

## **Exploring a Post-COVID-19 Sustainable Peace Model**

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### **Abstract**

The COVID-19 pandemic has not only taken many lives but caused social, political and economic chaos around the world. The pandemic has illustrated to us that we must discuss how a sustainable society and globe beyond COVID-19 should be created. This paper explores a post-COVID-19 sustainable peace model. The model is examined on global and individual levels. First, cosmopolitan non-dualistic politics is discussed. It is characterized as a relational transformation of those having distinct or opposing values and ideologies for mutual contribution to co-create new, shared values and goals beyond national boundaries. Then, a comprehensive peace model for individuals is examined. The model is categorized into four aspects: promotion of human security; achieving social justice; honing the capacity to hold multiple perspectives and patterns of thought without relying on any fixed position in order to construct new knowledge and approaches according to different situational dynamics; and the practice of compassion to acknowledge shared humanity and feel pain, despair or plight of others as our own. The upshot is that a cosmopolitan non-dualistic political process and multi-dimensional peace of individual human beings are interpenetrating. Empowerment of individual citizens with four aspects of peace will lead to changing the course of current global politics based on confrontational relationships into mutually contributory and creative processes.

**Keywords:** COVID-19, Peace, Cosmopolitanism, Human Security, Individuals

## **Introduction**

A novel coronavirus disease or COVID-19 has spread beyond borders and hit many people around the world. Though the global dissemination of the disease itself is a medical science matter, the spread brought about a variety of social, political, and economic chaos to human beings as well as states beyond different political and economic and cultural values or ideologies. The pandemic has not only taken many lives but put the jobs and daily lives of many in jeopardy. It also caused a political mess and social unrest around the globe. Further, the aftermath of the outbreak of COVID-19 in Wuhan City, Hubei Province in China and its development as pandemic has witnessed the rising political tensions between big states. The one between the US and China is a good example. Short- and mid-term agenda is clearly to provide necessary medical services to as much patients as possible and care about medical staff who have been courageously committed to the services so that humanity can control the spread of the virus. However, equally important from a long-term perspective is how we can create a sustainable society and globe beyond COVID-19. This paper explores a post-COVID-19 sustainable peace model. ☐

Starting with the claim for the need to examine peace model both on global and individual human levels, the paper will examine cosmopolitan non-dualistic political dynamics as peace on a global level. By showing the limits of Western universalism and non-Western relativism, cosmopolitan non-dualistic politics is proposed. It is a relational transformation of those having different or even opposing values and ideologies in the direction of appreciative and mutual contribution to jointly produce new, shared aims and interests beyond national demarcations.

Following the proposition of cosmopolitan non-dualistic political dynamics, a comprehensive peace model for an individual human citizen will be examined. The model is

categorized into four aspects: physiological and psychological aspect, that is, promotion and consolidation of human security; structural aspect of peace, that is, achieving social justice; epistemological aspect of peace, that is, honing the capacity to hold multiple perspectives and patterns of thought without relying on any fixed position so that each of us can jointly construct new knowledge and approaches according to different situational dynamics; and spiritual aspect of peace, that is, the practice of compassion to acknowledge shared humanity and to feel pain, despair or plight of others as our own, which inspires us to help each other achieve mutual well-being and the satisfaction of basic human needs. ☒

The upshot of the argument is that enacting cosmopolitan non-dualistic political process and enhancement of multi-dimensional peace of an individual human being are interpenetrating. Empowerment of individual citizens with the promotion of four aspects of peace will enable us to change the course of current global political dynamics based on confrontational relationships into the mutually contributory and creative process.

## **I - Implications of COVID-19 for our world: Why do we need a post-COVID 19 peace model?**

The outbreak of COVID-19 has evolved itself from an initially discrete outbreak in China into a global pandemic with all continents being blighted with the impact of the disease.<sup>1</sup> As a great pandemic that respects no borders, COVID-19 has shown us how fragile human life becomes. The spread of COVID-19 can be interpreted as a democratic disease as it presents no discrimination based on race, geography, political ideology, culture, religion, wealth or level of development or

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<sup>1</sup> See The United Nations. "Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity: Responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19", 2020, from <https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2020-03/SG-Report-Socio-Economic-Impact-of-Covid19.pdf>. (Accessed April 11, 2020).

underdevelopment<sup>2</sup> though the capacity to deal with the disease differs in countries.

Throughout the globe, COVID-19 has grounded engines of economic activities, including manufactures, airlines, hotels, restaurants, to name a few.<sup>3</sup> March 2020 witnessed the plunge in global financial markets and the impact will not be gone for a while. The global spread of COVID-19 has put social cohesion within many countries at risk as the impact penetrates deep into our society, forcing each citizen to change behaviors, affecting their well-being and mental health and revealing a weakness of the public health system in many countries.<sup>4</sup>

Further, COVID-19 impact will reinforce movement toward close-doors policies, mistrust between states and even different non-state groups and anti-globalization sentiment, leading to the rise of nationalism, populism, protectionism and severity of anti-immigration campaign.<sup>5</sup> There has also been a rising concern about xenophobia, discrimination, racism and stigmatization of certain groups who are wrongly blamed for the diffusion of the coronavirus.<sup>6</sup>

The global pandemic of coronavirus has also demonstrated a fall-from-grace moment of the neoliberal system.<sup>7</sup> Neoliberalism sees the world as a huge and potentially free global market wherein the exchange of goods for profit overrides other dimensions of cross-border relations.<sup>8</sup> Neoliberal economical assertiveness tries to maintain the economic power that resides in capitalist production and transactions and to develop new areas for investment and gain benefit from the variety of goods

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<sup>2</sup> See Cherkaoui, M. "The Shifting Geopolitics of Coronavirus and the Demise of Neoliberalism Part 1", 2020, from <https://studies.aljazeera.net/en/reports/shifting-geopolitics-coronavirus-and-demise-neoliberalism---part-1>. (Accessed April 10, 2020).

<sup>3</sup> Cherkaoui, 2020.

<sup>4</sup> The United Nations, 2020.

<sup>5</sup> Cherkaoui, 2020.

<sup>6</sup> The United Nations, 2020.

<sup>7</sup> Cherkaoui, 2020.

<sup>8</sup> See Freedon, M. *Liberalism: A Very Short Introduction (Very Short Introductions)*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

for consumption.<sup>9</sup> Neoliberalism is to be viewed as a political project led by an economically strong capitalist class to maximize economic advantage while directing little energy to humanity's social, cultural and even spiritual self-improvement or maturity.

However, the global pandemic crisis has brought about the unanticipated public health risk around the globe and put the limits of neoliberal short-sighted, exploitative, and competitive approach. A critical question is emerging that faces humanity as a whole: what should come in the first place – society or economy, strong public health or profit, citizens' physiological, psychological, intellectual and spiritual well-being or plutocracy?<sup>10</sup> Everything that is done during and after the coronavirus crisis must be directed to building equal and inclusive societies and human relationships that empower us to be more resilient and cooperative in the face of pandemics like COVID-19 and other global challenges. As coronavirus has wreaked havoc on global scale, we need to answer the critical question: What kind of visions would emerge from the COVID-19 crisis? The COVID-19 pandemic has created an opportunity for humanists, academics, civil societies and individual citizens to engage in a dialogue on a post-Coronavirus sustainable world. We must explore how we should redefine a sustainable and creative peace on both global and individual human levels.

Why should the examination of sustainable peace vision be included in the post-COVID 19 debate? As mentioned, many states or regions would avoid mutual human interaction and exchange of a variety of goods to prevent the further spread of coronavirus. This temporary shutdown cannot be stopped as the physical contact is the main cause of the spread of the virus. However, interdependent, interconnected and interpenetrating social, economic and political relationships on a global scale cannot be reversed, either. Though we might witness the rise of nationalistic sentiment or cultural or religious centrism, cross-

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Cherkaoui, 2020.

cultural, cross-border interactions cannot be given up categorically in the long run. The most critical question is how negative interdependent, interconnected and interpenetrating relationships along with asymmetric relations can be reversed into a positive, sustainable interdependent and interpenetrating ones. Therefore, the global political arena wherein different or even opposing political and economic ideologies, interests and ambitions clash needs a sustainable and creative peace model. Apart from a sustainable peace vision on a global level, holistic peace model for each human individual must be taken into serious account as part of post-COVID-19 vision. Normative and even utopian as it may sound, the conventional view that human beings or individuals are passive actors in global politics needs to come to an end. Rather, it is a responsibility of each human citizen as a critical and transformative agent to contribute to building sustainable global peace.

## **II - Cosmopolitan Peace Model**

What COVID-19 presented to us is that though differences in political ideologies or thoughts cannot be denied, those having different political systems must work together and cooperate as it is the only direction they can take. Despite differences or even oppositions in political philosophies and economic systems, new visions beyond those differences need to be explored as no single state can tackle COVID-19 itself and lead post-COVID-19 socio-politically and socio-economically sustainable globe.

### **Nature of the Contemporary Globe**

What is unique about our current situation is the complexity of the problems, including COVID-19 facing us. On a global scale, human beings are becoming compressed into an interconnected political and economic system.<sup>11</sup> The nation-state has become

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<sup>11</sup> See White, R. S. "Educating toward Future Globalization: A New Societal Myth and Pedagogic Motif" in *Educational Foundations*, Winter, 2004, pp. 71-96.

increasingly permeated by a global network of interdependencies in many fields and by a variety of political, economic, and ecological risks, which interconnect the separate worlds of developed and underdeveloped countries.<sup>12</sup> Under the conditions of an interdependent global world and globality of crises, every act of our everyday life links us to millions of unseen others.<sup>13</sup> Instability or chaos of one country has come to have regional and global ramifications, as a result of which, any form of misery or suffering of strangers can affect our daily social and economic activities.

What needs to be acknowledged is that the contemporary polycrisis or problematiques are human-made. We are facing the devastating consequences of our own action and thinking on a planetary scale never experienced before. The multi-dimensionality of the complex social and global problems including COVID-19 requires a new interpretive-engagement from our own side. What is at issue is the gap between our knowledge and approach to the world and global dynamics.<sup>14</sup> As the global structure is becoming interdependent and cosmopolitan, our own perspectival shift and its enacting in concurrence with the ontological change is required.<sup>15</sup>

## Cosmopolitan Peace

Cosmopolitanism means that as it has become normal that the scourge of global risks including COVID-19 and violent conflicts impinge on our everyday lives beyond borders, the old differentiation between internal and external, national and international, us and them, comes to lose their validity and enacting interdependent relationship on many levels becomes

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<sup>12</sup> See Beck, U. and Sznaider, N. "Unpacking cosmopolitanism for the social sciences: a research agenda" in *British Journal of Sociology*, vol. 61 no. 1, 2010, pp. 381-403

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> See Beck, U. "The Cosmopolitan Society and its Enemies" in *Theory, Culture & Society*, vol. 19 no. 1-2, 2002, pp. 17-44

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

essential to survival.<sup>16</sup> The cosmopolitan approach rejects the 'either-or' dualistic principle and critiques methodological nationalism that involves and intensifies territorial boundaries and demarcations between in-group and out-group.<sup>17</sup> Cosmopolitan view based on the recognition of the global risks that respect no borders demands contemporary international politics and political alliances that demarcate West and non-West to open and redraw boundaries and transcend the polarity of us and them to tackle common global challenges. Divisive and antagonistic discourses between/among states, especially, big ones including US, China, Russia, and others cannot lead us anywhere positive and sustainable.

According to Cherkaoui, two dominant narratives have circulated the globe in the aftermath of the rise of COVID-19: China manufactured the virus and the United States initiated the outbreak deliberately.<sup>18</sup> Further, Philip Reeker, senior State Department staff in Washington, D.C., claimed that Russian government has been attempting to sow disinformation about how the coronavirus emerged.<sup>19</sup> Though these exchanges of views without any foundations might have been acknowledged as practical and effective methods in conventional international politics, they cannot be acknowledged as an efficacious instrument. The current political debate in Europe and the United States over COVID-19 has resonated with isolationism and closed-door policy. Trumpian-minded Americans and Euro-skeptics could capitalize on the fear of pandemics to justify imposing more barriers.<sup>20</sup> The threat of the virus is externalized, and its responsibility is put on foreign countries or races.

However, what needs to be acknowledged across different or even opposing political ideologies and systems is that global

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<sup>16</sup> See Beck, U. *The Cosmopolitan Vision*. Cambridge: Polity, 2006.

<sup>17</sup> Beck, 2002.

<sup>18</sup> See Cherkaoui, M. "The Shifting Geopolitics of Coronavirus and the Demise of Neoliberalism – Part 2", 2020, from <https://studies.aljazeera.net/en/reports/shifting-geopolitics-coronavirus-and-demise-neoliberalism---part-2>. (Accessed April 10, 2020).

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.



crises share one critical nature: they cannot be construed as external environmental risks but must be understood as insecurities and uncertainties produced by states and people having different political thoughts and economic interests.<sup>21</sup> The rise of global risks requires those having different or even opposing political values, goals and interests to sharpen their global normative consciousness and generate cosmopolitan public sphere wherein a creative combination of different thoughts and values that interconnect the global and the local are explored.<sup>22</sup>

What needs to be emphatically claimed is that from a cosmopolitan perspective, either universalism or relativism, or difference or sameness is a dead-end debate between false alternatives.<sup>23</sup> The universalist seeks convergence on the basis of foundational forms of rationality, knowledge or values which are assumed to be universally valid for all human beings.<sup>24</sup> The universalism becomes a tool for political and cultural hegemony, which delegitimizes and oppresses others having different political thoughts or cultural values.<sup>25</sup> Shown in Western liberal peacebuilding, which pretended to be a universal peace vision and failed to bring about lasting peace in post-conflict countries like Iraq,<sup>26</sup> approaching global problems purely from a Western perspective would be neither effective nor justified.<sup>27</sup>

Relativism opposes the universalist claim of its universal applicability or uniformity. China, Russia or other non-Western

<sup>21</sup> Beck and Sznaider, 2010.

<sup>22</sup> See Delanty, G. "The cosmopolitan imagination: critical cosmopolitanism and social theory" in *British Journal of Sociology*, vol. 57 no. 1, 2006, pp. 25-47.

<sup>23</sup> Beck, 2006.

<sup>24</sup> See Evanoff, R. J. "Universalist, Relativist, and Constructivist Approaches to Intercultural Ethics" in *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, vol. 28 no. 5, 2004, pp. 439-458.

<sup>25</sup> See Garcia-Gonzalez, D. E. "Reflections on Peace from Interculturality" in *Peace and Conflict Studies*, vol. 23 no. 1, 2016 from <http://nsuworks.nova.edu/pes/vol23/iss1/1>. (Accessed April 10, 2020).

<sup>26</sup> See Richmond, P. O. *Peace Formation and Political Order in Conflict Affected Societies*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.

<sup>27</sup> See Schepen, R. and Graness, A. "Heinz Kimmerle's intercultural philosophy and the quest for epistemic justice" in *The Journal for Transdisciplinary Research in Southern Africa*, vol. 15 no. 1, 2019, pp. 1-7.

states or cultures have emphasized relativism, which springs from an impulse to acknowledge and respect the difference of others and relativity of all forms of rationality, knowledge, values, ethics, etc.<sup>28</sup> However, if relativism and contextualism are absolutized, the attentiveness to respect for value and ethical differences into opposite, that is, the rejection of any exchange of perspectives as impossible. When it is absolutized, relativism flips over into an incommensurability of values, visions, and goals.<sup>29</sup> If it is believed and practiced as complete and absolute, relativism itself becomes a basis of ethnocentrism.<sup>30</sup> Though ethnocentrism was originally linked to unfair or groundless judgements about others, it came to be associated with cross-boundary criticism.<sup>31</sup> Both Western universalism and non-Western relativism inherently contain its contradiction and limits when absolutized or enacted as complete.

The challenge confronting us is how we move away from the hegemonic centrism and incommensurability and create dialogical dynamics in which multiple thoughts, values and alternative ways of knowing are celebrated as well as recognized.<sup>32</sup> Conflict or failure to dialogue emerges whenever we divide the world up in terms of conceptual and ideological opposites as a fixed relationship. Hershock calls it predicament.<sup>33</sup> Predicament occurs when we are forced to confront the presence of clashes among distinct values, aims and interests as dualistically fixed and mutually incompatible.<sup>34</sup> Predicaments cannot be solved or managed with certain technical fix because conflicts among our own values, visions and interests make it impossible to define what is the problem

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<sup>28</sup> Evanoff, 2004.

<sup>29</sup> Beck, 2006.

<sup>30</sup> Evanoff, 2004.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Schepen and Graness, 2019.

<sup>33</sup> See Hershock, P. D. *Valuing Diversity: Buddhist Reflection on Realizing a More Equitable Global Future*. Albany, NY: Albany State University of New York Press, 2012.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

itself and what would count as a solution for both.<sup>35</sup> To overcome predicament among different ideologies, values, and thought systems means to approach the differences or even opposites non dualistically. ☐

Understanding and enacting differences and diversity of values and ideologies in non-dualistic way means to approach them as interdependent, interpenetrating and contingent, which allows those having different and opposing views and values to engage an infinite game wherein the point is not winning but sustaining and enhancing the quality of ongoing play for all involved. As we are in a world of contingent and interpenetrating world in which we must develop shared responses to unpredictable and value predicament-generating challenges, conventional politics of power needs to be transformed into a politics of strength – a politics of mutually contribution rather than ideologically driven exercises of control.<sup>36</sup> Non-dualistic cosmopolitan politics is a relational transformation in the direction of unprecedented and appreciative coordination to articulate new, shared aims and interests.<sup>37</sup>

Though it might be ridiculed as a utopian wishful thinking that the US, China, Russia or other emerging powerful states or West and non-West practice non-dualistic cosmopolitan political enterprise, global risks like COVID-19 show that no single political ideology can present an absolute solution. Rather, how we can respond to dynamically changing and situationally unpredictable non-linear crises without clinging to fixed values or ways of thinking has become urgent to co-create a sustainable globe. It is time for us to draw on the limitless wisdom of East and West and North and South.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> See Hershock, P. D. *Buddhism in the Public Sphere: Reorienting Global Interdependence*. London: Routledge, 2006.

<sup>37</sup> Hershock, 2012.

<sup>38</sup> See Shirazi, A. K. B. "Integral Education: Founding Vision and Principles" in *Integral Review*, vol. 7 no. 1, 2011, pp. 4-10.

### III - Holistic peace model for the individual human being

Though cosmopolitan non-dualistic politics has been discussed, it needs to be stressed that each humankind must play the key role in realizing such an innovative and mutually contributory political process in order to realize interdependent and interpenetrating relational dynamics. Potential power inheres in each human agency to transform the present in the image of an imagined future. However, in order for each of us to contribute to building a non-dualistic cosmopolitan political process, we need to enjoy peace in various dimensions. Therefore, holistic peace model at individual levels will be examined.

#### The Physiological and Psychological Aspects of Peace

The first aspect of holistic peace for individuals is a physiological and psychological one. It means the satisfaction of human security. Human security means the protection of individual citizens from the risks to their physiological and psychological safety, dignity, and well-being and construct a social environment that allows them to enjoy a stable and self-determined life.<sup>39</sup> The physiological security contains basic needs such as food, water, shelter and access to medical and welfare services when health conditions are in danger.<sup>40</sup> The rise of the human security concept highlights that the dangers to each human safety and survival posed by poverty, diseases, environmental problems, human rights abuses need to be taken into serious account as a global challenge. Traditional security focused on the protection of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states from external military threats. Human security challenges the conventional state-centric notion of security by making individuals the referent object of security and by extending the notion of safety to a condition beyond mere

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<sup>39</sup> See Tadjbakhsh, S. and Chenoy, A.M. *Human Security: Concepts and implications*. London: Routledge, 2007.

<sup>40</sup> See Maslow, A. *Motivation and personality*. New York: Harper and Low, 1970.

existence to a life worth living, well-being and dignity of every human being.<sup>41</sup>

The adoption of human security has illustrated “a progressive move away from the conventional wisdom of international relations as a discipline.”<sup>42</sup> Traditionally, in international relations, the central actor has been the state. Though Realists and Idealists approach international relations from different perspectives, they share the fundamental paradigm of state-centricity.<sup>43</sup> Further, the traditional argument of international relations maintains that states are central entities, the world is as it is, and should be sustained.<sup>44</sup> There has been little possibility envisaged for the transformation of the existing order based on state sovereignty as its center.

However, with the introduction of human security to the global arena, the survival, well-being, quality public health and dignity of the individual has become the ultimate goal of the state and political systems and the economic markets are relegated to secondary status as simple means to achieve that goal.<sup>45</sup> Social systems must respond to individual needs if they are to keep their legitimacy.<sup>46</sup> In this view, human social relations, including international relations, will remain incomplete unless a variety of human security is recognized and ratified as an essential source of political and social interaction. This does not mean that states or other social institutions are no longer required. Rather, it needs to be acknowledged that the

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<sup>41</sup> Tadjbakhsh and Chenoy, 2007.

<sup>42</sup> See Dunn, D. “Articulating an alternative: the contribution of John Burton” in *Review of International Studies*, vol. 21, 1995, pp. 197-208.

<sup>43</sup> See Dunn, D. (2001) “John Burton and the study of international relations: An assessment” in *The International Journal of Peace Studies*, vol. 6 no. 1, 2001, from [http://www.gmu.edu/academic/ijps/vol6\\_1/Dunn.htm](http://www.gmu.edu/academic/ijps/vol6_1/Dunn.htm). (Accessed March 13, 2020).

<sup>44</sup> See Broadhead, L. “Beyond the Traditions: Casting a Critical Light on Peace Research” in *Issues in Peace Research 1997-98: Theory and Practice*, Broadhead, L. (ed), 1997, pp. 1-18, Bradford: Department of Peace Studies, University of Bradford.

<sup>45</sup> Tadjbakhsh and Chenoy, 2007.

<sup>46</sup> See Rosati, A. J., Carroll, J. D. and Coate, A. R. “A Critical Assessment of the Power of Human Needs in World Society” in *Conflict: Readings in Management and Resolution*, Burton, J. and Dukes, F. (eds), 1990, pp. 156-179, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

manner of operations of the national and international levels of organization, including states, ultimately relies on the participation or consent of the individual persons whose aggregate behavior forms organized actions.<sup>47</sup> The status of the individual is no longer consubstantial to the state but an equal subject and actor in international relations.<sup>48</sup>

There is a dialectic interplay between individual human security and larger social and political values that society promotes.<sup>49</sup> There are strong links between the pursuit of human security and the conventional concepts of power, values and interests.<sup>50</sup> Though human security acknowledges the importance of power and the related concerns of traditional political realism, it approaches the concepts within a larger framework that directs attention to the underlying sources of human motivation, that is, the human inherent urge to promote human security. The focus should be not on the features, powers and interests of states, but on human beings themselves because they act as agents of or in the name of states.<sup>51</sup> Preserving the existing social or state order and system that fails to develop human security of citizens does not guarantee a sustainable society and globe. Achieving sustainability requires the promotion of human security that underpins a stable life for all. By elevating the individual human person as the ultimate end, human security discourse demonstrates the human capacity as agents of change of the global dynamics.

## **The Structural Aspect of Peace**

Pertinent to human security aspect is a structural dimension of peace. Structural peace means overcoming structural violence and achieving social justice. Structural violence is defined as "the

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<sup>47</sup> See Wedge, B. "The Individual, the Group and War" in *Conflict: Readings in Management and Resolution*, Burton, J. and Dukes, F. (eds), 1990, pp. 101-116, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

<sup>48</sup> Tadjbakhsh and Chenoy, 2007.

<sup>49</sup> Rosati et al, 1990.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Dunn, 2001.

cause of the difference between the potential and the actual, between what could have been and what is.”<sup>52</sup> The potential level of realization is what is possible with a given level of insight and resources.<sup>53</sup> If insight and resources are dominated by a group or class or used for other objectives, there emerges an incompatibility between the potential and the actual and failure to gratify basic human needs occurs.

How people behave and live their lives are shaped by larger socio-political and economic circumstances in which they find themselves.<sup>54</sup> Therefore, how people are treated and to what extent they can exert autonomy needs to be understood in the context of a larger framework of socio-economic values and structures. Citizens’ failure to enjoy human security is the outcome of asymmetric structures that is incapable of treating citizens equally in terms of political, social and economic opportunities.<sup>55</sup> For instance, neoliberalism stresses the beneficial outcomes of competitive markets and personal advancement far more than the general nourishing of human well-being,<sup>56</sup> human security including equal access to health care services, welfare for the vulnerable and the marginalized tends to be set aside. In the US that does not have a universal health care system, the poor people or minorities did not get access to medical services and proper welfare support though President Donald Trump made cash handouts to citizens. The COVID-19 has sent us a signal about the difficulty of neoliberalism-driven global political and economic systems.<sup>57</sup> The economic system is essential to us and neoliberalism contributed to economic prosperity and expanded the global

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<sup>52</sup> See Galtung, J. “Violence, Peace, and Peace Research” in *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 6 no. 3, 1969, pp. 167-191.

<sup>53</sup> Galtung, 1969.

<sup>54</sup> See Dukes, E. F. “Structural Forces in Conflict and Conflict Resolution in Democratic Society” in *Conflict Resolution: Dynamics, Process and Structure*, Jeong, H. W. (ed), 1999, pp. 155-171, Aldershot: Ashgate.

<sup>55</sup> See Rubenstein, R. “Conflict Resolution and the Structural Sources of Conflict” in *Conflict Resolution: Dynamics, Process and Structure*, Jeong, H. W. (ed), 1999, pp. 173-195, Aldershot: Ashgate.

<sup>56</sup> Freedon, 2015.

<sup>57</sup> Cherkaoui, 2020.

market, which gave people around the world an opportunity to improve the quality of life. However, as shown by the global spread of COVID-19, the vulnerable and the marginalized in the neoliberal global economy became more vulnerable and powerless in facing the disease. The failure to consider the structural transformation when we encounter certain limits of existing socio-political and economic systems results in perpetuating the status quo characterized as inequality and prolonging divisive and antagonistic human relationships.<sup>58</sup>

As a moral consideration, recognition (recognition of all citizens as moral equals in the midst of difference), fairness (impartial treatment and respect for all persons), and inclusion (all persons possess equal standing in the moral and political community) constitute the social justice.<sup>59</sup> Social justice demands us to transcend the objectification of persons in favor of their humanity and rights to get their basic needs secured.<sup>60</sup> The critical first step in promoting social justice or structural transformation is the belief that there is nothing sacrosanct about a status quo since it is not given but constructed. The process of structural transformation begins with a critical inquiry into the existing socio-political and economic system.

Through the critical inquiry into existing socio-political structures, the development of good governance and political participation, including the respect for the pluralism and the public expression of various voices on policy would be a foundation for stable and sustainable societies. Empowerment and participation of every citizen in political deliberation and fair-minded relationships across different backgrounds would be cardinal elements in structural peace. Structurally peace societies are marked by equally-distributed decision-making

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<sup>58</sup> See Botes, J. "Conflict Transformation: A Debate Over Semantics or a Crucial Shift in the Theory and Practice of Peace and Conflict Studies" in *The International Journal of Peace Studies* vol. 8 no. 2, 2003, pp. 1-27.

<sup>59</sup> See Reardon, B. A. and Snauwaert, D. T. "Reflective Pedagogy, Cosmopolitanism, and Critical Peace Education for Political Efficacy: A Discussion of Betty A. Reardon's Assessment of the Field" in *Journal of Peace Education and Social Justice*, vol. 5 no. 1, 2011, pp. 1-14.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.



powers in the production, allocation and utilization of economic, political and cultural resources.<sup>61</sup> At the core of the structural aspect of peace lies the belief that the existing state of affairs does not exhaust all other possibilities.<sup>62</sup> As our human world is a product of human action and thought, it should be acknowledged that it is the product of some actions and thoughts among wide varieties of possibilities.

### **The Epistemological Aspect of Peace**

The third aspect is an epistemological one. Here, epistemology is defined as our ways of knowing and viewing reality. Especially, it is characterized as our way of understanding conceptual thought or frame of reference that shapes our reality. Why should the epistemological aspect of peace be incorporated into the peace model? Social injustice, inter-group antagonism, discrimination and inter-state tension are created and sustained through our own thoughts.<sup>63</sup> Though external causes and conditions could not be ignored, the most fundamental problem is an epistemological one – our way of knowing and viewing the world and others. Though COVID-19 itself is a medical science problem, political tensions between rival states, nationalistic views or closed-border orientations, etc., caused by the spread of the virus are influenced and underpinned by our epistemological dynamics. As the shape of global conditions rests with our thoughts or way of thinking and knowing, the world changes when our thoughts and perspectives on the world change.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> See Montiel, C. "Toward a Psychology of Structural Peacebuilding" in *Peace, Conflict, and Violence: Peace Psychology for the 21st Century*, Christie, D. J., Wagner, R. V. and Winter, D. D. D. (eds), 2001, pp. 282-294, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> See Todd, S. "Facing Humanity: The Difficult Task of Cosmopolitan Education", 2008, from [www.philosophy-of-education.org/conferences/pdfs/Sharon\\_Todd.pdf](http://www.philosophy-of-education.org/conferences/pdfs/Sharon_Todd.pdf). (Accessed December 15 2015).

<sup>64</sup> See Nicolescu, B. "Transdisciplinarity – past, present and future", 2006, from <http://www.movingworldviews.net/Downloads/Papers/Nicolescu.pdf>. (Accessed September 25, 2015).

From time immemorial, human beings have developed conceptual thought or linguistic knowledge as a tool to make sense of reality and to communicate with fellow human beings.<sup>65</sup> We inhabit socially constructed and historically evolved and succeeded life-worlds that form certain cultural patterns – identities, beliefs, values and norms – as scaffolding for a meaningful experience.<sup>66</sup> We build and accept certain frames of reference – a pattern of worldviews, cultural values, political orientations and ideologies, religious doctrines, and moral-ethical norms – to construct conceptually framed reality to conduct political, economic activities and to lead a meaningful life.<sup>67</sup>

However, while building a certain frame of reference is critical to us, its fundamental problem lies in our propensity to privileging our own frame of reference as absolute or complete and in the reification of our understanding of reality and the objectification of the other.<sup>68</sup> Our belief in universality and completeness of a particular thought causes us to be dogmatic and exclusive of other views or thoughts. The extreme attachment to a frame of reference tends to elapse into polarity or negation of other frames of reference. Once a frame of reference socially and politically conditioning us is enacted as complete, we are prone to feel threat, anger or hatred to others with distinct frames of reference.

Once we see and treat others having different or opposing values as something disconnected from us, it becomes easier to propagate violence of any form upon them outside the

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<sup>65</sup> See Ichimura, S. "Contemporary Significance of Chinese Buddhist Philosophy" in *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, vol. 24, 1997, pp. 75-106.

<sup>66</sup> See Reysen, S. and Katzarska-Miller, I. "Intentional Worlds and Global Citizenship" in *Journal of Global Citizenship and Equity Education*, vol. 3 no. 1, 2013, pp. 34-52.

<sup>67</sup> See Mezirow, J. "Transformative Learning as Discourse" in *Journal of Transformative Education*, vol. 1 no. 1, 2003, pp. 58-63.

<sup>68</sup> See Zajonc, A. "Contemplative and Transformative Pedagogy." In *Kosmos Journal*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2006, pp. 1-3.

boundary.<sup>69</sup> In dichotomous epistemological structure, we tend to project negative qualities upon the outside and see them objectively belonging to them,<sup>70</sup> which promotes self-righteousness to take discriminatory attitude toward them. The mind in dualistic stance swings from extreme to extreme and clings to dead-ends, whereby values, ideas, or norms of our own group are not viewed as one of many alternatives, but the only right one. Other possibilities are dimly conceived or denied as wrong or inferior.

Building a provisionally coherent thought system is an inevitable part of everyday human life, including understanding social and global problems and considering how they should be addressed. However, when dualistic thought mode exerts exclusive control on our understanding reality, it causes us to exaggerate differences between people and create supposedly firm and fixed boundaries between in-group and out-group by imputing intrinsic and insurmountable differences.<sup>71</sup> Forming the sedimented and habitual ways of seeing the dynamic and complex reality with fixed perspectives restricts the patterns of awareness and limits our intentional range and capacity for meaning-making commitments.<sup>72</sup> It impedes constructive communication between those having different frames of reference to address complex global problems, including conflict and global pandemics.

To overcome our tendency to absolutize certain frame of reference and create an environment for constructive dialogue between those having different or opposing views and values, the practice of reflective self-awareness is proposed. Reflective self-awareness is the practice of stepping back from our current

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<sup>69</sup> See Hart, T., Nelson, P. L. and Puhakka, K. "Introduction" in *Transpersonal Knowledge: Exploring the horizon of consciousness*, Hart, T., Nelson, P. L. and Puhakka, K. (eds), 2000, pp. 1-9, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

<sup>70</sup> See Wilber, K. *The Spectrum of Consciousness*. Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, 1993.

<sup>71</sup> See Waldron, W.S. "Common Ground, Common Cause: Buddhism and Science on the Afflictions of Identity" in *Buddhism and Science: Breaking new ground*, Wallace, A. (ed), 2003, pp. 145-191, New York: Columbia University Press.

<sup>72</sup> Hershock, 2006.

frame to critically examine our pattern of thought, values, and logics shaping our experience.<sup>73</sup> Though human beings need a solid philosophical framework to live a meaningful life and address social and global problems, dissemination of certain philosophical frameworks as absolute or universal in the life-world becomes a constitutional power of institutional violence in the human social and global arena.<sup>74</sup>

Reflective self-awareness helps us recognize that all ways of thinking and knowing are socially or culturally constructed, contextual and contingent. The awareness empowers us to know that alternative ways of thinking and knowing are available and to be open to others' views, values and norms to explore more inclusive ones. The development of reflective self-awareness abilities generates pliability and flexibility with thoughts,<sup>75</sup> which break through an attachment to any specific ideological underpinning. By enhancing reflective skills, we can sharpen the capacity to simultaneously hold multiple perspectives and patterns of thought that depends on an awareness that embraces all perspectives without adhering to a position in any form as complete to approach the reality.<sup>76</sup> Learning to be consciously self-reflective of our own thoughts and willing to change thought mode according to different circumstances hones the ability to appreciate and explore multiple viewpoints and find comfort in unfamiliarity.

At the heart of epistemological peace lies the promotion of human capacity for qualitative differentiation and transformation that broadens the meaning of reality, which opens up new knowledge within our world. It is not the suppression or elimination of differences or disagreements, but the readiness to accord with differing situational dynamics, responding without exclusive reliance on any fixed views and

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<sup>73</sup> See Park, J. Y. *Buddhism and Postmodernity: Zen, Huayan, and the Possibility of Buddhist Postmodern Ethics*. Plymouth, United Kingdom: Lexington Books, 2008.

<sup>74</sup> Park, 2008.

<sup>75</sup> See Schlitz, M. M., Vieten, C. and Miller, E. M. "Worldview Transformation and the Development of Social Consciousness" in *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, vol. 17 no. 7-8, 2010, pp. 18-36.

<sup>76</sup> Hart et al., 2000.

principles in order to amplify relationally manifest mutual appreciation.<sup>77</sup>

## The Spiritual Aspect of Peace

The fourth aspect is spiritual peace. Though there is no single view of 'spirituality,' it is defined here as a universal respect for inherent equal dignity and divinity of every human being beyond racial, cultural and religious differences.<sup>78</sup> It is the recognition of each human being as an equal member of the human moral community.

Religion is an organized set of creed and practices shared by certain communities for spiritual concern<sup>79</sup> and so spirituality and religion are connected. However, religion also contains a danger for violence and division. It can turn into a cause of violence when the different religious group boundaries are fixated and essentialized as categorically incompatible. What needs to be remembered is that religious teaching is subject to interpretation and can be exploited to give self-serving justification to sharpen exclusive identity and destructive political programs.<sup>80</sup> Therefore, consciousness and capacity to be aware of the inherent dignity and divinity of every human being across community boundaries must be enacted. When both social identity (religious boundary) and transcendental identity are acknowledged, we can achieve unity in diversity and build a harmonious relationship to work jointly to address complex global problems.

To touch transcendental identity founded upon the recognition of inherent dignity and divine nature of all humanity, the practice of compassion is essential. Compassion is

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<sup>77</sup> Hershock, 2012.

<sup>78</sup> Reardon and Snauwart, 2011.

<sup>79</sup> See Harpviken, K. B. and Roislien, H. E. *Mapping the Terrain: The Role of Religion in Peacemaking State of the Art Paper*. Oslo: International Peace Research Institute, 2005.

<sup>80</sup> See Ramsbotham, O., Woodhouse, T., & Miall, H. *Contemporary conflict resolution: The prevention, management and transformation of deadly conflicts (4th ed.)*. Cambridge: Polity, 2016.

an acknowledgment of shared humanity and the commonalities in both suffering and aspiration among those with different identities.<sup>81</sup> It is a capacity to feel others' pain, sorrow, or plight as our own. Practicing compassionate mind develops a quality of loving-kindness, a universal and altruistic love that extends to ourselves, to friends and family, and ultimately to all people.<sup>82</sup>

Based on compassion and the recognition of dignity and equality of human beings, spiritual aspect of peace is to practice unity-based worldview. The unity-based worldview is the consciousness of the oneness of humanity.<sup>83</sup> It is an awareness that our well-being and others' are interdependent and interpenetrating. It is a transition from self-centered and dichotomous tensions of in-group and out-group to an all-inclusive state of awareness of our fundamental interconnection. The awareness of our fundamental interdependence does not deny the individuality of each of us; rather, it is a qualitative transformation of viewing identity. Instead of seeing identity as independent and fixed entity with firm boundary, we effect a perspectival shift to understand it as the interconnected web of life with no fixed nature.<sup>84</sup> We realize our existence as an open and dynamic living system within a larger interdependent and interconnected relationship.

The recognition of interconnected nature of any human relation affords each of us an opportunity to construct more inclusive superordinate identity and drives us to make an effort to gratify the basic needs of all beyond group boundaries and promote social justice for those having different identities as well as for ourselves.<sup>85</sup> This does not mean that all of us achieve

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<sup>81</sup> See Pruitt, I. T. and McCollum, E. E. (2010). "Voices of Experienced Meditators: The Impact of Meditation Practice on Intimate Relationships", 2010, from <http://portal.idc.ac.il/he/main/research/aware/research/documents/social/attachment/voices%20of%20experienced%20meditators%20the%20im>. (Accessed November 24, 2015).

<sup>82</sup> Pruitt and McCollum, 2010.

<sup>83</sup> See Daneth, H. B. "Towards an integrative theory of peace education" in *Journal of Peace Education*, vol. 3 no. 1, 2006, pp. 55-78.

<sup>84</sup> See Loy, D. "Indra's Postmodern Net" in *Philosophy East and West*, vol. 43 no. 3, 1993, pp. 481-510.

<sup>85</sup> Daneth, 2006.

qualitatively same well-being, or human security. It emphasizes that we learn to become conscious of interdependent and interpenetrating nature of different human security and justice and make a mutual contribution to help achieve each other's human security.

### **Interdependent and Interpenetrating Relationship between Cosmopolitan Non-dualistic Political Process and the Enrichment of Holistic Peace Model for the Individual Human Being**

Cosmopolitan non-dualistic politics and comprehensive peace vision are explored. Both are interdependent and interpenetrating. What must be emphasized is that global political dynamics and ideologies framing the dynamics are not given; that is to say, they do not exist naturally independent of human beings, but rather, a human construct. Though it is not easy to transform, global politics and ideologies shaping existing inter-state relations are within our reach. To change existing global political dynamics into cosmopolitan non-dualistic process suggested in this paper, human beings need to be empowered from a comprehensive perspective.

Human beings are a complex agent: physiological, psychological, socio-structural, philosophical and spiritual. In the first place, human security aspects need to be secured as they become a foundation for a stable life. The socio-economic structural aspect needs to be improved so that every citizen can get their voices heard widely and contribute to policy decision-making. However, human internal empowerment is also critical. The epistemological aspect of peace, that is, the philosophical aspect of human inner dimension, empowers us to be self-reflective and open to the diversity of values, ways of thinking and knowing and to explicate new values, visions and perspectives according to different political and social circumstances. The core of the spiritual aspect of peace is unity in diversity, that is, to appreciate diversity and unity of human beings simultaneously, which inspires us to cooperate with

others beyond but including differences. By penetrating into racial, cultural, political, or religious diversity and fundamental equal dignity and humanity of all, we can approach those having different identities or thoughts with respect and curiosity, which would help them to engage in a constructive dialogue to co-create new values, norms or ideas to address social or global challenges as a common issue. The epistemological aspect of peace and spiritual aspect of peace enable us to make optimal development of our potential to become a critical and transformative agent to boost cosmopolitan non-dualistic political process that is more inclusive and creative than conventional international politics based on confrontational ideological dynamics. Cosmopolitan peace and enhancement of multi-dimensional peace of the individual human being resonate with each other.

## Conclusion

This paper has examined post-COVID-19 sustainable peace model. Peace is a physiological, psychological, political as well as moral, and spiritual condition.<sup>86</sup> Though what has been discussed in this paper might be just an idea, a society and globe without positive visions of itself will be doomed.<sup>87</sup> This does not mean to deny or despite the existing thoughts or ideals. However, as claimed in the paper, the nature of social and global structures and how we approach global problems including COVID-19 are human constructs. Our conceptual thoughts or values shape how we analyze and understand social and global challenges. We must keep a critical analysis of the gap between the complexity of the problems and the limits of existing thoughts and produce new ideals.

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<sup>86</sup> Daneth, 2006.

<sup>87</sup> See Groff, L. "Contributions of Different Cultural-Religious Traditions on Different Aspects of Peace – Learning to a Holistic, Integrative View of Peace for a 21st Century Interdependent World" in *FUTUREtakes Transcultural Futurist Magazine*, vol. 7 no. 1, 2008.



What post-COVID-19 holistic peace model implies is we are witnessing a global connectivity in both negative and positive terms, which calls for a rethinking of the humanities and social sciences. The complexities of the global problems require us to develop and unfold transdisciplinary approach to research or intellectual enterprise and even education. Transdisciplinarity neither despises nor nullifies disciplines, but rather by overcoming their limits seeks to help us produce a more comprehensive and integrating knowledge and perspectives to address complex and multi-dimensional problems.<sup>88</sup> Disciplinary education and research tend to focus on components that make us less capable of seeing and understanding the world and problems as interconnected, interdependent.<sup>89</sup> The transdisciplinary approach emphasizes a larger, more holistic point of intersecting and interdependent ideas and the virtue of the unity of knowledge as a precondition for explicating sustainable solutions to complex social and global problems. Post-COVID-19 holistic peace model for sustainable globe proposed here implies the necessity for variety of academic enterprises including medical sciences, ethics, international relations, peace studies, philosophy, security studies, psychology, and so on to cooperate to produce integrative and comprehensive approach for a sustainable vision for future.

Intellectual humility or the acknowledgment of the finitude of each disciplinary knowledge boundaries and critical dialogue that challenges the compartmentalized disciplinary positions and moves forward holistic expression and networks of knowledge and wisdom of distinct fields would need to be integrated into social sciences and humanities research and education as such attitudes empower us to broaden our

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<sup>88</sup> See Crowe, H., Brandes, K., Aviles, B D., Erickson, D., and Hall, D. "Transdisciplinary Teaching: Professionalism across Cultures" in *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, vol. 3 no. 13, 2013, pp. 194-205.

<sup>89</sup> See Dabrowski, I. J. "David Bohm's Theory of the Implicate Order: Implications for Holistic Thought Processes" in *Issues in Integrative Studies*, no. 13, 1995, pp. 1-23.

horizons and encourage new research programs. The intellectual enterprise of any kind is an evolutionary learning process that keeps renewing our perspectives and redesigns and reorganizes our systems at higher levels of complexity.<sup>90</sup> How we understand and deal with disciplines are also a human construct. We need to keep renewing our thoughts and attitudes towards intellectual enterprise to contribute to overcoming increasingly complex and non-linear social and global problems.

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<sup>90</sup> Dabrowski, 1995.

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