social sciences

MDPI

Article

Rethinking International Scholarships as Peace Interventions in the Palestinian Context of Conflict

Anas N. Almassri

School of Education, Durham University, Durham DH1 3LE, UK; anas.n.almassri@durham.ac.uk

Abstract: International education scholarships can be significant interventions at times of conflict and peace. Extant research in International Relations and in International Education begins to demonstrate this significance but predominantly in neo-liberal terms of human capital import, North-facing cosmopolitanism, and Western-style democratization and global (economic) integration. This is valuable framing, but it misses more complex political effects of scholarships as conflict and peace interventions. This paper presents empirical evidence illuminating the need for a broader ontology in researching the potential contribution of scholarships to peace. The paper draws on qualitative data collected from 32 Palestinian scholarship alumni and alumnae, sampling a national group nowhere to be found in scholarly or policy works dealing with international education and conflict/peace. Developed through a critical realist thematic analysis of the collected data, the experiential findings reported here show strong perceived gains in the research participants' critical reflexivization and *domestic and* global (re)socialization of their sense of *national* identity and awareness. An interdisciplinary discussion of these gains demonstrates that scholarships may represent deep and significant advocacy and capacity-building interventions in the contexts of conflict, with these interventions spanning the humanitarian, development, and, to a lesser extent, political spheres. The discussion is concluded with a reflection on the methodological-conceptual challenge these findings outline to framing international education impacts in only neo-liberal terms. Overall, this paper contributes a timely Global South perspective to inform critical thought and practice of international scholarships for Palestinians and other conflict-affected groups/nations.

Keywords: conflict and peace; interdisciplinarity; international education; neoliberalism; Palestine; scholarship programs

Citation: Almassri, Anas N. 2024. Rethinking International Scholarships as Peace Interventions in the Palestinian Context of Conflict. *Social Sciences* 13: 336. https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci13070336

Academic Editor: Nigel Parton

Received: 14 May 2024
Revised: 19 June 2024
Accepted: 24 June 2024
Published: 25 June 2024

1. Introduction

International higher education scholarships have long been claimed to contribute to peace. Whether international exchanges, like the Fulbright and DAAD, or publicly or privately-funded programs to move potential leaders internationally for education and training, the following motif runs across policy and program objectives and empirical research of scholarships: an intended or effected contribution to conflict prevention (Raetzell et al. 2013), to a more peaceful world (U.S. Senate 2002), to global peace and stability (House of Lords 2014), to a peaceful Israeli–Palestinian future (OGS n.d.), to broad Saudi–American cooperation (White House 2005), and to Chinese peace investment in Africa (Benabdallah 2016). Pathways of this claimed contribution barely transgress a neo-liberal[1] ontology. Departing from liberal internationalism, public diplomats and IR/public diplomacy researchers often emphasize scholarships' contribution to peace on account of their facilitation of recipients', usually foreign potential leaders', socialization into democratic practices, liberal values, and affinity for the host country (e.g., Atkinson 2010; Gift and Krcmaric 2017). International education practitioners and researchers seem to depart from a similar ontological position, with extant analyses of the potential

contribution most often privileging mechanisms of neo-liberal life, e.g., human capital (Perna et al. 2014), democracy (Chankseliani 2018), and (a particular kind) of a civic or cosmopolitan mind and global citizenship (see Kim and Kwon 2023). Conversations between the two groups barely leave this ontological orbit (see CSIS 2016, 2018; USIP 2015, 2017; cf. USIP 2019).

This neo-liberal framing of the peace impact of scholarships, and more broadly of international exchange and education, is valuable. As shall be demonstrated later in this article, its base of supportive empirical evidence is growing stronger and stronger, and its theoretical robustness remains as firm as that of theories of democratic and liberal peace. However, this neo-liberal scoping of the potential contribution of scholarships to peace limits our understanding of the diversity of processes facilitating or hindering this contribution. It also narrows our appreciation of an otherwise great breadth of this potential contribution by limiting it—and in course, the conception of peace—to formulas of economic and ideological returns on investment. The lack of critique of this valuable but limiting neo-liberal frame seems to result, in part, from the relative lack of research on Global South contexts (cf. Campbell and Neff 2020; Dassin et al. 2018) and of critical research even when produced there (e.g., Lefifi and Kiala 2021). One such case is Palestine. Along with Israel, it is the second top location, just after the U.S., for peace and conflict-oriented international education programs (Pugh and Ross 2019), with full scholarship programs dedicated to inducing development and peace there (e.g., NYU 2013; OGS n.d.; UCU 2017). However, Palestine is virtually absent from academic and grey literature dealing with international education and peace, a gap within a larger one of the disproportionately little research on conflict-oriented international education programming in the Middle East and North Africa (Pugh and Ross 2019).

This article is one attempt at beginning to bridge this gap. It starts by revisiting the relevant literature, situating scholarships as conflict and peace interventions, and reflecting on the ontological link often drawn between scholarships and peace. Next, the (meta)theoretical and methodological frameworks used in the parent project of this article are briefly outlined. An elaborate description is then presented of 32 Palestinian scholars' experiences of a deepened reflexive sense of *national* identity and awareness, one now more *domestically and* globally socialized. Descriptive findings are then discussed to illuminate the multifaceted role of scholarships as conflict and peace interventions, as well as to sketch implications for researching the relevance-to-peace of international education scholarships. Overall, the article offers an original, evidence-driven critique of the predominant explanation of scholarships' contribution to peace on account of their reported liberal global socialization impact.

2. Scholarships as Conflict and Peace Interventions

This section is focused on reviewing literature dealing with scholarships and peace. In light of scarce research on their intersection (Pugh and Ross 2019) and the complexity of reviewing relevant research systematically (Mawer 2018), the dual objective of this section is to develop a sense of what research on scholarships may show about their potential as interventions for peace and to infer the overarching ontological terms with which their impact vis-à-vis peace is explained. Throughout the article, "scholarships" refer to programs funding degree-level education abroad or shorter-term international educational/training exchange. To capture the state of the field, peace is approached in its negative–positive conceptualization (Galtung 2012), and a broad and practical typology of conflict and peace interventions is used to organize this review (Goodhand 2006). The typology presents four areas of (sometimes overlapping) action: "provision of humanitarian **relief** in emergencies"; "promotion of long-term **social and economic development**"; "support for **political measures** and the promulgation and monitoring of **human rights**"; and "support for **peacekeeping, conflict transformation, security** sector reform, etc" (Goodhand 2006, p. 280, bold added to label the four areas). The typology also identifies three modalities of action in/across the aforementioned areas: direct

intervention, e.g., the delivery of aid and project implementation; capacity-building, i.e., "working with and developing the capacity of intermediary organisations"; and advocacy, i.e., influencing policy/decision makers (Goodhand 2006, p. 281; also see Galtung (1996), for more on the distinction and intersection of these areas and modalities of action).

Available empirical evidence shows that, in settings of conflict, scholarships often represent a continuum of direct intervention and capacity-building across the two areas of relief and socio-economic development. To people under armed conflict, scholarships enable access to educational and training opportunities that are otherwise (temporarily) inaccessible or of a structurally limited quantity or quality, e.g., in Libya (Shtewi 2019), Palestine (Almassri 2024a), and Ukraine (EC 2023). To them and to others emerging out of armed conflict, scholarships have much potential to contribute to resilience and rebuilding, e.g., for Syrian refugees in exile (Fincham 2020) and for Cambodians following the Cambodian–Vietnamese War (Webb 2009). In countries across and beyond Africa and the Middle East, scholarships enable the import and development of human capacities for the recovery, reconstruction, and development of higher education and (subsequently) other sectors, industries, and infrastructure (Almassri 2024b; Benabdallah 2016, 2019; Jafar and Sabzalieva 2022; Milton 2013, 2018). Beyond settings of (immediate) conflict, scholarships are a significant capacity-building intervention (Raetzell et al. 2013). In developing countries across the East and South, scholarship experiences are consistently reported to enhance recipients' delivery of and/or advocacy for positive technical and social change at community, institutional, and national levels (Abimbola et al. 2016; Campbell and Baxter 2019; Campbell et al. 2021; Demir et al. 2000; Jonbekova 2023). Though evidence of the impact at a systemic level remains scarce (Mawer 2018), plausible suggestions of such impact can be observed in the relevant literature. For example, Pavan (2020) suggests that scholarships to send students abroad from Gulf Cooperation Council member states facilitate not only economic development but also social reform in those states (also see Hilal et al. 2015).

Extant empirical evidence also shows some potential of scholarships to span a continuum of capacity-building and advocacy in the area of political measures/human rights. For one, Cecil J. Rhodes envisioned that scholarships to Oxford would not only build a distinguished cadre of Anglo-Saxon leaders but that they would also cultivate the same commitment to governing (imperial) peace (Ziegler 2008; also see Thayer 1914). A metamorphosis, arguably, of this vision of scholarships' political effect was enacted by Mandatory powers, where scholarships were delivered to facilitate processes of technocratic capacity-building during transition from British Mandatory rule in Iraq, Transjordan, and Palestine (Kalisman 2015). In the post-9/11 context, scholarships have been expanded to rebuild Saudi–American and American–Pakistani relations (Cromwell 2022; Hilal et al. 2015) and to help engineer structures of rapprochement and de-estrangement between the US and Muslim-majority and Arabic-speaking countries (Bevis 2016; U.S. Senate 2002). Underpinning these cases is the theoretical claim that intellectual and, by design or default, the political socialization of individual agents, often potential future leaders, leads to domestic political reform conducive to scholarship recipients' countries' peaceful membership in the world society (Bean 2021; Freyburg 2012). Often drawing on the history of scholarship expansion during and after the Cold War (Tournès and Scott-Smith 2018), public diplomacy research has increased scrutiny of this claim (see Gregory 2008; Nye 2008). For example, Barceló (2020), Gift and Krcmaric (2017), and Nieman and Allamong (2023) report strong quantitative evidence showing Western-educated leaders of non-Western countries are, respectively, less likely to initiate interstate warfare and more likely to democratize and to implement liberal reform (also see Atkinson 2010; cf. Freyburg 2012; Tokdemir 2017). Similarly, Chankseliani (2018) finds a very strong correlation between the level of democratic development and the education abroad destination of students from post-Soviet countries, with higher levels of democratic development in countries sending more of their students to Europe and the

US and lower such levels in countries sending more of their students to Russia (see Del Sordi 2018, for a qualitative illumination of the negative correlation in the case of Kazakhstan). In this sense, scholarships enable importing capacities that, though of primarily an academic and technical nature, embed political and ideological values. Current research shows that returning scholars often bring back this value with them and demonstrate potential in using it to influence the course of domestic politics.

It has thus far been demonstrated that, against Goodhand's (2006) typology of conflict and peace interventions, scholarships may have significant potential as positive interventions *in* and *around* conflict. This is consistent with Campbell and Neff's (2020) systematic identification of key rationales for degree-level scholarship programs for individuals from the Global South, including human capital development, development aid, diplomatic influence, and to promote social change. This background inspires the first of two research questions addressed in this article: what interventions do scholarships represent in Palestine's context of protracted conflict (RQ1)? Further, the research reviewed in this section suggests a view in which scholarships seem to be typologized as technical interventions of neoliberal peace, instruments of exporting human capital and underpinning political and economic values from the Global North to the Global South. This view is arguably a result of the prevalent neoliberal ontology in the parent fields of higher/international education (Ball 2015; Ibrahim and Barnawi 2022; Waibel et al. 2017) and international relations/peace studies (Barkawi and Laffey 1999; Howard 1978; Paris 1997, 2010; Reinisch 2016). In this predominant ontological view of the world, mechanisms of peace are posited to be Western-style democratization, liberalization, and integration into the world society (e.g., see Bean 2021), and therefore, the explanation of scholarships' potential contribution to peace is often offered on account of their quantified technical instrumentality in inducing *those* mechanisms (e.g., Barceló 2020; Gift and Krcmaric 2017; Nieman and Allamong 2023). This predominant mode of explanation inspires the second research question: given Palestine's context, is there a need for considering other/alternative mechanisms to explain the potential contribution of scholarships to peace (RQ2)? This article now proceeds to present the methods and findings that inform a response to both research questions.

3. Study Context and Methods

This article is the last in a series of three developed from a larger, critical realist study of the potential contribution of scholarships to peace in Palestine. Within critical realism, the investigation of such a contribution proceeds in three stages: reported experiences of education abroad are (1) descriptively analyzed to produce a base of empirical reference from which (2) theoretical inferences are drawn about any gains of everyday peace capability, and (3) explanatory claims are developed about the generation of any inferred everyday peace capability gains (Fryer 2022; Wiltshire and Ronkainen 2021). This article reports experiential findings generated through a data-driven, descriptive analysis of the data, i.e., the segment of findings resulting from the first stage of the three aforementioned (see Wiltshire and Ronkainen 2021, for a discussion of the practice and philosophy of critical realist thematic analysis). Of essential significance in this multi-stage analysis is the elaborate description of empirical findings, showing the empirical basis of subsequent theorization—and enabling external scrutiny of an inferential and explanatory interpretation. This elaborate description and openness are especially important in the case of the parent project because of (i) the severe literature gap on scholarships' impact in Palestine and thus the need for some baseline understanding thereof and (ii) the researcher's insider positionality as a Palestinian and a scholarships alumnus himself.

The findings reported in the next section are based on data collected from a purposeful sample of 32 participants in the parent project. All of them were Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank who had successfully finished their master's scholarships in various foreign countries 1–6 years before participating in the research (further sample details can be found in the two preceding articles of this series, Almassri 2024a, 2024b).

Qualitative data were collected from the participants through semi-structured, in-depth interviews, pre-existing documents, and a background questionnaire, altogether providing data about their demographic, academic, and career backgrounds and their perceived scholarship experiences and outcomes. Concluded in March 2023, data collection was focused on perceived individual-level effects, with the intention of examining the societal-level diffusion of those effects in future research.

4. Findings

A data-driven, descriptive analysis of available data shows that the research participants perceived two major events of their scholarship experiences, beyond academic achievement and career gains. The first event was their enjoyment of free movement and the associated freedom now to meet—often for the first time—fellow Palestinians from other areas and backgrounds. The second event was engagement in often reflexive deliberations about a range of national affairs. The participants' account of both events demonstrates their perception of a multidimensional, advanced extent of the impact of their scholarship experiences on their sense of national awareness, membership, and identity. This experiential theme starts with a description of the participants' reported perceptions of freedom from the political violence and its permeating everyday effects in Palestine. It then presents three key experiences reported within this freedom: meeting fellow Palestinians from other areas and backgrounds, recalibrating national awareness in international settings, and deepening their sense of national membership.

Many participants articulated enjoying freedom from the political violence and its permeating everyday effects—that is, effects in the mental, environmental, human rights, and/or mobility spheres of life—in Palestine. One participant said she had more of her mental energy released now that she enjoyed constant access to electricity and a reliable internet connection. "I no longer had to keep thinking about what to do when the electricity goes off or when the (2G) internet is too slow," she said—of a challenge defining—sometimes threatening—the life of Palestinians in her generation (see Anna et al. 2021; Hajjaj 2022). Another participant spoke passionately of factors that helped him make "a 180-degree change" from the "survival mood" by which, he said, he had always gone in Gaza: the drone-free sky, secure neighborhood, and "chill people, unbothered by sounds of planes in the sky". Other participants focused particularly on enjoying freedom from restrictions on movement and travel. One participant took the fullest note of this freedom while boarding trains and travelling across the UK and Europe. Responding to the interview question of what, beyond academics, they appreciated of their sojourn, the participant said the following:

> "… I was most impressed by the freedom of movement. I could in a few minutes plan my trip to another city or country… every time I took the train and found myself in a new city, I reminded myself that this was not normal, that this was unique to someone from Gaza. I just felt like 'wow, the train was no big deal to any other passengers, no reaction!" (translated)

The participants' enjoyment of this freedom from the salient everyday effects of insecurity and immobility in Palestine was most signified through their accounts of the opportunity to meet fellow Palestinians. For most of them, whether from Gaza or the West Bank, it was their first time to meet Palestinians from the other area—in addition to meeting Palestinian citizens of Israel and diaspora Palestinians. They described this broader national exposure as an opportunity to achieve fuller awareness of a cross-fragmental Palestine and a better understanding of the extent to which Palestinian territory and peoplehood are segregated. One participant had a particularly compelling, perhaps tragicomic comment of this increased national awareness. Responding to a follow-up interview question on whether they met other Palestinians during their sojourn, they said the following:

> "I suppose the most romantic Palestinians are those in refugee camps in Lebanon. They go to [Lebanon's southern] borders to catch a whiff of Palestine while perhaps weeping. And these don't like the Palestinians of Ramallah because streets there are too clean to be in Palestine, but they like us—Palestinians of Gaza—because of the shared misery. Palestinians of Jerusalem were especially interesting; I met some who were most nationalistic and others whose Palestinian-ness I couldn't determine. The latter didn't fit into at least my own definition of nationalism, which I do concede may be too narrow. So, there are sometimes enormous differences, which is good and normal. All nations of the world have this diversity, but because we [Palestinians of Gaza] are locked in, we are denied the opportunity to face these differences." (translated)

These encounters of the research participants with fellow Palestinians and the resulting insights about their peoplehood seemed to enhance and be enhanced by engagements focused on Palestine. The next section describes these engagements and their perceived significance for the participants' sense of national awareness and membership.

4.1. National Awarness in International Settings

Many participants reported dedicating some of their academic and/or civic engagements during their time abroad to thinking about Palestine and advocating for Palestinian rights. In their academic activities, participants used Palestine as an empirical site of their academic advancement. For example, one participant completed her thesis on factors influencing Palestinian agricultural products, two others on the global context of Palestinians' access to international exchanges and to foreign aid, and two more on the applicability and implications of certain international legal provisions on specific issues of the Palestinian–Israeli conflict. In their civic engagements, participants joined speaking events and, occasionally, protests, where they shared their experiences of life in Palestine to raise awareness about the politics, humanitarian implications, and other aspects of life under conflict. They also attended meetings with or contributed to events by student organizations focused on Palestine, e.g., Palestine Society at various UK universities and Students for Justice in Palestine in the US. Participants who were studying abroad during the May 2021 eruption of violence in Israel/Palestine organized or helped organize on- and off-campus events to contribute their voice and lived experience to discussion in their host countries of that cycle and its broader context of violence. Uniquely, participants in the Durham Palestine Educational Trust scholarship, because of its structure as an educational charity in the UK, were offered several opportunities to engage in such awareness elevation events.

All participants who reported such engagements cited as their motivation the need to amplify Palestinian voices and to challenge widespread lack of knowledge of or compassion with their cause. This motivation was fueled by a two-step realization that was strongly prevalent in the data. First, in the course of responding to the interview questions on any realizations about Palestine that they drew from their sojourns, many participants reported starting to realize that "احنا مش مركز الكون" "we [Palestinians] are not the center of the universe", a realization repeated in exactly the same words by different participants, from those who studied in Australia and the US to those who studied in Europe and even in Jordan:

> "… even when [fellow Palestinians] and others watch the news of what happens in Gaza, especially during wars, they still don't know certain things about our life there. This was shocking to me, but it led me to the second realization: We are not the center of the universe. Even people in Jordan were amazed at learning we had restaurants, cafes, and universities. Their amazement always was a shock to me." (translated)

Extending this realization, the participants reported developing a broader range of perceptions of how Palestine is approached in their host countries. These perceptions ranged from ones of active animosity and passive apathy to Palestine to ones of heightened scrutinization of discussing the Israeli–Palestinian conflict.

First, nearly all participants who studied in Europe and the US cited media distortion as a case of animosity. Their reported perception was that Palestine is subject to so much media distortion that ordinary people in their respective countries develop negative popular views—which in turn, two participants added, facilitate a continued lack of action by the international community to address the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. Second, several participants reported drawing perceptions of apathy to Palestine from classrooms and beyond. When prompted to share an example of such reported apathy, one participant shared the following incident of the absence—or omission—of Palestine from the curriculum of a social justice course at an American university: "A professor wanted us to read Edward Said's *Orientalism* but instead of assigning his book, she assigned us a book written about his book. It drove me nuts because the original book was there and was accessible!" Other perceptions developed by many participants were of the strong scrutinization of discussing the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, including through charges of antisemitization. One participant said the following: "Support for Zionism and charges of antisemitism are quite common here, especially in Melbourne, given the government's stance, so it's not easy for someone to go out publicly in criticism of Israel." Another participant's account stands out as insightful of how this peculiar scrutinization—often coupled with extreme animosity to Palestinians—came to be:

> "It's oftentimes like you're treated like Hitler's cousin here [in France]. That's the point of departure—you're Hitler's cousin. Now you may be nice, so you're a distant cousin of Hitler still. It's an automatic accusation, a sense of guilt vented away at us, a desperate cry for forgiveness for French complicity in handing Jews to the Nazis." (translated)

Continuing his account, the participant emphasized that he had never realized this is how the Israeli–Palestinian conflict is approached outside of Palestine:

> "It's a huge problem, and it's particularly so because nobody had taught us anything about this. Not at home, not at school, not at university, nowhere had we been taught how support for Israel follows that history of the Holocaust and of European antisemitism. I mean, I literally came here without even an understanding of antisemitism, an understanding that is essential to begin and approach any discussion here. I struggled to make sense of it at first, and so I always thought of my grandmother then. She was warned by her Jewish neighbors of imminent Zionist attacks on their village. Was she antisemitic to criticize the people who expelled her from her village? We never thought of it that way, so when I came here, I was made to recalibrate my approach to any discussion of Palestine." (translated)

Most participants seemed to be driven even more by their range of such perceptions to pursue or keep pursuing opportunities to challenge the object of their perception. Two participants said they actioned this drive by continuing to use media and educational spaces, including schools, to raise awareness of Palestinians' plight, in course feeling assured by the often positive engagement from their audience. Responding to the interview question on any realizations about Palestine they drew from their sojourns, a third participant said she actioned this perception in similar spaces but also in formal ones where opportunities were available:

> "I understood I was not the only suffering and I should be as interested in others' causes as I would like them to be in mine. I translated this into action during a session in the UK Parliament where I joined Bangladeshi colleagues on International Mother Language Day to celebrate their heritage but also to

connect their past struggle with our struggle for independence and liberation." (translated)

4.2. Reflexivizing National Awareness

The engagements and evolving perceptions presented in the previous section seem to have helped the participants during their education abroad to develop fuller awareness of the global context that shapes reality in Palestine. Simultaneously, these engagements, along with other experiences accessed through their scholarships, appear to have prompted the participants to take their national awareness to a reflexive front. In the course of their interviews, most participants constantly demonstrated a sense of reflexive national membership, recounting their experiences abroad and volunteering contrastive reports of how these experiences inform their approach now to various national affairs, from education and politics to national identity, as well as to leading, for the first time, an independent personal life.

On education, the participants shared reflections in which they contrasted their learning experiences abroad with those of theirs previously in Palestine. Contrastive comments in the participants' accounts covered issues spanning the limitation of resources for effective teaching and research, the lack of emphasis on writing, research, and critical and open learning, and the structural difficulty of creating an atmosphere conducive to intellectual engagement. The following two quotes illustrate such contrastive commentary:

> P1: "The nature of life in Gaza makes it very difficult for people to focus on things beyond securing subsistence. … It is true that some organizations avail such opportunities [for discussion of key issues], but I feel they lead nowhere because participants are still mentally occupied with trying to survive and secure subsistence. Being here, free from violence and its daily manifestations, allows you the mental space to think more concretely about Gaza and about Palestine." (translated)

> P2: "I think this is something that we lack, unfortunately, in our domestic education system, which is the critical thinking and the challenge to challenge what the professor is saying, to think outside of the box, to say your opinion without being afraid, and not just to say whatever what you think the professor would like and want to hear. That was also challenging for me because I was like, there were younger people than me in the class who were just so courageous and so like vocal. They would just say, no, this is bullshit. They'd say it to the professor, and then the professor would be like, "oh, yeah, tell me more about it""!

On politics, the participants drew on their academic and/or broader experiences abroad in reflecting on the need for more freedom of expression, enhanced rule of law, improved governance, and the dual need for bridging internal division and, instead of building national institutions, prioritizing the rebuilding of effective communities in pursuit of a connected, functional national peoplehood. However, one critique stood out as not only prevalent but also particularly significant: the reproduction of political beliefs. To some participants, they found, in their education abroad, space to think more (critically) about the context and contingency of this reproduction. This is illustrated in the impassioned but sobering account below, which begins to contextualize and de-essentialize the reproduction of political beliefs in Palestine—while also highlighting the potential of education (abroad) to cause cracks in the cycle of their reproduction:

> "When we were young, we were by far emotion-driven, which resulted from the difficulties we suffered in Gaza because of oppression. The more oppressive life becomes, the more you adopt euphoric ideas—'yeah, this is all unjust, but it'll all go away and Palestine will be free and we will return these [Israelis] to where they came from, and Palestine will be free from the river to the sea, and we will

> go on to live an ideal, rosy life'. This emanates from a mix of emotion-driven, fanatic religious and political ideas propagated by fundamentalists and ideologues. We were deeply affected by these ideas. Look at Fathi Hammad [a Hamas leader] when he says we'll liberate Palestine and won't recognize Israel; his rhetoric enflames passions and make illogical things believable. When you couple this with the injustice inflicted on us and the deep weakness we feel, the act of following fantasies, of imagining a radically alternative reality becomes very much possible. When you study and live abroad, you leave all of this. You realize the world is much bigger than the situation there and the occupation no longer affects you individually, at least not to the same degree. You then start reclaiming a more realistic sense of the world—even when this means we become pessimistic, which is natural given the bleak situation in Palestine. You finally realize we Palestinians are not a legendary or superhuman or resilient people. We are simple, poor people who fight and withstand hardship only because that is all we can do, and once we are free, we will go on to live an ordinary life." (translated)

To another participant, he found in his education abroad a window to recalibrate his view not only on political beliefs in Palestine but also on the context he said *is* engineered to keep their reproduction cycle going:

> "I was highly frustrated because I saw people were really developing at all levels in all countries but giving us this fake feeling—victory, resistance, resilience, whatever it is. It's a box; we've been put in a well-designed box, and all of our ideas emerge from within this box. They appear to us to be new or radical, but once we leave the box, we discover it's fake."

For a third participant, his education abroad presented an opportunity to leave that box but also challenged him to engage in critical self-inspection. In the course of sharing his experience, he said the following:

> "What is the source of our political beliefs about the national cause? No source. Your father? My father? AlJazeera? The mosque, if we go there? I discovered here that people read for Ghassan Kanafani, and they feel shocked when you tell them you haven't read for him. I remember a professor was covering Edward Said, so she asked for the Palestinian in the classroom to stand up and share his thoughts—in French—on Said's work. I didn't know how to do so even in Arabic! You realize you're Palestinian only because of your birth there and because of your survival of wars. It dawns on you then to stop and reflect, how have I come to learn my politics and to grow my understanding of national affairs?" (translated)

Furthermore, most of the participants from Gaza, regardless of their foreign countries of study, demonstrated wrestling with their sense of national vis-à-vis subnational identity. Three participants said they had always introduced themselves as Gazan, explaining it to professors and friends abroad as a way of emphasizing "the kind of isolation and suffering we had gone through" (see Abdel-Wahab 2022). All three said though that with encounters with other Palestinians, interactions with other people, and/or further thinking about it, they have come to give up this primacy of subnational pain and instead embrace the view that "we are one people and not two separate nations even if we have different experiences."

The participants' perceptions of changes in their sense of identity were limited to neither participants from Gaza nor to changes in their national identity. Several participants recounted that during their education abroad, they engaged themselves in rethinking their individual identities, along sociopolitical, critical, or gendered ways. One of the participants who studied in Qatar said he grew more critical of thinking of himself in individualist terms, instead embracing a belief that he is part of a larger social collective. By extension, he said, he also grew more firm in his belief that being Palestinian cannot

and should not be divorced from the larger collective of also being Arab. For four participants, their (increased) exposure to fellow Palestinians and global peers prompted them to be more conscious of their perceived positionalities of relative privilege. For example, several participants said they grew more aware of the relative privileges, or lack thereof, that resulted from their social background, economic class, and/or city of residence, and the ensuing level of access to earlier educational and self-development opportunities. Additionally, some woman participants highlighted that their education abroad presented them an opportunity to reflect on their gendered sense of identity. Two participants said they enjoyed more personal, social, and intellectual freedom while living abroad, including through exposure to feminist academic scholarship. In continuing their account, they reflected that certain "situations", "observations", and "tests" made them reevaluate the school of feminist thought they now feel inspired by in their lives as Palestinian women.

4.3. Experiences in the Personal and Social Spheres

Finally, the participants' accounts show that their deepened sense of national membership extended to the more personal and social spheres of their lives. For most of them, their education abroad marked the first time they had to rely on themselves in managing their now independent life. Several of them offered often impassioned accounts of their experiences of such independence, and nearly half of them reported finding in this more independent life space or time to make several gains, from becoming aware of the caring labor of their families to widening their social circle and cultural exposure, and/or diversifying their interests and engagements. Regarding losing in-person contact with her family, one participant said she was now more pushed to leave her comfort zone and find friends with whom to "go shopping, have conversations, or plan gatherings." In course, she said, she "enjoyed learning about their own lives and unique backgrounds". For a second participant, time abroad, including through COVID-19 lockdowns, made him reflect on his family life and, since his return to Palestine, becoming more involved in his family and child's life. A third participant said she now continues the life of extensive professional and community engagements she started developing first while studying in the U.S. Additionally, for several men and women participants, this first-time experience of independent life presented challenges and opportunities conducive to personal growth, including managing a life now more free from internalized gender and broader social expectations.

5. Discussion

The preceding section presented empirical findings of the research participants' scholarship experiences beyond academic achievements and career gains. These findings show that the participants perceived making significant gains in their sense of national awareness, membership, and identity. Reported experiences of safety, free movement, encounters with co-nationals, national advocacy, engagements in international settings, independent life, and much contrastive reflection on various national affairs were valued by the participants. Within Goodhand's (2006) typology, these findings outline a good response to RQ1, what interventions do scholarships represent in Palestine's context of protracted conflict? In the area of relief, scholarships facilitated a degree of relief of the participants' political standpoints and worldviews from effects of domestic segregation, national alienation, and international isolation, and they offered a stage of relief—or in the case of participants who remained abroad, a stage of transition away—from the immediacy of structural violence and from the standing threat of physical violence and its preoccupying mental effects. The findings reported here and in the two relevant articles of the parent project also show that the participants perceived a capacity-building effect of scholarships in both the area of relief and that of socio-economic (and political) development. The participants' perceived outcomes of their scholarship experiences suggest that the latter contributed to their professional capacities to analyze and build

solutions to humanitarian and development, among other, issues resulting from the Israeli–Palestinian conflict (Almassri 2024a, 2024b). The findings here also suggest that, besides (gendered) national and personal identity development, scholarships facilitated the participants' cultivation of cross-territorial connections with fellow nationals and their progress towards (re)constructing a cross-fragmental sense of national identity and a globally contextualized understanding of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict.

As Goodhand (2006) cautions, moving from the relief and socio-economic development areas to those of political measures/human rights and of security/conflict transformation/peacekeeping proves difficult, if at all possible, in the absence of a political will to address the "harder" aspects of peacebuilding. Considering the findings reported here (and in the two relevant articles), the case of scholarships' impact in Palestine illustrates this position. In the absence of political opportunity structures conducive to scaling up (and out) scholarships' individual effects, their capacity-building impact in the area of political measures/human rights is, at best, limited to facilitating a micropolitical attitude change of self-critique and reflexive (global) citizenship. No findings of the parent project support a direct claim of a capacity-building effect of scholarships in the area of security/conflict transformation/peacekeeping. Nor does any of the empirical evidence reported here (or generated through the parent project) suggest scholarships amounted to direct interventions in any of the three areas beside relief. Both of these non-claims follow a technical assumption of the specialty of capacities required in the area of security, conflict transformation, and peacekeeping, as well as of the need for systemicity for an action to amount to a direct intervention in the area of socio-economic development. Although some participants did undertake study in international relations, human rights, conflict management, security, and global development, no sufficiently prevalent or meaning-significant patterns emerged in the data analysis to support a claim of such specialized capacity-building or of individual-level impact materializing into a systemic form.

Finally, findings here indicate scholarships' effect on advocacy across all four areas. This is demonstrated in the participants' reports of civic engagements focused on informing and influencing foreign publics and actors' understanding of and approach to the security, political, economic, and humanitarian implications of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict (see Section 4.3). A more reflexive effect of advocacy was also demonstrated, where the participants' engagements in Palestine and with fellow nationals and others tended to reflect an expansion or influence in their views of needed domestic reforms. Table 1 below reflects this multifaceted role of scholarships as conflict and peace interventions.

Table 1. Scholarships as conflict and peace interventions in Palestine within Goodhand's (2006, p. 281) typology.

	Security/Conflict Transformation/ Peacekeeping	**Political Measures/Human Rights**	**Socio-Economic [and Political] Development**	**Relief**
Direct Intervention	Inapplicable	Inapplicable	Inapplicable	Epistemic, physical, and mental relief
Capacity-building	Inapplicable	micropolitical attitude change	Capacity-building for technical problem-solving, as well as for expanded political awareness and identity development	
Advocacy	Informing and influencing attitudes to the conflict and to domestic reform needs			

Reflection

Based on the preceding discussion, two points of reflection on researching scholarships as conflict and peace interventions are worth outlining. First, the potential of scholarships as such is presented here only empirically, i.e., describing reported

perceptions and experiences. This is valuable in exploring pathways of scholarships' potential as conflict and peace interventions. But it is far from sufficient. To build a trustworthy claim of scholarships' potential contribution to peace requires an explicit conceptualization of peace—whether by academic researchers or evaluation professionals. Otherwise, limiting the basis of that claim to empirical findings—of the kind that describe perceptions and experiences—presents an epistemological risk where, as Galtung (2014) cautions, "fact-based pragmatism" is normalized to the detriment of the creative intellectual and professional practice essential for peace. Indeed, the presumed sufficiency of empiricism could well be *a* reason why neo-liberal ontology—and its associated theoretical choices and methodological practices—continue being imported without much (critical) discussion from the fields and areas of research within which scholarships' potential contribution to (proxies of) peace is examined.

One contribution illustrated by the findings in this regard is of the critical reflexivity and *domestic* (re)socialization aspects of scholarships' impact on Palestinian students, as on other international students from similar contexts (e.g., Sodatsayrova and Waljee 2017). Both of these aspects fall out of the scope of the current dominant explanation of how scholarships can contribute to peace. As presented in the literature review section, this dominant explanation provides that scholarships facilitate the liberal ordering project, the global diffusion of values and practices of (only) politico-economic liberalization (see Barkawi and Laffey 1999; Wolff and Zimmermann 2016). And, because liberal democracies are assumed not to go to war with each other (cf. Rosato 2003), the diffusion of liberalization that scholarships facilitate is interpreted as the mechanism of their contribution to peace (e.g., Barceló 2020; Gift and Krcmaric 2017; Nieman and Allamong 2023). The findings presented in this article outline limits of this explanatory claim insofar as it recognizes neither of the two mechanisms identified from the research participants' data, critical reflexivity and *domestic* (re)socialization. The empirical demonstration of the prevalence of these two mechanisms therefore suggests there may well need to explore other and/or alternative ways of explaining the potential contribution of scholarships to peace (RQ2). Such mechanisms may move us to a broader ontological scope where scholarships' impact on peace is appraised more critically. This ontological scope is broader because it allows us to see beyond the presumption of unidirectional engagement by international students studying in the West that their awareness extends to only global frontiers, rather than also to domestic ones, and that their consumption of the politico-economic values of their host societies is a passive process of a guaranteed outcome.

A point of methodological reflection is also pertinent here—and perhaps especially so for interdisciplinary and qualitative researchers with an international education background trying to address the topic. The empirical evidence provided in this article supports the claim of scholarships as conflict and peace *interventions*, actions delivered in conflict-affected areas. Only after conceptualizing peace, i.e., beyond the technical sum of humanitarian, development, legal, political, and/or security interventions, can this empirical evidence be used to infer a *contribution* to peace, an action to which progress towards peace can be attributed (see Galtung 1996; also see Martel 2018). That is, if we are to move beyond empiricist and instrumentalist accounts of peace and if we are to achieve a higher degree of trustworthiness in demonstrating scholarships' potential contribution to peace, we need to make explicit our conception of *the* peace to which we claim the contribution is demonstrated. This conceptual–methodological care seems to the author to be particularly achievable in a critical realist philosophical approach to the topic of scholarships and peace. The professed separation of three domains of reality and the elaborate work in each of the three corresponding stages of data analysis allows for delineating perceived gains of scholarship experiences (i.e., interventions described in the empirical domain of reality), from theoretical redescriptions of these experiences as ones of/for peace (contributions inferred in the actual domain of reality), and from explanatory claims about the structure–agency dynamics that generate these experiences of/for peace (mechanisms of contribution inferred in the real domain of reality). This multi-stage

approach to analyzing scholarships' potential contribution to peace means, inter alia, the researcher is openly accountable to his/her empirical data. It also means s/he is able to invite/receive reflection and critique through subsequent stages of analysis from colleagues who, should they bring other disciplinary backgrounds, can advance the interdisciplinarity that this area of research demands (see Mac Ginty 2019; Stember 1991).

6. Conclusions

This article presented some demonstration of the relevance of international graduate scholarships to peace in Palestine. The empirical findings here show that scholarship recipients perceive significant gains in their critical reflexivization and *domestic* and international (re)socialization of their sense of *national* identity, awareness, and membership. Based on findings here (as well as others from the parent project, Almassri 2024a, 2024b), scholarships are suggested to have a multidimensional effect of individual capacity-building, especially in and across the areas of relief and socio-economic (and political) development, in Palestine's context of protracted conflict. Also, the presented empirical evidence and the philosophical-methodological approach taken in generating it may illustrate *one* valuable way of decolonizing research across peace studies and higher/international education, specifically through moving appreciation of scholarships' impact beyond terms of human capital, liberal socialization, and their pathways of contribution to (neo-liberal) peace. This move of decolonization aligns with the growing work critiquing and criticizing the neo-liberal ontology of education (e.g., see Connell 2017; Rizzotti and Cruz-Feliciano 2023; Toukan 2017) and of peace (Mac Ginty and Richmond 2013; Rosato 2003). Emphatically, many challenges lie ahead of this decolonial agenda, not the least of which are producing (context-sensitive) knowledge that helps scale up and out any individual-level scholarships' impact and, in synergizing education and peace, making effective use of the growing critical turn in both fields.

Funding: The research leading to this article received funding from the UK's Economic and Social Research Council [training grant number ES/P000762/1].

Institutional Review Board Statement: The research received ethical approval from the Education Ethics Sub-Committee at Durham University (ref. EDU-2022-11-19T06_55_46-xzlt35) on 9 January 2023.

Informed Consent Statement: All participants were provided with a consent package that briefed them on the research purpose, expectations of their participation, and their rights to privacy, to anonymity, to confidentiality, and to withdrawal from the research, including by removal of their data. All participants provided their informed consent in writing to the use of their data in the parent project and in any publications associated with it.

Data Availability Statement: The data presented in this article are not publicly available due to privacy and ethical restrictions. Further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

Conflicts of Interest: The author has no relevant financial or non-financial interests to disclose.

Note

1. I use this spelling to indicate the continuum between liberalism and neoliberalism, the latter understood here to represent a stronger development of the former's ideals of free-market capitalism, Western-style democratization, and liberal internationalism (see Harvey 2005; Shamir 2008).

References

Abdel-Wahab, Ali. 2022. Social Media, Self-Expression, and Self-Determination in Gaza. *Al-Shabaka: The Palestinian Policy Network*. https://al-shabaka.org/commentaries/social-media-self-expression-and-self-determination-in-gaza/ (accessed on 5 January 2023)

Abimbola, Seye, Rose Amazan, Pavle Vizintin, Leanne Howie, Robert Cumming, and Joel Negin. 2016. Australian higher education scholarships as tools for international development and diplomacy in Africa. *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 70: 105–20. https://doi.org/10.1080/10357718.2015.1119230.

Reva, Anna, Mirela-Iulia Cojocaru, and Jerome Bezzina . 2021. *Palestinian Digital Economy Assessment*. World Bank Report 167253. Available online: https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/472671640152521943/palestinian-digital-economy-assessment (accessed on 12 December 2023).

Atkinson, Carol. 2010. Does Soft Power Matter? A Comparative Analysis of Student Exchange Programs 1980–2006. *Foreign Policy Analysis* 6: 1–22. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1743-8594.2009.00099.x

Almassri, Anas N. 2024a. Appreciating International Scholarships Impact in Extreme Contexts: A Contribution from Palestine. [manuscript under review].

Almassri, Anas N. 2024b. International Higher Education Scholarships: *A* Pathway for Palestinians' Academic Recovery. [manuscript under review].

Ball, Stephen, ed. 2015. Governing by Numbers [Special issue]. *Journal of Education Policy* 30: 299–466.

Barceló, Joan. 2020. Are Western-Educated Leaders Less Prone to Initiate Militarized Disputes? *British Journal of Political Science* 50: 535–66. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123417000527.

Barkawi, Tarak, and Mark Laffey. 1999. The Imperial Peace: Democracy, Force and Globalization. *European Journal of International Relations* 5: 403–34. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066199005004001.

Bean, Richard Mark. 2021. Educational and Cultural Exchange and World Society: Building a More Peaceful International Society. Ph.D. thesis, University of Utah. Available online: https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/educational-cultural-exchange-world-society/docview/2866682200/se-2 (accessed on 15 March 2022).

Benabdallah, Lina. 2016. China's Peace and Security Strategies in Africa: Building Capacity is Building Peace? *African Studies Quarterly* 16: 17–34.

Benabdallah, Lina. 2019. Explaining attractiveness: Knowledge production and power projection in China's policy for Africa. *Journal of International Relations and Development* 22: 495–514. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41268-017-0109-x.

Bevis, Teresa Brawner. 2016. *Higher Education Exchange between America and the Middle East in the Twenty-First Century*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Campbell, Anne C., and Aryn R. Baxter. 2019. Exploring the attributes and practices of alumni associations that advance social change. *International Journal of Educational Development* 66: 164–72. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2018.10.003.

Campbell, Anne. C., and Emelye. Neff. 2020. A Systematic Review of International Higher Education Scholarships for Students from the Global South. *Review of Educational Research* 90: 824–61. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654320947783.

Campbell, Anne C., Erin Kelly-Weber, and Chelsea Lavallee. 2021. University teaching and citizenship education as sustainable development in Ghana and Nigeria: Insight from international scholarship program alumni. *Higher Education* 81: 129–44. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-019-00484-3.

Chankseliani, Maia. 2018. The politics of student mobility: Links between outbound student flows and the democratic development of post-Soviet Eurasia. *International Journal of Educational Development* 62: 281–88. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2018.07.006.

Connell, Raewyn. 2017. Southern theory and world universities. *Higher Education Research & Development* 36: 4–15. https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2017.1252311.

Cromwell, Alexander. 2022. Building social capital through encounter-based peace education: How Pakistani youth sustain motivation for peacebuilding and social cohesion. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education* 54: 698–716. https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2022.2129955.

Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). 2016. March 2. Public Diplomacy and Higher Education [YouTube Video]. Available online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sy2icYR42XU&list=PL_fyz1S1vQj4x-LAkMqH2DnjArCx9U3-V&index=25 (accessed on 14 January 2022).

CSIS. 2018. June 11. Exercising American Soft Power through International Education Exchange [YouTube Video]. Available online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZH7cB1RDNRo&ab_channel=CenterforStrategic%26InternationalStudies (accessed on 14 January 2022).

Dassin, Joan, Robin R. Marsh, and Matt Mawer, eds. 2018. *International Scholarships in Higher Education: Pathways to Social Change*. London: Palgrave MacMillan.

Del Sordi, Adele. 2018. Sponsoring student mobility for development and authoritarian stability: Kazakhstan's Bolashak programme. *Globalizations* 15: 215–31. https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2017.1403780.

Demir, Cennet Engin., Meral Aksu, and Fersun Paykoç. 2000. Does Fulbright Make a Difference? The Turkish Perspective. *Journal of Studies in International Education* 4: 103–11. https://doi.org/10.1177/102831530000400107.

EC. 2023. *Commission announces plans for a Horizon Europe Office in Ukraine by mid-2023. European Commission*. European Commission. Available online: https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/news/all-research-and-innovation-news/commission-announces-plans-horizon-europe-office-ukraine-mid-2023-2023-02-02_en (accessed on 5 January 2024).

Fincham, Kathleen. 2020. Rethinking higher education for Syrian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. *Research in Comparative and International Education* 15: 329–56. https://doi.org/10.1177/1745499920926050.

Freyburg, Tina. 2012. Democratic Diffusion under the Magnifying Glass: A Micro Perspective on the Change of Attitudes toward Democratic Governance through Transnational Linkages in Authoritarian Contexts. EUI MWP Working Paper 2012/30. Available online: https://hdl.handle.net/1814/24376 (accessed on 27 December 2023).

Fryer, Tom. 2022. A critical realist approach to thematic analysis: Producing causal explanations. *Journal of Critical Realism* 4: 365–84. https://doi.org/10.1080/14767430.2022.2076776.

Galtung, Johan. 1996. *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict Development and Civilization*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Sage.

Galtung, Johan. 2012. Positive and Negative Peace. In *Peace and Conflict Studies: A Reader.* Edited by C. P. Webel and J. Johansen. London: Routledge, chp. 6.

Galtung, Johan. 2014. *On Professionalization in Peace Research*. Galtung-Institut. Available online: https://www.galtung-institut.de/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Peace-Practice-Professionalizing-Peace-Practice.pdf (accessed on).

Gift, Thomas, and Daniel Krcmaric. 2017. Who Democratizes? Western-educated Leaders and Regime Transitions. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 61: 671–701. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002715590878.

Goodhand, Jonathan. 2006. Working 'in' and 'on' War'. In *Civil War, Civil Peace*. Edited by H. Yanacopulos and J. Hanlon. Bath: Bath Press, pp. 280–313.

Gregory, Bruce. 2008. Public Diplomacy: Sunrise of an Academic Field. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616: 274–90. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716207311723.

Hajjaj, Tareq S. 2022. November 19. Tragedy in Gaza after 21 people die in fire. *Mondoweiss*. Available online: https://mondoweiss.net/2022/11/gloom-over-gaza-after-death-of-21-people-in-fire/ (accessed on 26 December 2023).

Harvey, David. 2005. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. Oxford; Oxford University Press.

Hilal, Kholoud T., Safiyyah R. Scott, and Nina Maadad. 2015. The Political, Socio-Economic and Sociocultural Impacts of the King Abdullah Scholarship Program (KASP) on Saudi Arabia. *International Journal of Higher Education* 4: 254–67.

House of Lords. 2014. *Persuasion and Power in the Modern World.* London: The Stationery Office. Available online: https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201314/ldselect/ldsoftpower/150/150.pdf (accessed on 27 December 2023).

Howard, Michael. 1978. *War and the Liberal Conscience*. New Brunswic: Rutgers University Press.

Ibrahim, Awad, and Osman Z. Barnawi. 2022. *The Past, Present, and Future of Higher Education in the Arabian Gulf Region: Critical Comparative Perspectives in a Neoliberal Era*. London: Routledge.

Jafar, Hayfa., and Emma Sabzalieva. 2022. Faculty Experiences of Higher Education Internationalization in Post-conflict Iraq and Tajikistan. *Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education* 14: 47–65. https://doi.org/10.32674/jcihe.v14i2.3453.

Jonbekova, Dilrabo. 2023. Government scholarships for international higher education: Pathways for social change in Kazakhstan. *Higher Education* 87: 761–77. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-023-01034-8.

Kalisman, Hillary F. 2015. Bursary Scholars at the American University of Beirut: Living and Practising Arab Unity. *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 42: 599–617. https://doi.org/10.1080/13530194.2015.1043512.

Kim, Yeji, and Jungmin Kwon. 2023. Critical global citizenship education for transnational youth: Advancing justice and activism and promoting reciprocal learning. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 132: 104269. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2023.104269.

Lefifi, Tebogo, and Carine Kiala. 2021. Untapping FOCAC higher education scholarships for Africa's human capital development: Lessons from haigui. *China International Strategy Review* 3: 177–98. https://doi.org/10.1007/s42533-021-00074-y.

Mac Ginty, Roger. 2019. Complementarity and Interdisciplinarity in Peace and Conflict Studies. *Journal of Global Security Studies* 4: 267–72. https://doi.org/10.1093/jogss/ogz002.

Mac Ginty, Roger., and Oliver P. Richmond. 2013. The local turn in peace building: A critical agenda for peace. *Third World Quarterly* 34: 763–83. https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2013.800750.

Martel, Mirka. 2018. Tracing the Spark that Lights a Flame: A Review of Methodologies to Measure the Outcomes of International Scholarships. In *International Scholarships in Higher Education.* Edited by J. Dassin, R. R. Marsh, and M. Mawer. London: Palgrave MacMillan, pp. 281–304. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-62734-2_14.

Mawer, Matt. 2018. Magnitudes of Impact: A Three-Level Review of Evidence from Scholarship Evaluation. In *International Scholarships in Higher Education.* Edited by J. Dassin, R. R. Marsh, and M. Mawer. London: Palgrave MacMillan, pp. 257–80. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-62734-2_13.

Milton, Sansom. 2013. The Neglected Pillar of Recovery: A Study of Higher Education in Post-war Iraq and Libya. Ph.D. thesis, University of York, York, UK. Available online: https://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/5207/ (accessed on 4 December 2023).

Milton, Sansom. 2018. Reconstruction and Statebuilding. In: *Higher Education and Post-Conflict Recovery*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 141–75. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-65349-5_7.

Nieman, Mark David, and Maxwell B. Allamong. 2023. Schools of Thought: Leader Education and Policy Outcomes. *The Journal of Politics* 85: 1529–47. https://doi.org/10.1086/724959.

Nye, Joseph S. 2008. Public Diplomacy and Soft Power. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616: 94–109. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716207311699.

NYU. 2013. Paths to Peace Program. Tel Aviv University. Available online: https://www.tau.ac.il/sites/default/files/untitled%20folder1/Paths%20of%20Peace%202013%20introduction%20eng.pdf (accessed on 6 December 2023).

OGS. n.d. Our Generation Speaks. Available online: https://www.ogspeaks.com/ (accessed on 6 December 2023).

Paris, Roland. 1997. Peacebuilding and the Limits of Liberal Internationalism. *International Security* 22: 54–89. https://doi.org/10.2307/2539367.

Paris, Roland. 2010. Saving liberal peacebuilding. *Review of International Studies* 36: 337–65. Available online: http://www.jstor.org/stable/40783202 (accessed on 10 December 2023).

Pavan, A. 2020. Higher education abroad in the new millennium: GCC scholarship programs as GCC culture and identities boosters. Saudi Arabia in the spotlight. In *Gulf Cooperation Council Culture and Identities in the New Millennium*. Edited by Karolak, M. and Allam, N. London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 221–43. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-1529-3_12.

Perna, Laura W., Kata Orosz, Bryan Gopaul, Zakir Jumakulov, Adil Ashirbekov, and Marina Kishkentayeva. 2014. Promoting Human Capital Development: A Typology of International Scholarship Programs in Higher Education. *Educational Researcher* 43: 63–73. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X14521863.

Pugh, Jeffrey D., and Karen Ross. 2019. Mapping the field of international peace education programs and exploring their networked impact on peacebuilding. *Conflict Resolution Quarterly* 37: 49–66. https://doi.org/10.1002/crq.21256.

Raetzell, Lennart, Tobias Stern, Katharina Plutta, Mathias Krämer. 2013. *Programme Area Evaluation: Educational Cooperation with Developing Countries*. Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD). Available online: https://www2.daad.de/medien/der-daad/medien-publikationen/publikationen-pdfs/daad_dokmat_band_74_entwicklungszusammenarbeit_evaluation_englisch.pdf (accessed on 6 December 2023).

Reinisch, Jessica. 2016. Introduction: Agents of Internationalism. *Contemporary European History* 25: 195–205. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777316000035.

Rizzotti, Andrea, and Hector Cruz-Feliciano, eds. Cruz-Feliciano. 2023. *Voices from the South: Decolonial Perspectives in International Education*. Carlisle: The Forum on Education Abroad.

Rosato, S. 2003. The Flawed Logic of Democratic Peace Theory. *American Political Science Review* 97: 585–602. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055403000893.

Shamir, Ronen. 2008. The age of responsibilization: On market-embedded morality. *Economy and Society* 37: 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1080/03085140701760833.

Shtewi, Osama. 2019. Investing in Human Capital: The Contribution of Libyan Scholars Educated Abroad to Academic Institutions and Non-academic Organisations. Doctoral dissertation, University of Leicester, Leicester, UK. Available online: https://leicester.figshare.com/articles/thesis/Investing_in_Human_Capital_The_Contribution_of_Libyan_Scholars_Educated_Abroad_to_Academic_Institutions_and_Non-Academic_Organisations/10241717/1 (accessed on 4 October 2023).

Sodatsayrova, Nazira, and Anise. Waljee. 2017. Re-interpreting cultural values: Tajikistani students abroad. *Cambridge Journal of Eurasian Studies* 1: 1–22. https://doi.org/10.22261/CJES.DKC8NT.

Stember, Marilyn. 1991. Advancing the social sciences through the interdisciplinary enterprise. *The Social Science Journal* 28: 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1016/0362-3319(91)90040-B.

Thayer, William W. 1914. The Rhodes Scholarships and International Peace. *The Advocate of Peace (1894–1920)* 76: 38–40. Available online: http://www.jstor.org/stable/20666883 (accessed on 3 October 2023).

Tokdemir, Efe. 2017. Winning hearts & minds (!): The dilemma of foreign aid in anti-Americanism. *Journal of Peace Research* 54: 819–32. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343317708831.

Toukan, Elena VanderDussen. 2017. Expressions of liberal justice? examining the aims of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals for education. *Interchange* 48: 293–309. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10780-017-9304-3.

Tournès, Loduvic, and Giles Scott-Smith. 2018. Introduction A World of Exchanges: Conceptualizing the History of International Scholarship Programs (Nineteenth to Twenty-First Centuries). In *Global Exchanges: Scholarships and Transnational Circulations in the Modern World*. Edited by Loduvic Tournès and Giles Scott-Smith. New York: Berghahn Books, pp. 1–30.

U.S. Senate. 2002. May 10. S2505, Cultural Bridges Act. Available online: https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/BILLS-107s2505is/pdf/BILLS-107s2505is.pdf (accessed on 4 October 2023).

UCU. 2017. Guide to Scholarships for Palestinian Students. Available online: https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/8533/Guide-to-scholarships-for-Palestinian-students-Mar-17/pdf/ucu_palestinianstudents_scholarshipguide_mar17.pdf (accessed on 4 October 2023).

United States Institute of Peace (USIP). 2015. November 16. The Role of International Education in Peacebuilding [YouTube Video]. Available online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y_mKrB4Tx2Q&ab_channel=UnitedStatesInstituteofPeace (accessed on 14 January 2022).

USIP. 2017. November 16. NAFSA USIP Symposium: Strengthening Global Connections through International Education [YouTube Video]. Available online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PRDKnuZzCEk&t=2096s&ab_channel=UnitedStatesInstituteofPeace (accessed on 14 January 2022).

USIP. 2019. November 19. The Role of Higher Education in Resolving Conflict and its Consequences [YouTube Video]. Available online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RA-zYrT2gd8&list=PL_fyz1S1vQj4x-LAkMqH2DnjArCx9U3-V&index=17&t=0s (accessed on 14 January 2022).

Waibel, S., H. Rüger, A. Ette, and L. Sauer. 2017. Career consequences of transnational educational mobility: A systematic literature review. *Educational Research Review* 20: 81–98. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2016.12.001.

Webb, Sara. 2009. *Australian Scholarships in Cambodia: Tracer Study and Evaluation*. Barton: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Available online: https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/tracer-study-eval-aus-schols-cambodia.pdf (accessed on 3 October 2023).

White House. 2005. Joint Statement by President Bush and Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah. Office of the Press Secretary. Available online: https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2005/04/20050425-8.html (accessed on 3 October 2023).

Wiltshire, Gareth, and Noora Ronkainen. 2021. A realist approach to thematic analysis: Making sense of qualitative data through experiential, inferential and dispositional themes. *Journal of Critical Realism* 20: 159–80. https://doi.org/10.1080/14767430.2021.1894909.

Wolff, Jonas, and Lisbeth Zimmermann. 2016. Between Banyans and battle scenes: Liberal norms, contestation, and the limits of critique. *Review of International Studies* 42: 513–34. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210515000534.
Ziegler, P. 2008. *Legacy: Cecil Rhodes, the Rhodes Trust and Rhodes Scholarships*. New Haven: Yale University Press.