

## Post-conflict Peace Education and Paulo Freire

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This research explores the theories of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire and their possibilities for peace education in post-conflict societies. Peace education is often seen as a key component of peacebuilding, but mainstream peace education stems from epistemologies that reflect Western hegemony, and is thus limited in its potential to benefit participants in the Global South. To address this limitation, a framework of critical peace education has been posited by some scholars. This research further develops the theoretical foundations of critical peace education with the pedagogy of Paulo Freire. This research builds upon the call for a critical peace education by exploring the applicability of Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy in societies that have experienced conflict. A number of scholars have made persistent proposals to develop the theory of critical peace education by exploring the linkages between critical pedagogy and peace education. The most notable efforts include those of US scholars Monisha Bajaj and Edward J. Brantmeier. Although this nascent approach to peace education has great potential, its applicability to post-conflict contexts has not been explored. This research begins to fill this gap using the theories of Paulo Freire and identifies key theoretical possibilities for the further development of a critical peace education. Drawing from Paulo Freire's consciousness-building pedagogy, an approach is formulated that centers participants' local and first-hand experience with multiple forms of violence. As participants examine their own location within structures of violence, they engage in a praxis-based peacebuilding that allows for genuinely local approaches to conflict reconciliation. By seeing themselves as located within structures of violence, participants are empowered as historical actors. Such a critical peace education would critically examine internationalized perspectives on peace and conflict as potentially useful, but also as historically, geographically, and culturally located. This research concludes by identifying relevant gaps in the theory of critical peace education and potential directions for its further development.

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