

Guest editorial

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Emerging peace research part – 1

By virtue of their origins in the West, certain fields are dominated by scholars from the Western world. This is particularly true to International Relations and related disciplines like Peace and Conflict Studies. While we acknowledge that there are numerous Western scholars, such as Johan Galtung and Betty Reardon, who have made significant contributions to peace research, there is a need for out of the box thinking to look beyond to discover the work that scholars in the global South have produced. Besides resource and linguistic limitations, often scholars from the developing world lack opportunities to share their knowledge. A recent study found that scholars in the global South are underrepresented in top international peer-reviewed journals in social and medical sciences (Cummings and Hoebink, 2017). Similarly, another study reported that scholars from Africa, Asia, Latina America and the Middle East are missing from leading journals in politics and gender, published in the USA and Europe (Medie and Kang, 2018). This reality is prevalent in peace research too. Considering how the context is important in peace research, it is important to provide designated space to researchers from the global South to develop their ideas that can impact the field of peace research.

The field of peace research is still expanding, and at its best, continuously incorporating new and different voices, new types of research methodologies and various areas of cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary studies. To accomplish these goals, journals that highlight peace research must purposely seek out non-Western and/or English-centric studies. Scholars who are from the areas where the research is being conducted can offer insights into both rigorous research and an insider perspective. These same researchers will most probably not have to hire interpreters and travel may be easier, especially in these times of COVID-19. These unique voices are not heard by accident or chance but instead must be deliberately and specifically sought out. The challenge to seek out these unique voices is ongoing and takes diverse board and reviewer committees to ensure that the process is not stopped at “what we know and is familiar to us” but rather is focused on “what we still want and need to learn.” It is these deliberate actions to seek out the work of these scholars that is the focus of this editorial.

The International Peace Research Association Foundation has been funding peace research in two forms since 1991. The Foundation’s funded research covers the field in terms of both research methodology and focuses on theory, research, education and practice. This special issue will be unique for three reasons:

1. the international nature of both our scholars and their research projects;
2. the breadth and depth of the research the Foundation funds; and
3. the interdisciplinary nature of the research.

The first form is the Senesh Fellowship which grants two fellowships for women per year at US \$5,000 per year. To attract the best candidates from around the world, and especially from the global south, the IPRA Foundation Senesh program accepts applications in three languages: French, Spanish and English. At a time when most scholarships and fellowships

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are tied to a particular institution or program, the Senesh Fellow can choose where she wants to do her graduate work. The IPRA Foundation has applications from scholars from all over the world and they choose to study globally. To date, the Foundation has funded 20 scholars.

The second approach the IPRA Foundation uses for funding peace research is the Peace Research Grants program. This program offers Peace Research Grants to scholars whose work is focused on building peace in various areas of the world. These proposals for funding must be focused on some aspect of positive peace rather than, for example, how to do war better or security studies. These grants are for US\$5,000 and allow for the researcher, depending on where they are located, to complete a solid body of research. To date, the Foundation has granted 118 Peace Research Grants. These grants are very innovative, everything from collecting memories of missing persons in postwar periods to promoting peace education in refugee camps to using the arts to create peace dialogues in war-torn areas.

As the recipients of IPRAF grants have produced peace research on a variety of topics, we decided to publish this special issue to share some of that work in the areas of peace education; peace, peacebuilding and reconciliation; negotiation and mediation; nonviolent conflict; political institutions and conflict; and peacekeeping. Our authors in this issue come from a variety of backgrounds, such as academics and practitioners (pracademics), and their unique insights and methodologies will continue to make significant contributions to peace research in the years to come. The authors have dealt with complex issues by, for example, problematizing the peace discourse using various lenses like gender, the environment and empathy education. Moreover, some have looked at specific case studies to draw lessons from on-the-ground peacebuilding practices in a variety of contexts, such as Jammu and Kashmir, South Sudan and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Their research methodologies are quantitative, qualitative and mixed-methods approach. The approaches to data collection include dialogue, interviews, focus groups, narratives, historical and archival research.

This deliberate and purposeful way to hear and welcome different voices will maintain the uniqueness of the peace research field for years to come. These scholars represent the latest generation of contributors to the continually growing and expanding field of peace studies.

References

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