

## **Prefatory Note from the Editor: Introducing *NSJPGS*: The Inaugural Issue**

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With this inaugural issue of the *North South Journal of Peace and Global Studies*, the Center for Peace Studies (CPS) and the South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG) at North South University (NSU) begin an important intellectual journey that represents the aspirations of the affiliated faculty and staff to broaden a commitment to peace education and peace building in the South Asia region and beyond. The designation ‘North South’ in the journal title is intended to indicate the intellectual linkage and bridging of the concerns of the two geographic hemispheres concerning the diverse ways in which peace and global studies are conceptualized and engaged in qualitative and quantitative research. Today, the circulating concepts in use are “the Global North” and “the Global South,” in contrast to the earlier “East-West” discourse of geopolitics. Thus, there should be an intellectual linkage between “North South” in the interest of peace and global studies.

Peace, of course, is a fundamental value expressive of concern for the greater *human* interest above and beyond the contemporary configuration of international relations and the diverse *national* interests pursued by nation-states. Peace is a value essential to the achievement of a just and humane world order. As such, it is a trans-national and trans-generational value having *normative* standing. Proponents of peace seek to respond to the manifested needs of diverse peoples across the face of the earth today. But, they also seek to account responsibly for the rights of future generations and the moral and legal obligations we in the present have to our near- and far-term descendants. This is a matter of safeguarding the future against global catastrophe and loss of our common cultural and intellectual heritage that includes the contributions of various civilizations.

As such, it behooves us to remember that the fundamental value of peace supervenes upon the conceptual frameworks and value orientations of diverse peoples across the globe. This value is of concern in the context of the domestic affairs of nation-states as well as the bilateral and multilateral practices through which they interact with each other while motivated by mutual interests. Furthermore, peace as a value manifestly affects the coordinating authority of international intergovernmental institutions, e.g., the entirety of the United Nations system with its specialized agencies that has aspired to be a “working peace system;” the operations of non-governmental organizations that influence both public and private sectors of socioeconomic activity; multinational corporations having global reach in economic production, international trade and foreign direct investment as well as in the management of complex global supply chains; civil society with its attention to domestic agendas of sustainable development; and citizens in general in their interpersonal conduct, wherever they reside.

There is much of concern in extant international relations, global and regional governance, etc., that requires our sustained attention with a view to both penetrating analysis and meaningful effort to devise practicable solutions to the assortment of problems facing global humanity today. Obviously, as scholars focused on the normative dimensions of global reform have argued—and will continue to argue—the realization of a just and humane world order depends on transformation of contemporary international institutional structures and patterns of behavior, as well as transformation of values or philosophical orientations that are at the base of international political culture and that motivate diverse ideological perspectives that are often in contention.

In the meantime, of course, current affairs present us with incessant challenges in international relations and opportunities for conflict resolution and development. The world continues to experience war and armed conflict (including sub-national inter-ethnic violence) in multiple regions of the globe, domestic unrest from various causes influencing and contributing to forced migration and refugee flow, global distributive injustice at the root of both rising expectations and rising frustrations especially in the developing world, shocks from the ongoing effects of climate change and seemingly unprecedented natural disasters, widespread deleterious socioeconomic effects from the recent COVID-19 pandemic and the prospect of emergent pathogens having pandemic potential, and the continuing tendency of nation-states to champion national security interests relative to the logic of statecraft and appeals to

the principle of sovereignty.

For some analysts, the pursuit of “power-politics” all too often is in breach of customary and public international law as various major powers pursue “exceptionalist” agendas vis-à-vis their obligations under international law. Thus, the “*Realpolitik*” or “realist” paradigm of international relations remains in tension with “idealist” or “normative” analytical approaches to global problems; and, granted, scholars and policy-makers will continue to contribute their perspectives more or less aligned in these paradigmatic ways. Clearly, both schools of thought contribute meaningfully to the ongoing debate about what is to be done to find practicable and feasible solutions to the many problems that confront us in the early twenty-first century. Such debate presents one and all with an opportunity to practice “an ethics of disagreement” even as they nonetheless seek both to understand and to solve global problems of mutual concern.

In the modern period of international studies, it is also important to recall that “peace” has been construed relative to both ‘negative’ and ‘positive’ conceptualizations of the idea. Each conceptual orientation influences corresponding behavior of the relevant actors on the domestic stage and in the world arena of international relations. In view of the above, the journal’s editorial team aspires to share with our interested readers engaging and illuminating articles that address both conceptual and practical dimensions of peace and global studies (e.g., those mentioned above). Moreover, with the launch of this journal, the NSU Center for Peace Studies is committed to advancing the cause of positive peace and not merely that of negative peace, hence the broad scope of the journal’s aims. Studies of negative peace are for the most part focused on understanding the causes of war and armed conflict, primarily between sovereign nation-states, but of course also as concerns civil war and inter-ethnic violence within nation-states. Such analyses are important to one important dimension of contemporary international relations. The concept of positive peace, however, is much more inclusive, hence the deliberate linkage of ‘peace’ and ‘global studies’ in the journal’s focus.

Positive peace is reasonably measurable by criteria beyond that of negative peace. For example, the Institute for Economics & Peace in Australia, issuing its *Positive Peace Report 2020*, reasonably identifies “eight pillars” of positive peace that enable a society to flourish: a well-functioning government; equitable distribution of resources; a sound

business environment; high levels of human capital; low levels of corruption; free flow of information; acceptance of the rights of others; and good relations with neighbors. Hence, a nation-state that desires positive peace must formulate and implement governmental policies that work efficaciously in the direction of each of these principal metrics, all pillars taken together with a view to their sustainable achievement over the long-term of public and private sector performance.

*NSJPGS*, therefore, aims to publish the competent research of authors who engage topics and themes related to domestic, geopolitical, and international peace and justice; issues of political culture and diversity; topics in international law, global security, and world order; problems of socioeconomic development, global public health governance and global health policy; global environmental justice related to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); proposals for practicable solutions to problems of social and distributive justice; reduction or elimination of structural violence, armed conflict, and forced migration; and issues of governance policy related to the foregoing themes.

The present inaugural issue of *NSJPGS* includes a number of papers that reflect the interdisciplinary intellectual engagements of the authors, consistent with the journal's aims and scope:

- First, Professor Sk. Tawfique M. Haque, along with co-author Dr. Raymond Kwun-Sun Lau, provide a “Global South” perspective on the Russia-Ukraine War, characterizing it as a failure of the extant rule-based order and, thus, part of the competition and contest for a new world order by the “great powers” (China, Russia, the European Union, and the USA). One manifested consequence of this competition is “a more fragmented and uncertain global economic landscape.” This contest unavoidably includes articulation of competitive strategies in the Indo-Pacific, in which case the Global South is forced to calculate its place in great power relations via “strategic equilibrium.”
- Next we have a discussion from Professor Gour Gobinda Goswami and co-authors concerning the importance of having both non-clinical (socioeconomic, geographic, environmental, mobility, and governance) and clinical (epidemiological, hospital, etc.) data for the purpose of assessing the societal and global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and similar events that

might occur in future. Accordingly, Goswami provides a review of the ways in which COVID-19 related data have been collected consistent with diverse methods (panel data, time-series data, cross-sectional data, etc.). The operating assumption here is that awareness of such databases and the manner in which they are collected and published is important to the formulation and implementation of public policies that are responsive and seek to mitigate the effects of a pandemic in real time.

- Professor Harisur Rahman, et al., present us with a critical discourse analysis of media representations of China and Chinese culture at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic. They highlight the way in which the media in Bangladesh in particular contribute to negative perceptions and to “Sinophobia” in particular. Such media, in short, are by no means benign in their effects on the perceptions of local Bangladeshis. The social media reviewed portray China in negative light, while representing Islam and Bangladeshi Muslims favorably, thus a contraposition of cultures in the media does not conduce to intercultural respect. Further, China’s alleged violations of rights of the Uyghurs in China and its lack of positive engagement of the Rohingya crisis in Bangladesh are interpreted thereby to be evidence of discrimination against Muslims in general, and thus to China’s apparent intolerance of religion, especially Islam. Such qualitative analysis identifies some Bangladeshi social media as sources of discriminatory and hateful speech, whereby media representations are factually inaccurate in their portrayals and, therefore, not contributing positively to cultural representations of China. In short, consequent to an ethnocentric view, China is not perceived to be a true friend of Bangladesh.
- In the next article, Professor Mohammad Tanzimuddin Khan reviews international developments of the Energy Charter Treaty (ECT), which is designed to protect and safeguard foreign direct investment (FDI) and the operation of multinational enterprises (MNE). Those countries that become signatories to the treaty do so on the assumption that there will be palpable benefit from doing so, given the positive relation between international trade and FDI in particular. Since Bangladesh seeks to join the treaty, the question engaged here is whether the operative assumption is

correct, relative to what is known about energy sector operations in the country and accounting for the fact that Bangladesh is an energy-importing lower middle-income country. Professor Khan's analysis points to various vulnerabilities Bangladesh would likely encounter, in which case the recommendation is that the government not sign onto the ECT.

The Center for Peace Studies/South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (CPS/SIPG) hopes to produce a sustainable journal that is eventually properly indexed. The Editorial Team welcomes readers to consider submitting their own research papers in response to future calls for papers. Please consult the journal website accordingly.

As Editor, I express my thanks to the journal's associate editors for their editorial reviews, to the external reviewers who took time to provide peer reviews of the papers, and especially to Professor Dr. Mohammed Nuruzzaman, our managing editor, for his hard work to make this inaugural issue a success. The Editorial Team also jointly expresses our gratitude to the members of the journal's International Editorial Board for their professional service and promotion of the journal.

Peace to one and all! And best wishes for the year.