

Internationalizing Peace Psychology

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In this chapter, we describe the history, growth, and current scope of peace psychology. We demonstrate how peace psychology has been dominated by the security concerns of Western countries. Then we ask the question: How would the current content and scope of peace psychology be changed if greater weight were given to the geohistorical issues, perspectives, and research agendas of scholars from Asia and developing parts of the world? We suggest that such an accommodation would require Western models of peace psychology to place greater emphasis on structural violence and the pursuit of social justice. In addition, Western models would need to be reconceptualized to include the role of personal peace and religion in the pursuit of intergroup peace and social justice. We conclude with a discussion of future research in peace psychology, focusing mostly on the importance of increasing contact and cooperation between the West and the rest of the world, to deal effectively with a range of conflicts including the global problem of ideological extremism.

History and Growth of Western Peace Psychology

Although Western peace psychology often traces its origins to William James' concern about the attraction of war (Deutsch 1995), the growth of peace psychology has been most striking since the 1970s, with “peace psychology” citations increasing not only in absolute terms, but also in proportion to the growing number of records

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added to the PsycINFO database (Blumberg et al. 2007). Since the Cold War, several thousand research studies on peace psychology have appeared, many of which can be found in *Peace Psychology: A Comprehensive Introduction* (Blumberg et al. 2007).

The twentieth century was marked by a dramatic shift in psychological research and practice, moving from nearly an exclusive focus on “peace through (military) strength” during the early part of the century to the emergence of research in support of “peace through (international) cooperation” in the latter part of the century. During World War I, psychologists contributed to the war effort by developing group intelligence tests that were used to select and classify new recruits (Smith 1986). During World War II the specialties in psychology proliferated: clinical psychologists developed assessment tools and treated war-related emotional problems; human factors psychologists designed weaponry; social psychologists sought to increase the morale of US citizens and decrease the morale of the enemy. Experiments were conducted to identify newspaper headlines that would effectively motivate people to express a desire to participate in the war (Allport and Lepkin 1943) and emotions that mediated these desires were identified (Allport and Rhine 1942). Demoralization of the enemy was also a hot topic and the types of bombing campaigns that were most effective in this regard were also studied (Morale Division 1947).

As World War II drew to a close and the Cold War began, psychologists continued to support government policies: desensitizing soldiers who were afraid of being exposed to nuclear fallout during above-ground testing; working alongside government officials to encourage favorable attitudes among Americans in regard to the development of atomic energy; and conducting applied research on variables that could increase public support of US strategic interests as defined by the US government (Morawski and Goldstein 1985; Schwartz and Winograd 1954). Clearly, the cultural climate in the USA, as well as political, social, and material incentives encouraged psychologists to use their skills to promote war and war preparation rather than peaceful, cooperative relations among people. With few exceptions (cf. Jacobs 1989), throughout most of the twentieth century, psychologists in the USA readily supported government policies.

However, as the Cold War intensified and created widespread fear of nuclear annihilation, psychologists began to question whether government policies were making Americans more secure. In 1961, a collection of articles on “Psychology and Policy in the Nuclear Age” was published in the *Journal of Social Issues* (Russell 1961). The articles advanced some of the most durable concepts in peace psychology. Bronfenbrenner (1961), for example, argued that the USA and USSR held mirror images of one another; Osgood (1962) promoted “graduated and reciprocal initiatives in tension reduction” (GRIT) as a means of moving the superpowers away from the brink of nuclear war; and Deutsch (1961) wrote about the role of distrust in the US–Soviet policy of deterrence, a policy that Milburn (1961) noted was wracked with logical inconsistencies. Many of these concepts were further developed in books published shortly thereafter (Kelman 1965; de Rivera 1968). Unlike the work of the first half of the twentieth century, the new work was critical of US foreign policies.

During the Vietnam War, scholars continued to critique US foreign policy (cf. White 1966) and later, in the 1980s, psychologists began to organize in opposition to the heated rhetoric between the leaders of the USA and Soviet Union which seemed to be leading ever closer to the brink of nuclear war. At the same time, in Germany and other countries in Central Europe, psychologists took to the streets and protested the deployment of Soviet and US intermediate range nuclear missiles. Later, psychologists in both East and West Germany formed associations of scholars that endorsed peace and disarmament. A few years after the reunification of Germany, an umbrella organization (viz. Peace Psychology Forum) formed. Members published their work in the journal, *Science and Peace*, and undertook an annual peace psychology conference, which continues to meet (Boehnke et al. 2005).

In the USA, White's (1986) edited volume on *Psychology and the Prevention of Nuclear War* provided a set of concepts that were used in a number of university courses on peace psychology (Wagner and Christie 1994; Nelson and Christie 1995). Shortly after White's volume was published, a host of journal articles on the USA–Soviet relationship appeared in some of the most prestigious psychology journals (Levinger 1987; Lebow and Stein 1987; Wagner et al. 1988). In 1991 Peace Psychology was established as the 48th Division of the American Psychological Association (Wessells 1996). Ironically, although the Cold War fuelled the emergence and shaped the content of peace psychology in the West, by the time the Division of Peace Psychology was formed, the Cold War was over.

The Content and Scope of Western Peace Psychology

Vollhardt and Bilali (2008) have examined the degree to which the conceptual domain of Western peace psychology overlaps with social psychology. A content analysis of the five most highly cited journals in social psychology indicated that 8% of the published articles in recent years had peace psychology content. When examining the flagship journal in peace psychology, *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, it was found that about one-third of the articles employed social psychological constructs. The remaining content of peace psychology has not been explored systematically; however, given the multidisciplinary nature of peace, one might expect significant overlap with constructs in other areas of psychology (e.g., political, developmental, community) and other disciplines (e.g., international relations, sociology, cultural anthropology). Not surprisingly, peace psychology research is characterized by greater diversity in methodologies, participants, and geopolitical contexts, than social psychology (Vollhardt and Bilali 2008).

The scope of peace psychology in the post-Cold War era has gone beyond a preoccupation with the prevention of interstate violence. There has been growing recognition among peace psychologists about the importance of mitigating structural violence, an insidious and ubiquitous form of violence that also kills people, albeit

Fig. 1 Two kinds of violence and peace (from Christie, 2006)

	Episodic	Structural
Violence	Episodic Violence	Structural Violence
Peace	Episodic Peace	Structural Peace

	Episodic	Structural
Violence	Bullying Hate Crimes Genocide Terrorism	Patriarchy Racism Exploitation & Oppression Human Rights Violations
Peace	Dialogue & Conflict Resolution Contact & Cooperation	Nonviolent Democratization Movements Liberation Movements

Fig. 2 Examples of episodic and structural violence and peace

slowly, through the deprivation of human need satisfaction. Drawing on Galtung’s (1969) distinction between negative and positive peace, peace psychologists explore conditions that eliminate violent episodes (negative peace) and also conditions that promote social justice (positive peace). Hence, a 2x2 matrix has been used to capture the domain of research and practice in peace psychology (Christie et al. 2001), as illustrated in Fig. 1.

As indicated in the 2x2 matrix, peace psychology is aimed at the prevention and mitigation of both episodic and structural violence. In addition, peace psychology promotes episodic and structural forms of peacebuilding. Some representative topics that are amenable to a peace psychology analysis are given in Fig. 2.

Cohrs and Boehnke (2008) have extended the 2x2 matrix by classifying the key concepts in Western peace psychology as either (1) obstacles to positive or negative peace, or (2) catalysts for positive or negative peace. To promote peace, one would want to remove obstacles to nonviolent and socially just relationships between individuals and groups; however, the absence of obstacles does not necessarily mean there will be movement toward peace because catalysts to peace can operate quite independently of obstacles. Catalysts activate thoughts and actions that promote non-violent (negative peace) and social justice relationships (positive peace).

Negative Peace: The Absence of Violent Episodes

Negative peace refers to a state in which there is the absence of violent episodes. The difficulty of attaining and sustaining negative peace has been particularly problematic in the post-Cold War era where repeated episodes of violence (cycles of violence) are common in many parts of the world. Each cycle can be characterized by three phases (1) conflict, (2) violence, and (3) post-violence. Figure 3 illustrates these three phases, representing three different kinds of interpersonal or intergroup relations, and appropriate interventions for each kind of relationship.

Figure 3 acknowledges the distinction between conflict and violence, the former indicating the perception of incompatible goals while the latter suggests actions intending to harm the other. Of course, a relationship may be characterized by a mix of conflict and violence; hence, the overlap. A relationship between individuals or groups also could move from predominantly violent to a post-violence phase. The entry point or intervention varies as a function of the predominant nature of the relationship.

Obstacles and catalysts for negative peace. Cohrs and Boehnke (2008) have noted a host of well-researched social psychological obstacles and catalysts for negative and positive peace interventions. For instance, obstacles to negative peace include right-wing extremism, enemy images, militaristic attitudes, groupthink, moral disengagement, and support for military interventions. Other obstacles could be added such as the bystander effect, dehumanization, ethnocentrism, the normalization of violence, and nationalistic attitudes. Catalysts that could promote negative peace interventions include intergroup contact, antiwar activism, forgiveness, and reconciliation (Cohrs and Boehnke 2008). Additional catalysts to consider are cooperative attitudes, cultural sensitivity, empathy, decategorization of the other, integrative thinking, social competence, nonviolent attitudes and values, and a principled negotiation orientation.

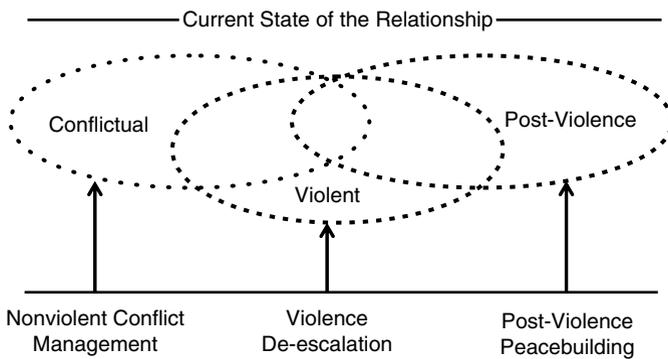


Fig. 3 Entry points for negative peace interventions (from Christie et al. 2008)

Positive Peace: Promoting the Reduction of Structural Violence

Positive peace refers to transformations within and across institutions that reduce structural inequities. In politics, positive peace is promoted when political structures are transformed to become more inclusive of those who have been marginalized in matters that affect their well-being. In the economic sphere, positive peace refers to the transformation of exploitive economic structures so that people who have been excluded gain more equitable access to material resources that satisfy their basic needs (Galtung 1996). Cultural narratives also play a role in positive peace: violent narratives that support structural violence (e.g., “just world thinking”) may be replaced with peaceful, emancipatory narratives that challenge the oppressive narratives of the powerful (Freire 1970).

As indicated in Fig. 4, relationships occur within a structural and cultural context. Moreover, although negative peace processes have three conceptually distinct entry points, depending on the predominant state of the relationship, positive peace opportunities can take place at any point in the relationship whenever social injustices are present.

Obstacles and catalysts for positive peace. Drawing on Cohrs and Boehnke (2008) and adding to their list, we note a number of interrelated, overlapping, and mutually reinforcing obstacles to positive peace that have been studied by peace and social psychologists: ideologies legitimizing social hierarchies, just world beliefs, inhumanization, blaming the victim, scapegoating, ideologies of exclusion, discrimination, sexism, racism, protestant ethic, social dominance orientation, and system justification. Catalysts for positive peace include: belief in collective efficacy, conscientization, inclusive ideologies, nonviolent attitudes and values, and skills in organizing social justice movements.

In short, Western psychologists have studied a range of obstacles and catalysts related to negative and positive peace. Some obstacles are robust, presenting problems

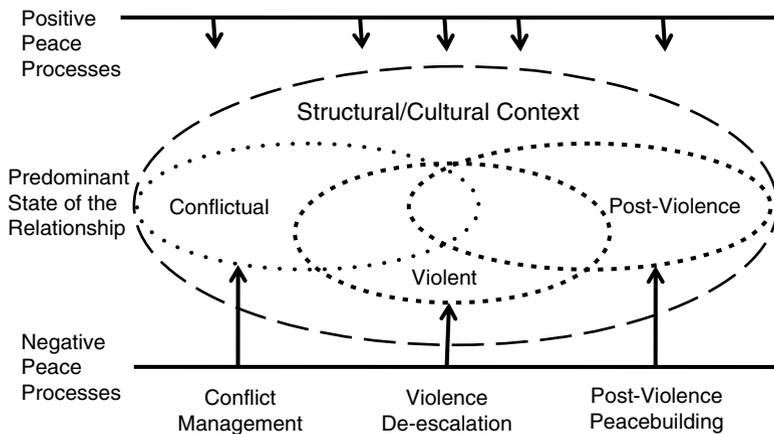


Fig. 4 A multilevel model of negative and positive peace processes (from Christie et al. 2008)

for the pursuit of both negative and positive peace. For instance, right-wing extremism could be a barrier to negative peace as well as positive peace. In addition, some catalysts may do double-duty, serving both negative and positive peace ends. A prosocial orientation, for example, could be a catalyst for either negative or positive peace. The more general point is that in order to pursue peace, obstacles need to be removed and catalysts activated.

Western peace psychology continues to use scientific methods to explore the normative issue of how to prevent and mitigate violence. However, post-Cold War peace psychology is no longer focused exclusively on that aspect of negative peace that seeks to prevent nuclear war. Today, it is recognized that (1) peace is more differentiated having both positive and negative forms; (2) positive and negative forms of peace can be usefully integrated and conceptualized as a multi-level system; and (3) the kinds of peace-related problems addressed vary depending on geohistorical context (Christie 2006).

Internationalizing Peace Psychology

Recognizing that the nature of peace psychology has been driven by security and geohistorical considerations in the West, we now enlarge the scope of peace psychology by including research and security issues that dominate the concerns of people in other countries and cultures. In particular, we suggest that Western psychology tends to emphasize negative peace (absence of violent episodes) while other parts of the world tend to focus on the reduction of structural violence and pursuit of positive peace (social justice) due in large part to a history of colonization. In addition, we will underscore several ways in which Western models of peace psychology would need to be reconceptualized in order to accommodate the personal and religious dimensions of peace that are found outside the West.

Emphasizing the Structural Roots of Violent Episodes

Many developing countries in Africa, Latin America, and Asia are former colonies of powerful Western nations. Colonial powers often conquered indigenous people, claimed territories, and imported forced labor to work on large-scale production and commercial activities. In many parts of the world, colonialism created multiethnic societies that were exploited by colonial masters who imposed certain structures to ensure their continued domination and control of the territories, often using the “divide and rule” policy that favored a particular group and neglected the concerns of other groups.

Although many of these colonies gained independence after World War II, the structures imposed during colonial rule had become deeply entrenched and post-war regimes continued with systems not much different from those of their colonial masters.

Therefore, while independence brought new local leaders, the old system remained intact as local leaders adopted many of the same oppressive practices of the colonial rulers. In many of these cases, the judiciary and its enforcement agencies were often subservient to those in power; hence, the potential for internal repression and state violence. Many of the present conflicts observed in developing countries are due to this legacy of colonialism (Noor 2009).

To be clear, in many developing countries, the conflicts observed are usually rooted in structure-based inequalities with enormous differences in political and economic power among multiethnic groups, divisions that are exacerbated by differences in religious and/or ideological beliefs that break along socio-economic fault lines. After the Cold War, inequalities widened both within and between countries with the growth of economic liberalism and the rise of capitalism and globalization. These demands for liberalization have weakened the capacities of many developing countries, both politically and economically, to redistribute resources in more equitable ways. The result has been a growing sense of injustice (socially, politically, and culturally) among developing countries in relation to the West.

Fukuyama argued that globalization and its processes may lead to "...an increasing homogenization of all human societies, regardless of their historical origins or cultural inheritances" (Fukuyama 1992, p. xiv). While this has happened to some extent, as observed in the dilution of cultural differences and the breakdown of traditional values and institutions, globalization has also deepened the divisions within and between societies by exacerbating economic inequalities that break along the fault lines of ethnicity. Hence, while globalization has been promoted to increase economic opportunity and prosperity (e.g., Sachs 2005), in developing countries, globalization is often associated with increasing economic inequality (Goldberg and Pavcnik 2007), instability, and violence (see Brennan 2003; Giroux 2004).

In addition, Crawford and Lipschutz (1998) provide evidence suggesting that the distributional issues and power shifts associated with globalization are linked with increases in ethnic and religious conflicts that are often at the root of identity politics and violence. Identity conflicts are becoming more frequent and it has been suggested that identity politics reflect a search for meaning, an attempt to preserve what one holds sacred in the face of change, and a need to be different in the mass of humanity (Gopin 2000). Therefore, this combination of intense globalization with feelings of relative deprivation and injustice, juxtaposed with religion and ethnicity, can be potent potential sources of conflict and violence in multiethnic societies where those in power tend to favor their group over others in economic, political, and social reforms.

American "colonialism" has been implicated in the contemporary rise of "religious violence" across the globe (King 2007). However, Noor and Moten (2007) paint a more complex picture, arguing that religion is often used as a substitute for other underlying problems, mostly rooted in colonialism, accompanied by conflicts encouraged by the proxy wars of the Cold War era and other failings (such as social injustices, poverty, unemployment, political repression, etc.) in the social political landscape of newly independent countries. Thus, in Asia and developing parts of the world, the challenge for peace psychology is different from that of the West.

Structural violence often lies at the root of episodic violence. And although the violence has been labeled “ethnic” and/or “religious,” many episodes of violence stem from past structural inequalities, often perpetuated by those currently in power to entrench their position and advance their interests.

Moreover, at present, most regimes in developing countries are still authoritarian. Hence, negative peace is often achieved through oppressive means, though they may claim and practice a few democratic forms borrowed from the West like elections, universal suffrage, and political parties (Noor 2009). In short, when one considers geohistorical context, it becomes clear that current conflicts are rooted in a colonial past and the remedies depend on the removal of structural obstacles.

Emphasizing Positive Peace

Because structural issues dominate the landscape in developing parts of the world, a more inclusive peace psychology would place greater emphasis on catalysts that promote social justice, that is, positive peace. Montiel (2003) has demonstrated that violent episodes in Asia most often take the form of intrastate armed conflicts, while structural violence tends to be associated with colonialism, authoritarian regimes, poverty, and multiethnic groups marked by asymmetric power relations. Hence, a host of positive peace catalysts are relevant in the Asian context: active nonviolent political transformations (i.e., democratization movements), healing of protracted-war traumas, beliefs supporting economic democratization, enhancing social voice and identity, culture-sensitive political peacemaking, etc.

In developing parts of the world, religion has also played an important role in positive peace as manifested in a number of social justice movements. For example, churches were at the forefront in the South African struggle against apartheid. In the people power movements in the Philippines, the strategic collaboration of grassroots and civil society leaders with the church was instrumental in the nonviolent democratic transition during the Marcos regime. In this case, the targets were structures of injustice, but the political movement was also animated by a vision of justice rooted in faith. The recent 2007 uprising of the Buddhist monks against the military in Myanmar is another witness to the role of religion in the struggle for justice.

The pursuit of positive peace is also salient in Latin America, where many psychologists have been inspired by the work of Ignacio Martín-Baró (1994), a social psychologist and Jesuit priest from El Salvador, who founded the liberation psychology movement that swept across Latin America in the 1980s. Liberation psychology is committed to praxis which critically evaluates and challenges the hegemony of Western psychological thought and its reliance on an individualistic, decontextualized, and objective view of the Other. Western psychology tends to locate the problem of social inequalities in the shortcomings of individuals and therefore is blind to structural variables such as institutionalized discrimination and oppression. Further, praxis is a normative approach that frames problems within the context of oppressors and oppressed and pursues theory and practices that benefit

the oppressed. From the perspective of liberation psychologists, the liberation process produces change on the personal and political levels for the oppressed and the oppressors, with everyone benefiting. The oppressed become emancipated while the oppressors extricate themselves from a sense of alienation (Montero 2009).

Liberation psychology challenges theory and practice in peace psychology, much of which is comfortably organized around a corpus of literature on conflict management and resolution, approaches to intergroup relations that can serve the status quo by reducing tension in conflictual relationships while conveniently leaving the social order uncontested. Liberation psychology nudges peace psychology to shift emphasis from tension reduction to tension induction and from a reliance on the power of top-down approaches to bottom-up movements for social change. The views of Martín-Baró and others in the liberation movement continue to spawn emancipatory agendas not only in Latin America but all over the world, including Australia, England, Malaysia, Peru, Philippines, Republic of Ireland, South Africa, Spain, and Venezuela (Montero and Sonn 2009).

Emphasizing Indigenous Forms of Peacebuilding

A more inclusive model of peace psychology would recognize and elicit culturally specific catalysts of peace. In Asia, for example, the cultural values that promote intra-group harmony rest on a different set of assumptions than in the West. Many Asian/Eastern philosophies and religions (e.g., Dahlan 1991; Storz 1999; Tu 1979, 1987) regard the self as holistic, made up of the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual, without any demarcation between them. The self is also regarded as socially constructed, making it dependent on others' perceptions. As such, the values of reciprocity and mutuality are strongly emphasized and people engage with others as total personalities, focusing more on the social and relational aspects of interactions than on the contents.

Asian societies are considered to be more collective than Western ones, with a greater emphasis on group orientation and relationship (e.g., Hofstede 1980; Norenzayan et al. 2002). These values of reciprocity and mutuality also imply an orientation toward consensus and co-operation, where conflict avoidance is more desirable than confrontation. In contrast, theorists and practitioners in the West tend to view conflict as desirable because conflict (i.e., the perception of incompatible goals) can be used as an opportunity for creative problem solving in the pursuit of common ground (Deutsch 1973). For many Asians, conflicts create tension, threaten social harmony, and disrupt relationships. When conflicts do arise, rather than confront or deal directly with differences, a negotiated settlement through a third party is more desirable (Kim 1997).

In many Asian countries, values that place group interests above individual goals have been championed and politicized by certain regimes in defense of their authoritarian governance, the so-called Asian values that transformed several Asian economies in the mid-1980s to -1990s (see Khong 1997, for a critique on Asian values).

These collective values can be put to good use under the right leadership. In many Asian countries, however, these cultural values are used by the authoritarian regimes as a tool to control dissent and perpetuate the regime's influence. Herein we find another reason why it is important to understand the social historical context of a country and how cultural norms and the assumptions embedded within them can constrain or facilitate the pursuit of peace.

Culture is important in another way. When cultural sensitivity is jettisoned, a form of cultural imperialism can take place. For example, "post-traumatic stress disorder" is a Western construct derived from a medical model that enjoys hegemony in relation to other cosmologies. In Bantu areas of Africa, psychological disturbances that follow violent events are often attributed to spiritual discord in which, for example, the individual feels haunted by the spirits of those who were killed. Upon returning home, stress reactions may occur because the individual is viewed as spiritually contaminated and rejected by community members. In such instances, purification rituals, rather than Western clinical procedures, may be most efficacious (Wessells and Monteiro 2001).

Reconceptualizing Peace as a Religious Experience

While modernity and secularization have marginalized the influence of religion in the West (Johnston and Sampson 1994; Thomas 2000), this privatization of religion has not been a universal experience. In spite of the claim made by secularization theory (that in the face of scientific rationality, religion would lose its hold on people), religion continues to be significant in individual lives, collective identities, and even political mobilization. Most of the world's states are secular (78%), but most people (78.3%) still belong to one of the world's five largest religions (Dubois 2007). Hence, the self is often seen as socially embedded in traditions entwined with religion (e.g., Avruch 1991).

The developing countries of Asia and Africa have always been permeated with religion and spirituality. While nations may adopt modern political ideologies that censor and downgrade the practices of religions, the influence of religion remains strong. For many people, there is no dichotomy between what is religious and what is non-religious and the very word "religion" itself indicates "a way of life" (e.g., Islam – *al-dīn*, the Chinese traditional religions – *chiao*, and Shintoism – the *kame* way). Most religions see people as an essential part of the universe; hence, the interconnectedness and interdependence between people, nature, and the wider environment. Individuals are asked to strike a harmonious and coordinated co-existence with all, to live alongside nature, not to control or exploit it (Kamaruzaman 2008). Religion is a powerful constituent of cultural norms and values, and because it addresses the most profound existential issues of life (e.g., relating to the nature of life in this world, whether there is life after death as well as issues about the universe such as its origin and sustainability) it is deeply implicated in individual and social conceptions of peace (Badri 2009; Dubois 2007). Therefore, in order to

internationalize peace psychology, the politics and grassroots power of religion as a catalyst has to be understood, especially with the increased number of conflicts centering on religious differences.

Peace as Personal

With few exceptions (e.g., Nelson 2007, August), Western perspectives on peace psychology tend to ignore the personal dimension of peace and focus on interpersonal and intergroup conflict and peace. In contrast, in many parts of Asia, personal peace is inextricably woven into the fabric of interpersonal and intergroup peace. Indian psychology, for instance, subscribes to a form of “mental discipline” which can enhance mental stability and compassion (Sinha and Sinha 1997). From such a perspective, one could argue that to achieve interpersonal and external peace, the individual must first attain intrapersonal peace, or peace and harmony within oneself.

Similarly, Gandhi viewed nonviolent direct action, that is, non-cooperation with authority, as the most effective way to reach positive peace. Gandhi’s approach required a great deal of internal peace, discipline, and suffering designed to penetrate the heart of the oppressor (Steger 2001).

Religious teachings often offer guidelines for achieving a balance among the mind, body, and spirit. Therefore, peace as defined by some religions is all-embracing; it is a state of physical, spiritual and mental stability, and well-being of the individual, society and state. Not surprisingly, secularization with its marginalization of religion is contested in many countries.

Reconceptualizing the Role of Religion in Violence

In recent decades, religion has increasingly been cited as a cause or at least a contributing factor to conflict and violence around the world (Huntington 1996). Violent events, such as the September 11 attacks, the Iraq war, extremist attacks in Pakistan, India, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, and elsewhere only seem to confirm in the popular mind that religion lies behind much contemporary conflict and violence, within and across borders.

While conventional wisdom may suggest religion promotes violence, Cavanaugh (2007), referring mostly to Christianity and Islam, argues that the division of ideologies and institutions into “religious” and “secular” is arbitrary and incoherent. Those who contend that religion leads to violence generally gloss over their definitions rather than explore complexities that may weaken their argument. Cavanaugh explores the hidden assumptions and necessary ends of the argument; by creating a category of bad, “religious” violence, the argument opens the door to excusing, condoning, and even encouraging “secular” violence. This distinction promotes a dichotomy between “us,” the secular West, perceived as rational and peacemaking, and “them,”

the violent religious fanatics in the Muslim world. The distinction between the two turns current conflicts into a “Holy War,” an absolutist conflict between eternal foes, of theocracy vs. democracy instead of the petty, worldly struggle it really is. Therefore, according to Cavanaugh, there is no difference between religious and secular violence. Both religious and secular ideologies can contribute to violence under certain conditions.

Religion/Spirituality, Violence, and Peace

Religious worldviews and value systems have always permeated the lives of individuals and societies in Asia. Due to the multiethnic nature of these societies, religious differences serve as a source of potential tension, especially when people are ignorant of other faiths. Such potential tension, however, does not necessarily translate into conflict. But, when religion is juxtaposed with other variables such as ethnicity or race, combined with structural inequalities (social, political, and economic) and difficult times, it can easily become the trigger that starts a conflict. This is seen in the Maluku dispute in Indonesia (Muluk and Malik 2009); while the underlying causes of the violence are structural in nature, entrenched within the existing systems by colonial rule for centuries and continued by the authoritarian regime that replaced it, the immediate trigger was a fight between an Ambonese Christian bus driver and an immigrant Bugis Muslim passenger that escalated into a violent episode that culminated in the killing and displacement of many people. During this time, historic grievances were raised as were religious identities which were viewed as sacred collectivities. As Muluk and Malik (2009) note: “... *Komando Jihad* and the *Laskar Jihad* did not want to stop the war as they believed it provided a way towards martyrdom [the *Jihad* way] in defense of Islam in Maluku.” Rivals were construed in negative terms, using “us–them” framing with “us” as good and “them” as evil. Under such circumstance, where one’s religion is perceived to be threatened, violence is justified and considered a holy cause. Under these conditions, violence is seen as an attempt to right the wrong, to resolve the conflict to one’s own (individual or collective) advantage against the determined resistance of an adversary (Lincoln 2003). Therefore, while religion itself is seldom the sole determining factor or principal cause of violence, religion can easily be exploited for violent purposes, especially by charismatic religious leaders who are ideologically and politically driven.

In Asia, especially in South Asia and Southeast Asia, where conflict is perceived to be partially rooted in religion, religious peacebuilding has a role to play in changing the hearts of the grassroots and civil society leaders. Religion’s spiritual dimension can provide access to the deep-seated, affective base for people’s behavior, enabling them to examine critically their own attitudes and actions. Because intergroup conflict is often based on emotional considerations, the conflict may not be resolved simply by rational negotiation processes and subsequent agreements. Unless this affective dimension is also considered within the historical sociopolitical context of the conflict, cognitive decisions and commitments may not necessarily translate

into feelings and actions (ter Haar 2004). In many cases, the affective or subjective components of conflict contribute to the continuation of conflict, while the original causes may long have become irrelevant.

Forgiveness is a central concept in religion, and it can be used to heal the painful past as shown by Muluk (2009) in the case of the *Tanjung Priok* tragedy. Using the Islamic principle of *Islah*, the victims were able to forgive the perpetrators for their past wrongdoings. In doing so, the victims were able to move on with their lives which had been marred for so long by feelings of hate, revenge, suspicions, etc. As pointed out by Cairns (2001), one of the most difficult problems in societies torn apart by prolonged conflict is in the inability to face up to the past, to forgive and thereby break the cycle of revenge. Thus, faith-based interventions are important because they enable people to look into themselves and question their feelings, thoughts, and behavior.

In addition to fostering forgiveness, religious groups and civil society leaders can open channels of communication between conflicting parties. Varshney (2002) demonstrated that Indian cities with interethnic networks where Hindus and Muslims are connected through civil society organizations are much less likely to engage in communal riots. In this case, the civil society groups opened channels of communication and promoted mutual activities in the best interest of the communities. These two benefits provided by faith-based interventions; a willingness to embrace and promote reconciliation, and networking between leaders and members of the different groups, however, are sometimes not sufficient on their own. In most cases, they should be used with other forms of conventional diplomatic approaches (Smock 2006).

A Research Agenda: Emphasizing International Contact and Cooperation

In this section, we discuss a research agenda in peace psychology, focusing mostly on the importance of increasing contact and cooperation between the West and the rest of the world in order to internationalize peace psychology and to deal effectively with a wide range of security concerns. Our emphasis on intergroup contact and cooperation is consistent with more than a half century of work by social scientists who have demonstrated that intergroup relations can be improved by bringing groups in contact with one another. Originally proposed by Allport (1954) in the context of intergroup prejudice and racism in the USA, the “contact hypothesis” has spawned a great deal of research that demonstrates prejudice can be reduced, particularly when the groups (a) meet on the basis of equal status, (b) cooperate toward a common goal, and (c) have institutional support (Pettigrew and Tropp 2006). In addition, mere exposure to outgroup members (e.g., living in mixed neighborhoods, going to mixed schools) can reduce the negative implicit associations with an outgroup (Aberson and Haag 2007; Turner et al. 2007). Contact through cross-group friendships can be particularly powerful (Pettigrew 1997). Even knowing that intergroup friendships exist or observing them is associated with lower levels of prejudice

(Turner et al. 2008). In regard to mediating variables, research indicates that contact works because it provides knowledge about the outgroup, induces empathy and perspective taking, creates more inclusive group representations, diminishes intergroup anxiety and the perception of threat (for a review, see Tausch et al. 2005). Clearly, we propose increasing levels of contact between East and West in an effort to develop a research agenda that is grounded in geohistorical realities and addresses global security issues.

Although the contact hypothesis originated in the West, the power of contact has been demonstrated in other parts of the world. In India, for example, Varshney (2002) applied the contact hypothesis to Hindu–Muslim relations using civil society groups that were dominant in Hindu and Muslim communities in order to open channels of communication and promote mutual activities in the best interest of the community. Hindu–Muslim contacts were organized around issues of common interest, with respected individuals from both communities serving together on committees that met regularly to discuss common concerns.

Similarly, the approach taken by Muluk and Malik (2009) in the Muslim–Christian conflict in Maluku, Indonesia, also employed the contact hypothesis. Malik, the initiator of the Baku Bae (Reconciliation) movement, was instrumental in getting the conflicting groups to meet and talk. He repeatedly met with respected influential people in the community, including village and religious leaders, in order to gain their trust. Problem-solving workshops were conducted by villagers in an effort to enhance forgiveness, social trust, and social capital. Grassroots networks were established and worked cooperatively as “peacekeeping guards” at points along the road that runs through the two communities so that future conflicts could be avoided. Neutral spaces were created in which Christians and Muslims offered basic health and education services. Intergroup contacts made in these contexts were able to build trust and solidarity between the conflicting parties.

Both studies underscore the usefulness of the contact hypothesis to improve intergroup relations between parties in conflict. In both instances, a number of conditions that have been identified as desirable (Dovidio et al. 2008; Tausch et al. 2005) were met: the groups were placed under conditions of roughly equal status; the contact was repeated and prolonged; the members of the groups worked toward common goals; and members had the support of authorities.

Keeping in mind the larger structural and cultural context within which intergroup contact is embedded, in the long term, a sustainable peace will require not only the improvement of intergroup attitudes but also the pursuit of more egalitarian narratives and structures. Hence, when bringing the groups together, past grievances and conflicts can be addressed via initiatives that promote social justice thereby redressing current economic, social, and political disparities while, at the same time, healing intergroup relationships. In terms of roles, influential religious or secular leaders of the community can be instrumental in bringing groups together and facilitating dialogues about shared values and common interests. Equally important is the role of political leaders in addressing the structural and cultural issues that underlie grievances and can only be addressed at the level of policy. In the cases provided by Varshney (2002), peace between Hindus and Muslims was sustainable because

economic disparities between the groups were reduced. In Muluk's and Malik's (2009) study, the Baku Bae movement also recognized the importance of structural issues and worked to minimize provocations that could lead to conflict by collaborating with institutions and NGOs that provided humanitarian relief and empowered the community economically and educationally.

Finally, in the wake of the 9/11 attacks on the USA, there has been a growing number of efforts to promote interfaith dialogues. In Malaysia, for example, Muzaffar (2002) coordinates faith-based interventions emphasizing shared religious values to bring groups together and reduce intergroup conflict. These religious values refer to certain standards or principles that people uphold, not to the theologies, philosophies and doctrines of the religions which are regarded as the ethics of religions (for an overview, see Morgan and Lawton 1996). They include attitudes and orientations which have a positive (e.g., honesty, compassion, patience, etc.) and negative (e.g., selfishness, greed, corruption, etc.) impact on the individual and society; values associated with institutions or the human being's larger environment which serve to enhance the moral aspect of human existence; visions associated with the meaning of life and life processes (e.g., while the rites and rituals to some of life's major milestones may differ, there are similarities in the meanings attached to them); and finally, the human bond, where people all go through similar life processes.

While Muzaffar (2002) argues that these common values can be used to integrate groups, he acknowledges that religious (and cultural) differences must also be understood to dispel fear, suspicion and distrust of the other. He proposes interfaith dialogue as the forum to understand religious similarities and differences where people from the various faiths can meet, talk, and listen to one another to try to appreciate the other's faith (and culture). In such a forum, by emphasizing the attributes of compassion, empathy, love, kindness and forgiveness, people may be more open to hear and listen, and respect the other side. Because members of both groups have been socialized differently from the other according to their respective religions and cultures, realizing that they do share some common values may move them to reconsider their differences.

The emphasis on common values is consistent with social psychological research on intergroup relations from a cognitive perspective (Dovidio et al. 2008). Typically, religious/ethnic identities become salient when intergroup contact is made, a condition that can magnify social identity differences. However, self-categorization is a dynamic process, and people at any one time possess the potential for many different group identities and are capable of focusing on different social categories. Therefore, an emphasis on shared values can alter the way people think about members of the ingroup and outgroup, enlarging category inclusiveness. Hence, group members may be moved toward recategorization in which a superordinate category of common values is most salient; alternatively, members of one group may view members of another group as individuals, through a process of decategorization (Dovidio et al.). In either case, reducing the salience of the original group boundaries may decrease intergroup conflict. Aside from the mechanisms involved, the important point here is that interfaith dialogues provide an opportunity for members of the two groups to meet, face to face, in the hope that these contacts and discussions,

over time, will yield better understanding and respect for one another while laying the groundwork for trust and lasting relationships.

Similarly, in the war on terror between the Christian West and the Muslim world, the reduction of conflict will require intergroup contact, most likely at the level of unofficial diplomacy. In order to move on such an agenda, the Western model of peace psychology will need to challenge the Western secular view that Muslims hold irrational beliefs, cannot be usefully engaged in dialogue, and therefore must be dealt with through the use of deadly force (cf., Harris 2004). The West will also have to reckon with the tendency to view anti-colonial violence as “religious” while referring to colonial violence as “secular” (cf., Juergensmeyer 2000). A case can be made that there are mirror images of enmity that will need to be addressed (Moghaddam 2004) both in word and action as we move forward with an agenda for peace psychology in the twenty-first century that is geohistorically situated and inclusive.

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Division (48) – Society for the Study of Peace, Conflict, and Violence: Peace Psychology Division, American Psychological Association. <http://www.apa.org/about/division/div48.html>.
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