

From Intractable Conflict Through Conflict Resolution to Reconciliation: Psychological Analysis

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Intractable intergroup conflicts require the formation of a conflictive ethos that enables a society to adapt to the conflict situation, survive the stressful period, and struggle successfully with the adversary. The formal termination of such a conflict begins with the elimination of the perceived incompatibility between the opposing parties through negotiation by their representatives—that is, a conflict resolution process. But this is only part of the long-term reconciliation process, which requires the formation of peaceful relations based on mutual trust and acceptance, cooperation, and consideration of mutual needs. The psychological aspect of reconciliation requires a change in the conflictive ethos, especially with respect to societal beliefs about group goals, about the adversary group, about the ingroup, about intergroup relations, and about the nature of peace. In essence, psychological reconciliation requires the formation of an ethos of peace, but this is extremely difficult in cases of intractable conflict. Political psychologists can and should work to improve the state of knowledge about reconciliation, which until now has received much less attention than conflict resolution.

KEY WORDS: reconciliation, conflict, conflict resolution, ethos, peacemaking.

Conflicts are a natural part of human interaction. People in conflicts, whether at the individual or group level, perceive that their goals or interests are contradicted by the goals or interests of the other party (Kriesberg, 1998a; Mitchell, 1981; Rubin, Pruitt, & Kim, 1994). When we focus on intergroup conflicts, they concern contradictory, concrete goals in the domains of territories, resources, trade, self-determination, religious rights, cultural values, and so on. But a conflict becomes a reality for society members¹ only when a particular situation is identified as

conflictive by them (Bar-Tal, Kruglanski, & Klar, 1989). This perception is a crucial condition for the outbreak of the conflict and serves as a basis for its further evolution.

From the psychological perspective of conflict analysis, outbreaks of conflicts are dependent on the appearance of particular perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, and motivations, all of which must change for conflict resolution to occur. But because this article focuses on intractable conflicts, which are characterized by their violent viciousness and durability, greater emphasis is given to reconciliation than to conflict resolution. Intractable conflicts deeply involve society members and result in the construction of a *conflictive ethos*, which provides the dominant orientation to the society (Bar-Tal, in press-b). In such cases, conflict resolution leads only to the formal termination of the conflict. The establishment of peaceful relations between the opposing parties depends on a successful reconciliation process, which in turn requires a change of the conflictive ethos and formation of the alternative *peace ethos*.

Social scientists are beginning to devote more attention to reconciliation (e.g., Asmal, Asmal, & Roberts, 1997; Keogh & Haltzel, 1993; Krepon & Sevak, 1996; Kriesberg, 1998b; Lederach, 1997; Rothstein, 1999; Tavuchis, 1991) after many decades of focusing almost entirely on the study of conflict resolution. Intractable conflicts pose a special threat to the stability of the international community. Such conflictive relations can sometimes endure for centuries. The present paper attempts to analyze the process of reconciliation in cases of intractable conflict, focusing only on its psychological, mainly cognitive, basis. The analysis is based on the psychological conceptual framework of intractable conflicts and their cognitive implications presented elsewhere (see Bar-Tal, 1998a, 1998b, in press-a, in press-b; Bar-Tal & Oren, 1999; Rouhana & Bar-Tal, 1998).

Psychological Basis of Intractable Conflicts

When society members identify a particular situation as a conflict, they engage in cognitive activities in order to expand their epistemic understanding of the conflict situation. First, they strive to explain the conflict situation, which often causes stress and uncertainty. They try to find answers to such questions as why the conflict erupted, which side is responsible for its outbreak, what are the intentions of the adversary group members, and so on.

In addition, society members form various beliefs that facilitate coping with the conflict situation. These beliefs relate to necessary steps that must be taken by society members in view of the conflict. For example, beliefs about mobilization and unity are necessary for coping with the external threat. This cognitive activity satisfies the basic human motivation to perceive the world in a meaningful way, in which events, people, things, or symbols come to be apprehended in an organized and systematic structure (Katz, 1960; Reykowski, 1982). When society members form beliefs about the new conflict situation, they feel that they have a meaningful

picture of the conflict, that their uncertainty is reduced, and that they can predict what may happen in the future and thus control their fate. But the described process of knowledge formation is always biased, because strong motivations such as ego defense or security needs underlie the information processing in situations of conflict. As a result, society members form their beliefs about conflict through selective information processing and biased interpretation of acquired information (see, e.g., the analysis of Israelis' and Palestinians' beliefs in Bar-Tal, 1990).

The cognitive involvement of society members depends on the intensity and durability of the intergroup conflict. The more intensive and durable the conflict, the more relevant it becomes to society members. As the conflict becomes more relevant, people become involved with it cognitively by forming various beliefs that explain the conflict situation and functionally help them to cope with it. The most extensive cognitive activity—which involves the formation of a conflictive ethos—takes place during intractable conflicts, which are the most extreme in severity and longevity.

Intractable conflicts are characterized as being protracted, irreconcilable, violent, of a zero-sum nature, total, and central, with the parties involved having an interest in their continuation (see Azar, 1985, 1990; Bar-Tal, 1998a; Goertz & Diehl, 1993; Kriesberg, 1998c). They are demanding, stressful, painful, exhausting, and costly both in human and material terms. These characteristics require that society members develop conditions that enable them to cope successfully with the conflict situation. One such condition is a psychological infrastructure, which consists of such elements as devotion to the society and country, high motivation to contribute, persistence, readiness for personal sacrifice, unity, solidarity, determination, courage, and maintenance of the society's objectives. Such a psychological infrastructure enables a society to adapt to the conflict situation, survive the stressful period, and struggle successfully with the enemy (see Bar-Tal, 1998a, for the details of this conceptual framework).

I propose that the construction of these psychological conditions includes a formation of functional *societal beliefs*. Societal beliefs are defined as society members' shared cognitions on topics and issues that are of special concern for society and contribute to their sense of uniqueness (Bar-Tal, in press-b). These beliefs construct society members' view of the conflict and motivate them to act. They thus provide the informational and motivational basis for societal action. Society members must believe in certain ideas to bear the stress and hardship of intractable conflict, and they must be motivated to act on behalf of the society and to harm the enemy. Of interest for the present conception are central societal beliefs that provide the dominant orientation to the society and constitute its ethos. An ethos combines central societal beliefs in a particular configuration and gives particular meaning to societal life in a given society. In the above-mentioned conceptual framework, eight societal beliefs were suggested as parts of the conflictive ethos of a society (Bar-Tal, 1998a).

Societal beliefs about *the justness of one's own goals* deal with (and justify the importance of) the reasons, explanations, and rationales surrounding the goals that led to the conflict. Societal beliefs about *security* stress the importance of personal safety and national survival, and outline the conditions for their achievement. Societal beliefs of *positive self-image* concern the ethnocentric tendency to attribute positive traits, values, and behavior to one's own society. Societal beliefs of *one's own victimization* concern self-presentation as a victim, focusing on the unjust harm, evil deeds, and atrocities perpetrated by the adversary. Societal beliefs of *delegitimizing the opponent* concern denial of the adversary's humanity through dehumanization, extreme negative trait characterization, outcasting, use of political negative labels, and negative group comparison (Bar-Tal, 1989). Societal beliefs of *patriotism* generate attachment to the country and society by propagating loyalty, love, care, and sacrifice (Bar-Tal, 1993). Societal beliefs of *unity* refer to the importance of ignoring internal conflicts and disagreements during an intractable conflict in order to unite the forces in the face of the external threat. Finally, societal beliefs of *peace* refer to peace as the ultimate desire of the society.

These eight societal beliefs help to shape the reality of societies torn by intractable conflict. Constituting the conflictive ethos, they underlie society members' perceptions, attitudes, motivations, and behaviors. It is assumed that these societal beliefs are necessary for enduring the intractable conflict. But they are far from sufficient to win a conflict. Other conditions of a military, political, and economic nature must also be fulfilled.

The formation of beliefs by group members is a natural and universal part of every intergroup conflict (e.g., Bar-Tal & Geva, 1985; Jervis, 1976; Kelman, 1997; Vertzberger, 1991), not only those that are intractable. All such conflicts require cognitive activity by society members in order to comprehend them. Society members form a set of societal beliefs and express them through various communication channels and institutions. Leaders and mass media form beliefs to explain the causes of the conflict, its nature, and its solution to group members. Cultural, educational, social, and political mechanisms are mobilized to impart these beliefs to society members and maintain them during the conflict. This is the case even in conflicts between groups that have friendly and cooperative relations.

Many intergroup conflicts do not deeply involve the society members, are tractable, and are ultimately resolved. Groups find ways to resolve the contradiction between their goals and the adversary's goals. Conflict resolution refers to a political process through which the parties in conflict eliminate the perceived incompatibility between their goals and interests and establish a new situation of perceived compatibility (Burton, 1990; Deutsch, 1973; Fisher, 1990; Kriesberg, 1992). It usually ends with an agreement, negotiated by the representatives of the two opposing groups, that outlines the details of the settlement in such a way as to allow the negotiators to view their respective goals as not being contradictory. Conflict resolution can also be seen as a psychological process, because it requires that the negotiators will change their beliefs regarding their own goals, the other

group's goals, the extent of contradiction between these two sets of goals, the conditions of the political environment, the situation of their own group, the situation of the adversary group, or combinations of any or all of these beliefs (see, e.g., Bercovitch, 1995; Burton, 1987, 1990; Fisher, 1990, 1997; Kelman, 1997; Kriesberg, 1992; Ross, 1993; Worchel, 1999).

In the context of intractable conflict, it is assumed that formal conflict resolution is only a necessary phase on the rocky road of peacemaking (see also Wilmer, 1998, discussing the Bosnian case). Of special importance is the process of reconciliation through which the parties in conflict form new relations of peaceful coexistence based on mutual trust and acceptance, cooperation, and consideration of each other's needs.

The Nature of Reconciliation

Reconciliation is not a necessary process in every intergroup conflict. It only applies to those intergroup conflicts that last for a long time (at least two decades) and involve extensive violence. When such a conflict endures for so many years, there is considerable accumulation of animosity, hatred, and prejudice; collective memories are imprinted by events related to the conflict; various cultural products reflect the antagonistic sentiment; beliefs related to the conflict become societal beliefs and are incorporated into the ethos; and at least one generation is socialized in the conflict climate, not knowing another reality. Extensively violent conflicts are those in which people on each side (often civilians) are killed and wounded, refugees are created, and property is destroyed or damaged. Of special importance is killing and wounding, because of the violation of the moral code of the sanctity of life, the deep emotional involvement of the societies in physical violence, the irreversibility of the situation, and the appearance of the will for vengeance (see Bar-Tal, in press-a).

These protracted and violent conflicts that require reconciliation can be of different types. Some of them may take place within a society divided on ideological issues (for example, in Spain, El Salvador, or Chile); some may take place within one country on the basis of interethnic, interracial, or interreligious schisms (for example, in Northern Ireland, South Africa, Turkey, or Israel); and some may involve two states (for example, France and Germany, Israel and Egypt, or India and Pakistan). Of crucial significance for understanding the reconciliation process is the outcome of the conflict resolution—specifically, whether the result of formal termination of the conflict is that the two adversary groups must continue to live in one political system (e.g., South Africa, Bosnia, Rwanda, El Salvador) or will live in two separate states (e.g., Israelis and Palestinians, French and Germans, Poles and Germans). It can be assumed that these two differing outcomes of conflict resolution require different forms of reconciliation. In the first form, there is a need to establish one political, societal, economic, legal, cultural, and educational system that will incorporate the two past rivals; in the second form, the past adversaries

live in two separate systems. The first form thus requires the establishment of the new system as part of the construction of the peaceful, cooperative, and trustful relations in a society. Reconciliation in the second form concerns the bilateral relations of two societies living in two different states.

In view of this distinction, it is not surprising that different social scientists have emphasized different aspects of reconciliation, depending on the type of conflict. For example, studies of reconciliation in the conflict-ridden societies of El Salvador, Honduras, Chile, or Argentina emphasized the political processes of democratization and justice as a condition for reconciliation (e.g., Corr, 1995; Kaye, 1997; Zalaquett, 1999). This line of thinking also appears in studies of reconciliation in South African society (e.g., Liebenberg & Zegeye, 1998; Nuttal & Coetzee, 1998). In this case, special attention is given to the process of reconstructing the past—with its acts of discrimination, injustice, killing, torture, and other violations of human rights—in order to foster societal healing (e.g., Asmal et al., 1997; Boraine, Levy, & Schefer, 1994; de la Rey & Owens, 1998; Norval, 1998). In this vein, Lederach (1997), who also focused on intrasocietal conflicts, proposed that reconciliation consists of four elements: *truth*, which requires open expression of the past; *mercy*, which requires forgiveness for building new relations; *justice*, which requires restitution and new social restructuring; and *peace*, which underscores common future, well-being, and security for all the parties in a society. In contrast, studies of reconciliation between states (e.g., France and Germany, Germany and the Czech Republic, Germany and Poland) referred to its function of building peace by creating new political, economic, social, and cultural relationships between former adversaries (e.g., Ackermann, 1994; Gardner-Feldman, 1999). Nevertheless, all the approaches recognize that reconciliation requires a psychological change—a transition to beliefs and attitudes that support peaceful relations between former enemies. This aspect of reconciliation, in the context of intractable interethnic and international conflicts, is the focus of the remainder of this article.

Psychological Perspectives on Reconciliation

Reconciliation in the psychological framework refers to a societal-cultural process that encompasses the majority of society members, who form new beliefs about the former adversary, about their own society, and about the relationship between the two groups. It is not a formal process, because it requires a change of societal beliefs. It may begin independently of the conflict resolution process, before the opposing sides even begin to negotiate, but the conflict resolution process always accelerates the reconciliation process. Nevertheless, the latter always continues for years, and even decades, after the last agreements of the conflict resolution were signed.

This psychological view of reconciliation is of special importance in cases of intractable intergroup conflict because of the need to change the well-entrenched

conflictive ethos. The conflictive ethos helps the society to cope with the adversary, but at the same time fuels the conflict and constitutes the fundamental obstacle to its resolution. It is thus imperative that the heart of the reconciliation process is the change of the conflictive ethos, which provides the systematic rationalization and psychological investment in the continuation of the conflict and constitutes its cultural foundation.

Change of the Conflictive Ethos

As described above, during an intractable conflict, societies form at least eight themes of societal beliefs that constitute the conflictive ethos (see Bar-Tal, 1998a). The process of reconciliation requires change of these societal beliefs. Three of these beliefs are the key obstacles to reconciliation: those concerning the justness of one's own goals, delegitimizing the opponent, and positive self-image.

Beliefs about societal goals. The most important change in the conflictive ethos concerns societal beliefs about the justness of one's own goals; these beliefs were involved in the outbreak of the intractable conflict, and they contradict a set of similar beliefs held by the adversary group about its own goals. Societies engaged in intractable conflict construct various justifications and rationales, myths, symbols, and rituals to serve this epistemic purpose. The reconciliation process requires changes in each group's beliefs about its own goals in order to remove the cognitive foundations of the conflict. This condition requires, in essence, abolition—or at least indefinite postponement—of the societal dreams and visions, expressed in specific goals, that caused the intergroup conflict.

A crucial catalyst of this change is the formal conflict termination (i.e., peace agreement), which is intended to eliminate the perception of contradictions between the goals of the parties. But this formal outcome, prepared by the representatives of the opposing societies, must be translated into cultural change of ethos, which involves the formation of new goals and their associated rationalizing beliefs, symbols, and myths.

The new societal beliefs should not imply contradiction between the society's goals and those of the former enemy, but instead should be concerned with accommodation between the groups. As discussed below, desirable new goals include living in peaceful coexistence with the opposing group and constructing cooperative relations.

The reconciliation process between France and Germany after the Second World War illustrates the changes in beliefs about goals. From continuous violent conflict and competition emerged new goals for the two societies, which stressed cooperation and common interest. Both nations envisioned the political and economic union of Europe, with a Franco-German pillar as its foundation (see Ackermann, 1994; Willis, 1965).

Beliefs about the adversary group. Another determinative condition for reconciliation is change of stereotypes about the adversary group. After years of

delegitimization, the members of the other group require legitimization and personalization. Legitimization allows members of the ingroup to view the adversary group as belonging to the category of acceptable groups, behaving within the boundaries of international norms. In essence, it grants humanity to adversary group members after years of denying it to them. Personalization, in turn, enables members of the ingroup to see members of the adversary group as human beings and to perceive them as individuals, as humane as members of the perceiving group are.

In terms of stereotypes, the change of beliefs about the adversary group should lead to a balanced stereotyping of this group—that is, the addition of positive stereotypes to negative ones. In any event, the delegitimizing stereotypes must disappear. The change should also cause ingroup members to perceive differentiation among the adversary group members. They should not be viewed as a homogeneous and unitary group, but as consisting of various subgroups with differing characteristics and opinions. Of special importance is some kind of forgiveness for the harm done by the members of the adversary group in the course of the intractable conflict. Together, these changes are assumed to cause a new perception of the adversary group; they increase trust in the other group, enable consideration of the other group's needs, and make it more likely that the other group could be perceived as a potential partner or even an ally.

Beliefs about the ingroup. The reconciliation process requires a change of societal beliefs about the ingroup, which during an intractable conflict are positive, self-glorifying, and self-praising, in marked contrast to views of the adversary group. The new beliefs should illuminate the ingroup in a more objective light, especially with regard to acts related to the conflict, and hence should be more complex and even critical. The new beliefs should recognize the contribution of the ingroup to the outbreak of the conflict and its extension, as well as the misdeeds of the ingroup in the course of the conflict, including responsibility for atrocities (if any). Such a change should also reduce the monopolization of feelings of victimhood; that is, there should be a recognition that both groups were victims in the conflict and have endured suffering. An example is the Czech-German Declaration on Mutual Relations and their Future Development, signed in 1997. It had implications for the self-image of each society in that it explicitly noted their past acts of injustice (Handl, 1997).

Beliefs about intergroup relations. Reconciliation requires the formation of new beliefs about the relations between the two groups that were engaged in the intractable conflict. These beliefs should concern the nature of the relations in the present, future, and past. With regard to the present, there is a need to develop beliefs about the importance of normalizing relations with the former adversary. There is a need to legitimize the construction of the new relations and provide a rationale for this change. With regard to the future, there is a need to establish beliefs about cooperative and friendly relations, emphasize their importance, and describe the utility of their amicable nature.

The new beliefs about the relations should also concern the past, the period of intractable conflict. The reconstruction of the past is an important part of reconciliation, because the collective memory of the past underlies much of the animosity, hatred, and mistrust between the parties. The collective memory of each party views the past selectively in a one-sided manner, focusing mostly on the misdeeds of the other group and its responsibility for the conflict, and on the glorification and victimhood of the ingroup. The new beliefs formed in the reconciliation process should present the past in a balanced way and in a more objective manner. This process requires a critical examination of the history of the intergroup relations, especially the history of the intractable conflict—a new look at the actions of one's own group and those of the other group. The most salient example of such a process is the work of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, established in 1995, which seeks to uncover the causes, nature, and extent of human rights violations during the apartheid period (Asmal et al., 1997; de la Rey & Owens, 1998; Norval, 1998). Another example is the work of the joint German, Czech, and Slovak historical commission that drafted a common interpretation of the events of 1938–1947 (Kopstein, 1997).

Beliefs about peace. In addition to changes of beliefs that directly concern the nature of the relationship between the two groups that were engaged in the intractable conflict, reconciliation also requires the evolution of new beliefs about the nature of peace and ways of living in conditions of peace. As noted, during the intractable conflict one theme of societal beliefs concerns peace. Although this indicates the aspiration for peace by groups involved in intractable conflict, such beliefs depict peace in general, amorphous, utopian terms, without specifying its nature or any practical ways to achieve it. The process of reconciliation requires the formation of new beliefs that not only describe realistically the meaning of living in peace, but also present the conditions necessary for living in peace. An important condition is the requirement that new conflicts and disagreements be resolved through peaceful mechanisms such as mediation, arbitration, or negotiation. In addition, it should be well propagated that conflict resolution requires compromise and concession.

The above analysis of required belief changes in the process of reconciliation implies that this process elevates a new societal ethos, the peace ethos, which replaces the conflictive ethos that evolved during the intractable conflict. Not all of the societal beliefs that constitute the peace ethos are in direct opposition to those that constitute the conflictive ethos. During the reconciliation process, the themes of the peace ethos evolve from the changes in the conflictive ethos. As discussed above, the core changes concern beliefs about societal goals, about the adversary group, about the ingroup, about intergroup relations, and about the nature of peace. But the evolution of a peace ethos does not preclude the maintenance of societal beliefs concerning patriotism, unity, security, and positive self-image. Societal beliefs about patriotism enable society members to mobilize in a cohesive manner to attain important societal goals. Societal beliefs about unity provide the basis for

feelings of belonging. Societal beliefs about security provide the basis for protection of the society against threats of all kinds, from military to cultural. Societal beliefs about positive self-image reflect a basic need of every society. These four themes of societal beliefs are thus functional for the survival of any society, and therefore society members maintain them during peaceful times as well. But during such times, these societal beliefs, in contrast to times of intractable conflict, should be complex, multidimensional, and open to skepticism and criticism.

Implications

In the framework of reconciliation between groups engaged in intractable conflict, the described changes of the conflictive ethos represent a very complicated, painful, threatening process with many obstacles. There are a number of reasons for this situation.

First, the societal beliefs of the conflictive ethos contribute greatly to the social identity of the society. They provide one of the epistemic bases that give meaning to membership in the society. Therefore, their change constitutes a threat to society members, who fear losing a glue that binds them together and motivates them to act [see, e.g., Bar-Tal and Oren's (1999) analysis of the changes in the conflictive ethos of the Israeli Jewish society in the course of the reconciliation process].

Second, such beliefs are well founded in the society. During the intractable conflict, the mobilized cultural, educational, social, and political institutions disseminate these beliefs and help to maintain them. Channels such as literature, books, films, plays, leaders' speeches, TV programs, newspaper articles, and sometimes even academic research propagate the beliefs of conflict, without presenting alternatives.

Third, because intractable conflicts endure for at least a generation (about 25 years), they involve society members who did not know any other reality. They were socialized in light of the conflict, acquiring the ethos of the conflict with its beliefs, symbols, and myths. As a result, the mentality of these younger generations is difficult to change [see, e.g., the analysis of Arthur (1999) regarding the reconciliation in Northern Ireland].

Fourth, during the intractable conflict the conflictive ethos becomes an ideological basis for various political groups. These groups view the societal beliefs of conflictive ethos as their credo, and thus any change of beliefs threatens their *raison d'être*. They therefore express the strongest objections to even minor modifications of the conflictive ethos.

Finally, societies in intractable conflict maintain societal mechanisms to guard consensus evolved around the conflictive ethos, which is viewed as a functional system for coping with the threatening and stressful situation. Individuals or groups expressing beliefs that deviate from the conflictive ethos are informally and sometimes even formally sanctioned. The sanctions thus inhibit the appearance of alternative ideas and opinions.

In view of the established status of the beliefs of conflictive ethos, it is not surprising that they are viewed as validated truth and thus constitute a reality for group members during the intractable conflict. Alternative beliefs are blocked, censored, rejected, or perceived with mistrust and suspicion. However, despite these difficulties, the process of reconciliation demands changes of the conflictive ethos. For such a process to begin and proceed, there must be a societal climate of openness and motivation to seek out and absorb new information that provides an alternative perspective on the conflict.

The process of reconciliation in which an ethos of peace evolves is a political, social, cultural, and educational process involving all the societal institutions and channels of communication. But it is not a formal process that can be fully controlled; it depends on the following factors:

1. Successful conflict resolution, which terminates the conflict formally and is expressed in an agreement signed by both sides. This is a determinative factor; without it, reconciliation cannot advance.
2. Acts of the adversaries that reflect the desire to change the conflictive relations into peaceful relations. This category includes unilateral acts of good will, symbolic acts of peace, reciprocal acts of concession, statements by leaders that imply the wish for peace, the appearance of organizations that support the reconciliation process, or the initiation of cooperative and joint ventures in different areas—political, economic, cultural, academic, or educational. Indeed, every analyzed case of reconciliation pays special attention to such acts, which solidify the reconciliation process (see, e.g., Ackermann, 1994, for the analysis of Franco-German reconciliation; Kopstein, 1997, for the German-Czech case; Arthur, 1999, for the Northern Ireland case; Maoz, 1999, for the Israeli-Palestinian case).
3. External supportive conditions, such as a peaceful international climate, pressure from influential allies, or the rise of a new external common goal (e.g., a threat). Gardner-Feldman (1999), analyzing the reconciliation process between Germany and each of four other nations (France, Israel, Poland, and the Czech Republic), paid special attention to the international context. In each case, she noted the contribution of the third party and of the international climate to the reconciliation process.
4. The strength of the opposition to the peace process within the society. Strong opposition of political parties and/or nonparliamentary organizations, which have the support of the elite and/or the masses, may impede the reconciliation process. The groups opposing reconciliation may continue to delegitimize the members of the adversary group, which adds fuel to the intractable conflict (e.g., the opposition's acts in Israel after the Oslo Agreement in 1993; Karpin & Friedman, 1998). Reconciliation thus requires building the extensive and

intensive support of society members, in order to weaken the opposition to this process.

5. The acts and determination of those parts of the society that support the reconciliation process. In this struggle, leaders play a crucial role. Because they serve as models to many of their followers, their open support and promotion of reconciliation, expressed in deeds and words, helps to maintain the process and mobilize the support of ingroup members. In her analysis of the reconciliation process between Germany and four other nations, Gardner-Feldman (1999) stressed in each case the contribution of the determined leaders who led their societies to realize their visions, often against strong opposition in their states—for example, David Ben-Gurion in the German-Israeli case.
6. The mobilization of educational, societal, and cultural institutions in support of the reconciliation process. The educational system can be used to socialize the whole young generation to live in peace with the past enemy. It can transmit the contents of the societal beliefs of the peace ethos and establish them in the students' repertoire. Support for the reconciliation process in the mass media may persuade the society members of its utility and the possibility of its actualization (see, e.g., the analysis of televised reconciliation ceremonies in Israel by Liebes & Katz, 1997). Also, the voice of the cultural elite may help to carry out the reconciliation. Its expression via various cultural contributions, such as books, films, or theatrical plays, serves as a valuable support for reconciliation by providing the rationalization for its desirability, creating new symbols and myths for the peace ethos, or presenting models for ingroup members (see, e.g., the case of the play *Desire* in South Africa; Barnes, 1997).
7. The activities of various organizations that promote reconciliation among the ingroup members and initiate joint acts with the former adversary group.

This is not intended as an exhaustive list of all possible factors that can influence reconciliation processes; these are only the factors that arise in an analysis of the reconciliation process in the context of intractable conflict, within a particular conceptual framework. Nevertheless, all the researchers cited in this article have pointed to the determinative role of psychological changes in society members' beliefs, attitudes, and motivations for the reconciliation process.

It is assumed that the coming years will witness a major effort to study and practice reconciliation. This endeavor is necessary because conflict resolution, especially in cases of intractable conflict, is only a part of the reconciliation process. The formal termination of a conflict does not guarantee meaningful change of intergroup relations in their deep political, economic, societal, and cultural sense. Without reconciliation, the conflict may break out again, as has happened in the past (e.g., in Bosnia or Rwanda). Reconciliation means an assurance that the past

rivals form peaceful relations and view themselves and each other in a way that is functional to the completely new relations.

It is the duty of political psychologists to make their contribution to this important endeavor. The psychological aspect of reconciliation is crucial, and various psychological factors play a major function in its crystallization. Political psychologists not only can shed light on this process and its inhibitory or accelerating factors, but also may play a role in its practical implementation.

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