

## **Healing the Scars of War: Teaching for Peace through Higher Education in Divided and Conflict-Affected Contexts**

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**Abstract:** In light of the lacuna of research investigating the teaching of peace and reconciliation through higher education in settings affected by conflict, this study explores higher education pedagogies for peace with university educators in four divided and conflict-affected contexts: China/Taiwan, Cyprus, Korea, and Somalia. The study examines approaches to teaching for peace and the challenges that faculty have encountered while attempting to promote reconciliation and mutual understanding in classrooms in conflict settings. Data was collected through qualitative interviews with 34 faculty coupled with ethnographic visits to the four higher education contexts and analysis of teaching syllabi. Data was then analyzed through a cultural political economy and decolonial perspective on education. Findings reveal contested interpretations of peace across cultures and education settings, as well as creative and resilient approaches to teaching for peace in conflict zones. It is premised that learning from the cross-cutting themes across these contexts is valuable for faculty in each of the settings as well as those faculty elsewhere who teach for peace in other divided and conflict-affected contexts.

**Keywords:** Conflict, Peace education, Unification education, Higher education, Peacebuilding, Comparison

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## Introduction

This study examines the varied practices university educators employ working for peace and reconciliation across divided and conflict-affected contexts. The interdisciplinary field of education for peace has grown significantly in recent years. It draws on theory and pedagogy from other related educational efforts, including anti-racism education, conflict resolution education, global citizenship education, human rights education, social justice education, and education for sustainable development. Global agendas of the United Nations and civil society initiatives – in and beyond each of the contexts – support the work (Hantzopoulos et al., 2021; Eom and Kester, 2022). Yet, there are few studies as of yet examining peace education in/through higher education in settings affected by conflict. Thus, to fill this void, this study aims to explore higher education pedagogies for peace with university educators in four divided and conflict-affected contexts. It turns its attention to learning from and across the adaptable and resilient higher education pedagogies for peace and reconciliation that have emerged among academics in China/Taiwan<sup>3</sup>, Cyprus, Korea, and Somalia. The goal of the research is to examine and enhance higher education responses to division and conflict, and for Korean scholars to learn from educators working for peace through higher education in other divided and conflict-affected societies.

To be sure, university educators in the four contexts have much to learn from each other toward nurturing pedagogies for peace. Specifically, China/Taiwan, Cyprus, Korea, and Somalia have been chosen as they are contexts currently tackling issues of conflict and peace in diverse ways through higher education. Each context faces social and political division. In each case, the division was the cause/consequence of a war:

- the 1949 defeat of the Republic of China Army forcing the Kuomintang to retreat to Taiwan;
- the 1950-53 Korean War resulting in the Demilitarized Zone at the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel that divides the peninsula today;

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<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that Chinese participants in the study expressed this should be framed as “Mainland China” and “Taiwan”, not “China/Taiwan”. China and Taiwan – like the other contexts in this study – are understandably entangled in complicated relations over sovereignty. Similarly, in Cyprus participants indicated that South and North Cyprus should not be capitalized (i.e., south/north Cyprus) to avoid confusion with state recognition for the north. These contested relations are often expressed, as in these cases, through nuanced uses of language. We acknowledge and seek to (re)frame the issues here – where possible – across various viewpoints of the participants, though noting too that there are many other angles that may not be present. We seek to offer a plurality of perspectives.

- the 1974 Turkish Invasion of Cyprus that led to the division of the island with Turkish Cypriots in the north and Greek Cypriots in the south (a UN Demilitarized Zone separates the two); and
- the 1991 Somalia Civil War (ongoing) resulting in the self-declared state of Somaliland in the North.

In each context, a de facto state was created following the conflict: Taiwan, northern Cyprus, North Korea, and Somaliland (Ali, 2017; Kolsto, 2006). Only North Korea is internationally recognized today with UN membership.<sup>4</sup> Taiwan, northern Cyprus and Somaliland continue to lack international recognition and remain fragile contexts; and aspirations for unification to some extent remain in each locale. Additionally, in each setting is a people who have shared much in common throughout their history until these recent divisions, including experiences of various forms of colonialism throughout the 20th century. Moreover, in the China/Taiwan, Korea, and Somalia cases, the peoples on each side of the divide (mostly) share the same ethnicity and language.<sup>5</sup> Each context is additionally politically democratic (except China and North Korea) and economically liberal. Thus, there are historic, ethnic, linguistic, political, economic, and colonial similarities between these contexts, yet the memory, legacies, and responses to the conflict differ with fascinating implications for higher education pedagogies and policies for peace and reconciliation. The study is driven by the following research questions:

1. How is peace and unification taught the same or differently across divided and conflict-affected contexts?
2. What specific pedagogies and policies are employed to support peace and unification?

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<sup>4</sup> There are 9 remaining countries/territories that do not recognize North Korea. These include Botswana, Estonia, France, Israel, Japan, South Korea, United States, Vatican City, and Taiwan. For comparison: only 13 countries/territories recognize Taiwan as sovereign; 1 recognizes north Cyprus as sovereign (Turkey); and no countries recognize Somaliland, although Somaliland and Taiwan have strong ties (as Somaliland seeks to emulate the ‘Taiwan Model’ of international cooperation and development – a further reason for the comparison between these two contexts in this study).

<sup>5</sup> Even in Cyprus, there have been calls to avoid ethnic essentialism that assumes there are two conflicting and immutable ethnic identities on the island, which would slow efforts toward reconciliation and unification. This is not an argument for de-ethnicization but for critical perspectives in education that understand community as a contingent achievement of political action and that disentangle efforts toward peace and reconciliation from state-sanctioned appeals to essentialist ethnic identities (Zembylas, 2011).

3. How do these pedagogies contribute to peace, reconciliation, and efforts toward unification, if at all?
4. Under what conditions do the educators advocate for reconciliation and unification?

In the pages to follow, we will provide an overview of the literature and our conceptual framework. This will be followed by detail of the methodology and contexts of our study before we turn to the findings. Then, we analyze and discuss the findings through the lenses of cultural political economy of education (CPEE) and borderlands prior to concluding. The paper contributes to contemporary debates on the role of higher education to respond constructively and effectively to division and conflict, and to nurture the capacities of citizens to support sustainable peacebuilding. In particular, the research offers new knowledge in the under-researched area of higher education peacebuilding in four under-researched divided and conflict-affected contexts (Dryden-Peterson, 2010; Millican et al., 2021; Milton, 2018; Kester et al., 2022).

### **Education and Peacebuilding in Conflict Zones**

In this section, we first review peace education and education in conflict literature before turning to examine the extant literature on unification education and peace through higher education in conflict-affected contexts. We begin with peace education.

#### *Peace through education*

Peace education aims to nurture students with the knowledge, values, skills, and capacities to resolve conflict nonviolently (Cremin and Bevington 2017; Reardon 2001; Ko 2006). To do so, peace educators examine instances of direct, structural, cultural, and poststructural violence in society (Galtung, 1969, 1990; Kester and Cremin, 2017), and imagine collaborative nonviolent responses (Cremin, 2016). Several contemporary peace educators have stressed self-criticality and reflexivity as critical skills for peace scholars to challenge the assumptions underlying education for peace, power differentials present in peace education pedagogy, and the promotion of justice through peace work (Gur Ze'ev, 2001; Kurian and Kester, 2018; Zembylas and Bekerman, 2013). A persisting theme in the literature is the emphasis on the empowerment of the individual (Clarke-Habibi, 2005; Pineda et al., 2019; Pupavac, 2001). Here, peace education often focuses on the development of learners' knowledge, skills, and attitudes to bring about attitudinal and behavioral

changes in order to deal with conflict in today's world (Salomon, 2002). These pedagogical approaches frequently draw on critical pedagogy in which teachers encourage students to engage in critical analysis of their own experiences and promote transformative action in their lives (Zembylas, 2018). Moreover, many peace education programs offer internships and apprenticeships that are oriented towards developing individual conflict resolution skills, leadership capacities, and dialogue (Hettler and Johnston, 2009).

However, the dominant focus on changing the individual mind and behavior has been criticized for its tendency to overlook social structures that create conditions in which violence thrives (Pupavac, 2001; Vickers, 2022; Zembylas, 2018). For example, Kester and Cremin (2017) have noted that the idea that individual acquisition of knowledge and skills will generate broader social change “promotes a modernist agenda of individual Enlightenment [and] autonomy” (1416) while failing to consider the social structures of colonialism; and Cardozo and Shah (2016) pose a danger that without an element of criticality, the positive and transformative face of education will remain unrealized. Particularly notable is the implicit adoption of a ‘liberal internationalist’ standpoint by educators, which results in the suppression of non-Western viewpoints within the classroom and in practice marginalizes non-Western perspectives (Cremin, 2016; Fontan, 2012; Kester, 2017; Kurian and Kester, 2018). Cremin (2016) identifies it as the confinement of the concept of ‘peace’ within limitations that have not progressed beyond Western-oriented assumptions rooted in modernist and moralizing viewpoints, disregarding the evident need to encompass non-Western and non-elite knowledge creation. It is a crisis stemming from the commercialization of education, which perceives education not as a catalyst for societal transformation but as a framework that perpetuates societal and class differentiations.

#### *Peace education in conflict-affected contexts*

Next, the literature on peace education in conflict-affected contexts specifically tends to focus on intractable conflict. There are two distinctive characteristics of peace education in intractable conflict zones, which are related to their complex situational and political factors in such settings where even using the term ‘peacebuilding’ is refrained and ‘peace’ is defined as a ‘politically loaded term’ (Zakharia, 2016; see also Smith, 2005). In many cases in such settings, peace education is funded by external organizations rather than domestic groups creating the image that such efforts are foreign (Corboz et al., 2019; Monaghan and King, 2016). Additionally, education

in many conflict-affected contexts is considered to be weak (i.e., underfunded and underdeveloped), thus hindering the promotion of access to quality education itself, much less specialized forms of peace education (Ahmed and Shahzad 2021; Lopes et al. 2019).

Topics such as ‘non-violent and peaceful conflict resolution methods’, ‘tolerance for others’, ‘the process of reconciliation’, ‘human rights’, and ‘universal brotherhood’ are found within the literature on education for peace in zones of conflict (Bush and Saltarelli 2000; Salomon 2011). Yet, peace education in conflict contexts has been criticized due to its lack of proper training and critical thinking, sustainability of programs, and difficulty in evaluating peace education impact. Concerning critical approaches to peace education, in Pakistan Ahmed and Shahzad (2021) attribute the failure to promote critical thinking to outdated pedagogies and teachers’ inability to embrace difference, as often occurs due to a lack of training. Regarding sustainability, it has been acknowledged that the impact of peace education rapidly decays, and there is no durable scaling up beyond the primary targeted populations. As such, the effectiveness of peace education is questioned (Cromwell, 2022; Salomon, 2011). Furthermore, the literature highlights challenges inherent in attempting to assess the impact of peace education within conflict contexts, with many studies emphasizing the importance of impact assessment (Corboz, 2019; Raines, 2004; Monaghan and King, 2016; Salomon, 2006; Tinker, 2006; Wright, 2010). Nevertheless contextual constraints persist. Such barriers include personal and professional safety, and logistical constraints including access to technology (or not) (Tinker, 2016; Wright, 2010).

### *Unification education*

Unification education, in the context of divided societies, is not a uniform concept. Rather, it takes on a complex endeavor encompassing the historical, political, and cultural dimensions of each region (Loader and Hughes, 2017). Prior studies have delved into the multifaceted nature of unification education, drawing insights from various regions such as China/Taiwan, Cyprus, Germany, Ireland, Israel/Palestine, Korea, Somalia, and Yemen. McPherson-Smith (2021), for example, examines the divergent trajectories of Somalia and Somaliland, attributing disparities to distinct colonial legacies. Arslan and Guven (2007), too, highlight the challenges faced by universities in northern Cyprus, underscoring the significance of education as a fundamental human right. Due to the failure to reach a unification agreement in Cyprus, non-recognition of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) results in isolation, exclusion, and limited access

to international funding sources, research funds, and European educational aid for the universities. This, in turn, affects the quality of education for students. In Korea, Kim (2020) presents a critical analysis of unification education on the peninsula, highlighting ethno-nationalist politics and the representation of North Korea in South Korean textbooks. She argues that unification education is fraught with political interests and nationalistic overtones.

Dingli (2012) engages with the experiences of Cyprus and Yemen, offering lessons for the former in terms of the politics of reunification. In particular, Dingli argues that efforts to delegitimize narratives of intractability are needed in Cyprus, and Yemen's experience shows that the rejection of narratives of division was critical as well as political will by the regimes to reunify. However, Dingli also points out that the lack of grassroots support and involvement placed Yemen in a situation of fragility for many years. Thus, efforts toward unification must entail both political leaders and grassroots initiatives. Christou (2006) delves into the role of the education system in shaping narratives of division and unity in Cyprus, exploring the power of memory and pedagogy. She concludes that unification education in Cyprus is full of rhetoric toward unification but void of an actual vision for unification and what is to follow. Thus, she says “the curriculum is discursively empty” (286). Loader and Hughes (2017), drawing on their personal experiences in Cyprus and Macedonia, explore the challenge of balancing cultural diversity and social cohesion in education within divided societies. They propose that shared education (referred to as ‘contact’ in other literature, e.g., Allport, 1954) is a positive model to “build trust, deconstruct stereotypes and critically examine questions of identity and social justice” (9). For them, shared education's impact goes beyond classroom teaching; it shapes collective identities, narratives, and the prospects for peace and unity in society.

All in all, the literature on unification education suggests that academic curricula, cultural engagement, and cross-border collaborations in unification education courses in higher education institutions have contributed to both perpetuating divisions and fostering unity, shaping students' perceptions and attitudes towards unification and peaceful conflict resolution.

### *Peace through higher education in conflict zones*

In regard to higher education in conflict-affected settings, Millican (2018) stresses that most concerns with higher education occur within times of peace and tend to “ignore some of the pressures inherent in conflicted, occupied or divided societies and does not take full account of the

inequalities that universities are able to generate or uphold” (13). Further, Milton (2018) argues that higher education can support or undermine peacebuilding through its three missions of teaching, research and service, as it plays a crucial role in identity (de)construction, the promotion of social norms, and challenging established truths. This creates a potential for higher education in conflict zones to offer alternative pathways to peace, conflict transformation, development, and reconciliation that counters the prevalent models of liberal peacebuilding. An example of peacebuilding through higher education is provided by Johnson (2013), who shows how universities responded to post-election violence in Kenya to support peacebuilding processes.

Yet, for a university to work sustainably toward peacebuilding and conflict transformation, institutions must be committed to adapting and developing their long-term missions, curricula, and pedagogical approaches to align them with efforts toward building a culture of peace (Johnson, 2013; Kester, 2021; Makara, 2023; Millican et al., 2021; Omeje, 2015). In this line, peacebuilding through higher education is a complex and delicate process, as higher education actively helps create the premises to mitigate or fuel instability, dependence, and fragility (Sahar and Kaunert, 2021). For example, Philip and Helen (2005) show how higher education propagates neo-colonial relations in postcolonial states, and Dillabough et al. (2018) indicate the political divisions that operate within universities in conflict zones. Finally, although literature examining conflict-affected contexts has recently explored the role of higher education in such settings (Johnson, 2013; Kester et al., 2022; Millican et al. 2021; Milton and Barakat, 2016), peace through higher education is an area that requires further attention (Chehimi et al., 2017; Kester, 2020; Kester et al., 2023; Millican et al., 2021). This brings us now to our integrative conceptual framework of CPEE and borderlands.

### **Conceptual Framework**

This study adopts the integrated conceptual framework of cultural political economy of education (CPEE) and decolonial thinking as developed by Kester and Chang (2022) previously, drawing on the work of Robertson and Dale (2015), Novelli et al. (2017), and Santos (2007). In this framework, the analysis of peace and reconciliation in education is contextualized to the specific educational context(s) of the study. This means examining education through the lenses of cultural, political and economic factors impacting upon education, and conversely considering how education in turn influences culture, politics and economics. In particular, this entails the



interrogation of *discourses* of peace and unification (i.e., cultural representations) in specific settings, and the consideration of who has *power* to affect others within and across these contexts (i.e., who can exercise autonomy through political relations; see Rodriguez et al., 2023). Additionally, the CPEE framework examines *finances*, that is, the economic (in)capacities of actors in conflict-affected settings to achieve their goals and/or be beholden to others' agendas (Higgins and Novelli, 2020; Lopes Cardozo and Novelli, 2018). From a *decolonial lens*, efforts are then made to disrupt and delink from various forms of material, aesthetic, and epistemic domination (Quijano, 2000; Santos, 2007). Together, these factors affect the design, delivery and assessment of teaching and learning for peace.

More specifically, when peace and education are understood from a cultural, political, and economic perspective, teaching and learning is then examined as embedded within broader social practices and political and economic structures, not merely as a psychological activity that focuses on the minds of learners as the locus of war and peace (Higgins and Novelli, 2020; Kester, 2018; Vickers, 2022). The implication here for peacebuilding is profound; in this view, discourses and practices of peace and conflict are critiqued in regard to what has been normalized and taken-for-granted (Zembylas and Bekerman, 2013). For example, the commodification of knowledge (including the selling of peace and war) and the governance of institutions in ways that support a political economy of exploitation and marginalization are exhumed (Smith, 2005). This critical CPEE orientation shifts the focus of educational research from attitudes and behaviors of conflict and peace (i.e, individual explanations) toward social structures of (in)justice (i.e., the social conditions maintaining intolerance and exclusion).

Further, the divided contexts in this study each involve a de facto state. As de facto states represent (in)visible spaces of contestation between sovereignty and subjugation, this space is ripe for understanding the capacity of higher education to support (or not) efforts toward peace and justice. Here, both Paulo Freire and Pierre Bourdieu point toward the capacity of higher education to support sovereign or subjugated minds (see also Alatas, 2000; Chen, 2010; Mignolo, 2007). For his part, Freire (1970) suggests that education may empower transformation – both personal and social – while Bourdieu (1989) indicates that education may be more likely to reproduce unequal social relations. The liminal space(s) of the borderlands between the recognized and non-recognized territories of this study reveal this tension at play as education oscillates between

promoting national unity and/or alternative visions of society from the periphery. Education, hence, operates in this space between the sovereign and the subject.

Here, to make additional sense of the space between the sovereign and subject, we engage Anzaldúa's (1987) *borderlands* as a way of further interrogating the multiple borders present in fragile divided and conflict-affected contexts. As Anzaldúa writes, "the borderlands are physically present wherever two or more cultures edge each other, where people of different races occupy the same territory, where the lower, middle and upper classes touch" (preface). She continues, the borders are "an open wound" where one side "grates against" the other "and bleeds. And before a scab forms it hemorrhages again, the lifeblood of two worlds merging to form a third", what she calls "a border culture" (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 3). Specifically, drawing on Anzaldúa, we highlight three types of borders: the physical, epistemic, and linguistic. The physical border entails material realities, such as disputes over land and territory.<sup>6</sup> State borders are perhaps the clearest example here, but there are many other examples relevant to this study, such as the dividing lines of neighborhoods, universities, or departments controlled by one or another ideological or political faction within a conflict setting (participants in this study spoke of the political-ideological borders in their universities, e.g., CHN/TWN5).

Epistemic borders refers to how learners are taught to "see/think" through particular epistemological constructs, e.g., what counts as truth and who the victims/perpetrators are. In this regard, Freire (1970) argues for the need to undo oppressor's logic without becoming like the oppressor, that is, finding new ways to inter-relate beyond dualistic us/them or victim/perpetrator dichotomies (see also Zembylas, 2023). Higher education, in this sense, offers the space for critical dialogue and the (re)construction of peaceful relations (or not). From a Bourdieusian (1989) perspective, as indicated above, the (re)production of conflict across generations may seem more likely than peace and reconciliation. Linguistic borders, on the other hand, refer to the way that language practices signify particular historical, political or social affections. In conflict zones, for example, this may involve the use of a particular word (e.g., 'peace', 'justice', 'conflict'); or a medium of instruction in schools and universities, especially in relation to past colonial languages (e.g., English, French, German); or dehumanizing discourses in media, politics, and art (Chilwa, 2021; Gee, 2014). Such linguistic fractures and tensions may continue for generations. University

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<sup>6</sup> Examples in this study include the territory of Los Anod in Somalia/Somaliland and Kinmen island between China/Taiwan.

educators are amongst the most critical interlocutors in facilitating which direction learning takes – toward reinforcing or transcending these borders.

Through this integrative conceptual framework of CPEE and border thinking, we are able to examine the cultural, political, and economic factors (including the physical, epistemic, and linguistic borders) that impede or support sustainable peacebuilding in divided and conflict-affected contexts. All in all, CPEE and borderlands support our critical reading of the data, as we investigate the logics, discourses, and practices of higher education in conflict zones. We next turn now to overview the methods of the study.

## **Methodology**

### *Research design*

To answer the research questions, this study used a comparative case study methodology (Bartlett and Vavrus, 2017; Rodriguez et al., 2023) to collect in-depth data concerning how university educators interpret and practice their teaching for peace in divided and conflict-affected contexts. The case study method was chosen to support the collection of nuanced context-specific data in each case site related to teaching for peace and reconciliation in divided contexts (Yin, 2003). The first author positioned himself as an ‘insider-outsider’ researcher in each of the settings, having worked in different capacities in each. As such, participants may have perceived him as an ‘outsider’ international researcher yet knowledgeable of each context, but not quite as an ‘insider’ with which they might need to be more reserved in what they share (Kerstetter, 2012).

Furthermore, in-context data was iteratively compared across the various settings with consideration for relevant contextual details and researcher reflexivity that allowed flexibility throughout the entire inquiry process (Sobe, 2018; see also Kester et al., 2021). This process revealed contrapuntal and complementary readings of the educators’ experiences with sovereignty and/or subjugation highlighting a relational grassroots perspective on higher education processes for peacebuilding (or not) in divided and conflict-affected contexts (Rodriguez et al., 2023). As Bartlett and Vavrus (2017) suggest, tracing phenomena across settings helps reveal variegated understandings of what is going on, in this case in regard to efforts to support peace through higher education.

### *Methods*

Data collection methods involved semi-structured interviews, document analysis (e.g., course syllabi, see Appendix 3), and ethnographic field notes with 34 university faculty (Table 1 below). The interview part of the study involved 60-90 minute interviews one-on-one in-person with each of the participants during the period of field work. This approach generated precise data on higher education in divided and conflict-affected contexts by asking participants to talk about their practices and conceptualizations of teaching for peace. In addition to interviews, the study also included the collection of course syllabi and a review of relevant websites to triangulate data. Together, these materials highlight common approaches the educators bring to the field and the types of topics, skills and strategies they use for teaching peace. These were cross-referenced with the first author's field notes acquired during the period of data collection.

The field notes include those observations taken by the first author during field visits to China, Cyprus, Somaliland, and Taiwan between July 2023-February 2024. These notes were further compared with the first author's reflections on working in Korea for over a decade. Together, these notes and reflections allowed annotated comments by the first author to complement the interview data, and they include contextual information important to the analysis, such as notes taken at each of the universities. Additionally, the first author has visited each of the settings in this study – both during the period of fieldwork and before – multiple times over the past 10 years. This provided him trust with participants during data collection, letting them know that he has accumulated many years of knowledge across the contexts. It additionally supported the deeper ethnographic insights into the study settings in a way that surveys and interviews alone cannot (Krause, 2021). This helped place data in its natural context in divided and conflict-affected societies.

### *Data collection*

Data for the study was collected in two stages.<sup>7</sup> The first stage involved interviews with 8 Korean university faculty concerning their work teaching for peace and justice in universities in a divided context. This period of data collection was completed between January-March 2022 (see Kester et

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<sup>7</sup> Each stage was funded by a different funding body: the first stage by Seoul National University New Faculty Grant (Research Project: 700-20210034) in 2021-2022, and the second stage by the Institute for Peace and Unification Studies (IPUS) at Seoul National University under the project of “Laying the Groundwork for Unification and Peace” in 2023-2024. We thank the funders for their generous support.

al., 2023). This first stage provided the foundation for the present study. In the second stage, completed between July 2023-February 2024, a new set of data was collected with university faculty in China/Taiwan, Cyprus, and Somaliland. The two sets of data involved the same core interview questions (see Appendix 1) allowing for the data to be combined for comparison to answer the study's research questions. Additionally, this project supported the development of a new Master of Arts degree program in Education, Conflict and Peacebuilding at the University of Hargeisa, Somaliland, thus amplifying and scaling up the impact of the project (see details here: <https://instituteofpeace.org/ma-in-education-conflict-and-peacebuilding.html>). It is also expected that a third stage of the study will now follow leading to the development of further pedagogic tools (e.g., teaching guidelines, workshops) to promote the study and teaching of education, conflict and peacebuilding in Korea and beyond.

### *Participants*

The 34 participants were selected through a combination of sampling methods, including identification through university websites (as identified by the researchers), key informants, and snowball sampling. To ensure diversity, the selected participants cross nationalities, gender, age groups, varying regions within the countries, disciplinary boundaries, and they come from different sides of the divide in each context (as far as possible). This was planned to allow for “maximum variation” among the sample (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). To ensure relevant faculty, participants met one of the following criteria:

1. They teach a relevant subject area, e.g., Anthropology, Education, Geography, History, International Relations, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology, etc.;
2. They have students in class from the other side of the divide, which elicits natural conversations in the classroom related to the topic of conflict, division, and reconciliation (e.g., Chinese students in Taiwan); and/or
3. They have a personal commitment to teaching for peace through higher education.

The first author commenced the collection of the first stage of interview data in January 2022 and the second stage in July 2023. Data collection ceased in February 2024 when the study had reached saturation (Fusch and Ness, 2015). This was the point at which no new codes or themes emerged

from the analysis process (Denzin, 2012). Data saturation was achieved at the point of approximately eight interviews in each context. To ensure counter-positions and insights from across the divide, the first author collected interviews with participants from China and Somalia. Due to the nature of restricted access to participants in conflict-affected contexts, it was unfortunately not possible to collect equal amounts of data on each side of the divide, or to collect data from North Korea and northern Cyprus. See Table 1 for further details on the participants.

Table 1. Study participants

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Nationality</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Region</i>	<i>Discipline</i>	<i>Highest level of education</i>
P1 (CHN/TWN1)	China	M	50-59	Nanjing	History	PhD
P2 (CHN/TWN2)	China	F	30-39	Nanjing	Sociology	PhD
P3 (CHN/TWN3)	Taiwan	M	50-59	Taipei	Education	PhD
P4 (CHN/TWN4)	Taiwan	F	40-49	Jiayi	Anthropology	PhD
P5 (CHN/TWN5)	Taiwan	F	40-49	Kinmen	Asian Studies	PhD
P6 (CHN/TWN6)	Taiwan	M	50-59	Taipei	Sociology	PhD
P7 (CHN/TWN7)	Taiwan	F	50-59	Hsinchu	Sociology	PhD
P8 (CHN/TWN8)	Taiwan	F	60-69	Taipei	Journalism	PhD
P9 (CHN/TWN9)	Taiwan	M	50-59	Taipei	Geography	PhD
P10 (CHN/TWN10)	Taiwan	F	30-39	Taipei	Psychology	PhD

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P11 (CYP1)	Cyprus	F	40-49	Nicosia	Education	PhD
P12 (CYP2)	Cyprus	F	40-49	Larnaca	Education	PhD
P13 (CYP3)	Cyprus	F	40-49	Nicosia	Education	PhD
P14 (CYP4)	Cyprus	F	70-79	Nicosia	Political Science	PhD
P15 (CYP5)	Cyprus	M	50-59	Nicosia	Anthropology	PhD
P16 (CYP6)	Cyprus	M	40-49	Nicosia	International Relations	PhD
P17 (CYP7)	Cyprus	F	40-49	Nicosia	Education	PhD
P18 (CYP8)	Cyprus	F	40-49	Nicosia	Sociolinguistics	PhD
P19 (KOR1)	Korea	M	40-49	Jeonju	Sociology	PhD
P20 (KOR2)	Korea	F	30-39	Seoul	Political Science	PhD
P21 (KOR3)	Korea	F	40-49	Seoul	Education	PhD
P22 (KOR4)	Korea	M	50-59	Seoul	Anthropology	PhD
P23 (KOR5)	Korea	M	50-59	Seoul	Education	PhD
P24 (KOR6)	Europe* <sup>8</sup>	M	30-39	Daejeon	History	PhD

<sup>8</sup> \*To protect the identity of the participants, as there are very few international faculty by country/discipline in universities in Korea, these participants' home countries have not been named.

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P25 (KOR7)	Korea	F	70-79	Suwon	Education	PhD
P26 (KOR8)	North America*	F	40-49	Seoul	Education	PhD
P27 (SML1)	Djibouti & Somaliland	M	30-39	Hargeisa	Education	MA
P28 (SML2)	Somaliland	M	40-49	Hargeisa	International Relations	PhD
P29 (SML3)	Somaliland	M	30-39	Hargeisa	Liberal Arts	MA
P30 (SML4)	Somaliland	M	30-39	Hargeisa	Development	PhD candidate
P31 (SML5)	Somaliland	M	30-39	Borama	Education	PhD candidate
P32 (SML6)	Djibouti & Somaliland	M	30-39	Borama	Education	PhD candidate
P33 (SML7)	Somaliland	F	80-89	Hargeisa	Development	PhD
P34 (SML8)	Somalia	M	40-49	Mogadishu	Business	PhD

*Ethics*

The study followed the ethical guidelines of Seoul National University<sup>9</sup> and UKRI/UNICEF (2021) standards for conducting ethical research in conflict-affected settings. Informed consent was obtained from participants prior to data collection, and confidentiality and anonymity have been strictly maintained throughout the research process to protect all participants. Additionally, pseudonyms and member validation techniques have been used in the writing of reports and

<sup>9</sup> Both stages of the project received ethical clearance from Seoul National University (with Korean educators in 2022: Seoul National University IRB no. 2110/004-002, and with educators in Cyprus, Somaliland, and Taiwan in 2023-2024: Seoul National University IRB no. 2306/004-005).



research papers. Finally, findings will be published open-access in the coming year to provide accessibility to the research results for all relevant stakeholder communities across the research settings, as recommended by UKRI/UNICEF standards. We have also made provisions prior to publication for participants to check and respond to the analysis.

### *Analysis*

Data analysis involved transcription of all interview files (see Appendix 2) and coding of the transcripts in three stages (Appendix 3). In stage one, transcripts were read multiple times to identify codes. In stage two, these codes were then further categorized into related areas, or categories. In stage three, the categories were organized to identify key themes. Moreover, transcript themes were additionally compared with course syllabi, observation notes, and documents collected during field visits to triangulate data. Through this process of multiple readings and constant comparative analysis (Nowell et al., 2017; Saldana, 2021), four substantive themes were generated concerning educators' strategic responses for teaching peace through higher education in conflict-affected contexts (see Appendix 4). In the next section, we turn to detail the country contexts in which the study was conducted.

### **Contexts**

The settings in which this study took place are each divided and conflict-affected. In each context, higher education serves as a potential force (or not) for peace and reconciliation (see Makara, 2023). This section provides a brief overview of the higher education context of each country, in particular as concerns its intersections with culture, politics, and economics (Novelli et al., 2014; Robertson and Dale, 2015).

#### *China/Taiwan*

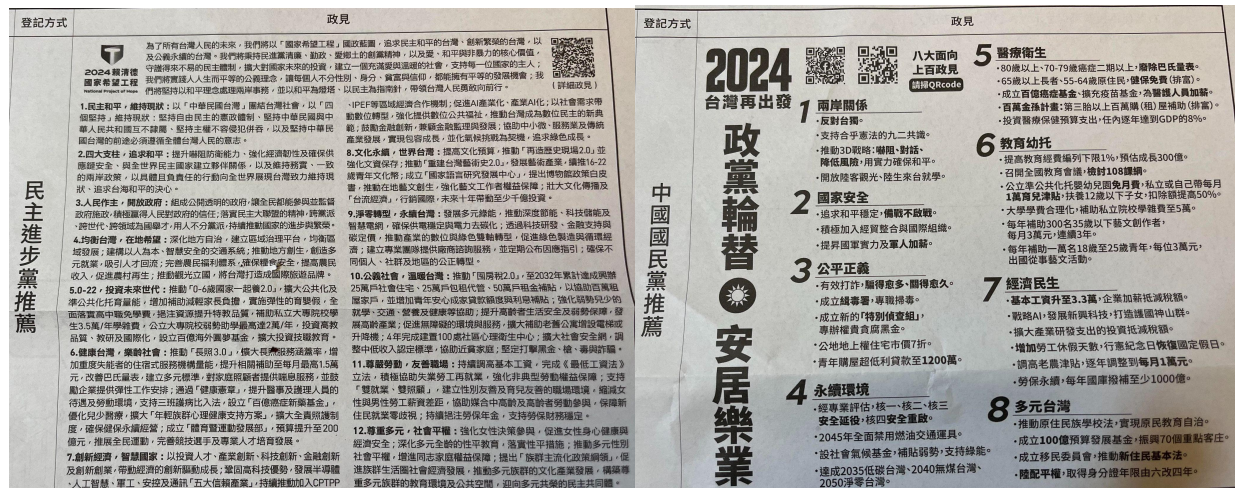
Taiwan is a non-recognized country.<sup>10</sup> Influenced by Japanese culture and indigenous tribes, it maintains a blend of hierarchical and egalitarian values. Its culture, deeply rooted in Chinese traditions, is notably conservative and family-centered. But the complexity of Taiwan's cultural identity arises from the shift away from traditional conservative ideologies to modern, pluralistic,

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<sup>10</sup> Taiwan and Somaliland – both non-recognized states in this study – are members of the Unrepresented Nations and People's Organization (UNPO). During this study, the lead researcher spoke in-person with representatives of UNPO.

and conflictual ethos (Wachman, 2016; Weiming, 1996). Politically, Taiwan is widely recognized for its robust democratic system, serving as a prominent example during the global wave of democratization in the 1980s and 1990s (Chou and Nathan, 1987; Wong, 2003). More recently, President Tsai Ing-wen (2016-2024) reiterated the importance of Taiwanese democracy for world peace. Yet, internally Taiwanese politics are divided between those who support closer relations with China and those who promote independence (Cho and Ahn, 2017). For example, the political platforms of the leading Taiwanese parties are generally split between the KMT – who firmly state that they are “against independence” – and the DPP who promote the “status quo” (see Image 1 below). Economically, throughout the late 20th century, Taiwan thrived due to well-planned policies, such as peaceful land reform that bolstered rural prosperity, and a subsequent focus on agriculture and industrial development that paved the way for substantial economic growth (Wu et al., 1989). In the late 20th and early 21st centuries, the economy was further bolstered by its leading production of computer microchips and other information and communication technologies (Ash, Garver and Prime, 2011).

Image 1. 2024 Agendas of the DPP and KMT Presidential Candidates



These policies showcase the DPP’s (left) clear stance on democracy, independence, and maintaining the “status quo” of cross-strait relations, while the KMT (right) are strongly “against independence.” (Source: Authors)

For its part, education has played a vital role in Taiwan's growth. Government policies on education in the post-1949 era emphasized widespread elementary and lower-secondary education

(Wu et al., 1989). In the 1960s, there was then a push to expand upper-secondary education, especially vocational and technical training, aligning with economic demands. Along with this, higher education experienced significant expansion and numerous five-year junior colleges were established to train mid-level professionals required by the industrial and business sectors (Chou, 2015). The enthusiasm for education among the Taiwanese people was a driving force behind these advancements. A cultural emphasis on knowledge, encapsulated in the saying, “The pursuit of knowledge is superior to all other occupations,” underscored the importance of education (Wu et al., 1989). This hunger for learning, coupled with government initiatives, led to a rapid expansion of all levels of education in Taiwan, fueling the nation’s progress and enhancing the overall quality of life for its citizens. This fervor remains today with nearly 150 universities, colleges, and junior colleges across the country, many of which are promoting stronger cross-national ties to strengthen Taiwan’s identity, culture, and national security both in relation to and beyond China (Cho and Ahn, 2017; Hsieh, 2020; Hung, 2016).

### *Cyprus*

Cyprus exhibits a distinct cultural difference between its northern Turkish and southern Greek regions since the 1974 division. In the north, the Turkish community emphasizes Turkish and Islamic heritage while Greek Cypriots speak a distinct Greek dialect and assimilate into Greece’s cosmopolitan culture reflecting a dynamic interplay of regional and global cultural influences. Politically, the 1960 constitution of the Republic of Cyprus outlined the division of executive power between a Greek Cypriot president and a Turkish Cypriot vice president, both elected for five-year terms through universal suffrage (Gürel and Özersay, 2006). As such, since attaining independence from British rule in 1960, the Constitution has struggled to reconcile the nationalistic aspirations of both groups, conflicts within and between them, and eventually civil strife (Philippou, 2009). Economically, tourism has driven rapid growth, yet the island’s reliance on tourism and a few key markets has posed challenges due to this dependency on a specific industry and limited trade (Sharpley, 2001).

Cyprus experienced a rising demand for higher education after gaining independence but despite this strong inclination towards advanced studies, the country did not establish any universities of its own until 1992, when the first state university was founded, and the absence of a public university until then prompted the establishment of several private educational institutions

(Menon, 1997). Later, when Cyprus sought European Union membership it aligned its formal education with European standards, and upon joining the EU in 2004 amidst cultural and economic globalization, there arose a necessity to modernize education in Cyprus (Zembylas, 2002). Zembylas (2002) characterizes Cyprus as a developing post-colonial nation grappling to find a balance between its local traditions and global influences.

### *Korea*

In the 20th century, Korea's tumultuous history created complex conflicts in cultural, political, economic, and educational spheres, largely influenced by external powers (Kang and Kwon, 2011). Specifically, Japan's colonization of Korea from 1910-1945 deeply impacted the nation's identity, culture and language development (Kim-Rivera, 2002). After independence in 1945, internal political divisions emerged, with factions aligning with either communism or liberal democracy, with this Cold War system still persisting on the Korean peninsula today. Within this context, peace has been defined as both the absence of war and a balance of forces in international relations (Kang and Kwon, 2011). Thus, the root of a divided Korea lies in its complex history, marked by processes of colonization, political division, and external (as well as competing internal) influences (Lee, 1989; Jung, 2023). Transforming these conflicts today requires reframing the conflict and promoting a culture of peace. Economically, South Korea gained rapid industrialization throughout the late 20th century and into the modern period of globalization (Cumings, 2005; Peters, 2020).

Education policy during the second-half of the twentieth-century in Korea was significantly influenced by the US, with the US military government shaping curricula, standards, and sending educators and students to the US for training (Jung, 2018; see also Peters, 2020, above). At the same time, Confucianism – while not directly shaping modern education – continued to influence Korean societal values and even the organizational culture in education administration from primary to tertiary education (Jung, 2018). Moreover, Korean resistance to Japanese colonization and later American presence led to social and educational movements to strengthen ethnic and linguistic monocultural identity (Yang, 2016). Additionally, higher education in Korea adopted Western values, democratic, and neoliberal ideologies (Shin, 2012; Yim, 2007). This intricate web of influences and historical legacies continues to shape Korean society, including its higher

education system, emphasizing the need for a nuanced approach to addressing underlying issues of diversity, conflict, and peace (Jung, 2018).

### *Somaliland*

Somaliland is a complex context. It was a British Protectorate until 1960, but shortly after gaining independence it voluntarily joined a union with Somalia (Bradbury, 2008). Then, a military coup by Mohamed Siyad Barre succeeded in 1969 and tensions rose to breaking points throughout his regime (Bradbury, 2008). With the fall of the dictatorship in 1991, Somaliland then re-established itself as an independent country (Bradbury, 2008; Prunier, 2021). Culturally, Somaliland is a clan-based society, which provides a sense of identity, security, purpose, and loyalty. This cultural form of organization is seen as a critical institution for the maintenance of sustainable peace, yet today it is also perceived as a barrier to progress (as many participants in this study indicate). Politically, though Somaliland is a functioning hybrid democracy (e.g., a Western liberal democracy with a Somali hybrid traditional elder structure, see Walls, 2017), it is internationally non-recognized.<sup>11</sup> Economically, the country is mostly self-reliant. Funding that it does receive is through remittances from overseas Somalis and subsistence agriculture (Bradbury, 2008; Phillips, 2020), though oil was discovered during the period of this study, much of which Taiwan has a claim to (Kao, 2023).

Since the 1990s, Somaliland has been growing its higher education sector to contribute to the state's self-sufficiency. In the initial years this meant the development of the teaching capacities of tertiary institutions, while more recently Somaliland has transitioned to emphasizing research development and dissemination (Pherali and Lewis, 2017), especially of its medical and engineering sectors. Since its re-establishment in 1991, Somaliland has been one of the most stable regions in the Horn of Africa. It generally has an image of peace because its isolation has led to a bottom-up approach to development, reconciliation, and reconstruction (Ali, 2017). Higher education in Somaliland has consistently promoted this peaceful image. At the time of our study, however, a series of delayed elections and an armed clan conflict in the city Los Anod led to the eastern region of Somaliland declaring itself independent, thus creating a new state called SSC-Khatumo. Combined, all of this makes Somaliland a culturally, politically, economically and educationally fragile setting within which higher education is often utilized as a tool for promoting internal unity, economic development, and peacebuilding (Bradbury, 2008; Phillips, 2020).

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<sup>11</sup> The international community considers Somaliland as an autonomous region in northwestern Somalia.

## **Findings**

This section presents the findings from the data. Four primary themes emerged in the analysis, including: the importance of building community, holding complexity/avoiding simplistic approaches to peacebuilding, criticality, and fear of change. We elaborate on each of these themes below, and theorize them through the lens of CPEE and borderlands.

### *Theme 1: Community*

The first theme to emerge from the analysis concerns the role of community-building in higher education aimed toward supporting efforts toward peace and reconciliation. Many participants spoke about internal divisions in their countries, not external or international divisions. For example, CHN/TWN5 from Kinmen spoke of Kinmen versus Taiwan, not Taiwan versus China (this is also evident in her course syllabus, see Appendix 3, which focuses on war and peace from the viewpoint of islands rather than states); and KOR1 spoke not about North Korea and South Korea, but about a gender divide existing in South Korea. Additionally, SML2's syllabus frames divisions within the Horn of Africa as the primary focus, not the division between Somaliland and Somalia (see Appendix 3).

Others in Somaliland also focused on the clan system. SML6 discussed clan factions within the country, not between Somaliland and Somalia, and SML3 expressed that, "We don't want to belong to any clan, but we have to belong to one common cause [in Somaliland]." That common cause is Somaliland's sovereignty. This is a viewpoint coming mostly from the Isaaq clan (Bradbury, 2008; see also SML6's transcript excerpt in Appendix 2). The Isaaq clan is the dominant clan of Somaliland that helped it to secede from Somalia and reestablish itself as an independent country in 1991. Then CHN/TWN5 raised her concern about political partisanship in Taiwan, for example, between the liberals and conservatives and between mainland Taiwan and Kinmen. She said, "I don't have any particular political party. But in Taiwan, it isn't possible. You should choose one... especially in Kinmen. The professors make their political identity very well known." Here, she highlighted the outwardly political stance of faculty. She concluded, "I think I should solve the internal [within Taiwan] conflict first. So that's why I talk about Kinmen first." It is evident from these expressions the concerns with internal divisions that faculty spoke about in their contexts more than international divisions.

Related to this, a subpart of this theme was the tendency of faculty to not talk about the divide between China/Taiwan, Cyprus, Korea, and Somalia/Somaliland. Several participants indicated that they perceive their country to be “at peace” (CYP6, CHN/TWN8), or at least speculated that most citizens might perceive the political environment to be peaceful. But there were other participants who pointed out the need to build trust between the different sides of the divide (e.g., CYP4; see Image 2 below). They highlighted that “we need more contact” (CYP2, CHN/TWN5). CHN/TWN5, for instance, spoke about the potential of “peace tourism” to foster mutual understanding between Chinese and Taiwanese; and participants in Korea (KOR1, KOR2, KOR8) spoke about the need to further promote gender equality, while CYP4 also highlighted the need to nurture gender sensitivity in Cyprus, as well as to further ethnic and religious understanding on the island.

Image 2. A unified China/Taiwan



This image from Kinmen Island (as viewed from Xiamen, China) suggests that reunification between China/Taiwan is inevitable – but not the type that Beijing propagates, rather – under the philosophy of Sun Yat-Sen (a philosophy more amicable to Taiwan). This is a strategic language choice – provocative when it was first built during the Cold War, but today perhaps more of an amusing relic – at the borders competing for sovereignty and subjugation. (Source: Nikkei Asia)

From a CPEE perspective, what this theme highlights is the complex array of identities in divided contexts, and the impact that these identities have on social cohesion inside and outside of the classroom. Furthermore, a CPEE lens emphasizes that these identities are constructed and – by

the nature of being constructed – they can be reconstructed. From a borderlands perspective as well, it reveals the potential that these “border culture” spaces can contribute to peacebuilding processes (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 3). In Kinmen Island, for example, this may involve ‘peace tourism’ by bringing Chinese to Taiwan and Taiwanese to China to foster intercultural understanding (see also Image 1 above, where the KMT argue for increased contact between Taiwanese and Chinese to nurture positive relations). In Cyprus, this involves the opening of the DMZ so that Cypriots from the south and north can travel back and forth on a daily basis across the UN buffer zones to get to know each other to deconstruct animosities and hatred. The Cyprus participants that the first author spoke to in this study highlighted that this process has largely been successful in terms of using contact to create stable bicomunal relations (though not without difficulty or controversy).

### *Theme 2: Complexity*

The next theme is complexity. Complexity emerged from the data around the multiplicity of challenges in conflict zones, including social sensitivity and navigating local and global perceptions and expectations, as well as the need to teach beyond simple black/white, us/them perspectives. As CYP1 stated, “there is no black and white.” CYP1, along with other participants, indicated that educators need to accept contingency, tolerance for ambiguity, and not teach simple answers when addressing difficult topics. As she said, educators, especially in conflict zones, should show multiple sides of the issues, bring in complexity, and give balanced views across the political spectrum. In his syllabus, SML4, too, embraces the notion of complexity and how different interpretations or definitions lead to different policy approaches (see Appendix 3).

In Taiwan, CHN/TWN6 also highlighted that peace should be viewed from a variety of perspectives. For him, peace is not a good word, it is a politically loaded term. For CHN/TWN6, in particular, peace may suggest acquiescence and subjugation to Beijing. For him – and others with this perspective – it does not represent freedom and democracy. The same critique holds for unification. For this reason, this is a language that he was not particularly open to and he’s not alone in this. SML2 also indicated that the language of unification is taboo, and SML1 described the pedagogic challenges with this discourse as opening wounds or risking the loss of friendship amongst peers. Pushing this notion of language further, contextuality is moved into the international sphere regarding state recognition and sovereignty, as the geographical location of a political entity – such as North Korea, northern Cyprus, Somaliland, or Taiwan – may function as



a state but it is not recognized by all in the international community (see Image 3). It does not meet the base “line of reference” in accordance with UN resolutions (CYP1 and SML5). Adding to this, the intricacies and importance of contextuality in education interact. Further, KOR3 demonstrates how even seemingly universal values are taught differently, indicating that “value education should be very contextual. Even though we're talking about universal human rights, the approach is so different.”

Image 3. The Korean peninsula ‘unified’



This North Korean textbook represents the worldview of a unified Korean peninsula from the perspective of North Korea. This perspective is taught in English language courses. On one hand, it highlights multiperspectivity on the issue of unification and critical reflection on what unification may entail. Simultaneously, this perspective is presented through English language teaching bringing to the fore an ambiguous relationship with English, as both the language of the enemy and the language of ideological possibilities in support of the North Korean regime (see Charalambous et al., 2021; Kang, 2020). (Source: Asia Press)

Adding another multifaceted layer, this complex fluidity lies not only in global and local differences, nuances, perceptions, and expectations, but also generational. KOR6 suggests that historical events are impacting modern politics. As a foreign professor working in South Korea, KOR6 expected international security and the issues surrounding the DMZ to be subjects of importance, but realized the focus is more on demography, age, economic justice, hegemony, and everyday lived realities. CHN/TWN8, too, reflected on how these expectations and experiences

become more complex with time, pointing to the structural ambiguity present in the relationships and interactions across generations and across local and global spaces. In addressing ambiguity, CHN/TWN3 identified the intertwined and multifaceted discourses surrounding peace and security in his critique of creating the conditions for such as not possible “under coercion or oppression.” This critique reflects the entanglement of sovereignty and subjugation, rather than existing as a binary having to live with or stand for one or the other. Participants CHN/TWN7 and SML1 noted the complicated social relations within and outside of the classroom as different generations experience different interactions with trauma, political events and divisions, and various forms of (neo)colonialism that result in the partitions of sovereignty and subjugation becoming more abstracted. This then creates challenges in teaching students through simplicity because as CHN/TWN7 states, “...it’s difficult to be able to elaborate clearly and what kind of complexity.” Yet, as SML3 asserts, “the question of unity, it’s dire to everyone... Especially the youth... They need a future.” Educators, especially in politically divided contexts, must bring in complexity and multiplicity to push past perceived binaries and address the evolving fluidity to guide students in criticality while simultaneously attempting to re-imagine possibilities for their futures.

A CPEE perspective indicates two major insights from this theme. First, educators need to hold different views simultaneously and be able to reconcile those viewpoints. This was also reflected in CPY5’s syllabus, “The course will enable students to understand people from their own as well as other cultures’ perspectives and to appreciate human cultural diversity and complexity” (see Appendix 3). Second, educators should be aware of the use of language that is contextually relevant, whether that is democracy, human rights, or intercultural understanding in that particular context; for example, in Korea, it’s human rights and democracy. In Somaliland and Taiwan, it’s the language of independence, the language of self-sufficiency. While in China, it’s the language of “mainland China/Taiwan”, and in Cyprus, Greek Cypriots from the south articulate the north as the ‘occupied territory of northern Cyprus’ indicating the Turkish are still illegitimately occupying the north of Cyprus today. Contextual relevance of language addresses the shift from a “black and white” perspective to a more colorful and complex fluidity between terms and relations that require appropriate strategies, approaches, and sensitivity when teaching challenging topics. From a borderlands perspective, this reveals multifaceted spaces in education that may reconcile the past, present, and future with opportunities for regeneration. This perspective indicates that sovereignty and subjugation are not opposing binaries, especially in

conflict-affected and divided societies, but rather alternative discourses/identities of complex ambiguity variably embedded in education.

*Theme 3: Criticality*

The third theme is criticality. The criticality theme is pronounced across all regions, denoting education's role in fostering critical thinking and engagement. In Cyprus, this involves addressing economic misperceptions and labor issues, as highlighted by an interviewee's concern about lower socioeconomic groups feeling threatened by employers disregarding the law, leading to new forms of racism and impacting peace efforts. For instance, CYP3 stated that, "a lot of people who are at the lower socioeconomic levels of the societal ladder... they are threatened by employers who don't respect the law... creating these new racisms... affecting the peacebuilding efforts." Relatedly, several community members with whom the first author spoke in Cyprus said that universities in the north were exploiting international students (e.g., from Africa) by deceiving them into believing that Turkish Cyprus is a member of the EU – under the logic that the whole island of Cyprus is – thus selling their non-EU connection. According to these community members, when international students arrive to the north and realize the deception, they hop the border to the south. From this viewpoint of community members, this socio-economic manipulation by the universities fuels frustration among Cypriots in Nicosia and beyond as the state must then respond to the challenges posed by this situation. In response, CYP3's syllabus shows her emphasis on promoting cultural pluralism through education policy and practice (see Appendix 3), as a way to present a variety of perspectives and critical thinking on neoliberal and institutional exploitation. She especially critiques the discourses of "new racisms" produced by these narratives of exploitation (real or perceived).

CYP8 also highlighted that "criticality" and "multiple perspectives" are exigent when teaching about conflict and nascent social issues in divided contexts, particularly as educators must then "deconstruct nationalistic and affective discourses about the other." Adding to this, the main focal point of CYP6's syllabus is to support students to engage in critical analysis of diplomatic processes, communication, and functions (see Appendix 3). Taiwan's focus is also on engaging students in diverse, often controversial discussions to encourage a broader understanding of law and human rights. For example, CHN/TWN3 encouraged his students to "put aside your personal opinions" and "let's discuss different positions." In South Korea, as indicated earlier, the emphasis

is on addressing gender inequality, reflecting the interviewee's observation of gender issues in younger generations (KOR1). Meanwhile, in Somaliland, criticality is essential for post-conflict nation-building, shifting from traditional clan politics to a more educational-centric approach. SML1 said that, "...the clan elders, they have done a wonderful job. But now their role has ended. Now it's the role of the educators, the intellectuals, the Islamic scholars." SML1 is suggesting, like others in our study, that Somaliland needs to move beyond clan politics toward a common state identity (this is also emphasized in Theme 1 above).

Here, language plays a dual role as both a unifier and a divider. In Cyprus, language differences underscore ethnic divides (i.e., Greek and Turkish), while in South Korea and Taiwan, English proficiency links to global engagement and socioeconomic status (see Yim, 2007). This is exemplified, too, in Taiwan, where cultural and political barriers (reified through accents and dialects) present challenges in navigating cultural perceptions, as seen in the educators' experiences with Chinese students: "The Chinese student... sometimes you feel that their answers are like propaganda" (CHN/TWN4). Yet, many other participants suggested that their Chinese students are amongst the most critical (e.g., CHN/TWN7, CHN/TWN9, CHN/TWN10). The ability to communicate across these linguistic, cultural, and political barriers is crucial for fostering mutual understanding and facilitating peacebuilding efforts. In Cyprus, overcoming language barriers and addressing complex issues like historical grievances is essential for sustaining balanced and diverse participation in dialogue (see Hadjipavlou, 2007). As such, the inculcation of values through education significantly shapes societal perceptions and interactions. In Taiwan, the focus on democratic and peaceful values (see also Image 2 above) is evident in the educators' approach to teaching social issues, as they emphasize non-violence: "most of the social work I teach is non-violence... I think the first question we should ask is 'should we break the law'? That's the civil disobedience issue... whether it's our duty or our right to not go by the law. Then we can move on to the next level. That is, violence... The purpose of my teaching is to know the process and the mechanism" of democratic social change (CHN/TWN6). South Korea's education system, still influenced by Cold War ideology, highlights the enduring impact of historical values (see Kang, 2002; Yang, 2016). These examples underscore education's ongoing role in molding and adapting to changing moral, cultural, and democratic ideals, as well as an understanding of globalization's ongoing complexities.

Furthermore, inequality and marginalization, particularly evident in South Korea’s wealth and power disparities, calls for education strategies that address these issues. KOR1 raised his concern that, “Less than a quarter of the population, I think, holds more than 80% or 90% of the national wealth.” Economic threats, particularly in Cyprus, underscore the importance of education in addressing societal misperceptions and fostering a more nuanced understanding of economic dynamics and labor rights. Additionally, education as a platform for dialogue in peacemaking is evident, as mentioned by CYP3 and CYP4. The neoliberal challenges in higher education in contexts like Somaliland, where government funding is limited (SML4), highlight the difficulties in maintaining a critical pedagogical approach when institutions rely heavily on student tuition. SML4 indicated that there is a “need to strengthen public institutions” and “know the culture of the community” (see also SML4’s syllabus in Appendix 3). Additionally, SML5 suggested that unification with Somalia is viable to attract further international aid. He said, “some people have an opinion that ‘we are tired for a long time as we are not getting international recognition. That’s why our education is not moving forward or our life gets hard, so maybe it’s better to unify with some money so we can get a better life’” (see Image 4). This lack of government funding, then, leads to fragility at the state level, and at the level of higher education it creates dependence on student tuition, thus potentially undermining education’s criticality.

Image 4. Billboards for aid agencies in Somaliland



These NGO signs (written in English and Somali) showcase several aid agencies present in Hargeisa. Somaliland’s (neo)colonial past and present is doubly evident in these billboards signifying dependence of foreign aid, which some participants indicated as a situation imposed by

European powers. At the same time, some participants argued for unification to attract further international funding. (Source: Authors)

From a CPEE perspective, this data reveals the multifaceted role of education in shaping societal norms, behaviors, and perceptions across diverse contexts. Viewed through the lens of the borderlands perspective, the interplay of criticality, language, and values in education becomes pivotal in shaping its impact on peace, conflict, and societal cohesion. This perspective underscores the importance of recognizing and engaging with the inherent complexities and contradictions of educational environments. Rather than seeking to eliminate differences, this approach advocates for critically and creatively engaging with them. Through this engagement, education can cultivate a deeper understanding and appreciation of diversity, fostering more inclusive and equitable societies. This borderlands perspective reframes education as a dynamic space where diverse narratives and identities converge, offering a unique opportunity for transformative learning and intercultural understanding.

#### *Theme 4: Change*

The fourth theme is change, or the ebb and flow of change, how change sometimes goes backwards not forwards. Several participants, for example, argued that maintaining the status quo in cross-strait relations between China and Taiwan (e.g., CHN/TWN8), or in divided yet stable contexts like Cyprus (e.g., CYP3), increases in difficulty as time progresses. These participants argue that the status quo is not in fact static, that it takes more work over time to maintain. This perspective introduces a crucial dimension to the understanding of change, acknowledging that even the seemingly stable elements of international relations or regional stability are subject to shifts and necessitate sustained efforts for preservation.

Moreover, this theme illustrates a nuanced understanding of peacebuilding that involves addressing power dynamics and inequalities beyond the mere absence of conflict (see Image 5 below). For instance, the emphasis on open, genuine dialogue (CHN/TWN3 and CYP8) suggests a recognition of its importance in addressing complex issues. The skepticism about peace discussions without addressing power dynamics implies a critical view of the effectiveness of dialogue in the absence of addressing underlying inequalities as CHN/TWN3 argued that “it’s no use to talk about peace at all if they can take whatever they want.” Also, recognition of generational

differences in understanding historical events and challenges (CHN/TWN8) in explaining past events to younger generations suggests evolving views over time, contributing to a dynamic socio-political landscape. Here, SML3’s statement that “politics without leadership is a dirty game” suggests a recognition of the importance of ethical and responsible leadership in maintaining political stability and peace. The vision for modernizing society, eliminating ignorance, and spreading knowledge suggests an understanding that higher education and awareness play vital roles in fostering a peaceful and informed society (SML4).

Image 5. Bellapais in Kyrenia, northern Cyprus



In Cyprus, cathedrals and mosques across the island provide relics of an integrated multicultural and multi-faith past. These cultural sites today point toward present tensions between the now-divided Christian south and Islamic north. (Source: Authors)

A change toward a better world in Somaliland is centered around a peaceful, developed, and recognized Somaliland, emphasizing internal and external factors that contribute to lasting peace and stability (SML1, SML4). SML2 emphasized this in his syllabus (Appendix 3), “The module, therefore, advances a more comprehensive understanding of peace, conflict, and development processes in the Horn of Africa, including the environmental scarcities, cultural and ethnic clashes, geographic fortunes, and conflict transformation.” In the Korean context, too, education is consistently presented as a key agent for social change, emphasizing inclusivity and addressing societal inequalities (KOR1). In his syllabus, KOR1 defines the purpose of his course as cultivating “a sociological perspective on law and legal phenomena” to address social change. This recognizes the role of education in fostering a more just and peaceful society by nurturing informed and engaged citizens. The evolving Cyprus situation, with an emphasis on new

challenges, changing dynamics, and political complexity, highlights the need for an adaptable and nuanced approach to peacebuilding (CYP3, CYP6). For example, CYP3 discusses this subtlety in relation to national holidays, “So we talk about, it is important to honor national celebrations, but how we do it in a different way. So, for example, we don’t honor war through education. Instead, we honor movements fighting for freedom and for justice.” This recognizes that peacebuilding efforts must evolve to address the dynamic nature of conflicts. The portrayal of peace as a process and the importance of forming alliances emphasize the collaborative and ongoing nature of peacebuilding. These insights provide valuable lessons for other contexts, emphasizing the need for sustained efforts and cooperation in the pursuit of peace.

From a CPEE perspective, this highlights deeply ingrained historical narratives and identities, showcasing the cultural complexities inherent in different regions. Politically, as shown by the participants, the acknowledgment of the dynamic nature of the status quo emphasizes the evolving political landscape and the persistent challenges in maintaining stability. The shifting situation in a given context underscores the necessity of an adaptable approach, recognizing the cultural, political, and economic intricacies intertwined within a setting. Education consistently emerges here as a potentially transformative force, fostering inclusivity and addressing societal inequalities, thus contributing to the vision of a more just and peaceful society. Yet, higher education can also be a force for reproducing inequitable power relations, as highlighted by TWN2, who said that “sometimes” as the lecturer “you feel that [students] answers are like propaganda.” This foregrounds the need to consider ‘the two faces of education’ in conflict zones (Bush and Saltarelli, 2000). Additionally, from a borderlands perspective, this theme highlights the importance of recognizing and navigating the ‘in-between’ spaces in societies, where different narratives, histories, and ideologies meet and interact. This borderlands lens, therefore, reinforces the idea of peace as a dynamic, collaborative process that demands continuous engagement with the complexities of cultural and political landscapes, emphasizing the need for adaptability, inclusivity, and a deep understanding of underlying power dynamics. Overall, this theme underscores peace as an ongoing, comprehensive process that may be either rooted in principles of inclusivity and addressing societal inequalities or reinforcing injustices, thus highlighting the exigency to understand the complex interplay of power and historical grievances in divided contexts. We turn now to the discussion.



## **Discussion**

Here, we discuss the implications of the findings and compare these with the extant literature. In doing so, we highlight where our findings confirm or challenge the existing literature. We also present key learnings from each setting as articulated by the participants, and finally we present curricular, pedagogical, and policy implications.

### *In conversation with the literature*

As indicated in the findings, our study confirms that the use of the term ‘peace’ is politically loaded in conflict-affected contexts. CHN/TWN6, for example, expressed his discontent with the concept, which for him is more closely related to suppression and subjugation rather than freedom. This confirms what Smith (2005) and Zakharia (2016) have previously shown regarding the contested and politically fraught nature of peacebuilding. Furthermore, as highlighted in Somaliland, the educational infrastructure – including physical buildings and learning materials as well as human capital – is weak and fragile, thus inhibiting the extent to which peace may be promoted through higher education (Ahmed and Shahzad, 2021; Lopes et al., 2019). In such a context, often the privileged and wealthy alone can access higher education meaning it tends to reproduce class privileges rather than offer substantial efforts toward equitable development and transformative opportunities (Cremin, 2016).

This study also shows the myriad ways that university educators ‘scale up’ peace work to ensure impact beyond the immediate student population. This challenges the argument by Cromwell (2022) and Salomon (2011) that the effectiveness of peace education is limited to the target group. At the same time, our study confirms the literature indicating that collecting data on the tensions and challenges of peace education in conflict-affected settings is hindered by issues of personal safety and logistical constraints including access (Tinker, 2016; Wright, 2010). Additionally, the data in our study confirm that the concept of unification in divided societies has numerous interpretations (Loader and Hughes, 2017). For example, CHN/TWN5 encouraged unification with China under an economic logic but stopped short of promoting political unification. Also, SML1 and SML5 suggested that unification between Somaliland and Somalia would have a positive economic impact on Somaliland as the country would then have access to international aid (which currently, as a non-recognized state, it does not). On the other hand, CHN/TWN3 was adamant that no unification with China – economic, political, or otherwise – is

acceptable. Thus, our study too shows that the concept of unification is fraught with contested interpretations and approaches across the contexts. Furthermore, the intractable nature of conflict and division – or at least the perception that conflict is intractable – presents a significant barrier toward any positive reconciliation or creative conflict transformation (Dingli, 2012; Zembylas, 2011).

Finally, many participants in our study showed support for intergroup contact education suggesting that it helps breakdown stereotypes and misunderstanding between conflicting groups (see also Allport, 1954; Hadjipavlou, 2007; Loader and Hughes, 2017). CYP2 and CYP4, for example, highly encouraged intergroup contact, as did CHN/TWN1. It should be noted that in each of these cases it could be said that the group encouraging intergroup contact is the politically dominant group (e.g., China, Greek Cyprus, South Korea). Moreover, our findings highlight how higher education may foster conditions to fuel conflict, instability, and fragility as is also evident in other studies on higher education teaching, research, and service in conflict zones (Dillabough et al., 2018; Milton, 208; Sahar and Kaunert, 2021). For example, as indicated above, several participants in Cyprus stated that universities in the north were exploiting international students, especially from Africa, by suggesting that Turkish Cyprus is a member of the EU – under the logic that the whole island of Cyprus is – thus selling the supposed EU connection. This situation feeds frustration among Cypriots in the south and beyond as the state must then respond to the challenges created by this situation. All in all, the findings reinforce and add nuance to the extant literature with contemporary evidence from the four divided contexts herein.

#### *In conversation across contexts*

From a CPEE perspective that education is embedded within broader social, political, and economic structures (Higgins and Novelli, 2020; Kester, 2018; Vickers, 2022), the educators ‘scale up’ their impact beyond the higher education classroom to ensure a positive impact more broadly at these levels. For instance, in interviews the faculty explained that they are involved in in-service teacher training and public forums on education, division, peacebuilding and reconciliation (e.g. CHN/TWN5, CYP1, KOR1, SML2). They additionally publish academic research in these areas as well as public pieces in newspapers and blogs to reach a wider audience. For example, SML2 believes that quality “education can play a very active role when it comes to the stability and social cohesion...” because education that embeds peacebuilding processes leads to tangible solutions.

Moreover, many described their work with NGOs and/or policymaking activities, and their roles in informing government policy. And, when asked by the first author, “what can others learn from higher education for peace in their context?”, the educators provided unique insights. In Cyprus, for instance, CYP1 said, “The feeling of threats exists everywhere. Everyone feels insecurity. And so if this is the case, then peace education is relevant in any setting.”

From Korea, KOR5 said, “you can be very critical of the state of your society, but then not presenting any alternatives would be very irresponsible. So being in the education field, educators are at the forefront in terms of bringing about social change.” So this participant sees a very deep responsibility for educators and scholars to contribute to positive social change. And, in Somaliland, SML4 says that, “actually what the world can learn from Somaliland is peace. As a country, as a community, we come together, we sit under the trees, we discuss our problems, we minimize our differences. Somaliland has sustained peace for 30 years.” Then, the last one, TWN5 said that “identity is socially constructed, so change of identity is possible.” And you can imagine how deep this runs in a context like Taiwan. Overall, these are the expressions of what the scholars said other educators have to learn from their experiences.

#### *Some curricular, pedagogical and policy implications*

The findings hold implications for curriculum, pedagogy, and educational policy in conflict zones. In terms of curriculum, it is crucial that educators approach teaching and learning through multiperspectival lenses allowing students to assess debates from a variety of perspectives. This was seen in CYP3’s syllabus promoting cultural pluralism, CHN/TWN3 encouraging students to “discuss different positions”, and SML2 using assignments to assess students’ abilities to engage in critical analysis. Along with multiple other participants indicating the need for criticality, to accept contingency, tolerance for ambiguity, and bringing in complexity, this approach would help prevent a one-sided presentation of issues and promote critical thinking among learners (see Ahmed and Shahzad, 2021). Additionally, syllabi and reading lists should offer diverse readings from across race/ethnic, gender, religious, political, and domestic/international divides (Chen, 2010; Connell, 2007). Moreover, as shown through the CPEE reading of the data, higher education for peacebuilding should be recontextualized to the specific context in which it is being taught through local readings and indigenous theoretical perspectives (Barreto, 2012). As seen in the findings, this contextualization of themes and topics – and competing discourses – for

peacebuilding was also applied by the educators to address the dynamic and changing nature of conflict in their locales. Doing so helps avoid essentialist and static understandings of peace by presenting its many contrapuntal readings (Subedi, 2013). This links with the themes of complexity and criticality in our findings.

In terms of pedagogy, university educators could facilitate debate and dialogue through interactive teaching methods that foreground knowledge construction, thus highlighting the contextual contingency of concepts such as peace, justice, truth, and reconciliation. Andreotti et al. (2015), for instance, present ‘social cartography’ as a pedagogical method for presenting different modes of understanding complex and culturally-specific terms. Through social cartography they map out the diverse responses to education for social change, including ‘no reform’, ‘soft-reform’, ‘radical-reform’ and ‘beyond-reform’ spaces (Andreotti et al., 2015, p. 26). The ‘no-reform’ space suggests that current educational, cultural and political practices are acceptable. By contrast, ‘soft-reform’ involves supporting students to learn the rules of the game (i.e., social, political, and economic norms) such that everyone has an equal opportunity (theoretically) to play. ‘Radical-reform’ includes changing the rules of the game so that access is not limited based on race, gender, sexuality, and political orientation, among other demographic markers. Finally, the ‘beyond reform’ space acknowledges that social norms are unfair and in turn it may be wisest to refuse to play the game altogether.

In regard to peacebuilding practices, this social cartography indicates that no response is needed in the ‘no reform’ space, new policies for increased access are necessary for ‘soft reform’, changing epistemological paradigms from a culture of war to a culture of peace is exigent for ‘radical reform’, and ‘beyond reform’ should involve finding ways to hack the system to create heterotopic spaces for peace, as well as opting out and disrupting systems of violence (e.g., militarism, racism, poverty, patriarchy, heteronormativity, etc.) to let those systems decline on their own. All in all, this links with the themes of community and change in our findings, which indicate that the educators in this study employ a variety of these options for peacebuilding. At the level of policymaking, the same approaches to diversity, critique, CPEE and borderlands can be applied, again as evidenced by the educators’ responses herein.

## Conclusion

In examining the multiple practices that university educators employ in their work for peace and reconciliation in divided and conflict-affected contexts, this study has revealed the dynamic and complex ways that educators respond to difficult and controversial social issues in the classroom. In the end, the research shows promising ways in which faculty grapple with contested visions of peace and unification in divided contexts. Educators in related settings and beyond have much to benefit from employing similar approaches in their specific locales, all the while taking into consideration specific nuances of the varied contexts. As a CPEE and borderlands perspective indicates, educators elsewhere may learn from others across diverse settings as they seek to delink from oppressive structures in creative and contextually-relevant ways. Such a delinking process necessarily entails creative leadership to offer viable alternatives to the status quo in conflict zones.

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## **Appendix 1**

### **Interview Protocol**

During this interview, you will be asked about your experiences teaching for peace, reconciliation, and conflict transformation in universities. I am interested in knowing how you conceptualize of a better more peaceful future society, what changes you think are necessary to get there, and how you employ aspects of higher education (e.g., curricular, pedagogic, and institutional policy strategies) to work toward creating that better future society with your students and colleagues. Please remember that the information you share during this interview will only be used for the purposes of this research. You may choose to not answer any questions you wish, or to withdraw at any time without consequence. Thank you again for agreeing to participate in the study.

#### Interview:

##### *Preliminary questions*

1. What is your nationality?
2. What is your gender identity?

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3. What is your age bracket?
4. What is your highest level of education?
5. What subject do you teach?
6. Where do you currently work?
7. What is your current position?
8. How many years have you worked in your current position?

### *Substantive questions*

1. What is your vision for a better world and how does it inform your teaching?
2. What type of peace are you seeking through education (e.g., security, justice, human rights, unification, intercultural understanding, gender equality)?
3. Is there a philosophy or theory that drives your work?
4. What courses do you teach that advocate for peace and unification? Would you be willing to share a sample syllabus that illustrates your practice?
5. What attracted you to this work?
6. When did you start thinking about doing this work?
7. Did you have any early experiences in your life that contributed to your decision to work for peace and social change through higher education?
8. Do you have a specific story to highlight the connections you make between higher education, peace and reconciliation?
9. Are there any other factors that made you decide to teach for peace and justice?
10. What do you think are the qualities and skills that are important for educators who advocate for peace and justice through their teaching?
11. What are the challenges and opportunities you face in doing this work? Can you share a success story or failure?
12. How does this work relate more broadly to your research, administration and other duties at the university? For example, what is your research area? What administrative responsibilities do you have? Do you have any other responsibilities at the university, or in your field, that allow you to work holistically toward peace and justice?
13. Who benefits from such education for peace and social change?

14. How do you ‘scale up’ your work to have an impact beyond the classroom (e.g., publishing, public forums, NGO work, etc.)?

15. What do other countries (e.g., China/Taiwan, Cyprus, Korea, Somaliland, etc.) have to learn from the experience in [China/Taiwan, Cyprus, Korea, Somaliland]?

16. Do you have any questions or ending comments?

Once again, thank you for your participation and the insights shared today. I will share with you soon the transcript of this interview for your review. Additionally, prior to the completion of the study I will share the findings for any final comments you may wish to add. It is my hope that this collective process will help us to better know how university educators working in divided and conflict-affected contexts understand, encounter and respond to the challenges and opportunities of promoting positive social change through higher education.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Sample transcripts**

These short excerpts from the transcripts highlight several of the key debates and themes that emerged from the data, as detailed in our findings.

#### CHN/TWN6

PAR: I teach courses in social movements, social labor, social environment. So I'm pretty much focused on social movements, like so social movement is, a lot, a lot of social movement is actually about conflict. It's about politics by other means. It's about political participation and especially mobilized by those marginalized people and they want justice.

PAR: So you see the conflict. Actually, conflict is pretty much the focus I'm looking at. Also, there's a reason why we sociologists pay so much attention to social movements because they often bring social change, and conflicts are actually kind of a necessary process, so if peace is defined as the opposite of conflict, I would say that such peace will always be superficial because we have depression everywhere, sometimes the people just suffer and without saying anything. That's not really peace. Peace without justice is not peace at all. So, this is what I actually do. So in the classes we look at different ways people mobilize, change the existing order, break the rules,

and change the existing law. So this is our conflict generating. So for me, I don't think peace within a society per se is a virtue.

PAR: Oftentimes, because we are, we have parties from different parts of the people, like different gender orientations, different sectors, and so on. So for me, I don't think peace, for me, is, I mean, societal peace is very important. But when peace is defined as the opposite of war, like especially when it comes to geopolitical conflicts, I think it really depends on what you mean by peace. Because like we in Taiwan, we are facing an existential threat from China. China just wants to annex Taiwan, and that's everyone. And this also comes in the debate in the Presidential election. Everyone wants peace, but you want peace by actually surrendering? You can surrender yourself and have a sort of peace, right? Or you can try to remain, protect your dignity, a way of life, by arming yourself, by building up deterrence forces. That's another way of peace. So it's debatable...

IN: In your classes, do questions about Taiwan's sovereignty ever come up? And Taiwan's relationship with China, the cross-strait relations? Do you discuss these in class?

PAR: I would not talk about that per se. But I'm looking, I'm studying, I have been studying Taiwan's social movements for more than 20 years. And there have been a lot of changes. I would say before 2010, most of the civil society activism was more focused on domestic issues, but with the growing rise of China, I think Taiwan really feels the coercive presence of China in different parts of the arena and different parts of everyday life. So more and more civil society organizations are fighting against the penetration of Chinese power in Taiwan....

#### SML6

IN: Okay. I want to go back and ask some questions about your previous answers. So when you said your vision for a better world and how it informs your teaching in Somaliland, you emphasized internal peacebuilding, uh, fair elections, democracy in Somaliland, a new philosophy and curriculum for Somaliland, etc. We talked about your philosophy and your curriculum ideas, but I want to ask a bit about the internal peacebuilding and fair elections. How does this become integrated into the courses that you're teaching? Do you have conversations about these topics?

PAR: Yes, I have so many conversations. You know, you know, there is what we call the foundations of curriculum. There are some, you know, factors that can affect the curriculum when we are building it. So these factors include historical foundations, the history of the country, sociological foundations, psychological foundations, philosophical foundations, economical foundations, political foundations, legal foundations. There are so many foundations that we can build our curriculum on. So there's what we call sociology. We can have it, there's also a legal foundation, which is from the constitution. You know, the Somaliland system of government is based on tribes. Tribes. It's based on tribes. We only say it is democratic, but, you know, in reality, Somaliland politics is based on tribes and clans. So, in 1993, different tribes came together, and they have signed, you know, contracts or agreements between them. The way they want to run the government. But later, these days, we see that... Only one tribe is just trying to force the others, and when it comes to, you know, power in the country and the politics of the country, which is the, you know, the middle clan, we call it the middle clan, Isaaq.... So, I always try to reach the people to have what we call a sociological foundation in our curriculum. Like a course called civic education because we don't have a citizenship education course in our education. Yeah. We never had that. We will need to have what we call civics or citizenship education. So that course teaches them their rights, their responsibilities, their roles, and status, norms, everything. Because as a society, we have culture, and that culture has different elements, and that elements include the norms, the sanctions, the language, the technology, the status, the roles, and everything....

### **Appendix 3**

#### **Sample syllabi documents**

These samples are short excerpts extracted from syllabi across the various study contexts.

#### CHN/TWN1

Course title: Positive Peace and Conflict Resolution

(Undergraduate general course)

Course outline

1. Course Overview
2. Definition of peace and violence
3. Causes of war

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4. Class discussion: How to create a world without war
5. Theory and Practice of Nonviolence
6. Justice and just war
7. The Four Elements of Reconciliation
8. Class Discussion: Case Study of Post-War Reconciliation between Nations
9. Religion and Peace
10. Gender and peace
11. Interpersonal conflict transformation
12. Conflict analysis and mediation skills
13. Class Discussion: Case study of how to mediate conflict as a third party
14. Globalization and the culture of peace

### CHN/TWN5

Course title: History and Culture of East Asian Islands

(Undergraduate general course)

教學進度	中文	每週進度及教學內容簡述 第1週 東亞戰爭史 第2週 東亞戰爭史 第3週 東亞戰爭史 第4週 戰爭島嶼：金門、馬祖 第5週 戰爭島嶼：金門、馬祖 第6週 戰爭島嶼：金門、馬祖 第7週 戰爭島嶼：韓國西海五島、濟州島 第8週 期中考 第9週 戰爭島嶼：韓國西海五島、濟州島 第10週 戰爭島嶼：韓國西海五島、濟州島 第11週 戰爭島嶼：韓國西海五島、濟州島 第12週 戰爭島嶼：沖繩 第13週 戰爭島嶼：沖繩 第14週 戰爭島嶼：沖繩 第15週 爭端與和平 第16週 期末考
Syllabus	English	
評量方式	中文	出席率 25% 上課表現 25% 期中考 25% 期末考 25%
Evaluation	English	
永續發展目標 Sustainable Development Goals		16-和平正義與健全制度(Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions)
參考網址		

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CYP3

Course title: Theory and Practice of Intercultural Education

(Graduate elective course)

Course purpose and objectives

The objectives of the course are for students to:

- Critically approach new educational perspectives in our modern multicultural world.
- Get an in-depth insight in the global values that should be cultivated through education so as to promote a universal ethic:
- Recognise the need for the educational management of cultural pluralism through the use of different models in our modern super-diverse societies.
- Understand the concept, mechanisms and effects of the Europeanisation of Intercultural Education.
- Recognise the important role of school leadership in promoting Intercultural Education.
- Get an in-depth insight in the concept, characteristics and functions of the intercultural teaching methodology, as well as other innovative educational practices regarding Intercultural Education.

Learning outcomes

Upon the completion of the course students will be able to:

- explain and contrast the objectives, characteristics and critique for each model aiming at the educational management of cultural pluralism.
- analyze how specific tools can contribute to the promotion of Intercultural Education.
- explain the causes and consequences of stereotypes, prejudices and inequalities.
- analyze the impact of European policies in the development of national intercultural education policies.
- critically analyze educational policy texts and curricula and describe the factors that influence the implementation of intercultural educational policy in Cyprus and Greece.

CYP5

Course title: Cultural Diversity Around the World

(Undergraduate elective course)

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### Course Description

To provide students with an understanding of the significance of cultural diversity around the world. The course will enable students to understand people from their own as well as other cultures' perspectives and to appreciate human cultural diversity and complexity.

### Learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students are expected to be able to:

- Analyze key anthropological concepts for understanding cultural diversity around the world such as culture, ethnocentrism, and cultural relativism.
- Discuss anthropology's contributions to our understanding of cultural diversity and difference.
- Describe the relationship between language, culture and ideology through reference to examples from diverse cultural settings.
- Analyze the significance of various forms of social organization such as economic activity, kinship, marriage, and family as they relate to culture.
- Explain how social categories such as gender, race, and ethnicity intersect with culture to create a more complicated picture of cultural diversity.

### CYP6

Course title: Diplomacy

(Undergraduate elective course)

### Learning outcomes

After completion of the course students are expected to:

- Illustrate familiarity with the evolution of modern diplomatic thought and practice.
- Analyse the different types of diplomatic relation and contact and the work of diplomatic organisations such as foreign ministries and missions.
- Compare the processes of negotiation, mediation, diplomatic communication, and the function of diplomatic ceremony and law.



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- Assess the key aspects of negotiation tactics, methods and limitations
- Assess in a critical manner the process of negotiation, mediation, diplomatic communication, and the function of diplomatic ceremony and law.
- Trace the development of multilateral diplomacy and its functioning.
- Assess the impact of technology and of the new media on diplomatic conduct.
- Demonstrate familiarity with different forms/sub-fields of diplomacy such as public and defensive diplomacy.
- Develop oral and written communication skills in the formulation of conceptual problems and be able to organize the available time and cope with deadlines.
- Demonstrate the learning skills, including use of IT, to allow them to continue education in a self-directed manner and to work on an academic level within the intended professional field.
- Use libraries, bibliographical material and academic research in an efficient manner.
- To use AI to generate solutions and innovative positions

### Course Contents

1. Origins, definition and study of diplomacy
2. The development of the Modern Diplomatic System & the New Diplomacy
3. Actors and venues of diplomacy
4. Structure and functions of Foreign Ministries and Diplomatic Missions
5. Bilateral diplomatic relations, unconventional diplomatic relations and diplomatic culture
6. Negotiations – key aspects, methods and limitations
  - a. Levels of communication
  - b. Key concepts of negotiation (BATNA, ZOPA, etc.)
7. Multilateral diplomatic relations
8. Telecommunications, technological changes and diplomacy
  - a. Cyber Diplomacy
  - b. AI and Diplomacy
9. Mediators and mediation
10. Politicians and diplomacy
11. Processes, functions and diplomatic typology

- a. Public Diplomacy
- b. Economic Diplomacy
- c. Defense/security Diplomacy
- d. Cultural Diplomacy

## 12. Summary and Conclusions

### KOR7

Course title: Peace and Citizenship Education

(Graduate elective course)

교육대학원: 평화와 세계시민교육

수업목표: 본 교과목은 현재 학교현장에서 심각하게 부딪히는 갈등의 문제를 평화와 시민성의 함양이라는 주제 하에 비폭력적으로 다루는 역량을 길러주지 위한 교직과목이다. 오늘날 시민교육은 민주시민교육이든 세계시민교육이든 공동체가 추구하는 평화적 공존을 지향하는 시민성 함양을 육성함을 목적으로 한다. 여기서 평화란 사회적 불안정으로 인해 야기되는 문제가 온전하게 해소되지 않을 때 발생하는 갈등이 폭력으로 번질 때 이에 대처하는 비폭력적 대응수단이며 동시에 그러한 비폭력적 상태를 말한다. 여기서 평화가 무엇이며 어떻게 교육을 통해 말할 수 있는지부터 이를 통한 세계(민주)시민성이 어디까지며 교육을 통해 과연 그러한 상태에 도달할 수 있는지에 대한 과정을 이번 학기에 다룬다.

(English translation of KOR7's syllabus extract: This course aims to foster nonviolent capabilities to deal with conflicts happening at current school sites under the themes of peace and cultivation of citizenship. The purpose of today's citizenship education, such as democratic citizenship education or global citizenship education, is to seek citizenship oriented toward peaceful coexistence. Here, peace is a nonviolent means to prevent conflicts from turning into violence. This course covers definitions of peace and how to approach peace through education, particularly through global (democratic) citizenship education.)

### SML2

Course title: Peace, Conflict and Development in the Horn of Africa

(Graduate required course)

1. Module description

The module examines the relationship between peace, conflict, and development in the Horn of Africa, beginning with a review of some of the principal causes of conflict. The assumption is that many of the primary causes of conflict in the Horn of Africa are closely related to the question of development. Examples of current trends of peace and conflict, such as disputes over borders and self-determination, challenges of democratization, the question of identity and ethnic tensions, disputes over the use and development of international water resources, tensions over land claims, the destabilizing impact of widespread poverty and increasing social inequality, and a rising flow of migrants fleeing war, famine, and other vestiges of political, social, and economic breakdown are discussed.

The module also addresses the question of how peace in the region contributes to the development process. In contrast, the lack of peace and stability, that is, a situation of war or conflict, drains away resources; armed conflicts destroy infrastructure and human lives, and deplete natural resources. The module, therefore, advances a more comprehensive understanding of peace, conflict, and development processes in the Horn of Africa, including the environmental scarcities, cultural and ethnic clashes, geographic fortunes, and conflict transformation.

## 2. Learning objectives

The objective of the module is to enable the students to gain knowledge about conflicts and political instability in the Horn of Africa and the interlinked development challenges in the post-colonial period. This is to provide a basis for understanding and advance the ability to engage in critical analysis of the states and regional and international politics in the Horn of Africa. The critical analysis will focus on Horn of Africa's relations with great and middle-level powers, such as the United States, China, and Middle Eastern actors, including those of individual states and regional political and economic groupings.

## 3. Learning outcomes

By the end of this module, students will acquire sufficient knowledge to adequately understand the geopolitical dynamics that affect the Horn of Africa and critically assess the linkages among local, regional and international relations, including historical aspects, political and economic geography and dynamics, and geostrategic and security issues.

## Assignments (20%)

Assignments are intended to assess students' understanding of the concepts and topics introduced and the ability to engage in critical analysis. They will consist of an essay question which is to be

answered in approximately two typed pages. The assignments should be referenced according to academic standards.

#### SML4

Course title: Theories and Practices of Development

(Graduate required course)

Learning objectives

- To enhance students' understanding complex debates and definitions on development as concept;
- To enable students, understand how different definitions of, and approaches to, 'development' are linked to particular policy approaches 'on the ground';
- To enable students, understand different classical, neoclassical and concurrent development theories;
- To expose students to the practices of development theories in developing nations' contexts;
- To facilitate students to demonstrate how development theories are put into practice in different real-world contexts;
- To provide students with the knowledge, critical perspectives and skills needed to engage with issues and challenges of socio-economic development as they relate to the global south.

Course outline

Part 1. Conceptualization of Development: What Do We Mean By Development?

Part 2. Modernization, Keynesianism and Neoliberalism

Part 3. Structuralism, Neo-Marxism and Socialism

Part 4. Understanding Basic Concepts of Environment, Peace and Development

Part 5. Grassroots Development

Part 6. The Nexus Between Environment, Conflict and Peace

Part 7. Social and Cultural Dimensions of Development and Other Cross-Cutting Issues in Development Theories and Practices

**Appendix 4**

**Sample coding**

Theme: Complexity

Themes	Categories	Codes
Complexity	“No black and white”	No black and white answers when educators teach difficult topics.
	Socially sensitive relations through language, democratic values/human rights, and changing generations	<p>CHN/TWN6 peace is not a good term</p> <p>SML2 and 1 the term unification is taboo regarding Somalia and Somaliland and challenging pedagogically but SML2 &amp; 5 negotiation and reconciliation are important terms for indigenous methods of conflict resolution</p> <p>CYP1 discusses the term “state”</p> <p>Transition to global - local contextuality: KOR3 universal values but different approaches.</p>
	Navigating international and intergenerational relations, perceptions, and expectations	<p>KOR6 historical events are impacting modern politics &amp; expected international security/DMZ to be huge issues but realized the reality is quite different. Within Korea, the focus is more on demography, economic justice, hegemony, and everyday lived realities.</p> <p>CHN/TWN8 reflects “But it's, it seems very close to us, but it is useless to discuss about peace. Because of course we want peace, but it doesn't depend on us.”</p> <p>CHN/TWN3 "If you are under coercion or oppression, there's no condition to talk about it at all."</p> <p>SML1 “Generation gap, political divide, limiting sovereignty = boundaries made by colonial powers, **historical indifference”</p> <p>SML3 “media decentralized talk of unity (amongst clans/stakeholders)” and “the question of unity, it's dire to everyone. ...The heart of everyone. Especially the youth.... They need future.”</p>