

CHAPTER 28

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF INTRACTABLE CONFLICTS

eruption, escalation, and peacemaking

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1. INTRODUCTION

THE study of intractable conflicts and their resolution is an examination of a unique context and real-life societal issue. It mandates special efforts to elucidate its dynamics, as intractable conflicts have immense effects on the well-being of the societies involved in them, and often also on the international community in its entirety. The ongoing conflicts in the Middle East, Kashmir, Sri Lanka, Chechnya, and Rwanda constitute prototypical examples of these types of conflict. Of 309 conflicts taking place in the period between 1945 and 1995, Bercovitch (2005) identified 75 serious interstate conflicts that were violent, lasted at least 15 years, and were resistant to any peaceful settlement. But if we extend the scope of the definition, we find that of the 352 violent conflicts that have erupted since World War II, only 144 have concluded in peace agreements (Harbom, Hogbladh, & Wallensteen, 2006). If we assume that it is very difficult in our times to unequivocally win an interethnic or international conflict, it follows that because many of the violent conflicts have been resisting their peaceful resolution, they are protracted.

Conflicts erupt when two or more groups perceive their goals or interests to be in direct contradiction to one another and decide to act on this basis. This very general situation is an inseparable part of human life, and there are thus many different causes for the eruption of conflicts (see Thackrah, 2009). In more specific cases of intractable conflict, the party's goals may include, for example, the rectification of unequal divisions of wealth, power, and/or resources; cessation of occupation, oppression, discrimination, and exploitation practices; satisfaction of national needs and aspirations; achievement

of freedoms; attainment of territorial claims; or achievement of expression or dominance of competing dogma and/or ideology.

From a normative and even moral perspective, conflicts are not necessarily negative because progress in various domains is often only achieved through them. Even in cases of intractable conflict, some have been judged by the international community as involving one party with just claims that were, or continue to be, ignored by the opponent (see Walzer, 2006). Nevertheless, we argue that intractable conflicts, because of their violent nature, cause the involved society members considerable misery and suffering, and the challenge for the civilization is therefore to find ways to manage and resolve them in a constructive way.

Intractable conflicts, by their essence, are *very particular type of severe conflicts that last for a long period of time, as the parties involved in them can neither win nor are willing to compromise in order to reach their peaceful settlement*. Through the years, different terms have been proposed to label this type of conflict, among them *protracted conflicts* (e.g., Azar, 1990), *enduring rivalries* (e.g., Goertz & Diehl, 1993), *malignant conflicts* (Deutsch, 1985), or *deep-rooted conflicts* (e.g., Burton, 1987).

All the above-mentioned terms imply that this type of conflict is vicious and difficult to resolve. Thus, the term "intractable" has become widely used because it denotes these conflicts' resistance to peaceful resolution (Coleman, 2000, 2003; Crocker, Hampson, & Aall, 2005; Kriesberg, 1993; Vallacher, Coleman, Nowak, & Bui-Wrzosinska, 2010). Throughout the years, the seven following features that underlie the essence of intractable conflicts have been proposed (Kriesberg, 1993, Bar-Tal, 2007a, 2013):

1. *They are total*, being perceived as concerning essential and fundamental goals, needs, and/or values that are regarded as indispensable for the group's existence and/or survival. (See also the discussion of existential conflicts by Fisher, Kelman, & Nan, chapter 16, this volume.)
2. Intractable conflicts involve *physical violence* in which group members, combatants and civilians are killed and wounded in either wars, small-scale military engagements, or terrorist attacks.
3. Intractable conflicts are *of zero-sum nature*, namely, parties engaged in intractable conflict do not see any possibility of compromise and perceive any loss suffered by the other side as their own gain, and conversely, any gains of the other side as their own loss.
4. They are perceived as *irresolvable*, namely, society members do not perceive a possibility of resolving the conflict peacefully.
5. They occupy a *central place* in the lives of the individual group members and the group as a whole.
6. Parties engaged in an intractable conflict make *vast material* (i.e., military, technological, and economic) *and psychological investments* in order to cope successfully with the situation.
7. *They are protracted* in that they persist for a long time, at least a generation.

Different disciplines, like sociology, economy, and political science, contribute to the understanding of the dynamics and foundations of these conflicts. We focus on the socio-political-psychological perspective, which can shed light on some aspects of their major processes. While we acknowledge that these conflicts are over real issues that must be addressed in resolving them, the fact that in their essence they are accompanied by sociopsychological dynamics influences their nature and requires thorough consideration of these factors (see Bar-Tal, 2011, 2013; Fitzduff & Stout, 2006; Kelman, 2007; Tropp, 2012).

Therefore, the socio-political-psychological perspective on intractable conflicts focuses on the study of the beliefs, attitudes, emotions, and behaviors of the individuals and groups involved in the eruption of a conflict, its maintenance, its resolution, and the subsequent reconciliation. These beliefs, attitudes, and emotions play crucial role as a prism through which the involved society members view the reality of conflict and on the basis of this view carry their behaviors. An important assumption in this perspective is that although intractable conflicts differ greatly in their specific context and contents, the general sociopsychological dynamics are similar and can thus be analyzed (see Bar-Tal, 2011, 2013; De Dreu, 2010; Fitzduff & Stout, 2006; Tropp, 2012).

The chapter, focusing on the macro-level analysis, aims mainly to describe the unique nature of intractable conflicts and delineate their major societal emotional-cognitive-behavioral processes, as well as the evolved sociopsychological repertoire that fuels them and the processes that are involved in resolving them peacefully. This goal is achieved by analyzing the course of intractable conflict and its peaceful resolution via its three main phases: eruption of intractable conflict, its escalation and management, and its de-escalation and movement toward peacemaking. Additionally, the chapter strives to make this analysis within a conceptual framework that focuses on the interrelationship between the context and the collective psychological state of society members. This conceptual framework will be now presented.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND KEY CONCEPTS

Our analysis of intractable conflict is based on the fundamental and seminal contribution of Kurt Lewin (1951), who proposed that human behavior is a function of an environment in which a person(s) operates with its physical and social factors and his or her tendencies, including ideas, thoughts, intentions, and fantasies. In Lewin's (1951) view, any behavioral analysis must begin with the description of the situation as a whole, because the person's conception of the situation (or environment) determines to a large extent his or her behavioral possibilities and eventually chosen routes of action.

Of special importance for our conception is Lewin's application of the theory to the group situation. He suggested that the behavior of a group, as that of an individual, is

affected greatly by the collective perception of the environment and the group's characteristics (Lewin, 1947). On the basis of this classical theoretical framework, which was supported by later conceptions (e.g., Ross & Nisbett, 1991), we suggest that understanding collective behaviors in intractable conflict requires an analysis of the *psychological conditions of the conflict's context* (i.e., an environment, a field) and the *collective psychological state* of the involved societies, which includes the *lasting psychological repertoire* of the collective as well as *immediate psychological response tendencies*. Therefore, our analysis of each phase of the intractable conflict and its resolution will use these two mega-elements, as well as their continuous interaction as building blocks of the conceptual framework.

2.1. The Collective Context and Its Psychological Conditions

Theories in social sciences have generally accepted the basic assumption that the study of a *social context* is essential for understanding the functioning of societies (e.g., Giddens, 1984; Parsons, 1951). Recently, Ashmore, Deaux, and McLaughlin-Volpe (2004) have defined social context as the "general and continuing multilayered and interwoven set of material realities, social structures, and shared belief system that surround any situation" (p. 103). Hence, we begin our presentation with the description of the collective context of intractable conflict. In our view, the collective context's significance lies in the fact that it dictates the society members' needs and goals and the challenges that they have to meet in order to satisfy them. It also provides opportunities and limitations, stimulations and inhibitions, as well as the spaces and boundaries for human behavior.

The collective context of intractable conflict should be seen as a lasting context for decades, as durability is one of the important characteristics of intractable conflict. Thus, the nature of the *lasting context of conflict* has relevance to the well-being of society members—it involves them, occupies a central position in public discourse and the public agenda, supplies information and experiences that compel society members to construct an adaptable worldview, is determinative factor in selection of lines of behaviors, continuously shapes the lives of the involved societies, and imprints every aspect of individual and collective life.

As the lasting context of intractable conflict is durable—at least 25 years—there are short-term contexts of a transitional nature that are embedded into it and turn it into a dynamic phenomenon that develops in a nonlinear fashion. We define this short-term context as *transitional* because it consists of observable and well-defined societal conditions that come about as a result of major events and major information that influence the behavior and functioning of the individuals and collectives who perceive and cognize them (Bar-Tal & Sharvit, 2008).

In any discussion about context, either lasting or transitional, we focus on the *psychological conditions of the conflict's context* that are inherent part of the context. They emerge together with other conditions (physical, political, etc.) and become part of the

environment. They provide the signals, stimuli, prompts, and cues that need to be perceived and cognized by individuals and collectives in order for the context to have an impact on them. Some examples of the psychological conditions that are usually formed in the context of intractable conflict are those of threat, danger, stress, and uncertainty (de Rivera & Paez, 2007). These psychological conditions, in turn, trigger perceptions, thoughts, ideas, affects, and emotions that altogether form the *collective psychological state* and lead to various types of behavior.

In this chapter we note additional two contextual features that have an effect on the course of the conflict: societal characteristics typifying societies in conflict and the major entrepreneurs that lead society members and mobilize them for the conflict. Both features function for society members as part of the context. For our conceptual framework the existing levels of openness and freedom of expression are among the most important societal characteristics of the context. They relate to the availability of alternative knowledge and information, which may shed a different light on the conflict. In addition, the entrepreneurs considerably influence the construction of the society members' collective psychological state (Reicher, Hopkins, Levine, & Rath, 2005). They are the agents who diagnose the situation as being conflictive, provide a particular illumination of the situation to society members, and then mobilize them to social action by setting the goals, the rationale behind them, and the means of achieving them, especially by using and forming collective identity through identification (Haslam, Reicher, & Platow, 2010). Subsequently, some of them—or new agents—have to mobilize society members for peacemaking when such an option enters the realm of possibility (Hamburg, George, & Ballentine, 1999).

Finally, any discussion of the context of intractable conflicts has to take into account their diverse natures. In the present chapter, we focus on a particular distinctive dimension of symmetry versus asymmetry (Kriesberg, 2009; Rouhana, 2004). A conflict's location on this dimension is usually evaluated on the basis of the sides' military and economic capabilities. However, the conflict's asymmetry can also be a psychological matter, with both groups perceiving themselves as being weaker party to the conflict because of various reasons (see, for example, Schaller & Abeyasinghe, 2006 in the case of Sri Lanka conflict). Finally, this dimension also applies to the international community judgment of the moral justness of the conflict's goals. In some intractable conflicts, the international community may regard the goals of one party as just, while viewing the other party's goals as unjust.

2.2. Collective Psychological State

A collective psychological state consists of the beliefs, attitudes, values, emotions, motivations, intentions, and behavioral practices related to conflict held by the involved society members. It includes an enduring repertoire, as well as immediate psychological reactions that are evoked in specific situations. These two psychological elements feed each other and continuously interact to create the collective psychological state

characterizing societies in conflict. While the immediate, transient psychological reactions are somewhat similar to the ones that can be found in other types of intergroup conflicts, the lasting psychological repertoire mostly characterizes intractable conflicts. (See Stein's discussion of collective mood, chapter 12, this volume.)

An important part of the lasting psychological repertoire are societal beliefs, defined as enduring beliefs shared by society members (Bar-Tal, 2000). These beliefs develop as a result of the unique collective experiences and can refer to societal images, norms, values, concerns, and so on. During the intractable conflict many of them are supporting its continuation. In addition, the well-developed system of societal beliefs in intractable conflicts and the strong intragroup connections spur the evolvement of a collective identity that reflects the lasting conditions of intractable conflict. This collective identity indicates the common awareness that members share the recognition that they are members of the same group (David & Bar-Tal, 2009; Huddy, 2001; Klandermans & de Weerd, 2000).

In addition, those who live in societies involved in intractable conflicts also experience long-term emotional sentiments. While emotions are multicomponential responses to specific events, sentiments are enduring configurations of emotions or a temporally stable emotional disposition toward a person, group, or symbol (Arnold, 1960; Frijda, 1986; Halperin, Sharvit, & Gross, 2011). Since most society members do not experience many of the conflict-related events directly, these sentiments should be seen as group-based emotional sentiments, often targeted at another group (Smith, Seger, & Mackie, 2007). That is, they develop and are experienced by society members within the lasting context of intractable conflict because of their identification with the society (de Rivera, 1992; Mackie, Devos, & Smith, 2000; Wohl, Branscombe, & Klar, 2006; Yzerbyt, Dumont, Wigboldus, & Gordin, 2003). The enduring emotional sentiment is frequently associated with its corresponding short-term, group-based emotional reactions (Halperin & Gross, 2011).

Taking the above into account, we would like to note that we do not claim that the resulting psychological state is consensually shared. Nevertheless, we suggest that in many societies in times of intractable conflict (especially during its escalation period) a relatively consensual repertoire evolves regarding the general goals and other conflict-related themes, even when there is no wide consensus on the means.

3. SOCIO-POLITICAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF CONFLICT PHASES

After presenting the general framework, we turn now to the description of the phases of intractable conflict and peacemaking. In the description of these phases, we will focus mainly on those processes that are unique to intractable conflict.

3.1. Eruption of Intractable Conflicts

The fundamental question in this part is how intractable conflicts erupt and what distinguishes their eruption process from the eruption process of other conflicts? Conflict eruption, as the starting phase of any intractable conflict, includes a process in which the parties' conflicting goals rise above the surface and spark the potential for violent intergroup confrontation. Intractable conflicts erupt over goals that are perceived to be of existential importance and often are related to core beliefs associated with group identity. They are based on severe grievances and contentions that are accompanied by strong emotional feelings (Bar-Tal, 2013; Kriesberg, 2007; Coutant, Worchel, & Hanza, 2011). The existential goals appear from the beginning at least on one side, but with time, in cases of intractable conflicts, the features of the intractability appear on both sides. Thus, we will now examine the context and the psychological states of the parties to conflict.

3.1.1. *Conflict Eruption: Context and Its Psychological Conditions*

Azar (1990) suggested that the basic conditions for eruption of protracted conflicts are deprivation of basic needs related to collective identity (see also Brewer, 2011; Kelman, 2001; Korostelina, 2006; Reicher, 2004; Staub, 2011). These conditions can be classified into several categories (Thackrah, 2009). First, they often develop in a multiethnic community where the resources are unequally divided on the basis of group membership (e.g., the conflicts in Rwanda or South Africa). Second, they pertain to territorial disputes because groups, especially national groups, relate their identity to a specific country they consider their homeland (e.g., the Israeli-Palestinian and Kurdish conflicts). Third, they relate to the political-economic-cultural system in which the societies function (e.g., the conflicts in Nicaragua and Spain). The fourth category is often related to demands of free expression of culture, heritage, tradition, religion, and/or language that are perceived as expressing the essence of group identity (e.g., the conflict in Sri Lanka). Finally, groups may feel that the particular context in which they live threatens their core group identity (e.g., Protestants in Northern Ireland and Maronites in Lebanon). Importantly, in many cases, the different categories of conditions overlap or appear simultaneously.

The eruption process is driven by intra- as well as intergroup processes that stimulate and motivate the destructive transformation of the disagreements into overt and active conflict. The intragroup processes are led by powerful entrepreneurs, who promote the broad mobilization of society members. The entrepreneurs are those who define the scope of the deprivations, pose the goals of the conflict, construct the epistemic basis and embed it into the social identity, persuade society members to support the conflict's causes, and vigorously recruit active participation in it (Reicher et al., 2005). The challenge of mobilizing society members to actively participate in the intractable conflict is of crucial importance. Many of the ideas related to the psychological processes that underlie collective action (see Klandermans & van Stekelenburg, chapter 24, this

volume; Snow, Soule, & Kriesi, 2004; van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008) can be applied to mobilization for conflict.

In the discussion of the context we focus on perceived threat as one of the key determinants of conflict eruption. Perceived threat is defined as perceived probability that harm will occur, and it reflects the perceived balance between the magnitude of the outside threat, on the one hand, and one's coping capabilities with such threat, on the other hand (Stephan & Stephan, 2000; Stein, chapter 12, this volume). Threats can be perceived either on the collective or on the personal level. In intractable conflicts in which perceived threat often leads to the fear of the group's possible extinction, society members might experience collective angst (Wohl & Branscombe, 2009; Worchel & Coutant, 2008). Such extreme extinction threat, or collective angst, can stem either from realistic or from symbolic sources (Stephan, Renfro, & Davis, 2008).

Perception of threat increases with the occurrence of violent actions by the rival group (Huddy, Feldman, Taber, & Lahav, 2005; Maoz & McCauley, 2008). Such actions signal the potential of harm and the other group's evil intention. They consequently lead to increased identification, emotional involvement, and enhanced levels of mobilization. Of special importance are brutal acts committed by the other group, which are viewed as unjustified and immoral. These brutal acts serve as traumatic turning-point experiences for group members, as they evoke group outrage, feelings of victimization, and empathy for injured compatriots. In turn, they then increase group members' identification and their willingness to act for the group's cause.

For example, it is assumed that the events in Northern Ireland on Bloody Sunday in 1972 and in South Africa in Sharpeville in 1960 served as major events that increased the readiness of the respective communities of Catholics and blacks to begin actively participating in the conflict. In the former case, British troops fired at a peaceful march of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association, killing 14 Catholics (seven of them teenagers) and injuring 13 others. In the latter case, South African police opened fire on a crowd of black protesters, killing 69 of them (including 10 children) and injuring over 180.

Finally, in asymmetrical conflicts the eruption phase develops differently, as institutionalized means for mobilization constitute a determinative factor for its success. When one dominant party has a state anchor, as is the case in asymmetrical conflicts, it has access to state institutions, organizations, resources, and trained personnel. Thus, the powerful party uses institutionalized methods of mobilization, such as the mandatory recruitment of participants, with established procedures, organizations, and training, the use of mass media, and allocation of resources (e.g., the Singhalese, Israeli Jews, government forces in Guatemala, the whites in South Africa, and the French in Algeria).

The party that is not supported by state institutions must employ informal mobilization methods, often relying on volunteers who require training, depending on social networks and trying to raise resources (e.g. Tamils, Palestinians, rebels in Guatemala, the blacks in South Africa, or the Algerians). Moreover, the latter party mobilization methods are often illegal and face active obstruction and prevention by the rival (see, for example, mobilization practices of insurgents in El Salvador, Wood, 2003).

What follows is that the mobilization process of such a party in intractable conflict is especially based on the successful persuasion of society members in the justice of the society's goals and in the ability to carry out the confrontation as well as spontaneous actions that are driven by collective anger. These informal actions are encouraged by the success of militant actions that grant the masses feelings of efficacy and create hope that a violent conflict could fundamentally transform the intergroup power balance (Bandura, 2000).

3.1.2. *Conflict Eruption: Collective Psychological States*

The context of emerging conflict provides fertile ground for the development of the collective psychological state required for an intractable conflict to erupt. The essential part of this development is the emergence of a strong and salient collective identity that is directed at the evolved goals and the recognition of the need to correct the group's position (Brewer, 2011; Roccas & Elster, 2012; Tajfel, 1982; Huddy, chapter 23, this volume). Other content-based, motivational and structural psychological processes that can potentially promote conflict eruption rely on the existence of this type of strong collective identity (Bar-Tal, 2013).

Indeed, there are empirical indications that social identity becomes a basis for mobilization (Brewer, 2011; Reicher, 2004). The strength of group identification has been found to be related to the level of emotional response to collective threats (Smith et al., 2007)—and to the willingness to engage in political action (Klandermans & de Weerd, 2000; van Zomeren & Iyer, 2009). In addition, in times of intractable conflict, mobilization is facilitated with the strengthening of three generic characteristics of collective identity (see David & Bar-Tal, 2009): *a sense of a common fate* that pertains to the sense of unity and the feelings of mutual dependence (Doosje, Ellemers, & Spears, 1999); *concern for the welfare of the collective and sacrifice for its sake*, which refers to feelings of interest in the experiences of the collective and motivation to act on its behalf, including sacrifice of one's own life (Kashti, 1997; Reykowski, 1997); *coordinated activity by the collective's members*, which refers to the ability of the different groups and sectors that compose the collective to collaborate with one another to achieve societal goals posed in the conflict (van Zomeren & Iyer, 2009). In this vein, the concept of politicized collective identity proposed by Simon and Klandermans (2001) is of special relevance to the present analysis. The concept denotes a mindset based on high identification with the group that leads to involvement and engagement in the group's struggle for its goals (Hunt & Benford, 2004).

Nonetheless, strong collective identity leads to the eruption of conflict only if it is accompanied by the relevant societal beliefs. First and most important is the belief that the in-group is deprived of collective goods (tangible and/or intangible), or that there is some potential for such deprivation. Such a sense of relative deprivation may evolve as a result of comparison between one's own present subjective state of affairs and the state of another group and/or the in-group's own past state, as well as comparison between the present state and an imaginary aspired-to state that the group believes it deserves (Runciman, 1966; Walker & Smith, 2002). An alternative, or complementary belief, may

be that another group is harming or poses a continuous potentially existential threat of harm to the in-group.

Second, deprivation or harm potentially lead to conflict eruption if either (a) the responsibility or blame for their occurrence can be ascribed explicitly to the actions of a certain out-group and these actions are perceived to be unjust and violating basic norms and values; or (b) the out-group possesses the commodity needed to put an end to the experienced deprivation. In both cases, the desired goal of changing this situation must be viewed as justified. These two beliefs, however, may not be enough. A third societal belief often needed for the eruption of intractable conflicts is the conviction that the in-group is strong enough to at least face the out-group successfully in a future confrontation that could be violent (Hirschberger & Pyszczynski, 2010). This perception of strength and controllability (i.e., collective efficacy) provides the confidence necessary to undertake aggressive action and take the inherent risk (Bandura, 2000). Moreover, in most cases, public support for use of violence is highly dependent on the belief that the out-group's hostile actions stem from an evil, stable, and irreversible disposition central to the out-group members' character (Halperin, 2008).

Our basic assumption is that the above-mentioned ensemble of societal beliefs leads to the development of the epistemic basis for the goals. The epistemic basis consists of an elaborate belief system (also called a narrative) that explains, rationalizes, legitimizes, and justifies the goals set and later also the means used to achieve these goals. The epistemic basis is necessary because in order to be mobilized for the conflict, group members need to know why the goals are important to them individually and to the group as a whole, and whether the goals are realistic and just. The epistemic basis also addresses the international community in order to receive its support.

In addition, the psychological state in that stage contains the long-term sentiments of despair, frustration, hatred, and fear (Halperin, Sharvit, & Gross, 2011). On the basis of the long-term sentiments and societal beliefs, short-termed emotional and cognitive reactions emerge and transform the long-term beliefs and sentiments into concrete support or even participation in aggressive collective action. These psychological "triggers" of intractable conflict usually appear as a response to what is perceived as out-group provocations or unjustified irritating, aggressive behavior. Emotions, especially negative ones, are the most powerful influential force because they are easily evoked and translated into concrete action tendencies (Lindner, 2006).

The emotion that has been most frequently studied with respect to this stage of the conflict is anger. *Anger* is evoked by events in which the individual perceives the actions of others as unjust, as unfair, or as deviating from acceptable societal norms (Averill, 1982). In addition, it involves appraisals of relative strength and high coping potential (Mackie et al., 2000). The integration of these two characteristics often creates a tendency to confront (Berkowitz, 1993; Mackie et al., 2000), strike, kill, or attack the anger-evoking target.

In line with its characteristics, previous studies conducted in the context of real-world conflicts have consistently found a clear and direct association between anger and the attribution of blame to the out-group (Halperin, 2008; Small, Lerner, & Fischhoff,

2006). Other studies have found that individuals who feel angry appraise future military attacks as less risky (Lerner & Keltner, 2001) and anticipate more positive consequences for such attacks (Huddy, Feldman, & Cassese, 2007; Huddy, chapter 23, this volume). Accordingly, studies conducted in the United States following the 9/11 attacks found that angry individuals were highly supportive of an American military response in Iraq and elsewhere (e.g., Huddy et al., 2007; Lerner, Gonzalez, Small, & Fischhoff, 2003; Skitka, Bauman, Aramovich, & Morgan, 2006). Finally, the central role of group-based anger in motivating conflict eruption and aggression yielded further support in a recent study conducted in Serbia and Republika Srpska (Spanovic, Lickel, Denson, & Petrovic, 2010).

Humiliation is another important emotion that appears in the early phase of conflict eruption. It is defined as "enforced lowering of any person or group by a process of subjugation that damages their dignity" (Lindner, 2006, p. xiv). It creates rifts between groups and breaks relationships (Lindner, 2001). This feeling arises in many of the conflict situations in which societies experience deprivation as a result of discrimination, oppression, and/or exploitation.

On the cognitive level, almost every process of conflict eruption is driven and accompanied by mutual intergroup misperceptions (Fisher & Kelman, 2011; Jervis, 1976; White, 1970). The title of the seminal work of Ralph White, *Nobody Wanted War: Misperception in Vietnam and Other Wars*, accurately captures the role of misperceptions in conflict eruption processes. To demonstrate this process, Keltner and Robinson (1993) have presented evidence for a "false polarization": partisans perceive more disagreement between their own opinions and those of their rivals than exists in reality. This can lead to heightened mistrust, which can potentially result in destructive misinterpretations of the rival's intentions and aspirations (Chambers, Baron, & Inman, 2006).

Another example of misperception in the initial phase of conflict eruption is the tendency to attribute the negative behavior of the rival group to personal characteristics, while disregarding situational factors (see, for example, Pettigrew, 1979, who labeled this tendency the "ultimate attribution error"; also Fisher, Kelman, & Nan, chapter 16, this volume). This tendency is even more profound because the attribution to personal characteristics is often made to innate dispositions (Dweck, 1999). This attribution implies that the rival group is evil and will not change and therefore a confrontation is needed in order to achieve justified demands (Hunter, Stringer, & Watson, 1991; Holt, & Silverstein, 1989).

Hypothetically, situations of deprivation and their appearance on the public agenda could lead the powerful group to recognize the situation as unjust, leading it to attempt to change the situation by correcting the injustice, or dividing the goods in an equal manner, granting autonomy, and possibly compensating the victims for their suffering. In reality, however, this situation almost never happens. When serious demands are posed, a stronger group almost never voluntarily relinquishes its highly valued goods in terms of power, status, privileges, wealth, resources, or territories. Moreover, in almost all the cases when one side characterizes the conflict as being intractable, the other

side follows this definition also. In most cases, moral and just reasons do not lead most groups to give up what they think is theirs, or what they think they deserve. Thus, satisfaction of the deprivation usually takes place within the framework of a conflict, after a long, often violent struggle, which may eventually lead to the victory of one side or to the conflict's peaceful settlement.

3.2. Escalation and Conflict Management

The fundamental question of this section is why conflicts escalate and how they are managed in their climax, within the unique framework of intractable conflicts.

3.2.1. *Conflict Escalation: Context and Its Psychological Conditions*

Escalation indicates that the grievances, objections, and contentions raised are not met with understanding and compliance, but rather with dismay, rejection, and even stronger counteractions. Consequently, the party that raised the grievances or objections resorts to harsher steps, in order to make the conflict more salient and more costly to the rival. In other words, the parties gradually adopt increasingly drastic means to promote their goals (Pruitt & Kim, 2004). These steps are met with severe reactions, and both sides thus raise the level of confrontation, entering into cycles of reactions and counter-reactions (Horowitz, 1985; Kriesberg, 2007).

To explain the escalation process we focus on the psychological conditions of the context and specifically on the continuous, vicious cycle of the interactions between these conditions and the collective psychological state. The developed repertoire, as part of the psychological state, leads to actions that escalate the conflict; in turn the escalation reinforces the repertoire that perpetuates the conflict, due to the dominance of the culture of conflict and its bearing on collective identity. In fact, in this stage the parties become entrapped in the conflict because they invest greatly in it and need to justify this investment with the attempt to recoup incurred losses and more forcefully achieve their respective goals (Brockner & Rubin, 1985; Ross, 2010).

The mobilization at this phase is usually successful because the conflict's goals at that stage are often perceived as protected or sacred (Atran & Axelrod, 2008; Landman, 2010), and thus as fundamental for defining the identities, worldviews, and ideologies of society members. Therefore, the goals become resistant to any trade-offs or compromise. Hence, society members become morally invested in the goals of the conflict and morally convinced in the justness of these goals (Tetlock, 2003; Skitka, 2010). The conflict then becomes clearly perceived as being zero sum and unsolvable.

Moreover, this phase is characterized in most of the cases of intractable conflicts as a phase of societal closure. The entrepreneurs of the conflict, on the one hand, propagate information that supports continuation of the conflict and, on the other hand, try to limit the society's access to alternative information that, in their view, could weaken the society's position in the conflict. Thus, the context is often characterized by use of such societal mechanisms as mass media control, censorship of information, delegitimization

of alternative information and its sources, and self-censorship (see Bar-Tal, Oren, & Nets-Zehngut, 2012; Burns-Bisogno, 1997; Wolfsfeld, 2004).

The conflict also greatly preoccupies society members and is continuously present on their agenda, as they invest much materially and psychologically in successfully coping with the enemy. Finally, escalation is observed in the context of the intensification of hostile acts, including verbal rhetoric and especially behavioral actions such as killings and injuries of both active participants in the violence and civilians. Paradoxically, the increasing violence and sacrifices usually strengthen the involved parties' commitment to the conflict's continuation, mainly because adhering to this commitment helps society members avoid the cognitive dissonance embedded in behavioral change (Brubaker & Laitin, 1998; Elchereth & Spini, 2011; Horowitz, 2001; Staub & Bar-Tal, 2003). In line with that rationale, prospect theory suggests that the failure to renormalize reference points after losses leads society members to see these losses as sunk costs, to the overvaluation of those costs, and to risk-acceptant behavior to recover sunk costs and return to the reference point (Levy, 1996; chapter 10, this volume). Thus, the context of the conflict changes significantly and creates very severe experiences for the involved society members. These stressful experiences are part of the psychological conditions of the context that characterize intractable conflicts.

The above-described psychological context poses three basic challenges to the societies involved in intractable conflict (Bar-Tal, 2007a, 2013). First, society members need to somehow satisfy those human needs that remain deprived during intractable conflicts, such as the psychological needs of knowing, feeling certainty, mastery, safety, positive identity, and so on (e.g., Burton, 1990; Maslow, 1954; Reykowski, 1982; Staub, 2003; Tajfel, 1982). Second, they must learn to cope with stress, fears, and other negative psychological experiences that accompany intractable conflict situations (e.g., Hobfoll, Canetti-Nisim, & Johnson, 2006; Shalev, Yehuda, & McFarlane, 2000; Worchel, 1999). Third, the societies must develop psychological conditions that are conducive to successfully withstanding the rival group—that is, to attempt to win the conflict or, at the least, avoid losing it.

Also in this phase, the symmetry versus asymmetry distinction influences the dynamic of the conflict's escalation. The stronger party with a state behind it often has the resources and the military personnel to withstand the escalation and also has at its disposal channels of communication and societal institutions to disseminate the epistemic basis for continuing the conflict. On the other hand, the weaker party must find resources for carrying the escalation, mobilizing volunteers to actively participate in the conflict and to disseminate its messages (Fisher, Kelman, & Nan, chapter 16, this volume). Often in this phase, the weaker party takes violent action, including terror attacks, against civilian targets to harm the stronger party, which often lead, in turn, to retribution and preventative measures (often called terror state's measures) that also widely harm the weaker party's civilian population. Psychologically and morally, this process continuously erodes the epistemic basis for the conflict, on the side of the stronger group, which in turn has to develop further psychological mechanism to mobilize its people to the goals of the conflict (see, for example, Ramanathapillai, 2006).

3.2.2. *Conflict Escalation: Collective Psychological States*

In discussing the collective psychological state of society members in the escalation phase, we begin with the teleological beliefs, attitudes, feelings, emotions, and motivations that develop as a result of the new experiences of the escalating conflict. They develop in order to allow the societies to meet the described psychological challenges. This proposition on the evolvement of the functional repertoire is based on extensive work in psychology showing that in times of stress, threat, and deprivation, individuals need to form a meaningful worldview that provides a coherent and organized picture (see work by Antonovsky, 1987; Frankl, 1963; Greenberg, Pyszczynski, & Solomon, 1997; Janoff-Bulman, 1992).

It is further proposed that as the intractable conflict persists, the collective psychological state filters into institutions and the communications channels and gradually crystallizes into a sociopsychological infrastructure. This infrastructure has three pillars that constitute the cognitive-emotional basis for the long-term psychological state: collective memory of conflict, ethos of conflict, and collective emotional sentiments that serve as foundations of the developed culture of conflict (Bar-Tal, 2007a; 2013).

3.2.2.1. Collective memory is defined as representations of the past, remembered by society members as the history of the group and providing the epistemic foundation for the group's existence and its continuity (Kansteiner, 2002). Collective memory constructs the narratives, the symbols, the models, and the myths related to the past that mold the culture of the group. Societal beliefs of collective memory, as a narrative, in the case of intractable conflict, evolve to present the history of the conflict to society members (Cairns & Roe, 2003; Halbwachs, 1992; Pennebaker, Paez, & Rimé, 1997; Tint, 2010; Wertsch, 2002).

This narrative develops over time, and the societal beliefs describe the eruption of the conflict and its course, providing a coherent and meaningful picture of what has happened from the society's perspective (Devine-Wright, 2003; Paez & Liu, 2011). The major function of collective memory is to provide the epistemic basis for present societal needs and goals (Liu & Hilton, 2005). Therefore, it is selective, biased and distortive in nature, and it clouds judgment and evaluation of the present (Bar-Tal et al., 2012; Baumeister & Hastings, 1997).

Collective memories of intractable conflict are organized around narratives of transitional contexts or particular major events, with the focus placed on specific individuals who have played major roles in the conflict. These may be short-term events such as battles, or even parts of battles, or prolonged events such as wars or occupations. Indeed, the narrative of collective memory touches on at least four important themes. First, it justifies the eruption of the conflict and the course of its development. Second, it presents a positive image of one's group. Third, it delegitimizes the opponent. Fourth, it presents one's group as being a victim of the opponent.

To develop this narrative, the conflict's collective memory is fed by memories of events that preceded the conflict and/or of events unrelated to the conflict that took place in conjunction with the conflict. These memories are often adapted, reconstructed, and

reinvented to serve the needs and goals stemming from the challenges posed by the conflict (e.g., Hammack, 2011; Zerubavel, 1995). Volkan (1997) has proposed that societies especially remember major events that he calls *chosen traumas* and *chosen glories*. These past events, especially chosen traumas, greatly contribute to the definition of group identity and are therefore maintained in the culture and transmitted to new generations, while also occupying a central place in the collective memory of a society involved in intractable conflict (e.g., MacDonald, 2002; Zertal, 2005).

The collective memories of societies involved in intractable conflict provide a black-and-white picture and enable a parsimonious, fast, unequivocal, and simple understanding of the history of the conflict. In fact, the competition over the collective memory constitutes an additional confrontational field where, during the escalation phase of the conflict, each society tries to impart its own collective memory to in-group members and then to persuade the international community of its truthfulness (Bar-Tal et al., 2012; Noor, Brown, & Prentice, 2008).

3.2.2.2. The ethos (of conflict) is defined as "the configuration of central societal beliefs that provide dominant characterization to the society and gives it a particular orientation" (Bar-Tal, 2000, p. xiv). It provides the shared mental basis for societal membership, binds the members of society together, gives meaning to societal life, imparts legitimacy to social order, and enables an understanding of society's present and past concerns as well as its future aspirations.

We suggest that under prolonged conditions of intractable conflict, societies develop a particular ethos of conflict that provides them with a particular dominant orientation and gives meaning to societal life (Bar-Tal, 2000; 2007a; 2012). In the earlier work it was proposed that the ethos of conflict is composed of the following eight interrelated themes of societal beliefs (Bar-Tal, 2000; 2007a; Rouhana & Bar-Tal, 1998) that were found to be dominant in various societies engaged in intractable conflict (Bar-Tal, 2007b; Hadjipavlou, 2007; MacDonald, 2002; Oren, 2009; Papadakis, Peristianis, & Welz, 2006; Slocum-Bradley, 2008).

Societal beliefs about the justness of one's own goals, which first of all outline the goals in conflict, indicate their crucial importance, and provide their justification and rationales. In addition, the societal beliefs negate and delegitimize the goals of the rival group. These societal beliefs play a crucial motivating role because they present the goals as being existential, thus requiring society members to adhere to them and to mobilize.

Societal beliefs about security refer to the appraisal of threats and dangers as well as difficulties in coping with them within the intractable conflict (Bar-Tal & Jacobson, 1998). Their most important function is to satisfy the needs of maintaining safety, which involves the basic human needs for a sense of protection, surety, and survival (Maslow, 1954), but they also play an important role in the mobilization of society members for coping with the perceived threats and dangers.

Societal beliefs of positive collective self-image concern the ethnocentric tendency to attribute positive characteristics, values, norms, and patterns of behavior to one's own society (Baumeister & Hastings, 1997). They frequently relate, on the one hand, to courage, heroism, or endurance and, on the other hand, to humaneness, morality, fairness,

trustworthiness, and progress. These beliefs allow a clear differentiation between the in-group and the rival and supply moral strength and a sense of superiority (Sande, Goethals, Ferrari, & Worth, 1989).

Societal beliefs of one's own victimization concern self-presentation as the ultimate victim, with focus on the unjust harm, evil deeds, and atrocities perpetrated by the adversary (Bar-Tal, Chernyak-Hai, Schori, & Gundar, 2009; Vollhardt, 2012). They provide the moral incentive to seek justice and oppose the opponent, as well as to mobilize moral, political, and material support from the international community.

Societal beliefs of delegitimizing the opponent concern beliefs that indicate that the rival group is outside the boundaries of the commonly accepted groups, and should thus be excluded from the international community as a legitimate member worthy of basic civil and human rights and deserving of inhumane treatment (Bar-Tal & Hammack, 2012; Haslam, 2006; Tileaga, 2007). These beliefs serve a special function in justifying the group's own aggressive acts against the rival.

Societal beliefs of patriotism generate attachment to both country and society by propagating loyalty, love, care, and sacrifice (Huddy & Khatib, 2007; Huddy). Patriotic beliefs increase social cohesion and dedication and serve an important function in mobilizing society members to actively participate in the conflict and endure hardships and difficulties, even to the point of sacrificing their lives for the group (Somerville, 1981). When they turn into blind dogma, they close the way to peacemaking (Schatz, Staub, & Lavine, 1999).

Societal beliefs of unity emphasize the importance of staying united in the face of the external threat (Moscovici & Doise, 1994). These beliefs strengthen society from within, develop a consensus and a sense of belonging, increase solidarity, and allow society to direct its forces and energy to dealing with the enemy.

Finally, *societal beliefs of peace* propagate peace as the group's ultimate desire and present society members as peace-loving. Such beliefs play the role of inspiring hope and optimism. They strengthen the positive self-image and a positive self-presentation to the outside world.

An ethos of conflict is a relatively stable worldview, which creates a conceptual framework that allows human beings to organize and comprehend the prolonged context of conflict. Therefore, it can be seen as a type of ideology (Bar-Tal, Sharvit, Halperin, & Zafran, 2012; Cohrs, 2012; Jost, Federico, & Napier, 2009; Van Dijk, 1998). As an ideology, an ethos of conflict represents a coherent and systematic knowledge base that serves as a guide for the coordinated behavior of society members and directs the decisions made by society's leaders, the development of the societal system, and its functioning. It relates to conservative worldviews that intend to preserve the context and societal system as it is (Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003).

3.2.2.3. Collective emotional sentiments develop because of the nature of long-term intractable conflicts, which create fertile ground for the continuation and aggregation of emotions beyond the immediate time frame (Bar-Tal, 2013; de Rivera & Paez, 2007; Petersen, 2002; Scheff, 1994). Hence, during the escalation stage societies involved in intractable conflicts develop a set of collective emotional sentiments

that is dominated primarily by hatred, despair and fear (see: Halperin, Sharvit, & Gross, 2011).

The most destructive emotional sentiment that influences beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors at the stage of conflict eruption is *hatred*. *Hatred* is a secondary, extreme negative emotion (Halperin, 2008; Sternberg & Sternberg, 2008) that is directed at a particular individual or group and denounces it fundamentally and all-inclusively (Sternberg, 2003). In most cases, hatred involves appraisal of the behavior of an out-group as stemming from a deep-rooted, permanent evil character (Halperin, Sharvit, & Gross, 2011). As a result, hatred is associated with very low expectations for positive change and with high levels of despair, which altogether feed the conflict's continuation and escalation. Indeed the evaluation of short-term conflict-related events through the lens of hatred automatically increases support for initiating violent actions and for intensifying the conflict (Halperin, 2011; Halperin, Canetti-Nisim, & Hirsch-Hoefler, 2009; Staub, 2005). When hatred is accompanied by group-based anger, which dominates the eruption stage, its consequences are even more destructive (Halperin, Russel, Dweck, & Gross, 2011).

While hatred provides the emotional basis for viewing the opponent in the conflict, fear may prevent attempts to break the vicious cycle of violence. Due to recurring experiences of threat and danger resulting from the conflict, society members may become oversensitized to cues that signal danger and exist in a state of constant readiness to defend themselves (Jarymowicz & Bar-Tal, 2006). This oversensitization to fear cues freezes society members in their prior dispositions regarding the conflict and the out-group and prevents them from taking risks or thinking creatively about resolving the conflict. People prefer to suffer with the known than take a risk that comes with possible relief.

Eventually, the sociopsychological infrastructure with its three pillars becomes the foundation of the evolved *culture of conflict*. A culture of conflict develops when societies saliently integrate into their culture tangible and intangible symbols, created to communicate a particular meaning about the prolonged and continuous experiences of living in the context of conflict (Geertz, 1973; Ross, 1997). These symbols of conflict become hegemonic elements and provide a dominant interpretation of the present reality and past and future goals, and an outline acceptable practice. When a culture of conflict becomes dominant, intractable conflicts come to be way of life (Bar-Tal, Abutbul, & Raviv, in press). It serves as the major motivating, justifying, and rationalizing force in the group, playing a highly functional role in addressing the challenges posed by the context (Bar-Tal, 2013).

Additionally, the societal beliefs of culture of conflict provide contents that imbue the collective identity with meaning (Cash, 1996; Cairns, Lewis, Mumcu, & Waddell, 1998; Gillis, 1994; Oren & Bar-Tal, in press). On the individual level, the conflict may change the individuals' definitions of identity and levels of identification, by increasing the importance of both identity and the will to belong to a collective. On the collective level, it may influence the generic characteristics of the shared sense of common fate and continuity, perception of uniqueness, coordination of activity, extent of sharing beliefs,

concern for the welfare of the collective, and readiness for mobilization on behalf of the collective (see David & Bar-Tal, 2009; Eriksen, 2001; Reicher, 2004).

Considering that this process occurs simultaneously for both parties to the conflict (each a mirror image of the other), it is obvious how the vicious cycle of violence in intractable conflicts operates (Sandole, 1999). Any negative actions taken by each side toward its rival then serve as information validating the existing collective psychological state and in turn magnify the motivation and readiness to engage in conflict. Both societies practice moral disengagement, moral entitlement, and self-focusing, blocking any empathy and responsibility for the suffering of the rival or responsibility for the group's own actions (Bandura, 1999; Castano, 2008; Čehajić & Brown, 2008; Opatow, in press; Schori, Klar, & Roccas, 2011; Wohl & Branscombe, 2008). Human beings do all the possible psychological acrobatic exercises to continue the conflict and kill rival society members in violent encounters.

Once intractable conflicts become solidified and institutionalized with the culture of conflict, they endure for a very long period of time, fluctuating in their intensity, as powerful barriers prevent their peaceful resolution. We suggest that the same psychological repertoire that helps society members cope with the challenges posed by the conflict, prevents them from identifying and taking advantage of opportunities for peace. Thus, together with more transient cognitive (Ross & Ward, 1995) and emotional (Halperin, 2011) barriers, the enduring sociopsychological repertoire (i.e., ethos of conflict and collective memory) serves as a barrier to conflict resolution. From a broader perspective, sociopsychological barriers *pertain to* an integrated operation of cognitive, emotional, and motivational processes, combined with a preexisting repertoire of rigid conflict-supporting beliefs, worldviews, and emotions that result in selective, biased, and distorted information processing (see details presented in Bar-Tal & Halperin, 2011; also Brader & Marcus, chapter 6, this volume; and Stein, chapter 12, this volume).

This processing obstructs and inhibits the penetration of any new, alternative information that could potentially facilitate progress toward peace. It leads to a selective collection of information, which means that group members tend to search and absorb information that is in line with their repertoire, while ignoring contradictory information, which is viewed as invalid. Furthermore, even when ambiguous or contradictory information is absorbed, it is encoded and cognitively processed in accordance with the held repertoire through bias, addition, and distortion (for example, De Dreu & Carnevale, 2003; Pfeifer & Ogloff, 1991; Shamir & Shikaki, 2002; Sommers & Ellsworth, 2000). This processing takes place because the societal beliefs supporting the continuation of the conflict are rigid due to structural, emotional, contextual, and motivational factors (Bar-Tal & Halperin, 2011; Kruglanski, 2004).

3.3. De-escalation of Intractable Conflicts and Peacemaking

The above barriers indicate that overcoming the core disagreements is a very difficult challenge. Nevertheless, almost every society engaged in intractable conflict contains

societal forces (even if they are a small minority) that propagate and press for embarking on a different road—the road of peacemaking. Once these forces grow and become influential, it is possible to say that the process of peace-building has gained momentum. In some societies, this process even ends with a peaceful settlement following negotiations that may extend over many years (see Fisher, Kelman, & Nan, chapter 16, this volume).

There are various terms to describe this process (see Galtung, 1996; Rouhana, 2004). Peace-building processes can be defined as continuous exerted efforts by society members, society's institutions, agents, channels of communications, and the international community to achieve full, lasting peaceful relations with the past rival within the framework of a culture of peace. Peace-building thus includes all the measures taken to facilitate the achievement of this goal, culminating in reconciliation (see also de Rivera, 2009; Lederach, 1997). This is a very long process, commencing when at least a segment of society begins developing activities to promote peace (Lederach, 2005). Peacemaking, as a phase in the peace-building process, focuses only on actions taken to reaching an official settlement of the conflict, in the form of a formal agreement between the rival sides to end the confrontation (see Zartman, 2007). Within the process of peacemaking, conflict resolution refers to the negotiation process that takes place between decision-makers to reach its formal settlement. Hence, the key question in the de-escalation phase is how the process of de-escalation evolves and what factors facilitate it.

3.3.1. *Conflict De-escalation: Context and Its Psychological Conditions*

In the phase of conflict de-escalation the characteristics of the context change as the intractability becomes less extreme in nature, moving toward the tractable end of the continuum. Embarking on the road of peace-building begins when at least a segment of society members begins to think that the conflict should be resolved peacefully and begins to act to realize this idea. Once such an idea emerges and is propagated by at least some society members, the long process of moving the society toward resolving the conflict peacefully begins.

A substantive change in people's beliefs, as will be described in the following section, may be facilitated in many of the cases by changes in the context, signaling to society members a need to reevaluate the repertoire that has fueled the continuation of the conflict. Such significant change in the context can be driven, among other things, by the accumulation of negative conflict experiences; major events like the eruption of a new harsh conflict with a third, unrelated party; an unexpected conciliatory, trust-building action by the rival; internal non-conflict-related events (for example, economic collapse or internal turmoil); intervention of a third party; geopolitical changes (for example, a fall of a supporting superpower); or the rise of new leaders, who are less committed to the ideology of conflict.

Nonetheless, even such substantial contextual changes do not usually lead to an immediate, dramatic change in public opinion. In many cases, the process of peacemaking begins with a minority who starts to realize that it is necessary to end the conflict by negotiating its resolution with the rival. Those in the minority must possess not only conviction in the justness of the new way but also the courage to present alternative

ideas to society members, because they are often viewed by the great majority of society members as, at best, naive and detached from reality, but more often as traitorous. Nevertheless, the emergence of this minority is important not only for the in-group, but also for the rival group, where a similar process may consequently be ignited or reinforced.

As this group develops within society, new entrepreneurs may appear and mobilize society members to support the peace process. In most cases, peacemaking involves, on the one hand, bottom-up processes in which groups, grass-roots organizations, and civil society members support the ideas of peace-building and act to disseminate them among leaders as well, and, on the other hand, top-down processes in which leaders join the efforts, begin persuading society members of the necessity of a peaceful settlement of the conflict, and initiate its implementation (Gawerc, 2006). Peacemaking processes, in order to succeed, must also receive the support of the elites and societal institutions, support that must eventually be shared by at least a substantial portion of society (e.g., Bar-Siman-Tov, 2004; Knox & Quirk, 2000). Of special importance is the role played by the mass media and other societal channels of communication and institutions, which can first promote the formation of a peace orientation and subsequently transmit and disseminate a new system of beliefs among the society members (Wolfsfeld, 2004).

Arriving at a peaceful settlement at the end of the peacemaking process constitutes a turning point in the relations between the rival parties. Still, at least some societies involved in intractable conflict eventually reach this stage through a political process in which both parties eliminate the perceived incompatibility between their goals and interests and establish a new reality of perceived compatibility (Deutsch, 1973; Fisher, 1990; Kriesberg, 2007; also Fisher, Kelman, & Nan, chapter 16, this volume). The formal manifestation of this process is an agreement negotiated by representatives of the two opposing groups, which outlines the settlement's details. The agreement indicates a formal end to the conflict and specifies the terms of its resolution, based on uncertain and ambiguous future benefits. In most cases, the agreement demands the parties put aside certain dreams and aspirations in order to accommodate the possible and practical present. In any event, reaching a peaceful, just, and satisfactory solution to an intractable conflict, supported by both rival parties, is probably one of the most impressive and significant achievements to be attained by human beings.

Nevertheless, a conflict's peaceful resolution does not have a singular meaning, as peace may take on many different forms once it is achieved. It can range from a cold peace that indicates an end to violent acts and minimal diplomatic relations, to a warm peace that is geared toward major transformation—the establishment of entirely novel peaceful relations (see Galtung, 1969).

The period of peacemaking and, even more so, the first stage following the conflict's peaceful settlement is often quite difficult. In this stage, society members move from a well-known and familiar context into an uncertain, ambiguous, and risky context (Bar-Tal, 2013). This context has many of the characteristics of conflict, while at the same time possessing characteristics of the emerging context of peace. On the one hand signs of peacemaking appear, reflected in meetings between the rivals, coordination of some

activities, moderation of violence, and so on. On the other hand, violence acts continue, conflict rhetoric continues to be employed, and, most importantly, the culture of conflict remains hegemonic. Adding to the confusion characterizing this period is the fact that the rival parties, avoiding substantial risks, continue to reflect on the possibility that they may be forced to return to the road of violent confrontation. Therefore this period can be seen as a period of duality, where signs of conflict and signs of peace coexist.

Moreover, in most cases, peacemaking is not accepted willingly by all the segments of society. There are often spoilers who exert every effort to foil the process using various tactics of incitement and even violence. Thus, societies making peace are often polarized, with an intrasocietal schism separating those who support peacemaking from those who refuse to compromise toward a peaceful solution. Finally, in many cases of peacemaking and even after the realization of a peaceful settlement, reappearing violence may evoke beliefs and emotions conducive to conflict.

3.3.2. *Conflict De-escalation: Collective Psychological State*

Changes in the context, as well as the self-enlightenment of some society members, lead to the appearance of new beliefs that must then be adopted and disseminated among society members. This is a necessary condition for the peaceful settlement of a conflict and later for reconciliation. These new beliefs that signal an emergence of an alternative collective psychological state should include many new ideas, such as an idea about the need to resolve the conflict peacefully, about changing the goals that fueled the conflict and posing new goals that can lead to peace, about legitimization, humanization, and trusting the rival, about sharing victimhood, about the history of the conflict, and so on (Bar-Tal, 2013).

This challenging process of cognitive change requires unfreezing, as suggested by classical conception offered by Lewin (1947). Hence, a precondition for the acceptance and internalization of alternative content about the conflict or peace-building depends on the ability to destabilize the rigid structure of the collective psychological state related to the conflict that dominates the involved societies. These new alternative ideas must be spread, legitimized, and eventually institutionalized in society. Legitimization is a stage in which ideas, actions, or agents propagating peacemaking become morally acceptable in view of the norms and values of the group (Kelman, 2001). This important phase moves the minority group to a position in which ideas concerning peacemaking become accepted as part of the legitimate public discourse. Institutionalization indicates penetration of the alternative beliefs supporting peacemaking into societal institutions and channels of communication, such as the formal political system, educational system, cultural products, and mass media. In fact, in this phase, an alternative narrative about the necessity of peacemaking is well established. It contains beliefs that contradict the established collective memory and ethos of conflict and serve as the foundations for an ethos of peace, which sheds new light on the reality.

Alongside the contextual changes that were described above, embarking on the road of peace depends mostly on the psychological states within both societies involved in the severe and harsh conflict. A number of scholars have tried to elucidate the conditions of

ripeness that may facilitate peacemaking processes and conflict settlement realization. For example, Zartman (2000, pp. 228–229) proposed that “If the (two) parties to a conflict (a) perceive themselves to be in a hurting stalemate and (b) perceive the possibility of a negotiated solution (a way out), the conflict is ripe for resolution (i.e., for negotiations toward resolution to begin).”

Pruitt (2007) offered a psychological perspective on ripeness theory, by analyzing the case of Northern Ireland. In his view, ripeness reflects each party’s readiness to enter and stay engaged in negotiations. Antecedents of readiness include motivation to escape the situation together with optimism about the prospects of reaching a mutually beneficial outcome. We have recently proposed (Bar-Tal & Halperin, 2009) and demonstrated empirically (Gayer, Tal, Halperin, & Bar-Tal, 2009) that societies may begin negotiations for the conflict’s peaceful settlement when their members realize that the losses resulting from the continuation of the conflict significantly exceed the losses that a society may incur as a consequence of the compromises and outcomes of peaceful settlement (see also Levy, chapter 10, this volume).

In ending our analysis we would like to make few points that shed light on the macro processes beyond peaceful settlement of intractable conflicts. Eventually, some of the intractable conflicts may de-escalate and move toward their peaceful resolution when society members are demobilized from supporting the goals of the conflict and mobilized for its peaceful resolution (Gidron, Katz, & Hasenfeld, 2002). But it is not enough just to want peace—without determination and persistence by active agents of peace, peace cannot be achieved (Fitzduff, 2006). Almost all human beings cherish the value of peace and wish to live under its wings. But achievement of peace is not that simple—peacemaking requires parting from far-fetched, ideal dreams, resorting to concrete steps of pragmatism, and transforming the psychological repertoire that for many years served as a compass for continuing the conflict. Even goals rooted in justice and moral values must eventually be compromised due to pragmatic considerations that are often required for successful peaceful settlement.

Nevertheless it has become evident that even reaching a formal peace settlement may fall far short of establishing genuine peaceful relations between the former adversaries (e.g., Knox & Quirk, 2000; Lederach, 1997). Formal conflict resolution sometimes obliges only the leaders who negotiated the agreement, the narrow strata around them, or only a small part of the society at large. In these cases, the majority of society members may not accept the negotiated compromises, or even if they do, they may still hold the worldview that has fueled the conflict. As the result, formal resolutions of conflicts may be unstable and may collapse, as was the case in Chechnya following the first war, or they may result in a cold peace, as is the case in Israeli-Egyptian relations. In these and similar cases, hopes of turning the conflictive relations of the past into peaceful societal relations have not materialized because the peace-building process with reconciliation never actually began, was stalled, or has progressed very slowly.

Throughout the last decades social scientists as well as practitioners have come to realize that in order to crystallize peaceful relations between the former rivals and move them into a phase of lasting and stable peace, extensive changes are required in

the sociopsychological repertoire of group members on both sides. We regard stable and lasting peace as *consisting of mutual recognition and acceptance, after a reconciliation process, of an invested supreme goal of maintaining peaceful relations that are characterized by full normalization with cooperation in all possible domains of collective life that provide secure and trustful coexistence*. This view provides a compass to the desired nature of peaceful relations that are embedded in a culture of peace.

In this framework, in almost every peace-building process reconciliation between past rival parties is a necessary condition for establishing stable and lasting peace. It pertains to sociopsychological restructuring of relations between past rivals that allows healing from the past wounds of the conflict. This can be achieved through mutual recognition and acceptance, through open and free deliberation about past conflict, and by taking responsibility and correcting past injustices and wrongdoing. Thus, building lasting and stable peace requires, on the one hand, structural changes that restructure the nature of relations between the parties and, on the other hand, fundamental sociopsychological changes that penetrate deep into the societal fabric (Bar-Tal, 2009, 2013; Kelman, 1999; Long, & Brecke, 2003; Nadler, Malloy, & Fisher, 2008; Rouhana, 2011). The former refers to such processes as termination of oppression, discrimination, and occupation; addressing past human rights and justice violations, as well as performance of atrocities; distribution of power, wealth, and resources; demilitarization and disarmament with absolute cessation of violence; and construction of a democratic culture with structural justice. The latter refers to adoption and internalization by society members of values, beliefs, attitudes, emotions, norms, and practices that cherish peace, justice, respect of human rights, cooperation, trust, sensitivity and consideration of the other party's needs, interests, and goals, equality of relations, acceptance and respect of cultural differences—all as foundations of a culture of peace. These processes are interwoven, gradual, nonlinear, reciprocal, planned, voluntary, and very long. Their successful completion can guarantee solidification of peaceful relations between the former rivals, as the processes lay stable foundations, rooted in the new structures and the psyche of the people grounded in a culture of peace.

4. CONCLUSION

An intractable conflict by its nature is prolonged, vicious, and violent and resists termination because neither of the involved parties can win determinatively or is willing to negotiate a peaceful settlement that will satisfy the needs and goals of a majority of the society. These conflicts do not end, even when one party achieves a temporary military victory, if it does not address properly the grievances and contentions of the rival party that underlay the eruption and continuation of the conflict. Many of these conflicts are a result of unjust practices that were normatively accepted in previous years, and even though the moral codes of intergroup behaviors have changed, it is almost impossible to correct those past injustices. No group yields voluntarily power, dominance, wealth,

resources, territories—even when they were obtained in an immoral way in the past. Thus more conflicts are managed by power than by morality and justice, and often powerful third parties have a vested interest in their continuation.

Despite tremendous progress in framing new moral codes of intergroup behaviors, the civilized world has not found ways to bring the rival parties in intractable conflict to a successful, peaceful termination that opens the way for the eventual establishment of the lasting and stable peace. We believe that this is one of the most challenging missions for enlightened civilization: to increase the power of justice and morality and decrease the power of force on the road to establishing international mechanisms that will bring an end to the bloodshed of intractable conflicts. In this mission social scientists can play a major role not only by providing enlightenment about the forces that fuel continuation of the intractable conflicts, but also by elucidating the processes, factors, mechanisms, methods, and ways that can facilitate processes of peace-building.

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