The Montessori System as Education for Peace

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the potential of the Montessori education to contribute to building the subjective conditions for peace in the aftermath of conflict in the developing world. Information from semi-structured interviews with Montessori teachers was analyzed and six themes are identified that contribute to creating the subjective conditions of peace. The roles of school environments, experiences outside the school, teacher-student relationships, experience in nature, the Montessori curriculum, and cultivating inner peace are discussed in the context of the relevant literature of peace and conflict, peace education, and Montessori education. Finally, the thesis concludes that Montessori education has extraordinary potential to contribute to the subjective conditions of peace in post conflict situations and suggests future research on the implementation of Montessori education in the developing world.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

International development organizations recognize the importance of education for human progress. According to UNICEF, quality education is a vital contribution to human progress, and is especially critical as a bridge between humanitarian relief and development in conflict situations (2015). Getting children enrolled in school is the necessary first step towards economic growth, political stability, and environmental sustainability (UNICEF, 2015). The fourth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) lays out a plan for making substantial progress toward that end by 2030, most notably by achieving universal education from pre-primary through secondary school (United Nations, 2015). Equal access, literacy, and relevant skills training are to be areas of focus (United Nations, 2015). Additionally, the SDG includes appreciation of diversity and the ability to contribute to global peace, non-violence, and sustainable development in its description of quality education (United Nations, 2015).

Recently, UNESCO published a report entitled "Rethinking Education: Towards a Global Common Good?" that brings the organization's original humanist commitment to education back to the forefront (2015). The humanist approach frames education as essential to the good of humanity not only by furthering economic progress but by promoting social justice, environmental sustainability, and peace (UNESCO, 2015). Although access to education has increased over the past decade, inequality within educational systems still results in poor educational outcomes for certain groups (UNESCO, 2015). As technology makes global communication and access to information

networks readily available to more people, identity-based and ideological conflicts continue to increase and spread (UNESCO, 2015). Education as part of a new model of development needs to respond to these evolving concerns in the twenty-first century (UNESCO, 2015).

In this paper, I will present the current guidelines, practices, and theories of peace education that are currently used in development, particularly in post-conflict situations. I will then present an alternative approach, Montessori, which is guided by its own set of theories and best practices.

UNICEF has published a best practices guide for peacebuilding education entitled *Emerging Practices in Design, Monitoring, and Evaluation for Education for Peacebuilding* (Herrington, 2015). The guide proposes that education can be used to promote tolerance and understanding of the 'other', or people perceived as inherently different from oneself. (Herrington, 2015). A strong peace education program addresses beliefs, attitudes, and values and teaches older students conflict management skills and theory (Herrington, 2015). Activities can include peer mediation, expression of hopes for after the conflict, engagement with families, and self-assessment (Herrington, 2015). Importantly, it is recommended that schools switch from teacher-centred, authoritarian systems to learner-centred ones in order to engage students in critical thinking and stimulate their desire to be active citizens (Herrington, 2015). Focusing on students' agency and intrinsic motivation from a young age prepares them to be dynamic decision makers, rather than simply reactors to authority. Teaching methods should foster a climate of democracy and the understanding that disagreement can be a productive part of society when one has the proper skills to manage it (Ramirez-Barat and Duthie, 2015).

However, these skills are only mentioned specifically in reference to education about recent violent events and are not integrated with teaching the rest of the curriculum.

Violence around the globe continues to escalate in intensity. Although since 2008 the number of ongoing armed conflicts has decreased, more than three times as many people died in 42 conflicts in 2014 as in 2008 (Norton-Taylor, 2015). Of the estimated 14.2 million refugees worldwide, 41 percent are children (Norton-Taylor, 2015). 36 percent of the world's 24.5 million internally displaced people are children. Additionally, more than 100,000 children have been demobilized from armed forces since 1998 (UNICEF, 2015a). The human rights violations that often accompany armed conflict diminish human capacities, deplete individuals' agency, and undermine networks of social capital within communities (de Greiff and Duthie, 2009). Fear can cause people to become more reclusive and families and communities to close themselves off, limiting the social connections that can be formed. Violence and deprivation of rights can also hinder development by lowering people's expectations for their lives and the possibilities available to them (de Grieff and Duthie, 2009).

In light of these global circumstances, the topic of peacebuilding is more relevant than ever. The definition of peacebuilding that UNICEF uses to guide development projects is: "a multidimensional range of [actions, approaches, and methods] to reduce the risk of a lapse or relapse into violent conflict by addressing both the causes and consequences of conflict." (2014)

However, this is a one-sentence distillation of a vast literature that on which I will elaborate in chapter two of this thesis.

Especially in the aftermath of conflict, education is crucial to reestablish normalcy and functionality in a community. Education can contribute to conflict prevention, social transformation, civic engagement, and economic progress in post-conflict reconstruction by helping to provide skills and employment opportunities for youth, empower young people as actors for change, and engage youth as citizens and political voices. (UNCIEF, 2015a)

The absence of person-to-person violence and armed conflict in a society are objective, clearly visible and measurable qualities that mark a society as peaceful. Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programs, for example, focus on both of these objective aspects of peace. The sixteenth Sustainable Development Goal also prioritizes the creation of peaceful, just institutions (United Nations, 2015). In order for these objective conditions to be sustained in a society, they need to rest on subjective conditions that create the deep desire within the individuals responsible for the creation of institutions to live in a peaceful world (O'Malley, 2015). I will limit my research to the subjective conditions of social peace, which will be discussed in greater detail in chapter two.

This thesis is concerned with how education can be used as a pathway to creating these subjective conditions by providing an environment in which children can experience a community where empathy and compassion are deeply embedded social norms and conflict resolution skills are folded into the curriculum as an important part of school life. The Montessori system of education, developed by Dr. Maria Montessori, consists of both a vision for global peace and a specific pedagogical method that fulfills these characteristics.

I selected the Montessori system of education for study for several reasons. During my elementary, secondary, and post-secondary education I have had the experience of being a student in a Montessori school and in standard North American schools and noticed differences that seemed to go beyond academic achievement. As a system originally developed for children living in poverty that also explicitly seeks to contribute to world peace, Montessori bears serious consideration and study in the field of international development.

The field research for this project was carried out in a suburban Montessori school in the United States. It was important for the integrity of the study to choose a school that was well established and where all the teachers were certified by Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE) accredited training programs. These programs are much more numerous and more easily accessible in North America. Additionally, public or government-funded Montessori schools are scarce in developing countries and I was not able to find any well-established, accredited schools that were accessible to the general population where they are located. Finally, the particular school selected was easily accessible to me as a former student. Although this research was carried out in one American school, as I will discuss in later chapters the ideas presented can be extended to other contexts. Chapter five will suggest directions for further research, including cross-cultural studies.

I chose a qualitative methodology for this research because the research question deals with the Montessori education's potential implications to the subjective conditions of peace. In order to answer this question, it was necessary to gather the subjective impressions and opinions of research participants and to be flexible with the interview

process. Therefore, I conducted semi-structured interviews with teachers and administrators at a Montessori school. The interview guide can be found in Appendix A.

This thesis will argue that in Montessori schools, school environments, experiences outside the school, teacher-student relationships, experience in nature, the Montessori curriculum, and an emphasis on cultivating inner peace function in such a way that Montessori education has extraordinary potential to create for children the subjective conditions necessary to forge lasting peace in the aftermath of conflict.

Chapter two of this thesis will review the existing literature on peace and conflict theory and the current research on peace education, focusing on Montessori as education for peace. Chapter three will give a brief of the Montessori system, describe the methodology of my fieldwork, and present the data collected. Chapter four will analyze that data in the context of the literature discussed in chapter two. Chapter five will conclude the thesis and suggest directions for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In order to understand the potential of Montessori education to create the subjective conditions for peace, it is necessary to understand current perspectives on peace and conflict theory and the role of peace education in preventing and addressing conflict. This chapter will review the literature on conflict and peace education.

Conflict and Development

A 1992 report of the UN secretary general entitled "An Agenda for Peace" set the tone for subsequent post-Cold War era peacebuilding. The report defines peacebuilding primarily as taking necessary precautions to ensure human security. Article 12 of the report asserts that, "The concept of peace is easy to grasp. That of international security is more complex." This simplistic assumption lies at the heart of the objective perspective that characterizes peacebuilding efforts. The report also addresses the necessity of combating economic insecurity, social injustice and political oppression in order to work towards human security and peace, implying that these issues are the deepest causes of conflict and ignoring the subjective conditions that lay the groundwork for complex structural problems. Economic insecurity, social injustice, and political oppression are in themselves complex issues that arise out of and interact with the cultural fabric of communities at every organizational level, from the family to the state. Peace itself is a concept with many definitions and interpretations unique to each context in which peacebuilding takes place.

More recently, the United Nations Peacebuilding Orientation booklet characterizes peacebuilding as a primarily national responsibility and activity (2010). Peacebuilding is defined there as measures taken to reduce the risk of relapse into conflict, and can include any activity that claims to work towards that aim. Post-conflict peacebuilding involves strengthening national capacities and improving conflict management through coherent strategies tailored to specific national circumstances. Dependent on capable national and international leadership, peacebuilding is highly political (United Nations, 2010). The United Nations considers national ownership and capacity building to be the foremost concerns of peacebuilding initiatives, which should typically begin after the end of a conflict or when the end is near at hand. Although the UN guidelines also emphasize the importance of addressing the root causes of conflict, the conceptualization of peacebuilding as a post-conflict activity contradicts that aim (2010).

Several activities fall under the heading of peacebuilding. Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration, security sector reform, and militarized peacekeeping missions as well as international supports for political processes, transitional governments, and basic services can be considered peacebuilding initiatives. The UN takes a 'conflict-sensitive' approach to peacebuilding, meaning that peacebuilding activities should seek to address the structural causes of the recent conflict in question or the structures that could cause a relapse into conflict (2010).

The idea that development and human security depend on each other is now a basic assumption in development theory and practice in the liberal model of peace (Duffield, 2007). Liberalism, according to Duffield, is based on the protection of people's

lives and freedoms (2007). Development, defined as poverty reduction in Duffield's work, is not only a moral imperative but a necessity in order to maintain security (Duffield, 2007). Human security risks are associated with underdevelopment, because underdeveloped nations are open to takeover by forces that are hostile to the Western way of life. In discussing global conflict, Duffield writes in terms of securitization and presence or lack of human security rather than theorizing peace.

Mary Kaldor looks at the current global situation from a slightly different perspective, analyzing the scholarly debate around the dynamics of violent conflicts around the world (2013). Since the end of the Cold War, inter-state conflicts have declined while intra-state conflicts have become more prevalent. Kaldor describes several ways in which pre- and post- Cold War conflicts differ, and her categorization is a useful way of thinking about the context in which peacebuilding is practiced (2013).

According to Kaldor, old wars were fought between nation states disputing geopolitical interests. The primary method of waging war was the battle, with a clear winner and loser. Territory was captured by military assault, and military efforts were financed by states or outside donors (Kaldor, 2013). New wars, on the other hand, tend to centre on ethnic, religious, or tribal identity. Territory is captured by political means, and much of the violence is directed towards civilians by deprivation of basic needs, forcible re-location, and genocide (Kaldor, 2013). The roots of these new conflicts are often deeply historical, arising from interactions between cultural identity and economic or political circumstances. Because of these differences it is more important than ever to focus on the subjective underlying causes of conflict.

In their quantitative study, Collier and Hoeffler seek to elucidate the causes of civil conflict by analyzing statistical data (2004). They argue that greed, defined as pursuit of economic opportunity, is more prevalent as a cause of conflict than grievance, which is defined as a response to social inequality and injustice, and identity (2004). To Collier and Hoeffler, the cause of conflict is rooted in circumstance. Similarly, analyses such as that of Rummel suggest that political structure is to blame for conflict, arguing that democratic nations do not go to war with each other (1997).

In *Development as Freedom,* Amartya Sen puts forth an argument for a capabilities approach to development, which he frames as a "freedoms" approach (1999, p. 33). Sen argues that development should be thought of not only in economic terms, but first and foremost in terms of increased access to five basic universal capabilities or freedoms: political freedom, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees, and protective security (Sen, 1999, p. 3, 35). Because income poverty is often associated with deprivation of capabilities, measuring poverty can give an impression of how 'developed' a society is, but it does not offer a comprehensive picture (Sen, 1999). From a capabilities perspective, freedom is both a pathway to progress and the aim of progress (Sen, 1999).

Sen's approach to development uses the term "unfreedom" to refer to the structural causes of diminished capabilities (1999, p. 3) He later elaborates on the connection between the two unfreedom and development: "The process of development, in this view, is not essentially different from the process of overcoming unfreedoms" (1999). In a freedom-based approach to development, the significance of the shift from bonded labour to free labour (wage labour) lies in the fact that this shift occurred early on

in Europe and North America's development. Sen's emphasis on the importance of capacity building for development brings the necessity of education into focus. Sen's approach to development is relevant to the discussion of conflict from two perspectives. First, since peace is such an imperative precondition for development, building capabilities that that will help individuals contribute to peacebuilding is particularly important. Such capabilities form an important part of the subjective conditions for peace discussed below. Second, the freedom of protective security allows other processes of development to continue.

Subjective and objective conditions of peace

Johan Galtung's work on classifications of peace and violence offers a theoretical context in which to consider these views on peace and conflict from a social perspective. Galtung views violence and peace as inverses of each other. Understood as such, he proposes a typology of violence and peace that identifies negative and positive aspects of each (Galtung, 1996). *"Negative peace"* refers simply to a reduction in violence. "Positive peace" entails an actual improvement in the quality of life in the aftermath of a conflict. Within these two categories, he also identifies three categories of violence. Direct violence is a violent act or event that can be physically perceived. Structural violence is deprivation of basic needs through exploitative institutions in society. Cultural violence is the name Galtung gives to the aspects of culture that legitimize and justify structural and direct violence. The psychological mechanism at play here is internalization. For example, the factors in society that make killing in the name of justice via the death penalty or in combat during war acceptable, but murdering a person unacceptable, would be considered cultural violence. The visual representation of

Galtung's categories of violence is a triangle in which structural and direct violence form the base corners. Although all three types are complexly linked, it is possible to draw a causal relationship from cultural to direct violence by way of structural violence (Galtung, 1996).

This paper will assume that it is impossible for development to take place in the midst of ongoing conflict and violence; development needs peace. The type of peace on the surface of this assumption is what Galtung characterized as "negative peace", meaning simply the absence of violence (Galtung, 1996). This can be contrasted to 'positive peace', meaning the active creation of social environment where people live in harmony with a high standard of wellbeing (Galtung, 1996). In this thesis, I will use the idea of a fundamental relationship between the objective and subjective conditions for peace developed by Anthony O'Malley (O'Malley, 2015). The objective conditions resemble Galtung's "negative peace", for instance lack of violence, and the expectation of physical safety and non-violent institutions. As described in the previous section, most peacebuilding initiatives target these objective aims. However, in order to sustain a conflict-free environment, and to truly aspire to development, something similar to "positive peace" is needed. In order for society to sustain an objective lack of conflict, the individuals who comprise its institutions must be people who, from the core of their being, abhor violence and have the capacity to be compassionate and empathetic towards all other human beings. Education can be an important tool for creating the subjective conditions that foster positive peace and lead to an objective lack of violence.

According to Galtung, the problem with peace education as it is broadly practiced by international organizations and governments is the idea that peace occurs between

nations, and education happens at school (Galtung, 1983). The next section will explore

the perspectives on peace education as a necessary aspect of peacebuilding.

Peace Education

Education is only briefly mentioned as a peacebuilding tool, in the context of

basic service provision (UN, 2010). The Peacebuilding Orientation recognizes the

importance of targeting youth in peacebuilding programs that are focused on socio-

economic reintegration and conflict resolution skills (UN, 2010).

Sagi-Schwartz uses a developmental psychology approach to peacebuilding to

investigate how children can be socialized to war or peace (2012). In an effort to

conceptually link processes and relationships at the interpersonal level to geopolitical

process by looking at the implications of early childhood relationships, she shows how

the Circle of Security and Goal Corrected Partnership models manifest at different levels

of social organization (Sagi-Schwartz, 2012). She argues that strong, trusting

interpersonal relationships in early childhood make people more willing to engage in

peace process (Sagi-Schwartz, 2012). Conversely, children whose relationships with

adults are characterized by insecurity and lack of trust tend to have more difficulty

imagining the conflict from the other perspectives, and are less willing to communicate

and engage in peaceful interactions with representatives of the opposite side (Sagi-

Schwartz, 2012).

Recent studies in Jamaica and Lebanon support the assertion that early childhood

interventions can be effective to prevent violent behaviour in the future (UNICEF,

2015b). The dominant development discourse recognizes that there are a number of

specific ways early childhood programming can contribute to peacebuilding:

1. Providing safe, caring and loving environments for young children

2. Promoting positive attitudes and skills in children

3. Improving caregiver and child well-being

4. Reducing conflict and violence

5. Diminishing inequities and contributing to social justice

6. Serving as platforms for community cohesion. (UNCEF, 2015b)

A familiar example of the kind of supplemental peace education program I have discussed that functions as an addition to existing curricula are the resources for schools and teachers produced by Peaceful Schools International. Peaceful Schools uses a collaborative approach to work toward developing understanding and support within the school community that includes teachers, parents, and students. Extracurricular activities that focus on peace play an important role in cultivating that community engagement, as well as books, lesson plans, and guides (Peaceful Schools, 2015).

Peaceful Schools advocates participatory teaching methods, emphasizing cooperative problem solving, tolerance and respect for different groups and beliefs. Conflict resolution skills are also taught, such as peer mediation strategies, so that students can learn how to manage conflict they come across in their communities. Additionally, students are involved in community service outside the school and teachers have access to professional development opportunities that have to do with peace, including training around bullying, anti-racism, cooperative learning, and crisis response (Peaceful Schools, 2015).

Another example of an extracurricular school-based peace program is the Peace Messenger Program run by UNICEF and Search for Common Ground in Cote d'Ivoire

(UNICEF WCARO, 2015). The program established peace clubs in schools in response to post-election political conflict in 2013. Teachers were trained in conflict management in order to facilitate student leadership of the clubs. The aim of the project was to help students be resilient to conflict by strengthening youth and community members' capacities in the areas of conflict transformation and prevention (UNICEF WCARO, 2015). The clubs were meant to support existing structures in schools and communities, promote nonviolent conflict management techniques, and perpetuate a culture of tolerance among youth and community members in and around the target schools (UNICEF WCARO, 2015).

The vital role of education in creating peaceful societies is widely accepted and a variety of approaches to incorporating peace into school curricula exist, both in the context of standard schools and in development situations with more precarious educational systems (Johnson and Johnson, 2005, Fountain, 1999). Effective peace education includes conflict resolution and peacebuilding techniques and theories, teaching about the history of peace and conflict, and modeling peaceful cooperative environments in schools and classrooms (Harris, 2002). Johnson and Johnson stress the importance of cooperative environments where children from opposing sides of conflicts must interact and learn to mediate disputes as central components of peace education (2005). They lay out five dimensions of effective peace education: incorporation of peace into other standard curricula, fostering a sense of common goals, needs, and identity, constructive controversy procedures, peer mediation skills, and civic values that prioritize the common good (2005). They also outline the differences between 'imposed peace' and 'consensual peace'. 'Imposed pace' results from peacekeeping missions and top-down

securitization approaches (Johnson & Johnson, 2005). In contrast, peace is consensual when the two sides mutually decide to enter into a nonviolent relationship. To be effective for establishing lasting peace, education should focus on consensus (Johnson & Johnson, 2005). UNICEF's approach to peace education incorporates the ideas of both teaching and modeling peace, but is more multifaceted, establishing skills, knowledge, and attitudes to be built into curricula within their framework of education for development (Fountain, 1999).

However, other studies suggest that while peace education programs can be effective in changing some attitudes and behaviours, these changes are often temporary, glazing the surface of deeply rooted social problems. In a 2010 study, Yigal Rosen and Gavriel Salomon report on the efficacy of a school-based peace education program for Israeli youth. They were concerned with the apparently contradictory results of many such studies before them. Rosen and Saloman noted that some researchers found that peace education programs were effective while others showed that they were not. Rosen and Salomon propose that the discrepancy lies in confusion around what results are actually being measured. In their research, they draw a distinction between 'convictions', which are deeply-held, generations-old cultural beliefs and stereotypes, and 'attitudes', which are more surface-level attributes (2010).

The program in question sought to give legitimacy to each group's narrative in the eyes of the other and increase positive attitudes toward the opposing group. However, the researchers note that if transmitting cultural values is part of a school's mission then the project of peace education is complicated by the fact that it exists in partial opposition to that mission. The study found that the school-based program was successful in changing

students' attitudes toward the opposing group. However, questionnaires and interviews that targeted deep beliefs about the other group did not show a change, and the attitudinal changes were short-lived. Youth changed their perceptions of and actions toward the other, but only superficially (Rosen and Salomon, 2010).

While discussion of the structural causes of conflict is prevalent in the above literature, exploration of the role played by individual affect and attitude is rare. However, violent structures are made up of individuals. Galtung's theories of negative and positive peace and conceptualization of direct, cultural and structural violence are foundational in social justice and peace theory. In order to add an affective dimension to this way of thinking about the causes of conflict, Michael Hammond's writing on the sociology of emotion is useful. Hammond provides insight into the nature of affective ties between human beings, the building blocks of social structures, through an alternative analysis of Durkheim's *The Division of Labour in Society* (Hammond, 1983). Many social theorists see emotion as a consequence of social organization, but according to Hammond's interpretation of Drukheim, understanding social organization is a consequence of emotion explains the differential attachment human beings exhibit towards people to whom they relate in different ways.

This way of thinking about affectivity is based on an understanding that humans are physiologically able to handle a finite amount of emotional stimulation, and make social decisions based on their perception of what will cause them to have favorable emotional responses (Hammond, 1983). Affective bonds between people elicit positive emotions, and the intensity of the response is proportional to the strength of the bond. As social density increases, people have more opportunities for bonds with others, and

therefore more relationships amongst which to share limited capacity for emotional

connection. One solution to this situation would be for individuals to form a greater

number of weaker ties, but by doing so people would be depriving themselves of

necessary strong emotional connections. According to Hammond's reading of Durkheim,

as social density increases the complexity of social organization increases so that each

individual has a smaller field over which to cast their net of emotional connection. The

strongest affective ties can be formed between people who are closest to each other in the

social order (1983). This way of thinking about emotion has important implications for

peace theory because it offers insight into the structural origins of conflict on an

individual level. It is more difficult to feel emotionally connected to people further form

oneself in the social order, and it is easier to perpetrate or turn away from violence

against a group or individual to whom one does not feel an emotional connection.

In her introduction to *For Love of Country?*, Martha Nussbaum also references

the idea of the differential strength of emotional ties, stating that for humans to function

as moral beings emotional attachment must be strongest with family and in the local

context, but that it is possible for true compassion to be extended beyond that narrow

sphere. She uses the example of Aristotle's response to Plato's claim that in an ideal city,

all citizens would care for each other equally. Aristotle replied that in that case, no one

would care for each other at all because the ability to care is learned in small groups with

strong bonds (Nussbaum, 2002).

Elaine Scarry agrees that the way human beings act toward each other is based on

how they imagine each other (1996). She points out that no imagining of another person's

reality can ever be perfectly realistic, only existing in reference to the imaginer's reality

(Scarry, 1996). Scarry identifies two points of view on how to spread cosmopolitan values: changing how people imagine each other and changing oppressive structures, both equally necessary. The latter is important to support the former, and to avoid placing the fate of the imagined in the hands of the imaginer (Scarry, 1996).

Montessori as Peace Education

In a statement similar to Galtung's view on the short comings of peace education, Maria Montessori believed that "Preventing conflict is the work of politics. Establishing peace is the work of education." (Montessori, 1949 p. 24) Maria Montessori was also adamant about the importance of having compassion and respect for all humanity:

Let us in education ever call the attention of children to the hosts of men and women who are hidden from the light of fame, so kindling a love of humanity, not the vague and anemic sentiment preached today as brotherhood, nor the political sentiment that the working classes should be reduced or uplifted. What is first wanted is no patronizing charity for humanity, but a reverent consciousness of its dignity and worth."

(Montessori, 1948, p. 27)

She regarded morality as a manifestation of the relationships between individuals, writing that morality and not industry must be the measure of value in society (Montessori, 1949).

In contrast to the common methods of peace education mentioned above, Maria Montessori never suggested that children learn about peace as a separate category of knowledge in addition to other subjects. Instead, she designed a system of education that would help them to develop the skills and attitudes necessary to be part of a peaceful

society from the ground up (Soholt, 2015). In 1949, Maria Montessori wrote: "Education today is still confined by the limits of a social order that is now past" (Montessori, 1949, p. xiii). In the wake of World War II, education as it had been practiced in the west for decades was no longer fulfilling the needs of the time. Now, in a world torn by civil conflict and terrorism and complicated by globalization, it rings as true as ever. According to Montessori, the goal of education is twofold. It must support the child's growth and development as an individual and contribute to the creation of a peaceful global society. The first of these goals is necessary to the second.

Montessori echoes Galtung in her conceptualization of peace, noting that to understand peace as merely the absence of war would a failure for peace and a victory for war, and that true peace means the creation of a harmonious society (Montessori, 1949). "The question of peace cannot be discussed properly from a merely negative point of view, as politics ordinarily regards it. In the narrow sense of avoiding war and resolving conflicts between nations without recourse to violence" (Montessori, 1949, p. xi). Her writing is also reminiscent of that of Hammond, above, stressing the importance of acknowledging that institutions in society are made up of individuals and the interpersonal relationships between them. She saw society as being made up of individuals working together for a common purpose (Montessori, 1949). Therefore, the only possible foundation for peace was within individual people. The only way to create positive peace is to restructure society, starting with children. (Montessori, 1949).

In Dr. Montessori's words, "It is obvious that education as the cornerstone of peace cannot consist only in attempting to prevent children from becoming fascinated by war. It is not enough to keep the child from playing with toy weapons, to stop making

him study the history of mankind as a succession of feats of arms, and to stop teaching

him that victory on the battlefield is a supreme honour. It is not even enough to instill in

the child a love and respect for all living beings and all the things that human beings have

built through the centuries.

This would be the role of the classroom in a much greater task, a campaign

against war in and of itself, a role that we might describe as a negative one - the mere

attempt to remove the threat of an imminent conflict -rather than a positive effort to bring

about pace in the world" (Montessori, 1949, p. 35).

Implementation of Montessori as Peace Education

The Montessori system of education reflects a vision for peaceful global society

and consists of a pedagogic method with guidelines for curriculum, material

environments, and student teacher relationships. As a medical doctor, Dr. Maria

Montessori became interested in child development while at a hospital in Rome and

began working with children who were considered to be mentally defective (Montessori,

1967). She observed how the children interacted with each other and their environment

and recorded her observations in a systematic and methodical manner, and subsequently

developed a system of education based on her findings. Montessori lived through two

world wars and the destruction they left behind in Europe, and by the end of World War

II she had become known around the world as an innovator in education. Her system

contains not only a pedagogical method, but also a vision for a truly peaceful global

society (Montessori, 1967) In 1947, she addressed a UNESCO assembly on the topic of

education and peace (Association Montessori Internationale, 2015). Her vision for

education was to create a system that would form better people and facilitate global

cooperation (Montessori, 1949).

Normalization – Ages Zero to Three

In *The Absorbant Mind* (1967), Montessori describes the development of children

from birth to six years old. An important characteristic of that age group is that children

are able to easily and unconsciously assimilate the attitudes of adults in the environment

around them (Soholt, 2015). During this time, they are also acquiring the sense of self

confidence and security that lays the groundwork for learning about the world in

elementary (Montessori, 1948). Montessori frequently uses analogies on varying scales to

illustrate the importance of the individual and the interconnectedness of humanity. Just as

individual health is necessary to protect a population form disease, an inner sense of

peace is necessary for individuals to participate in building peaceful societies

(Montessori, 1949).

During the child's first six years, controlled motion exercises such as walking

along a line help children develop a mind-body connection, rooting themselves in their

environment and strengthening their imaginative connection with the world (Wolf, 1996).

Children must feel a sense of inner peace in order to relate to the school and the rest of

the world in a peaceful way – teachers can facilitate this through centering exercises,

guided meditation, and using any activity that gets the child to focus their attention

inward for a period of time. Cultivating stillness and silence helps children connect to

their inner world (Standing, 1957). In Montessori classrooms, silence is neither an

oppressive force or a punishment. Instead it is a special challenge introduced when the classroom is already focusing calmly and the students are ready for it (Wolf, 1996).

In Primary classrooms, which include three to six year-olds, self-care is also an important focus of the curriculum. Children work towards independence in dressing, preparing food, and hand washing. Through these chores they learn to feel responsible for their own person and take pride in caring for themselves. This is a necessary first step to caring for the environment and other people. Even in three-to-six classrooms, children clean and maintain order, prepare group snack, care for plants and animals, and help their younger peers with self-care tasks. In this way, they learn what it feels like to be part of a caring society in which responsibility for the wellbeing of the group is happily borne by all (Montessori, 1967a; Leonard, 2015; Lillard, 1996).

In Montessori three to six year old classrooms, a normalized child is one who is completely engaged in her work, which she has chosen as an activity that will help him to construct himself (Montessori, 1967). Enjoyment of the chosen work leads the child to repeat the task until he achieves competence and then mastery. While deeply engaged in her work, the normalized child is concentrating for an extended period of time on something he finds fulfilling and meaningful (Montessori, 1967). Polli Soholt writes that normalized children also have strong relationships with reality, developing a strong interest in learning about the world (2015). Normalized children are in control of their fine and gross motor movements. Learning control of movement helps in developing the child's will, and according to Maria Montessori in *Education for a New World*, discipline that comes from within a child's own will to contribute to the group is the basis of social cohesion (Montessori, 1946).

Cosmic Education – Ages Six to Twelve

For Montessori, "The fundamental principle of education is correlation of all subjects, and their centralization in the cosmic plan." (Montessori, 1948, p. 75). In her writing, Montessori refers often to both the "cosmic plan" and the "cosmic task" of individuals, of humanity as a whole, and of all life. This is not intended as a statement of religious purpose, but rather the idea that all life has a unique role to play on earth. Just as every organism in an ecosystem fulfills a function, and every organ in a body is vital to the health of that body, each human has a unique social function to perform towards the improvement of life for all of humanity. Identifying and fulfilling this role is what she referred to as an individual's "cosmic task" (Montessori, 1949).

At around six years old, children begin to ask "why". Their curiosity shifts outward and they become enthusiastic about learning about the world. This is also the age that they begin to explore their developing sense of morality, asking questions about what is right or wrong and what makes it so. Their decisions are increasingly based on their understanding of morality, rather than their own comfort or desire. After age twelve this natural enthusiasm toward learning about the world is less intense, so it must be capitalized on in the elementary classrooms. Montessori teachers respond to children's curiosity about the world by following their interests and intellectual needs (Montessori, 1949). On the value of enthusiasm in learning Montessori wrote, "the child should love everything that he learns, for his mental and his emotional growths are linked." (Montessori, 1948, p. 17). In order to effectively engage children's imaginations and

facilitate their learning, a teacher must be "an enthusiastic student of biology, and of the psychology of the growing child, and so of the man." (Montessori, 1948, 113).

Maria Montessori called her pedagogy for the six to twelve year old child "cosmic education". Cosmic education presents the child with the story of the universe, engaging her imagination in connection with the real world (Montessori, 1948). Montessori believed that children who are not encouraged to use their immense powers of imagination in this way become self-centred, with narrow interests. They are not open to "the wonders of the world and sympathy with suffering humanity" (Montessori, 1948, p.17). The entire curriculum is tied into history – for example when children begin to learn about geometric shapes, they are also presented with the stories of the discovery of the concepts and theorems they are dealing with. (Leonard, 2015).

Montessori's book *To Educate the Human Potential* (1948), describes a plan for cosmic education that presents history, biology, and culture in a cohesive story. It includes chapters on the formation of the universe and the planets, the geological history of earth, the emergence of life, the evolution of humans, and ancient civilizations. Between the ages of six and twelve, children are able to imagine this story with a power and clarity not available to them later in life. Montessori considered imagination an integral part of human intelligence (Montessori, 1948). As children imagine themselves in relation to the vastness of the universe, their moral questions take on greater context and significance. In Dr. Montessori's words, "If the idea of the universe be presented to the child in just the right way, it will do more for him than just arouse his interest, for it will create in him admiration and wonder, a feeling loftier than any interest and more satisfying." (Montessori, 1948, p. 6) Aline Wolf writes that a sense of wonder is an

important foundation for peace (Wolf, 1996). This is not a religious education, but it can be called a spiritual one. Wolf suggests that spirituality is about asking the human questions that are common to all cultures and times in history about the nature of life and its purpose, and what lays beyond the boundaries of human perception. The capacity to engage with these questions is what connects human beings to each other (Wolf, 1996)

Environment

In Montessori literature, it is common to hear of the 'prepared environment'. Montessori classrooms are designed by teachers to attract the interest of children at each particular developmental level, catering to the the multiple ages in one class and a diverse range of individual interests. Children select the work that most interests them during a three-hour work cycle. The materials in a classroom, often referred to as 'works', are arranged on shelves and kept in the same place every day. This is especially helpful for children under six as it allows them to have strong points of reference in their surroundings and creates a sense of security (Montessori, 1949). With these limits in place, the child is free to develop her powers of concentration self-discipline through the process of normalization, described above (Montessori, 1949). Similarly, there must be limits for acceptable behavior that are clear and logical, with logical consequences (Montessori, 1946).

The use of the word "environment" over "classroom" is significant because it speaks to Montessori's belief that the child's surroundings are the building blocks available to her to create her adult self (Montessori, 1967). This is true of a child's entire context, not just the four walls of a classroom. However, the classroom is the domain of the teacher, and within that space it is the teacher's role to carefully prepare an

environment that engages her students' entire personalities, offering opportunities for their social, intellectual, spiritual, physical, and emotional development.

To carry out this important task, teachers must continuously be engaged in their own self-exploration and development. To fully respect their students as people, teachers must be conscious of their own imperfection and capacity for growth, and help them gradually realize their cosmic task (Montessori, 1946; Wolf, 1996). Teachers must understand their role to be igniting the imagination of their students, as opposed to imparting understanding or mandating memorization (Montessori, 1948). They are responsible for facilitating the child's process of self-realization, providing opportunities and caring support for growth. To this end, they treat the students as agents of their own education (Montessori, 1949).

Another important task for the Montessori teacher is leading by example. Teachers treat their students with the respect that they expect the children to show to each other and to any other person they meet (Montessori, 1946). They speak to the children, and to other adults within earshot of children, as they expect the children to communicate. Even with their movements around the classroom, they demonstrate grace and care. Teachers are part of the fabric of the classroom community alongside the children, showing by example how to be an ideal community member (Montessori, 1946).

Contact with the natural world is an important part of Montessori environments for a variety of reasons. Activities such as gardening provide the experience of caring for living beings and, in the case of food gardens, of providing for a community through work on the land (Montessori, 1967a). Montessori was adamant that a person's individual

spiritual health depends on contact with nature (Montessori, 1967). Perhaps most importantly, the natural world is the ultimate classroom of cosmic education (Montessori, 1949). Nowhere are the mysteries of life and the universe more immediate than looking at the clouds or stars, or pondering the process of photosynthesis in a green leaf. The cosmic education curriculum instills vast sense of context for human society, and connecting impressionistic lessons about the formation of the planet and the cycles of water and nutrients to their own physical surroundings forms a crucial link in children's imaginations, solidifying the idea of the interconnectedness of all life. The importance of the environment and curriculum to developing the subjective conditions of peace is neatly summed up in *Education and Peace:* "The child who has felt a strong love for his surroundings and for all living creatures, who has discovered joy and enthusiasm in work, gives us reason to hope that humanity can develop in a new direction." (p.69)

This chapter began by reviewing the current policies and ideas that shape current peacebuilding initiatives. Peacebuilding is thought of as technical and structural process of ensuring human security through the cessation and prevention of conflict and the reduction of poverty. These objective aims, while crucial to development, ignore the subjective conditions that underlie them and prevent the creation of lasting peace. Establishing the subjective conditions necessary for peace involves educating individuals who are compassionate, empathetic, and willing to search for innovative solutions to social problems that do not involve violence. This type of education must begin in early childhood and focus on the whole individual rather than being an outside addition to the school curriculum. Scarry and Nussbaum describe the importance of imagination in compassion and emotional connections between people. Montessori, too, believed that

imagination was key to developing the compassion and tolerance necessary to build peaceful societies and her system of education is designed to engage and harness that power in children.

Montessori Education, with its explicit goal of contributing to world peace through education and pedagogical method based on respect for human individuality and the innate capability of children has the potential to contribute to the subjective conditions for peace through education. In the following chapter, I will briefly overview the Montessori system to provide context for my field research, describe my research methodology, and present the results of the fieldwork.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Data

This chapter will describe my research methodology and present the findings of my fieldwork. The research investigated the potential of the Montessori system of education to create the subjective conditions for peace that must be in place within individuals before the objective conditions of peace can be present in societies. Before discussing the methodology and presenting the findings, it will provide context for the data with a brief description of Montessori education.

Introduction to the Montessori System

This broad introduction to Montessori is included with the Methodology and Data section of this thesis so that the reader will have some historical context for the environment in which my data was collected. In the literature review, I addressed Montessori specifically as peace education. Here, I include a wider view of Montessori pedagogy that will give background for language and concepts occurring in the data.

In 1929, Montessori founded Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) to continue her work (American Montessori Internationale, 2016). Today, that organization certifies teachers, publishes journals and resources, administers the Mario Montessori 75 Fund, and serves as a network to connect Montessori schools and teachers around the world. The outreach arm of AMI, Educateurs san Frontières (ESF), is dedicated to protecting children's rights and improving access to Montessori education world-wide (Educateurs sans Frontièrs, 2016). EsF has projects in Thailand, Kenya, the United States, Australia, Haiti, and France. Approximately 20,000 Montessori schools exist. About 4,500 of those are in the United States, and the rest are spread throughout many countries

in Europe, North and South America, Australia, Africa, Asia, and Australia (North

American Montessori Teachers' Association, 2016).

The first Montessori classrooms were called "Children's Houses" and served

children between the ages of three and six (Montessori, 1967). The first of these, opened

in 1907, served poor children in tenement houses in Rome (Montessori, 1967).

Classrooms contained furniture that was small enough for young children to move around

themselves, and they were allowed to do so. Rather than being organized into rows and

desks as in most standard western education systems, children move about the

environment in Montessori classrooms, creatively making use of what they find in the

environment. Work can be done at tables or mats on the floor, independently or in groups

(Association Montessori International, 2015). In this way, children experience the natural

consequences of their disordered movement. They learn to move quietly, gracefully, and

with purpose. In Montessori classrooms, teachers observe students and teach them to use

the materials in the environment, but it is up to the children to select the work they do at a

given time (Association Montessori International, 2015). The children select the work

that is right for them at their current stage in development.

Classrooms in Montessori schools group children into three-year age groups

(Association Montessori International, 2015). What Dr. Montessori called the "children's

house" is often referred to as 'primary'. These are classrooms for children ages three to

six. The next three-year cycle is for six to nine year olds. That classroom is often called

'lower elementary'. Students in 'upper elementary' classes are between nine and twelve

years old. Organizing classrooms around three-year cycles also allows children to move

at their own pace, selecting work that is appropriate and interesting to them at the time (American Montessori Internationale, 2015)

The three guiding principles of Montessori lessons are conciseness, objectivity, and simplicity (Montessori, 2010). Manipulative materials, designed to be attractive to students at each specific stage of their development, are used to present all lessons in Primary and Elementary classrooms. Many of these materials, especially for three to six year olds, naturally control error without input from a teacher (Montessori, 2010). Presented to individual students or small groups, lessons use as few words as possible and are often silent. Throughout the Montessori curriculum, the lessons progress from the general to the specific, or from a whole to its parts. Each subsequent lesson is then situated in a known context.

The practical life and cultural curricula are particularly relevant to the data presented later in this chapter. Practical life work has a dedicated classroom space at the Primary level, and is diffused throughout classroom life at the Elementary and Junior levels. (Montessori, 2010). Even the youngest children in a Montessori school care for their environment, keeping it clean and tidy. They set the table for lunch and learn table manners. They care for plants and classroom pets. One of the most striking aspects of the practical life curriculum to an observer of a Primary class is the poise and grace with which children of three and four years old are able to move around the classroom. In Lower Elementary, practical life skills include cooking and welcoming guests into the classroom. Children learn to keep themselves organized and regularly talk with teachers about their work. In Upper Elementary, service plays an important role. Older students often mentor younger students, and regular outings into the community take place.

(Lillard, 1996). Maria Montessori left few curriculum guidelines for twelve to fourteen year olds, or what generally corresponds to the middle school years in the standard North American school system, so there are many interpretations and models for Junior classes. However, almost all include farming or gardening and running simple small businesses, for example selling herbs grown at the school to the community (Montessori, 2010).

Maria Montessori referred to geography, science, and history as 'cultural subjects'. In all these areas, the material proceeds from concrete to abstract and general to specific. The science curriculum starts at the beginning, with a metres-long black cord representing the timeline of the universe from big bang to present day. The cord is long enough that it cannot be unrolled inside the classroom. White marks on the cord represent the formation of the planets, the first life on earth, the emergence of mammals, then of humans. Smaller timelines of life on earth, the development of civilizations, and the development of writing are introduced in Lower and Upper Elementary and give students a sense of where they sit in relation to millions of years of history (Montessori, 2010).

In addition to carefully prepared classroom environments, nature and outdoor time are important parts of Montessori education. Dr. Montessori saw contact with nature as a way of being in touch with creation. She thought it was important for children to develop love for living things, and a sense of connection to the universe (Montessori, 1967). Lessons like the black strip stir children's imaginations and inspire thought about the big picture, and take on special significance alongside daily contact with the most minute details of the natural world.

Methodology

This thesis seeks to understand the perspectives of Montessori teachers on how Montessori education can contribute to creating the subjective conditions of peace. Knowing that developing peace through education from the infancy through adulthood is the explicit aim of Montessori education, I designed this research project to explore how that occurs and investigate the potential for implementing Montessori as education for peace in the developing world. Additionally, Dr. Montessori's first developed her system in working with poor children in tenement homes in urban Rome, with few resources at hand. To that end, this thesis investigates the potential of the Montessori system to create the subjective conditions of peace for children in the world's conflict zones.

Primary research for this thesis included thirteen semi-structured interviews and one two-person focus group over the course of one week in April, 2016. A qualitative approach was the best way to address my research question because I was interested in the teachers' understanding of the Montessori system as a way of educating for peace, and the ways in which they interpret Maria Montessori's idea of education as a cornerstone of peace and realize it in their classrooms. For example, it is not possible to quantify teachers' individual interpretations of Montessori literature or capture the variations and similarities in their descriptions of ways to help children with conflict resolution. I chose to conduct semi-structured interviews rather than open ended or structured interviews because I wanted each interviewee to talk about the same set of concepts while still telling their unique stories and perspectives, providing rich material for inductive analysis. The semi-structured format also allowed me to ask questions out of order, skip questions that seemed inappropriate or irrelevant in context, and probe

interviewees to explain or elaborate. The interview guide is appended. The participants were not comfortable being audio recorded and most interviews took place in busy environments, so I kept careful field notes. I then typed up the field notes and annotated them where I noticed themes emerging. After second and third annotations, I organized the information into six main categories, presented later in this chapter.

All interviews took place at a private school in the United States that serves children ages eighteen months to fourteen years. The research site was chosen because it is an example of a well-established and successful Montessori school. Access to this research location was facilitated by my existing connection as a former student at the school. All participants were Montessori teachers certified by the American Montessori Society (AMS) or Association Montessori Internationale (AMI). Teachers in Toddler (1.5-3 year-old), Elementary (6-12 year-old), and Junior (12-14 year-old) classes were interviewed. The head of school, admissions coordinator, art teacher, and learning assistant also participated, and all four are certified as and have acted as classroom teachers.

I selected a suburban North American school because within the scope of this Master's project it was only feasible to choose one school, and it was important to choose a well-established program where all teachers were certified by Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE) accredited training programs. I was not able to find a school in the developing world that met this criteria and whose student body was not limited to the most privileged segment of the population due to private school tuition fees. The particular school was selected because of my existing relationship with the school made it an accessible and accommodating research site.

After semi-structured interviews with fifteen teachers of eighteen-month to fourteen-year-old children at a Montessori School in the United States regarding how Montessori education can contribute to creating the subjective conditions of peace, I identified six key aspects of the Montessori system: school environments, experiences outside the school, teacher-student relationships, experience in nature, the Montessori curriculum, and cultivating inner peace contribute to laying the groundwork for peaceful societies in individuals. These six themes were the most common ideas throughout the interviewees' thoughts on how the Montessori system of education contributes to building the subjective conditions of peace. These six dimensions of the Montessori educational experience constitute the metrics for the presentation of my data, and will constitute the structure for the organization of my later analysis.

Data

In Montessori training and literature, it is common to hear of the 'spiral curriculum': The child at birth is at the centre of the spiral, and every aspect of their learning radiates outward. Every aspect of the curriculum relates to the environment of which they are immediately aware. The outer rings of the spiral represent the broader range of the child's frame of reference in adulthood. The image of the spiral is useful because it illustrates how interrelated the curriculum areas are, surrounding the child at every moment and expanding as she develops.

The idea of a spiral can also apply to the school environment. The child is always at the centre of their educational experience. When they are young, the circle of people they can bond with is small: the innermost ring. As they grow, their circle of social

interactions becomes wider and wider, extending out to eventually include the capacity to imagine and to care for all life on earth.

I introduce this idea before relating the content of my interviews because, although I have identified six key aspects of Montessori education that contribute most to creating the subjective conditions of peace, it is important to note that just as the curriculum areas coexist and work together in the classroom, in relation to and centred around the child, the criteria described below also function together as a total system, with the child's development as a human being who will contribute the strengths of their individuality to the world as its goal, as its centre.

School Environment

Classroom environments are prepared relative to age. For younger children, in the Toddler classroom, their environment consists of the area within a few feet of them and the few people they see every day. As they move up through the levels, the range of people they emotionally attach to as well as the physical environment they can explore broaden, and the conflicts they experience take place in different levels of interaction (19iv16a)[1]. The Montessori environment responds to this (19iv16a). At all levels, there are far fewer of each material than there are students, so children must negotiate with each other to get what they need. The environment itself invites conflict, providing opportunities to solve it (19iv16a, 22iv16b). The classroom is set up in such a way that students are constantly sharing space with each other, learning as young as eighteen months to move around each other carefully and gracefully (19iv16a). Freedom of

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[1] A note on citations: Each interview was assigned a code representing the date of the interview. The first number refers to the day, the roman numeral refers to the month, the second number refers to the year, and the letter refers to the order. For example, this first citation represents the first interview conducted on 19 April, 2016.

movement in the classroom also helps students understand what it means to respect each

other's space and trust one another not to disturb their work, for example if it is left out

on a mat while another student steps away (22iv16c). Students must problem-solve

independent of adults and collaborate which each other, which one interviewee saw as the

most effective way to cultivate empathy (21iv16a, 20iv16b).

The mixed-age classes allow younger children to learn from older children

(21iv16b). For example, in a primary class three year olds who are learning to zip their

own jackets are encouraged to turn to their older peers, even a specific peer mentor,

before seeking help from an adult (18iv16a). The three-year cycle also means that

children experience three years' worth of consequences for their social actions (20iv16c).

Having children of multiple ages working together in one classroom emphasizes the

feeling of community in each classroom (22iv16c). Similarly, students have access to

peers of various ages all day, and to all the adults in the school, providing them with

opportunities for many types of social interactions (25iv16a).

Even at the twelve to fourteen-year-old level where classroom does not involve

manipulative materials, the arrangement of the classroom space has an important impact

on students' social interactions (22iv16a, 22iv16b). Students can choose to sit alone or

together to work, as opposed to more traditional environments where their proximity to

one another would be constantly dictated by the arrangement of desks (22iv16a). While

manipulative materials are not featured in the twelve to fourteen-year-old environment,

materials such as science lab equipment and books are considered shared property,

meaning that students have to both respect each other's personal space and share

resources, learning when each is appropriate (22iv16b). Other teachers emphasized that

they teach their students to care for the classroom itself as collective property and a shared responsibility (21iv16c). In each class, students have assigned jobs in the classroom, including caring for plants and animals (21iv16c).

One interviewee talked about the importance of natural consequences in the school environment, explaining that natural consequences create accountability for actions (20iv16c). The school environment should be pervaded by mutual respect among all students and teachers, and for the physical environment, giving children a small-scale example of what a utopian society could look like (21iv16c, 20iv16c). Similarly, some interviewees likened authoritarian relationships between adults and children to acceptance of authoritarian governments (19iv16b, 22iv16c). Some teachers talked about preparing certain areas of the classroom with peace in mind, for example creating a 'peace corner' in primary classrooms where children can spend time on their own and choose from a variety of quiet activities or just sit in silence (18iv16a). Other teachers preferred to offer a more centrally-located peace shelf (18iv16b).

Teacher-Student Relationships

Without exception, all interviewees were adamant that teachers play a vital role in creating and embodying a peaceful classroom environment. Although at the Montessori school where the interviews were conducted adults were referred to as "teachers", several preferred to think of themselves as "guides," feeling that this was truer to Maria Montessori's method (18iv16a, 20iv16c, 20iv16b). Allowing children to lead their own learning and helping them be successful contributes to children's sense of wellbeing and confidence (20iv16b).

When conflict arises in the classroom, teachers help students navigate the process of conflict resolution rather than assessing conflict and administering consequences (19iv16a). They place responsibility on both parties to engage in the process of finding a solution and helping both children learn to deeply listen to each other's points of view (19iv16a, 25iv16a). Interviewee 20iv16b explained that these interactions need to be developmentally appropriate. Three-year-olds are capable of negotiating conflict, but should be asked "how" questions such as "how can you help him feel better?" rather than "why" questions like "why is he sad?" (20iv16b). Interviewee 21iv16a felt that in order to raise individuals who think independently, they need to have the opportunity to do so as young children, implying that independent thought is indeed a goal of education.

Respect for children as human beings with their own individuality and role in the community was a key priority for many teachers (19iv16a, 21iv16a, 22iv16c). Combining this idea with the aforementioned focus on modeling behaviour and attitudes, one teacher described teaching as an act of humility (21iv16b). Another observed that for children, particularly young adolescents who come from challenging backgrounds, it is extremely beneficial to interact with teachers who work well as a team and care about each other as people (22iv16b). Teachers share personal stories about themselves with students and try to get to know students people, with lives and interests outside the school (18iv16a, 21iv16c, 22iv16b). This creates connections and shows children that everyone around them has their own unique stories and perspectives, all of which have value (18iv16a, 21iv16c, 25iv16a). Sincerely appreciating children's opinions, strengths, and individual potential is a key part of a teacher's interaction with children (20iv16b, 25iv16a). Another interviewee emphasized that individual attitudes and behaviours between teachers and

students are vitally important because they radiate outward to the whole community (20iv16b). Teachers also give lessons in 'grace and courtesy', for example how to hold the door while making eye contact, and then hold children to the standard set during the lesson throughout the year. Some classes give explicit lessons in how to include and show respect for peers (21iv16c).

Many interviewees talked about the importance of teachers modeling respectful communication and problem-solving for students. Teaching in teams of two or three allows children to observe every day how adults interact with each other, and they mimic these interactions (21iv16c, 20iv16a, 22iv16b). Because teachers are in and part of the children's community, it is important for them to model grace, courtesy, and peace themselves (20iv16c). One teaching team interviewed even occasionally disagrees on purpose in order to demonstrate how to work through a difference of opinion (21iv16c). Another teacher talked about striving to appear "on the same page", so that the limits they set in the classroom are clear (18iv16a, 19iv16a). Some felt that children pick up on the emotional energy of teachers, so it is important for teachers to be calm themselves and strive to create a peaceful environment in the classroom through their demeanor, thinking of the classroom as a community that is both academic and emotional (20iv16a, 21iv16c).

For teachers of older children, it is important to find balanced relationships with students, acting as a mentor and advocate and allowing themselves to learn from their students (22iv16b). Several teachers expressed the idea that children are constantly engaged in the process of self-realization (25iv16a, 21iv16a, 19iv16a). Interviewee 22iv16a explained that for twelve to fourteen-year-olds, that process involves trying on different personalities and social roles, so teachers need to be clear and consistent about

their own role in the social order of the classroom so that students have a clear set of limits in which to feel secure.

When asked about the methods of evaluating students' academic progress, and the lack of focus on grades and quantifying achievement, most were adamant that while some students are more competitive than others by personality, all know where they and their peers' strengths lie and compare each other's accomplishments (18iv16a, 21iv16a). The crucial difference, they said, was in how achievement is valued. The personal growth of each student and the sense of community in the classroom take precedence (19iv16a). Students understand that while they may know where they are academically compared to other students, they are not obligated to attain any certain level of achievement to be successful. Progress and collaboration are more important than the end product, and internal satisfaction is prioritized (20iv16b). Other teachers commented that the lack of value judgment placed on the end product of children's work by adults gives them confidence (20iv16a). Even in the twelve to fourteen-year-old class, where assignments are marked with a numerical system, the grading is subjective and students are always allowed and encouraged to have conversations with teachers about their marks (22iv16b). The grades are meant as starting points for conversations as well as a way for students to keep track of their own progress rather than to compare their achievement to a standard or to each other (22iv16b). One teacher summed up this idea by saying that fair does not mean giving all students the same treatment, but rather giving each student what they need (25iv16a).

Going Out

Experiences outside the school, particularly service in both the school community and beyond, is an important part of Montessori education. Interviewee 21iv16b thought that 'going out' is the crucial element that sets Montessori education apart and contributes most significantly to the subjective conditions of peace, saying that experience is much harder to come by today than information. At the three to six-year-old level going out entails running messages to the office, asking the administrative assistant for photo copies, or doing chores outside of the classroom (18iv16a). As children's imaginations develop, they are able to relate to and empathize with people less and less directly related to them in a more conscious way (19iv16a). As this development occurs, students travel farther and farther from the classroom (19iv16a). Teachers coach children before they leave the classroom, making sure they know what is expected of them. They learn how to interact with adults outside of their everyday context and, later, with people outside the school, learning life skills at the same time (20iv16a, 21iv16c). According to interviewee 20iv16a, this experience impacts how children form relationships. Other teachers felt that experience outside the school helps expand children's sense of community and develop their confidence in interacting with various types of people (20iv16b, 25iv16a). The children take pride in fulfilling the high expectations of responsible and respectful behaviour that teachers have for them (21iv16c). When performing independent errands, children feel that they are trusted with responsibility by adults (20iv16b, 18iv16a).

Outings for older students include student-planned field trips, camping trips, shopping trips to buy supplies for projects, and mentoring younger students (21iv16b, 20iv16b). One teacher stressed the importance of camping trips in the school's culture because they provide an opportunity for the community to work together in a less controlled environment to ensure the group's comfort and success (21iv16a, 22iv16b). Experiences outside the school that are related to the learning happening in the classroom help children make real-world connections and instill a sense of history (21iv16b). They also help students learn to think outside of themselves and be more aware of the broader human community and the importance of all types of work (21iv16b, 22iv16b, 25iv16a). In the twelve to fourteen-year-old classroom, business interactions in the context of the practical life curriculum are frequent (22iv16a). For one interviewee, the most important impact of these interactions is that students are able to realize that most people they will interact with are good, understanding people (22iv16a). Similarly, other teachers felt that forming connections outside of the school helps students feel less isolated and more connected to the world (22iv16c).

Experience in Nature

According to many interviewees, contact with nature plays in important role in the school environment. One referenced her understanding of Montessori literature as advocating outdoor lessons whenever possible (20iv16b). Working outside fosters a feeling of connectedness with the earth, and a sense that as human beings we are connected to all life that came before us and all that will come after (20iv16b, 25iv16a). One teacher who uses guided meditation to help students feel at peace in her classroom noted that when she asks them to picture a place that makes them feel calm and happy,

they always pick a natural setting (18iv16b). Some participants also expressed that

constantly being inside feels 'unnatural', especially to children (22iv16a, 20iv16b). When

asked about the importance of outdoor time during the school day, some teachers thought

it was most important because it provides opportunities for unstructured play where

children can learn experience cooperation, leadership, and problem-solving skills through

experience (21iv16a). When the children are out on the playground, adults supervise

conflict resolution, but let students work through disagreements as independently as

possible (21iv16c).

Curriculum

When asked what aspects of the curriculum contribute most to creating the

subjective conditions for peace, many interviewees talked about what Maria Montessori

called the Cultural Curriculum. Interviewee 19iv16a thought that the study of history

gives students the understanding that all ideas are built on other ideas, and a sense of the

global interconnectedness of human life on earth. A school administrator articulated the

underlying motivation of the cultural subjects, that children are aware of their place in the

universe and understand that the world is bigger than what they can perceive (25iv16a).

This understanding begins at the primary level, where caring for plants and animals,

learning plant and animal life cycles, and the story of the formation and parts of the

planets are parts of daily classroom life (18iv16b, 21iv16c). A work called the Cosmic

Nesting Boxes is an example of a material that facilitates this: the smallest box is painted

with a picture of a child and the largest box is painted with a representation of the

universe. The boxes can be un-nested and stacked, showing the child in the context of all

the intervening stages between herself and the universe. An accompanying book

describes each, ending with the question, "Is there anywhere I can get that's bigger than the universe?" (18iv16b). Teachers often reiterate the message that all life on earth has a valuable role to play (18iv16b). They do this through small actions, such as encouraging children to release bugs back outside rather than killing them in the classroom (18iv16b). In a lesson about the omnipresence of water, teachers chipped ice from a stream on the playground at recess and showed the primary children how it melted and then boiled when heated. The demonstration was a platform for a conversation about clouds, rain, and the importance of water (18iv16b).

The study of history begins with the formation of the planets and the universe, and continues with explorations of ancient civilizations and contemporary culture, building students' awareness of diverse cultural practices alongside the understanding that all deserve respect (25iv16a, 22iv16c). In the elementary geography curriculum, the relationship between cultural and physical geography is explored, again highlighting the connections between life on earth (22iv16c). Lessons in the fundamental needs of humans are presented at the elementary level, and that theme is carried through the cultural subjects in the older levels (25iv16a).

For older students, the idea that all history is world history is important (22iv16a). One teacher described her approach to teaching history as being continuous, focused on day to day life rather than progressing war by war (22iv16). The study of economic geography, for example learning where food comes from, is also important and contributes to students' awareness of the world (25iv16a). Studying the humanities builds students' appreciation for art, language, music, and all that humans create (18iv16a). Science and math are seen as universal languages, common to human beings

across all cultures (22iv16b). Learning biology provides a concrete, scientific understanding of the physical connections between life on earth, and a platform to explore the relationship between uniqueness and similarity (22iv16b). The underlying idea is that people are more likely to care for what they know about (18iv16b, 20iv16b, 22iv16b).

Cultivating Inner Peace

Many interviewees stressed that in order for children to contribute to a more peaceful world, they need to be able to be still, peaceful, and confident as individuals (19iv16b, 20iv16a, 20iv16b, 20iv16b, 21iv16b, 18iv16b). For example, learning to articulate their needs and feelings calmly during an interpersonal conflict is an explicitly taught skill in lower elementary (19iv16b). Similarly, if a primary teacher is speaking with someone and a child wants her attention, the child places her hand gently on the teacher's shoulder and waits. The teacher does not acknowledge the child until she is done with her current conversation. This creates a quiet space between the child's feeling of wanting something and their fulfillment of that desire where they can learn to be comfortable sitting silently with their own thoughts for a time (20iv16a).

Constructing the classroom as a safe space where children can work out who they are as individuals and let their own voice be heard is crucial (19iv16b). In order for children to think outside of themselves, they need to have a strong self-image (20iv16b). One way in which this sense of safety is achieved is through the expectation that students respect each other's work when it is left out in common spaces (21iv16c). Another way is through careful facilitation of conflict situations by teachers, encouraging children to listen to each other's points of view deeply and communicate their own calmly (19iv16b,

25iv16a). Just as teachers make a point of telling personal stories in order to connect with students, they encourage students to deeply listen to each other's stories. One interviewee suggested that the reason narratives are so important is that they facilitate emotional connections between people (19iv16b).

This chapter gave a brief introduction to the Montessori system, described my qualitative research methodology, and presented the findings of the interviews. Six main themes were clear in the data: school environments, experiences outside the school, teacher-student relationships, experience in nature, the Montessori curriculum, and cultivating inner peace. The following chapter will be an analysis of how these six aspects of the Montessori system give it great potential as a method of educating for peace in the developing world, particularly in conflict zones.

Chapter 4: Analysis and Discussion

In this chapter, I will analyze each of the the six themes presented in the previous chapter, relating them to the literature presented in chapter two. In this thesis, I argue that Montessori education has the potential to help create the positive conditions for peace in the world's conflict zones. By "subjective" conditions of peace I refer to the individual affective, cognitive, behavioural conditions that are necessary to build and sustain positive peace and delegitimize cultural violence (O'Malley, 2015). Montessori education contributes to this aim by developing in children behaviours and worldviews that include both compassionate imagining and the understanding of how to build peaceful and compassionate institutions.

Classroom Environments

In Montessori classroom environments, children lead their own learning. This is significant because the world is not a uniform place. In order for children to learn to navigate difficult social situations, they need practice in their daily lives. According to Goertz (2001), choosing peaceful solutions to social problems is a skill that children can practice and master in the classroom, like arithmetic or reading. Making those choices is harder for some children than others, and all of them need opportunities to use and develop their skills. Learning to peacefully handle social conflicts requires specific lessons and plentiful opportunities for supported but independent practice.

When social conflicts arise in Montessori classrooms at the primary level, the teachers' role is to help children learn to listen to each other, keep themselves calm, express their needs, and find solutions. They steer students away from blame, fault, and dialogues that take on an "us vs. them" or "me vs. you" pattern. They help children

imagine how they might feel in the other person's situation. In lower elementary teachers take on an even less active role, making sure students know they are there for support but not getting involved unless asked. The children are skilled at listening and imagining now, and can often help support their peers during the process of working through conflicts. These early experiences, in the safe and supportive classroom environment, are practice for the complex skills of conflict resolution that children will go on to use in less safe and supportive contexts throughout their lives.

Sharing space in the classroom and on the playground is a valuable lesson extending compassion to those who appear to be different from oneself. Goertz talks about inclusion in elementary classrooms, describing it as practice in 'living with the other': "Constructive daily living with the 'other' in the classroom during childhood is the indirect preparation for an adult life of vital social and political action, promoting peace, not provoking hostility." (Goertz, 2001, p. 83). Several interviewees talked about the importance of placing value on personal improvement and satisfaction rather than comparing academic success between students or to a standard, reiterating the importance of genuinely valuing diversity in and out of the classroom

Goertz (2001) writes that the school environment is a microcosm of the wider world, and for this reason it is important to engage the entire classroom community in creating a shared system of values and set of skills that focus on justice and reconciliation rather than revenge. One of the teachers I interviewed thought of the classroom as a way of giving students an example of the ideal community (20iv16c). Combining that with the awareness and acceptance of diversity that comes from experience and reflection outside

the classroom, students are prepared to re-create the peaceful environments they learned in childhood in the wide array of groups they will be part of throughout life.

Freedom of movement and choice during the three-hour work cycles of Montessori classrooms requires students of all ages to be constantly sharing both space and materials with each other (22iv16c). In this way, the environment invites conflict, providing the opportunity for students to learn how to handle various social situations in peaceful ways, developing the skills to choose non-violent communications (19iv16a, 22iv16b). Spending free time in outdoor environments, even less structured than classrooms, provides additional opportunities for this learning.

Experiences outside the school

Community service and experience outside the school in the later elementary and junior high years helps build students' awareness of their place in a greater human context. When experiences outside of school are related to learning in the classroom, school becomes a part the student's life rather than something that exists alongside or removed from 'real life'. This way, the history and science learned in the classroom are not mere facts, but contribute to a deep sense of the human experience.

Going out into the community beyond the school is an opportunity for students to learn to share space and time with diverse groups of people, through collaboration, business interactions, and service projects. These instances increase as students get older, building on the foundation they have built of skillfully interacting with their peers and extending their powers of compassionate imagination to people and places beyond their immediate sphere of reference. This is the practice that will prepare them to move on from their schools and be part of making the other communities they are part of more

peaceful, tolerant and inclusive. Through experience outside the school in the normal course of a student's education, they become more aware of the human community and the importance of all types of work (21iv16b). Paring experiences and reflection with the lessons described earlier is an extremely powerful way to build empathetic connections.

Teacher-Student Relationships

According to Goertz, the difference between authoritative and authoritarian teaching is that in the former, children are taught that they are capable of solving problems independently and are allowed to try it out for themselves, knowing that an adult is there to support them if necessary. In authoritarian teaching styles, children are taught that they are incapable and need an adult to step in and mediate their social interactions (Montessori, 1949; Goertz, 2001). Self-discipline that emerges from the social environment of the classroom under the guidance of an authoritative teacher is the basis of a strong and caring community full of independent and capable individuals. The imposed discipline of classrooms run by authoritarian adults can only be a source of conflict. One interviewee, while speaking generally on the topic of teacher-student relationships, expressed the belief that authoritarian relationships in the classroom lead to acceptance of authoritarian leaders in adulthood (20iv16c).

Teachers in Montessori classrooms are role models for students, demonstrating the behaviour and thought processes they want students to use when dealing with each other. Teachers set the example for having compassion and respect for everyone. Many interviewees reported that they try to form connections with children that go beyond the classroom, telling stories about their lives and inviting children to do the same. By doing this, they show respect for children as people with complex lives outside of school and

show students that they can relate to teachers as people, not simply authority figures. This is important because it provides daily practice in creating empathetic connections with other people. According to Sagi-Shwartz, close interpersonal relationships with adults in early childhood helps establish in children a mindset which is more conducive to conflict resolution later on life (2012).When teachers help students work through disputes, they do so by teaching them how to actively and deeply listen to each other's stories and talk about what each of them needs, and what each can do to help the other meet those needs (19iv16b; 20iv16a).

Montessori Curriculum

Lessons like the Fundamental Needs of Humans use visual and kinetic aids to help children imagine the realities of people outside of their frame of reference. The basic physical and psychological necessities for human life are simple concepts to understand for a six-year-old. Children at this age can easily relate to them. Making this knowledge part of children's worldviews early on is the first step to developing a personality that takes for granted that all humans have something in their natures in common. All need the same few basic requirements. It is not hard for a six-year-old to imagine what it feels like to be deprived of one of these things. The empathetic learning comes when they are able to imagine that another person who looks different, speaks another language, eats different food, has different aspirations, can feel the same when deprived of their basic needs. This is when imagination aides the extension of empathy and compassion for the unknown. The next step is understanding on an intellectual level how many of these unknown, different people really do go without their basic needs. This is another step in the imagining, and when that understanding is built on a foundation of empathy and

compassion it is part of the child's personality rather than being a detached fact of which they are aware. The cosmic education curriculum in elementary helps the child form a strong imaginative connection with the world, turning their immense and innate power of imagining outward to their social and physical realities (Wolf, 1996; Montessori, 1967).

The elementary period is particularly essential to developing the skills and worldview necessary to contribute to creating peace because approximately age six is the age kids start wondering "why" about everything and basing their decisions on their understanding of morality (Montessori, 1948). In *Education for a New World* Montessori explains that the entire curriculum is tied into history. Science, geography, language, math, and human history are all presented as part of a larger narrative of which the human species is a small yet significant part. Presenting this story at the time of children's moral development provides an expansive context and sense of perspective for their exploration of right and wrong. Some of my interviewees articulated why narrative is so important, both at the small personal level and the larger historic level – it facilitates emotional connections between individuals and to the greater context of life on earth (19iv16a, 25iv16a).

Materials and lessons such as the long black strip, the great lessons depicting the origin and physical nature of the universe, the timelines of life and of various aspects of human history, and materials and lessons designed by individual teachers such as the Cosmic Nesting Boxes described earlier all help to engage children's imaginations with an expansive narrative. One interviewee talked about the convergence of physical and human geography in Montessori elementary classrooms, significant because it builds awareness of the dependence of human life on the earth and the connections between

human groups based on their shared need to use natural resources (22iv16c). In the later elementary and adolescent years, the study of history focuses on daily life and global connections, building a broad narrative rather than progressing from war to war as if these are the most crucial events on the human timeline (22iv16a).

Experience in Nature

The main areas of benefit of spending time in contact with nature expressed by the interviewees were that it enables children to connect their learning about natural and human history, biological and physical science to observation and lived experience, thereby perpetuating their wonder and curiosity about the world and their place in it. That idea is reminiscent of Nussbaum and Hammond's discussions about the the extension of compassion and emotional connection beyond the immediate circle of a person's daily interactions. One of the most important lessons of what Montessori called the "cosmic education" curriculum during the elementary years is the realization that all of humanity has in common its roots in and dependence on the earth. Time spent in nature provides the opportunity to connect this idea with the physical reality around them, perpetuating wonder and curiosity about the world and their place in it. Thinking in these terms requires extensive use of the child's imagination. According to Nussbaum, imagination is the source of the human ability to be compassionate, and the extension of compassion depends upon the power of imagination.

Cultivating Inner Peace

Montessori wrote that it was necessary for individuals to cultivate inner peace in order to contribute to building peaceful societies (1949). During the process of normalization, described in an earlier chapter, they develop the self-confidence and

security that lay the groundwork for learning about the world (Goertz, 2001). According to one interviewee's experience, children need a strong self-image to learn to think outside of themselves (21iv16b). This is reminiscent of Hammond, who calls for renewed attention to the idea of individuals as the building blocks of societies (1983). It also recalls Nussbaum's assertion that the ability to be compassionate is first developed in the most immediate and intimate relationships (2001). Many of my interviewees reflected these ideas, declaring nearly unanimously that they strive to help their students find inner peace, calm, and silence with the intention of giving them a strong foundation from which to build peaceful, healthy relationships in the communities they will be involved in for the rest of their lives.

Montessori Education and Peacebuilding

As discussed in the literature review, studies have shown that early childhood education can have a strong impact on children's ability to engage in conflict resolution processes later in life. Sagi-Schwartz (2012) emphasizes the importance of strong relationships in that early childhood context. Rosen and Saloman (2010) criticize peace education programs that only address students' superficial attitudes and behaviours, failing to build lasting and genuine tolerance for the convictions of others that is a necessary foundation for the continuous process of peaceful development. An important part of Montessori education is cultivating a system of values even before children begin to ponder morality around the age of six. In Montessori classrooms, teachers help students develop the skills to intentionally empathize with each other, as well as provide experiences and connections that help make peaceful social dynamics second nature. For

example, to prioritize the physical and emotional wellbeing of other people because they feel it is the right thing to do as opposed to because they feel obligated to an authority figure.

Montessori and Hammond both see significance in addressing individuals and interpersonal relationships as the building blocks of social institutions. Hammond's emphasis is on affective ties as the basis of social cohesion. For Montessori, self-discipline and the genuine desire to prioritize the interests of the group were particularly important individual conditions. Montessori also wrote about the importance of an imaginative connection to the world and to humanity, an idea in line with the contemporary cosmopolitan scholars Nussbaum and Scarry, who wrote that the ability to be compassionate was based in the power of imagination (Nussbaum, 2002; Scarry 1996). Bridging these three ideas, one interviewee said that an important part of responding to children's developmental level is to understand that they are able to empathize with people less and less directly related to them as their imaginations develop (19iv16a). Similarly, opportunities to connect with the world outside the school and form connections with diverse groups of people helps extend those imaginative and compassionate connections beyond the child's immediate daily context (22iv16c).

Nussbaum and Scarry agree that compassion is based on the ability to imagine, to the maximum possible extent, another person's reality. Nussbaum and Montessori both talk about the power of imagination, and how the source of compassion is imagination (Nussbaum, 2002; Scarry 1996). Montessori lessons are designed to capture children's imaginations and engage them with the real world, connecting everything they learn to the over-arching narrative of life on earth. Teachers help students imagine each other's

perspectives and communicate them to each other in the complex social environment of the classroom.

As discussed in the literature review, Scarry writes that it is necessary to have both compassionate imagining and institutionalization of equity in a society (1996). In Montessori classrooms, both of these exist. Compassionate imagining takes place in every facet of the curriculum, from teachers facilitating discussion between children involved in disputes, helping them to listen and imagine each other's situations, to lessons presented at all levels that focus on the common needs, tragedies, and triumphs of the human species and the ability to cast the net of imagination to the corners of the globe with curiosity, wonder, and compassion.

So far this chapter has described how the the Montessori system has the potential to create the subjective conditions for peace. This constitutes a contribution to peaceful development in post-conflict situations by laying the groundwork for building peaceful social institutions in a new generation.

Hammond (1983) writes that emotional ties of differing strengths are the basis of social organization. Similarly, Nussbaum (2002) and Scarry (1996) theorize that compassion, originating frrom the ability to imagine another person, is easiest to extend to individuals with whom one shares a closer relationship, but possible to extend further through both imagination and social reform. Montessori education, implemented in communities that are recovering from violent conflict, has the potential to create experiences that predispose the next generation to live as compassionate and empathetic individuals and create social institutions that are more just and peaceful.

As Rosen and Salomon write, the key to peace education that has a lasting impact is to change the deeply held convictions that are at the origin of many conflicts (2010). Similarly, Galtung writes that the difference between negative and positive peace is that positive means actively creating a society that is harmonious, where there is a high standard of living (1996). In order to work towards positive peace in the aftermath of conflict and facilitate continued peaceful development and prevent children from slipping back into problematic attitudes as Rosen Saloman demonstrated with other peace programs, successful peace education programs need that to help children develop convictions and worldviews that will be conducive to creating peaceful institutions as they grown up (2010). Like Goertz (2001) writes, and several interviewees echoed, the experience of the Montessori classroom communities gives children, the future leaders of their communities, a sense of what the ideal community feels like. This is particularly important in situations where children's lives outside of school are fraught with experiences of conflict.

The conflict management skills children learn on a daily basis as they participate in a Montessori classroom community quickly become second nature at a young age. Early childhood intervention is crucial to developing these important skills that will serve children well as they grown up in trying situations. Sagi-Schwartz's work on the importance of close relationships in early childhood, as well as reports on early childhood interventions in the development context support this idea (Sagi-Schwartz, 2012; UNICEF WCARO and UNICEF, 2015). My research participants agreed, adding that one of their most important tasks as teachers is to facilitate experiences that prepare their

students to be peaceful, compassionate members of society and creatively solve problems without violence.

The power of the Montessori system as education for a more peaceful world lies in the fact that these lessons and experiences take place in the course of daily school life, at the same time that children are learning the basic intellectual skills that are part of early education. As work progress on the fourth Sustainable Development Goal, access to quality education for all, and the sixteenth, promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for all, approaches that are effective in low-resource situations are valuable (UN, 2015). Rather than use resources on separate peace education training, curricula, etc. and take away from time spent building other skills, it is better to use a system of education that focuses on the whole child at once and the person they are growing up to be, not just their academic competencies. The conflict resolution skills and and compassionate worldviews fostered by Montessori education develop as students navigate classroom social life, solve problems, and follow their interests in the course of the school day, becoming part of their lives in a way that externally imposed lessons about peace and conflict cannot.

Montessori as Peace Education in Developing Societies

The dynamic environment of a Montessori classroom provides constant opportunities for problem solving and heuristic thinking as children learn and socialize. One of the UN peacebuilding guidelines introduced in the literature review is peacebuilding as a local responsibility. For that to happen, the individuals responsible for rebuilding society from within in the aftermath of conflict need compassion and problem solving skills. They need to be people who seek non-violence and are capable of compassionate imagination.

Montessori schools are communities. They serve more than just the children in their classes. Much of the work of the school is real-world work and can be adapted to the needs of any context: growing food, caring for younger children, building, water sanitation, community and parent education are all life-sustaining activities that can take place within the school community as part of its work. The opportunity exists not only for children to learn and practice skills they will need for daily life in their particular cultural context and circumstances, but also to actively contribute to the wellbeing and healing of their community. Montessori schools are the perfect rallying point for community healing.

The first Montessori schools served children living in tenement homes in urban Rome. Dr. Montessori and her colleagues had few resources with which to implement her pedagogy. The materials necessary for Motnessori classrooms can be made by teachers themselves rather than purchased in many cases, and making and maintaining materials and school environments can also be a meaningful part of the community life of the school.

Although my research was carried out in a North American school, the principles of Montessori Education, supported by my data, strongly suggest that Montessori could play a beneficial role in educational reform in developing countries. The ways in which Montessori education contributes to the subjective conditions of peace through the arrangement of the school environment, use of experiences outside the school, teacher-student relationships, experience in nature, the Montessori curriculum, and a focus on cultivating inner peace offer a way to work against what Galtung calls cultural violence (1996). The Montessori classroom offers the close interpersonal relationships and

supportive communities in early childhood that Sagi-Schwartz says contribute to future willingness to engage in conflict resolution (2012). It offers the potential for a peace education that creates the deeper level of tolerance that Rosen and Soloman say many peace education programs miss.

The focus on what is called 'Practical Life' work in all levels of Montessori education makes it particularly suited to the development context and situations of post-conflict reconstruction. Practical life, while part of the school day, includes any tasks that are part of daily life in a given cultural context. As described in the data section, in the youngest age groups examples of practical life include personal hygiene, self-care, and food preparation. For older students agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, sewing, construction, and entrepreneurship can all be part of school life. Practical life is critical to the individual students as they mature and develop a sense of self, but also to bridge the school and community. Thus, Montessori schools can be benefit developing communities by contributing to capacity building in culturally appropriate, context-specific ways.

UNICEF's education division focuses on education in emergencies and post-crisis transition as well as innovation in education. The goal for researching education in emergencies is to learn what types of programs have the potential to support the creation of peace and resilience in the aftermath of a crisis (UNICEF, 2016). This thesis argues that Montessori education has substantial potential to create the subjective conditions for peace that are critical in post-conflict situations. Additionally, UNICEF currently funds education projects around the world that are employing innovative and non-traditional methods, seeking new techniques in education that advance the goal of equitable education for all. However, none of the projects currently listed as UNICEF innovations

in education are focused on Montessori education (UNICEF, 2014b). In the next chapter,

I will propose directions for future research.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

This research has explored the potential of the Montessori system of education to establish the subjective conditions for peace in the world's conflict zones.

My analysis of the primary data collected during the fieldwork and of the works of Dr. Montessori and those who have continued her work indicates that the Montessori system has the potential to contribute to peace by creating the necessary subjective conditions. Reviewing the literature on peace education revealed a lack of attention to creating school environments for children in conflict zones that can support their development as compassionate, empathetic, tolerant individuals as a necessary basis for peaceful development. I have argued in this thesis that what Montessori refers to as the Cosmic Education Curriculum, combined with teachers' individual methods for demonstrating and nurturing in their students respect for life and a sense of connectedness to others, are important parts of the system and contributors to the subjective conditions of peace that make Montessori effective not only as a method of schooling that adequately prepares children for higher education and later employment, but that prepares them to contribute to the mending of a global human society increasingly torn by violence.

Fieldwork for this thesis consisted of fourteen semi-structured interviews at a Montessori school in the United States. The participants, teachers of children 18 months through 14 years, were asked to talk about how they see Montessori education as a way of creating the subjective conditions of peace as described earlier in this paper. The most common themes in the interviews were the importance of school environments,

experiences outside the school, teacher-student relationships, experience in nature, the Montessori curriculum, and cultivating inner peace at school.

Thinking about education as contributing to peacebuilding by creating subjective conditions that lay a strong foundation for all other peacebuilding effort is a shift in perspective that could lead to changes in the way peace education is imagined in the development sphere. Montessori education is already being implemented in low-resource situations and with marginalized groups, the goal being to provide them children with quality education, and peace education programs are already being implemented as part of development projects around the world. The next step to progress toward the goals of providing quality education for all and lessening the impact of violent conflicts around the world is to think of these two goals as inextricably linked aspects of the single goal of sustainable, positive peace and find solutions that utilize that interrelatedness.

As demonstrated in the literature review, research on the importance of emotional ties in childhood, the origins of empathy, and techniques for peace education is prevalent, but innovative programs that combine these ideas with the intention of harnessing children's drive to learn are not. This is the gap that future research and policy analysis focusing on Montessori as education for peace, through creating the subjective conditions for peace, can fill.

Recommendations for Future Research

It would be useful to do a policy analysis of peace education projects funded and run by development agencies through the lens of the subjective conditions of peace as put forth in this paper. This way, specific recommendations could be made in order to deepen

the impact of existing programs and design new programs for the contexts where the need

for peace education has already been identified and resources are being allocated.

The global Montessori community is focusing more and more on peace. In March

and July 2017, respectively, the American Montessori Society and Association

Montessori International annual conferences will focus on Maria Montessori's vision for

peace and sharing knowledge across borders ("Pathways to Peace", 2016; "2017 Annual

Conference", 2016). Additionally, a new peer-reviewed scholarly journal, *The Journal of*

Montessori Research, produced its first issue in November 2015. However, research

specifically focusing on that application of the system is lacking compared with the bulk

of research regarding the academic success of Montessori students.

The largest study ever of the efficacy of Montessori education will be published in

2017 by the Riley Institute at Furman University in Greenville, SC (Ayer, 2016). The

study measured five domains over five years in 45 different public Montessori

classrooms in South Carolina, including what the study calls the 'affective domain',

according to an interview with the principal investigator (Ayer, 2016). Social skills are

included, but qualitative investigation of beliefs, attitudes, and empathy towards others is

absent. Additionally, the study uses as a fidelity measure the Montessori Essentials

outlined by the Montessori Public Policy Initiative (a collaboration between the

Association Montessori Internationale and American Montessori Society), which lists

teacher qualification, class size, use of Montessori materials, and the presence of a three-

hour work cycle as important components of a true Montessori classroom (AMI & AMS,

2015). As the validity of Montessori as a source of academic achievement becomes more

accepted and publicized, equally rigorous qualitative study of its affect on students'

attitudes and behavior toward other people – at a deeper level than learning social skills –

is called for.

Additionally, there is a lack of studies that focus on the affective dimensions of

Montessori education in cultures outside of North America. While a few Montessori

schools in the developing world have been studied in low resource situations, first nations

communities, and post-conflict situations (AMI, 2016), there is room for rigorous study

of how implementing Montessori education in these situations specifically contributes to

peaceful development in different cultures. Additional research projects should target

Montessori programs in the developing world and in post-conflict situations, with

particular attention to the social and emotional outcomes as well as the effects of

Montessori schools on the communities they serve. Research should also be carried out

on the barriers to establishing Montessori schools in the developing world and to

potential students accessing those schools. The opportunity exists for pilot programs

anywhere that aid agencies and NGO's are already carrying out education projects, both

as part of international development plans and post-conflict or disaster aid. Data from

specific projects in different global south contexts would be beneficial to develop policy

guidelines and secure stable funding for more Montessori programs.

Policy Recommendations

In order to implement Montessori education more widely in the developing world,

it would be useful for UNICF to hire MACTE certified Montessori teacher trainers as

consultants to make recommendations for program design at country and local levels.

Funding pilot projects in developing countries and publishing the results in the form of

guides could help begin to form a community of practice around implementing

Montessori with the goal of creating the subjective conditions of peace in challenging situations in the developing world. Funding and staffing affordable, accessible, and thorough Montessori teacher training programs in as many countries as possible would be a crucial next step to sustaining the projects beyond a trial period.

National governments willing to recognize Montessori as a valid and appropriate method of education should offer training and resources to convert government schools to Montessori in order to ensure that more students are able to access it. Recognizing the potential for Montessori schools to be integral parts of the communities in which they exist and provide environments in which children can have experiences that will help them become future peacemakers and creative problem solvers is a crucial first step for governments. The next step is funding teacher training programs that are appropriate and sensitive to the context at hand and providing resources for families, teachers, and communities about the potential of Montessori for contributing to a more peaceful world.

The Sustainable Development Goals have linked the idea of access to early childhood education to development, and credited education with the ability to reduce the instance of conflict around the world. Chapter one introduced the international context of peacebuilding and education and the current best practices for peace education in the development sector. The importance of early childhood education to reducing conflict and contributing to development has been echoed by theorists such as Sen, Galtung, Rosen and Saloman, and Sagi-Schwartz. Chapter two reviewed those works alongside Nussbaum and Scarry's cosmopolitanism and Hammond's commentary on social structure and emotion to draw connections between compassion, imagination, and early education and discussed Montessori education as a system that has the potential to create

those subjective conditions of peace for young children. Chapter three further described

the Montessori approach to education and presented the primary research findings

collected through a series of semi-structured interviews with teachers in at a Montessori

school in the United states. After coding and analyzing notes from the interviews, six

themes emerged: the importance of school environments, experiences outside the school,

teacher-student relationships, experience in nature, the Montessori curriculum, and a

focus on cultivating inner peace. Chapter four connected those six themes to the

literature, describing in detail how the Montessori system can create the subjective

conditions for peace, and how it is particularly relevant and feasible in post-conflict

situations in the developing world. The Montessori system was developed with world

peace as the ultimate goal, and with the utmost respect for children as human beings with

unique potential to grow as compassionate, innovative people who can contribute to

building peaceful institutions. As Dr. Montessori wrote in a letter to all governments in

1947, "Man must be cultivated from the beginning of life when the great powers of

nature are at work. It is then that one can hope to plan for a better international

understanding." Those "powers of nature" are a child's ability to connect to others, to

imagine their place in human society and the greater picture of life on earth. The

Montessori system creates an environment that nurtures and harnesses those qualities in

individuals, so they may be the creators of sustainably peaceful institutions in their

communities, countries, and the world.

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Appendix A:

Interview Guide

The Montessori System as Education for Peace
Interview Guide

1. Is helping students have peaceful interpersonal interactions a priority for you?
→ How do you do that?

2. What aspects of Montessori pedagogy do you observe making the greatest differences in how children relate to others?
→(probe for answers about peers, school community, global community)

3. Based on your experience as a classroom teacher, does Montessori education foster cross-cultural understanding and compassion?
→ If so, how?
→ (probe for specific examples)

4. What does Montessori's vision of a peaceful global society mean for you?

5. Do you think about that vision, as written in *Education and Peace* and Montessori's other works, on a daily basis in the classroom?