Table 1 (overleaf), social justice peacebuilding centres on local analysis and action. Stability peacebuilding centres around state interests.

All forms of peacebuilding along the spectrum laid out in this section face major shifts to their environment and must find their bearings among both acute (section 3) and chronic (section 4) crises.

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2 For example, Philipp Rotmann, "Managing the Risks of Stabilization: Germany's New Assessment Tool". PeaceLab. 12 January 2021. https://peacelab.blog/2021/01/managing-the-risks-of-stabilization-germanys-new-assessment-tool

Table 1: Peacebuilding Paradigm Spectrum

Civil Society-led "Social Justice" Peacebuilding		Government-led "Stability" Peacebuilding
• A positive, just peace that addresses structural injustice • Builds social, economic and political equity and participatory governance • Challenges the status quo and rule of law where they reinforce discrimination • Achieves human security as defined by communities	**Goal**	• A negative peace ending large-scale public violence • Extends state authority for top-down governance • (Re)establishes the rule of law • Achieves national interests as defined by the state
• Intersectional and anticolonial analysis of human rights, power and oppression • Analyses structural and direct violence, as well as individual unconscious bias	**Analysis**	• Analysis of drivers of violent conflict that tends to ignore colonialism and historical power dynamics
• Local or sometimes government funding • A focus on wider economic justice and reparations	**Funding**	• Primarily government-funded foreign "aid"
• Begins with local community leaders, traditional and modern civil society groups, with some international NGOs and government input from abroad	**Planning and Strategy Process**	• Begins with foreign and national government meetings with minimal input from local "implementing partners"
• Local peacebuilding efforts operate independently, although sometimes with loose local coordination	**Coordination**	• Operates alongside state security forces and under state-led command

3 The meta crises: Pandemic, climate change and weaponisable technologies

At least three acute global threats – the pandemic, climate crisis and new weaponisable technologies – affect the peacebuilding field. All three are increasingly disrupting the state system, the market and society at a global scale (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Acute Global Crises
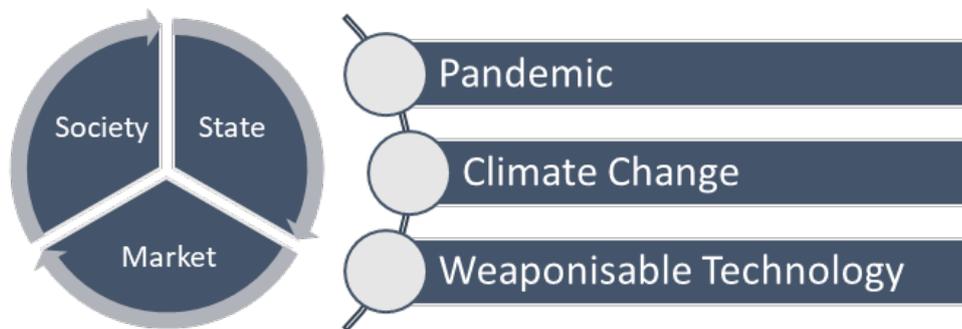
In a globalised world, pathogens like SARS-CoV-2 spread rapidly via international travel. The ongoing pandemic, which started in 2020, exacerbates existing political, economic and social inequalities and adds to the crisis of government legitimacy. Covid-19 lockdowns and isolation worsen mental health, gender-based violence, and fuel the spread of conspiracy theories and violent extremist ideologies. Governments around the world are struggling to slow the spread of the virus and to meet public health needs. Some governments are exploiting the pandemic to increase their control over public information, using repression against dissidents and nonviolent protesters. At the same time, disinformation about the origins of and treatments for Covid-19 is spreading rapidly on social media. The pandemic is also impacting the humanitarian system, already stressed from wars and chronic refugee crises in multiple countries, stretching the capacities of every international organisation and state infrastructure. A global economic crisis, a food security crisis and a long-term health crisis are emerging. The Gates Foundation describes the pandemic's impact on global health and vaccinations as setting the world back "about 25 years in about 25 weeks" (Gates and Gates 2020). The pandemic also affects funding for both stability and social justice peacebuilding, as states and foundations devote more resources to healthcare. It heightens the urgent need for locally led initiatives with sustainable sources of funding.

Along with the pandemic, the climate crisis is an unfolding global emergency causing deadly droughts, wildfires, storms, flooding, heatwaves, polar vortexes and billions of dollars in damage. The dependence on fossil fuels since the Industrial Revolution, along with the current model of endless economic growth, has warmed the planet by 1.1 degrees Celsius. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), deaths and harms due to the climate crisis will increase exponentially in the future if nothing is done to reduce anthropogenic emissions. Gloomy predictions of the future mean that urgent action is required in disaster preparedness and crisis planning. If global temperatures increase by a further 0.4 degrees to 1.5 degrees Celsius, there will be massive environmental impacts. An increase of 2 degrees Celsius nearly doubles the harm. For example, at a 1.5 degree increase, six million people will

lose their homes to rising sea levels. At a 2 degree Celsius increase, 10 million will be forced to migrate. By 2030, global emissions must be reduced by 7.6% a year in order to prevent even more catastrophic events. The expense and difficulty of addressing the climate crisis increase with each year of delayed action (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 2020). The climate crisis requires local-level peace processes to negotiate local climate-related prevention and mitigation strategies necessary for stability, as well as social cohesion and social justice efforts in response to climate-fuelled mass migration.

Weaponisable technology, such as artificial intelligence and machine learning technologies, is unleashing a third global disaster. These technologies have ushered in a "post-truth era" where false and inflammatory posts on social media travel faster and further than truth or debate, distorting political processes and polarising already divided societies. Weaponisable technologies are amplifying polarising narratives on social media platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, Weibo and Twitter. Social media platforms profit from surveilling every individual user and creating databanks of psychometric data useful for commercial and political advertisers wanting to target specific audiences to sell their ideas or products (Bashyakarla 2018). In this extractive "attention economy", platforms maximise the use of neuroscience and behavioural design to keep users on their platforms as long as possible. Social media algorithms amplify highly emotive material such as hate speech, disinformation and conspiracy theories as this material seems to keep users on these platforms longer (Schirch 2021b). Artificial intelligence has already exacerbated surveillance and systemic racism and discrimination against Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC), posing a "super threat" against marginalised groups (Benjamin 2019)[3]. Russia, China, Iran and other states are using social media to surveil and repress democracy activists in their own countries with troll armies and cyber brigades. Digital authoritarianism is increasing, and Covid-19 is accelerating the pace of government-backed mass surveillance and repression, including in democratic countries (Yayboke and Brannen 2020).

Other new technologies enable remote killing by lethal autonomous weapons systems and cyber warfare, which can be used to kill, harm or cause mass chaos. New technologies are low-cost and widely available, 'democratising' access to these weapons of mass destruction. They pose worrying new threats to arms control since they increasingly remove human decision-makers from the immediacy of death and destruction and deprive them of the agency to prevent violence (Altmann 2020). New technologies increase the threat of "war by mistake", as machines can make decisions more quickly than humans, creating a dynamic where even a conventional conflict can quickly spiral out of hand, without humans being able to interrupt the rapid cycle of violence. Unlike traditional weapons launched by air and sea, cyber warfare enables attacks with little to no warning that can destroy national health, energy or transportation infrastructure. Compared with the methods of calculating a balance of power or a build-up of weapons that enable early warning in traditional warfare, capacities for cyber warfare are more difficult to predict or calculate. Technological vulnerabilities are difficult to anticipate, making it harder to calculate safety and stability, and making it more tempting to be overconfident. "Hybrid" warfare makes it easier for those using it to hide their identity, and to use proxies to create ambiguity and confusion around the origin of attacks. Arms control agreements are far more challenging in this context (Kaspersen, Eide and Shetler-Jones 2016). Like the pandemic and climate crisis, the acute threats to both stability and social justice from weaponisable technology raise urgent questions for the peacebuilding field.

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3   In *Race After Technology*, Ruha Benjamin explains how bias and oppression are built into many of the algorithms technology companies use to optimise profits.

4 The chronic crises

4.1 The State System

Amidst and partially independent of these acute crises, the state system is changing. Global power dynamics are shifting, public expectations of the state are increasing, and competing forms of governance are supplementing or challenging the state. Changes in the state system are affecting peacebuilding in a variety of ways.

4.1.1 Lingering Colonialism and Changing Expectations of the State and Governance

European colonial powers governed over vast areas of the world, extracting local resources to enrich themselves and drawing boundaries between states that sometimes deliberately ignored the traditional territories of local ethnic groups. Colonisers imposed their religion, language, economics, and political and cultural practices on indigenous peoples. African scholars such as Mahmood Mamdani have long arguedthat the state system created havoc in governance across the continent, fomenting interethnic tensions (Mamdani 2018). Recent Western military engagement on former colonial territory, such as the French involvement in Mali, and US-led nation-building exercises in Iraq and Afghanistan raise questions about whether colonial governance has continued.

Public frustration and a declining trust in state institutions are translating into support for anti-establishment authoritarian leaders in some areas. Freedom House's yearly reports[4] document how democratically elected authoritarian leaders manipulate public opinion to appear as if they are providing public goods and arrange for theatrical displays of pretend democracy to give the illusion of public support (Freedom House 2022). In the last decade, the number of countries with democratic systems has been declining. Authoritarian leaders and their followers use social media to spread false information about multiculturalism and pluralism, and fuel public sentiments that minority groups and immigrants threaten society. In a growing number of countries in all regions of the world, democracy has become a façade; in these countries, governments go through the motions of elections or make public speeches about human rights and freedoms while working to undermine them. Authoritarian leaders are usurping power through contentious elections. Authoritarian leaders in Russia, China and Iran are attempting to amplify this trend, as they view democracy anywhere as a contagious threat (Csaky 2020). Non-state armed groups like the Taliban, ISIS and Al-Shabaab compete with governments to provide public goods.

Stability peacebuilding emphasises state-led governance. However, in many parts of the world, including some Western countries, the state system cannot and does not deliver adequate governance of public goods. Expectations of the state have moved from its role in holding a "monopoly of violence" to fend off attempts to overthrow the government, towards a growing emphasis on the state's ability to provide public goods, such as access to healthcare, education, jobs, transport and housing. Expectations of the state also appear to be outpacing government performance. Some states are unable or unwilling to provide public goods, particularly in fragile economies affected by the climate crisis and/or the pandemic. Elite corporate interests continue to hold significant political power, often contributing to corruption. Far too often, public resources enrich elite groups at the expense of human security for others, and state security forces repress civil society that may question corruption or abusive state policies. Global crises such as the pandemic and storms, wildfires and other climate emergencies pose major challenges for state governance. According to the US military's 2014 report on *National Security and the Accelerating Risk of Climate Change*, climate change weakens political systems, disproportionately affects marginalised

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4 See https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world (accessed 21 March 2022).

communities, and contributes to social unrest and terrorism. The report claims that climate change acts as a "threat multiplier" for instability in some of the most volatile regions of the world (CNA 2014).

Despite placing increased emphasis on the state's role in providing public goods, stability peacebuilding efforts seem to have made little impact on transforming structural violence that harms politically and economically marginalised groups. For example, the Black Lives Matter movement in the US highlights the continuing frustrations with systemic racism in policing, housing and healthcare, as evidenced by the increased death rates among Black and Latinx[5] Americans during the pandemic. Despite a successful anti-apartheid movement and democratic elections in South Africa, structural violence continues to keep many Black South Africans poor.

How will stability peacebuilding respond to these wide-ranging challenges to state governance? Do social justice peacebuilding efforts have an agenda for governance in response to growing support for authoritarianism and increased expectations of the state? How might the peacebuilding field decolonise its decision-making methods and the voices, histories and interests that guide its approach?

4.1.2 Shifting Power Dynamics

At the global level, there is a move away from US superpower dominance and Europe-centred politics toward Brazil, Russia, India, China and regional powers in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The Western analytical gaze offered Eurocentric narratives of history and culture, both in favour of Western power, and often unintentionally reinforcing it through critique (Sabaratnam 2013). In the new polycentric world order, there are multiple centres of influence and leadership. In their book on *Rising Powers and Peacebuilding*, Call and De Coning argue that the new world powers known as the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) represent 40% of the global population, influence global decisions, and are increasingly becoming donors and interveners (Call and De Coning 2017).

While the US has been the economic superpower for over 100 years, China's accelerated economic growth, increased military spending and bold geopolitical power moves across Asia, Africa and Latin America, including its new humanitarian aid and lending during the pandemic, are evidence of its rise to superpower status. While Russia holds less economic status, its global ambitions are evident in its geopolitical moves in Ukraine, Syria, CAR and other countries. These ambitions further manifest in its open intent to undermine the European Union, and its role in seeding division and disinformation around the globe to undermine democracy, polarise societies, and cast doubt on public institutions. While US superpower dominance blended economic power, military power and a public commitment to human rights and democracy, Russia and China are explicit that they reject international human rights norms and see democracy movements at home and abroad as a threat. The Economist describes China's genocidal level of persecution against Muslim Uyghurs in mass concentration camps as "a worldwide attack on human rights" (The Economist 2020).

The growth of regional and multilateral organisations offers scope for greater coordination and joint problem-solving to address threats that cross national boundaries, such as poverty, illiteracy and war. At the regional level, the African Union, Organization of American States, European Union, Association of Southeast Asian Nations and other organisations have emphasised their role in conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

Populist movements have expressed fears of states surrendering their sovereignty and handing over power to international or regional organisations. The successful Brexit campaign in the UK to leave the European Union and the Trump administration's criticism of NATO are examples of this trend. UN Secretary-General António Guterres offered an analysis of the shifting trends in the state system in 2018. "Multilateralism is under fire precisely when we need it most … Trust is at a breaking point. Trust in national institutions. Trust among states. Trust in the rules-based global order … We must repair broken trust. We

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5   Latinx is a gender-neutral term used to refer to people of Latin American cultural or ethnic identity.

must reinvigorate our multilateral project" (Guterres 2018). At the same time, UN reform efforts continue and resonate with the World Economic Forum's call for a "great reset" (United Nations 2021).

In the face of states' hesitancy to embrace bold climate action via global treaties such as the Paris Agreement, subnational leadership has stepped up to keep the consensus alive. Municipal leadership to address the climate crisis is significant since at least half of the world's population lives in cities, consuming two thirds of the world's energy and emitting 70% of global carbon emissions (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2018).[6]

How will the peacebuilding field continue to evolve in a polycentric world? Will cities and multilateral organisations take up stability peacebuilding operations, or will they seek to address structural injustices driving violence and offer support to a social justice peacebuilding agenda?

4.1.3 Rethinking the Future for Peace Processes and Operations

The number of non-international armed conflicts has more than doubled since 2000, with two thirds of these conflicts involving more than two parties (ICRC 2018). Yet peace processes are in global decline in both their relevance and success. There were 27 comprehensive peace agreements between 1990 and 1999 and 23 between 2000 and 2009, but only 11 between 2010 and 2020 (Pospisil 2020, 4).[7] In his report *The Ungovernance of Peace*, Pospisil argues that the popular peacebuilding narrative of a sequence beginning with a successful ceasefire, a political settlement, security sector reform, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of armed groups, transitional justice, and constitutional development leading ultimately to elections is a myth. In a comparison of 150 peace processes since 1990, Pospisil found no pattern or evidence of any sort of sequential theory of change to guide transitions. "Peace ungovernance" refers to collapsing peace agreements and failures to achieve sustainable political solutions. In this view, there is no evidence of an effective recipe for peacebuilding transitions as emphasised in the stability peacebuilding paradigm (Pospisil 2020).

This decline in peace agreements and lack of linear progress toward peace agreements suggest that peacebuilding could be viewed as an ongoing process, a constant negotiation between groups who have different goals, different theories of change, and different expectations of how to manage intergroup conflict. Will the decline of traditional state-based peace processes open up space to imagine how the peace process methodology might be applied to global climate negotiations, or to how local governments can integrate large numbers of climate migrants?

Each of these trends within the state system impacts the future of both stability and social justice peacebuilding. Relevant market trends for the peacebuilding field pose similar challenges, but also provide the context for the agenda for decolonising peacebuilding described at the close of this article.

4.2 The Marketplace

Within the marketplace and global economy, there are growing questions about the presumed contribution of capitalism to peace and democracy. Endless economic growth is devastating a planet with finite resources. Yet capitalist tenets of a free market, free trade, endless growth and gross domestic product (GDP) are presumed to support peace. Investments in positive peace create greater market rewards, yet the arms trade and the military industrial complex still provide economic motivations for war. While severe forms of poverty were decreasing before the pandemic, inequality is growing, and wealth is becoming more concentrated, a trend exacerbated by the pandemic. Gender-based discrimination in the marketplace continues to negatively impact society. And finally, there are questions about sustainable economic models

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6   See also https://www.c40.org/ending-climate-change-begins-in-the-city (accessed 12 July 2021)

7   These numbers are calculated from the PA-X Peace Agreements Database (www. peaceagreements.org) tabulated by Pospisil in his report The Ungovernance of Peace. Pospisil has counted only the actual conflict dyads that have experienced one (or more) comprehensive peace agreement(s).

for both stability and social justice peacebuilding. When faced with multiple crises related to health, environmental, and violent conflict, cities and countries will have to prioritize and find sources of funding for addressing multiple crises.

4.2.1 Reaching the Limits of (Endless) Economic Growth

Can a planet of finite resources facing a climate crisis continue to uphold economic growth as a foundational principle for the marketplace? Economists at MIT wrote *The Limits of Growth* in the early 1970s, questioning this fundamental assumption. Computer models show that an increasing population, resource extraction, consumption and pollution will have catastrophic impacts on humanity and the planet (Meadows et al. 1972).

Economic growth models have prioritised carbon-based energy sources, which produce climate-warming greenhouse emissions, and the cultivation of fragile monocrops, more prone to being wiped out by floods, droughts or climate change. According to the website The World Counts, in 2020,[8] there were 7.8 billion people on the planet. Between 2011 and 2015, humans cut down 20 million hectares of forest each year. From 2016 onward, the equivalent of a football field of forest was cleared every second, averaging 28 million hectares per year. At this rate, there will be no more rainforests in 79 years. One fifth of all species are at critical risk of extinction. Each year, over 7.5 million people die from air pollution. In 29 years, humans will run out of food if global food systems are not transformed. In 19 years, humans will run out of fresh water. In 29 years, there will be more plastic than fish in the world's oceans. The Great Pacific Garbage Patch is more than two million square kilometres and growing (The World Counts 2020). The economic growth model has put the world on a path towards environmental destruction, humanitarian crises, and wars over basic resources like clean water and food.

Both stability and social justice peacebuilding face conflicts related to resource scarcity, and for both ends of the spectrum, these conflicts will inevitably worsen in the decades ahead. What does the peacebuilding field have to say about economic models that seem to exacerbate resource-based conflicts and the climate crisis?

4.2.2. Rethinking the Link between a Free Market and Peace

Stability peacebuilding embraces the assumed relationship between a free market, free trade, democracy and peace. The Institute for Economics and Peace asserts that economic performance and peace are often a mutually reinforcing "virtuous cycle". Highly peaceful countries have a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) three times higher than those with low levels of peace. The converse is also true. In 2017, the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) estimated that the economic impact of violence to the global economy was $14.76 trillion (Institute for Economics and Peace 2018). But IEP also asserts that poor, conflict-affected countries that invest in Positive Peace, which relates to social justice, exhibit the strongest economic returns (Institute for Economics and Peace 2020b).

Other authors question these basic assumptions about the link between free market capitalism, democracy and peace. Amy Chua argues that free market capitalism paired with democracy has increased conflict between identity groups. She claims that the West's evangelism in twinning a free market with democracy has ended up pitting an "economically powerful ethnic minority" against "a numerically powerful impoverished majority", ultimately undermining democracy and fomenting interethnic violence (Chua 2004).

Within the free market, the military industrial complex continues to drive the economic motivations for building weapons. The war on terror has generated billions of dollars in profit for arms and defence corporations (Zachs 2016). While global military expenditure increased between 2000 and 2009, it plateaued between 2010 and 2018, and then dramatically increased in 2019. In 2019, military spending in the US and China increased by 5% and in India by nearly 7% (SIPRI 2020).

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8 See https://www.theworldcounts.com/ (accessed 21 March 2022).

Unlike stability peacebuilding, social justice-minded peacebuilders articulate the negative impacts of neoliberalism's emphasis on the individual as consumer and the Earth as a possession to be exploited (Sumulong 2020). While stability peacebuilding can argue that the free market contributes to peace, social justice peacebuilding can make the case that structural justice benefits the market. What can both forms of peacebuilding do to address better the economic drivers of violent conflict and structural injustice?

4.2.3. Increasing Inequality and Discrimination

Experts at Davos and the World Bank have been excited to share declines in extreme poverty for those living below $1.90 a day. There are also declines in numbers in the next three lowest income categories. The percentage of the global population living on more than $10 a day is higher than it was in 1980. However, two thirds of the world's people still live on less than $10 a day. If wealth is trickling down to the poorest of the poor, the trickle is slow – extremely slow (Beltekian and Ortiz-Ospina 2018). The UN's *World Social Report 2020* found that inequality is growing for over 70% of the world. The wealthiest 1% increased their share of income between 1990 and 2015, whereas the income share of the least wealthy 40% of the global population has decreased. The UN report argues that inequality is driving global protest movements, worsening social divisions, and creating a "vicious cycle" of poverty and discontent driven by technological change, migration, urbanisation and the climate crisis (Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2020).

According to the US bank Citigroup, systemic racism has cost the US economy $16 trillion in the last 20 years, and if the US were to address systemic racism, the US economy would see a $5 trillion boost over the next five years (Peterson and Mann 2020). According to the *Global Gender Gap Report 2020*, women around the world still do at least twice the amount of unpaid work as men. While 78% of working age men are employed, only 55% of working age women earn an income. Women earn less than men for the same paid work in nearly every country. At the current rate of women's empowerment, the gender gap in economic participation will take 257 years to disappear. In 72 countries, it is against the law for women to open a bank account or obtain loans (World Economic Forum 2019). The UN warns that the pandemic is disproportionately affecting women, possibly setting back women's empowerment by decades (Lederer 2020). In a globalised market, large corporations are increasing their size, while small businesses close. The pandemic has exacerbated this trend, with large corporations like Amazon achieving their highest profit margins in the pandemic-affected economy in 2020.

Over the last one hundred years, official colonialism has ended, but many argue that it has morphed into political and economic systems that continue to exploit cheap labour and loot local resources in the Southern Hemisphere through a trade system that benefits wealthy countries (Burgis 2015). Beginning in the 1970s, countries in the Southern Hemisphere proposed a New International Economic Order (NIEO) with more favourable trade terms for the Global South. Free trade has tended to favour Western countries and large corporations rather than countries in the Southern Hemisphere and small businesses. Free trade can undermine local agricultural and industrial production by opening borders to imports of cheap food and goods from other countries. Food aid is also designed in many cases to help farmers in developed countries offload their surplus crops. The 2019 trade war between the US and China affected economic activity around the world.

The marketplace, including aid and trade models, creates winners and losers in the global economy. The rules favour the wealthy and punish the poor and marginalised. The market affects both stability and social justice peacebuilding efforts. Can the peacebuilding field question the assumption that the current system is the best economic option and become more active in voicing and acting on its concerns? What type of inclusive, multi-stakeholder peace processes can ensure that the losers of the world economy are at the table when economic negotiations are under way?

4.3 Society

Over the last hundred years, civil society has reorganised itself. There is increasing polarisation and a mainstreaming of extremism in societies around the world. Gender-based violence in the home and community continues as the most prevalent form of violence worldwide. More people are forced to migrate from rural to urban areas and between countries to escape climate-induced disasters, poverty and violence. New technologies have brought new social challenges, such as social media addiction and surveillance by government and corporations. Increasing frustration with a status quo that perpetuates systems of inequality and discrimination has sparked protest movements across the world.

4.3.1 Increasing Migration

According to the UN Refugee Agency, by November 2020, nearly 80 million people were forcibly displaced by persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations or events seriously disturbing public order. Nearly half were children under the age of 18 (UN High Commission on Refugees 2020). Even before the war broke out in Syria, rural farmers had begun migrating to the cities when their crops failed due to climate change-induced lack of rainfall. Syrian refugees from the civil war escaped violence to Turkey, Lebanon, Greece and other European countries, only to face angry local populations in the host countries (Selby et al. 2017). Poverty and lack of viable livelihoods motivate others to migrate, often first to urban areas and then to other countries. Climate change is already driving millions to migrate each year. But the potential impacts of rising sea levels, droughts, wildfires and severe storms will fuel *mass* migration. Some scientists estimate that for every temperature increase of one degree, approximately one billion people will be forced to migrate (Lustgarten and Kohut 2020). Migrants fleeing violence, poverty and climate disasters in Northern Africa and Central and South America face increasingly tight restrictions and hostile host populations in Asia, Europe and North America.

Mass migration is already a major driver of conflict and violent extremism. Stability peacebuilding may help to set up refugee and IDP camps. However, social justice peacebuilding is necessary to address the root causes of climate shocks, conflict and poverty. How can social justice peacebuilding support constructive, non-violent mobilisation for change? What can peacebuilding organisations do to help address and prepare for mass migration? How can peace processes work at the local level to alleviate tensions and fears?

4.3.2. Increasing Trauma, Polarisation and Extremism

In their book *Democracies Divided: The Global Challenge of Political Polarization*, Carothers and O'Donohue point to a global trend towards demonisation of opponents, a shift toward extremism or pushes for radical change, and an accompanying curtailment of democratic processes (Carothers and O'Donohue 2019). Populist and authoritarian leaders fan the flames of identity-based conflicts, fuelling overt racism, Islamophobia, antisemitism and other expressions of hate toward minority groups, particularly immigrants and those perceived as "foreigners" (Clements 2019).

Widespread social and political polarisation may be contributing to the growth of violent extremism. Polarisation is leading to the mainstreaming of violent extremism where political opponents view violence against civilians as necessary (Alam 2021).

Weaponisable technology also seems to be increasing polarisation and extremism. Online radicalisation on social media platforms contributes to real-world violence. Violent extremist groups use social media for recruitment, training and financing their movements, and the pandemic has created more time for recruiters to rally support online (UN Security Council 2020). In the US, for example, disinformation about the US election and QAnon conspiracies shared on social media were used to mobilise participants in the siege at the US Capitol on 6 January 2021. The growth of transnational white supremacist terrorism illustrates the scale of the threat of far-right violent extremism (Schirch 2021a). Western peacebuilding

organisations must come to terms with the reality that their own societies are conflict-affected and require robust peacebuilding at home (Parlevliet 2022 (forthcoming)).

Over the last five years, deaths caused by terrorism have decreased by nearly 60%. However, in sub-Saharan Africa, terror attacks have increased by 67% and most terror-related deaths still occur in the Southern Hemisphere. In Europe, North America and Oceania, far-right terrorism has increased by a shocking 250% (Institute for Economics and Peace 2020a). Violent extremist beliefs often include anti-immigrant narratives. Given the global increase in climate-related migration, this could increase violent extremism.

In the short term, the lockdowns, financial disruption and media attention to the pandemic seem to have temporarily slowed terror attacks. However, the pandemic is increasing many of the drivers of violent extremism, including government repression, economic and political marginalisation, isolation and a desire for belonging.

An increasing body of research and peacebuilding initiatives hints at a link between the growing crisis of meaning, anxiety, depression and behavioural health challenges and the mainstreaming of violent extremism, authoritarianism and polarisation (Okai 2020; Bosley 2020; Steadman 2020). Both social justice and stability peacebuilding emphasise building social cohesion in divided societies. Behavioural health interventions can help people to recognise cognitive fallacies that drive out-group mistrust and to cultivate healthy behaviours and relationships that can transform the perceptions of in-group versus out-group competition. While the scale of polarisation is increasing, peacebuilding methods have not yet scaled up to meet the challenge. How can peacebuilding efforts focus more attention on psychosocial wellbeing and trauma to prevent further polarisation and intergroup violence? How can peacebuilding practitioners harness new communication technologies more effectively?

4.3.3. Increasing Gender-based Violence

While terrorism grabs attention with public acts of violence against civilians, gender-based violence out of sight of the public exceeds every other form of violence in terms of its scale and scope. One in three women worldwide from all economic and education levels will experience either physical and/ or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime. LGBTQ+ people experience higher levels of gender-based violence than cisgender and heterosexual persons. While 35% of heterosexual women experience rape, physical violence and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime, the figures are 44% for lesbian women and 61% for bisexual women. Half of transgender people have experienced sexual violence at some point in their lives. Gender-based violence leaves survivors with lasting trauma and disability (YWCA 2019). Female genital mutilation (FGM) affects two hundred million women around the world and has social and economic costs estimated to be up to 3.7% of GDP in some countries (World Bank 2019).

Environmental degradation and the climate crisis are increasing gender-based violence against women and girls. For example, the extractive industry in the DRC is linked to high levels of rape and human trafficking. Conversely, researchers note that gender-based violence makes addressing environmental crises more difficult as access to land and environmental resources is closely associated with gender exploitation (Castañeda Camey et al. 2020). The pandemic also brought sharp rises in gender-based violence in countries around the world, due perhaps to the combination of an increase in economic stress and lockdowns that prevented people at risk from escaping abusive relationships (Graham-Harrison et al. 2020).

The peacebuilding field usually focuses on public violence. Nevertheless, strategic approaches to violence must recognise the linkages between public violence and the gender-based violence that often happens in private. How can the peacebuilding field integrate more gender-responsive programmes to address this global surge in gender-based violence during the pandemic? Why have efforts to prevent gender-based violence had such little impact?

5 Strategies for Decolonising Peacebuilding

The triad of crises described in this article accentuates the need for a "great reset" for the peacebuilding field. The present crises are an opportunity to build back better by addressing fundamental weaknesses in current peacebuilding practice and dilemmas heightened by a bifurcated peacebuilding spectrum. Decolonisation is at the heart of a peacebuilding reset.

In 2020, the Black Lives Matter movement prompted an urgent examination of broader patterns of colonial thinking embedded in peacebuilding programmes (Garza 2020). The Covid-19 pandemic heightened awareness of the essential role of locally owned health and safety frameworks to address local needs. As Youssef Mahmoud notes, this may be a silver lining of the pandemic, giving social justice-oriented peacebuilders the space to implement their own programmes by drawing on local resources (Mahmoud 2020).

Decolonisation is not a simplistic process or empty gesture. Cultural studies scholars Aníbal Quijano and Walter Mignolo's 2007 definition of decoloniality critiques the hidden ways in which the logic of colonialism manifests in the present conceptions of modernity such as technological innovation, democratic governance and capitalist market economies (Quijano 2007; Mignolo 2007). In their influential essay *Decolonization Is Not A Metaphor*, Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang argue that people who benefit from status quo power structures may make superficial and symbolic "moves toward innocence" that distract attention from land reparations and repatriation (Tuck and Yang 2012). These theorists insist that decolonisation moves beyond symbolic gestures. Tapji Garba and Sara-Maria Sorentino's response article *Slavery is a Metaphor* argues that a focus on land repatriation obscures the fundamentally racist and anti-Black oppressions embedded within the harms to black and brown people in the past and present (Garba and Sorentino 2020). Decolonisation thus requires both *material and symbolic* actions toward freedom, equity, repair, reparation, abolition and repatriation.

Decolonialising peacebuilding creates space for people harmed by colonial worldviews and institutions to name and be agents of change while those who have benefited from colonialism take active steps to acknowledge and repair the harms from colonial legacies. The verb "decolonising" must avoid Tuck and Yang's superficial "moves to innocence" and instead view decolonisation as requiring significant cognitive and structural change. Decolonising means addressing the forces of colonial empire that echo throughout the state, market and society in today's world.

A growing literature explores what decolonising peacebuilding might require, including decolonising the design of peacebuilding, the definitions of human rights (Dilanyan, Beraia and Yavus 2018), notions of gender (Hudson 2016) and the structure of Western aid (Paige 2020). Decolonising peacebuilding requires local approaches to address the combined impact of the pandemic, the climate crisis and new technologies, along with shifts to the state system, the market and society. Below, ten core elements of an agenda for decolonising peacebuilding are identified which highlight the tensions between social justice and stability peacebuilding and illustrate what centring local analysis and action might mean.

Expand Local Ownership

What can the peacebuilding field do to heighten awareness of the strengths and practical examples that put diverse local civil society leadership at the heart of all aspects of peacebuilding? The concept of local ownership has been a staple of many international agreements, starting with the OECD's development cooperation model (OECD 1996). Yet in the last 20 years, peacebuilding "experts" with a stabilisation agenda have continued to displace local wisdom, capacity and social justice goals rather than work in

partnership with them in an anticolonial framework. Outsiders' intentions to build peace or "stability" have not always translated into benefits for local people. Despite efforts to emphasise local ownership, stability peacebuilding's hold on the field shows no signs of weakening.

Decolonising peacebuilding requires a rethinking of competing definitions of "local". In the race to find "local implementing partners", too many government and international NGO peacebuilding programmes choose elite urban civil society organisations. Yet these organisations may not represent the community in any real way. Worse, they may may substitute for actual grassroots organising and movement-building. Diverse community-based organisations, outside of the urban NGO sphere, must be involved in devising conflict analysis processes, programme development, implementation, oversight and evaluation (Schirch and Mancini-Griffoli 2016). Local communities must be allowed to speak their own languages, define the issues according to their own analysis, and carry out the strategies that they think are culturally relevant and build on local capacities and traditions (Errington-Barnes and Connolly 2021).

Advance Intersectional Conflict Analysis

What can the peacebuilding field do to advance intersectional conflict analysis? Decolonising peacebuilding requires reflection on the power dynamics between and within different identity groups. An intersectional analysis highlights how multiple oppressions intersect to form compound oppressions. Race, class, gender, religion, physical abilities and other individual characteristics intersect, interact and overlap (Crenshaw 1989). Youth, women, LGBTQ, Indigenous, Black and People of Colour need to be the authors of their own peace, with outsiders playing supporting roles decided by and overseen by diverse insiders (Schirch 2013). Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* still provides the inspiration for how intersectional conflict analysis seeds conflict transformation (Freire 1970). Local analysis and action to prevent and transform harm are central to a peacebuilding reset.

Facilitate Intersectional Solidarity

What can the peacebuilding field do to foster intersectional dialogue and coalition-building? While intersectional analysis draws attention to compounded oppressions, it can also lead to competitive victim narratives. This can pit one oppressed group against another. Colonial powers conducted "research" on local populations in order to understand how to use "divide and conquer" strategies to enable a small number of white colonisers to control a large number of local Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2017). Intersectionality in practice requires solidarity between marginalised groups. Successful social movements depend on coalition-building between groups (Van Dyke and McCammon 2010). In her book *The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together*, Heather McGhee asserts that zero-sum narratives within society bolster the forces of systemic racism. Racial justice is about ensuring that human rights apply to everyone, including Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC). McGhee argues that social justice activists should shift the focus from how racism benefits white people to emphasising, instead, how racism costs everyone in society. Racial justice will create a "solidarity dividend" that will enhance all people's human rights (McGhee 2021). The skills of dialogue, mediation and negotiation can be used to build strategic coalitions and a solidarity dividend between identity groups (Bloch and Schirch 2018).

Rethink Governance and Peacebuilding

What can the peacebuilding field do to strengthen national infrastructures for peace that are centred around diverse local peacebuilding actors? Decolonising peacebuilding requires a more robust multi-stakeholder approach to governance as ongoing negotiation; a permanent peace process where local voices are central, not just included on the margins (Pospisil 2020). Diffusion of governance is necessary for robust peacebuilding and offers an example of the best possibilities for blending social justice peacebuilding with state efforts at stability peacebuilding. Governance is essential for peace, but state-building missions rarely prioritise social justice (Cortright, Seyle and Wall 2017). The movement to build "national infrastructures

"national infrastructures for peace" blends national and local government with civil society's local peace and reconciliation committees and has potential to decentralise and decolonise governance (Giessmann 2016).

Renew Attention to Economic Models and Measures

What can the peacebuilding field do to ensure that full human dignity for all is central to economic models? What can it do to promote fair trade agreements or reparations for wealth extracted by colonial powers, or a combination of both fairer trade and reparations? Decolonising peacebuilding means analysing the winners and losers in economic models and measures. In 1945, Kenneth Boulding, the grandfather of the field of peace studies, published *The Economics of Peace*. 75 years later, the peacebuilding field has little new to say about how economic systems undermine or contribute to peace. The UN's Sustainable Development Goals made the link between sustainable development and sustainable peace explicit, but did not offer a new economic model or address the exploitive, climate-warming, consumption-based marketplace (Kharas and McArthur 2019). Most of the recent literature on the role of the economy and peace focuses on the impact of investment or aid money in post-war contexts, with some arguing that economic aid contributes to post-war reconstruction, and others arguing that political reforms or peace agreements are far more important than economic elements (Strachan 2012). The arguments and assumptions of the stability peacebuilding paradigm linking a free market, democracy and peace merit closer attention. Small declines in poverty are positive but are dwarfed by massive increases in inequality, which correlates more closely with conflict. Equality and particularly gender parity are linked to improvements in livelihoods, food security and other aspects of human security, as noted in UN peacebuilding missions (Gizelis 2009) and by prominent peacebuilding NGOs (Robinson 2016). Shifts in the market and peacebuilding field are not keeping up with growing economic inequality, environmental destruction and the climate crisis, all of which impact human security.

Decolonising peacebuilding also requires new funding models in which local communities finance efforts to promote the social justice they seek. Civil society reliance on donor funding leaves local peacebuilding actors vulnerable to international donor decisions to readjust funding to new crises, such as the pandemic, or external state interests. It also reinforces colonial relationships. In *Decolonizing Wealth*, Edgar Villanueva analyses philanthropic power to move away from the colonial paradigm toward one that understands local agency and Indigenous wisdom (Villanueva 2018). Some development and peacebuilding experts point to reparations frameworks as necessary to replace the colonial-style aid industry (Leach 2018). Developing local sustainable financing for peacebuilding initiatives is essential to decolonise peacebuilding and will foster more resilience during crises.

Protect Social Movements and Civil Society Space

What can the peacebuilding field do to foster greater support for and synergy with nonviolent social movements? Decolonising peacebuilding requires a critique of the institutionalisation and professionalisation of the work of building peace. Too often, stability peacebuilding requires formal, donor-approved institutions that may drain people power away from social movements aimed at structural justice and human rights (Beraia, Yavuz and Dilanyan 2019). In many countries, the civil society space is shrinking as states use weaponisable technologies to surveil, imprison, kill and disappear activists. These trends pit social justice peacebuilding against the stabilisation agenda. Recent literature has sought to reconnect the essential role of nonviolent social movements in peacebuilding to address the frequent absence of power analysis (Dudouet 2017; Bloch and Schirch 2018; Stephan 2020). In light of structural violence and power imbalances, there is a need for a shifting of power and building wider coalitions for change. Civil resistance movements seem to be contagious, with democracy activists from Hong Kong inspiring those in Thailand and Myanmar, Nicaragua learning from Venezuela, and millions of climate protesters interacting and organising online. During the last decade, the frequency of public protests has increased by an annual average of 11.5% (Brannen, Haig and Schmidt 2020). As civil society has evolved from loose protest

movements toward greater capacity and institutionalisation, new civil society approaches blend people power tactics with policy proposals and direct negotiation and dialogue. Decolonising peacebuilding requires more influence for international civil society organisations, with civil society networks and movements working across regions.

Address the Psychological Drivers of Polarisation and Extremism

What can the peacebuilding field do to address the crisis in meaning and foster greater support for psychosocial wellbeing and trauma healing? Decolonising peacebuilding requires decolonising approaches to psychosocial wellbeing and trauma healing (Visser 2015). While Western conceptions of health tend to focus on discrete symptoms and pathology, local cultural traditions include ceremonies, rituals, music, art, dancing or other movements as positive community resources to encourage wellbeing. Local customs have often evolved over centuries into tradition-based healing practices to address mental and behavioural health challenges and are now backed up by evidence that they are just as if not more effective than Western-style interventions (Musyimi 2018). The Carter Center's Mental Health Program in Liberia is supporting a sustainable mental health system by training a mental health workforce, supporting the passage of a national mental health law, and assisting Liberia's Ministry of Health in conducting anti-stigma training courses for pharmacists, journalists, law enforcement officers, faith and traditional leaders, and users of mental health services (Carter Center 2021). In Zimbabwe, local psychosocial experts created a successful mental health programme involving community "grandmothers" who sit on park benches located in the green spaces outside health clinics and act as friendly, approachable lay health workers who listen to and support individuals facing anxiety, stress, adverse trauma responses and depression – known locally as *kufungisisa* or "thinking too much". In 2017, more than 30,000 people in Zimbabwe received treatment from a grandmother on a Friendship Bench, with positive outcomes rivalling those of conventional therapeutic methods (Chibanda et al. 2016).

Innovate Digital Peacebuilding

What can the peacebuilding field do to harness the power of digital technologies for social justice and peace, and at the same time to address the multiple and polarising threats they pose to privacy, democracy and information? Decolonising peacebuilding requires the use of digital technologies for organising, coordinating, mobilising and amplifying local citizen journalism on the issues that people can see and feel in their own lives. Democracy activists are organising and mobilising mass civic actions online. While some peacebuilding organisations are attempting to tap into the power of social media to amplify peacebuilding messages and stories, few peacebuilding organisations are responding at scale to the threats social media technologies pose to peacebuilding goals (Schirch 2020). Stability peacebuilding operations will have a much more difficult time working in complex environments with diverse armed groups with technological killing power. New capacities and resources are necessary to address digital threats to civil society and maximise the potential of digital peacebuilding.

Invest in Climate Peace Processes and Prepare for Mass Migration

What can the peacebuilding field do to prepare for the onset of climate emergencies and mass migration? Decolonising peacebuilding requires skills in designing inclusive peace processes around climate migration, adaptation, mitigation and prevention. Many peacebuilding organisations continue to focus on armed conflicts and peace processes at the state level, giving little attention to the threats from the climate emergency. Local-level climate peace processes should devote energy to building the public and political will for significant shifts to the marketplace. Peacebuilding institutes have given some attention to analysing the complex relationship between climate change and violent conflict. However, the peacebuilding field has not addressed the scale or urgency of the climate crisis (Day and Caus 2020). The field of environmental peacebuilding contributes innovations which assist conflict parties to manage conflicts over environmental resources and pollution (Dresse et al. 2018). Nevertheless, it too lacks a

comprehensive view of marketplace reform to address the rapacious consumption and growth framework. Given the importance of energy transformation in addressing the climate crisis, more attention must be paid to harnessing peacebuilding expertise to produce diplomatic agreements and policy solutions in this field. Both social justice and stability peacebuilding will need to plan for and address the social tensions, food shortages, disproportionate effects on marginalised communities and other humanitarian crises that will result from climate-induced mass migration. The peacebuilding field needs to scale up local mediation teams to address challenges that climate migration poses to social cohesion, and to emphasise inclusion, local capacity and resilience in local humanitarian leadership to mitigate the impacts of climate wildfires, droughts, storms, etc.

Tackle the Elephant in the Room: The Military-Industrial Complex

What can the peacebuilding field do to address the economic drivers of arms manufacturing and sales? Decolonising peacebuilding requires greater attention to the military industrial complex with its profit motivation for violence. Military-based strategies for peace receive funding despite a lack of evidence of success, sometimes even when there is evidence that they cause more harm than good (Bacevich 2010). With the 2020 Taliban takeover of the Afghan government, it seems that 20 years of war and over six trillion dollars primarily benefited US defence companies touting the neo-colonial war on terror, not local Afghans. Yet this observation was absent from most mainstream analysis of the US-led war on Afghanistan and the many reflections on the 20-year anniversary of 9/11 and the legacy of the global war on terror that followed.

6   Conclusion

Just a few years ago in 2016, the SDGs and global governance movements envisioned achieving significant improvements in quality of life around the world. Today, lives are at risk from a global pandemic, a climate crisis, entrenched structural injustices, civil wars, terror attacks, gender-based violence and severe economic inequality. In a world of diverse threats, rapid changes and a multitude of crises, peacebuilding leaders will need to prepare themselves for interdisciplinary challenges. Peacebuilding will require anticolonial ethicists as well as technocrats. Peacebuilding will need systems thinkers able to imagine and design integrated, anticolonial programmes that address multiple challenges in a way which is sensitive to psychosocial trauma, gender, climate, economic inequality, political polarisation, extremism and good governance. Peacebuilding engineers will need to design every city, housing community and computer programme with peace and social justice ethics in mind.

The scale and scope of challenges facing our planet over the coming decades will require unprecedented innovation. Peacebuilding leaders will need to be persuasive and charismatic communicators who are able to shine a light of hope through the fog of disorder. Peacebuilding groups will need to partner with social movements, and think about how to shift the field away from an international NGO model. As we move into an uncertain future likely to bring chaos and disruption, leadership researcher Margaret Wheatley urges us to protect "islands of sanity" in communities throughout the world, where local leaders commit to protecting values, cities innovate and develop model solutions, and people decide to focus on inspiration, best practices and positive peace (Wheatley 2017). Decolonising peacebuilding offers a map for moving towards a survivable future.

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About the Author

Lisa Schirch, PhD, holds the Starmann Professorship Chair at the University of Notre Dame's Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies. She also directs the Social Media, Technology and Peacebuilding programme at the Toda Peace Institute. A former Fulbright Fellow in East and West Africa, Schirch is the author of eleven books on locally-led peacebuilding, including Conflict Assessment and Peacebuilding Planning: Local Ownership in Security, The Ecology of Violent Extremism, Synergizing Nonviolent Action and Peacebuilding and Social Media Impacts on Conflict and Democracy (in 2021).