

### Book Review

**Candice C. Carter (ed.) *Conflict Resolution and Peace Education Transformations across Disciplines*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. ISBN: 978-0-230-62063-6. 237pp.**

Oluwaseun Bamidele

Department of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, Faith Academy, Canaanland Ota, Nigeria.

[oluwaseun.bamidele@gmail.com](mailto:oluwaseun.bamidele@gmail.com)

If there ever was a book written about conflict resolution and peace education that offers prospects for hope on such a grim subject, then it is this one. The book resulted from the work of numerous authors who have ably assisted the editor, and whose expert views on the conflict and peace education are fresh, provide food for thought, and urge scholars to awake from slumber and seize their moment. The grafted olive tree bearing many types of fruit, depicted on the cover of this book, represents ongoing variety in peace education which is a contextually responsive pedagogy throughout the world. The authors in this book contribute information about such cross-disciplinary instruction in higher education in the field of conflict resolution and peace education.

In this new context of conflict-focused peace education, there are several pedagogical questions that need to be answered, including the following: What are the variations in conflict analysis across disciplines? What notions underlie responses to conflict in each of the disciplines? In what ways are the same ideas about conflict applied in different fields of work? (p.3). It is important for use in the formation of local and global policies. Through a multidisciplinary lens, the contents of this book inform peace education and development. The contributors to this book describe conflict and peace education in the disciplines in which they provide adult education.

In chapter one, Wynn, Wilburn, and West-Olantunji discuss techniques of mental health counseling. The cases they present describe culturally sensitive, therapeutic, and artistic responses to their clients' conflicts. Their recommendations for counselor preparation include intrapersonal work for transformation within their field, which is truly important in the resolution of many types of conflict. To their analysis sum up, these authors opine that counselors are uniquely positioned to assist individuals and groups with intrapersonal and interpersonal conflict transformation because of their extensive training in effective communication, identification and expression of feelings, and multiculturalism (p.7) Their strengths-based focus, aids clients in moving from conflict to greater awareness and improved relationships. They also seek that Counselors need to understand how culture influences conflict, and be able to think systemically in order to understand individual needs within a broader cultural context.

In chapter two, Welch and Baker describe the historical context of justice and systems of social control before they present analytical conflict transformation and examples of its use in sociology. They highlight the multiple points from into which conflict can be analyzed, at any time, and avenues of inquiry, among other techniques, for use in that process and explore the theoretical foundation of ACT, map out the formal ACT strategy, and describe how we have introduced ACT into the college classroom and how it impacts students outcomes. The theoretical foundation of ACT draws from the history of justice, CT, and sociology. The principal idea is that conflict can usually be traced back to the knowledge and interpretation of the parties involved. People often enter conflict because of what they know about the situation and because they are part of collectively identifying something as harmful. After they lay out the foundation, they present an ACT matrix, or template, that encourages the systematic analysis of conflict and social problems. In this matrix the parties involved in the situation, the knowledge each party espouses, their interpretation of the situation, and their actions are explicitly identified. Using inductive and deductive analysis, the knowledge and interpretations are deconstructed and alternative actions are identified (pp.35-53).

In chapter three, Frank identifies communication and civic responses to conflict. His examples of public conversations about a "culture of peace" illustrate methods of political talk that have been useful in community as well as school contexts. Frank frames peace education within the disciplines of communication, adult education, and the broader discipline of political science. It addresses how adult peace education occurs informally in the context of nongovernmental institutions, and specifically the role of nonprofit organizations that comprise civil society and the third sector of the economy (p.64). At the same time, public civic talk can stimulate increased awareness, vibrant democracy, and equality, all of which are prerequisites for peaceful transformation of systemic social and political conflict. More specifically, Frank addresses the responsibility of nonprofits for promoting such talk in public space, and how that stimulates informal peace education. Nonprofits can create venues for these conversations that can substantially contribute to the advancement of peace. Citizens can come to a greater recognition and valuing of difference that contributes to building resilient bonds of community. This has much significance for the ongoing experiment of democracy in an increasingly multicultural and global community where value-based (moral) political talk can positively engage diverse participants.

Diacoff in chapter four, focuses on many vectors of comprehensive law that centers on transformation of legal responses to clients' conflicts. She then identifies skills that attorneys use in the new non-litigious work with their clients' conflicts (p.5) and discusses the historical background, philosophical underpinnings, and definition of these vectors of the comprehensive law movement which open a debate issues in the development of this movement. And also, provides methods for and challenges in training lawyers, judges, and other legal personnel to conduct these forms of conflict resolution along with the promise of the comprehensive law movement for improved conflict resolution in the future. According to her, future of the legal profession is encouraging; whereas in the last two decades (p.117) the results of traditional criminal trials and the securities scandals cast doubt on the legal system and on lawyers generally, the promise of a better way of resolving legal matters and disputes exists. The vectors of the comprehensive law movement provide that promise.

In chapter five, Tuason explores the link between transformation efforts in response to poverty and encourages awareness of human resilience along with personal responsibility in the change process. He establishes the foundation with all these salient questions: What kinds of conflicts do individuals, communities, and countries go through under debilitating conditions that are exacerbated by poverty? How can peace be attained in circumstances of economic hardship?(p.127) The answers to these questions come by citing developing countries such as the Philippines, where levels of poverty are extremely high and paralyzing, peacebuilding and peacemaking necessarily involve an extensive understanding of the direct and structural violence to basic needs.(pp.128-151). He ends with the consequences of poverty to the psyche of human beings, that is, perceived causes, ways of coping, emotions, dreams, and hopes, are paralyzing because they are cyclical and vicious. Peace efforts, therefore, do not only include the empowerment of the poor.

The next chapter, Russell and Ty start by tracing conflict work in the fields of anthropology and political science before they describe their transformational approaches to conflict in the same region Tuason analyzed. They provide insights into how the disciplines of anthropology and political science offer important ethnographic, cross-cultural, and holistic perspectives on conflict resolution and peace education in making use of elicitive approaches of both Paulo Freire and John Paul Lederach and their perspectives on conflict resolution and transformation techniques closely resonate with our project approaches (p.157) and recognize that ready-made formulas in peace education are least responsive to the actual needs of participants. Consequently, they assert that facilitators and participants should be treated as co-learners in the educational process (p.160).

The editor, in the final chapter, Carter describes challenges in teacher preparation for peace education and needs of teachers who are highly motivated, although unequipped, for such instruction Carter then explains the roots of a conflict in the advancement of peace education for children (p.193). To him, preparation of teachers for peace education occurs throughout their entire training program. Integrating the theme of peace into program policy and courses enables comprehensive education of teacher candidates and returning teachers who advance their formal education. Carter opines that motivated teachers find support for peace education in their

preparation programs and sites of practice or communities, they do overcome challenges they face and they serve as needed role models for their students (p.200).

This book provides the growing interest in learning, teaching, and working for peace development and provides questions for further research which include, what are the lessons learned in implementing peace programs? What makes a peace program successful? In short, what are inductively derived (not predetermined) indicators of success? What are the best practices? What issues are involved in the question of the relationship between specific historical-social contexts and transferability of lessons learned and best practices? To what extent are programs with established peace and conflict organizations more capable and successful at engaging in sustainable peace promotion than those without organizational structures? Carter suggests that 'with these questions, our search and work for peace continues unabated' (p.180). *Conflict Resolution and Peace Education Transformations across Disciplines* is detailed, succinctly written. The report is well researched and provides ample background knowledge of the origin of conflicts and how they can be stopped. The book is a concerted effort of authors who are equipped not only to analyze but also to provide prospects for future reconciliation. The book is not a mere rhetoric, but shows the peace building capacities developed and in action in developing countries.