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Intercultural communication, interreligious dialogue, and peace

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Abstract

In an increasingly interdependent world that includes great cultural, ethnic, racial, national, and religious diversity, it is imperative that we find ways to come together as a human family while still honoring and respecting our many diversities. In the nuclear age, and now the bioterrorism age, and in the wake of September 11, 2001, it is also imperative that we find ways to resolve our conflicts short of violence. The fields of intercultural communication and interreligious dialogue provide important tools to help people deal with all these diversities in more positive ways that increase understanding between people and can enrich people's lives. People must still resolve their conflict issues, but understanding other people's cultures, negotiating styles, and religions will prevent unnecessary misinterpretations of other people's behavior, which can exacerbate conflicts that already exist. This article is concerned with many positive approaches and tools for dealing with diversity from the fields of intercultural communication and interreligious dialogue as these pertain to creating more peaceful futures. It is a basic hypothesis of this article that a more peaceful future requires adoption, by people worldwide, of a dynamic, interdependent, complex (not homogenized) whole systems' worldview, which honors both our unity and interdependence, as well as our diversity—of races, ethnicities, cultures, nationalities, and religions.

Our generation has arrived at the threshold of a new era in human history: the birth of a global community. Modern communications, trade, and international relations as well as the security and environmental dilemmas we all face make us increasingly interdependent. No one can live in isolation. Thus, whether we like it or not, our vast and diverse human family must finally learn to live together. Individually and collectively we must assume a greater sense of Universal Responsibility.

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The XIVth Dalai Lama

No peace among the nations without peace among the religions. No peace among the religions without dialogue among the religions. Hans Kuhn

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1. Part I: Intercultural communication

1.1. *Introduction to the intercultural communication field and definitions of terms*

As the diversity of the world's people has increasingly interacted with each other, the field of intercultural communication has arisen to provide useful tools for better understanding of cultural diversity. Intercultural communication (as compared with comparative cultural studies) deals with what happens when people from different cultures come together to interact, communicate, and negotiate with each other. There are both, general principles and approaches to intercultural communication, as well as specific studies of two particular cultures (and their underlying values), interacting. There are many definitions of culture, including what gives meaning to life, as well as "learned, shared, patterned behavior, as reflected in technology/tools, social organizations, and ideas/beliefs" (anthropological definition).

1.2. *Huntington's thesis on the clash of civilizations as one response to cultural diversity*

Civilizations are groupings of cultures or the largest cultural grouping with which one identifies short of humanity as a whole. Events of September 11, 2001, and other terrorist events, underscore Samuel P. Huntington's warning of a "clash of civilizations" replacing the old "Cold War conflict," in this case Muslim vs. Western civilizations [1,2], but the fields of intercultural communication and interreligious dialogue provide tools to help avoid such an outcome.

1.3. *Intercultural communication as an alternative approach to cultural diversity*

Key principles of intercultural communication include 'The message sent is often not the message received', even though we usually assume that this is the case—especially when we do not know about another culture—and we therefore expect people from that culture to perceive what we say and behave the same way as we would in our own culture. This leads to learning to be able to distinguish between D, I, and E/J, i.e. between *describing* the behavior of someone from another culture (purely factually) vs. *interpreting* the meaning of or reasons for the behavior of

someone from another culture (where misinterpretation can occur-especially if we do not know the other culture) vs. *evaluating or judging* that behavior as good or bad, usually with some emotional content, based on how one interpreted it. The problem comes when we do not know the other culture and therefore interpret the behavior of someone from another culture based on what that behavior would mean within our own culture, since that's all we know. This misinterpretation of their behavior can then lead to a negative judgment of that behavior, which might not have occurred 'if' we had known what that behavior meant in the other person's culture. The problem, in short, is that we often jump from D to I to E and end up in judgment, while still thinking we are just describing the behavior of that person from another culture.

1.4. *Two opposite archetypal worldviews based on opposite underlying values*

In addition to the more visible aspects of culture reflected in outer behavior, there are less visible aspects, including underlying values and assumptions about reality (concerning relationships with others, nature, God/spirit, and the body in medicine) that drive and motivate behavior. Two archetypal cultural paradigms or worldviews, based on polar opposite underlying values, include the following, with most cultures falling somewhere in-between:

1. *A homogenized, whole systems, interdependent worldview*, including: group (not individual) identity; feeling part of the nature; seeing God or spirit immanent in all creation; and seeing the body as a dynamic energy flow system. This is more traditionally a non-Western worldview.
2. *A segmented worldview*, including: identity as separate individuals; feeling separate from the nature and thus trying to control the forces of the nature; seeing God as separate and on high; and seeing the body as a number of separate organs and parts. This is more traditionally a 19th century Western worldview.

1.5. *Additional sets of polar opposite values underlying different cultures*

Additional pairs of polar opposite values that can underlie different cultures and influence behavior and negotiate styles of people from different cultures are presented subsequently. Any given culture can lie somewhere on a spectrum between any set of these underlying polar opposite values [4].

High context cultures (where social relationships and rules for interacting between people are most important, and where you have to take time to get to know people and establish personal relationships of trust between people before you can negotiate or carry out business with them) vs. *low context cultures* (which are very results-oriented, where 'time is money' and one immediately wants to 'get down to business' to negotiate with people and reach an agreement, often based on legal protections in one's dealings with others, underlying the fact that one does not have to like someone in order to do business with them).

Group-identity cultures (where one's primary identity is as a member of one or

more groups, and where one is socialized from the day one is born to subordinate one's individual needs and wants to the needs of the group, and to be respectful and sensitive to the rules for interacting with others) vs. *individual-identity cultures* (where one's primary identity is as a separate individual, and where one is socialized from the day one is born to stand out as an individual, to express one's own ideas and feelings, and to assert oneself and fight for one's own interests and values).

Particularist cultures (where people are expected to treat friends, family, and close business associates i.e. those with whom one has close relations in different, more favorable ways than one treats other people) vs. *universalist cultures* (where everyone is supposed to be treated equally, based on common and, often, legal standards of acceptable or unacceptable behavior).

Diffuse cultures (all aspects of life, including status at work and in private life, are interrelated, and carry over from one area to other areas) vs. *specific cultures* (each area of life is separate from other areas, and one's status can be different for each area), leading to different patterns of communication.

Non-verbal communication cultures (where non-verbal forms of communication are more respected and trusted, and where one is expected to intuit the meaning from the context in which relationships mean more than from what is actually said) vs. *verbal communication cultures* (where truth is embodied in 'the word' and one is expected to be factual and honest and specific in one's verbal communications, since they are relied upon as a basis for business and social relationships between people).

Indirect communication cultures (where communication is more indirect and one strives to maintain harmonious group relationships, and not offend others by being too blunt or direct) vs. *direct communication cultures* (where one says what one thinks and feels—even if it offends others, based on the belief that being 'honest' is most important, and where one is also expected to assert oneself and make one's own interests and needs known—even if it disturbs the group harmony in the process).

Neutral cultures (emotions are controlled, and people's feelings and thinking are not revealed) vs. *affective cultures* (feelings are freely expressed); also relates to cultures with less touching vs. more touching, respectively.

Ascribed status cultures (status is largely inherited and based on social class, gender, and age) vs. *achieved status cultures* (status is based on achievement, on the knowledge and skills that one has achieved, and hence, on one's ability to perform certain tasks).

Being cultures (more inner-directed; focus more on 'being in the moment' and finding inner peace and balance, as well as harmony in one's relationships with others, based on a cyclical view of change which accepts reality as it is at the moment, rather than trying to change the external world) vs. *doing cultures* (more outer-directed; focus more on change in the world, social justice questions, and the possibility for linear 'progress' in the world, based on taking individual or collective actions in the external world to create a better world future).

Cultures living in harmony with the nature/externally oriented cultures (seeing oneself as part of the nature, not separate from it, and therefore trying to respect

and live in harmony with the cycles of the nature) vs. *cultures trying to control or subordinate the nature*, by imposing one's will upon the nature/internally oriented cultures (because one sees oneself as a separate individual, who is also separate from the nature, and therefore one must try to 'harness the forces of the nature' to one's own ends).

Synchronic time orientation (past, present, and future are all interrelated; past glories are the basis of great futures) vs. *sequential or linear time orientation* (events are sequentially ordered; focus on linear progress and on the future).

Cultures also vary, in not only how they deal with time, but also how they deal with space (how close is one to another person in communicating with them).

1.6. *Layers of cultural identity and cultural marginality*

People often have layers of cultural identity, and adding an additional layer (as, for example, identifying as a planetary citizen today, beyond one's national and ethnic-cultural identity) does not mean that one needs to eliminate other pre-existing layers of identity. The intercultural field also has a concept of cultural marginality, where a person can learn about and live in so many different cultures that their own identities are no longer limited to any one culture and, in this sense, they become 'marginal' to any one culture, but able to appreciate and interact with many cultures. [4] Such people are sometimes called 'global nomads'.

1.7. *Helpful rules for effective intercultural interaction with people from another culture*

When going to interact with people from a different culture, there are a few helpful rules, which, if used, will help create better intercultural relations between peoples from different cultures now and in future. Not following these rules can increase the probability of misunderstandings occurring between peoples from different cultures, which can lead to increased conflicts that could have been avoided.

Before interacting with people from another culture, do your homework and learn about the dominant characteristics and expected behavior patterns of that culture, as well as the underlying values on which this behavior is based, so that you are not surprised to discover people behaving differently than they would have in your own culture, and then judging them negatively as a result, without really understanding why, from their cultural context, they are behaving that way.

When in another culture, look at the behavior of the respected leaders in that culture for clues about the accepted behavior in that culture. Also try to find a mentor or friend from that culture or subculture, whom you can consult for advice and better understanding on how best to behave and interact in that culture.

Once you have learned some of the dominant characteristics of people's behavior in another culture, give yourself time to get to know each person individually, to find out how much their behavior and values correspond to that of their dominant culture or not. Remember that each person is an individual, with their own life

experiences and interests, no matter what dominant culture or subculture they may have been socialized into.

Remember that as people from different cultures increasingly interact with each other in our increasingly interdependent world, which will only increase in future, more and more people will find themselves influenced by more than one culture, ethnic group, race, or religion, and their identities will also reflect more of these multifaceted influences. Be careful not to put people in pre-set boxes. Be open to find out who they really are and how they have fused different aspects of their identity together.

1.8. Futures of cultures and civilizations in an interdependent world

There are many views on the future of cultures and civilizations, now that everyone is interacting with each other in the world today. People used to see US as a 'melting pot' of cultures (creating homogenization), but now the 'salad bowl' image (of unity amidst great diversity) is seen as more appropriate. Similarly, before, there had been great fear of Western cultural imperialism creating a homogenized global culture (one scenario for the future), which may be occurring on a superficial level, but not as much on deeper levels, where culture changes much more slowly.

This implies that in future, while aspects of a global culture are being created on one level, on deeper levels people will continue to value and reflect their own diverse cultures in their everyday lives. As people move more quickly into the future, they also go back more to their roots to hold on to what is really important and meaningful to them from their respective cultures. In these various ways, people will both stay connected to their past, as well as ensure their movement into the future.

In an interdependent world, it is vitally important that everyone realizes that cultures are all different socially learned maps of reality, but they are not ultimate reality. A corollary of this is to recognize that all cultures have something important to contribute to the world (based on those strengths that each of them has developed from his own unique history and experience, and environmental requirements), but no culture has all the answers. In future (as in the past), people can enrich their own lives by being open to learning from other cultures, while still continuing to value what is important in their own cultural roots. One can thus today look at each culture as bringing different gifts to the table of humanity. This framework can only work, however, if people can be open to learning from, and respecting, cultural diversity.

A related hypothesis of this writer is that as people from different cultures increasingly interact with each other—globally, as well as in their own local communities—each individual can become his own unique synthesis of all the different cultural influences that have impacted his life. Much intercultural creativity can be unleashed from such interactions—within the societies and within the individuals (who must seek ways within themselves to make sense of and reconcile these diverse cultural influences in their lives). While this process is not always easy, it is a process that entire humanity is going through today in varying degrees.

All the above points illustrate the possibility of a *complex whole systems world-view emerging today*—of unity amidst great diversity—as all the cultures of the

world interact, and as all the underlying opposite and diverse cultural values of the world (discussed previously) are interacting and seeking some common unity that connects and unites them across all their diversities. For example, people may be seeking ways to have both individual *and* group identities; to honor both spiritual *and* material values; to be open to both Eastern and Western cultures; and to honor both tradition and development or modernization. We are increasingly living in a both/and world, not an either/or world.

The future of cultures and civilizations is a complex, multifaceted topic, that makes today's world both exciting and challenging to live in. Complex issues of cultural identity will continue to dominate the world, as people seek ways to find or preserve their traditional cultural values amidst increasing intercultural interactions. A perceived threat to what some would call a distorted interpretation of traditional cultural and religious values was clearly a factor behind the events of September 11, 2001. Nonetheless, it is also clear that preserving cultures in their pure form (if indeed this ever existed, which is doubtful) will become increasingly difficult in future, as all cultures are interacting much more today, and will do so even more in future, within a global economy with global telecommunications and now also the internet—as the emerging global brain of humanity, with all the best and the worst, and increasingly all the diversity, of humanity represented.

It is also vital that the more developed parts of the world reach out to the less developed people of the world, so that all can increasingly participate in and contribute to this emerging, culturally complex, global community. If this does not happen then it is clear that more violent and conflict-laden scenarios will dominate the future. Globalization must be seen to benefit not only the few but all the people. The increasing gap between rich and poor—within and between countries in recent years, and the continuing poverty that exists in many parts of the world, must somehow be reversed, and greater educational opportunities must become available to people globally—or no amount of intercultural communication will be able, on its own, to create the more desirable scenarios for the future that everyone should want.

2. Part II: Interreligious dialogue (IRD)

2.1. Introduction to religion, war, and peace, and to IRD

While much has been written about violence and conflict in the name, at least, of religion—including the events of September 11, 2001—it is important to note that much positive interreligious, interfaith, and intermonastic dialogues are also occurring between people from different spiritual-religions traditions in the world. It is not an accident that as the world becomes more interdependent, some people feel threatened, while other people from different religions reach-out to try to understand each other more and to find areas of common ground. Various interfaith organizations exist, which have issued declarations on common principles for an interdependent world. One positive effect of the events of September 11, 2001 is that increasing interfaith dialogue is also occurring, a positive development, along (unfortunately)

with an increase in the acts of violence against innocent Muslims or Arabs living in different parts of the world. Nonetheless, interfaith dialogue is becoming a true social movement by forward thinking people from around the world, who realize that it is an essential component for a more peaceful world.

2.2. *Spectrum of possible positions within any religion*

Within any religion, a spectrum of possible perspectives is possible, including: mysticism, organized religion, and fundamentalism or extremism. All the religions begin with someone having mystical experiences defined as “a direct experience of ultimate reality” [5]. This experience transcends the five senses and provides a direct experience of the presence of God or spirit in some way. Such individuals later try to share their experiences—and the wisdom about life and its meaning and purpose that they have gained from these experiences—with others, who eventually suggest the formation of a religion around the teachings of that enlightened person. Once religions are formed, the teachings of the ‘founder’ (who usually did not start out to found a new religion) become the foundation of scripture for that religion, and these teachings are passed down from one generation to the next and become part of social learning and culture. When these teachings later are dogmatically interpreted by others or when they lead to extremist behavior such as violence against others, they can be called by some fundamentalist or extremist as the versions of that religion. It is important to note that *all* the religions can potentially contain all of these perspectives.

While there are, no doubt, exceptions. In general, mystics from all the religions can understand and respect each other, since they come from direct inner experience of the divine, and not from the differences of socially learned beliefs, which organized religions have often stressed more. Nonetheless, there is some debate regarding whether mystics from all the religions are experiencing the same thing or whether their mystical experiences are mediated through their cultures or learning [6]. To the extent that fundamentalist or extremist versions of any religion tend to believe that only one interpretation of their scriptures is true, which is *their* interpretation, this view tends to omit the possibility of truth coming from the other religions, or indeed, from other perspectives within their own religion. This has led some people to claim that the world needs not only IRD, but also intrareligious dialogue—between different sects and denominations within the same religion.

2.3. *Religions all say they support peace, as well as the golden rule*

Despite the range of possible perspectives or interpretations of scriptures within any given religion, it is important to note that *all* the religions say that they support peace. Examples from different religions include:

- “If a man sings of God and hears of Him, And lets love of God sprout within him, All his sorrows shall vanish, And in his mind, God will bestow abiding peace.” (Sikhism)

- “A Muslim is one who surrenders to the will of Allah and is an establisher of peace (while Islam means establishment of peace, Muslim means one who establishes peace through his actions and conduct).” (Islam)
- “The Lord lives in the heart of every creature. He turns them round and round upon the wheel of Maya. Take refuge utterly in Him. By his grace you will find supreme peace, and the state which is beyond all change.” (Hinduism)
- “The whole of the Torah is for the purpose of promoting peace.” (Judaism)
- “To be in harmony with others, you must be at peace with yourself.” (Buddhism)
- “Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God.” (Christianity)
- “Peace...comes within the souls of men when they realize their relationship, their oneness, with the universe and all its powers and when they realize that at the center of the universe dwells Wakan-Tanka, and that this center is really everywhere, it is within each of us.” (From *The Sacred Pipe*, by Black Elk, Lakota Sioux Medicine Man)
- “Oh, Great Spirit, let us greet the dawn of each new day, when all can live as one and peace reigns everywhere.” (Native American)
- “The Great Peace towards which people of good will throughout the centuries have inclined their hearts, of which seers and poets for countless generations have expressed their vision, and for which from age to age the sacred scriptures of mankind have constantly held the promise, is now at long last within the reach of the nations.” (Bahaism)

Despite the above commitments to peace, it is clear that people of different faiths have historically, and continue even today, to resort to violence and war at times to settle their conflicts. People use religion to justify their non-religious objectives for power or aggression; various religions also have a ‘just war’ tradition, and others justify violence for self-defense, when attacked. The creation of a more peaceful world will require committed efforts over the long run to create conditions for peace, which are outlined in Part III.

All the religions also have some version of the golden rule i.e. to treat others as they would like to be treated themselves. If people could only realize that in an interdependent world, these common principles in all the religions, and the principles that one applies to members of one’s own religion, need to be applied not only to one’s own group of people, but to humanity as a whole. Realizing and implementing this in one’s own life could make a significant difference in creating a better world future.

2.4. Principles of interreligious/interfaith dialogue vs. debate

There are a number of principles on how to conduct interreligious or interfaith dialogues between people from different spiritual–religious traditions, including the following [7]:

- Be open and willing to listen without judging the spiritual journeys, views, and experiences of people from other religions as opposed to debating as to which

religion is right or wrong, which inhibits real listening, learning, and dialogue in such situations.

- Do not try to convert anyone from their religion to yours. This goes against the whole importance of respecting people's diverse religions and being open to learning about them.
- Do not try to create one world religion, but respect the diversity of traditions.
- Let people from each religion speak for themselves, from their own experience, about what it means to practice that religion.
- Allow the possibility of some common spirituality that underlies all the diversity of the religions through which that spirituality expresses itself.
- Realize that one can enrich one's own spiritual–religious life by being open to learning from other traditions without having to leave one's own tradition.
- Realize that human beings—throughout the pre-recorded and recorded history, in different cultures and civilizations around the world—have sought to reflect on the deeper meaning and purpose of life, to honor the unknown and mysterious, and to connect to something spiritual and eternal beyond this transient material world and life. This search for deeper meaning connects all of us.

2.5. *First vs. second axial age of the religions*

It has been proposed that the world's great religions have gone through one axial age and are currently entering a second axial age. The first age was characterized by the religions growing up in different parts of the world and being more or less isolated from each other, leading to a focus on the differences between religions. In more recent years, as the world becomes ever more interdependent and people from different religions are all interacting much more with each other, it is imperative to find areas of common ground that unite and underlie the diversity of different religions. This change of focus may be ushering in a second axial age of the world's religions [8,9], which is also reflected in the common declarations issued by various interreligious organizations in recent years (see subsequently), as well as in interfaith dialogue emerging as an important social movement around the world, which will no doubt continue to grow in future, since it is part of a larger movement of seeking unity among the world's diverse cultures, nationalities, races, and religions.

2.6. *Key interfaith organizations and their interfaith declarations*

There are a number of organizations involved in IRD, which have also issued declarations on principles that they commonly support. A few key interfaith organizations and the declarations that they have produced are discussed subsequently

Interfaith dialogue began with the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions in 1893 in Chicago, where Swami Vivekananda came from India and had a big impact. One hundred years later, people in Chicago decided that they should organize a second Parliament, which took place in 1993 in Chicago and was a huge event with many religions being represented. The 1993 Parliament issued a draft document, 'Towards a Global Ethic', on common principles that different religions could sup-

port. It was decided that the next Parliament should be in a developing country, South Africa, in 1999, which over 7000 people from different world religions attended. The 1999 Parliament focused on moving from a declaration of principles (1993) to action steps (1999) with ‘A Call to Our Guiding Institutions’ (for cooperation with them) and on a call for ‘Gifts of Service’ to the world and to South Africa from participants. The next Parliament will occur most probably in 2004.

Another important interfaith organization is the World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP), which has leaders of many world religions as the members. The World Conference has sponsored important interfaith peace efforts in countries like Bosnia, and issued the Riva del Garde Declaration.

The United Religions Initiative (URI) began with a vision of Episcopal Bishop William Swing of San Francisco in conjunction with the preparation for the 50th Anniversary of UN in San Francisco. It was realized that the UN Charter made no reference to religions, or to the environment, which led to two separate movements—for a URI Charter (Bishop Swing’s vision, which was signed in Pittsburgh in June 2000), and for an Earth Charter, also completed in 2000. Both the Charters had input from people around the world and deal with broad visions of peace. The URI has evolved into a grassroots organization with self-organizing Cooperation Circles in cities and communities around the world. Each Cooperation Circle must support the principles of the URI Charter, but can then focus on activities most relevant to their local communities, while still linking with others globally.

The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has sponsored three conferences on religion and peace: in 1993 in Barcelona, Spain; in 1994 in Barcelona; and in 1998 in Granada, Spain. The 1994 conference issued a ‘Declaration on Contributions of Religions to a Culture of Peace’, while the 1998 conference created a draft working paper on ‘Religious Education in a Context of Pluralism and Tolerance’.

The Society for Buddhist–Christian Studies is another interesting interfaith group, in which much cross-fertilization and learning occurs and where Buddhists have learned about social engagement in the world from Westerners and Christians, while the latter have in turn learned about meditation from the Buddhists, without individuals from either group having to give up their own religious identity or affiliation.

The above are only a few of many interfaith organizations active globally and locally around the world today.

2.7. Creating an interfaith organization in one’s own community

In addition to the above-mentioned global interfaith organizations, one can also start an interfaith organization in one’s own community. One very useful exercise in meetings—until people get to know each other better—is the appreciative inquiry process developed by David Cooperrider of Case Western University and used in URI summits. Give people a couple of questions to discuss, have people pair-up with someone they do not know well, and give each person equal time to share their answers to the questions on their spiritual journeys, with the other person just listening without judging and appreciating what is shared, and then switch and let the

other person share. Such sharing comes from a deep, authentic level in people and helps build real relationships in any interfaith group [10].

2.8. Progress towards IRD and education replacing interreligious conflict and war

While conflicts, which sometimes escalate into violence and warfare, have always existed between people of different cultures and religions at different times, historically, there have often been important historical periods when these very same people lived together more peacefully. When conflicts do occur, there are often other factors, beyond religious differences, involved even though parties in conflict often use their religions to legitimize their positions.

Today, the world is becoming more interdependent at a rapidly growing rate and informed and concerned people around the world are increasingly realizing that we must reach out to the persons of other faith traditions than our own. While violence gets more media-coverage than interfaith dialogue, the events of September 11, 2001, have dramatically illustrated what the future of the world will look like if we do not reach out to people of different faith traditions and create greater respect and understanding between people. So while the September 11 events led some people to engage in hate-crimes and violence against innocent Arabs and Muslims (which governments must strongly punish), a number of other people have participated in interfaith activities and reached out to Muslims and Arabs in their communities. This trend needs to continue through interfaith education in our schools, religious institutions, and the media if, in future, the positive interfaith relations are to prevail over the negative ones around the world.

3. Part III: Prospects for a more peaceful world future in our increasingly interdependent world

3.1. Introduction to creating a more peaceful world future

There are many aspects of creating a more peaceful world in future. Better intercultural communication and IRD will certainly help, but they are not the only conditions sufficient for peace. As noted at the beginning of this article, people also have real conflicts on real issues in the world, which must also be addressed and hopefully resolved, managed, or transformed. Misunderstanding of other people's cultures and religions can exacerbate such conflicts, however, making them more difficult to resolve. Views of peace have also evolved, largely since the end of the World War II, to include at least seven aspects, leading towards a holistic, integrative view of peace. This will clarify how intercultural communication and IRD fit within this broader view of peace.

3.2. *Non-violent conflict resolution and development perspectives*

There are also a number of principles and approaches from the fields of Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution Studies that are also important. The Conflict Resolution/Management/Transformation field acknowledged that there will always be conflicts or differences between people in the world. The key question is not whether conflicts or differences exist, but whether we human beings can find more constructive, non-violent, and democratic, participatory ways to resolve or manage those conflicts. In an increasingly interdependent world and in the nuclear and bio-terrorism age that we now live in, this challenge is as urgent and great as ever.

Indeed, one can envision a very negative future world scenario where increasing violence continues to haunt the world—both by anti-state groups opposing the existing order in some way and by states in response to this violence. Such a scenario will also drain resources of ever more countries from social, economic, and educational development into military and intelligence expenditures. A more positive scenario for the global future results from people's and governments' acceptance of our global interdependence and along with this, a recognition of the responsibilities of everyone in aiding economic and social development, increasing political participation, and preserving cultures (while still interacting with others) around the world, so that increasing numbers of people feel that globalization does not threaten their interests, but can help enhance their lives and their local communities.

3.3. *Peace studies perspectives and evolution of seven aspects of peace, leading towards a holistic, integrative view of peace*

In the Peace Studies field, there are both narrow (absence of war) and broad (multifaceted) views of peace. Over time, and largely since the end of the World War II, additional aspects of peace have been enumerated. The late Paul Smoker and the author developed an overview on the evolution of at least seven aspects of peace, of which intercultural communication and IRD deal with the fifth (intercultural peace) and the seventh (inner peace) aspects of peace. But a more peaceful future world requires (in the author's view) that all seven aspects of peace be addressed. Each type of peace also adds an additional dimension to peace, leading collectively towards a holistic, integrative view of peace. These seven types of peace are grouped in three categories briefly outlined subsequently [11–13].

3.3.1. *War prevention*

1. Peace as an absence of war and physical violence, which is a necessary precondition for all other types of peace to be possible, and which was a primary concern at the end of the World War II and indeed at the end of all the wars.
2. Peace as a balance of forces in the international system, where international institutions must be set up to maintain the peace and to allow the balancing of political–economic–military–social–technological and other forces, so that a forum for global governance exists and war and violence can be averted.

3.3.2. *No physical or structural violence*

1. No physical *or* structural violence on macro (national and international) levels—what Johan Galtung called, respectively, negative peace and positive peace. Here, eliminating structural violence (where people's needs could be met, but is not being met, due to inequities in the structure of the international system) and working for social justice and human rights are added to the need to eliminate war and physical violence.
2. No physical or structural violence on macro *and* microlevels—of community and family (feminist peace); also elimination of patriarchal values and institutions on all levels. Feminists noted that peace cannot occur on a national or global level if it is prevented from occurring within the families and the communities.

3.3.3. *Holistic, integrative, and positive views of peace, based on unity and diversity within complex systems*

1. Holistic intercultural peace—between all the human beings and their diverse cultures and religions—focusing on common human cultural and spiritual needs, which unite and motivate human life, while honoring the diverse forms through which these manifest in the world.
2. Holistic Gaia peace—of humans with the Earth, our life support system, and the need to be caretakers of earth and work for sustainable development that will preserve the earth for future generations.
3. Holistic inner–outer peace—adding inner peace to all the six types of outer peace (as mentioned above). Without peace in our hearts and minds, we will project our unresolved inner conflicts out onto others, making the concept of peaceful world impossible.

3.4. *Contributions of different cultural–religious groups to different aspects of peace*

1. It is interesting to note that Western cultures and religions traditionally focus especially on creating peace by changing aspects of the external world (peace # 1–5), while Eastern cultures and religions focus especially on inner peace (peace # 7) as the necessary condition for the world peace, and indigenous and goddess cultures and religions—the 'Earth-based religions'—especially speak for the Earth (peace # 6).
2. There is now much cross-fertilization occurring between the world's cultures and religions, which are increasingly open to learning from each other. This interaction is creating a collective and synergistic vision of peace that is multi-dimensional and multi-system level— from inner to micro to macrolevels. In the years since the end of the World War II, this vision has also evolved from a focus only on the problems that need to be eliminated (peace # 1–4) to positive visions of what needs to be created (peace # 5–7). Futurists have always noted that effective change requires not only recognizing problems that need to be addressed or eliminated but articulating such positive visions [14].

3.5. *Progress towards achieving these seven types of peace and prospects for the future*

Articulating these different aspects of peace, and their relationship to one another, is a first important step in enunciating clear goals for peace in the future. While varying degrees of progress have been made in each area of peace, there is still much more that remains to be done. The articulation and education of people about these different aspects of peace, and people's conscious commitment to work for and live these visions in their own lives, provide the best hope for creating a more peaceful world for the 21st century, despite current increasing levels of violence in the world, in the wake of the events of September 11, 2001.

4. Conclusions

In conclusion, a more peaceful world entails many dimensions. While better intercultural communication and IRD are not the only conditions necessary for peace, they are nonetheless essential ingredients. One can indeed look at different scenarios for the future, with a negative one resulting from the lack of intercultural and interreligious understanding, communication, and respect, and a more positive one resulting from the existence of these things. It is up to the nations, organizations, and the individuals to see the critical importance of education and leadership in these areas, along with the other areas that are necessary for a more peaceful world, and to commit time and resources to ensure that this happens. Only then will the 21st century turn into a better future for humanity than the bloody wars that marked the 20th century.

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Further Reading

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