

Ejim-Ofo, Higher Power, and Universal Design: Case for Justice and Peace in the Contemporary Society.

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Abstract

The contemporary human societies, as can be observed through a common-sense lens, face escalating dissatisfaction, institutional decay, and widespread injustice, revealing a critical need for meaning-making realities capable of strengthening the justice and peace framework from within the human person. This paper proposes *Ejim-Ofo*—the Igbo metaphysical consciousness of innocence, moral clarity, and communal accountability—as a prototype for cultivating justice and peace in modern societies. Drawing on philosophical, cultural, and psychological insights, the study reframes justice and peace not as the absence of war but as the absence of unresolved conflict, emphasizing that “conflicts begin in the minds of men, and the resolution for justice and peace must be constructed in the same psychological space. Through an interdisciplinary analysis, the paper integrates Ejim-Ofo with Higher Power (HP) consciousness and Universal Design (UD) to establish a tripartite framework that unites moral intentionality, spiritual resilience, and structural equity, thereby proposing intrinsically motivated human behaviors. Global data on declining rule-of-law performance and institutional efficacy underscore the urgency of approaches that empower individuals rather than relying solely on governmental systems. The paper further advances the Counselor Education Intervention Strategy (CEIS), which transitions learners from technical-know-how to intentional-know-how through whole-person, meaning-making pedagogies. Together, Ejim-Ofo, HP, and UD offer a universal option for reconstructing justice and peace in contemporary society by engaging culture, conscience, and inclusive design as mutually reinforcing drivers of human and societal transformation.

Keywords: Ejim-Ofo, Higher Power, Universal Design, Justice and Peace, Human Nature, Technical Know-how, Intentional Know-how, Counselor Education.

Introduction

The objective of this paper is to trigger in the readers an intentional way of engaging with the present human societies. In this consideration, the human society is no longer viewed as an isolated world or reality; the human society must be viewed with an inclusive lens where every aspect of the human cosmology is given importance. These aspects of the human cosmology include the totality of the environment, the living beings, animals and plants, the underground world and its components, the non-physical worlds and their components. These aspects of human society are no less important to the quality development of the human person and society. To assert the contrary is to remain in denial of the essentials. The contemporary human society and intelligence are used to focusing and expressing only

finished products, at the expense of always hidden foundational necessities and procedures. This is to say that beautiful rose flowers are as important as the quality of the vase in which they draw nutrition and grow. In education, the focus on educational outcomes, institutional edifice and prestige, and high-market-inducing course modules must not take precedence over whole-person-centred learning strategies. The philosophy for whole-person-centred learning is a strategic psychology that criticises the common practice of only classroom-centred learning. Here, little or no solid reference is made to the environmental, historical, social, psychological, or religious meaning-making experiences of the learner. If human emotional conditions affect learning, then the above-mentioned learners' meaning-making experiences must not be avoided or neglected. Emotional stability and quality education constitute essential foundations for justice and peace within human societies. When educational systems fail to cultivate emotional intelligence (empathy), critical thinking, and ethical awareness, the resulting social environment becomes vulnerable to injustice and violence. The prevalence of violent and unjust social structures often reflects underlying deterioration in collective mental health and the inadequacy of educational programs and policies (Eastgate 2026).

In this paper, an effort will be made to present "Ejim-Ofo" as a historical prototype of a meaning-making experience and explain how it is connected to justice and peace in human society. The hypothesis is that a quality or near-quality of justice and peace in human society, coupled with its consequential emotional quality, would be a breakthrough for educational, political, social, economic, and religious healthy behavioral practices.

What is Justice and Peace

**"Since wars begin in the minds of men,
it is in the minds of men
that the defences of peace must be constructed." UNESCO.**

This discussion on justice and peace logically refocuses one on the nature of the human person. This paper will provide only a stringent trail of philosophical and historical exposés on justice and peace naively understood as the absence of war. In narrating the history of the Peloponnesian War, Thucydides, an ancient Greek historian, includes the idea that fear, fighting for honor, and self-interest are the origins of war among nations. Thomas Hobbes in the *Leviathan* describes human nature as always in a state of continuous war of all against all as a result of competition for diffidence and glory. It becomes evident that justice and peace, often explained away as the absence of war, are not right. Rather, quality evidence for justice and peace is the absence of conflict; war is the absence of conflict resolution. Philosophers and Historians have maintained the competitive and jungle character of human nature and conclude that war is inevitable in human society. However, more ancient traditions and thoughts have exposed that the human nation has a "growth" nature, that is, "brahman". It was further described as "dukkha," which literally means dissatisfactory. These understandings imply that human nature is constantly on the move (recreating) towards a better form or reality of self. (Stevenson 2018, pp. 48-100). Evidently, what is inevitable is conflict, and not war. The difference between justice and peace is a difference without separation. Peace is the evidence of justice. When peace evidences justice, then there are no conflicts. Conflicts, therefore, are the absence of peace and justice. When conflict is not resolved, it leads to chaos, violence, and war. The UNESCO explanation of justice and peace could be better explained thus:

**Since conflicts begin in the minds of men,
It is in the minds of men
that the resolution for justice and peace must be constructed.**

This is a stronger critique of conflict resolutions carried out in round tables, conference rooms, and assemblies. Experiences and evidence have shown that most of these round-table resolutions could be likened to a chess game where one party allows the opponent to win so as to eventually destroy them.

Implication for Justice and Peace

The implication of justice and peace, understood as the absence of conflict in the minds of men, is the non-optional necessity to educate the minds of men. Such educational content must take into consideration the totality of human experiences and environment, including cultural realities (International Mediation Institute, 2026). The human society requires a strategic and inclusive educational reform that can instil the DNA of fairness, common sense, complementarity, and collaboration into the minds of individuals. Competitions and discriminatory vocabularies and nomenclatures instil violence in the human mind. “global and local” identities, for instance, are possible triggers for violence in the minds. Rather, empathic educational stances and languages should be encouraged, “glocal,” for instance (International Mediation Institution, 2026). The concept of Universal Design (UD) emerges as the right approach to the 21st-century realities and social life. It is an anti-discriminatory approach to human life and realities and insists on fair rights and responsibilities for every human person, animals, and the environment.

As mentioned earlier, any strategic approach towards the promotion of justice and peace in human society must begin from the minds of individuals, that is, from the privacy of their consciousness. In every culture, there is a cultural phenomenon or reality that speaks to an individual's conscience. This phenomenon or reality is the meaning-making physical or non-physical experience that engages individuals in the path of fairness, right, and responsible attitudes. At the same time, the reality expresses consequences of non-compliance in such a way that the individual, while enjoying total freedom, understands the implications of any non-compliance. The Igbos of Nigeria have a reality known as “Ofo” (Ikegwu 2012). In proposing Ofo reality as a meaning-making metaphysical or spiritual reality for the benefit of human society, the intention is to encourage and expound the necessity of the human person to connect to a Higher Power (HP). Evidence-based research has discovered the positive and long-term effects of such a connection. Research further discloses how such a connection improves individuals’ mental health, embracing life purpose, social support, networking, coping mechanisms, and hopes and optimism (Bates 2025).

What is Ejim-Ofo

Ejim-Ofo (I hold Ofo) is a conscious assertion by an Igbo individual. This conscious or intentional and emphatic proclamation asserts the innocence (goodwill) of the individual before any physical human persons or groups, and before the unseen realities. In the Igbo milieu and culture, Ofo, as a metaphysical or spiritual reality, is responsible for the administration of justice and peace in human society. As a metaphysical or spiritual reality, it is intrinsically a living consciousness in the heart and mind of the Igbo people. The reality assures that in Igbo society, land disputes, for instance, are not just settled (justice), but also the reality assures that the conflicting parties continue to live in peace; eat and drink

together. It is important to insist that justice (lawsuit settlement) is not enough to ensure a peaceful community. Justice and peace are two different realities without separation.

In using Ejim-Ofo as a prototype of meaning-making reality to argue for quality justice and peace in human society, the intention is to invoke such reality in all other cultures and peoples of the world for the same purpose. Such realities have the capacity to engage the conscience of individuals to act intentionally and fairly without the need for undue force, surveillance, or monitoring. In this logic, one could claim with conviction that meaning-making realities present in all cultures and peoples are a universal design (UD) or consciousness that drives every individual, without undue force or reward, towards positive creative behaviors that always choose the way of justice and peace, rather than discrimination, selfishness, and violence.

A Focus on Contemporary Human Society

The focus on contemporary human society is with the intention of writing a justice and peace report card for contemporary society. Such a report card will enable quality evaluation of the present human society. In general, there is a high percentage of dissatisfaction and uncertainty in every stratum of contemporary society. Economic, political, social, biological, governmental, and religious institutions can no longer guarantee the quality practice of justice and peace in society. The present human society lacks any meaning-making institutions or individuals. The objective here is to expose or bring to awareness the downward plunge of humans and their societies in view of redefining and repositioning the various human societies and institutions responsible for human life and the protection of the human environment. For a long time, human society has leaned towards cosmetic pseudo-ideologies and has presented these ideologies as the real thing. The result is that most folks now prefer, for instance, AI-cropped photos to real photos because the photos look beautiful. And so, realities or things are only considered from a peripheral platform without any consideration for intrinsic or deep meaning. Governments and institutional policies tend to follow the same trend and pattern, addressing human issues and concerns without bringing about any meaningful change. This is to say that any governmental or institutional efforts, if not bottom-up by collective individuals' intentional collaboration, such efforts are merely white-elephant efforts.

The Blavatnik School of Government (2024), building on the InCiSe Index, conducted elaborate field research and collected data across one-hundred and twenty (120) countries of the world. The research was to evaluate government performance and policy delivery. The work relied on four (4) domains of governance, including Strategy and leadership, Public policy, National delivery, and People and process. Although the index did not measure outcomes or impacts of governmental policies on society, it highlights the inevitable necessity to improve the quality of employee (human) engagement in public services and actions. The result of the 2024 Index shows a strong correlation of GDP per capita with the human capital index. It means that both could be better strategized to empower individuals and consequently empower a whole nation (Blavatnik School of Government, 2024).

In terms of policy efficacy, Switzerland (55%) and Finland (51%) are the only countries where most people expect their governments to respond to public feedback. There is a gross scepticism about how meaningful public consultations are in practice by various governments across the world (OECD 2025). What is obvious is that the day-to-day running of human societies and ensuring the practice of quality justice and peace across various corners of the world can no longer be solely left to governments. Every citizen of the world must be involved through meaning-making realities to contribute to the betterment

of human society. The spirit of market-driven or profit-driven advertising breeds consumerism, which in itself is devoid of any quality human values and meaning. Individuals only engage for the sake of self-aggrandisement; such individuals do not play by the rules of life but play the illicit and unjust cards. Sometimes adults and Institutions aid and teach children how to cheat. It has been seen how international governments and institutions engage in cheating and discriminatory practices without remorse or respect for humanity. The implications of these incorrect practices are fatal, especially for the younger generations, who then learn to consider cheating as a normal practice or behavior.

In the United States of America, for instance (a convenient sample due to the availability of research data), there is a general and significant deterioration in the justice system since 2018, and public perception of government accountability has been declining since 2013. And today, Americans hold negative views on the state of the country's rule of law (WJP 2024). Around the world, 1.5 billion people cannot obtain justice for civil, administrative, or criminal justice problems. 4.5 billion people are excluded from the opportunities the law provides. And 253 million people live in extreme conditions of injustice. Summarily, two-third of the world's population (5.1 billion) suffer from multiple injustices (WJP 2024). It is now evident that the world is not on track to meet the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) to ensure equal access to justice for all by the year 2030.

Ejim Ofo, Higher Power and Universal Design

The strategic alignment of Ejim Ofo as a Higher Power to the possibility of providing a breeding environment for justice and peace is a desperate need for a better human society. The construction and maintenance of the justice and peace framework must not only be the concern of Governments and Institutions, but the concern of all. Governments and Institutions may be corrupted in their practice or may not provide a justice system in every corner of the globe, but individuals must connect to the HP, which communicates directly to their conscience the need to protect and preserve life on earth. In Igboland, Ofo is the reality or consciousness or authority or agent that consistently and intentionally holds the individual accountable for their every behavior and practice of justice (Edeh 1985). Implicitly, Governments and Institutions in themselves cannot be corrupt or unfair, but individuals in Governments or Institutions could become corrupt and unfair, first in their hearts, and then in their services to their governments. In this way, Governments and Institutions become corrupt and unfair in their service delivery. It is necessary to separate individual malfeasance from systemic structures and blueprints so as not to lose the tracking on possible origins of unfair practices in human institutions. "We must separate Max from Marxism!" Every individual is therefore called to consciously participate in building an enabling environment for justice and peace.

The Counsellor Education Intervention Strategy (CEIS)

In its essence, counselor educational initiatives and programs cannot be complete without a quality supervision program. It is to say that the work of a counselor educator implicitly includes supervision, to ensure professional and intentional impacts. Counselor education and supervision in general focuses on transformative education, social justice, multicultural competency, and a systemic change paradigm. On these tracks, counselor education and supervision strategically strive to make positive impacts on the general mental health, enabling a healthy society through self-empowering and transformative educational programs and competencies. The goal of supervision, precisely, is to ensure the transformation of learners from the arena of technical-know-how to intentional-know-how. These two (2)

arenas do not conflict with each other but complement. While technical know-how provides for the needed knowledge and professionalism, intentional know-how complements with agency or empathic attitudes that align with human values and meaning. This is a strategic path for educational institutions to contribute to building a healthy and peaceful human society.

In general, meaning-making or purpose-driven learning is increasingly identified as a critical global competency. The exposition on contemporary society explicitly identifies the need for strengthening the global justice and peace index. Counselor Educators are positioned to identify such needed meaning-making realities and construct learning models that engage the totality of the learner; “whole-learner-approach”. In this track, learners are guided towards intentional appreciation of their cultural, spiritual, and social lived experiences. In this way, the learners can achieve a “whole-person-transformation.

Table 1: Ejim Ofo, Higher Power and Universal Design Integration.

	Realities	Impact on Justice and Peace	Educational Strategy
1	Ejim Ofo.	Moral clarity, communal ethics.	Cultural knowledge, intentionality, and restorative justice practices.
2	Higher Power (HP).	Purpose, hope, spiritual resilience.	Reflective practice, ethical inquiry, agency, contemplative pedagogy.
3	Universal Design (UD).	Structural equity, accessibility.	Inclusive curriculum design, global ideologies, multimodal learning designs.

Ejim Ofo provides the moral and ethical foundation; HP provides spiritual motivation and resilience; and UD provides the structural and systemic pathways for building an environment where justice and peace can flourish. Justice and peace cannot be achieved through institutions alone. There is a need to cultivate within individuals, through cultural meaning-making realities like Ejim-Ofo, spiritual grounding in a Higher Power, and structural fairness via Universal Design, foundational motivations for justice and peace in human society.

Figure 1: Holistic Framework for Justice and Peace Education (Copilot Diagram)



Conclusion

This paper has argued that the contemporary global crisis of justice and peace cannot be resolved solely through institutional reforms, governmental interventions, or policy innovations. While these structures remain necessary, they are insufficient without a deeper transformation of human consciousness. The analysis demonstrates that justice and peace are not merely sociopolitical outcomes, but essentially an interior disposition rooted in meaning-making processes that engage the totality of human experience—cultural, spiritual, psychological, and communal. As the paper emphasizes, “conflicts begin in the minds of men, and the resolution for justice and peace must be constructed” in the minds of men. This insight reframes justice and peace as fundamentally anthropological and educational projects rather than exclusively legal or administrative ones.

By presenting *Ejim-Ofo* as a meaning-making prototype, the study highlights the enduring relevance of cultural and metaphysical realities in shaping ethical behavior and communal harmony. Ejim-Ofo’s emphasis on innocence, accountability, and moral clarity offers a culturally grounded yet globally adaptable model for cultivating justice and peace without coercion or surveillance. When integrated with Higher Power (HP) consciousness—providing purpose, hope, and spiritual resilience—and Universal Design (UD)—ensuring structural equity and accessibility—the framework becomes a comprehensive strategy capable of addressing both the interior and exterior dimensions of human society.

The Counselor Education Intervention Strategy (CEIS) further operationalizes this framework by advancing a pedagogy that moves learners from technical-know-how to intentional-know-how. Through whole-person, meaning-making education, CEIS equips individuals with the agency, empathy, and ethical intentionality required to contribute to a peaceful and just society. In this way, counselor educators become pivotal actors in strengthening the global justice and peace index, not through abstract theory alone but through transformative educational practice. Or is it possible that what is needed for justice and peace in human society is the option suggested by the “Person of Interest,” a sci-fi drama series? In the series, Harold Finch teams up with an ex-CIA agent to use a computer machine equipped with sophisticated algorithms to scan and survey the public through electronic internet-connected interfaces, and capable of detecting and preventing crimes before they are committed. **Person of Interest** offers a “provocative engaging” for justice and peace, but its solution—total surveillance guided by a benevolent super-intelligence—is neither realistic nor ethically acceptable in human society. Still, the series raises important questions that are worth engaging seriously.

This paper concludes that the future of justice and peace depends on a collective return to meaning-making realities that engage culture, conscience, and community (CCC). Ejim-Ofo, HP, and UD together form a universal option for rehumanizing contemporary society—an option that empowers individuals, complements institutional structures, and restores the moral foundations necessary for sustainable justice and peace. As global data continues to reveal widespread injustice and institutional distrust, the urgency of adopting such integrative frameworks becomes increasingly necessary. The path forward requires not only systemic redesign but also intentional human transformation rooted in cultural wisdom, spiritual depth (transcendence), and inclusive educational practice.

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