

**Collaborative Flourishing:
Positive Peace in Businesses and Organizations**

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The HALO model differentiates between the concepts of negative and Positive Peace. Peace is often understood in terms of negative – that is, in terms of the *absence* of conflict, hostility, violence and so forth. However, while such conceptions tell us what peace is not, they fail to illuminate what must be present to produce peace. Focusing on peace within nations, the Institute for Peace and Economics has identified eight *pillars of peace* – a series of conditions that increase the likelihood of peace within any given nation. In this way, the eight pillars specify the conditions for *Positive Peace* – the conceptions that must be present for peace to occur.

In this paper, I extend the analysis of Positive Peace from the study of nations to the study of businesses and other organizations. I first elaborate further on the concept of peace itself. Building the concept of Positive Peace, I argue that peace cannot and should not be defined as a conflict-free state. Conflict is inevitable in human relations. Peace is the state of being able to *manage conflict* between people without resorting to violence or hostility. There are many ways in which conflicts can be managed within and between social groups. Conflict arises when parties take sides and adopt different positions on a given issue. A primary way of resolving conflict involves meeting the unmet needs that motivate parties to adopt different positions on an issue. From this point of view, it follows that *peace* is the state that arises as parties are able *to identify and meet the needs, interests and concerns that underlie and motivate conflicting stances and positions on a given issue*.

I suggest that the eight pillars increase the likelihood of peace within a given nation for several reasons. First, they create an infrastructure that meets the basic needs of people in society. As a result, conflicts over basic needs (e.g., food, shelter, employment) never get a chance to arise and fester. Second, the pillars reflect the functioning of a system that allows for peaceful resolution of conflict when it arises (e.g., processes that give people a voice in decision making). Third, depending on the society, pillars reflect the operation of a shared cultural ethos – a set of shared beliefs, values and norms that identify the proper ways in which conflicts can and should be addressed (e.g., democratic debate in individualist nations; the quest for harmony in many Asian nations).

Having elaborated on the concept of peace as the capacity for collaborative problem-solving, I then apply the Halo model to an analysis of the functioning of businesses and organizations. It is often stated that the primary reason for the existence of a business is profit, and that businesses should operate for the express purpose of serving the interests of shareholders. This

view arguably brings the profit motive – the goal of shareholders, CEOs and owners – into conflict with the needs of employees. However, building on the Halo model, I ask: To what extent do the eight pillars of peace describe the functioning of business and organizations that are both financially successful and that produce high levels of job satisfaction by employees? What accounts for the success of such organizations in coordinating financial success and employee satisfaction?

The Halo Approach

The Institute of Peace and Economics (IPE) has elaborated the Halo approach to understanding the processes that produce Positive Peace. While the concept of peace is traditionally understood in terms of what is absent – conflict, hostility, violence – the concept of Positive Peace is defined in terms of what must be present in order to sustain peaceful societies (IEP, 2021, 2025). Positive Peace consists of the “attitudes, institutions, and structures that create and sustain peaceful societies, based on a systemic approach to the functioning of society” (IEP, 2025, p. 4). Systems thinking is central to the concept of Positive Peace. At its most basic, a system consists of any set of parts that function together as a whole. A major tenet of systems thinking is the idea of non-independence. In any system, while the parts of a system are distinct from each other, they are not independent. The parts of a system exert mutual influences on each other. A change in one part of a complex system typically produces changes in other parts of the system. At any given point in time, the state of a complex system is a product of the ways in which the parts of the system mutually influence and constrain each other within the contexts in which it operates. One cannot understand the functioning of a system unless one understands how the parts influence each other over time. Conversely, one cannot understand the operation of any single part of a system without understanding the ways in which it affects and is affected by other aspects of the system.

A society is a complex system. It is made up of a suite of deeply interconnected subsystems each of which operate in part according to their own principles. A society is composed of *institutions* – government, businesses, schools, churches and other organizations. It is organized around shared and contested beliefs, attitudes and practices – moral and social norms, beliefs about personhood and social relations, how to govern, how to distribute goods. Such beliefs are distributed in complex ways throughout society and weave themselves through social institutions. A society is organized around structures – relations within between and among institutions, attitudes and practices – hierarchical, horizontal, heterarchical or the like. From the standpoint of the Halo approach, the path to establishing Positive Peace is to (a) create an accessible understanding of the systemic working of society; (b) identify the core systems and structures that provide the infrastructure for Positive Peace, and (c) work toward the task of building those systems and structures.

The term Halo is used to shed light on IEP’s systemic approach to understanding Positive Peace and bringing it into existence. Like a halo, the systemic IEP framework “encircles and illuminates” the systemic process of fostering societal development toward the ends of

peacefulness and social resilience. A halo suggests illuminates the endpoints that we should seek while simultaneously reminding us of the goodness of the ends we seek to produce.

The Eight Pillars of Positive Peace

The IEP group has identified a system of eight basic pillars of Positive Peace. Each pillar identifies a condition that has been empirically shown to be characteristic of nations that are associated with low levels of intractable conflict, violence and hostility (negative peace). Together, the eight pillars form a system of non-independent conditions for creating and sustaining Positive Peace. The eight pillars are identified in Figure 1.

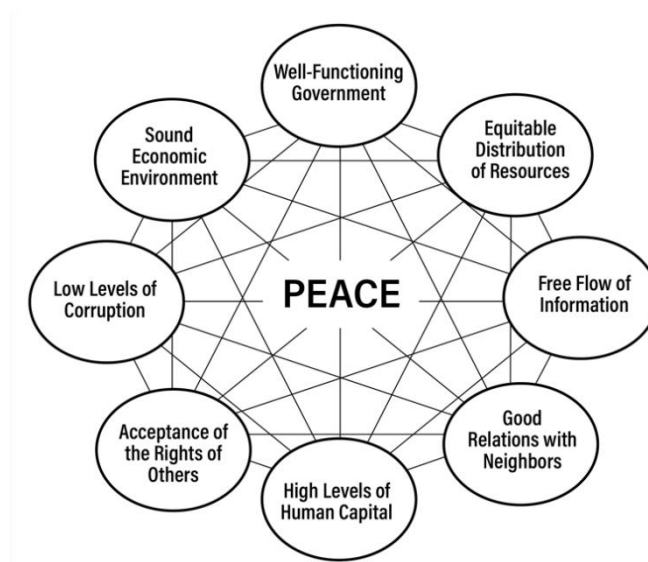


Figure 1. The Eight Pillars of Positive Peace

- **Well-Functioning Government.** Government that provides high-quality civic and public services, ensures participation of the people, fosters trust, exhibits political stability, and maintains the rule of law.
- **Sound Business Environment.** Economic conditions and a well-functioning private sector allowing for the sustained production and distribution of financial resources.
- **Equitable Distribution of Resources.** Fair and equitable access to resources such as income, healthcare, education and other parts of the physical and social infrastructure.
- **Acceptance of the Rights of Others.** Shared beliefs, norms and laws that are committed to ensuring basic human rights and freedoms.
- **Good Relations with Neighbors.** Harmonious relations with other nations and among religious, ethnic or cultural groups within a nation.
- **Free Flow of Information.** Free and independent media that distributes information that enables individuals, businesses and society at large to make informed decisions about personal, economic, social and civic matters.

- **High Levels of Human Capital.** Capacity to produce educated, skilled and trained individuals at sufficiently high levels to sustain core social, civic, economic activity.
- **Low Levels of Corruption.** Low levels of dishonest or fraudulent activity reflects an attitude of confidence and trust needed to support the effective and efficient functioning of social institutions.

Based on these pillars of peace, the IPE has developed a *Positive Peace Index*, a compendium of 23 indicators of reflecting the eight pillars of Positive Peace. Using this index, IEP has ranked 163 countries of the world (covering 99.7 percent of the world's population). They have also developed the *Global Peace Index*, which assesses three broad categories of peaceful and nonpeaceful activity: (a) the level of safety and security in a society; (b) the extent of domestic and international conflict, (c) degree of militarization. Rankings on the Positive Peace Index are highly correlated with measures of the Global Peace Index. Most nations with high levels of Positive Peace tend to have lower levels of conflict, high levels of security, and low levels of domestic militarization (and vice-versa). Exceptions to this rule come in the form of nations who have high levels of Positive Peace, but which lack the socio-economic infrastructure to support stable social and economic functioning.

The Virtues and Vices of Systemic Processes

We often think of the problems of society as a set of separate and independent issues. Education, poverty, crime, inequality, immigration, climate change are seen as more or less separate issues that each require their own tailored solutions. This is perhaps understandable. The problems of society are large and even overwhelming. To deal with the complexity, it is often helpful to break the problem of society down to seemingly more manageable chunks and address them one by one. This strategy is helpful in reducing cognitive load imposed on us by looming issues. It can also be helpful in addressing smaller, local or self-contained problems. However, most of our most pressing problems are encased or not self-contained ones; they are systemic issues that cannot be solved by thinking of any particular social problem in isolation.

Societies, organizations and other social groups are complex systems. As complex systems, they are composed of many parts that mutually regulate each other. One cannot seek to resolve problems with any single element or process within a system without understanding the ways in that element affects and is affected by other processes in the system. Three principles can help understand how complex systems function, and thus how patterns of peace and violence themselves function as complex systems. These principles include (a) *multiple and relational causality*; (b) *positive and negative feedback*, and (c) *virtuous and vicious cycles*. These three principles build upon each other.

Multiple and Relational Causality. We ordinarily think of why things happen in terms of the simple concept of cause and effect. Something that happens at an earlier point in time exerts a force on some object or event and causes it to change in some way. A pool cue hits a ball and

propels it into motion. Putting pressure on the pedal causes the bicycle to move. Smoking causes cancer. Such explanations are helpful when we are speaking casually or when we want to understand how things work in simple situations.

Complex outcomes are rarely the result of any single prior cause, or even of multiple different causes acting independently. Because a system is a set of elements that influence each other over time, the operation of a system is a product of multiple influences acting together. Further, because the elements of the system are not independent of one another, it is difficult if not impossible to identify or isolate the causal force of single element on the functioning of the system. Instead, it is more helpful to think of complex systems as operating on the principle of relational causality. The cause of an outcome is not to be found in the individual elements, but instead in the *relations* among those component parts.

A simple example can illustrate this point. It is common for people to suggest that there is a causal relationship between cigarette smoking and cancer. To be sure, people who smoke are more likely to develop cancer. However, most people who smoke do not develop cancer. This is because the toxins in the cigarette do not act alone. The functioning of the immune system plays a central role in the process by which toxins affect the growth of cancers. More important, the various influences on cancer do not operate independently. Cancer does not result from the independent effects of either the toxin or the immune system or both at the same time; it arises from the relation between these elements of the biological system. An immune system that regulates toxins will ward off cancer; one that fails to do so will enable its growth.

Peace and violence are not products of any single pillar of peace, or even of the cumulative effect of each pillar acting independently. The various pillars influence each other and participate in each other's functioning. A society that has a sound economic foundation will be more likely to develop a physical and social infrastructure to meet people's needs. A nation that values the *rights of people* will be more likely to be able provide a more-or-less *equitable distribution of resources*. *Equitable distribution of resources* will increase the likelihood of producing *high quality education*, which will produce *high quality human capital* need to support businesses and a *well-functioning government*. The eight pillars interact in complex ways to produce systems of peace (or violence).

Positive and Negative Feedback. It is, of course, easy to say that the components of a complex system affect each other over time. However, this truism is a simplification of an already complex process. To understand how systems function, it is important to understand *how* various system elements and pillars affect each other. There are many ways in which system elements affect each other. Two central ways in which elements can be related include the formation of positive and negative feedback.

Positive feedback occurs when the output from one process amplifies the output of another process. An example of positive feedback occurs when messages "go viral" in social media. As people like or share a particular message, it is made available to more people, who then like or share the message, which makes it available to more people, and so forth. Sharing a liked

message produces a positive feedback loop that increases the possibility that it will “go viral”. Negative feedback occurs when the output of one system negates the functioning of another. For example, consider two systems: a thermometer and a furnace. The thermometer monitors the temperature in the room and sends signals to a switch which turns on or off a furnace. The furnace will stay “on” as long as the temperature in the room is below a certain point. When the temperature reaches the point, the furnace is turned off. In this example, feedback from one process (the thermometer), negates the operation of the other (the furnace). Negative feedback works in the other direction as well, as the temperature in the room falls *below* the set point, the furnace will be turned *on*.

In the Halo model, positive and negative feedback loops abound. A *well-functioning government* will attract *high quality human capital*; this, in turn with increase the quality of government functioning, further attracting quality personnel, and so forth (positive feedback). The opposite is also true, a poorly functioning government will attract less qualified personnel, which will further reinforce the poor functioning of the government (positive feedback). *Free flow of information* in a society will make it more difficult to hide dishonesty and malfeasance, leading to states of *low corruption*; in turn, the establishment of norms for low corruption can perpetuate the free flow of information. Examples of negative feedback are also apparent. A simple example involves the role of *free flow of public opinion* on the *functioning of government*. When the public disapproves of government action, public opinion provides negative feedback that can reverse public policy; conversely, a change in public policy can function to remove the negative public opinion.

Virtuous Cycles, Vicious Cycles, and Attractors

It is only a few steps from positive and negative feedback loops to the development of virtuous and vicious cycles (Lalaounis & Nayak, 2022). The examples provided above describe mutual relations between two component processes (e.g., *free flow of information* and *functioning of government*). Complex systems, of course, are composed of multiple component processes. A *virtuous cycle* is one in which patterns of positive and negative feedback between and among elements in a system affect each other in such a way to produce a *stable desirable pattern* of functioning within the system. A *vicious cycle* occurs when elements affect each other in such a way as to reinforce stable undesirable patterns of activity¹.

¹ Consider the phenomenon of a father and daughter in at the candy aisle at the supermarket. Imagine that the youngster asks for candy and the father declines her request, saying that it will spoil her dinner. With more emotion, the child asks again and is again met with refusal. The cycle of mutual escalation (positive feedback). At one point, to silence his increasingly embarrassing daughter, the father “gives in” and buys the candy. This example illustrates how both positive and negative feedback produce a vicious cycle. Because each person’s behavior amplifies the other’s, the behavior of the child and the father form a positive feedback loop. The pair enter a negative feedback loop when the father “gives in” to his daughter’s request. At this point, the father’s feedback (the yielding of the candy) causes the child’s escalation to stop. From the standpoint of the father, the cycle is a vicious one in which the mutual escalation yields an undesired result. The daughter, of course, may see the situation differently.

Different patterns among system components result as a product of the specific ways in which elements of a system influence each other. Depending on the ways elements influence each other, systems organize themselves into either stable or unstable states. A stable pattern of relations among elements in a system is sometimes called an *attractor*. Attractors are typically the result of a *virtuous* or *vicious* cycles of interactions that occurs among system elements. Stable patterns of peace and hostility are the results of virtuous and vicious cycles. The more pillars of peace that are operative within a social system, the more likely that system is to organize itself into a system of Positive Peace. The fewer pillars that exist in the system, the more likely the system will exhibit signs of hostility, violence and unresolved conflict.

The key to creating stable peace is to foster the development of pillars of peace within any given social system. As the various pillars develop, they will influence each other in ways that produce virtuous cycles that are mutually reinforcing and self-sustaining. Although the process of cultivating a peaceful society is a gradual one, once a critical degree of coordination among pillars of peace occurs, systems tend to enter virtuous cycles and progress is accelerated.

Positive Peace as the Capacity to Manage Inevitable Conflict

When we think of peace, we often imagine a state of harmony among people. We imagine a state that is free from conflict and where people can interact without discord, hostility and violence. However, peace is not simply the absence of conflict. The eight pillars of Positive Peace identify optimal conditions for the *building* of peace within a society or social group. However, if peace is not the mere absence of conflict, what do we refer when we speak of *peace* per se? That is, what is it that we call *peace* in the concept of Positive Peace?

Conflict is inevitable in any community or set of relationships. If this is so, then peace cannot simply correspond to the absence of conflict. Instead, peace must have something to do with how conflicts are managed within and between individuals and communities. A conflict is form of opposition between two or more things. There are, of course, many types of conflicts that emerge within human societies and relationships. At base, however, social conflict results when people compete over the conditions and resources that they believe that they need to meet their needs, interests and concerns. If this is true, then it follows that peace occurs when people do not feel the need to resort to hostility to meet their needs and interests. As a result, we can think of peace not as the *absence of conflict*, but instead as the *presence of forms and systems of collaboration* that allow people to meet their needs and interests without resorting to force, hostility or violence.

From this framework, one might ask, how do the eight pillars function to foster states of Positive Peace? From the ongoing perspective, the question becomes one of understanding how the eight pillars provide a systemic infrastructure for identifying, coordinating and meeting the

varied needs of individuals and groups that compose of any given community. This question calls for some type of system for understanding the needs and interests that humans seek to meet. Many such frameworks have been proposed (Bernard & Lac, 2014; Braithwaite & Law 1985; Chulef, Read, & Walsh, 2001; Fiske, 2008; Ford & Nichols, 1987; Grouzet et al., 2005; Kenrick et al., 2010; Maslow, 1970; Reiss, 2004; Schwartz, 1992; Talevich et al., 2017; Wicker et al., 1984). While there is little consensus about the core needs that humans have – or even if they have any at all – Table 1 identifies several broad categories of human needs that have appeared across many of the lists of needs that have been proposed.

Because they form a system, the pillars of peace operate in complex ways to meet the human needs of members of any given social group. As a result, the various pillars are not independent in how they function to meet social needs. Nonetheless, some pillars may be more relevant than others in the process of meeting particular classes of human needs. The right-hand portion of Table 1 identifies pillars of peace that are likely to be particularly relevant in meeting different classes of social needs.

Table 1
Common Human Needs

		Government	Economic	Corruption	Rights	Human Capital	Good Neighbor	Information	Equity
EXISTENTIAL NEEDS									
Biological	Survival, Air, Food, Water, Sleep	x	x						
Safety	Protection, Shelter	x		x	x				x
AGENCY									
Autonomy	Freedom, Independence, Effectance, Self-Determination, Self-Expression, Self-Interest	x	x	x	x			x	x
Dignity	Respect, Worth, Identity				x				
Purpose	Meaning, Significance, Mattering		x		x				
Esteem	Status, Recognition		x		x				
Pleasure	Fun, Play, Leisure	x	x		x				
COMMUNION									
Love	Affection, Connection, Intimacy, Care								
Relational	Trust, Honesty, Reciprocity, Recognition				x				
Community	Belonging, Participation, Contribution, Social Identity				x		x	x	x
Economic	Employment, Resources, Healthcare, Opportunity	x	x		x	x			x
Peace	Beauty, Tranquility, Nonviolence	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

As shown in Table 1, one might suggest the pillars of peace identified by the IPE operate in ways that would appear to address the full complement of human needs – with the possible exception of needs related to love. This is not surprising. Social relations at the level of the nation operate primarily within the public rather than the private sphere. The need for love and concerns about interpersonal relationships are largely seen to be the domain of the private sphere. The eight pillars thus address public needs related to the autonomy, economic well-being, safety, dignity, rights and the social identifications of community members. Peace is threatened when attempts to meet such needs are thwarted. The conditions of Positive Peace create infrastructures that allow citizens to meet these needs without undue force.

Positive Peace Goes to Market: Collaborative Flourishing in Businesses

It is widely believed that the primary purpose of a business is to pursue profit. Milton Friedman famously argued that a company's primary responsibility is to produce profit for its shareholders. From this view, the needs of employees and other stakeholders are secondary. From the standpoint of market-based theory, the needs of employees, customers and other stakeholders are met through the proper pursuit of profit. To make a profit, a company must produce quality goods and services, which serves the needs of customers. Employee needs are met as they are adequately compensated for their productivity and contributions in creating desirable goods and services.

Nonetheless, it is broadly recognized that the desire for profit tends to compete with the needs of people who produce a company's goods and services. If the primary goal of a company is to produce profit, then all other goals and activities function as a means toward that end. Organizations tend to be set up hierarchically where owners and higher-level managers, CEOs, presidents, owners and boards are responsible for directing the activities of lower-level workers in ways that increase efficiency and productivity. In such organizations, employees are not treated as ends unto themselves; they are understood as *means* toward the primary end of turning a profit. To the extent that the needs of employees are taken into consideration, the goal of meeting those needs is seen as a necessary cost of doing business. If the primary goal is profit, concern for human well-being is secondary.

Peaceful nations tend to be those with well-functioning governments and sound economic foundations. They respect the rights of others, provide for free and open communication, and seek to provide a degree of equity in the allocation of resources. As a result, they have comparatively low levels corruption and good relations with their neighbors. The pillars of peace identify social, political, economic and moral foundations that support economic success while simultaneously allowing nations to meet the human needs of their citizens. Businesses and organizations are complex social systems. They operate according to systems principles. Might the pillars of peace provide a model for understanding how businesses can pursue profit while simultaneously seeking to meet the needs of their stakeholders? Might the Halo approach provide systematic ways to think about and address the perennial conflicts that occur between management and labor (Messmann, Evers & Kreijns, 2022)?

In what follows, I apply the HALO framework to an analysis of the functioning of business and organizations. In so doing, first adapt the eight pillars of peace to the business context. I then examined extant literature related to the ways in which the eight pillars function broadly within the context of business and organizations, and particularly their relationships to job satisfaction, level of conflict in organizations, and worker productivity. The results strongly demonstrate that

job satisfaction and worker productivity are strongly enhanced in organizations that function according to the pillars of peace. Job satisfaction and productivity are enhanced when organizations foster a *culture of collaboration* through the medium of *socio-emotionally intelligent* communication. Drawing on the existing literature, I propose a process model of *collaborative flourishing* – the process by which organizations can pursue prosperity by treating productivity and human well-being as flip sides of the same social process.

Pillars of Collaboration in Businesses

Figure 2 contains an adaptation of the eight pillars of peace to the context of business. To develop the model, I first reframed the different pillars of peace in terms that are relevant to the business process. I then reviewed large bodies of literature related to the adapted model, and particularly literature related to how measures of the eight adapted pillars relate to job satisfaction, level of conflict and productivity in the workplace. I then adapted the model further to the content and findings of the research reviewed.

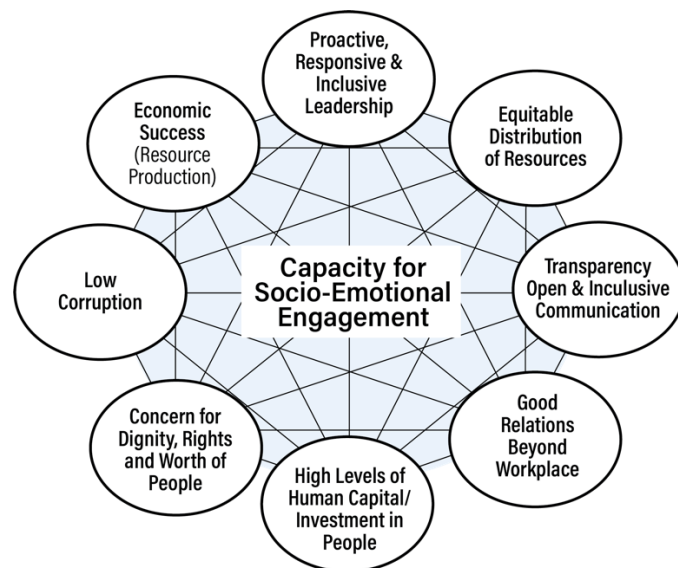


Figure 2: Pillars of Collaborative Flourishing in Business

The pillars of collaborative flourishing include:

- **Proactive, Responsive and Inclusive Leadership.** Leadership that combines proactive guidance and decision making with responsiveness to employee needs and expertise. Includes authoritative, transformative leadership oriented toward organizational, employee and product/service development.
- **Economic Success.** Sound economic planning leading to profit and long term financial success.

- **Equitable Distribution of Resources.** Fair and equitable access to resources needed for professional activity; manageable work demands, fair compensation, and access to quality healthcare and related economic supports.
- **Concern for the Dignity, Rights and Worth of People.** Infusion of moral values throughout the workplace that includes not only an appreciation for rights but also an affirmation of the dignity of workers, a concern their well-being, and/or a concern with moral values that define the company.
- **Good Relations Beyond the Workplace.** Positive relations with other business, moral reputation, capacity for corporate responsibility, and/or a concern with the well-being of stakeholders beyond the workplace (e.g., work-life balance).
- **Transparency, Open and Inclusive Communication.** Open and inclusive decision-making, desire for critical feedback from stakeholders (employees, customers, etc.), frequent but not overwhelming communication intraorganizational communication.
- **High Levels of Human Capital/Investment in People.** Capacity to recruit competent and high-level personnel; commitment to fostering employee professional development.
- **Low Levels of Corruption.** Professional behavior characterized by honesty and low levels of dishonest or fraudulent activity.
- **Capacity for Socio-Emotional Engagement.** Often called emotional intelligence, sensitive socio-emotional engagement refers to the capacity to relate to self and others in emotionally sensitive ways.

Research relating measures of these pillars to job satisfaction, productivity and profitability will be discussed below. Before examining that literature, two preliminary findings are important. Although there is a wealth of research assessing predictors of job satisfaction, comparatively less research exists that examines the degree of conflict present in organizations. Nonetheless, research indicates a strong relationship between job satisfaction and various measures of intraorganizational conflict.

Research demonstrates that conflict in the workplace takes many different forms, unequal compensation, social conflict (de Wijn et al., 2022), organizational, personal and communicative conflict (Pavlović et al., 2022), role conflict (lack of clarities about boundaries between roles; Parayitam et al., 2021), role ambiguity (lack of certainty of duties; Raub et al., 2021), support from managers (Yousaf, Shaukat & Umrani, 2021), work-life balance (Nickerson, 2023) and others forms of conflict. Research shows that people who report higher levels of satisfaction tend to be more productive in the workplace and tend to experience lower levels of conflict in the workplace (Jung, Soo & Ang, 2024; Parayitam et al., 2021; Üçok, & Torlak, 2024; Weider-Hatfield, Hatfield, 1995; Yousaf, Shaukat & Umrani, 2021). Emotional intelligence in managers and supervisors predicts their level of interpersonal engagement (Emmanue & Thampi, 2016). In what follows, although imperfect, I use job satisfaction as a proxy indicator of level of conflict in organizations.

The Central Role of Social-Emotional Engagement. A second important finding concerns the role of *emotional intelligence* in mediating the relationships between variables the predict job

satisfaction and productivity. There is an enormous literature on this literature. Although there is no clear single definition of emotional intelligence, Mayor and Salovey (1997) defined emotional intelligence² as “the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion; the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth (p. 9).

The research on emotional intelligence in business contexts overwhelming demonstrates the deep importance of emotionally sensitive communication in mediating workplace relations (Ramachandran et al., 2024; Saha et al., 2020). Research shows that differences in emotional intelligence among workers predicts job satisfaction; employee turnover, employee performance and productivity (Hasanah et al., 2024); level of conflict (Parent-Lamarche & Saade, 2024); capacity for conflict resolution (Sabie et al., 2020); commitment, engagement and attitudes toward work (Othman et al., 2024; Selvi & Aiswarya, 2023); employee thriving and development (Zhongmin, Zhou, & Blackman, 2024); the experience of positive versus negative emotions in the workplace (Loi, Golledge & Schutte, 2021); levels of stress (Alsufyani et al., 2024); deviant workplace behavior (Cox, Zawawi, & Yasin, 2022); workplace civility and incivility (Ramsey-Haynes, (2021); counter-productive work behavior (Dirican & Erdil, 2020); moral sensitivity (Guo et al., 2024); trust and emotional safety in the workplace; and other indicators of workplace thriving (Logasakthi, Prakash, & Singh, 2022; Xie, Chang, & Singh, 2021).

These findings suggest that the capacity for sensitive *socio-emotional engagement* – *the capacity to relate to self and others in emotionally sensitive ways* – is a central mediator of workplace flourishing. To the extent that peace consists of the capacity to manage conflict between people, one might suggest that the capacity for socio-emotional engagement functions as a ninth pillar of peace in the workplace. The capacity for sensitive socio-emotional engagement may function as the glue that mediates collaborative flourishing in the workplace.

The Process of Collaborative Flourishing in Organizations

² The concept of emotional intelligence is a popular one. It has been studied extensively in and out of business contexts. Despite its appeal and the robustness of findings using this concept, I use the concept with some reservation. Two issues are prominent. First, the concept of emotional intelligence builds on the general concept of intellectual *intelligence* – which is organized around the idea of broad-based or general ability. However, it is unclear that the emotional skills named by the term emotional intelligence are organized as a general or fixed ability. Socio-emotional skills are highly variegated and tied to different social domains and contexts. Second, the concept of emotional intelligence puts primacy on the concept of awareness of emotion, which is understood as a kind of internal experience. In this way, however, the term emotional intelligence may be a misnomer. What people call emotional intelligence involves skills that extend well beyond emotional awareness. They are perhaps better understood as socio-emotional skills, as they involve the capacity to represent to perspectives, emotions, rules, and norms of other people in social contexts. If what people call emotional intelligence is actually as aspect of socio-emotional skills understood more broadly, framing the concept as emotional intelligence runs the risk of misrepresenting the skills that are being studied. In this paper, I will refer to emotional intelligence using the phrase “socio-emotional engagement”.

Collaborative flourishing is the process through which businesses and organizations produce financial success through the process of promoting the development of both people and products. As shown in Figure 2, the nine pillars of collaborative flourishing interact in complex ways to produce businesses and organizations that optimally meet the needs of the full range of organizational stakeholders. As complex systems, it is difficult – if not impossible – to identify the pathways through which the various processes that make up a business affect each other over time. Nonetheless, against the backdrop of an awareness that systems are typically more complex than they seem, it is possible to offer a sketch of how the pillars and processes of collaborative flourishing work together to produce optimal outcomes for both profit and people. Such a model is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3 shows how (a) the nine pillars of collaborative flourishing (in blue) allow businesses to *coordinate and meet* the needs of both (b) employees (in yellow) and (c) business (red). At base, the traditional needs of business include *productivity* (economic³), *profit* (economic, autonomy) *reputation* (esteem) and the need to work toward its *mission* (purpose, community) if any. The needs of employees include *compensation and economic resources*, *dignity* (dignity, autonomy), *purposeful identity* (purpose, esteem), *participation in decision-making* (autonomy, community), *manageable working conditions* (economic, autonomy), *work-life balance*, a sense of *belonging* (community), and *job satisfaction* (autonomy, peace).

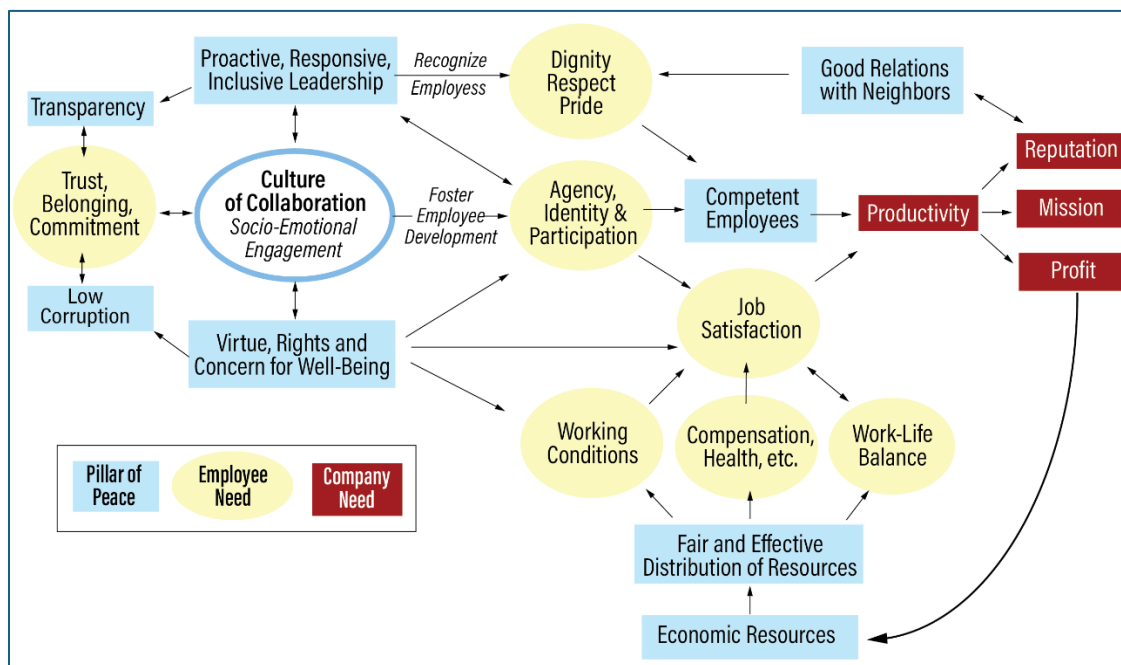


Figure 3. The Process of Collaborative Flourishing

The model of collaborative flourishing can be understood in terms of five basic principles.

³ Terms in parentheses indicate the broader category of human needs as indicated in Table 1.

1. **Collaborative culture and socio-emotional engagement is the embodiment of collaborative flourishing.** At base, collaborative flourishing is informed not by any set of policies or procedures, but instead by mindset and culture. Collaborative flourishing is facilitated by a culture of collaboration in which leaders are genuinely concerned with coordinating and meeting the full range of stakeholder needs. Such a culture must be an authentic one, one that is informed by a genuine commitment to both profit and people. This does not imply the formation of a horizontal organization. There is no contradiction between leadership and organizational culture that is simultaneously proactive in providing direction, guidance and decision making, and one which makes the concerns of employees and other stakeholders as central aspects of its core interests and mission. As indicated above, the capacity for socio-emotional engagement between and among employees – informed by a value system that supports such processes -- is perhaps the single most important vehicle for the creation of a collaborative culture (Bergethon & Davis, 2018; Jiang & Shen, 2023).
2. **Leadership and organizational culture set the stage.** Traditional models of organization structure tend to be hierarchical, where higher level officials set the goals and agendas that lower-level employees are expected to follow (FitzRoy & Nolan, 2022). With exceptions, compared to more inclusive and collaborative approaches to leadership, hierarchical approaches tend to result in lower levels of employee commitment, productivity, job satisfaction, and higher levels of distress, fear and insecurity among workers (Abdel-Halim, 1980; Külekci, Özbozkurt & Bahar, 2020; Palmer et al., 2024; Zhang, Zhao & Chen, 2022). In contrast, transformational, empowering and servant leadership approaches have the capacity to transform organizational culture (Buttigieg et al., 202), increase worker commitment and productivity, and reduce stress, fear, burnout and turnover in employees (Buttigieg et al., 2023; Das & Pattanayak, 2023; Kim, Kim & Lee, 2024). Decreased levels of perceived hierarchical power between employees is associated with higher levels of job satisfaction and performance (Abdel-Halim, 1980). Exemplary leadership – including what has been called transformational and servant leadership -- is associated with a desire to cultivate moral virtue in the self and the organization (Khan, Siddique & Khan, 2024; Logasakthi, Prakash & Singh, 2022; Mustafa, Vinsent & Badri, 2023; Sousa & Dierendonck, 2017; Tholen, 2023).

Effective leadership, however, is only as effective as the socio-moral organizational culture that it spawns and that supports it (Azhar, Zhe, & Simha, 2024; Roy et al., 2024; Jiang & Lin, 2022). Self-serving forms of leadership are associated with heightened levels of corruption in organizations (Gaganis, Pasiouras & Tasiou, 2024). However, forms of leadership that are simultaneously directing, collaborative and emotionally engaged are associated with enhanced levels of transparency and comparative low levels of corruption (Johnson et al., 2024; Halter, Arruda & Halter, 2009; Lestrangle & Tolstikov-Mast, 2013; Jiang & Shen, 2023) and higher levels of job satisfaction (Gaganis, Pasiouras & Tasiou, 2024). The capacity for socio-emotional engagement, however, is not to be equated with a laissez-faire approach to leadership. In the absence of proactive

direction, laissez-fair approaches tend foster problems parallel to those produced by authoritarian approaches (Samanta & Lamprakis 2018).

3. **Virtuous concern for human well-being fuels employee competence, satisfaction and productivity.** A common complaint about hierarchical organizations is the failure of higher-level managers to include lower-level employees in decision-making, including decision-making related to their local spheres of work (Tilton et al., 2024). In contrast, leaders who exhibit the capacity for socio-emotional engagement tend to have workers to exhibit enhances sense of autonomy and self-efficacy (Juujärvi, Nummela & Sinervo, 2023; Kennedy & Garewal, 2020; Yildiz & Simsek, 2016), higher levels of work commitment (Diskiene, Pauliene& Ramanauskaite, 2019), group cohesion (Zhang et al., 2024) and a sense of identification and belonging in relation to the company (Burhan, Khan & Malik, 2023; Li, et al., 2023; Urban, 2016). Employees who are respected, included and empowered in these ways report high levels of job satisfaction (Diskiene, Pauliene& Ramanauskaite, 2019; Yorulmaz & Ozbag, 2020).
4. **People Produce Profits When Profits Support People.** Companies that value and respect workers (Lagree et al., 2023; Mohammed, 2022), who affirm their dignity (Ahmed et al, 2023) and who invest in employee training and development (Vinberg, Gelin & Sandberg, 2000) have workers who are not only more satisfied, but who are also more competent and productive (Benham, 1993); Bhakuni & Saxena, 2023; Jiang & Shen, 2023). Worker productivity is enhanced in firms that provide manageable workloads (Herdiana & Sary, 2023), safe working conditions (Maryam, 2024; Mutegei, Joshua, & Kinyua, 2023) and equitable distributions of resources (Tenhiälä, Chung, & Park, 2024). Competent, productive employees contribute directly to the profitability of companies (Franklin, 1983; Nofriadi, Rafki & Oktarina, 2024; Vinberg, Gelin & Sandberg, 2000). Profits provide the means through which companies that care about their employees support them. Companies that use their resources to support the well-being of their employees have more satisfied and productive and loyal workers (Bhattacharya et al., 2023; Olii et al., 2024).
5. **Well-Being Ripples throughout the System.** The effects of investing in the well-being of workers extends beyond the company and back again. For example, employees who report having a work-life balance tend to be more satisfied and productive. As work pressures become more manageable, fatigue deceases and employee's sense of work-life balance increases (Hildenbrand et al., 2024). Further, the work-life balance of supervisors predicts the level of satisfaction that *supervisees* have with their supervisors (Malik et al., 2021). In this way, subtle (or profound) changes in working conditions can often ripple through the system in ways that lead to changes throughout the organization. For example, ethical leadership and productivity create financial success (Myer, Thoroughgood & Mohammed, 2016), which thereupon augments company reputation (Goldring, 2015) which attracts high quality human capital (Schaarschmidt, Walsh & Ivens, 2021), which further increase productivity (Wijavanti & Sari, 2024). Proactive and inclusive leadership increases levels of trust and belongingness of

employees (Huang et al., 2021), which increases feelings of emotional safety necessary for collaboration and productivity (Burhan et al., 2023). Even minor changes in key elements of a system iterate over time to produce virtuous (or vicious) cycles that can transform the culture of an organization. Success in one area or domain of functioning tends to beget success in others, while failure begets failure.

Peace and Prosperity through Collaborative Flourishing

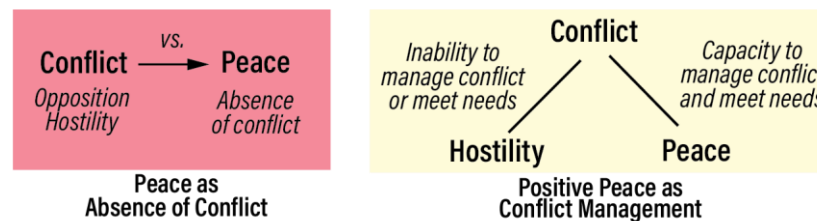


Figure 4: Negative and Positive Peace

Figure 4 shows two models of peace. The left panel shows the traditional conception where peace is contrasted with conflict. From this point of view, peace and conflict are opposites. The goal is to move from conflict to peace. The conception on the right rejects the idea that peace and conflict are opposites. Instead, it proceeds from the view that conflict is an inevitable aspect of life. If this is true, the peace is not so much the absence of conflict as much as it is the capacity to manage, resolve or transform conflict. Conflict arises when people compete over ways to meet their unmet needs, goals and concerns. If this is true, the peace is not so much the absence of conflict as it is the capacity to resolve conflict. To the extent that conflict is a ubiquitous aspect of the human condition, it follows that the opposite of peace is not conflict, but hostility. A peaceful system which provides the means to meet the full range of needs of all stakeholders. Under such a system, people need not resort to violence or force to meet their needs. Within and between nations, the eight pillars of peace provide a framework for understanding how a nation provides the means for coordinating and meeting the needs of its citizens without recourse to violence.

Figure 5 compares traditional and collaborative conceptions of business. To the extent that profit is regarded as the primary goal of business, businesses must perennially face an inescapable conflict, namely that between profit and people. As shown in the left panel of Figure 5, if the primary goal of business is profit, then a concern for the well-being of people is at best a secondary one. At worst, people are seen as a means toward the end of pursuing the primary goal of profit. We justify treating people as mere means through the provision of adequate compensation. However, to the extent that profit is the primary motive, the clash between profit and people remains.

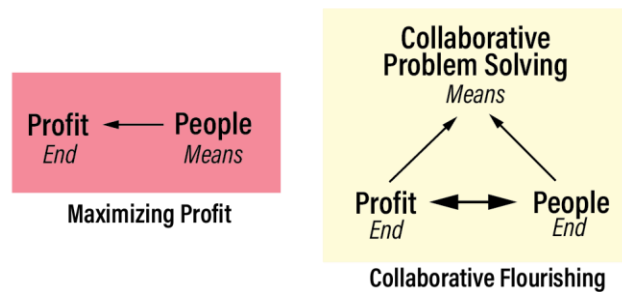


Figure 5. Profit-Based and Collaborative Conceptions of Business

The right panel of Figure 5 shows a conception of business based upon a collaborative ethos. From this point of view, both people and profit are seen as the ends of business activity. A collaborative business is one that provides a collaborative infrastructure for meeting the needs of all stakeholders to the maximum degree possible. Collaborative problem solving provides the means through which businesses pursue the simultaneous ends of promoting both profit and human well-being. Collaborative flourishing occurs when a company brings together the goals of fostering well-being and profit at the same time. Such an approach may easily engender trepidation by leaders who may fear that caring for people necessarily competes with the pursuit of profit. This is not true. Profits accrue from the actions of an agentic, motivated, competent and *valued* workforce. Conversely, profits are needed to support the development and well-being of such a workforce. More important, however, to the extent that people are valued as ends unto themselves, the pursuit of profit as the primary concern of business is cast in a different light. It compels us to ask: what are profits for? This is a ultimately a question of the values that inform the type of society we wish to live in.

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