

# PEACE STUDIES JOURNAL

**Volume 15, Issue 1**  
**June 2022**

# PEACE STUDIES JOURNAL

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Guest Editor:

Dani Green, PhD

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## **ABOUT PEACE STUDIES JOURNAL**

The Peace Studies Journal (PSJ) is a leading and primer journal in the field of peace, justice, and conflict studies internationally. PSJ, founded in 2008 out of the initiative of the Central New York Peace Studies Consortium was established as an informal journal to publish the articles presented at the annual Peace Studies Conference, but in 2009 PSJ was developed into an international interdisciplinary free online peer-reviewed scholarly journal. The goal of PSJ is to promote critical scholarly work on the areas of identities politics, peace, nonviolence, social movements, conflict, crisis, ethnicity, culture, education, alternatives to violence, inclusion, repression and control, punishment and retribution, globalization, economics, ecology, security, activism, and social justice.

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## **Stories of Transformation: SLCC Symposium on Equity & Inclusion: Remarks**

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**Keywords:** healing; justice, Salt Lake Community College; Black liberation

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## **STORIES OF TRANSFORMATION: SLCC SYMPOSIUM ON EQUITY & INCLUSION: REMARKS**

Clifton G. Sanders

Thank you for the opportunity to make some remarks regarding Salt Lake City Community College's (SLCC) journey toward a future where inclusion, diversity, equity, and justice flourishes in and from SLCC into the communities we serve. My remarks will start with a reflection from my early days as SLCC faculty. These remarks were originally intended for dedicating the Clifton G. Sanders Racial Justice and Black Liberation Library which, due to the pandemic and other circumstances, is still a work in progress. Nevertheless, the reflection is appropriate in today's context. After the reflection I will give my version of a call. So I will start...

When I came to SLCC in 1993, I had been laid off for three months from my Senior Research scientist position at an R&D company. Despite completing my PhD and receiving patents for biomaterials technology, I was professionally frustrated, disillusioned, and emotionally exhausted to the point that I packed away all my chemistry books. Leaving Utah was not much of an option then because the country was in an economic recession and there were no jobs in science. Truthfully, I came to SLCC because I was broke and needed to find work while figuring out my life as I was nearing my 38<sup>th</sup> birthday. Shortly after starting here as an adjunct chemistry instructor, I knew I was called to teach the kinds of students we serve. But if it were not for Dave Richardson,

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at that time a brand new SLCC dean, and only the second academic dean of color in SLCC's history (I was the third), I might not have been hired full time. If not for Black Biology professor Emma-Jean Battles, my office mate in my first year, I would not have experienced her soul-restoring mentoring and encouragement. I could say similar things about colleagues and friends like Jack Hesleph, Victor Akhionbare, Charlotte Starks, Philip Anosike, Deidre Tyler, Ron Valcarce, (the great) Dee Glascoe, Karen Killinger, Robert Velasquez, Joe Gallegos, Joy Tlou, Deron Hutchinson, Sam Smith and others. My early years at SLCC were blessed by these relationships. Although we mostly Black and Brown folks were spread/scattered across the college, I cherished every encounter, even if it were just to say a quick 'hi' on the way to teach a class. Our shared histories and experiences meant that we could talk without extensive footnotes, that we could take brief vacations from "double consciousness" and code switching, that we could be ourselves with each other without apology, without opprobrium, without having to deal with fragility. For those brief moments I felt liberated in this place by the love of these colleagues. And this is decades before today's fashionable conversations about how important it is for students to encounter professors who look like them. These professors, administrators, staff of all types, embodied this longing for Racial Justice and reconciliation at SLCC for decades. Of course we all cherished our interracial friendships and alliances across the college, but we needed to feel each other's' presence for strength for the journey we are still on.

An important part of my journey is to remind SLCC of this tradition of care, this "cloud of witnesses," past and present, whom many of you may not know, but without them we would not have this moment. I am fortunate and grateful to pass along their wisdom and I attempt to serve here according to their legacy of love, hope and determination and risk taking. As I face the twilight of my SLCC career I embrace with gratitude that I am in this moment because of these mentors and teachers, along with the love of many friends who are true allies and seekers. And I am so happy to have the privilege of seeing a new SLCC generation take up this work with seriousness, courage, and inspiration born in these challenging times. I am as eager to learn from these living "legacies in the making" as I am to pass along the contributions to SLCC "peoples history" that must not be forgotten.

Contemplating a call to action is a serious undertaking. Properly understood, it signals that now is the time or season—called by some "Kairos"—to commit wholeheartedly to doing new things to build a better world. So what kind of actions are worthy of such a call?? Before I answer, I want to acknowledge the incredible number of ways that SLCC over the years has served and welcomed many communities through a variety of beautiful celebrations, centers, programs, projects, initiatives, partnerships, and alliances involving every part of SLCC. The pandemic might have dulled this memory, so a first suggestion is that we remember, revive, and recover the best of that tradition in service of peace, justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Along with this I am also convinced that SLCC needs to center all other actions within a paradigm of "healing," or more precisely, "healing conversations," this concept coined by my dear friend, scholar, activist, and peacebuilder, Dr. Michael Minch. There are many scholars, thinkers and citizens who are convinced from events over the past 10 years that the United States is dangerously close to civil war. Political scientists now define America not as a democracy but rather as an "anocracy"—a country that falls in between democracy and full autocracy. Polarization in public opinion, the threat of armed insurrection and violence between militant citizens, along with

legislative attempts to suppress academic freedom and historical narratives about American society—seek to bully SLCC and other public higher education institutions into fearful submission. If there is a time—Kairos—to engage in the risky but crucial task of domestic peacebuilding—if there is a time to attempt “healing conversations” between adversaries, if there is a time—Kairos—to embrace conflict transformation and peacebuilding methodologies which have been nurtured in Northern Ireland, the Middle East, the Balkans, South Africa and other post-conflict zones, then that time is now.

I hope that Salt Lake Community College, and the library that currently bears my name, can complement activism with courageous action to launch a center to train facilitators for the kind of “healing conversations” needed to help people in our college community and beyond find common ground that leads to mutual understanding and liberation from fear into the genius of peace and hope grounded in truth, justice, mercy, and reconciliation. A commitment to loving our collective self and our community in this way is indispensable to inclusivity, equity, diversity, and inclusion at its best. I do not have the space here to talk more about what is necessary to do this work faithfully. And I am a novice myself. But I know I am called in some way to this and my learning curve is steep. Still, my call to action to us is nothing less than authentic, disciplined peacebuilding through “healing conversations.” Thank you.

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## Activists and Pre-Suasion

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**Keywords:** activism; persuasion; communication; ethics

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## Abstract

Activists, to increase their impact and effectiveness, need to be as persuasive as possible. To illustrate how activists can learn from persuasion research, evidence and insights from the book *Pre-suasion* by Robert Cialdini are introduced and applied. Cialdini's core argument is that communicators, through certain techniques, can position their audience to be more open and receptive to their message *before* any part of the message has been delivered. Examples are used to show how pre-suasion techniques can be used within activist groups and when communicating to wider audiences. Pre-suasion raises a number of ethical concerns that activist groups would be wise to discuss.

## ACTIVISTS AND PRE-SUASION

Chris Brown, Brian Martin, Liane Munro, and Dalilah Shemia-Goeke

## Introduction

Activists need to communicate to each other, to potential supporters, and to opponents. In all cases, it makes sense to be as persuasive as possible in order to attract new members, change public opinion, and convince opponents to reconsider their views, for example. To communicate more effectively, it's possible to learn from the great amount of research on persuasion. One reason is to become more convincing. Another is to be better able to defend against others' persuasive efforts.

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In this article, we present ideas from the book *Pre-Suasion* by Robert Cialdini, seeking to extract possible applications and lessons for activists on how to be more persuasive and effective in efforts to achieve social change.

Despite the importance of communication and persuasion, and the vast body of research on these topics, few activist traditions have fully engaged with the field, at least not in a way sufficient to draw on the most useful insights that can inform practice. This applies to Marxism, feminism, pacifism and most other traditions.

Persuasion is big business. Corporations spend vast amounts of money on advertising, including on research into how to make advertising more persuasive (Andrews et al., 2013; Armstrong, 2010). Governments spend large sums on public relations. In the digital arena, companies hire the most talented graduates and pay them to design videogames, social networking apps, and websites that are as attractive as possible. Their effectiveness is seen in the number of people who have behavioral addictions to their electronic devices (Alter, 2017).

Few activists have the resources needed to hire teams of professionals to improve their communication operations. They might have committed supporters who help design websites, write media releases, and produce attractive posters. For research, though, they usually depend on what is done for other purposes — and most research on persuasion is oriented to corporations and governments. Nevertheless, there is much to learn from this research.

Robert Cialdini, a professor of psychology and marketing, wrote a book titled *Influence*, published in 1984. Unexpectedly, it became a bestseller. Cialdini wrote for a general audience, highlighting key ideas from research on persuasion using vivid examples. For example, one tool of persuasion is scarcity: when something is perceived to be in short supply, it becomes more desirable. This principle is regularly used by companies: “Limited edition”; “This offer ends tomorrow”.

Some of Cialdini’s principles can be used by activists, but applying them is not always easy. That’s probably why you have never met activists on the street saying, “The latest on environmental destruction: only a few leaflets remaining” or “Membership in our group: limited time introductory offer.”

On the other hand, there is much that activists can learn from research on and practical insights about communication and persuasion, from a range of perspectives (Elgin, 1989; Goldstein et al., 2007; Hausman, 2000; Heath & Heath, 2008; Jowett & O’Donnell, 1999; Michie, 1998; Pratkanis & Aronson, 1992; Reinsborough & Canning, 2009; Rosenberg, 1999; Rushkoff, 1999; Ryan, 1991; Thompson and Jenkins, 1993; Voss, 2016; Wu, 2016). If you know the psychological dynamics underlying tricks that others use to try to persuade or distract you, then you are in a better position to continue with your activism. At the very simplest level, this might be becoming aware of how you’re being distracted by Facebook posts and cat videos.

Although activists seldom have massive resources to pour into their communication efforts, nevertheless, even with a basic understanding of persuasion techniques it is possible to do much better. After all, activists are doing something different than convincing consumers to buy a

particular brand of soap or car; they are doing something more fundamental and potentially significant and uplifting.

Having looked into this issue, we think it is worthwhile for activist groups to learn from communication research and to experiment for themselves with techniques available. To illustrate how this might be done, we chose a newer book by Robert Cialdini.

After writing *Influence* in the 1980s, Cialdini continued his investigations into persuasion and eventually discovered a process that he believes is more fundamental. He calls it “pre-suasion,” which is what happens when people are influenced, unconsciously, to be receptive to particular messages. *Pre-suasion* is the title of his book published in 2016.

Here, we begin by outlining the idea of pre-suasion. Then we show how it can be applied to various issues faced by activists, giving several examples, and including a table listing a variety of possibilities. Ultimately, our aim is not to convince you to adopt these particular options or even to accept the idea of pre-suasion, but rather to show the potential value of learning from research on communication and persuasion.

We have consciously chosen to use a more accessible and sometimes colloquial style. We are writing to illustrate how activists can themselves learn from research on communication and persuasion and have adopted an approach that seems compatible with that goal.

## **Pre-Suasion**

You meet someone and they give you a drink. Does it make any difference whether the drink is warm or cool? Of course, this depends on whether you like warm or cool drinks. But here’s what researchers have discovered: if it’s a warm drink, you’re more likely to feel closer to the person who gave you the drink (e.g., Inagaki and Eisenberger, 2013). This is an example of pre-suasion. How does it work?

Cialdini argues that there are many things that you can do, prior to the delivery of any actual information, that can have a significant influence on how your message will be perceived and the degree to which it will be accepted. Hence the term ‘*pre-suasion*’: Persuasion starts prior to the message itself. It is what a communicator does *before* the message, or how the ground is prepared for the seed of the message, that largely determines the communicator’s persuasiveness.

The pre-suasive ideas Cialdini covers are not expensive processes demanding long-term commitment. Rather, they are techniques which can be applied just before you deliver your message. And in applying these techniques well, communicators arrange “for recipients to be receptive to a message before they encounter it” (Cialdini, 2016, p. 4).

Cialdini’s key idea about pre-suasion concerns the role of attention, in other words what we are noticing at any given time.

Cialdini cites many research studies — including some of his own — showing that when you’re paying attention to something, it seems more important than it would otherwise (pp. 33–50). When there’s a news report about a terrorist attack, terrorism seems more important than it would



otherwise. The news is a powerful guider of attention, especially for those who consume news media regularly. Already you can see the relevance to activism: peaceful protests don't receive as much media coverage as violent protests, so heavy viewers of the media are likely to think violent protest is more important or more prevalent.

Cialdini also cites studies showing that whatever we pay attention to seems more causal: it seems more influential as the cause of what happens (Hagemann, Strauss, & Leissing, 2008; Robinson & Zebrowitz-McArthur, 1982; Taylor & Fiske, 1978; Zebrowitz-McArthur & Ginsberg, 1981). More news is about people in positions of authority, like presidents and prime ministers, and this makes them seem more powerful. In contrast, there's not so much news about poor people, or about ordinary people involved in grassroots organizing and activism, which means they seem to have less power than they actually do. For example, workers often tend to think that their employers are very powerful and therefore do not dare to take action, although they do tend to have impact when they act collectively. This can lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy not only for employees: people not in positions of authority in general may not realize how much power they have because their attention is constantly directed at politicians, religious leaders, and celebrities.

If attention is the key to pre-suasion, this has wide ramifications for activists. It is relevant to their meetings and their meeting places, their messaging, their use of symbols and their choice of actions. It is also relevant to how they respond to messages from others, ranging from advertisers to opponents. By being aware of the role of attention in persuasion, activists can become more effective.

Some of Cialdini's ideas are often instinctively applied by nonviolent activist groups, others less so. Therefore, many of the ideas will sound familiar to activists. However, it may still be helpful to raise them because seeing such knowledge backed by evidence may bring more clarity. That said, pre-suasive techniques are often intuitive, and we may use many of them already. Notwithstanding, there are powerful and accessible techniques that might enable activists to substantially increase their communicative efficacy. Below we take some of Cialdini's specific ideas and discuss them in relation to activist groups and campaigns, highlighting either how they are commonly and successfully used, or discussing contexts and scenarios in which their application might be useful and powerful.

### **Pre-Suasion Examples**

In going through *Pre-suasion*, we thought of many possible applications of the ideas to activism. The following examples and vignettes show some ways that ideas about pre-suasion might be applied by activists. There are many other possibilities, some of which are indicated in Table 1 below.

#### *The Order of Evoked Associations Matters*

Your group is organising a demonstration to raise the issue of police brutality. Unfortunately, last time the turn-out was not so great. This time you want to do something different so that many more people show up and join the rally for your cause. For the last march you had mobilization videos, blog posts, and leaflets to encourage people to participate. In order to motivate them you showed images of violent clashes and then asked them to take action against these grievances. Sounds

great, right? The trouble is that when threatening images are presented, such as those containing violence, the person may be intimidated and refrain from joining the rally.

So what would be more effective? As the demonstration is about police brutality it is legitimate to show examples of what that means. But according to research, scary and violent images like these that trigger fear increase the inclination of people in that moment to look for the protection of belonging to a group (Goldstein et al., 2011). If cognizant of this typical human response, activists may address it by displaying, demonstrating, or performing an image of togetherness, which might trigger the desire to belong. So, make sure that raising the issue (displaying violence by police) is followed by an image or demonstration which evokes togetherness (a welcoming picture of a group of people standing closely together; a group of protestors singing or dancing together) and only then make your request to join the march.

### *Broadening Membership*

Your group wants to diversify its membership base and not only recruit privileged white students, but engage more working class, migrant backgrounds or people of color. Perhaps you do not want to only mobilize young people but include folks from all ages and walks of life. Or your group has decided that the goal of the next campaign phase is to mobilize and organize more parents or pensioners, as these had been identified as crucial for your cause but are not yet part of the movement. We all know we should try to adjust our wording and messaging more to the audience we wish to reach and yet still often we end up preaching to the choir, reaching out to those who are already our supporters and allies without being able to widen that scope. What can we do to better tailor our messaging to the people we want to reach?

One of the reasons for this may be that while we were drafting that text for the leaflet or post on social media, we were surrounded by that “choir” — our fellow activists who tend to share the same ideas and assumptions. But if we want to tailor our vocabulary more effectively to the people we are addressing, we need to surround ourselves with people like those we are aiming to reach. One option to do that, suggested in the book, is to hang up on the wall pictures of people representing that group you wish to reach out to (pp. 118–119).

This can be done when writing a text, creating a video, or even when planning a campaign addressing that specific audience. For example, during the strategy planning workshop, make sure to hang up posters with pictures of people representing your target group. In this way you will make sure you are primed to keep this particular audience in mind all the time.

### *Kinship*

Cialdini highlights many pre-suasive techniques that have unifying qualities. These techniques can open people up to be more receptive to various types of messaging. An example is the development of a shared language of kinship (p. 178). Cialdini recommends using unifying kinship language and imagery such as *family*, *motherland*, *forefathers*, and *sisterhood* to connect with and pre-suade our audience. This technique is designed to bring thoughts of family—one of our most motivating concepts—into our consciousness, pre-suading people to feel more united. This method can be



applied in a campaign strategy to influence our audience to change their views or become more supportive of our campaign (see also Lakoff, 2009).

Of course, kinship-related language and imagery is not the preserve of well-intentioned movements and campaigns. An indication of its destructive, violent, or exploitative potential is suggested through research which Cialdini himself cites. As he notes: “In one pair of studies, reminding Spaniards of the family-like nature of their national ties led those feeling ‘fused’ with their fellow citizens to become immediately and dramatically more willing to fight and die for Spain” (p. 178). Far-right groups seem keenly aware of this kind of dynamic. They often deploy this kind of kinship-related language and imagery to foster an exclusive and discriminatory sense of unity and purpose which violently excludes those who do not fit within their accepted notion of kin/country.

Activists, then, in paying attention to the pre-suasive power of kinship, are potentially equipped with a complex but multi-dimensional tool. On one level, it is a tool that provides a critical or analytical lens through which activists can identify, deconstruct, and defend against those who use the power of kinship language and imagery for divisive, discriminatory, exploitative, or violent ends. On another level, activists are able to wield similar language and imagery in a proactive way. That is, they can use kinship-related language and imagery to broaden the sense of family, to expand rather than restrict who is included in concepts of togetherness, and to reveal the contradictions at the heart of those who seek to deploy notions of unity and togetherness to ultimately exclude and distance.

### *If/When-Then Sentences*

Your activist group has decided what action it would like to take. But you have a nagging concern: you’ve been part of these campaigns before, and you know that things never run as smoothly as you expect. Fellow activists sometimes become fearful or aggressive; opponent groups, police, or security forces can be belligerent; or some in the group tend to be easily distracted, forgetting the core reason that brought people together in this action in the first place.

Cialdini offers a useful technique for this kind of situation because pre-suasion techniques can not only be used on outside or external audiences, but on yourself and your closest allies. One such technique is called the “if/when-then sentence”—the idea that, when embarking on a challenging but important course of action/change, people can mentally prepare themselves to resist the kinds of threats, dangers, and temptations they know will arise. For example, you might be trying to be more diligent with your writing, but every time you sit down you are distracted by your email or the general overwhelming array of digital content easily accessible on your device. To confront this, Cialdini suggests that you might prepare for this temptation/distraction prior to its occurrence. Thus, you might prepare and internally repeat a sentence along the lines of: if/when I find myself opening YouTube videos when I’m trying to write my book, then I will disconnect my internet and commit to my writing for the next hour. It may seem simple, but Cialdini cites social psychological studies that show this simple tool actually works (Bayer & Gollwitzer, 2007; Gollwitzer & Sheeran, 2006, 2009; Hudson & Fraley, 2015; Oettingen & Gollwitzer, 2000).

Activists often embark on actions that contain risks, dangers, temptations, and threats. An affinity group, for example, might be leading or participating in a confrontational protest and know that the possibility for violence, both from protesters and police, is possible in such heightened circumstances. If the group has collectively decided on rules of engagement, the if/when-then sentence might form as a useful tool in their training and preparation. For example, to help combat the potential threat of police belligerence, nonviolent activists might collectively decide on a certain sentence, repeat it during training, and deploy it when necessary. Such a simple training and activist tool could help maintain a group's nonviolent discipline, a key factor highlighted in much research on the success and efficacy of nonviolent campaigns (Sharp, 1973, pp. 573–655).

### *Attention*

Sam, a member of an activist group and well connected with others, came across a book titled *Stand Out of Our Light*. The author, James Williams (2018), was formerly a Google strategist. His basic idea is that information used to be scarce but now is abundant. Instead, what is scarce is attention. Companies are grabbing people's attention using every possible persuasive technique, and most people are susceptible, with few resources to resist. People go along with this because of the benefits of information abundance.

Sam was alarmed by one particular point in the book: in various countries, approval of military rule is increasing, especially among the young and wealthy. Williams attributes this to the influence of information and communication technologies—in particular, the way they direct attention towards trivial content which distracts us from more meaningful pursuits and ideals. Technology companies see users as their product: they capture users' attention, for their own purposes, not for the benefit of users.

Sam raised these ideas with members of her activist network, suggesting an informal audit of time spent on screens. The results were alarming. People were spending hours each day on social media, their attention being captured, mainly for commercial purposes. But every person thought it was essential to use social media to keep up with what was happening.

Sam suggested a way to take more control over attention. Each member of the network would monitor an important newsfeed, while unsubscribing to newsfeeds monitored by others. Sam's colleagues said they were reluctant to unsubscribe from newsfeeds because they did not want to miss out on important developments and information. Sam's suggestion was that every week each network member would be responsible for providing a short dot-point summary of important developments, on the newsfeed they were monitoring, to all the others. This would help overcome the fear of missing out and also develop skills in assessing importance.

However, only a few network members could maintain their commitment to this plan. For most, it was too tempting to follow whatever popped up on their screens and too much trouble to write even a short summary. Sam realized the enormous difficulties in taking control over attention, as well as the implications this posed for their activist efforts. The information environment within which they all lived—seemingly abundant but actually very narrow and commercially directed—was dominating even those who were motivated to pursue change. But even more, it was

distracting and diverting public attention away from the issues their group wanted to raise. Amidst such mass inattentiveness, their current protest efforts seemed unlikely to resonate or gain traction.

### **Pre-Suasion, Ethics, and Activism**

Some of us felt uneasy about using methods of pre-suasion. They seem like manipulation. Before discussing this important issue though, it is important to note that educators and writers alike already use pre-suasive techniques to be more persuasive, without being manipulative. For instance, many workshop facilitators use ice-breakers and other methods to foster connections and trust among participants and to prepare them for the topic, thereby increasing their receptiveness to the main part of the seminar. Equally, thinking about a suitable subject title for an e-mail or article means engaging in pre-suasion. Yet, because the reader knows it is happening, the process is transparent and does not feel manipulative.

Although pre-suasion ideas and research such as shared kinship language could be of value when incorporated into a campaign strategy, it is important to note that there are risks associated with the use of these methods within our groups and on our group members. Consider, for example, the use of unifying language to foster a “we-consciousness” amongst group members (Severt & Estrada, 2015; Tuckman, 1965). Much of the research on group cohesion highlights the importance of applying methods such as this in a genuine way to foster group cohesion. As well, one indication of improved group cohesion is the natural and genuine increase of the use of plural pronouns such as “we” and “us” when describing other group members (Forsyth, 2018). However, there is a challenge in authentically applying this research to the internal workings of our activist groups. Because pre-suasive techniques, largely anchored in a sales/marketing paradigm, are designed to influence and manipulate, many group members may see the use of these techniques within our groups as disingenuous. Instead, groups might seek to foster greater cohesion not through any kind of pre-suasive technique, but through sincere and honest connections which better support trust, belonging, and friendship (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Lakey, 2010).

We had several discussions about this and many other ethical dimensions of using pre-suasion techniques in activism. Rather than try to give a conclusive summary, instead we here suggest the issues we canvassed, including differences in perspective, in the form of a dialogue.

Linda — I’m uncomfortable with pre-suasion. It seems devious. When we present our ideas, can’t we just be open and honest?

Deborah — I agree, it can be used for all sorts of goals. On the other hand, though, it’s about how our minds work. The mind is associative and thus what is presented to it will influence how it will perceive the part that follows. Isn’t it okay to communicate more skillfully and effectively by drawing on such knowledge?

Chin — Maybe the important thing, if we’re thinking of using pre-suasion techniques, is to discuss this in our group to see whether everyone is on board.

Brent — Advertisers and marketers are able to hire experts to develop the most effective means of persuasion, and governments have highly-paid public relations staff. At the very least, we should be aware of their techniques and try to defend against them.

Linda — Defend against them, yes, but using them doesn't feel right. As activists we set a higher ethical standard. We want people to see the truth about the issues, not to manipulate them using their unconscious mental processes.

Deborah — I hear you and I share this perspective. However, we try to be as persuasive as possible already, right? When giving a talk, we prepare carefully, try to speak factually and clearly, and dress appropriately for the occasion. The ways we dress and pronounce words can have a pre-suasive effect independently of what we say, whether or not we want them to. If we're already using pre-suasive methods, why not be good at using them?

Linda — Just because we use pre-suasive techniques unconsciously in an authentic natural way to make connections, doesn't automatically make it okay to use them intentionally to ripen the ground in order to persuade someone into doing or believing something.

Brent — Some pre-suasive techniques are effective even if you tell people you're using them.

Deborah — Yes, we can be transparent about it and still reap the benefits without manipulating anyone against their will. And yet there are many people out there who are concerned about the state of affairs and want to do something about it, but don't know much about how ordinary people can change the world, because others have been more effective in communicating their views. We're up against resourceful communicators. Shall we just leave all that knowledge to corporations and states and watch how they're spreading their worldview while we refuse to make use of how our cognition works?

Linda — I recognize that some of us think we have to use all the tools at our disposal to win against our adversaries. However, the way I see it, if through this article we seem to condone or even encourage activists to use pre-suasive techniques, we need to be clear that they are used to persuade people of the facts. We certainly don't condone their use to mislead or control. If we do then we're no better than our opponents. In my opinion, there is a fine line between pre-suasion and manipulation, and we have an ethical obligation to stay on the right side of that line.

Chin — Cialdini writes about the ethical issues. His conclusion is that using the techniques to manipulate people is actually not effective, as this can ultimately backfire against the manipulator once someone notices it.

Deborah — Maybe we just need to evaluate what we do on a case-by-case basis, just like we assess other things we do.

We agreed that knowing how to defend against pre-suasive techniques was definitely worthwhile. Some of us thought using them within our groups to foster cohesion and unity was possibly okay if we were open about them. Others thought that using pre-suasive techniques on group members was not okay in any circumstance. We all thought it was important to discuss the ethics of particular techniques when using them with other audiences. Others might come to different conclusions.

We've described a number of possible applications of pre-suasion ideas to activism. There are many others, some of which are listed in Table 1 below. These are just suggestions; many other applications could be imagined.

**Table 1. Some pre-suasive techniques with possible applications to activist circumstances. In the descriptions, relevant page numbers from Cialdini (2016) are indicated.**

Topic	Description	Relevance to activism
<i>Frontloading of attention</i>		
Privileged moments	Privileged moments are when people are especially receptive to messages, and the key to receptiveness is what they are paying attention to at the time. (19–30)	Meetings and actions are privileged moments. They are good times to offer messages. For example, people attending a rally are likely to be especially receptive to messages about further participation.
Privileged moments 2	For pre-suasion, you don't need to change people's beliefs, just attract their attention. (26)	Use political stunts to attract attention. Encourage people to engage in fun and daring activities.
Channeled attention approach	Altering what's prominent in a person's mind at the moment affects the decisions they make. (26–28)	Develop group communication norms that adopt language to encourage group members to be open to new possibilities, be more helpful, and use shared group language.
Attention and importance	An issue seems more important when you're paying attention to it. (31–50)	When opponents pay attention to activists, it makes the activists seem more important. When opponents attack, use that to gain more attention.
Attention and importance 2	Things that people don't pay attention to are assumed not to have much importance. (48–49)	Some issues drop off the activist agenda because there's no media coverage. If you think they're important, try to bring these issues to people's attention.
Attention and assumed influence	The person at the top of a hierarchy receives more attention and hence is assumed to have a greater influence over events. (66)	Be aware that politicians and media commentators are not as influential as they seem.
Fear	Messages involving elements of fear, paired with information about constructive/accessible steps/actions, can be powerful. (72–73)	Fear and disillusionment can be obstacles to participation. By ensuring that communications not only highlight the damaging results of a problem (e.g., climate change, militarism), but also

		constructive steps, people might be more inclined to participate.
Magnetizers	Attention is drawn to issues that are unfinished, mysterious, and relevant to the person. (88–96)	A bit of mystery (e.g., leading with an unsolved problem, open question) about an action or group might attract more attention.
<i>Association</i>		
Associations	Associations created by language and images are influential when attention is drawn to them. (99–115)	Make associations with actions, groups, and/or activism.
Who we are is where we are with our attention	Who we are with respect to any choice is where our attention is right before we make our choice. (99–115)	Make use of this associative attention effect by thinking hard about the images evoked or presented in a text/talk or video right before you make a request (e.g., to sign a petition or attend an activist meeting).
The importance of words	The use of particular words can have a profound effect on how they are received and actioned by an audience. For example, in the community services sector, people are now referred to as clients or consumers, reflecting and reproducing free-market-type thinking. (100)	Groups could refer to seemingly powerful individuals or organizations with humorous names, helping to strip away their seeming power/authority.
Understand your audience	Images affect the way we think about others. (116–119; 127)	Surround yourself with typical audience members' faces; for instance, in the planning phase of a campaign.
If/when-then sentences	When it is hard to implement the necessary steps/actions to achieve certain goals, if/when-then statements can help to overcome this challenge. (137)	If/when-then statements could be used in group training/preparation to help maintain nonviolence discipline in the face of hostility and aggression.
<i>Persuasive techniques</i>		
Social proof	People feel comfortable doing/feeling something when other people are doing it. (160–164)	Increase recruitment and momentum by showing the participation of similar others.
Experts	Hearing advice from experts leads to people not thinking for	If you want people to think for themselves, tell them about this

	themselves; instead, they think about the messenger. (164)	effect.
Weaknesses	Disclosing a weakness, talking openly about mistakes of the past and arguing against self-interest increase credibility and trust. (165–167)	Start conversations by acknowledging weaknesses and others' negative views; make learning processes transparent and show how the movement has grown from them.
<i>Being together</i>		
Kinship	Language and imagery can bring affinity with others into our consciousness. (176–182)	Use words and pictures in campaigns that bring to mind family, connection, and togetherness.
Family	The brain interprets supporting a family member as helping ourselves. (177)	In public communications, use words such as brothers, sisterhood, forefathers, motherland, heritage, family, and home.
Feelings of togetherness, of closeness	Feelings of togetherness and closeness can be induced by holding something warm or seeing images of people standing close together. (178)	Use welcoming pictures of people standing close together on material to invite people into the movement. In house-meetings for organizing drives, make sure everyone gets a warm beverage. Offer hot beverages on street stands, not only to encourage people to stop and listen to you, but also to create a feeling of closeness while you talk.
Localism	The deep connection with the people we are located near makes us more sympathetic and merciful to people who live in close proximity. (187)	For activist recruitment, link environmental and social justice issues to a shared locality.
<i>Acting Together</i>		
Acting/performing in unitary ways	Acting together, for example performing activities in unison, fosters group solidarity and perceived likeness. (192–194)	Organize synchronized movements at rallies. Use coordinated-movement games in training to deepen group cohesion. Offer neighborhood activities such as dancing or jogging together to create community trust.
Liking	When people feel they are like others, they see them more positively. (194)	Develop imitation and mirroring games for fostering cohesion.



Music for feelings-related arguments	Use music only to convince with emotional appeals, not when you mainly use rational arguments. (197)	Be conscious about when you add music to a video clip to mobilize people.
Emotional or rational wording	To be more convincing, connect rational arguments with words like “I think”; connect feelings-related arguments with words like “I feel.” (198–201)	When trying to convince people to become active either face-to-face, on a pamphlet or online, use this advice; also, try to appeal more to people attracted to positive emotions (not only rational arguments and negative emotions).
Reciprocal exchange	Doing favors for each other builds connection and strong relationships. (201)	Build group cohesion and group member relationships through stories of self, affinity groups, sharing meals together, etc.
Reciprocal self-disclosure	When people open up to each other, they bond and create trust. (201–202)	Add 1-on-1 listening exercises to group development units in workshops and meetings.
Co-creation	Creating something hand-in-hand with others creates an affinity with the group. Cialdini: “If co-creation causes at least a temporary merging of identities, then what applies to one partner also applies to the other.” (202, 204)	Offer options for people to chip in and contribute; for example, surveys to influence strategy, send in voice message, create a video to tell your story for a campaign, community gardens, story-sharing projects.
Seeking advice	Seeking advice creates togetherness, whereas evaluations push people apart. (205–207)	Ask people for advice on how to tackle an issue (like for a survey and in conversations), to recruit new members or to create sympathy. In workshops and meetings, encourage giving each other advice (not feedback).

## Conclusion

If persuading people is a core component of activism, then it seems important for activists to think closely about how they might better do this. This is what we have tried to do in this article, presenting Cialdini’s idea of pre-suasion and extracting potential ideas and applications for those engaged in social change campaigns.

Cialdini’s writing is engaging and accessible, providing both evidence and anecdote in support of the key idea that what is said or done before a message is delivered, rather than the message itself, often determines the success, influence, or persuasiveness of the communication. But questions remain in regard to the applicability of Cialdini’s work—a work of social psychology growing largely out of a sales/marketing context—for activists. Is the use of pre-suasive techniques ethical? Might it depend on the context in which they are being used? Does the argument, bolstered with



evidence from various settings, offer a robust concept that can genuinely and effectively be applied within the intensity and complexity of activist campaigns? No doubt, activist groups themselves will need to grapple with these and other questions.

Our intention has not been to convince you to unquestioningly adopt Cialdini's ideas. Rather, we have tried to probe the extent to which they may offer some useful ideas or insights for those involved in grassroots campaigns. In this sense, Cialdini's work offers another concept, or a further tool in the toolbox, that activists might want to consider as they seek to be more successful in their campaigns.

We found it stimulating to think through pre-suasion and the various possibilities and conundrums it throws up. At the same time, there is much other communication and social psychology research out there which may offer similarly interesting ideas. Whilst we have chosen Cialdini's *Pre-suasion* for consideration, we encourage activists and groups to identify, study, and apply a wide range of research to support and strengthen their efforts.

### Acknowledgements

We thank Sharon Callaghan and Jungmin Choi for valuable comments.

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# PEACE STUDIES JOURNAL

Volume 15, Issue 1  
June 2022

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## **Peace Frames in Two Participatory Social Media Initiatives: Drafting an Empirically-Based Framework Facilitating the Discussion of (Positive) Peace Theorization**

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**Keywords:** peace initiatives; social media; qualitative framing analysis; Facebook; Twitter

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### **Abstract**

Scholars have been discussing the role of the media in conflicts, wars, and protest movements frequently in recent years. Peace communication and promotion via social media have, however, received less attention, and concepts of peace have rarely been investigated and theorized beyond an absence-of-war and violence prevention understanding (Bock, 2012). The present research identified peace frames using two participatory social media peace initiatives: the “I Declare World Peace” project (<http://www.ideclareworldpeace.org/>) and the #peaceitforward initiative (<http://nobelpeaceprizeforum.org/>). Both initiatives aim at promoting peace without focusing on a certain region/war zone, basically via the same social network sites (Facebook and Twitter), while differing in their (communicative) approaches. These conditions promised the identification of manifold perspectives of peace. Based on the extraction of peace frames identified from participants’ online contributions to the two initiatives, the present research suggests a framework draft to be used as a discussion basis for further empirically-based “bottom-up” theorization of (positive) peace, independent from specific conflict areas and cases.

## PEACE FRAMES IN TWO PARTICIPATORY SOCIAL MEDIA INITIATIVES: DRAFTING AN EMPIRICALLY-BASED FRAMEWORK FACILITATING THE DISCUSSION OF (POSITIVE) PEACE THEORIZATION

Irmgard Wetzstein

### Introduction

Media researchers have been dealing with news coverage of wars using peace journalism concepts (Fawcett, 2002; Hanitzsch, 2007, Lee and Maslog, 2005; Rodny-Gumede, 2016). They have also been dealing with social media as infrastructures in which rumors can spread easily and conflict dynamics, including protest movements and respective organization and mobilization, are likely to accelerate (Bennett and Segerberg 2013; Jenkins, Ford, and Green, 2013; Warren, 2015). They have, however, dealt less with peace in social media contexts. Published research on peace communication is generally rather old (Blake, 1998; Hershberger, 2004; Rappaport, 2002; Supina, 1972) and, if connected to social media, often limited to certain areas and cases, such as African states or the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Ramaiah and Warner, 2012; Simons, 2016; Warren, 2015). For example, the 2016 *Media and Communication* special issue on peacebuilding in the age of new media (see web appearance) mainly addresses and investigates particular conflicts in new media contexts, such as Internet censorship in the authoritarian regime of Syria, and EU Armed Forces' use of social media in areas of deployment (Al-Saqaf, 2016; Hellman, Olsson, and Wagnsson, 2016; Simons, 2016). Undoubtedly, investigating conflict cases and certain regions in social media contexts is highly relevant. However, given that every conflict is singular—regarding for example, conflict events, actors, and issues—and (media) researchers have seemed to approach conflicts through an escalation lens rather than through a process-toward-peace lens (see for example Jaeger, 2004), such conflict-oriented research perspectives might produce limited results when it comes to (1) the identification of peace frames and (2) the derivation of a framework draft as a discussion fundament for further peace theorization based on empiric “on the ground” findings, consequently taking a path differing from the traditionally normative perspective of peace concepts (Löffelholz, 2004; Bonacker and Imbusch, 2006).

The present research uses a qualitative framing analysis of contributions to two participatory social media peace initiatives to identify and structure participating people's approaches to peace as a concept. It employs the “I Declare World Peace” project (<http://www.ideclareworldpeace.org/>) and the #peaceitforward initiative (<http://nobelpeaceprizeforum.org/>), both focusing on peace per se (and not on a certain conflict region or event). The research considers the participants' social media contributions to the initiatives and especially the underlying (assumingly mostly intuitive) approaches to peace in their postings and tweets as a valuable source for “bottom-up” peace theorization. Focusing on peace, the present research also highlights that social media—with their material and discursive infrastructure enabling high communicative dynamics, being oriented toward conversation, dialogue, and word-of-mouth, and characterized as interactive—have the potential not only to accelerate conflict dynamics and spread rumors, as research rightly emphasizes (see, for example, Del Vicario, Bessi, Zollo, et al., 2016), but also to promote peace, depending on the purpose for which they are used. The present study contributes to the recent, still small but growing body of literature bringing a peace-centered perspective into social media

research (Ghouri, Akhtar, Vachkova, et al., 2020; Naseem, Arshad-Ayaz, and Doyle, 2017; Ragandang, 2020; Ron, Suleiman, and Maoz, 2020; Sher and Sturm, 2018).

### **Social Media in Peace and Conflict Contexts**

Compared to social media research from peace perspectives, the role of social media in conflict situations and respective interconnectedness to traditional news media have received far more of media researchers' attention: researchers have mainly been focusing on citizen journalists, meaning bloggers based in conflict regions using social media as platforms when reporting on witnessed conflict events and experiences; for example, during the highly escalated conflict within Operation Cast Lead at the beginning of 2009, when Gaza was not accessible to corporate news organizations. Citizen journalists focused on local events can play an important role within the newsgathering process in traditional media, especially if access to conflict regions is widely restricted or refused, while "warbloggers" focus on international news and use blogs to highlight opinion differences with mainstream news content, e.g., during the invasion of Iraq in 2003 (Allen, 2009; Wall, 2009).

Moreover, social media, mainly Facebook and Twitter, have been serving activists and protesters for fast and uncomplicated information distribution recently, as happened in Hong Kong's "Umbrella Movement" (Wetzstein, 2017) and in Egypt and Tunisia within the "Arab Spring" (Amnesty International, 2012). Aday, Farrell, Lynch, et al. (2012) highlight that with social media, information was likely to spread outside the concerned region during the Arab Spring, "acting like a megaphone" (p. 3).

Being aware that social media may also contribute to the spread of conflicts and the acceleration of conflict dynamics by providing forums for contents and (false) rumors perceived as provocative, it can be assumed in reverse that they, as mentioned, can make contributions toward peace due to their communicative potentials across borders and infrastructure facilitating interactivity. For example, in their study on Facebook potentially promoting dialogue in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Mor, Ron, and Maoz (2016) conclude that "Facebook can indeed serve as a platform that enables intergroup dialogue in the context of the intractable conflict between Israelis and Palestinians" (p. 23). Similarly, studying motivational responses to a viral music video called "Peace Anthem," Ghouri, Akhtar, Vachkova, et al. (2020) state that "emancipatory ethical social media campaigns," as they call them, "play an imperative role for fostering relationships and facilitating peace" (p. 287). Addressing social media's role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its use by peace-promoting organizations, Sher and Sturm (2018) conclude that "[a]lthough social media are far from a panacea in conflict resolution or peacebuilding, their effective use can lead to more cohesion and growth within the two conflicting societies" (p. 55). Based on their qualitative text analysis of the Israeli grassroots movement Women Wage Peace's (WWP) Facebook page, Ron, Suleiman, and Maoz (2020) find that Facebook as a "dialogue-provoking platform" (p. 1) provides both space for peacebuilding actions as well as hostile and sexist expressions. Ragandang (2020) refers to social media as modifiers of the "peacebuilding arena" (p. 358), facilitating especially young people's engagement in peace work. Naseem, Arshad-Ayaz, and Doyle (2017) argue that social media and especially the "blogosphere" as spaces for peace education have the potential to connect marginalized people and groups in society, give them a common voice and thereby "encourage alternative meaning-making processes that disrupt



hegemonic understandings of the issues” (p. 108). Social media infrastructures used as spaces to promote peace, then, fit well in the concept of alternative media as public spaces for and by citizens offering community service by providing an alternative to public communication beyond established societal power structures (Drüeke and Zobl, 2018). There is an obvious consensus about social media’s main characteristic of participatory opportunities for its users, be it in the form of visible outward-oriented expressions, such as the interaction within provided communicative spaces and the contribution of content, or in the form of invisible, inward-oriented involvement (Landert, 2017).

### **Peace as a Normative Concept**

In general, (positive) peace is rather positioned normatively emphasizing a should-be state, rather than actual conditions and empirical evidence. This becomes particularly clear when following the scientific debate on the normative substance of the concept of peace and on its (lacking) potential of theorization (Bonacker and Imbusch, 2006; Löffelholz, 2004). Regarding the history of ideas of peace concepts, Immanuel Kant plays an important role within peace and conflict studies by explaining Democratic Peace as a product of human reason (Bonacker and Imbusch, 2006; Wetzstein, 2011).

One of the most prominent frameworks explaining peace is its distinction in positive and negative peace (Galtung, 1996). While both positive and negative peace approach peace as a static condition rather than as a dynamic process, they differ substantially regarding the scope of violence: the negative concept of peace implies the absence of war, armed conflict and direct, personal violence and is preferred by researchers for whom the operationalization of peace is of central importance. Peace negotiations usually aim at achieving negative peace. The approach of peace being more than the absence of war and direct, personal violence has led to the concept of positive peace, which describes a holistic, undividable, and overall understanding of peace as the absence of all violence, including the absence of structural, indirect violence (e.g. poverty, hunger, discrimination, apartheid) with implemented comprehensive social justice (Bonacker and Imbusch, 2006; Grewal, 2003; Wetzstein, 2011). This article aims at contributing to the theorization of peace from a positive peace perspective.

### **Research Questions and Methodological Approach**

Empirically-based peace theorization is underway but far from completed. The present research uses a “bottom-up” approach toward peace theorization, considering postings and tweets of people participating in social media peace initiatives to (1) identify peace frames and (2) suggest a framework draft as a central discussion for further peace theorization based on these peace frames, consequently adding an empirical “bottom-up” approach to the traditionally normative perspective of peace. In other words, the study seeks to contribute to answer the following research questions:

- (1) Which peace frames can be identified on Facebook and Twitter within the “I Declare World Peace” and #peaceitforward initiatives?
- (2) How can the identified peace frames be structured for further peace theorization?

The focus on these research questions aims at producing results adding to peace concepts beyond normative approaches when emphasizing how people actually approach and experience peace, and, on a meta-level, highlights the usefulness of connecting peace research and social media research when considering participatory and dialogue-oriented social media infrastructures as research vehicles for theory-building. Neither “I Declare World Peace” nor #peaceitforward address a certain conflict or conflict region but focus on peace and world peace per se, which promised to produce results beyond understandings of peace based on singular conflict events.

### **Cases: Two Participatory Social Media Initiatives**

On their website, the “I Declare World Peace” project is explained as an art installation project/sort-of-science experiment. The initiative suggests that thoughts (of many) can affect the physical world, and thus tries to encourage as many people as possible to type “I declare world peace” on social media platforms. In a nutshell,

IDWP is a peace art installation project that hopes to spread within the consciousness of every person on the planet, sort of as a “Gates of the Mind.” Each person will hold a “flag” in his or her mind, which collectively will change the history of the world. The “flag” is “I Declare World Peace,” expressed in the language of the thinker.

Furthermore, they state:

With your help circulating the affirmation ‘I Declare World Peace’ we can together spread and raise global peace consciousness. We have nothing to lose and everything to gain. (I Declare World Peace”, n.d.)

The #peaceitforward initiative was started by the Minnesota-based annual Nobel Peace Prize Forum (n.d.) at the beginning of 2015, asking people to

think about what you do on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis that helps build peace. We all make a difference, seriously! Then, write it down on a sheet of paper—and take a photo of yourself holding it up with the hashtag #PeaceitForward :) Being part of a movement is an awesome thing, and your impact is NEVER too small. Think about it, what is the cheesy old saying...? Something like...a ripple becomes a wave? Truth. (Hanna, 2015, para 2)

Both initiatives are low-threshold in terms of participation, with no need for membership, which is typical for social media (awareness) initiatives and part of the respective logic of connective action (Bennett and Segerberg, 2013); they both aim to raise awareness for (world) peace *in general*, suggesting that each individual can make a difference and welcoming everyone to participate and spread the word. They both use Facebook and Twitter as social media channels but pre-define different communicative structures and affordances to written and visual communication:

- (1) The “I Declare World Peace” project wants to spread an affirmation of peace in writing possibly accompanied by visual images, thereby adopting a notion of



“artistic activism,” which combines individual, artistic expressions and collective, strategic thoughts (Duncombe and Lambert, 2018).

- (2) The #peaceitforward initiative started on the occasion of the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize Forum in Minnesota, with people stating individual contributions to peace by suggesting the use of “standardized” memes with personal action frames (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013).

### **Sample Selection and Description**

Being set up as a rather short-term initiative connected to the Nobel Peace Prize Forum 2015, all #peaceitforward initiative-related images (visual images using the suggested personal action frame) posted on Facebook and Twitter possibly including image-accompanying written text were included in the analysis corpus, therewith approaching the #peaceitforward initiative as a full survey (72 images in total: 38 on Twitter, 34 on Facebook). The personal action frame was introduced on Twitter on February 17, 2015, and images were posted on Twitter and Facebook until mid-March and only one more afterwards (on October 15, 2015). Research material regarding the long-term “I Declare World Peace” initiative was then collected within this time period as well (mid-February to mid-March 2015). Using the same time period should enable better comparability of the two initiatives’ peace concepts and contextualization which, even though both initiatives do not have a certain geographical or conflict theme focus, might be influenced by certain political conflict events or protest movements at that time. Regarding the “I Declare World Peace” initiative, all still visual images within initial Tweets and Facebook postings (including visual and written reactions) accompanied by written expressions within or in addition to the visual images beyond the phrase “I declare world peace” were used as research material (in total, 100 visual images accompanied by written expressions: 95 on Twitter, five on Facebook).

#### *Sample Description I: #peaceitforward*

The invitation to Twitter and Facebook users to report how they build peace resulted in 38 memes with personal action frames on Twitter and 34 of such images on Facebook (10 of which were also posted on Twitter). Out of those 72 images, 36 were color images and 36 were black and white, and, with 42 women, two groups of girls/women, 24 men, two people with unknown/other gender depicted on the images, female participants in the initiative clearly prevail (two images showed a personal action frame only, without the person who wrote the statement). There were neither visual reactions to these images on Facebook nor on Twitter. Written reactions occur within a total of five postings and Tweets, entailing one to six comments and all being positive in terms of showing support and/or gratitude. The number of retweets, shares, and “likes,” in general, is in the single-digit range except for two (locally) prominent people participating in the initiative generating respective numbers in the double-digit range. Besides written text within the personal action frames, potential participants in the initiative are encouraged in writing to participate. As well in image-accompanying texts, participants express and reinforce their support for the initiative, or only the hashtags (#peaceitforward and #NPPF for Nobel Peace Prize Forum) with no further written text are used. Generally speaking, the initiative’s tone and the written expressions of its participants are optimistic and positive, highlighting that everyone can contribute to peace and that it is simple to make such a contribution. On Twitter, 29 images were mainly posted by private

individuals, most likely students as social media delegates supporting the Nobel Peace Prize Forum 2015 at Augsburg College in Minneapolis. Another eight images come from the official accounts connected to the Nobel Peace Prize Forum and Augsburg College or Augsburg Alumni, and one is connected to “Auggie Eagle,” which is obviously Augsburg College’s mascot. On Facebook, 22 images are collected in an album, seven images are posted by the Minnesota-based “Twin Cities Save the Kids” initiative, one image is posted by the “Native Lives Matter Coalition,” and four come from private/student/social media delegate accounts. On Facebook, the Nobel Peace Prize Forum account is only used for making announcements and informing about the initiative, but not for participating in the initiative in terms of posting images. Generally, Facebook is rather used for announcements and information and, once, for establishing contacts, while Twitter seems to be the actual initiative’s channel. This also applies to the “I Declare World Peace” initiative (see below).

### *Sample Description II: “I Declare World Peace”*

Whereas the #peaceitforward initiative suggests participants use a pre-defined visual image composition to communicate their peace-building messages, the “I Declare World Peace” initiative asks its participants to just spread the phrase “I declare world peace”; the use of visual material and further written expression is left to individual preferences. This results in a use of computer-generated images, assumingly edited photographs (using, for example, color filters), and drawings/cartoons. A clear categorization of the used images to these image types is not possible in most cases, which is why no concrete image type frequencies can be provided here. While, just like in the #peaceitforward initiative, there are no visual reactions, written reactions expressing support, approval, and gratitude for sharing occur on Facebook. Similar to the #peaceitforward initiative, the number of retweets, shares and “likes” reaches single and lower double digits at a maximum, and Twitter is used as the initiative’s main channel while Facebook is used for information purposes, including the sharing of newspaper articles focusing on peace endeavors. In contrast to the #peaceitforward initiative, the participants in the “I Declare World Peace” initiative are hard to identify in terms of gender and role; it seems that they generally participate as private citizens without any institutional connection. In general, the participants in the initiative do not address concrete groups of people in their written statements but rather formulate general appeals, good wishes, or empowering messages fostering world peace; for example, when they quote peace-related messages that are known from a pop-cultural context and use prominent people as intermediaries for “their” peace message (e.g., depicting John Lennon accompanied by the “All you need is love” or “Imagine” quote). Such written statements are either embedded in the visual image or Tweets/postings contextualizing the visual image. While the general attitude underlying the posted and tweeted messages is a positive (and moralizing) one, negative events and circumstances are, in line with Sützl (2016), also used to highlight the necessity and inevitability of world peace, for example when thematizing the destruction of nature and the disregard of animal rights.

## **Results**

This section summarizes the main results of the study, consequently focusing on the extracted peace frames. It then uses the peace frames as a basis to draft a framework for discussing and furthering empirically-based peace theorization.

### *#peaceitforward Frames: Concrete Actions and Contributions*

When considering that the #peaceitforward initiative asks for *contributions* to peace and peace-building, respectively, it is not surprising that the formulation of more or less concrete actions taken by its participants in general forms the fundamental of peace conceptualization. Those concrete actions are then connected to their beneficiaries as well as with issues related to these actions, and with values and attitudes mentioned in the realm of the actions taken.

Teaching and serving: Teaching and serving forms a frame highlighting personal encounters and the support of one's own immediate surroundings, such as the local community and the neighborhood, as well as vulnerable groups in society, such as children and young people with special needs. Participants refer to religion/faith, social skills, and communication as well as environmental issues when stating their contributions to peace in a teaching and serving manner. Values and attitudes connected to actions of teaching and serving are altruism (giving back), empathy, and dialogue-orientation to achieve equity, as well as promoting mutual understanding among the different faiths (for examples from the research material, see links 1–4 in the annex).

Learning and self-reflection: While the teaching and serving frame is associated with quite a large diversity of issues and values, the learning and self-reflection frame is less manifold. It includes the deliberate use of words and language, consciously practicing forgiveness, and the issue of vegan nutrition and lifestyle, from which individuals as well as animals could benefit (see exemplary link 5).

Raising awareness, advocating, and mentoring: Actions in the context of personal encounters of *raising awareness, advocating, and mentoring* address social imbalances affecting (vulnerable) social groups (see exemplary links 6–9).

Promoting arts and being creative: Making arts and being creative is approached less diversely and, in general, not connected to values and attitudes or concrete beneficiaries (see exemplary link 10).

Making people laugh: Making people laugh is not connected to any concrete beneficiaries or actants, but instead connected to attitudes and positive emotions such as joy, kindness, love, and forgiveness (see exemplary link 11).

### *Implications of #peaceitforward: Focus on Service to Local Communities*

As mentioned, in contrast to learning and self-reflection, teaching and serving is a more diversely approached frame in the #peaceitforward initiative, thus indicating that the motive of giving is more intense than the motives of personal development and receiving. Moreover, teaching does not refer to any kind of specialized knowledge, but is connected to the transfer of knowledge regarding communication and social skills as well as mutual understanding. Local communities/the neighborhood and (vulnerable) groups in society are the main beneficiaries of the mentioned peace-building actions, the latter especially in terms of raising awareness for social imbalances and helping those negatively affected. Using a “standardized,” pre-defined visual image composition with personal action frames, and understanding peace as a process by focusing

on small contributions to build peace, #peaceitforward suggests an action-oriented, rather micro-level peace concept of individual “small” contributions everyone can make within their immediate contexts.

### *“I Declare World Peace” Frames: Attitudes and Moral of Inner and Global Peace*

The “I Declare World Peace” initiative approaches peace differently from #peaceitforward. Moral evaluations and instruction form the foundation of peace conceptualization.

Inner peace: One frame of the “I Declare World Peace” initiative can be subsumed under the label “inner peace,” highlighting that peace starts with oneself and as an inner transformation, peace as a lifestyle of kindness and an awareness of love, for which one should pray. Messages regarding inner peace are contextualized with religion/faith and/or spirituality, love, kindness, and happiness for oneself, which therefore positively affect everyone else (see exemplary link 12).

Equity and unity: The equity and unity frame combines appeals and warnings to avoid classifications into race, gender, sex, and religious categories, the promotion of diversity and friendship, and the empowerment of “the weak.” In terms of moral evaluation, there are different recognizable positions regarding the role of religion/faith for peace as either hindering or important (though this is never explicitly debated), while there are no such conflicting positions in terms of inner peace (see exemplary links 13 and 14).

Equal respect for humans and animals: Unity is also a motive within the *equal respect for humans and animals* frame, highlighting the importance of nature conservation and stating that “we are all one” (see exemplary links 15 and 16).

Peace as a (non-utopian) path: Occasionally, world peace is communicated as a movement, as not utopian and as a process/path and not a goal to achieve, the latter going in line with academic peace literature (Wolfsfeld, 2004; see exemplary link 17).

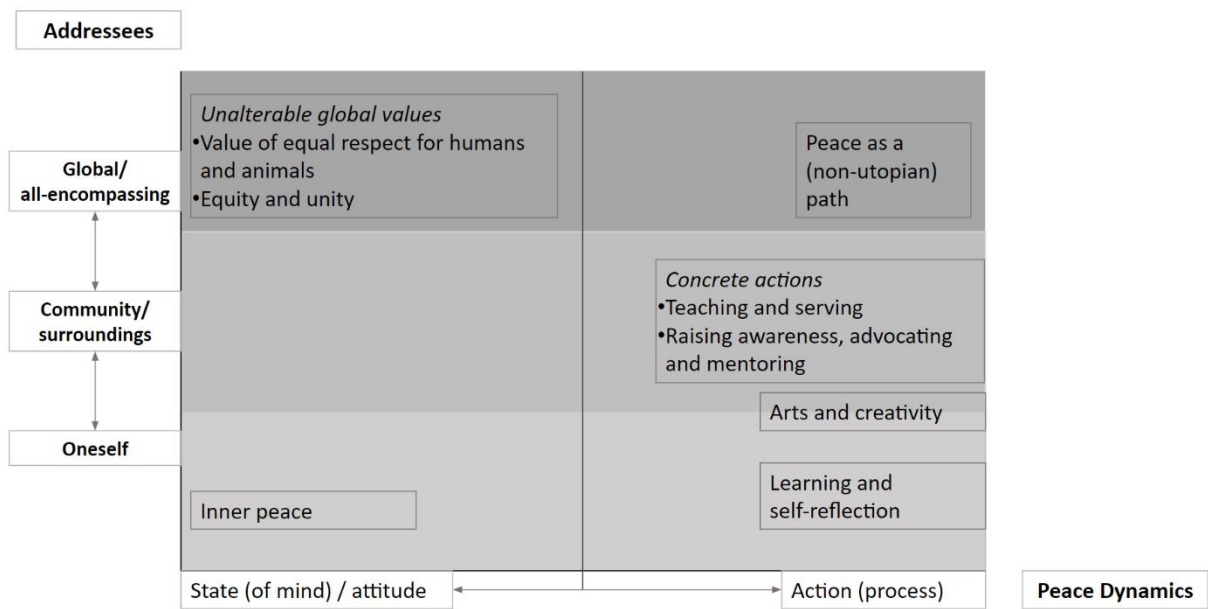
### *Implications of “I Declare World Peace”: Peace as a Diffuse and Encompassing State-of-Mind*

In contrast to #peaceitforward, the “I Declare World Peace” initiative is not action- and community-focused, but approaches attitudes toward peace more generally, including personal inner peace and peace as a state of mind, as well as, on a macro-level, peace as a global process and phenomenon. With a moralizing tone, participants in the initiative draw a connection to spirituality, highlighting the unity of all creatures on earth. With a rather weak connection to concrete measures toward peace, the peace concept drawn within the “I Declare World Peace” initiative remains very general and rather diffuse. The latter also applies to the used visual contents, thereby adding to Möller’s (2018) argument of “visions of peace” and especially “[p]eace photography—in contrast to war photography—does not exist as a concept in the professional discourse on images” (p. 220).

**Discussion: Towards a Framework of Peace Theorization**

With a fairly small sample size, and its focus on two specific participatory peace initiatives, the research at hand cannot elaborate overall generalizable peace concepts, but provide a structured discussion that serves as a foundation for further peace theorization—independent from particular conflict scenarios and regions. The results indicate that peace (and peace initiatives) can be conceptualized very diversely, depending on whether peace is approached on a macro-level (e.g., as a global process or phenomenon) or on a micro- and meso-level (e.g., services to the community/immediate surroundings)—as well as whether peace is approached as an external process only or “inner peace” is also considered in peace conceptualization. Peace initiatives might pre-define the communicative structure of how their participants should approach peace. However, when people communicate their approaches to peace within those communicative structures, different perspectives to peace emerge.

The following figure illustrates the attempt to structure the results into a framework that aims to facilitate further discussion of peace theorization. Based on the empirical results of the present research, the framework draft uses “peace addressees” and “peace dynamics” as main, permeable axes to locate the yet identified peace frames as components in a sort-of coordinate system.



**Figure 1. Framework draft facilitating further discussion of (positive) peace theorization**

References to war are rare in both the #peaceitforward initiative and the “I Declare World Peace” project. Regarding the aforementioned differentiation between positive and negative peace, this indicates that the two initiatives have managed to approach peace beyond an absence-of-war/direct violence understanding, which consequently makes the suggested framework draft add an empirically-based perspective to the normative concept of positive peace. Moreover, with peace as a process it adds a dynamics and process-oriented perspective to the traditionally results-oriented definition of positive peace as a static condition (Galtung, 1996).

The attempt to structure understandings of peace for further discussion of peace theorization based on participatory social media initiatives clearly comes with the limitation that the term peace might be used arbitrarily, and understandings of peace are formed rather intuitively. Consequently, this can only be a first draft of a framework to facilitate the discussion of peace theorization, a framework that has to remain flexible, dynamic, and open to further integration of future empirical findings.

## Conclusion

The present research focused on peace frames identifiable from participatory social media peace initiatives. Highly relevant questions regarding the specific roles, impacts, and limits of such initiatives in achieving peace, how wide and which audiences can be reached, and who exactly their participants are, have not been emphasized in the present research. Still, to put the results into context, it is important to consider the infrastructures from which peace frames were extracted.

As mentioned previously, Facebook and Twitter provide excellent infrastructures to start and maintain participatory peace initiatives, just like they provide an infrastructure for the spreading of misinformation and fueling violence. However, in terms of (equal) participation, the question of access to social media is still problematic, as the “digital divide” remains an issue, with Internet penetration rates remaining lower in the “global south,” despite relative increases, hindering people in certain regions from participating in such initiatives (Ramaiah and Warner, 2012). This might result in the communication of peace understandings and concepts with a rather “Western lens” only, which might also apply to the “I Declare World Peace” initiative as well as to #peaceitforward, the latter explicitly being an initiative on the local level. In addition, it must not be ignored that social media being manipulated (or censored) by the state can affect any kind of social media communication and prevent people from contributing to social media (peace) initiatives. Another important point to consider is connected to confirmation bias, a psychological tendency of processing information in a way that maintains one’s own attitudes in terms of self-confirmation, *inter alia* resulting in different isolated “information bubbles” in social media channels, in which one’s own attitudes and opinions are permanently confirmed right. For social media peace initiatives, this suggests the assumption that via Facebook and Twitter, only those are reached who are already interested, aware of, or involved in peace-building endeavors and efforts. Therefore, social media might, for example, not provide the right space to convince yet-unconvinced people of the necessity of peace. However, in contrast to conflict- and elite-oriented mainstream journalism, which hardly considers peace as news (Fawcett, 2002), social media infrastructures obviously can provide what Drüeke and Zobl (2018) describe as alternative, community-oriented, participatory, citizen media spaces in which to communicate peace. In terms of participation, it is, however, worth noting that social media-immanent interaction potentials (Landert, 2017) are not exploited within the two initiatives focused on the present research. Facebook and Twitter rather seem to be used as archives or petition infrastructures promoting peace and informing about the initiatives (also see Simon’s (2016) explanations of grassroots peace activism on Facebook forming an archive of (a possible future) peace).

As noted, the sample size of the material used for the research at hand was rather small for generating general conclusions and meaningful quantification. Moreover, the hashtags are not only used for the actual initiatives’ purposes (this applies especially to #peaceitforward, where on



Twitter and Facebook, 370 other visual images were also posted, not necessarily connected to the Nobel Peace Prize Forum's initiative), and the intended message of visual images remains unclear when not accompanied by written text explaining the context. It would be interesting and important to assess these aspects in-depth in order to be better able to embed the initiatives in a broader social media and peace-communicating context. A semiotic analysis could be interesting to analyze, especially the visual motives within the "I Declare World Peace" initiative, for evidence of patterns towards (so far non-existent) concepts of the visualization of peace (Möller, 2018). To be able to detect general peace concepts, further peace initiatives will have to be analyzed, ideally using a longer period of time. However, initial steps facilitating a discussion on different approaches and perspectives particularly to positive peace were made within the present research.

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## Annex 1: Exemplary Contributions

*Exemplary Tweets: #peaceitforward*

### Teaching and serving

- (1) <https://twitter.com/AugsburgAlumni/status/570328304290377728>
- (2) <https://twitter.com/hwiers/status/570428627554336768>
- (3) <https://twitter.com/DenDenJ12/status/570255139623141376>

- (4) <https://twitter.com/mwentzel/status/570262213870514176>

Learning and self-reflection

- (5) <https://twitter.com/luanftgubler/status/568967369957236736>

Raising awareness, advocating and mentoring

- (6) <https://twitter.com/StribOpinion/status/571705059504996353>  
(7) <https://twitter.com/AuggieEagle/status/568171206328725504>  
(8) <https://twitter.com/EhhNotBrad/status/570261573345742850>  
(9) <https://twitter.com/lauraswanson/status/570256309099966464>

Promoting arts and being creative

- (10) <https://twitter.com/studioloraine/status/569322321204240386>

# PEACE STUDIES JOURNAL

Volume 15, Issue 1  
June 2022

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## **Conflict and Integration in the Middle East and North Africa**

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**Keywords:** regional Integration; conflict prevention; Middle East; North Africa; gas pipelines

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## **Abstract**

In the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) several attempts, such as United Nations Security Council efforts to end conflicts, have ended some wars, but have not been able to prevent further conflicts and wars. Thus, the questions arise as to what circumstances might lead to war and conflicts in the MENA? And how to prevent conflict and war in the region? Based on the European experience of World War II, the shift in the balance of power was the main cause of the wars, and regional integration was the only formula that could conceivably maintain the existing, relatively even, balance of power among European countries. Hence, the balance of power can be considered an essential condition for consolidating stable peace. The main aim of this study is to inquire could political rivalry and conflicts among the MENA states be managed through the regional integration process so that they agree to resolve their conflicts more constructively in order to avoid war and maintain the balance of power in the region. Taking this fact into account, the present research will study the possibilities of regional integration in the MENA.

## **CONFLICT AND INTEGRATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA**

Mahnaz Zahirinejad

## **Introduction**

The contemporary Middle East and North Africa (MENA) has experienced various conflicts and wars. While other states in different regions such as the Europe and East Asia have been successful in resolving their conflicts, there have not been serious attempts to find solutions to prevent war

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or help to manage conflicts in the MENA. The existing studies mostly have focused on the success or/and failure of solutions for ending the war, but not on conflict prevention in the region. Therefore, the present research is an attempt to study the circumstances that lead to war, and also to study how to prevent conflicts and bring peace to the region.

It is obvious that it is not easy to shape a clear regional system, to establish any systematic rules of the game to prevent war in the MENA, but there must be a solution that would motivate these countries towards stable peace. Studying the formation of the European Union demonstrates that conflict prevention can be achieved through regional integration, the process that regional states enter into an agreement through common economic institutions and rules. The agreement may extend to political, social, cultural, and environmental as well. The aim is to achieve wealth or peace and stability.

It can be assumed that regional integration could also be applied to the MENA to prevent conflict and war in the region. Thus, the main aim of this study is to inquire whether it is possible that political rivalry between or among states managed through a regional integration and cooperation process can assist in resolving conflicts more constructively and to avoid wars. The present research suggests that setting up a regional body such as the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) might be a mechanism for maintaining balances of power and preventing war in MENA. However, to establish this kind of organization in the MENA, a comparison of the factors which led to the establishment of the ECSC must be undertaken.

### **The European Integration and ECSC**

The establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was at root a response to balance of power considerations in Western Europe after World War II. The Second World War changed the balance of power in Europe and the world. By the end of the war, the balance of power had shifted from the traditional players in Europe to the United States and the Soviet Union. Western Europe sided with the United States in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) military alliance, and the Soviet Union's satellite-allies in central and eastern Europe became unified under Soviet leadership in the Warsaw Pact.

The United States financially supported the former European great powers, such as France, Great Britain, and West Germany, under the Marshall Plan. In 1952, in the plan's last year, economic growth in the countries that had received funds had surpassed pre-war levels. It was obvious that none of the former great powers in Western Europe could hope to regain its power on their. However, there was fear of American withdrawal from the defense of Europe and a breakdown of NATO. The Western European countries wanted to provide for their own security. The best option was the construction of some kind of West European collation. However, the French and the West Germans eyed one another warily and worried about the distribution of power within coalition. It was this concern that led them to conclude that they had to share control of the group: to integrate and establish a community. Integration was the only formula that could conceivably maintain the existing, relatively even, balance of power between them. It is important to know that without America it would have been more difficult for the former European enemies to cooperate (the French and the Germans). The ECSC was designed to prevent further war between France and Germany and ultimately led to formation of the European Union.

The role played by the European leaders in formation of the ECSC should be considered as an important component also. Andrew Moravcsik, who explains European integration in his theory of “liberal inter-governmentalism,” emphasizes the role of national governments as the key actors in the process of integration. He argues that EU integration can best be understood as a series of rational choices made by national leaders (Moravcsik, 1998). This was due to democratic systems in Western Europe countries. Domestically Western Europe countries had free market democracies and despite significant national differences, democracy was universally prevalent in Western Europe after 1945.

Therefore, the possibilities for the establishment of an organization such as the ECSC in the MENA with the aim of maintaining balance of power and regional integration could be discussed under these terms and with attention on these factors.

### **The Balance of Power: Structural Realism**

The main causes of war between (rational) actors are economic gain, territorial gain, religion, nationalism, etc. However, what incentives or circumstances might lead countries to arm in ways that the expected benefits from war outweigh the costs for at least one of the sides? According to the theory of the balance of power, change in the balance of power makes one state more optimistic about the outcome of war and therefore leads it to increase its demands. Kenneth Waltz’s theory of “Neorealism/Structural Realism,” which was the dominant theory of international relations until the end of the Cold War, is useful in exploring this issue. Waltz explains that the structure or architecture of the international system forces states to pursue power and leaves them little choice if they want to survive (Mearsheimer, 2019).

Waltz views the international system as one of anarchy where there is no international government and authority over states and governments. He believes this world of anarchy leads states to be ready to respond to the behavior of other states, since there is no protector that states can depend on in an emergency time (Waltz 1979, p.102).

The need for security leads states to favor the status quo and to adopt a defensive position toward their competitors. Moreover, the absence of an authority above nation states forces them to make alliances in order to contain the threats posed by rival powers. Consequently, in a world of anarchy the competitive behavior of states tends to lead to some sort of equilibrium under certain conditions (Mearsheimer, 2019). When every state acts this way, a balance of power emerges where no state is predominant, and therefore no large-scale war will take place. The result is a stable international system of states. According to the defensive realists, structural factors limit how much power states can gain, which works to ameliorate security competition.

Waltz believed that bipolarity is the most beneficial form of balance of power, as it limits the possibilities for qualitative revision of the status quo by the actor-states: the whole world space is divided between two centers and its satellites, and even local changes become unlikely, as this automatically tends to drag the two superstates into it, both with the capacity to destroy each other, as well as all of humanity under the direct nuclear collision. Thus, the balance of power will bring peace. One might think that peace must be possible if all of the major powers are content with the

status quo. The problem, however, is that it is impossible for states to be sure about each other's intentions, especially future ones (Mearsheimer, 2019).

As with the reunification of Germany, the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, and disintegration of the Soviet Union, the traditional bi-polar military structure in the world was brought to an end. In this situation, Waltz started to describe a new world politics. For instance, he predicted the rise of new European powers and rampant nuclear proliferation across Europe (Kissane, 2007). However, there has not been arms race and instead of a group of powers competing over European spoils, the EU has become the common, peaceful project for Western and CEE states alike (Kissane, 2007).

The European powers have not formed counterbalancing coalitions to guard against US predominance. The current world politics has been described as the "unipolar moment" means the center of world power is the unchallenged superpower, the United States. In this condition thus we should expect the global hegemony of the United States.

John J. Mearsheimer as an offensive realists has an argument on this issue. He believes that "except for the unlikely event wherein one state achieves clear-cut nuclear superiority, it is virtually impossible for any state to achieve global hegemony" (Mearsheimer, 2001, p.22). This is because, the principal impediment to world domination is the difficulty of projecting power across the world's oceans onto the territory of a rival great power" (Mearsheimer, 2001, p.22). That's why any hegemony has to be only regional, strictly observing the fact that competitive hegemony limits its interests in its zone of influence (Lieber and Gerard, 2005, p.109).

Mearsheimer assumes that the rise of China, which, along with the revival of Russian power, has brought the unipolar era to a close. He believes the world became multipolar in or close to 2016. This would indicate that China, Russia, and the United States will have to compete with each other for power (Mearsheimer, 2019, p.2). It is likely China will compete with the United States in the Pacific region. This is because China's "best way to survive under international anarchy" is to achieve regional hegemony in Asia (Mearsheimer, 2014).

It could be assumed that the MENA is also likely to be an area influenced by China, Russia and United States's conflicts. Therefore, concerns about further wars in the region and instability should not be answered without considering the role of the great powers, particularly the United States.

### **Regional Powers in MENA**

In the MENA and particularly the Persian Gulf, regional systems naturally tend towards balance of power. This is mainly because of rivalry and conflicts between the regional players; Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Egypt and Israel. Although there have not been any conflicts between Iran and Turkey, Iran and Iraq, or Iran and Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Israel have experienced several conflicts and wars.

The conflicts among the MENA countries coincided with shifts of powers between the states. Shifts in the MENA balance of power can be explained with reference to the global players'



policies for the region. Since in this balancing of power in the region, the global variable has been significant as well.

In the period following World War II, regional affairs were often shaped by the global rivalry of the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union. Generally, the balance of power in the MENA was designed by the United States through its strategy, with United States policy aimed at protecting its interests in the region by controlling the regional players. After the Islamic revolution of Iran in 1979, and its change in foreign policy towards the United States and the west, the United States identified Iran as a significant threat to America's interests in the region. It developed a policy known as "dual containment" to deal with Iran, as well as Iraq, due to its relations with the Soviet Union. At the end of the Cold War, the United States effectively gained the initiative in the power balance in the Middle East and this shift depicted Iran as the main source of insecurity in the region (Barzegar, 2010).

Continuation of "dual containment" saw the United States aiming to isolate both countries regionally, cutting them off from the world economic and trading system, and encouraging regime change in Iraq (Gause III, 1994). This resulted in involvement in Iraq and the United States's tough sanctions on Iran's nuclear program.

Currently, conflicts have increased in Iran and Saudi Arabia. Regrettably, despite potential opportunities in petrochemical and industrial cooperation in Iran and Saudi Arabia, structural incongruities, the lack of political will, and deep cultural divergence have kept the two Middle East giants apart.

It should be noted that the MENA is not the kind of a regional system wherein the development of a hegemonic regional order is a likelihood. In the Middle East, none of the regional players (Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia) have the potential to achieve regional hegemony. For example, neither Iran nor Saudi Arabia can shape the regional order unilaterally. They both need proxies, allies, and extra-regional assistance to create and maintain a dominant regional order. Their internal structures and policy options also place them on opposite poles (Sariolghalam, 2018).

At the same time there are other pivotal players (Israel and Egypt) that have influential capabilities. Due to its lack of authoritative leading countries, the Middle East has never been a well-formed regional sub-system able to formulate a common regional agenda and to consolidate a majority of local states around it. Thus, counter-balancing alliances will always be an option for the rest (Kontos, 2018).

With the lack of authoritative leading countries in the Middle East, the United States claims leadership in the region. Although the United States has largely failed to cement itself in this position (Korolkov, 2018, p.87), it seems its new policy is designed merely to increase its role in region, due to its rivalry with China.

While the Middle East, and particularly the Persian Gulf, have always been under the influence of the United States, China's role in the region has increased recently. China, which has not established regional hegemon yet, has ambitions to be a regional hegemon. For many years, China was avoiding any interference in Middle Eastern politics due to the United States's dominance in

the region. It seems Chinese leaders are trying to increase their power in the region. It should be considered that China imported more than 44 percent of its oil demand from the Middle East in 2018. Thus, the MENA and especially Persian Gulf countries play important roles in China's energy security.

Moreover, China tries to increase its role in the region through some projects such as "the one Belt one Road". For instance, the eighth Ministerial Meeting of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum (CASCF) brought the foreign ministers of the 22 Arab League member states together with their Chinese counterpart and "the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)" was a central focus of the meeting. It seems that Chinese leaders are looking for energy security through economic cooperation in region. It should be considered that the MENA has also become increasingly dependent on the Chinese economy. However, there are not many indications that China is trying to challenge US interests in the MENA. However, a more proactive policy by regional powers might reduce the influence of the United States in the MENA.

Therefore, while the United State's policy is preventing China's domination in Asia and East Asia, the MENA and the Persian Gulf should not be the area of China's activities. Consequently, although Iran is not a direct threat to the United States, rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia, Iran's hostility towards Israel, and Iran's relations with China and Russia, are important threats to U.S. interests in the region. Iran also can't be truly considered as a regional power, but Saudi Arabia and its allies in the Persian Gulf, as well as Israel and the US are talking about Iran's hegemony in the region. This is mainly because of Iran's role and influence in Iraq and Syria.

The point is that the interference of the United States has not reduced the possibilities of war or even affected the role regional powers in MENA peace processes. Thus, regional players must find a solution among themselves to prevent war and conflicts.

### **Economy and Political System of the MENA**

For the most of the MENA states a multilateral approach toward regional issues is lacking. The reasons behind the lack of a multilateral approach is related to domestic issues, such as an authoritarian political system and rentier or semi rentier states(economies).

Since the early 1970s the effect of increasing oil exports and higher per capita income tended to result in the formation of rentier economies in the MENA. In these counties, with high oil income and the economy largely under the control of the state, the state is so powerful and integral at all levels of the economy, with distribution of rents the main function of the rentier state, undermining even nascent linkages between the people and the state. The rentier state is capable of preventing the formation of social groups and democratic parties and institutions, making it difficult for society to push for reforms and change. Thus, the Middle East is a highly authoritarian region.

Some rentier states have been influenced by new world politics and economy, became more globalized, and are seemingly spending their rentier wealth more intelligently to develop their economies and societies, and even change the state's relationship with society. According to Matthew Gray these states are in the "late-stage" or "late rentierism" (Gray, 2011,p.6). A rentier states in this stage is more entrepreneurial, supportive of development, and responsive than it was



previously; however, the fundamental characteristics of rentierism remain. The states retain clear “red lines” on what are acceptable or unacceptable political challenges to the state’s authority (Gray, 2011, p.6).

As the results, while in a democratic state, it is ideas and national interests that govern a country rather than the power of personalities, in the MENA, the power of personalities and personal agendas, as a rule, supersede national ones. These governments, and, particularly, national rulers, might not take fully into account the national interests of the country.

As the results, economic power in these states ultimately remains highly centralized. This has affected foreign policies of these states and their economic trade as well.

For instance, Turkey, as a non-oil exporting country already, is integrated into the global economy, but Iran is integrated into the world mainly through oil and gas. Some governments have begun to develop their foreign policies, but the problem is that as major oil exporters, many of them are still only developing their oil industry or even those countries with more diversified economies, are in trade relations with Western and Asian countries than their neighbors. In recent years, Saudi Arabia has become more integrated with the global political and economic system. As such, the country has been less strong in its trade relations with its neighbors.

Although there has been a series of economic and political, bilateral, and multilateral agreements between MENA states, they have failed to integrate economically. However, energy has been a base for cooperation between the MENA oil exporters countries. The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) connected them in process of oil exporting. It can be suggested that creating a regional gas pipeline network would forge mechanism of cooperation to integrate them economically.

### **The Gas Pipelines Source of Integration**

The Middle East’s total natural recoverable gas reserves amount to 75.8 trillion cubic meters. By comparison, the Commonwealth of Independent States reserves stood at 56.6 trillion cubic meters, while Europe's reserves amounted to 3.2 trillion cubic meters in 2020 (Statista, 2021). The proven gas reserves are not distributed equally across the region. More than two-fifths are in Iran. Iran holds the world's second biggest natural gas reserves, 32.1 trillion cubic meters, around 17.10% of the world's total natural gas reserves (World Population Review, 2021). However, most of these reserves remain undeveloped due to international sanctions and lack of foreign direct investments in field development.

Almost a third of proven gas reserves are in Qatar, a combined share of nearly three-quarters. This means that Qatar holds around 13.10% of the world's total natural gas reserves (World Population Review, 2021). Most of the remaining proven gas reserves are shared by Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Iraq, and Kuwait. Saudi Arabia’s total proven natural gas reserves are more than 6.0 trillion cubic meters, which give it the eight largest proven natural gas reserve nation globally. Iraq's proven natural gas reserves make it the 12th largest in the world (World Population Review, 2021). The important point is that there are several joint gas fields among Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait or among Iran, Qatar, and other MENA countries.

These countries have plans to export gas, but some are still not producing gas or are even becoming gas importers, particularly of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG). Between 2014 and 2020, LNG imports into the Middle East almost doubled, from 5.3 Billion cubic meters to 9.2 Billion cubic meters (Statistical Review of World Energy 2021). Bahrain and Saudi Arabia are planning to import LNG as well (Forbes, 2018). According to statistics, Middle East demand for energy will grow by 3.35% per annum for the next 15 years, as MENA population is estimated to grow by 20% to reach 581 million in 2030 and a further 24% by 2050 to hit 724 million (Middle East Energy Dubai, 2021). The increase in gas demand is also spurred on by its relative cheapness. The very low gas prices in the region have stimulated demand and encouraged wasteful use. The MENA has become gas importer also due to the high cost of gas exploration for some countries such as Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, particularly for Abu Dhabi (Forbes, 2018).

It is obvious that transporting existing gas reserves among the countries in the region through pipelines would be more economical and reasonable. This would also lower demand for LNG. However, gas pipeline transit in and from the MENA is far less significant than oil or LNG.

### **Natural Gas Pipelines in the MENA**

Although there are few gas exporter countries in the MENA, *Qatar was the largest exporter of LNG in the world in 2019- 2020*. The country's exports of 77.1mn tons accounted for 22% of global LNG production in 2020 (CEIC, 2021).

In 2020, LNG exports from Qatar went to a total of 22 countries around the world, with India accounting for the largest volume of Qatar's LNG exports, followed by Japan, South Korea, China, United Kingdom, Pakistan, and Taiwan (EIA Qatar, 2020). However, Qatar natural gas exports was 143,700.000 Cub m mn in December 2020 (CEIC, 2021).

Iran, as the major gas producer, exports to Turkey, small amounts to Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Iraq, and receives imports from Azerbaijan (EIA Iran, 2020). Iran exported about 12,670.000 Cub m mn and imported 1,270.000 Cub m mn in December 2020 CEIC, 2021.

In the same year, Oman exported 10,625.777 Cub m mn of natural gas, mainly to South Korea and Japan. Although Oman is a major exporter of natural gas, rising domestic consumption has caused exports to decline. Oman imported 300.000 Cub m mn in 2020 via a pipeline from Qatar (EIA Oman, 2020).

Gas from Israel's Tamar field has been flowing to Jordan since the beginning of 2017. In addition, based on an agreement, Israel will export \$10-billion worth of natural gas over 15 years to Jordan from the end of 2019. Jordan imported gas from Egypt until attacks by militants on the Egyptian pipeline network in 2013 (Benmeleh and Magdy, 2018).

Egypt has historically exported gas by pipeline through Sinai to Jordan, Syria and Israel and may now reverse the pipeline to import regasified LNG from Jordan or gas from Israel.

North African countries such as Algeria and Libya are major gas exporters to Europe. Algeria is Europe's third biggest gas supplier, after Russia and Norway, with Spain depending on the country for around half of its demand. North African countries' pipeline exports to Europe surged nearly 14% year on year to almost 25 Bcm in the first nine months of 2018 (Cala, 2018). Libyan natural gas exports were reported at 4470.071 million cubic meters (MCUM) in Dec 2017 (CEIC Data, 2019).

There are not significant gas pipelines in the region but some of planned gas pipeline projects include:

1. **The Nabucco-West Pipeline:** a proposed natural gas pipeline from the Turkish-Bulgarian border to Austria. The aim of the Nabucco pipeline is to diversify natural gas suppliers and delivery routes into Europe, thus reducing European dependence on Russian energy. The original project was backed by several European Union member states and by the United States and was seen as a rival to the South Stream pipeline project. The main supplier was expected to be Iraq, with potential supplies from Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, and Egypt. The main supply for the Nabucco West was to be Shah Deniz gas through the proposed Trans-Anatolian gas pipeline (TANAP).
2. **The Qatar-Turkey Pipeline:** a proposed natural gas pipeline from the Iranian–Qatari South Pars/North Dome Gas-Condensate field towards Turkey, where it may connect with the Nabucco pipeline to supply European customers, as well as Turkey. Possible routes to Turkey discussed have been via Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Syria and through Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Iraq.
3. **Arab Gas Pipeline (AGP), Jordan, Syria, Lebanon:** The pipeline “East-West” (East-West pipeline) is an important infrastructure project for the transportation of Saudi raw materials from the east of the country to the west. It provides not only access to resources via another export route—through the Red Sea to Europe—but also transports the raw material to processing plants in the west of the country, where there are many large settlements and industrial centers. The pipeline is about 1170 km in length, with a capacity of 5 million Billion barrels/day (BPD). The operator of the pipeline is the main company of the country—Saudi Aramco. The initial pipeline was put into operation in 1984.
4. **Iran-Pakistan-India Gas Pipeline:** The Iran–Pakistan–India (IPI) gas pipeline would traverse over 2,775 kilometers (1,724 miles) from Iran's South Pars gas field in the Persian Gulf through the Pakistani city of Khuzdar, with one branch going on to Karachi and a second branch extending to Multan and then on to India. While India withdrew from the contract due to U.S. pressure and sanctions on Iran, Iran signed a contract with Pakistan, and the Iran–Pakistan gas pipeline is under construction. This pipeline can be further extended to China.
5. **The Iran, Iraq, Syria Pipeline:** This proposed project could satisfy Iran's need for new energy sources, Iraq's need to counterbalance foreign deals made with the Kurdistan Regional Government, and Syria's search for sources of support.

Planning and development of international gas pipeline projects are aimed primarily at raise of the safety of gas supply. However, state rivalries or conflicts have affected almost all plans for gas pipeline in the MENA and from the region to European and Asian markets. This is because these pipelines could increase power of the exporting country if accomplished.

### **The Balance of Power and Gas Pipelines**

The MENA countries exporting gas by pipeline can choose several routes such as the Persian Gulf, the Mediterranean Sea or the Red Sea to export gas to Europe or Asian countries. Shortage of routes and low cost of the gas pipeline plans are advantages of some of them. However, the main reason only a few plans have gone one step further is that most pipelines security reduced by rivalry between Iran, Saudi Arabia and Israel and their allies (Nafeez 2013). Therefore, the lack of security of the routs has become vulnerability of the gas pipeline plans in the MENA. As several gas pipeline projects have been suspended or delayed due to the lack of security.

Some gas transfers have been disrupted and attacked. The pipelines attacked, possibly linked to, or inspired by, transnational terrorist groups, or backed by other states. For instance, militants have repeatedly attacked oil and gas pipelines in Yemen and the gas pipelines running through Egypt's Sinai Peninsula. In 2006, there was a failed terrorist attack on Saudi Arabia's Abqaiq oil stabilisation plant. In the Khuzestan region of Iran, pipeline and refinery explosions may have been caused by Arab protesters or outside intelligence services (Mills, 2016, pp. 8–9). Moreover, except the Iran-Turkey gas pipeline, Iraqi Kurdistan has a plan to expand export gas to Turkey, while Iran is also working on a pipeline to Pakistan. Both pipelines are vulnerable to attack.

It should be noted that the economic impact of disruptions range from trivial to severe and from regional to global. They include increasing the oil price, decreasing production, repairing costs, and reducing investments, among other impacts (Mills, 2016, pp.15–16). This is against the backdrop of global gas demand increasing by up to 50% by the end of the next decade and natural gas playing a major role in the EU energy system. Currently, Russia supplies almost 45% of European gas consumption (Market Observatory, 2020). However, European countries do not like being so reliant on Russia gas and are trying to find new sources. The Middle East gas reserves are the best option.

Analyzing obstacles to the gas pipeline plans which have failed or delayed describes importance and strategic role of the pipelines. These pipelines could increase power of the exporting country if accomplished. For instance, gas pipeline from Iran through Turkey to Europe, could make Iran the second or even the first gas supplier to Europe. Therefore, pipelines may have a substantial impact on the balance of power in the region. It is obvious that the shift in the MENA balance of power, which happens from time to time, leads to conflicts and instability in the region.

It can be assumed, to prevent instability and conflict there should be a means of cooperation which does not affect the balance of power and also be profitable for the most of the countries in the region. Based on this idea, setting up a gas pipeline network such as the European Coal and Steel Community, might be a mechanism for preventing conflict. Currently there are some kind of plans in small scale. For example, the gas pipeline project between Israel and Jordan will transfer \$10-billion worth of natural gas from Israel into Jordan. At the same time there is another deal between

Egypt and Jordan. According to this deal Egypt exports gas to Jordan, which would mean sending gas through the same pipeline, but in the opposite direction than if gas were being exported from Israel to Egypt (Kravtsova & Zawadzki, 2019).

Another example are gas pipelines proposals from Iran and Qatar from various routes. The gas pipeline Qatar-Iraq-Turkey to the European market, Qatar- Saudi Arabia-Turkey to Europe, Qatar-Iran-Turkey or Iran-Iraq to Syria-, Iran-Iraq-Turkey to the European market. The best option would be a network which would run a pipeline from the latter's North field of Qatar, contiguous with Iran's South Pars field, through Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria and on to Turkey, with a view to supply European markets.

Therefore, the present research suggests that to maintain the balance of power, the gas exporting countries should be economically integrated through a Gas Pipeline Network.

### **The MENA Gas Pipeline Network and the Role of Great Powers**

In regard to the MENA Gas Pipeline Network, it can be expected the following policies from the great powers. The United States is now an oil and gas exporters. Technological developments have enabled the U.S. to unlock cheap, abundant shale gas supplies and, after starting from scratch in 2016, it is expected to have enough capacity by the end of 2021, to make it the world's largest LNG exporter (Parker, 2019). On the other hand, Europe is now the top buyer of U.S. LNG after a near fivefold spike in U.S. LNG sales to the continent this winter, overtaking South Korea and Mexico. China also imported LNG from the United States in 2020. Thus, any improvement in MENA gas exports affects the U.S.'s position on the global energy market.

Russia's role as the main gas supplier of Europe means it is not interested in gas exports from the MENA to Europe. Although European countries do not like being so reliant on Russia gas and are trying to find new sources, they have no plan for increasing their gas import from the MENA. This is because, at the first, the European have plan which is called the European Green Deal. The plan aim to transform the 27-country bloc from a high-to a low-carbon economy. Secondly, since the end of the Second World War, the European powers have not formed counterbalancing coalitions to guard against U.S. predominance in the MENA. Therefore, the EU should aim to direct the U.S. away from policies that damage European security. However, there is no still important action taken by the European countries.

It should be considered that the EU dependency rate on natural gas import has increased since 2000. It is estimated that the EU will have to seek additional imports to cover up to one-third of its anticipated consumption. Currently, Russia is the largest supplier of natural gas to the EU while Norway, North African suppliers specially Algeria and recently the U.S.(LNG) have not been able to reduce the EU dependency on Russia. Thus, participation of the EU in the gas network pipeline would be important for the EU energy security and the security of the gas pipeline as well. This would affect the balance of power in the region as well.

In the absence of the Western countries, the role of China in the project will incense. The increasing demand of China for energy and the necessity of providing it from foreign resources have made energy security a vital issue for the country. The rise of China as a global power and its new policy

in the MENA can be considered as an important factor in changing balance of power in the region. To achieve this aim, the Chinese leaders focus on energy and emphasis on the MENA peace consistently through economic development. The project will be an opportunity for China. Moreover, participation of gas consumers countries such as India will increase the stability of the pipeline.

## Conclusion

Based on this study, the regional integration could also be applied to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) to prevent conflicts and war in the region. For that setting up a regional body such as ECSC might be a mechanism for preventing war in the MENA. The first step towards the regional integration can be occurred if several countries get benefits from the same gas pipeline. This cooperation might could change the MENA states' approach and help them to get ready to enter to the new era of regional interaction. The project might extend to economic cooperation in other sectors and eventually lead to emerging a new balance of power and brings the stability and peace to the region.

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