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A Nonkilling Paradigm for Political Problem Solving

Un Paradigma de Non-matar para a Resolución de Problemas Políticos



We are about to enter the sixth year of the new millennium, and war and terrorism remain the norm to resolve international conflicts. All the experience of bloody wars of the previous century and the wisdom thereby gained seems to have been wasted.

Professor Glenn Paige in his recent book, *Nonkilling Global Political Science* argues if political scientists, scholars who dedicate their lives to the study of political power in its multi-faceted manifestations do not challenge seriously the assumption of lethality, then why

PAIGE, Glenn D (2006). *Sen matar é posible. Cara a unha nova ciencia política global*. Tradución, Bárbara Kristensen; prefacio de Joám Evans Pim e introdución de James A. Robinson. Rianxo: Instituto Galego de Estudos de Seguranza Internacional e da Paz, 200 pp. ISBN 84-690-0274-0. Publicado orixinalmente en 2002 como *Nonkilling Global Political Science*. Dispoñíbel gratuitamente en: <<http://www.globalnonviolence.org>>.

would one expect political leaders and citizens of the world to do so.

Is a nonkilling global society feasible? Paige in this path-breaking book asks this simple yet profound question, but goes a step further to challenge his discipline, questioning, Is a nonkilling global political science achievable? On both counts, through insightful analysis and substantive evidence, his answer is a resounding "Yes!"

Glenn Paige, professor emeritus of political science at the University of Hawaii, writes from experience, having served in the Korean War. The work represents the synthesis

of decades of research which includes a number of books: *The Korean Decision* (1968), *The Scientific Study of Political Leadership* (1977), and *To Nonviolent Political Science: From Seasons of Violence* (1993).

The term "Nonkilling" unlike nonviolence is not as comforting because it confronts us with the modern violent reality that we witness regularly on our television screens. The reality is that mighty nations still consider that they can assert pre-emptive wars, last experienced during the Third Reich and the Soviet period, without qualms. Professor Paige's use of the term is very specific, neither advocating pacifist philosophy nor religious faith. It is grounded in the evidence-based approach of behavioral sciences.

Paige shows that both violence-accepting politics and political science in the last century have failed to suppress violence by violent means. The study of government and international politics has been unable to lay the groundwork and methodology for policy advice that goes to the roots of the causality of global violence.

Paige's vision is for political science to dedicate itself to a diagnosis of the pathology of lethality and to discover both prescriptions and treatments that can be shared with all who seek to remove killing from global life. Most humans do not kill.

Perhaps less than two percent of all homo sapiens have ever directly killed another human being (p.27).

A nonkilling political science approach is completely compatible with the pioneering study of global lethality undertaken by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2000. It found that there were 1.6 million deaths resulting from suicide (50%), homicide (30%), and war (20%). WHO calls for taking human killing in all its forms as a disease to be eliminated by the same comprehensive public health measures that are applied to other diseases¹.

Paige uses life-affirming medical science as a metaphor. Medicine, through its continual research and

¹ WHO, World Report on Violence and Health (with Foreword by Nelson Mandela), Geneva (2002). The WHO report is the first comprehensive review of the problem of killing on a global scale - what it is, who it affects and what can be done about it. It seeks to dispel the hopelessness that often accompanies any discussion on violence. Violence is preventable - it is not an intractable social problem or an inevitable part of the human condition. It is a multifaceted problem with biological, psychological, social and environmental roots. There is no simple or single solution to the problem. Violence must therefore be addressed on multiple levels and in multiple sectors of society simultaneously.

training programs on prevention, intervention, and post-traumatic transformation strategies have proven successful in producing both knowledge and practitioners for the moral interest of preservation of life. Paige considers that same rigor and commitment to non-lethality can be made equally applicable to social sciences.

The last three chapters of the book lay out a road-map for a large-scale reconstruction of a nonkilling global society. In a chapter on "Implications for Political Science," the author proposes changes that might accompany a shift towards non-lethality in the areas of political philosophy, political theory, leadership, policy studies, comparative politics, and international politics.

For instance, why has the study of successful leadership in conflict resolution without military intervention remained neglected? There is a long list of Nobel Peace Prize recipients who dared to take the nonviolent route for complex regime-change in their respective countries, and succeeded. Their accomplishments, leadership styles, ideologies, skills, and strategies are waiting to be examined and analyzed². The Graeco-Roman writer Plutarch (40-120 BC) in his com-

parative studies of rulers suggests some principles that can be used to evaluate peaceful leadership in modern social science terms –personality, role, organization, tasks, values, setting, and errors.

Discussing the institutional implications of a nonkilling approach, Paige asserts that needed at all levels of governance are public service departments of nonviolence with cabinet responsibilities. Their tasks are to monitor community conditions related to the logic of nonkilling political analysis, to support professional training for prevention and post-lethal transformative rehabilitation, and to advise on public policies that will facilitate community well-being. Such a Department will aggregate violent statistics and recommendations for violence-eliminating actions from all public and private sources, and will make periodic status reports together with nonkilling policy recommendations to governmental decision-makers.

Within diplomatic establishments, nonviolence specialists are suggested no less than conventional military attachés or officers responsible for economic relations. A position of nonviolence cultural attaché is proposed in embassies who will seek to build bridges of discovery, and cooperation between all sources of nonviolent well-being in home and host countries (p.135).

Paige calls into question the

² Demonstrated in a Festschrift article dedicated to George Simson, Glenn Paige (1999). "Gandhi as Leader: A Plutarchan Perspective," vol. 22, n.º 1, 57-74.

Weberian dogma that the acceptance of violence is imperative for the practice and science of politics. On this bias, he writes that unlike natural sciences that encourage development of pure theory as a contribution to practical applications, political science has tended to be unreceptive to theoretical imagination, and this is especially true with regards to nonviolent creativity. "By dismissing it in professional training as 'utopian,' 'idealistic,' and 'unrealistic,' political science intellect is condemned to confinement in perpetual lethality" (p.74).

Consequently, killing that has been expected to liberate, protect, and enrich has become instead a source of insecurity, impoverishment, and threat to human and planetary survival. This "pathology of defense" is such that what it is intended to defend becomes itself the source of self-destruction. Bodyguards kill their own heads of state, armies violate and impoverish their own people, and nuclear weapons proliferate to threaten their inventors and possessors. Again, in this there is an immense need for studying the psychological consequences of killing both within and without a war situation³. More knowledge of

³ Some relevant works include: Rachel M. MacNair (2002) *Perpetration-Induced Traumatic Stress: the Psychological Consequences of Killing*. Westport: Praeger

post-killing stress would lead to policy changes in society to reduce murders, support for war, genocide, and mass killing by certain population segments and persons.

He asks that the role of political science in transition to nonlethal security is to develop theory and practice to provide credible alternatives to threat or use of lethal force - including preventive nonlethal transformation of the will to kill among potential adversaries. He points to growing body of literature and experience on the subject providing a basis from which to advance; especially the classic work of Gene Sharp and the contributions of John Burton and Johan Galtung⁴.

Publications; Lt. Col. Dave Grossman, On Killing (1995). *The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company; Chalmers Johnson (2004). *Sorrows of Empire: Militarism, Secrecy, and the End of the Republic*. New York: Henry Holt and Company; James Waller (2002). *Becoming Evil: How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing*. New York: Oxford University Press.

⁴ Some resources for applied nonkilling political theory: Gene Sharp (1973). *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*. Boston: Porter Sargent; John Burton (1979). *Deviance, Terrorism & War: The Process of Solving Unsolved Social and Political Problems*. New York: St. Martin's Press; Johan Galtung (1996). *Peace by Peaceful Means*. London: SAGE Publications.

Paige concludes that the time has come for a paradigm-shift in the discipline: "If tradition has taught that we must kill to be free, equal and secure –the present teaches that unless we stop killing not only freedom and equality are in jeopardy but our very survival –individual, social, and ecological– is imperiled. We have reached a point where the science and practice of politics must be aligned with the life-supporting forces of society and nature. It (nonkilling) is not only good morality, and good practically, but it is also this era's imperative for political science" (p. 155).

Paige is optimistic that this goal is neither utopian nor idealistic, but one that is reachable and essential. He courageously identifies and defines in his Nonkilling approach an imminent need for a new sub-field of political science. The book is both provocative and creative, an original work and a wonderful tonic for these troubled times.

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