CAPABILITY THEORY OF PERSONAL PEACEFULNESS (CTPP): EXPANDING THE SCOPE OF HUMAN FLOURISHING AND HARMONY

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ABSTRACT

The yearning for peace within and the world around is a fundamental human aspiration. However, despite numerous philosophical and spiritual traditions grappling with its essence, a comprehensive framework for understanding and cultivating peace remains elusive. Personal peacefulness also remains a complex concept often relegated to peace explorations. This paper introduces the Capability Theory of Personal Peacefulness (CTPP), a novel framework built upon the capability approach that offers a robust foundation for understanding and fostering individual and, thereby, societal peace. CTPP offers a holistic and dynamic approach to peace that emphasises the interconnectedness of individual well-being, social harmony, and environmental sustainability. This paper explores the foundational principles of CTPP and its implications with insights into the Capability Approach and Peace Psychology. This paper argues that CTPP provides a valid and valuable peace theory worthy of further theoretical development and empirical exploration. CTPP extends beyond describing the state of peace to advocate for specific ethical standards, capabilities, and conditions that should be pursued to realise peace at personal and societal levels. It provides a framework for what peace should look like and how it can be achieved, making it a guiding theory for both personal conduct and public policy to foster a more harmonious world.

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Introduction

The Capability Theory of Personal Peacefulness (CTPP) represents a novel advancement in peace studies by incorporating the Capability Approach into the realms of individual and collective well-being. CTPP reconceptualises peace not merely as the absence of conflict but as the active cultivation of capabilities that facilitate personal fulfilment and societal harmony. It posits personal peacefulness as a foundational capability essential for human development and societal cohesion. This theory expands the scope of peace psychology by focusing on the personal aspects of peace and their implications for broader social and environmental interactions. It advances a holistic perspective that underscores the integration of personal growth, social justice, and ecological sustainability. CTPP advocates for targeted policies and practices promoting internal peace and its external manifestations, thereby setting a transformative agenda for research and practice in peace studies.

Defining Peace as Harmony

The views of the pioneer of peace academics, Johan Galtung, have primarily dominated peace research, peace studies, and peace education. Decades after defining negative and positive peace as the absence of direct and structural violence (1969), Galtung proposed a Mini Theory of Peace (2007) with a refined connotation for peace. The Mini Theory of Peace conceptualises peace as fundamentally relational, emphasising the importance of harmony in interactions within individuals, among people, or between nations.

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- **Negative Peace**: The absence of violence or conflict, akin to a cease-fire. This form of peace is more about preventing harm than creating favourable conditions.

- **Positive Peace**: The presence of harmonious relations and well-being transcends the absence of conflict, including the proactive fostering of positive interactions.

Galtung argues that real-world relationships often contain a mix of disharmonious, indifferent, and harmonious dynamics, but the essence of sustainable peace lies in enhancing positive, harmonious interactions.

- **Negative/Disharmonious**: A zero-sum interaction where the gain of one party is the loss of another.

- **Indifferent**: A neutral stance where parties do not affect each other's well-being.

- **Positive/Harmonious**: A synergistic relationship where the well-being of one party positively influences the other.

This entails mitigating direct and indirect forms of violence and actively building conditions that promote harmony.

Moving Beyond Inner and Outer Peace

On a broader aspect, peace has been classified as inner and outer peace. Linda Groff (2018) designates the environmental, cultural, transnational, international, between states, within states, community and family aspects of peace as outer peace and the individual as inner peace. Inner peace is often conceptualised as a state of calmness and tranquillity within an individual, with an absence of disturbance and an abundance of serenity.

However, it is evident in daily life that they are not mutually exclusive but interlaced as a person's inner peace is affected significantly or even determined by the happenings in the outside world (Sandy et al., 2006). Equally, outer world peace is affected extensively by the state of inner peace of people, which is evident from the verse, "*Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed*" in the preamble of UNESCO (Huxley, 1946).

Hence, we must reconsider the classification of inner and outer peace from a more personal perspective.

- **Personal Peace:** A person's conscious choice of solace extends beyond inner peace to include various aspects of outer peace, such as how one perceives, interacts, and builds relations with the external world.

- **Systemic Peace: T**he experience of peace in civic society as a result of the harmonisation taking place in various societal systems—political, economic, religious, governmental, and so on—which is beyond the control of a single individual but from the collective participation that forms part of the system.

- **Eco Peace:** The collective well-being of animals, plants, and nature, deliberately attained by a shift of focus from 'Anthropocentrism' to 'Ecocentrism'.

Personal Peacefulness Defined

Sims et al. (2014, p.1) defined personal peacefulnessas *"the peacefulness of individuals, including inner peace, interpersonal peacefulness, and peaceful attitudes toward groups and nations*." Nelson defined the various attributes of personal peacefulness: *"Peaceful personality is defined as a characteristic of an individual involving the consistent manifestation of peaceful states, attitudes, and behaviours over time and across relevant contextual domains……* (Nelson, 2014b, p.7) *"Peaceful behaviour is defined here as actions that create and maintain nonviolent and harmonious relationships. Cooperation and kindness are examples of peaceful behaviour. Peaceful states include emotions such as calmness, serenity, security, and conditions of inner harmony between aspects of self. Peaceful attitudes are defined here as beliefs and values that facilitate creating and maintaining nonviolent and harmonious relationships. Thus, peaceful personality connotes consistently peaceful behaviour, states, and attitudes over time and across relevant contextual domains."* (Nelson, 2014b, p.8).

Ctpp as a New Multidimensional Theory of Peace

CTPP defines personal peacefulness by incorporating the multidimensional, harmonious and capabilitarian aspects of peace.

Personal Peacefulness is an elegant, dynamic and positive state of human existence achieved through the active realisation of harmonisation capabilities across intrapersonal, interpersonal, extrapersonal and transpersonal dimensions, drawing inspiration from the innate harmony in the universe.

This definition underscores several key features:

- **Fundamental Aspiration: Peace as the Goal of Life**
    - This suggests that peace should be the primary objective in life, guiding our actions and intentions. It emphasises the importance of personal, communal, and global peace as the foundation for a fulfilled existence.

- **Active Realization: Taking Deliberate Actions for Peace**
    - Active realisation implies that peace is not just a passive state to be hoped for but requires proactive, conscious efforts to create and maintain. It involves making choices and taking actions that promote peace in our daily lives and interactions.

- **Peace as Harmony: Harmony as the Means for Peace**
    - This principle posits that peace is achieved through harmony, suggesting that a balanced, harmonious state within individuals, their relationships, and their environment is essential for peace.

- **Harmony is Ubiquitous: Presence of Harmony in All Existence**
    - The ubiquity of harmony indicates that harmony is an inherent aspect of all existence, present in nature, human relationships, and within individuals. Recognising and aligning with this ubiquitous harmony can facilitate peace.

- **Harmony Needs Harmonisation: Active Cultivation of Harmony**
    - This principle acknowledges that, though inherent, harmony requires active cultivation and maintenance. It involves balancing different elements and aspects of life, including emotions, thoughts, and actions, to sustain harmony.

- **Harmonisation is a Capability: Harmonisation of Beings & Doings**
    - Harmonization, as a capability, implies that individuals can develop and enhance their ability to create and maintain harmony in their lives and the world around them. This involves aligning one's actions (doings) with one's values and essence (beings).

- **Multidimensional Harmonisation: Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, Extrapersonal & Transpersonal Harmonisation**

    This concept expands on the idea of harmonisation by categorising it into different dimensions:

    - **Intrapersonal** (within oneself). Intrapersonal harmonisation is the process of aligning one's emotions (affects), thoughts (cognitions), ethical beliefs (morality), self-perception (self-concept), and spiritual (Immanent) dimensions.

    - **Interpersonal** (between individuals). Interpersonal harmonisation involves harmonising peaceful and constructive relationships with others. It extends the concept to the realm of familial and professional domains of human existence.

    - **Extrapersonal** (with the external environment and society). Extrapersonal harmonisation encompasses an individual's relationship with the broader societal and environmental contexts, extending beyond immediate community connections to cultural, religious, national, international/global, and nature dimensions in a just and sustainable manner.

    - **Transpersonal** (connecting with the universal and existential domains). Transpersonal harmonisation is about transcending the individual self and connecting with a higher, transcendent spiritual dimension and all existence. It is the cosmic or existential aspect of personal peacefulness while finding alignment with the universe and all existence beyond the individual self.

- **Disharmony is More Than Conflict: Overcoming All Disharmonies, Not Just Overt Conflicts**
    - This principle highlights that disharmony encompasses more than visible conflicts or disagreements. It includes internal conflicts, subtle imbalances, and misalignments with the natural world, all of which must be addressed to achieve true peace.

- **Harmony is Evolution: Event together to Evolve together**

When engaging with others, aim for win-win outcomes that benefit all involved, avoiding destructive or conflicting states. This approach fosters cooperation and respect, enhancing both individual relationships and broader societal interactions.

- **Cosmic Harmony: Harmony with All Beings & Universe**

The ultimate goal is cosmic harmony, a profound and all-encompassing state of balance and unity with all beings and the universe. This suggests a holistic approach to peace, recognising the interconnectedness of all things and striving for harmony at the most expansive level.

In essence, peace is not merely the absence of conflict but a positive, dynamic state of harmony that requires conscious effort and cultivation at multiple levels of existence. The multidimensional perspective on harmonisation underscores the necessity of a holistic approach to peace, including emotional, psychological, social, ecological, and spiritual dimensions. This comprehensive view suggests that efforts to promote peace must be multifaceted, addressing the complex interplay of factors that influence harmony. This multifaceted perspective underscores the interconnectedness of individual well-being and universal harmony, suggesting that peace is both an internal state and a relational one that extends beyond the self to encompass all levels of existence. These principles call for a broadened understanding of peace that transcends traditional boundaries, incorporating personal growth, social justice, environmental stewardship, and spiritual connectivity. They invite a proactive, inclusive approach to peace-building that recognises the complex, interconnected nature of existence and the role of every individual and community in contributing to the fabric of peace.

Core Theoretical Foundations of CTPP

Built upon a rich tapestry of diverse theoretical perspectives, CTPP flourishes from the solid foundations of the capability approach, positive psychology and peace psychology, extending them to worthy nuances.

- **The Capability Approach:** CTPP borrows the capability approach's focus on agency and the realisation of valuable functionings (Sen, 1990; Nussbaum, 2011), shifting the lens from lack of conflict to the capability to achieve personal peace. CTPP builds upon the foundation of the capability approach, enriching it by explicitly recognising personal peacefulness as a valuable function and proposing specific capabilities that contribute to achieving it. This expansion offers a more comprehensive understanding of human well-being and paves the way for further research and action towards creating a more peaceful and harmonious world. Viewing personal peacefulness through the lens of the Capability Approach allows for a nuanced understanding of it as a valuable state of being that contributes to overall well-being. This perspective underscores the role of personal agency, social conditions, and the freedom to pursue personal peace as essential components of human development. By framing personal peacefulness as a capability, we can better appreciate the factors that enable individuals to achieve this state and the importance of creating societal conditions that support it.

- **Positive Psychology:** CTPP aligns with positive psychology's emphasis on human flourishing and cultivating positive states of being. The Capability Theory of Personal Peacefulness (CTPP) and Positive Psychology both enhance human flourishing by focusing on strengths and positive experiences. Positive Psychology shifts from treating illness to enhancing well-being through happiness, engagement, relationships, meaning, and achievements—known collectively as PERMA (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). CTPP aligns with these goals, focusing on proactive peace cultivation through personal strengths rather than conflict resolution. Both fields advocate an active approach to well-being, emphasising that happiness and peace are achieved through intentional efforts. By integrating Positive Psychology's strategies, CTPP empowers individuals to foster inner peace and positive interactions, contributing actively to a more harmonious society.

- **Peace Psychology:** CTPP flourishes from Peace Psychology, which strives to create a more peaceful world by addressing the complex mental landscapes that cause disharmonies and fostering the psychological foundations for sustained peace (Christie et al., 2008). The Capability Theory of Personal Peacefulness (CTPP) enhances peace psychology by emphasising individual and societal peace through a unique lens. Both fields prioritise understanding and addressing the psychological roots of conflict, recognising the crucial link between individual well-being and societal peace. However, CTPP uniquely advances this by

cultivating specific capabilities across four dimensions: intrapersonal, interpersonal, extrapersonal, and transpersonal. It strongly emphasises inner peace, derived from positive psychology, to foster resilience, positive emotions, and meaningfulness. By stressing personal agency and the structured development of peace-promoting capabilities, CTPP offers a profound framework for nurturing personal peacefulness, thereby enriching both theoretical discourse and practical applications in peace psychology.

Theoretical Underpinnings of CTPP

The CTPP framework draws upon a rich tapestry of psychological and management theories across intrapersonal, interpersonal, extrapersonal, and transpersonal domains. Exploring the domains involves examining various aspects and dimensions contributing to an individual's peacefulness. These domains encompass different areas of life and experiences that collectively influence one's overall state of personal peace.

Intrapersonal Harmonization focuses on achieving inner balance through understanding and regulating emotions, thoughts, ethics, self-concept and spiritual behaviours. As discussed by Salovey and Mayer (1990) and expanded by Goleman (1995), Emotional Intelligence highlights the importance of self-awareness and empathy in managing emotions. Cognitive-behavioural theories (Beck, 1979; Ellis, 1962) and Cognitive Dissonance Theory (Festinger, 1954) underline the significance of cognitive restructuring and consistency. Theories like self-compassion (Neff, 2003; Leary et al., 2007) and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) (Hayes et al., 2011) advocate for kindness towards oneself and values-driven action. The role of moral development (Kohlberg, 1971), self-congruence (Rogers, 1951), and the resolution of life-stage conflicts (Erikson, 1950) in achieving inner harmony is also emphasised. Pursuing self-actualisation (Maslow, 1943) and mindfulness practices (Kabat-Zinn, 1994) are also pathways to personal peacefulness.

Interpersonal Harmonization extends the concept of peacefulness to relationships within families, work, and social contexts. Family systems theory (Bowen, 1966) and attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969, 1982; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016) explore the dynamics of familial relationships and the importance of secure attachments. Concepts such as work-life harmony, role theory (Katz & Kahn, 1978), self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), and conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989) address the balance between professional and personal lives. Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 2004) and Social Exchange Theory (Homans, 1958) examine broader social interactions, while approaches like Nonviolent Communication (NVC) (Rosenberg, 2003; Gewirtz & Bond, 2010), interdependence theory (Kimball & Safran, 1982), and negotiation strategies (Fisher et al., 2011) offer tools for fostering harmonious relationships. Feminist theories (Hooks, 1984), peacebuilding theories (Galtung, 1969), and critical race theory (Crenshaw, 1989) highlight the need for social equity.

Extrapersonal Harmonization involves engaging with the broader societal, cultural, religious, and environmental contexts, emphasising the interconnectedness of all beings. Bennett's (1986) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) outlines a progression from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism. The theory of religions - religious inclusivism and religious pluralism advocates cultivating positive religious attitudes in a multicultural society (Jose, 2008; Hick, 2010). Global Citizenship (Reysen & Katzarska-Miller, 2013) facilitates awareness, caring, and embracing cultural diversity while promoting social justice and sustainability. Deep ecology (Naess, 1973; Palmer, 1997) highlights the need for environmental stewardship, while ecopsychology (Roszak et al., 1995) and environmental ethics (Rolston, 1988) advocate for sustainable living and ethical interactions with the environment, while eco-phenomenology foster harmony through responsible stewardship (Tymieniecka, 2000).

Transpersonal Harmonization transcends the individual self, connecting with a higher, spiritual dimension. Peak experiences (Maslow, 1970), collective unconscious (Jung, 1964), and transcendental experiences (Groff, 2016) illustrate the spiritual connections between the self and the universe. Integral theory (Wilber, 2007) and immanent and transcendent spirituality (Groff, 2008) offer insights into achieving transpersonal peace. Existential and Cosmic Harmony reflects the deep human need for alignment with the universe, suggesting a symphonic relationship where individual actions resonate with cosmic rhythms. Perennial Philosophies (Feuerstein, 1991) and fields like astrobiology and cosmology (Dick, 1996) inspire awe and a sense of belonging within the cosmos.

Conclusion

The exploration of the Capability Theory of Personal Peacefulness (CTPP) unveils a pervasive approach to peace that extends far beyond the conventional confines of the field. Distinguished by its

comprehensive integration of the intrapersonal, interpersonal, extrapersonal, and transpersonal realms of human existence, CTPP offers a nuanced and expansive framework that enriches traditional peace studies. Central to this approach is recognising peace as a proactive and ongoing endeavour, necessitating active engagement, adaptability, and a profound commitment to cultivating harmony across all facets of life.

CTPP's holistic perspective advocates for a transformative shift in consciousness, broadening one's sense of identity to embrace a more inclusive understanding of life and existence. Such a shift aligns personal transformation with broader peacebuilding efforts, framing the pursuit of peace as a collective journey rooted in individual growth and societal change. Incorporating a broad spectrum of human experiences, including physical, emotional, cognitive, and spiritual dimensions, CTPP fosters interdisciplinary collaboration, drawing from psychology, sociology, environmental science, and spirituality to offer a richly diverse approach to peace research and practice. Its emphasis on the dynamic nature of peace adapts to the evolving landscape of personal and societal development, promoting a culture of continuous learning and improvement.

In essence, CTPP offers a profound and promising framework for understanding and nurturing personal peacefulness. It advocates for a multidimensional and dynamic approach that holds significant potential for enriching theoretical discourse, empirical research, and practical initiatives in peacebuilding. The path to a more peaceful world begins within, and CTPP offers an insightful guide for navigating the intricate interplay of internal and external harmonisation processes.

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