

Articles

Culture of Peace: contributions to peace education from a Cultural Psychology perspective

Cultura de Paz: contribuições para a educação para a paz a partir da perspectiva da psicologia cultural

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Abstract

The concept of culture permeates different theoretical perspectives. From the viewpoint of Cultural Psychology, culture assumes a central and dynamic role, together with human agency, as subjects and culture co-construct each other through active processes of cultural internalization and externalization. This theoretical approach enable a conceptual expansion of the 'Culture of Peace' beyond the definitions outlined in official documents, favoring an understanding that encompasses three major developmental dimensions: interpersonal – referring to relationships, interactions, and communication processes; intrapersonal – related to the subjective processes of forming beliefs, values, habits, and attitudes; and socio-environmental – encompassing the co-construction of social and natural ecosystems aligned with peace. This article articulates the contributions of Cultural Psychology to the Studies and Research for Peace and Peace Education, expanding the necessary analysis of the phenomena of peace construction. We hope to foster a deeper understanding of Peace Education and the complexities involved in co-constructing actual Cultures of Peace.

Keywords: culture; culture of peace; human development; cultural psychology; peace education.

Resumo

O conceito de cultura permeia diferentes perspectivas teóricas. Sob a ótica da Psicologia Cultural, a cultura assume uma perspectiva central e dinâmica, coconstruída pela agencialidade humana por meio dos processos ativos de internalização e externalização cultural, promotores de desenvolvimento. Esta abordagem teórica permite uma ampliação conceitual de Cultura de Paz para além das definições em documentos oficiais, abrangendo três grandes dimensões do desenvolvimento: interpessoal – referente às relações, interações e processos de comunicação; intrapessoal – processos subjetivos de formação de opiniões, valores, hábitos e atitudes; e socioambiental – que contempla a coconstrução de ecossistemas sociais e naturais coordenados à paz. O presente artigo articula a Psicologia Cultural aos Estudos e Pesquisas para a Paz e à Educação para a Paz, expandindo a necessidade da análise das especificações da construção da paz. Esperamos promover uma compreensão mais profunda da Educação para a Paz e das complexidades envolvidas na coconstrução atual de Culturas de Paz.

Palavras-chave: cultura; cultura de paz; desenvolvimento humano; psicologia cultural; educação para a paz.

INTRODUCTION

What do we mean by Culture of Peace? What conception of culture addresses the multiple factors and dimensions inherent to peace? What conception of peace supports the dynamism of cultural construction? How can such conceptions contribute to Education for Peace? These and other questions will be analyzed in this article, which aims to promote reflections and theoretical articulations about the Culture of Peace, the various and diverse aspects that participate in this process, and the dynamics of its coconstruction from a semiotic-oriented Cultural Psychology approach (Valsiner, 2021). This theoretical approach highlights the crucial role played by meaning-construction processes in human development, therefore, in cultural development as well.

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The relevance of expanding conceptual and theoretical understandings about the dimensions and scopes that make up the Culture of Peace has been highlighted by inter, multi, and transdisciplinary dialogues, to transcend restricted interpretations of its components to envision and study the phenomenon from a broad spectrum of possibilities for promoting its effective coconstruction.

From Peace Studies and Research, the scientific community has gradually expanded its theoretical and practical repertoire about peace construction in different fields of knowledge. Primarily due to the complexities and diversity of sociocultural contexts, researchers and theorists are invited to deepen and build conceptual bridges and knowledge that interconnect expertise from different epistemological perspectives. In addition to this kaleidoscope of epistemologies, concepts, and theories, are the contributions of Psychology from a critical, developmental, and cultural perspective, which emphasizes the crucial role played by culture and human agency regarding peace construction. Different from the traditional individualist approach of psychology, Cultural Psychology emerges as a conglomerate of theories that highlights the role of culture and the affective-semiotic processes of individuals in the constitution of human phenomena in general. That is, in terms of individual and sociocultural development.

To this end, next we present a brief contextualization about studies and research for the promotion of Peace, followed by the foundations of Cultural Psychology and some important theoretical elaborations that may contribute to Education and studies of how to foster—or develop—societies oriented to cultivate processes leading to the coconstruction of Cultures of Peace. Here we underline the plural—cultures—because depending on the plural characteristics of each culture. Thus, we can never expect just one similar, universal culture, but indeed diverse cultures that may share some universal processes that may be conducive to peaceful practices and coexistence.

CULTURE OF PEACE: STUDY AND RESEARCH

The concept of Peace is broad, and has varied meanings, inviting us to undertake a critical and contextualized conceptual analysis. From an intra-subjective perspective to international treaties, the concept of peace includes interpersonal, intrapersonal and socio-environmental dimensions that, when interconnected, impact the construction of paths that bring us closer to or further away from peaceful principles of coexistence. The scope of the construct “peace” is not limited to the absence of violence, but to the active presence of practices, values, attitudes, relationships and social structures that prioritize human development, human rights and dignity.

From subjective and ethereal conceptions to concrete and experiential conceptions, the historical line allows us to investigate and analyze the multiple views and knowledge related to the construction of a Culture of Peace, involving the promotion of human development and the construction of a world based on principles of justice, respect, solidarity, equity, sustainability, among others.

Galtung (1930-2024) stands out among the most influential authors on the theme, the main founder of the discipline of peace and conflict studies, and founder of the Peace Research Institute in Norway (Oslo, 1959). Currently, Peace Studies and Research constitute a legitimate scientific field that involves several areas of knowledge in different countries, whose efforts and knowledge converge towards the consolidation of the Culture of Peace in its micro and macro scopes (Ferreira et al., 2019; Maschietto; Ferreira, 2024).

Jares (2002), a well-known researcher on the subject, emphasizes that “educating for peace is neither a historical novelty nor a necessity associated with a specific historical moment” (p. 87). He warns about the all-encompassing nature of the subject and its relevance since ancient times as a goal of humanity. From Socratic ideas to the International Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations to contemporary research on peace, central concepts and ideas on the subject have expanded (quantitatively) and deepened (qualitatively), in order to impact the promotion of peaceful practices in different fields of knowledge and social action.

Investigating and understanding the factors that constitute Cultures of Violence, still so prevalent in contemporary social contexts, has proven to be relevant for the expansion of the inspiring concepts concerning Cultures of Peace. However, it is necessary to recognize that the promotion of peace transcends actions to avoid or confront violence; it requires studies and research on the typologies, components, dimensions, and scopes that make up the complex and fertile field of knowledge and practices that guide human development and the peaceful coconstruction of human relations.

Salles Filho (2019) also highlights that the Culture of Peace does not represent only “a label for international organizations, nor a brand of public policies or social projects” (p. 44), since it constitutes a dense and complex understanding that articulates different knowledge and reorganizes new ways of living and coexisting for human beings. Such action, however, presents significant conceptual and structural challenges that can hinder a broader and more effective articulated action, making it necessary to reorient the meaning of fragmented fields of study and strengthen “a collaborative, cooperative and transdisciplinary stance, adding the ‘certainties’ of specificities with the ‘uncertainties’ of so many critical situations of our time, which affect life in all its forms” (id., p. 382). For this reason, the author emphasizes that advances will only be possible from the real exchange between areas of knowledge in an interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and transdisciplinary way, which dialogues with the daily life of human beings.

Regarding Psychology, Cultural Psychology has contributed to the topic by investigating the ontogenesis of values and ethics at the level of individual development and cultural coconstruction, of social motivations and of conceptions immersed in the processes of formation of beliefs and values, consistent—or not—with peaceful practices of human coexistence (Branco, 2023; Valsiner, 2012).

Thus, the need to foster fruitful dialogues between psychological science and other fields through transdisciplinarity allows for an integrated and systemic vision of the subject-contexts relationships (environmental, institutional, interpersonal), based on a dialogical approach that emphasizes the person's agency in the coconstruction of the culture in which s/he is immersed. Next, we discuss conceptual issues relevant to the topic of this article.

CULTURE OF PEACE: CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

The UN Declaration and Program of Action on a Culture of Peace (Organização das Nações Unidas, 1999), in its article 1, presents the Culture of Peace as a set of values, attitudes, traditions, behaviors, and lifestyles based on respect for life, the end of violence and the promotion and practice of non-violence through education; dialogue and cooperation; full respect for and promotion of all human rights and fundamental freedoms; peaceful resolution of conflicts; efforts to protect the environment for present and future generations; respect for and promotion of the right to development; adherence to the principles of freedom, justice, democracy, tolerance, solidarity, cooperation, pluralism, cultural diversity, dialogue and understanding at all levels of society and among nations; among other elements that promote a national and international atmosphere conducive to peace.

The Culture of Peace can also be thought of as a philosophy of life, as a way of mediating conflicts and as a political strategy for transforming reality, characterized by the collective search for a way of life and relationships that contribute to the construction of a world marked by justice, solidarity and peace (Callado, 2004).

According to Salles Filho (2019), “a culture of peace is not just a point of arrival, it is a starting point” (p. 20), and needs to be understood as a set of human and social practices based on the joint construction of positive human values—which foster human rights—practices characterized by processes of conflict mediation, environmental sustainability and encouragement of planetary citizenship, based on solidarity, generosity and respect for differences.

Galtung (1989, 1996) elaborated on the concepts of peace and violence as being direct, structural and cultural peace/violence. According to him, the Culture of Peace would encompass the transformative movement of a scenario of direct violence (episodes of

aggression, deprivation, depredation) into direct peace (peaceful actions and interactions); of structural violence (poverty, social inequality, injustice) into structural peace (public policies and actions aimed at peace, social justice, education); and of contexts of so-called cultural violence (prejudices, discrimination) into contexts of inclusive peace (inclusive practices, respect for diversity, peaceful beliefs and values).

It would imply, therefore, a movement of change, an active mobilization of cultural coconstruction that, as Milani (2003) highlights, only becomes viable to the extent that individuals advance from a state of stillness (in the sense of silence and paralysis) to one of restlessness (in the sense of concern, movement and mobilization), assuming their role in History.

It is possible to identify different conceptualizations and scopes based on the contextual singularities and epistemological approaches adopted. In addition to the contributions of Johan Galtung (1989, 1996), the conceptual universe encompasses the personal, social and environmental/planetary ecological dimensions of Weil (1993); the personal, relational, structural and cultural dimensions of Lederach (1997, 2011, 2012); the imperfect and procedural peace of Muñoz (2001); the spectral expansion of the intrapersonal to the international dimension of Balestreri (2003); and the paradigmatic transition from combating violence versus promoting peace of Milani (2000, 2003, 2004). Also noteworthy are the historical and educational contributions of Jares (2002, 2007, 2008); multicultural peace and the traditions of Education for Peace by Guimarães (2003, 2011); the perspective of social peace, gaia/ecological peace and internal peace by Jimenez Bautista (2022), among other perspectives that, in their specificities, aim to expand paths and build strategies that promote peaceful experiences and coexistence.

Recognizing the relevant contributions of different theorists, we present, below, the conceptions of culture and human development from the epistemological lenses of Cultural Psychology, whose focuses will support the understanding of Culture of Peace.

CULTURE AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN THE LIGHT OF CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY

The definition of culture and the various epistemological approaches employed by human sciences have evolved over time. Historically, anthropology, psychology, sociology, philosophy, biology, linguistics, and other disciplines have tended to separate the body from the mind, sustaining a Cartesian view where dichotomies abound, biological versus social, subject versus culture, and so on. Especially since the last decades of the 20th century, we observe a scientific search for a more dialogical and integrated understanding of the constitution of the human being, recognizing the constitutive and structuring role of sociocultural interactions.

Valsiner (2014) highlights this aspect by emphasizing culture as a process, and not as an entity, suggesting that we avoid understanding that we “belong” to a culture (passively) and instead understand that we “participate” in a culture (actively), based on the relationships and experiences built between the subject and the world. In this sense, culture is not “transmitted”, but continuously “co-constructed” by people among themselves; it is not learned, but rather internalized and externalized actively by the agency of the subjects.

From this perspective, individual subjective and collective anthropological aspects are not configured as static, crystallized, and historically dated blocks, since they mix and dynamically reconfigure themselves based on dialogical relationships, constituting an active and transformative open system. Beyond being a locus in the space-time dimension, culture constitutes a dynamic process of experience and production of meanings, catalyzed by the individual's encounter with the world. From a historical-cultural perspective, subjects are co-constituted in culture, recognizing their historicity.

Culture, therefore, consists of a dynamic set of knowledge, beliefs, values, practices, artifacts, habits, and lifestyles constructed through human experience on both collective and individual levels, based on intersubjective relationships established with oneself and with the environment, integrating individual, social, and natural elements. In other words, culture represents the broad and dynamic context in which human experience occurs, the

field where development is constituted, where the new emerges, and where we co-construct our humanity and singularity. Recognizing what makes us human and unique in our cultural diversity, we compose an immense mosaic based on different values and experiences, identifying in culture a dynamic kaleidoscope of intersubjective experiences in continuous processes of (re)signification.

As schematically visualized in Figure 1, the active bidirectional processes of internalization and externalization facilitate possible transformations in the person's hypergeneralized "affective-semiotic fields", which are constituted through social relationships with significant others and from the subject's active experiences in relation to the cultural messages of the environment. Such fields result from internalization processes throughout ontogeny, which gradually give rise to the individual's core motivational instances, known as values and prejudices that guide the subject's perceptions, thoughts, and actions when interacting with others.

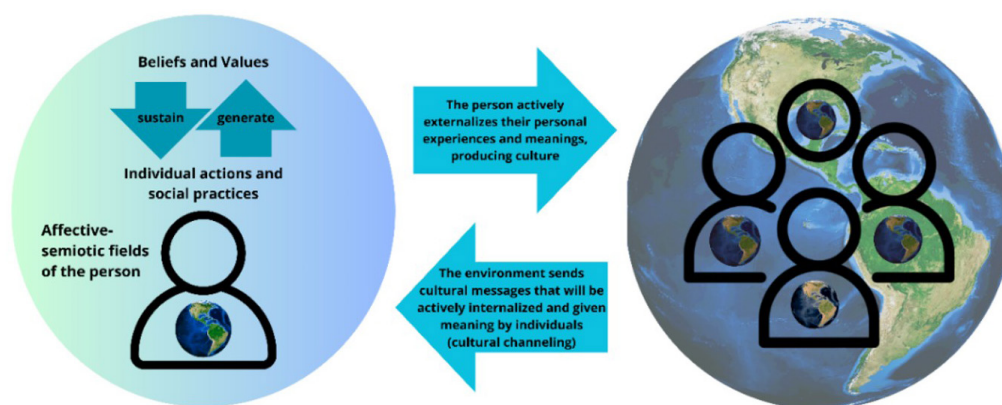


Figure 1. Active processes of internalization and externalization in the bidirectional coconstruction of culture.
Note. Graphic design by the authors.

It is understood, therefore, that beliefs, values, and prejudices produce practices that sustain culture, generating corresponding beliefs, values, prejudices, and so on. This developmental dynamic, then, may give rise to significant transformations in cultural practices and values, creating changes in the quality of interactions and relationships between people. The internalization of peace values, for example, can happen if the developing person experiences significant encounters with social others who praise and practice peaceful interactions. Such experiences may activate the internalization of peaceful values and actions, which can later be externalized as actual practices of peace construction. In other words, a violent context can gradually transform itself as new practices and reflections on beliefs and values are introduced and cultivated within institutions, educational practices, and daily interactions between people. The introduction of such changes can, therefore, transform people, families, social groups, and nations into a systemic and interconnected way, creating an ecosystem that, like individuals, will always be in a state of permanent development.

From this perspective, educational processes inspired by peaceful values can channel cultural messages that are actively internalized by individuals, impacting the formation of beliefs and values that support practices consistent with such principles. In turn, the active externalization of the subject, through attitudes, (meta)communications, interactions, and relationships, produces culture, impacting micro, meso, and macro contexts. Education thus assumes a crucial role in enhancing human development and the cultural co-construction of peace, at the microgenetic level (in the present moment), the ontogenetic level (throughout life), and the sociogenetic level (or social).

CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY APPROACH TO CULTURE OF PEACE

Having presented the general concepts regarding the Culture of Peace and the Cultural Psychology perspective, we now seek to analyze the topic from this theoretical perspective, which goes beyond interpretations that create a dichotomous view of the topic.

From the perspective of Cultural Psychology, the subject is conceived as an active being, an agent of its development, and a co-constructor of the culture in which it participates. Culture, viewed as a process co-constructed in relation to subjects, assumes a dynamic and creative character permeated by meanings, values, beliefs, and social motivations that give rise to artifacts and practices. The bidirectionality of cultural construction involves processes of active internalization (at the intrasubjective level) of cultural messages and simultaneous processes of active externalization (at the intersubjective level). Such processes create motivations that are expressed in varied ways, along a continuum that ranges from cooperation to competition, inclusiveness to exclusion, peaceful to violent interactions and relationships, resulting in social structures such as institutions, architectural projects, and other manifestations that convey cultural messages throughout historical time.

Through the interpretative lenses of Cultural Psychology, we can study the dynamic and systemic interconnection between peace-building perspectives that interact at micro, meso, and macro levels, suggesting paths for the active promotion of a Culture of Peace.

To deepen our understanding, we will address the following aspects: (1) a complex developmental process of multidimensional coconstruction; (2) the agency of the subject in the face of the cultural coconstruction of peace; (3) the issue of social motivation, coexistence and values for peace; (4) transculturality and cultural co-construction; and (5) the promotion of Education for the Culture of Peace.

Culture of Peace as a developmental process of multidimensional coconstruction

Human development and cultural processes produce dynamic systems that are mutually constitutive, promoting a permanent tension between changes and conservative struggles to maintain the stability of the systems. Therefore, how can we cause transformations that lead to a culture of peace? Understanding a culture of peace as the entire set of actions and practices that promote human and social development, and violence as everything that prevents or hinders such development (Galtung, 1989), we find it crucial to analyze both intra- and intersubjective processes involved in peace co-construction.

Conceiving culture as a processual phenomenon, we can understand 'Culture of Peace' as *an interconnected and dynamic set of interpersonal, intrapersonal and socio-environmental coconstructions that promote development and are in line with principles of respect, ethics, citizenship, justice, solidarity, sustainability, etc. that underpin values, attitudes, relationships and social structures that prioritize life, human dignity, peaceful coexistence and planetary life.*

The *interpersonal dimension* - Recognizing the synchronous and interconnected mosaic of dimensions that integrate intersubjective relationships, between people and between humans and the environment, we conclude that a culture of peace requires the coconstruction of peaceful interactive and communicative contexts. Human interactions should be based on respect and appreciation for the singularities and diversities that coexist in different social contexts. This approach implies redefining or transforming contexts and relationships guided by prejudice, discrimination, and other visible and invisible forms of violence.

The *intrapersonal dimension* - The cultural production of peace involves a dynamic, subjective process of co-constructing beliefs, values, attitudes, habits, and actions at a personal level, which is coherent with a 'Culture of Peace'. This dimension encompasses individual psychological processes within the scope of self-development.

The *socio-environmental dimension* refers to the creative process of co-constructing concepts and actions that align with the experience, creation, and preservation of natural ecosystems and social well-being, in line with the components and peaceful principles of healthy coexistence. It means sustainability and a strengthened awareness of belonging and citizen co-responsibility. This dimension can manifest itself in the continuous development of ethical and democratic policies and practices, as well as inclusive architecture, institutional organization, nature preservation, and sustainability practices, in documents, standards, and rules, as well as in agreed-upon routines, among others.

The three dimensions above are in constant dynamic interconnection. At an intrapersonal level, the development of values and the development of ethical skills and attitudes that value personal and collective singularities interact with what takes place at an interpersonal

level, promoting interactions and communications inspired by mutual respect, empathy, and solidarity. Both dimensions interact with the socio-environmental level, where the construction of inclusive environments should guarantee living and coexistence based on the principles of justice and equity, encompassing social, physical, architectural, and legal domains, among others. The inherent interconnection of the three dimensions produces experiences and practices that contribute to a permanent orientation towards the dynamic coconstruction of a Culture of Peace (Figure 2).

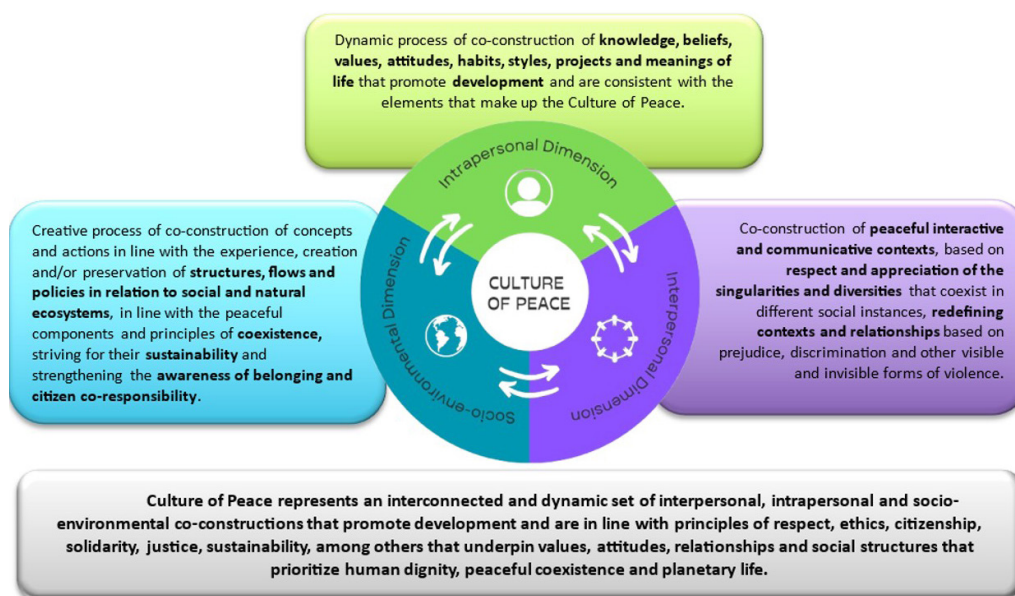


Figure 2. Interpersonal, intrapersonal, and socio-environmental dimensions of peace.

Note: Graphic design by the authors.

As seen previously, peaceful values canalized by cultural relationships and messages begin to impact the reading and meaning of contexts, situations, stories, and decisions, redefining practices and promoting development. The processes of active internalization of social messages and active externalization of experiences of pro-sociability and cooperation, consistent with the principles of peace, would have repercussions in the micro, meso, and macro relational fields.

Recognizing education as a privileged space for cultural co-construction, the dynamic interconnection can be observed from the interactions, relationships, and communications established in the different dimensions presented. As an example, peaceful actions aimed at respecting diversity in the school context can encompass, at an interpersonal level, the promotion of interactions and communications inspired by mutual respect, empathy and solidarity through the proposal of cooperative activities by empathic teachers; at an intrapersonal level, the promotion of such prosocial interactions may lead to the development of values, ethical skills and attitudes that respect personal and collective singularities; and, at a socio-environmental level, the construction of inclusive environments would favor coexistence based on principles of justice and equity, encompassing care and respect for life in our planet. The implicit interconnection of the three dimensions produces experiences and practices that contribute to a permanent orientation (process) towards the dynamic co-construction of the Culture of Peace.

Subject agency in the cultural coconstruction of peace

Considering the irreversibility of time and the orientation towards objectives that characterizes human development (Valsiner, 2021), history is co-constructed as a field of possibilities, rather than one of determinism, favoring processes of change based on the subject's actions. The subject's transformative potential can operate over realities situated at the micro, meso, and macro levels, permeating individual, family, community, society, and other global contexts.

Cultural Psychology emphasizes the non-deterministic nature of cultural canalization, affirming the subject's potential for resistance (Chaudhary et al., 2017). That is, immersion in scenarios of direct, structural, and ideological violence does not necessarily determine that the subject will become violent, since the person can actively re-signify and reorient his/her goals and life trajectory in other directions. It is noteworthy that such redirections can be especially facilitated by encounters with new people and/or cultural references in new contexts based on experiences and practices inspired by non-violence and prosociality. For example, an adolescent raised in a violent context can redirect his/her trajectory by identifying with a motivated teacher who provides him/her with new experiences inspired by peaceful principles of coexistence, engaging the adolescent in creative and cooperative activities, and supporting him/her in peaceful resolution of conflicts.

Therefore, immersion in cultural scenarios of violence does not necessarily determine its repetition in cycles of violent experiences, and individuals can, based on their agency, intentionality, and criticality, actively participate in the co-construction of a culture of peace. It is the actions carried out by individual subjects in specific spaces and times that can promote significant cultural transformations, leading to new systemic reconfigurations of the self in its relationships with others and the world. Such actions help move the Culture of Peace from the ethereal realm of being a distant ideal to the concrete realm of present reality.

Peace and ethical-moral development: a process of mutual construction

Ethics and morality refer to the dignity and value of human existence. Understanding ethics as the collective, social and political dimension of human relations, and morals as the subjective dimension of the individual (Freitag, 1997), we notice that ethics (social) and morality (subjective) are part of the same psychological phenomenon, which refer to the quality of human relations and sociocultural practices.

Morality (personal) and ethics (collective) guide individual conduct and are dynamically and mutually constituted throughout experiences and interpersonal relationships (Branco, 2023). It can be said, then, that the ethics of the group are based on the collective culture (shared meanings, rules, and norms of the group), while the morality of the subject is constituted based on his/her personal culture. Therefore, Culture and personal agency promote human ethical-moral development (Branco; Freire; González, 2012).

From a Cultural Psychology perspective, Branco (2023) argues that the investigation of moral and ethical phenomena must consider how human beings internalize values and rules of moral conduct, and how these are transformed into concrete patterns of interaction and relationships in their interpersonal relationships. After all, people are constituted according to the definition of right or wrong in each context, considering its conventions and social coexistence rules. So, for Cultural Psychology, beliefs and values are marked by each culture, but, according to Branco (2023), some ethical-moral principles can be generalized because they enable the very existence of societies, which depend on the institution of some fundamental norms and rules that allow for a sustainable and productive social organization, despite being multiple and diverse.

Social motivation, coexistence, and values for peace

The coconstruction of peace involves the dynamics between collective culture and the individual's personal culture, leading us to analyze social motivations and behavioral tendencies that arise from beliefs and values co-constructed through social interactions.

Cultural messages can present implicit (indirect) or explicit (direct) suggestions that are, or are not, in line with peaceful principles of coexistence. Therefore, cultural canalization processes derived from such messages guide preferences, interpretations, motivations, and social values, which may be aligned with inclusion, solidarity, and a Culture of Peace, or with discrimination, prejudice, and oppression, among other elements of a culture of violence.

Branco, Manzini and Palmieri (2012) differentiate three basic types of social motivations: (1) cooperation: interactive context in which the actions of participants favor the achievement of everyone's goal; (2) competition: pursuit of mutually exclusive goals; and 3) individualism: selfish, corporatist, self-centered with hostile, competitive dispositions. The authors warn

(and question) that “ultimately, individualism acquires the status of an ethical principle and moral rule” (p. 99), emphasizing cooperation as fundamental to the motivational disposition that will result in behaviors compatible with respect, justice, solidarity, responsibility, and democracy.

Just as the cultural logics of competition and individualism operate in opposition to constructing a Culture of Peace, prejudices and discriminatory practices arise from stereotypes with historical, sociocultural, and ideological bases, consolidating rigid emotional and social boundaries that reproduce inequalities and impact collective life (Madureira; Branco, 2012). For this reason, prosocial values and interactions—such as generosity, empathy, sympathy, and cooperation—should be especially encouraged in both formal and informal relations and educational contexts.

This can be achieved in multiple ways, through transforming pedagogical and cultural practices by adopting a dialogical paradigm in teacher-student interactions and actively promoting new, creative, and cooperative activities to foster prosociality and mutual respect in the school context, learning to live together based on diversity, rather than despite it. The same should be done in family life, where the examples set by parents in peacefully resolving conflicts can have a fundamental impact on human development. Values and human rights are essential paths to guarantee and promote a better life for all, considering the multidimensional coexistence and the motivational sources that are expressed in the interpersonal, intrapersonal, and socio-environmental spheres, thereby stimulating peaceful actions that foster development.

Transculturality and cultural coconstruction

Transculturality implies interactions of respect, understanding, and communication between different cultures; it does not correspond to a simple coexistence of different cultures (multiculturality). It implies respect for and actual interchange between diverse social identities, cultural co-productions, plus integration yet preserving singular characteristics.

Collaborative and prosocial transcultural processes are valued, respecting the cultural roots that nourish the mosaic of multiple identities and nations. To this end, interactive processes must adopt a cooperative and constructive paradigm, characteristic of a collaborative dynamic of cultural appreciation, rather than a dominating and destructive paradigm characteristic of practices of cultural exclusion. Recognizing our shared humanity across different nationalities, ethnicities, and communities implies acknowledging the interdependence and complexity of cultural webs, and prioritizing the development of ethical and moral values, as well as human rights.

According to Lederach (2011), “the construction of social change is the art of seeing and building networks” (p. 96). Under the illustrative meaning of ‘web’, culture is understood as an interdependent network of meanings, senses, and construction of learning, through which culture reveals its dynamic, relational, diverse, and complex nature: “in peacebuilding, relational centers that hold, create, and sustain connections are fundamental” (p. 97).

Inspired by the “world system” perspective and the appreciation of the cultural roots that constitute individual and collective development, Suliveres and Morán (2020) highlight the relevance of working from a “systemic peace” (p. vi), which considers the realities of our communities, peoples and societies, and promotes environments of justice, freedom, democracy and dignity.

In line with this conception, Morin (2019) argues that “the more the trend towards globalization accelerates, the more there should be a counterpoint of local initiatives”, and such “places” should also be “globally reconnected” (p. 49). Morin (2019) highlights the need to exercise legitimate fraternity, understood as mutual aid, cooperation, union and solidarity based on affection, whether resulting from long-lasting relationships (family ties, friendships, professional relationships, among others), or emerging from temporary interactions (meetings, celebrations, demonstrations and other casual contexts). The philosopher reports the existence of an “open fraternity” (inclusive) and a “closed fraternity” (exclusive to outgroups), warning of the risks of isolation and segregation that contradict human coexistence. From this perspective, the latter tends to close itself off hermetically and inhumanly in nationalism, conceiving of one’s

nation as superior and legitimizing exclusionary and oppressive practices towards any other nation, while disregarding the inclusive interconnection typical of planetary co-responsibility. Morin (2019) also highlights the importance of expanding our awareness of human community and anthropological identity to recognize and value aspects that identify us as Humanity and differentiate us as individuals and nations: “[...] human unity is the treasure of human diversity, human diversity is the treasure of human unity” (p. 41).

Despite the heterogeneous values and variations in ethical-moral codes that can coexist in different cultures, Branco (2021) states that it is possible to conceive negotiation exercises that address both local and universal aspects concerning ethics and morality, because some basic principles are fundamental for group coexistence. These universal principles generate “a consensus towards the preservation of life, in the context of human groups and societies” (p. 68).

Recognizing the diversity of the parts implies considering the creative dynamism of the whole, while considering the dynamic fabric of the whole implies valuing the unique richness of the parts. Valuing local, regional, and national realities, listening, and taking initiatives effectively legitimize peaceful actions based on the necessary cultural contextualization, without hardening the boundaries of contact and coexistence with other cultures, as we coexist in a process of real interconnection and development. Since we inhabit the same “pale blue dot”¹ we are invited to fraternal coexistence not only as a principle or a purpose, but mainly as an experience worthy of living.

EDUCATION FOR THE CULTURE OF PEACE

Education is a privileged field that promotes human development, and Education for Peace is the active channeling of knowledge, efforts, and actions that invest in the citizenship formation of students, hopefully promoting attitudes and environments compatible with the peaceful principles of coexistence in its different dimensions.

As they constitute a locus of channeling and cultural co-construction, educational institutions assume strategic relevance for human and social development, based on the investment in students’ sense of citizenship, their ethical formation, and in the conscious use of knowledge for the benefit of Humanity, transcending curricular learning.

Understanding the role of teachers in the cultural canalization process, it is essential to pay attention to cultural messages expressed through contents, methodologies, relationships, discourses, norms, and structures, to evaluate whether they are coherent with the elements that promote the Culture of Peace.

In this regard, reflecting on the aspects that facilitate or hinder the co-construction of a Culture of Peace in schools, while considering different relational dimensions, tends to foster the development of practical and effective pathways grounded in the agency of the individuals involved. By way of illustration, the identification of cases of bullying, prejudice, and discrimination among students may promote preventive and intervention-oriented actions aimed at valuing diversity and fostering empathetic dialogue (interpersonal dimension); the identification of cases of low self-esteem, personal neglect, or self-harm among students may inspire initiatives directed toward personal development, self-knowledge, and self-appreciation (intrapersonal dimension); and the identification of a tense, inaccessible, or exclusionary school climate may encourage actions that enhance the physical, structural, and/or communicational organization, with a view to building a welcoming and inclusive environment (socio-environmental dimension).

To achieve this objective, the importance of providing adequate initial and continuing education to education professionals is highlighted, based on conceptions and practices that promote coherence between formal and lived, explicit and hidden curricula, to favor effective Education for Peace. From this perspective, we recognize educational spaces as privileged contexts for cultural co-constructions, inviting the school community to recognize themselves

¹ Reference by astronomer Carl Sagan to Earth, from the photograph taken on 02/14/1990 by the Voyager 1 space probe, seen from six billion kilometers away.

as potential agents of peace, channeling processes that promote human development and peaceful citizens.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Recognizing the polyphony inherent in different areas of knowledge, Peace Studies and Research converge voices through integrative actions, fostering interdisciplinary dialogues, exchanges of experiences, inter-institutional approaches, and scientific productions. In this way, we can promote dialogues between perspectives, studies, research, and practical efforts that strengthen and inspire transformative actions, experiences, and peaceful coexistence, from micro to macro contextual dimensions.

This article aimed to identify relevant articulations between the theoretical foundations of Peace Education, Peace Studies and Research, and Cultural Psychology, emphasizing the role of processes of cultural coconstruction resulting from active internalizations and externalizations of cultural messages (cultural canalization processes) together with the subjects' agency in promoting peaceful coexistence among people.

Expanding our understanding of culture enables us to explore more effective paths for its coconstruction. By understanding it as a dynamic process rather than a final product, we transcend the position of spectators to become real agents of peace construction. Understanding the "Culture of Peace" from a coconstructive and dynamic perspective expands possibilities for actions that transcend a simple reduction of violence, by promoting preventive and intervention actions in favor of peace and social development in its multiple dimensions.

The bidirectional process of cultural coconstruction between subject and culture highlights citizens' shared responsibility in promoting peaceful cultures inspired by coherent principles. Understanding culture as a systemic and processual field enables us to comprehend the interdependence between micro, meso, and macro ecosystems involved in human existence.

In short, we hope the contributions presented here can inspire the coconstruction of peaceful paths for human coexistence, strengthening the construction of bridges between scientific knowledge, cultural contexts, and educational practices conducive to Cultures of Peace.

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