

*Respecting Human Rights with Individuality  
and Flexibility for Creating a Better Society*

Kaori Yamashita, University of Wroclaw, Poland

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**Abstract**

There are various ideas of people. Considering individual characteristics and circumstances, they often have disagreements, and their disagreements sometimes deteriorate into conflicts. Some societies treat conflict as one of common consequences through disagreements and seek better solutions through their conflicts. By contrast, Bonta's work introduces peaceful societies where people try to avoid conflicts and maintain their harmonic atmosphere by their self-restraint. These two kinds of societies' distinctions do not mean good or bad. They have just different ideas for outcomes of conflicts under their social conditions. However, both ways raise questions through some elements of human nature: satisfied or antagonized feeling has almost no end without will of termination. If conflicts solving societies are directed to productive solutions and move up to higher steps, it is desirable. Nevertheless, human beings cannot always choose such manners since people normally seek their emotional feeling fulfillment. On the contrary, peaceful societies are dependent on social regulations with self-restraint. Yet, human beings are imperfect, and by their regulations they might not be able to appeal their conflicting situations and might not receive justice. When their self-restraint has breakdown, their situations might be worse. Notwithstanding, it is necessary to create better societies at peace in the world. The key of resolution is respecting human rights with individuality and flexibility.

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## **1. Introduction**

Since there are a wide variety of nations, regions, cultures, religions and environments, people have various kinds of ideas. Although there are similarities, people have own ideas and tendency to act with own interpretations and judgments. Then it is normal that people among societies often have disagreements each other. Besides, regarding such personal distinctions including physical conditions and medical reasons, it is at times inevitable that disagreements deteriorate into conflicts. Consequently, the issue is how to deal with conflicts before they become violent ones. There are two kinds of societies, which contrastively deal with their conflicts. On the one hand a society treats conflicts as one of common outcomes from aggravated disagreements and seeks better solutions through the conflicts. On the other hand another society, which Bonta (1996, pp.405, 406) introduces as peaceful societies, treats conflicts as abhorrent and tries to avoid them by controlling themselves for maintaining harmonic atmosphere.

Because these societies have different ideas of conflicts with their circumstances, people cannot quickly decide whether they are good or bad. Nevertheless, ways of both societies rise questions through some elements of human nature: satisfied or antagonized feeling has almost no end without will of termination. In solving conflicts societies, it is desirable if conflicts are directed to productive solutions and move up to higher steps. Notwithstanding, human beings cannot always choose such manners since people occasionally seek their emotional feeling fulfillment. On the contrary, people in avoiding conflicts societies prefer to use self-restraint including their social regulations. However, not everyone can appeal their entire negative situation, and some might not receive social justice. Besides, when their controlled self-restraint has breakdown, their situation might be worse. Nonetheless, human beings need to seek better solutions while they deal with their diversity. Therefore for creating better societies, it should be better to think about individuality and flexibility through the UN's human rights. In addition, UNESCO has a program for peace creation, the Culture of Peace, which should be included for this theme.

## **2. Human Rights and Regulations**

By forgetting human rights, the consequences became dreadfully destructive. People had to reflect upon how inhumane and disastrous during the World War II. In these years people had just focused on annihilation among the same human beings. Therefore, the United Nations was established in order to promote better international community with the rights of every individual everywhere. Continuously, on 10 December 1948 the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the UN General Assembly as a complement of the UN Charter (The UN: History of the Document, n.d.). For creating better societies, everyone needs to remember human dignity with fundamental human rights. Without this consideration, people tend to act atrocities. In fact, preamble of the Human Rights mentions as "recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world" (The UN: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, n.d.).

Regarding "freedom, justice and peace", the Human rights Article 19. explains "everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes

freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers”. If people are important and have dignity, their opinions with deliberating human rights also require to be respected. It means that everyone has different characteristics as individuality, and as flexibility people cannot force others to follow some particular ways. People are not placed under observation until proved their guilty according to law in a public trial (The UN: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, n.d.). Since the establishment of the UN is mainly reflection of the World War II and their atrocities, it is better to focus on peace for creating better societies.

Considering the UN Human Rights, it is normal to have different opinions among others and also disagreements. It is impossible that everyone always has the same opinions each other. Then disagreements sometimes produce conflicts, and it is essential to think how to deal with conflicts for better societies at peace. Before depicting those two kinds of different societies, it is better to explain the UN’s regulations for handling disagreements and preventing violence. The key of solution should be respecting human rights with individuality and flexibility and create how to make people obligate such matters. Actually, the UN has proclaimed clear regulations and observes how things develop through the Rule of Law that the UN describes how important to enforce the manner in consideration of the heart of the United Nations’ mission because by tangible regulations and enforcement, people can produce a durable peace including the effective protection of Human Rights and sustained economic progress (United Nations and the Rule of Law, n.d.). Moreover UN Deputy Secretary-General Eliasson stated such tangible regulations as “transparency and accountability are powerful tools for oversight of the use of public resources, including to prevent corruption. Corruption distorts markets and hinders sustainable development. Institutions must also be accessible” (Deputy Secretary-General keynote address, 2014).

Although there are stipulations, laws and constitutions if people do not know and cannot follow them, such social regulations are meaningless. However, tangibility of regulations leads people to consider own accountability as one of members of the world since people know their requirement. The Rule of Law is as a principle of governance, and it promotes people to be accountable through regulation tangibility. For instance, by public promulgation of regulations, people will learn how to adjust themselves under international human rights’ norms and standards. In other words, by establishing the ways of regulation enforcement, people will create peacefully better societies (The General Assembly, 1992).

For creating better societies at peace, an international order based on the Rule of Law and international law state that “it was essential for peaceful coexistence”, and “to help ensure overall coordination among the lead entities and other actors, at both the global and the country level” (Security Council, 2006, pp.1,2). For conducting the regulations, to create the Rule of Laws and to make people understand are inseparable because it makes people realize whether positive matters or negative matters especially in cultural and personal areas. Nevertheless, there are still violent conflicts in the world. People have enmity one another and are hard to deal with that although there are human rights, the Rule of Law and other regulations for creating better societies at peace. Therefore, under UNESCO there is an establishment of “the Culture of Peace” in order to create foundation of peace.

### **3. UNESCO: The Culture of Peace**

People are to create better societies at peace however, it is difficult still now. Considering diversified human characteristics, it is frequent to have disagreements and non-violent conflicts. Then the question is how to deal with conflicts peacefully instead of violent ones. Now it is necessary to ponder the word, peace. Definitions depict it as the normal and non-warring conditions and a state of mutual harmony between people or groups. Moreover, it mentions having law and order within a state, which creates absence of violence or other disturbance. However, even though it says non-warring condition and mutual harmony, societies at peace seem to have disagreements or non-violent conflicts. In fact, peace also means to end hostilities and abstain further fighting or antagonism. It is neither to do nothing nor to be bystanders (Dictionary.com, n.d.) (Collins English Dictionary, n.d.). Instead, people should actively solve or avoid before conflicts become harmful hostilities and antagonism. As active attitudes for creating better societies at peace, there is a program “the Culture of Peace” under UNESCO to cogitate on how different societies develop to solve problems and how people deal life and environmental issues with others (de Rivera, 2004, p.532).

For promotion of better peaceful societies in the world, the Culture of Peace was prepared. The main actors are from UNESCO after the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) declared (2000) the International Year for the Culture of Peace and 2001-2010 as the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World (ter Haar, 2013, p.1). The Culture of Peace itself explains how to create societies at peace by a set of values, attitudes, modes of behavior and ways of life through dialogue and negotiation among individuals, groups and nations, which will reject violence. Their prioritized peace establishment is conversation and mutual understanding instead of oppression by force. At the same time, it focuses on peaceful foundation such as sustainable economic and social development including food security through international cooperation (UNESCO Culture of Peace, n.d.).

While people promote dialogue and negotiation under the Culture of Peace, they also consider about the environmental issues because no matter how to set non-violent situations, if their basic necessities are lacking, it is difficult to terminate violence. When people are in need of basic necessities, but there is only shortage of that, in many cases people harshly deprive one another, which lead to have violent conflicts and wars. Therefore the Culture of Peace also encourages people to understand peace creation through education from childhood with cultural diversity. The number eight form Ten Bases For A Culture of Peace describes cultural identity without threatening to impose a universal culture (UNESCO CULTURE OF PEACE PROGRAM, 1998). As above-mentioned two kinds of societies, they have different ways to deal because their fundamental thoughts of conflicts are incompatible. However, such incompatible ideas mean also diversified cultural identity, and through human rights people need to respect that and not to impel only one way. Accordingly, it is crucial to observe these different societies, especially peaceful societies, for the purpose of cultivating a deepened understanding their positive and negative points and further considerations with human nature.

#### **4. Two Kinds of Societies and Human Nature**

As previously mentioned, violent conflicts occur if people are in need of basic necessities when there is only shortage of the quantity. On the contrary, in some other cases there are non-violent conflicts although they have a severe shortage of necessities. Accordingly, it should take into consideration why violence occurs. Steele defines conflicts as “involving at least two parties, who have a mutual problem of position or resource scarcity, in which there is a behavior (or threat) designed through the exercise of power to control or gain at the other' s expense” (1976, p.222). It seems that people have conflicts because they try to control the situations and manipulate the other parties, and then the conflicts become violent because both parties prefer to lead the situations by their own ways. Of course, sufficiently provided basic necessities are also important with a view to preventing violent occurrences.

Moreover, there are definitions of conflict from Bonta as “the incompatible needs, differing demands, contradictory wishes, opposing beliefs, or diverging interests which produce interpersonal antagonism and, at times, hostile encounters” (1996, p.405). Regarding that, conflicts are generally involved in people and aggravate situations of disagreements. If so, there is definitely a possibility to solve or avoid conflicts by a will of end among human beings. Simultaneously, it is also possible to create better societies at peace by a will of creation among them, and furthermore the UN and UNESCO have regulations for bringing people in peace establishment. With these prospects, people also can observe two kinds of societies from Bonta’s work: solving conflicts is normal and avoiding conflicts is normal. He illustrates the former ones with Western societies and the latter ones with small communities such as Semai, Ifaluk, Toraja and Tahitians, which he calls peaceful societies (1996, pp.405, 406). Their diversity is not good or bad, but these societies are taking different ways by their circumstances and also have positive and negative points for conflict solutions.

##### **1) To Solve Conflicts**

Fundamentally solving conflicts societies believe to have conflicts is normal, and the important matter is how to solve the further going conflicts. Naturally having conflicts parties divert from violence and mainly act on negotiation and intervention. When they cannot solve their cases, they will ask the third-party to come to them for solving their situations. Since their purpose is to determinate which party is guilty or innocent and right or wrong, they frequently bring their cases over formal court trials where they seek to fulfill justice (Bonta 1996, pp.404, 406. 407, 415). Even though they attempt to finish their conflicts productively, their situations at times do not work well because both parties occasionally include emotional satisfaction. They remember justice fulfillment but often unintentionally seek personal justification and act for their own protection. Therefore, their cases mostly take longer until their situations are clarified. Nevertheless, they have some positive points in this way. For instance, people in these societies prefer to explain own opinions, which make people understand their details and also follow one of human rights requirements.

## **2) To Avoid Conflicts**

Since peaceful societies believe not to have conflicts is normal, they prefer to act how to finish swiftly when some of their communities start arguments. Through Bonta's work of peaceful societies, there are principally five strategies so as to maintain their harmony. Firstly, they try to take off emotional feeling from the having conflicts parties for evading thoughtless arguments because they know such negative emotions producing destructive consequences. In fact, as an example Semai community primarily perform this way to remove emotions from the parties and reaffirming correct and peaceful behavior (1996, p.404). To keep away from emotional feeling makes people to choose realistic and reasonable solutions. Emotions mostly claim feeling satisfaction, which often does not have productive consequences.

To avoid further conflicts is not easy even for people in peaceful societies. As the second strategy Bonta explains Toraja community about their self-restraint, which members of peaceful societies dear to choose. Since these people believe that tense emotions will bring further troubles and irrecoverable situations, and they use this attitude, self-restraint, and try to dissipate their emotions. Then thirdly most of peaceful societies prefer to settle their problems on an internal level for early resolutions with self-restraint. Actually, to give influence of conflicts on others in their societies promptly paralyzes the entire social function since the communities are relatively small. Since further negative emotions will bring destruction, through self-restraint they make efforts to finish in early stages (1996, p.406).

However, such their self-restraint does not always work well for solving their fundamental problems. Times like those, people perform separation as forth strategy, which means that they leave away from the having conflicts parties. Even family members of the parties leave away if the resolutions seem to be difficult. Since they normally have tight relationships and many social functions are connected to each other, it is hard to live if they are not included in their small communities. Therefore, for them, separation is one of effective attitudes for the purpose of making their emotions cool off. Moreover, they have the fifth strategy as intervention among peaceful people. Their intermediates should not be agitators because their roles are to take their emotions away and make them have settlements in order to bring peaceful solutions. Intermediates are also involved in and care about threatening atmosphere, which the having conflicts parties might produce (Bonta, 1996, p.407).

## **3) How to Build Up?**

After all, peaceful societies exert themselves to avoid conflicts by any means. In addition to above-mentioned five strategies, as daily attitudes they make smiling and are pleasant to everyone because their priority is to avoid conflicts and maintain social harmony as the goal of conflict resolution (Bonta, 1996, pp.412, 414). Regarding their determination to avoid conflicts, there are certain similar situations among peaceful societies. It is a will of end for conflicts. Addressing the will of end clarifies how to build up better societies at peace in their ways. Considering many other social elements in small communities, compared with solving conflict societies people should not quickly decide which strategies are good or bad. However, people can focus on the core of their actions, the will of end. Although these communities are relatively small, it does not mean that only small communities can have peaceful

atmosphere. Instead, the focal point is how they prepare a will of end and endeavor to bring peace promptly because they need to think about the consequences if the conflicts get worse and longer: disharmonized social influence and paralyzed social functions.

People in a small community normally know each other well. Supposedly most of them are own relatives, colleagues, or somehow related people even their having conflicts parties. If they have violent conflicts, their devastated situations will impact on their entire society. Although one party gets a win, the loser party might be their related people, and the consequence of the winner's prize might be also a loss. Eventually everyone has negative conditions in the community. In other words, if opponents relate to own lives, it is difficult to pursue only own winner's prize because the fate of opponents is also own fate. Of course, people in bigger communities are hard to think about this connection between others' fate and own fate. Nevertheless, people are somehow connected on the earth. It is not only environmental pollution and global warming but also consequences of a negative feeling, which gives a further negative feeling on others. For example, a driver having a negative feeling affects his/her drive, and such negative driving affects other drivers or passengers and their lives are in danger. They might be killed by a driver with negative feeling. Consequently, such a negative feeling contaminates the entire society until people determine the end by their own wills.

Furthermore, Fabbro (1978, pp.67, 68, 80) uses Fried's (1967) schema of political evolution for the purpose of examining peaceful societies as egalitarian band society, which are summarized by three points. The first, Fabbro stresses on small and face to face communities as "a major contributory factor in their open and basically egalitarian decision-making and social control processes" (pp.67, 80). About these words "small" and "face to face", people can interpret not only literally but also figuratively that they know each other well, and it does not mean that only small communities can have peaceful atmosphere as above stated. If people know each other well, it also means to care among others and to live and work together as neighborhood, which leads to be troublesome if their grudges cannot have solution and stay forever. People in such societies normally have tight connection among others, and without membership they are hard to live. Therefore, they prioritize to maintain a peaceful society at all events. Actually such societies have different atmosphere compared with neighbor unknown societies. People knowing each other produce social norms among them and prevent to commit crimes because it makes them understand their meaning of existence in their society: everyone is important. Meaning of existence is one of motivations for life and also creates better societies at peace since they desire to exist and live as members of the society.

The second, it is lack of formalized patterns of ranking and stratification, which means almost no opportunity to exercise authority on citizens or to occupy positions of prestige (Fabbro, 1978, p.67). Since people in peaceful societies have some roles and work together, everyone is necessary and important in their communities. There is no place that authority restricts individuals for showing its power, but they need to help one another more directly and promote individuals, which build up real integration: everyone has some better points among others and is necessary beyond of social and cultural stratification. Even small children know some things, which adult can use for something as hints for own lives. Not everyone knows everything, and

everyone knows something more than others in the society. Indeed regarding each one's characteristics and environments, knowledgeable fields are various and useful for building up better societies. In fact especially in bigger societies, as social regulations to have ranking and stratification is considerable. However, for oppressing others they should not exist.

Thirdly, Fabbro (1978, p.67) explains these societies as lesser material inequality between individuals. Since they originally do not have much material, such limited material makes them be sober and keep negative emotions away from one another. People in peaceful societies seem to have freedom from materialistic atmospheres because they have lesser material and cannot hold it for their prestige. Notwithstanding, this point is not only "lesser material inequality" but also "lesser inequality" that stretches the interpretation as mental freedom from materialistic ideas. Additionally, these societies are also almost no authority exercise to oppress the population as stated above. If people live through own characteristic development with individuality and flexibility instead of focusing on what others think of prestige, it conducts people to feel less crucial how much other people have better materials. Simultaneously, for creating better societies at peace people need to regard equality as an essential point such as social access, education, and work. Real peace comes from real equality, which produces own individual characteristic development with flexible social manners under laws and moral consideration.

#### **4) Acceptable Points from Both Societies with Human Nature**

Apparent peace does not always mean people having no negative feeling. No emerged conflict does not mean the society having quiet atmosphere. Considering individual various characteristics and circumstances, to have disagreement is normal. The important issue is how to deal with conflicts. There are two kinds of societies: to solve conflicts and to avoid conflicts, and as described above, both societies have positive and negative points. In solving conflicts societies, people explain their opinions and try to make their situations better by fulfilling justice. However, some of them unconsciously seek emotional fulfillment and the situations might deteriorate. In avoiding conflicts societies they take self-restraint and restore their situations to harmonic atmosphere. However, they might not be able to explain enough their conditions and might not have social justice. After all, the important point is how to deal with conflicts and not to expand into violence. According to circumstances, people can use and develop strategies of both societies because above all peace is created by a will. Through a will of end for conflicts people can create better societies at peace. Peace is not just a feeling but a will to create. Regarding human nature's negative sides, which are especially seen during wars, a satisfied or antagonized feeling has almost no end without a will of termination. Many people may think that time heals all wound and all negative feeling, nevertheless, such memories suddenly come up to own minds by some triggers. They induce people to struggle again until making a decision to terminate by their own wills.

At any rate, both societies prioritize existence of human beings under their ideologies. Actually people care about their own existence, which is not just survival but needs to prepare security. As basic security people care food, residence and cloths, however, when people forget individuality and flexibility under human rights, many kinds of things become own securities, which they treat as essential matters for their lives.

Besides, people believe to go through difficulties if they do not have them. For instance, as occupational security people think about degree, licenses or practical training. As personal security there are friendships, marriages or investments. Moreover, if people include cultural or family matters, there are numerous complicated securities. Indeed they are important, however, people also need to think about own real necessities, such as what sorts of friendships or marriages. If not, when people cannot have their believing securities, their feelings are devastated, and their negative human nature comes up, which lead to do negative actions in extreme cases. It is not only during wartime but also every time such as suicides, murders, abductions, extortion, burglaries and atrocities.

After all, above-mentioned two kinds of societies basically have different ideas of their secured existence under their circumstances. Actually, de Rivera mentions about security issues for peace that “the security of all people rather than simply the security of those within a given nation-state, and it enlarges the scope of security to refer to far more than protection from enemy attack” (2004, p.533). For creating better societies at peace, the basic matter is secured existence physically and also mentally. Solving conflicts societies do not have tighter relationships among them, and their secured existence is less connected to their social members but fulfilled justification. Then they bring their disagreements to courts. On the contrary, avoiding conflicts societies have tighter relationships among them, and their secured existence is more connected to their entire societies. Accordingly, when people think about social connections one another and have a will to end their conflicts, they can create better societies at peace. Simultaneously they need to respect human rights with individuality and flexibility since peace also requires real equality and meaningful existence.

Although a nation is prosperous and has strong economic influence, there is no guarantee of a good life for the entire citizen because some kinds of people do not fit to the social conditions and in devastated situations, such as having heavy diseases and being jobless. If these people cannot find any help or support, they are physically or mentally ruined. During devastated situations, people need to receive necessities for secured existence. Nevertheless, people simultaneously need to think about real equality such as accessibility and opportunity for meaningful existence since real necessities connect to own characteristics and circumstances. It is not always real equality if everyone receives the same things at the same time since a quantity of matters might be too much for some but too little for others. It is necessary to consider individuality and flexibility.

Regarding real equality, for example, some societies have particular age limitation for being a regular employee. Yet, if people in such societies take off the age limitation but take only individual ability for job application and flexible conditions of employment, full-time job seekers will have hope. Besides, for the job application people make efforts, which they can avoid devastated situations since devastated situations are connected to hopeless, and hopeless often produces violence and crime by some elements of human nature. For this matter, personality development is also important. Factually UNESCO mentions education as an essential matter as previously noted (CULTURE OF PEACE PROGRAM, 1998). However, education means not just seeking higher degrees. Considering individual characteristics and situations there are various kinds of education: vocational training, occupational practicing, and mental developing including homeschooling. When people receive

meaningful education, they can open their eyes and heart so as to develop their potential and hope. Simultaneously, for having real equality people also need to prepare themselves for a certain point. These situations will create better societies at peace since their hearts have hope and are not devastated anymore.

## **5. Conclusion: Respecting Human Rights with Individuality and Flexibility**

There are two kinds of societies: solving conflicts and avoiding conflicts. Both societies have the strong and weak points as described above. Indeed, Goldsworthy et.al. (2007, p.598) mention, “learning to avoid and resolve conflicts is an important part of becoming an active and productive member of society in general”. Considering characteristics and circumstances of human beings, it depends on situations which ideologies people should use and develop. Then some societies choose to solve conflicts, and other societies prefer to avoid conflicts since they have different thoughts about conflicts and their outcomes. Societies solving conflicts think that to have conflict is normal and through conflicts with self-expression they will have better results. By contrast societies avoiding conflicts believe that to have conflicts is abnormal and have to bring back to their harmonic atmosphere with self-restraint. However there are still violent conflicts in the world, and they go further and bring destructive consequences.

According to negative side of human nature, people need to have a will of end for violence and prepare each one’s meaningful existence for preventing hope losing and devastated feeling, which will produce destructive outcomes. Considering human rights, people need to have equality on the earth, nevertheless, equality does not always mean to have the same matters at the same time. In addition, people mostly focus on visible equality but necessary elements are including invisible one. For example at workplace, if people are sick or physically weak, it is necessary to have extra support or work reduction compared with physically strong people. When workload of everyone is just the same, weak people are destroyed. Of course, the balance and wages between their workload are considered as real equality with individuality and flexibility, which are connected to meaningful existence for creating better society at peace.

There is no one clearly routinized answer considering of human beings’ diversified characteristics and circumstances. However, a main point of solutions for conflicts relies on accountability to people who are required to respect human rights under the Rule of Law and regulations that are already intangible through proclamation of the UN and UNESCO. At the same time it is necessary to prepare real equality through individuality and flexibility for meaningful existence. And then people need to remember that there are negative possibilities to aggregate conflicts to violent ones if they do not determine the end. By human nature, satisfied or antagonized feeling has almost no end without a will of end for the situation. With a will people can end violent conflicts and also create better societies at peace.

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