

Peace Interventions Tailored to Phases Within a Cycle of Intergroup Violence

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Abstract

This chapter discusses intervention strategies for intrastate violence with emphasis on preventing and mitigating cycles of organized violence. We distinguish three phases of a cycle of violence (intergroup conflict, organized violence, and postviolence), discuss characteristics of each phase, and suggest peace intervention strategies that are particularly well suited for each phase. When discussing the limitations of our perspective and future research directions, we point to the narrow focus of research and practice on peace interventions aimed at promoting the absence of organized violence (i.e., *negative peace*) without concomitant efforts to promote social justice (i.e., *positive peace*) and sustainable development. We maintain that durable forms of peace require the application of both negative and positive peace interventions.

Key Words: Intervention strategies, cycles of violence, negative peace interventions, positive peace interventions, peace psychology, peacebuilding, social change, group norms, social identity

Three major forms of conflict have emerged and dominate the geopolitical landscape in the 21st century: (1) intrastate conflicts marked by protracted cycles of intercommunal violence; (2) structural conflict and violence, in which oppressed and exploited groups suffer and die slowly through the deprivation of human needs; and (3) terrorist activities carried out by state and nonstate actors. In this chapter, we examine the first of these three types of conflict. We begin by describing the phases and characteristics of cycles of intrastate violence. Then, we review intervention strategies that are well suited for interrupting the cycle and preventing further episodes of violence. Finally, we place the problem of violence cycles in the larger context of intergroup power differences and outline directions for future research.

Cycles of Violence

Worldwide, since the 1990s, most episodes of violence have been within state boundaries, typically occurring in and around communities where

they exact a heavy personal toll on the lives and well-being of neighbors, friends, and family members (Eriksson, Wallensteen, & Sollenberg, 2003). These episodes of violence are often intercommunal and occur repeatedly. On a psychosocial level, they are characterized by intercommunal tensions, oppositional social identities, political motivations, and deeply divisive ideologies. Some of these violent cycles are intractable, last one or more generations, and are perceived as existential and zero-sum in nature (Bar-Tal, 2007; Coleman, 2003; see also Bar-Tal & Hammack, this volume; Vallacher, Coleman, Nowak, & Bui-Wrzosinska, this volume).

We begin our analysis by distinguishing three distinct phases in a cycle of violence: (1) intergroup conflict, (2) organized violence, and (3) postviolence, as depicted in Figure 15.1.

The Intergroup Conflict Phase

Intergroup conflicts have been defined in various ways, such as differences in interests, views, or goals

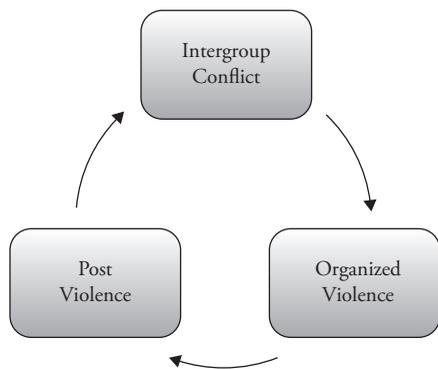


Figure 15.1 Cycle of intergroup violence.

(Deutsch, 1973), opposing preferences (Carnevale & Pruitt, 1992), or the perception of divergent interests that may be real or imagined (Rubin & Levinger, 1995). Members of conflicted groups may have antagonistic feelings, attempt to control each other (Fisher, 1990), and believe that the aspirations of both parties cannot be achieved simultaneously (Pruitt & Kim, 2004).

Following the conventions of conflict theorists and practitioners, we view “intergroup conflict” as a set of cognitive and affective processes in which each of the parties to a conflict perceives its group’s interests as incompatible with the interests of one or more other groups. The parties in conflict may or may not have violent feelings toward the other, but importantly, they do not act on them. Unlike organized violence, which is inherently destructive, intergroup conflicts can lead to creative and mutually beneficial outcomes (Kriesberg, 2003). However, if mismanaged, intergroup conflict can be an antecedent to organized violence as depicted in Figure 15.1.

The Organized Violence Phase

As conflict conditions become more polarized and hostile, leaders may begin to marshal public support for the use of force. Cohrs and Boehnke (2008) have summarized findings that bear on public support for organized violence. Generally, public attitudes toward military ventures are more supportive if people (1) perceive that an adversary poses a collective threat; (2) feel angry and outraged; and (3) lack concern about the human suffering that may result from a military incursion. Other variables that predict public attitudes include a range of processes that fall within the rubric of moral disengagement such as denying responsibility by drawing on beliefs in a “just war,” minimizing the negative

consequences of a military intervention, seeing the violent action through a humanitarian lens, and dehumanizing the target of the violence (Bandura, 1999; see also Bar-Tal & Hammack, this volume; Opatow, this volume). Organized violence entails the translation of these perceptions and emotions into overt forms of behavior that engender direct and indirect assaults with the intention of harming the other.

When intergroup relations are dominated by violence, cognitive and emotional processes that resist peaceful overtures become intensified. Some well-documented processes involve faulty, negative attributions of the other; rigid categorical thinking (e.g., us-them); selective inattention to information; heightened outgroup antipathy; and a host of other cognitive and emotional processes that make constructive dialogue between combatants difficult (Kimmel & Stout, 2006; see also Cohrs, this volume). In addition, intergroup threat tends to be a prominent feature of violent episodes, and the appraisal of threat can reduce empathy for outgroup members and evoke strong negative emotions, including anger, fear, rage, resentment, and insecurity—emotional states that are not conducive to peacemaking (Lickel, this volume; Stephan & Mealy, 2012).

The Postviolence Phase

A sharp distinction between organized intergroup violence and the postviolence phase is not always possible. Even when groups in conflict negotiate a settlement, threats to physical safety may be present because of intermittent shooting, bombing, shelling, and other kinds of violence (Jeong, 2005). A host of other problems can set the stage for ongoing violence after a negotiated settlement: forced displacement of individuals and groups, separation from abducted family members, the erosion of traditional values and norms, destruction of social networks and sense of community, lack of health services, extreme poverty, the breakdown of law and order, violations of human rights, an uptick in criminal activity, weak or no governance, and violations of human rights (Interagency Standing Committee, 2007).

Often times, the process of transitioning to the postviolence phase requires security sector reform, reintegration programs for soldiers who are decommissioned, the establishment of the rule of law, and the strengthening of protection systems at all levels of society (Wessells, 2012). Although physical reconstruction is typically emphasized, it is also

important to rebuild institutions that address social and communal needs and put in place mechanisms for managing intergroup conflict. Otherwise, there is a risk that the postviolence phase will be followed by another round of intergroup conflict and organized violence, thereby continuing the cycle of violence depicted in Figure 15.1.

Overview of Peace Interventions

Peace interventions are aimed at moving parties that are locked in a cycle of violence toward a nonviolent state of conflict management. Figure 15.2 depicts the three phases in cycles of violence (shaded boxes) and three categories of peace interventions (unshaded boxes) designed to prevent and mitigate violent episodes.

As noted in Figure 15.2, the type of peace intervention deployed is contingent on the predominant phase of intergroup relations (i.e., conflictual, violent, or postviolent). When the relationship is primarily in a phase of intergroup conflict (without overt episodes of violence), intervention strategies emphasize nonviolent conflict management. When the relationship is characterized by organized violence, de-escalation strategies are implicated to reduce the frequency, intensity, and duration of violence. Finally, in the postviolence phase, interventions typically emphasize reconciliation and sustainable development. Figure 15.2 is designed to acknowledge that although relationships may be

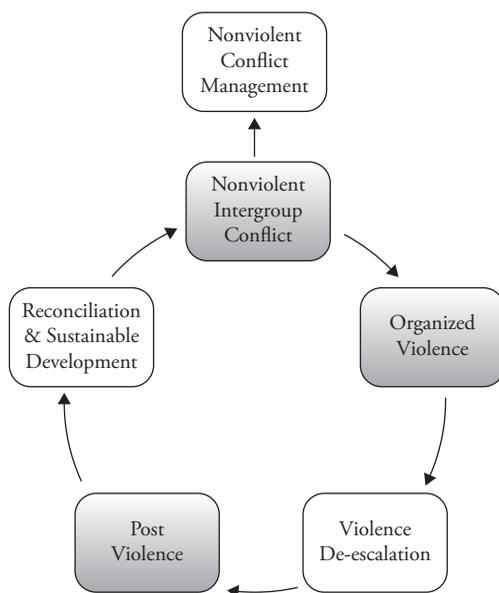


Figure 15.2 Peace interventions (unshaded boxes) for a cycle of violence.

nonviolent, relationships are never entirely “conflict-free” and therefore, even when there are no overt forms of violence between groups, nonviolent conflict management strategies are implicated to prevent violence.

The peace interventions are not mutually exclusive; the degree to which each is emphasized is contingent on the relative dominance of the three phases. An important point for practitioners is that relative dominance of the phases can also oscillate, calling for shifts in the emphasis of peace interventions in response to changing configurations of relative dominance. A program designed for one set of conditions may thus need spur-of-the-moment adaptation as conditions change. Moreover, some interventions are robust and applicable to various phases in the cycle of violence. For instance, *intergroup contact* approaches have been applied during both the intergroup conflict and postviolence phase. *Unofficial diplomacy* has been applied at each and every phase in the cycle of violence. In the following analysis, we consider the three types of peace intervention approaches that we deem to be most appropriate for each phase of the cycle of violence, beginning with nonviolent conflict management.

Nonviolent Conflict Management

Although the notion of “intergroup conflict” may have negative connotations, conflict practitioners and theorists often point out that the consequences of conflict, whether positive or negative, depend largely on how the conflict is managed (Kriesberg, 2003). Conflict outcomes are constructive when they yield mutually beneficial outcomes, improve relationships, and create habits and tendencies to manage new conflicts in ways that preserve and strengthen the relationship. Sanson and Bretherton (2001) note that conflicts can encourage open and spontaneous communication, reveal contentious issues, sharpen analyses, lead to greater clarity in problem framing, and improve the overall quality of problem-solving (see also Nagda, Yeakley, Gurin, & Sorensen, this volume). As Deutsch (1973) has pointed out, the key question is not whether conflicts will arise—they will. Unlike violence, conflicts are ubiquitous and inevitable. The key question is whether conflicts will be managed constructively, thereby yielding desirable outcomes such as complex reasoning, high quality decision making, and relationship building.

There are many nonviolent conflict management strategies that can promote conflict resolution: negotiation, mediation, diplomacy, dialogue,

arbitration, interactive problem-solving, intergroup contact, unilateral initiatives, and a host of other methods that are aimed at moving the parties toward mutually satisfying outcomes and relations (see also d'Estrée, this volume; Wagner & Hewstone, this volume). Most importantly, in accordance with Figure 15.2, nonviolent conflict management offers the opportunity of intervening effectively in order to prevent the outbreak of a violent episode. In the following sections, we describe four conflict management strategies that have been used to prevent organized violence: (1) peacekeeping, (2) confidence building measures, (3) unofficial diplomacy, and (4) intergroup contact.

PEACEKEEPING

One way to manage conflict in order to prevent violence is through peacekeeping, a method that typically involves civilian or military personnel who are deployed to separate would-be combatants. The kinds of activities undertaken by peacekeepers have expanded in recent years (Langholtz, 1998), from a nearly exclusive preoccupation with keeping disputing parties spatially apart to a range of activities including the protection of humanitarian aid workers, monitoring electoral processes, and building government institutions such as police or military forces in an effort to keep the peace.

Since the deployment of the first peacekeepers in 1948, peacekeeping operations have had some successes around the world. However, peacekeeping that does not build in mechanisms for conflict resolution can lead to a static situation in which peacekeepers must remain deployed or risk the outbreak of violence. The continued deployment of peacekeeping forces in the Middle East, Cyprus, and Kashmir for more than 50 years demonstrates a major limitation that can arise when underlying grievances and differences between the parties are not adequately addressed. Under more ideal conditions, peacekeeping effectively sets the stage for managing the conflict in a way that resolves issues, reduces intergroup tensions, addresses the interests of the parties in the current conflict, and moves the parties toward a more constructive relationship. Clearly, peacekeeping in a traditional sense (i.e., without conflict-resolving efforts) may effectively deter opponents and prevent violence, but peacekeeping itself is poorly suited for resolving intergroup conflicts (Dixon, 1996).

It can be difficult to move beyond peacekeeping and bring the parties to the table, particularly when there is the perception of threat and a history of

distrust. As a general rule, external threats increase the psychological need for internal cohesion (Stein, 1976) and trigger perceptions of intergroup differences as well as attributions of destructive motives (Lickel, this volume; Stephan & Mealy, 2012). Under conditions in which threat and distrust are salient, the use of confidence building measures may be a first step in the conflict resolution process.

CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES (CBMs)

CBMs are often unilateral actions, initiated by one of the parties to a dispute, that are aimed at reducing mistrust and building trust. They can be used in tandem with peacekeeping (Langholtz, 1998) and have the advantage of requiring only one of the parties to initiate the conflict-resolving process. An early CBM proposal was the use of Graduated and Reciprocated Initiatives in Tension Reduction (GRIT), essentially a sequence of carefully calibrated and graduated unilateral initiatives that induce the other side to reciprocate with a tension-reducing action which in turn leads to a sequence of reciprocations (Osgood, 1962). During the GRIT process, both sides experience increments in mutual trust and tension reduction. Lindsfold (1978) analyzed conditions that favored the use of a GRIT-based strategy based on the results of experimental game studies. To reduce tension and build trust, the unilateral initiative should be (1) announced before implemented; (2) carried out following the announcement; (3) noncontingent so that the initiative is attributed to a desire to resolve the conflict rather than the expectation of a *quid pro quo*; (4) costly to the initiator so that initiatives are not viewed as a trap; and (5) continued for a period of time in order to give the other party time to reconsider its policy, consider potential reciprocations, and respond with a conciliatory move. Unilateral initiatives combined with reciprocity have been shown to be effective for eliciting cooperation with a wide range of methodologies including experimentation, computer-simulation, and comparative historical cases of international interactions (Patchen, 1987).

REFRAMING

The concept of “reframing” can be applied to various levels of analysis, from the personal to interpersonal to intergroup levels. In the context of interpersonal relations, for example, when a relationship between two people is relatively stable, there are shared expectations about verbal and behavioral interactions and what they mean; that is, both

persons will have similar subjective frames and these frames will influence patterns of interactions (Snow & Benford, 1988). Reframing occurs when one or both persons behave in a way that challenges the shared subjective frame and suggests a new framing of the relationship (Kriesberg, 2003).

Similarly, at the intergroup level, protracted conflicts can be reframed. For example, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's trip to Jerusalem in 1978 was an unexpected and grand gesture that signaled a change in the relationship, reduced tension, and started the process of building trust and cooperation between Egypt and Israel, thereby paving the way toward peace (Kelman, 1997). While Sadat's visit effectively reframed the relationship, dramatic changes are often difficult to accept, particularly when psychosocial processes such as delegitimization, victimization, revenge, moral exclusion, and destructive ideologies have characterized the geo-historical context within which the relationship is embedded (see Bar-Tal & Hammack, this volume; Cohrs, this volume; Opatow, this volume; and Vollhardt, this volume). In short, although the evidence for a circular relationship between tension reduction, trust development, and cooperation is quite compelling (Kramer & Carnevale, 2001), a good deal of work remains to be done on the political antecedents and psychosocial mechanisms that favor the successful implementation of grand gestures and related conciliatory approaches to reframing (Kramer, 2012).

Reframing in order to bring parties to the table can be particularly challenging when intergroup conflicts are intractable, because the same information may be perceived and interpreted very differently by groups in opposition. Bar-Tal (2007), for example, has suggested that conflict-supporting societal beliefs (e.g., myths, collective ideologies, goals) may serve as a prism through which members of a society interpret their experiences, validate their beliefs, and reject disconfirming information. Accordingly, movement toward the resolution of conflict often requires some reframing of either the problem, relationship, or the parties involved. For instance, it may be possible to include more parties in order to increase the range of trade-offs effectively available for a negotiated solution or exclude those who would resist movement toward conflict resolution. The problem itself might be reframed to emphasize non-zero-sum features of the conflict (Addison & Murshed, 2002).

Reframing has been used by Gayer, Landman, Halperin, and Bar-Tal (2009) in a study that draws

on prospect theory and its proposition that decision making in humans is more strongly influenced by information about losses than information about gains, even when gains and losses are of equal magnitude. Using the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as context, Gayer et al. induced loss aversion in participants who were drawn from an Israeli-Jewish population by presenting them with information that described ways in which the continuation of the conflict was likely to result in growing economic and demographic losses over time. Under the loss aversion condition, participants were more easily persuaded to reconsider their beliefs than they were when arguments focused on the potential gains derived from a peace agreement. In particular, the aversion to loss created a greater willingness to reevaluate current positions, acquire new information about potential avenues for conflict resolution, and support compromises. Research of this kind demonstrates the importance of reframing and the potential of theory to inform research and policy.

Both for *CBMs* and for *reframing* strategies, a general issue is that perceptions of zero-sum relations or harmful costs are in part learned and socially constructed (Esses, Jackson, & Armstrong, 1998; Louis et al., 2007), as are the emotions individuals feel regarding their group's role and behavior in a conflict (Thomas, McGarty, & Mavor, 2009). The success of reframing by Gayer and colleagues attests to this malleability. However, individuals may be systematically taught in schools, media, religious institutions, and over the dinner table to overlook the real benefits of cooperation and costs of conflict, and to focus asymmetrically on the benefits of conflict and costs of cooperation. Moreover, perceptions of the "rational" costs and benefits associated with conflict and cooperation are generally markers of group identities and norms (Louis, 2009; Louis, Taylor, & Douglas, 2005; Louis, Taylor, & Neil, 2004).

For example, knowing that someone believes that war is necessary and inevitable might mark someone as more likely to be from a certain political party, ethnic group, religious group, or class within a society. Similarly, knowing that someone believes that war is unnecessary and peace is possible may also be a useful cue to political preference, religious values, ethnic group membership, and class. When this is the case, attempting to challenge contradictory beliefs becomes difficult because the mere articulation of the belief makes salient the source's divergent group memberships from the target. Understanding the normative underpinning of

cost-benefit calculations and emotions draws attention to how socialization, and normative influence more broadly, are fundamental to the evolution of conflict resolution processes in a society.

Specifically, adopting the view that groups' norms and ideologies underpin their willingness to accept particular pieces of information means that careful framing of the source of any information is essential. Peace intervention designers who hold unquestioned beliefs that their views of the conflict are "objective" while those of the protagonists are "biased" deserve the mistrust and rejection they encounter. For reframing to be effective, the source of the reframe must be credible—that is, they must have the psychological authority to contradict an existing, culturally embedded worldview. Without such authority, group members may react *against* the attempted reframe, creating a backlash against the view being promulgated (Louis, Duck, Terry, & Lalonde, 2010).

Several sources of psychological authority to change can be identified from the persuasion and communication literatures. For example, making salient one's own membership in the group with inclusive language and taking ownership of existing conflictual behavior, may be necessary to avoid attributions of destructive rather than constructive motives for the critique and proposed change (Hornsey et al., 2008; Louis, 2008). Positioning oneself as conforming to a group's values and norms on other dimensions may also be necessary to establish oneself as a credible group representative (Turner & Reynolds, in press; Reicher, Haslam, & Hopkins, 2005; see also Hollander, 1958). Many agents of change identify themselves as alienated by their own group's violence, emphasizing their emotional and moral rejection of the group. However, this strategy may be more likely to promote a backlash by associating militarism with central group values, and associating nonviolence with marginality.

On a personal or role level, holding attributes associated with leadership in the particular context, such as elected office, spiritual authority, or a revered ancestry may also be beneficial (e.g., Abrams, Randsley de Moura, Marques, & Hutchison, 2008). In the absence of any personal or role authority, a source may also attempt to capture authority by leveraging one dimension of the group's norms against another dimension. For example, it may be possible to invoke an injunctive norm that a behavior *should not be done*—that it is immoral or inappropriate—to create conformity that undermines a descriptive norm that a behavior

is *common* or prevalent in a group (Smith & Louis, 2008, 2009; Louis, 2009). By positioning oneself as the champion of historical and central group values, one might borrow the authority of those recognized norms to challenge what may be conceived of as a regrettable departure from the group's long-standing values.

This is a rhetorical challenge easier attempted than achieved, of course. But an intervention campaign around reframing that is designed with attention to these questions of psychological authority may be considerably more effective than one that presumes expertise or assumes a position as an "impartial" third party. The communication and normative influence literatures highlight the importance of the group's existing opinion leaders as pivots of resistance or effective social influence. But it also suggests how new sources might seek to position themselves as effective agents of normative change. By taking ownership of the present behavior, making explicit constructive or prosocial motives, asserting conformity and embracing the group's norms on other dimensions, highlighting one's personal or role claim to authority (if possible), and invoking central, recognized group values or norms as the basis for the new norm challenge, sources' reframe attempts may be more likely to succeed.

UNOFFICIAL DIPLOMACY

Another approach to conflict management involves diplomacy through unofficial channels (Crocker, Hampson, & Aall, 1999; Diamond & McDonald, 1996; Fisher, 1997; Lederach, 1997; Peck, 1996). When the geohistorical context is so toxic that leaders cannot initiate cross-group dialogue, unofficial diplomacy may be a more desirable alternative than direct talks. Unofficial diplomacy does not seek binding agreements or policies but instead is aimed at developing mutual understanding and relationships between unofficial but influential members of adversarial groups (see d'Estrée, this volume). The process is typically facilitated by a third party that encourages participants to engage in intergroup empathy as they analyze the conflict, test assumptions, redress biases, arrive at insights, improve intergroup relations, and craft constructive policies that, under ideal conditions, are adopted by policy makers (Fisher, 1997; Kelman & Cohen, 1976). Third parties can also serve as mediators, offer technical and economic assistance, encourage would-be combatants to engage in constructive interactions, de-escalate tensions, and make arrangements for arbitration or adjudication. Such

unofficial forms of diplomacy can be useful in all phases of a violent cycle: during conflict, violent episodes, or postviolence (Kelman, 1996).

In addition to facilitating unofficial diplomacy, third parties also can participate in efforts aimed at early warning and action. For example, early warning efforts have been carried out by staff at the Department of Political Affairs in the United Nations. The department functions as an institutional mechanism that can detect, analyze, and dispatch resources when the antecedents of violent episodes appear (Peck, 1996). These and other efforts to manage, resolve, and transform conflicts are in keeping with broader efforts to prevent violence (see Staub, this volume), a goal that is increasingly embraced by the United Nations in part because of the potential hazards of conflict escalation that characterize repeated cycles of violence and result in an enormous toll on life and property (Secretary General, 2006).

Movement away from violence and toward conflict resolution may also be more likely when conflicted parties begin to reduce oppositional interactions aimed at winning, and increase promotive interactions aimed at mutually satisfying outcomes and improved relationships. As noted earlier, Fisher and colleagues have provided a template for many of the approaches to promotive interactions that have proliferated over the past twenty years (Fisher, Ury, & Patton, 1991). These “interest-based” approaches to conflict resolution recommend that the parties to a conflict begin by conceptually separating the people from the problem. Parties also are encouraged to be tough on the problem and easy on the participants; to engage in cognitive flexibility and joint problem-solving; to move away from intransigent positions and seek options for mutual gain; and to pursue a deeper understanding of each other’s underlying motivations, desires, and needs (d’Estrée, this volume). The desired end point for interest-based approaches is an integrative solution that satisfies the needs of all parties.

In addition to interest-based conflict resolution, many theorists and practitioners emphasize the importance of conflict transformation in which relationships are moved toward a more constructive way of relating and dealing with differences and disagreements, a change that may require efforts to address wider social and political causes of intergroup conflict (Folger & Bush, 2005; Lederach, 2003). Recent research has also demonstrated that positive emotions can facilitate the sharing of information, honest exchanges of information, and the enhancement

of trust, empathy, creative brainstorming, and constructive problem-solving (Shapiro, 2001, 2012). Attempting to introduce positive emotions to protagonists in a conflict context may be more effective at the low end of the simmer than when the boiling point is being approached, however.

INTERGROUP CONTACT

While confidence building measures, reframing, and unofficial diplomacy have generally been deployed to build top-down positive relations between leaders, another approach to resolving conflicts and improving intergroup attitudes is derived from intergroup contact theory. This approach typically focuses on changing relations from the bottom up. Intergroup contact has most often been applied during the conflict phase of the cycle of violence, though increasingly attention is being given to the postviolence context (see Wagner & Hewstone, this volume). Research on intergroup contact has demonstrated that higher levels of intergroup contact are associated with lower levels of intergroup prejudice (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Even knowing that other ingroup members have had positive contact with outgroup members can sometimes change attitudes for the better (Wright, Aron, McLaughlin-Volpe, & Ropp, 1997). While contact generally reduces prejudice, the effect can be enhanced when Allport’s (1954) four primary conditions are met: namely, when contact is (1) cooperative, (2) between equal status groups, (3) supported by institutional authorities, and (4) based on common goals. Because intergroup friendships also can have a powerful influence on the reduction of prejudice, Pettigrew (1998) added a fifth condition to the contact hypothesis, noting that the “contact situation must provide the participants with the opportunity to become friends” (p. 76).

Contact conditions are not always met, however. While empathy and perspective taking are mediating mechanisms that can improve relations, contact that enhances anxiety or the perception of threat can lead to poor relations (Brown & Hewstone, 2005; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008). Anxiety and threat can be provoked by a host of conditions including: contact that is marginalized by authorities; contact that is between parties that have great disparities in power; contact that advances one party’s goals and not the other’s; or contact that enables one side to communicate hostile thoughts and emotions, or harmful behavior.

A general issue is that contact and dialogue between oppositional parties without constructive

follow-up action may be unproductive and harmful to relationships, and increase the likelihood of subsequent violence. In addition, if intergroup contact reinforces status quo power configurations between groups, the tension and resentment within the currently disempowered group will be likely to build over time, and the leadership that initiated attempts at nonviolent conflict resolution may be discredited in favor of more militant approaches.

Another problem faced by conflict management approaches is that some conflicts are structured in ways that are not amenable to mutually satisfying outcomes. “Realistic conflicts” arise over the division of limited resources (e.g., land, water, etc.) as contrasted with conflicts that may be satisfied by addressing perceptual biases, human needs, and other psychological processes (e.g., need for symbolic recognition). As noted above, perceptions of zero-sum relations are in part normative (Esses, Jackson, & Armstrong, 1998; Louis et al., 2007): how much land and water is “enough” may be contested, along with the costs of attempting to claim the resource versus benefits of cooperating in its division. It is worth noting, however, that even realistic conflicts whose structure is zero-sum and result in distributive outcomes can be negotiated more effectively and yield what is seen to be fair when empathy and mutual respect characterize the interaction process (Shapiro, 2012).

De-escalation of Violence

When conflict leads to the outbreak of organized violence, psychological processes that resist peaceful overtures intensify (Kimmel & Stout, 2006). Under violent conditions, it may be most productive to abandon efforts to promote conflict management and relationship building and move toward our second category of peace interventions, de-escalation strategies, as noted in Figure 15.2. Current work on de-escalation is progressing in four areas: (1) understanding and addressing the role of emotions in ongoing violence; (2) focusing on recognizing and seizing moments of “ripeness,” that is, when parties’ exhaustion and hurt create a window of readiness to change; (3) interactive conflict resolution; and (4) antiwar activism.

THE ROLE OF EMOTIONS

Early accounts of intractable conflicts emphasized the role of cognitions as psychological barriers to de-escalation, and in particular mutual perceptions and images, national self-images, national identity, and ideology (see Kelman & Cohen, 1976). While

cognitive processes remain central to our understanding of barriers to de-escalation, in recent years, the emotional components of intractable conflicts have been given much more attention and elaboration. For example, expectations about the harmful and destructive future behavior of an adversary are typically associated with intense emotionality. The cognitive-emotional mix that comprises *mistrust* contributes to the continuation of the cycle of violence and reluctance to initiate conciliatory actions in the negotiation process. Fear of being exploited, anger and shame over past victimization, misdirected guilt over past perpetration—all can be both outputs of the confrontational history of relations between the parties and antecedents of future violence (Kramer & Carnevale, 2001).

Bar-Tal and colleagues (Bar-Tal, 2007; Bar-Tal & Hammack, this volume; Bar-Tal, Raviv, Raviv, & Dgani-Hirsh, 2009) note that under prolonged conditions of intractable conflict, the parties involved develop an “ethos of conflict” that functions as an ideology through which all aspects of conflict are processed and interpreted. The ethos provides a clear and simplified picture of the conflict, its goals, rationale for actions taken, and images of one’s own group and of the rival group. Some components of the ideology include beliefs about the justness of the group’s goals, the perception of oneself as victim, positive self-perception, and a sense of morality. In contrast, the enemy is delegitimized or assigned to an extremely negative social category that is beyond the conceptual boundary of what constitutes humanness. The ideology undergirds a host of violent behaviors that may be framed positively, in terms of determination, heroism, and sacrifice. In Bar-Tal’s model, the beliefs arouse intense feelings such as anger, hatred, or fear and therefore are resistant to change (see also Lickel, this volume). The “ethos of conflict” represents a substantial barrier to the reduction of violence and perpetuates the conflict. Recently, Bar-Tal and Halperin (2009) have proposed an integrative model of barriers to conflict resolution. Their model is informed by the operation of cognitive, emotional, and motivational processes, combined with a preexisting repertoire of rigid supporting beliefs, worldviews, and emotions. They propose that the complex constellation of variables that feed into the model creates faulty information processing that is selective, biased, and distorted. Hence, new information that could contribute to the peaceful resolution of a conflict is obstructed and distorted when processed.

How to remove the constellation of cognitive and emotional barriers to de-escalation is not clear. But taken at face value, if feelings such as fear, anger, grief, and shame interfere with a willingness to move forward, attempting to engage with these emotions provides a direction for interventions (see also Nagda et al., this volume). It will be important to recognize that collective emotions such as war-fueled anger have a strong normative component (Thomas et al., 2009), as individuals may have been taught to feel anger and fear, or guilt and remorse by valued others in their social environments. The prospects of changing emotions as an outsider are therefore limited, and there is a risk of provoking reactance. As in the case of cognitive reframing, efforts to introduce emotional change must be designed with attention to the psychological authority of the source.

RIPENESS AND READINESS

While episodes of violence can become intractable, Pruitt (2012) points out that they often de-escalate in one of two ways: (1) one of the parties exerts overwhelming power and therefore forces the other party into submission, or (2) the situation becomes “ripe” for de-escalation. Ripeness theory (Zartman, 2000, 2006) delineates a number of conditions that favor negotiations when parties are locked into a conflictual or violent relationship. Two necessary, though not sufficient, conditions must be present for ripeness to occur: first, the parties experience a “mutually hurting stalemate” in which neither can defeat the other and both are enduring unacceptable costs; second, both parties perceive a “way out” of the stalemate, share the sense that a negotiated solution is possible, and are willing to pursue such a course of action.

Readiness theory (Pruitt, 2007) offers a psychological perspective on ripeness theory. Readiness is viewed as a variable that reflects each party’s willingness to enter and stay engaged in negotiations. Antecedents of readiness include the motivation to escape the situation, followed by optimism about the prospect of reaching a mutually beneficial outcome. Pressure to negotiate by powerful third party allies can also enhance readiness. When readiness is present, a subtle conciliatory signal may be offered. If the other party reciprocates, optimism ought to increase for both sides. There also is the option of back-channel talks or unofficial forms of diplomacy to explore the possibility of negotiation, a prospect that would require less optimism and readiness than entering into direct negotiations.

INTERACTIVE CONFLICT RESOLUTION

In protracted conflicts that are punctuated with repeated episodes of violence and characterized by polarized views, official diplomacy may be politically difficult to initiate, as noted above. Under these conditions even talking with an adversary may be regarded by constituents as weak and politically naïve. Political leaders may be under enormous domestic pressure to demonstrate resolve and toughness by cutting off relations with adversaries or engaging exclusively in coercive forms of interaction. When episodes of violence dominate the relationship, unofficial diplomacy and interactive conflict resolution (ICR) strategies may offer viable options for the pursuit of peaceful relations.

As highlighted elsewhere (d’Estrée, this volume), ICR is a collection of methodologies that bring together unofficial members of identity groups or states that are in conflict with each other (Fisher, 1997, 2005). Members of the conflicted groups are not necessarily political leaders but tend to be influential members of their respective communities, some of whom may have relations with political leaders and policy makers, and be able to indirectly lay some of the groundwork for official negotiations and policy development. Intergroup dialogue sessions are facilitated by an unofficial and impartial third party, usually a team of social scientist practitioners who are familiar with the geohistorical context of the conflict and have a skill set informed by principled approaches to negotiation. Third-party members may facilitate dialogue sessions that reveal the antecedents of the conflict and encourage the kind of intergroup problem solving that leads to agreements that are mutually acceptable to the parties in conflict.

Outcomes of ICR have included a deepening of mutual understanding between parties, stronger intergroup relationships, new perspectives on old problems, and the loosening of intransigent and polarized positions (Fisher, 2005). Agreements are nonbinding because participants do not officially represent their governments; but because participants tend to be widely respected, workshops not only induce change in the individuals participating, but may serve as a catalyst for change in wider political communities. ICR has been applied in many conflicts, including Northern Ireland (Hall, 1999), Cyprus (Fisher, 2001), Israel/Palestine (Kelman, 1995; Rouhana & Kelman, 1994), Malaysia/Indonesia (Mitchell, 2005), Sri Lanka (Hicks & Weisberg, 2004), and in the Horn of Africa (Beyna, Lund, Stacks, Tuthill, & Vondal, 2001).

ANTIWAR ACTIVISM

While a great deal of research on de-escalation interventions tend to focus on top-down change by leaders, some times de-escalation occurs because of bottom-up forces that originate in antiwar activism (Mayton, 2009). Like other forms of social activism, antiwar activism is most likely to occur in political contexts where freedom of assembly and expression are permitted. However, even under optimal political conditions in which dissent is tolerated, there may be resistance to antiwar activism. Because one of the main claims to legitimacy for a sovereign state is the right to wage war in the name of national security, antiwar movements can pose a threat to the state and be met with repression and a host of actions that seek to discredit, derogate, and delegitimize activists. Antiwar movements have been associated with successful de-escalation of violence in some cases, such as the anti-Vietnam War movement in the United States, but have been notably ineffective in other cases, such as prior to the US war in Iraq (Kumar, 2006).

Although research on the psychological bases of antiwar activism is rather meager, some findings suggest that social identity, cognitive representations, and collective emotions matter (Boehnke & Shani, 2012). Large-scale social movements are likely to occur when people come to perceive themselves as sharing a collective social identity with other activists and act in accordance with this common social identity (Bliuc et al., 2007). In terms of social representations, nonactivists represent war as a tragic event and lack a sense of efficacy in relation to actions that might mitigate war (Blackwood & Louis, 2011). In contrast, activists have a more concrete approach in regard to what can be done to mitigate war. They are often sustained by a commitment to longer-term change, even when little is expected in the short term (Hornsey et al., 2006). In addition, activists and nonactivists differ sharply in their representations of civil protest and nonviolent conflict. Activists see conflict as normal, while nonactivists view conflict as hostile and negative (Sarrica & Contarello, 2004). Boehnke & Shani (2012) also note that in addition to social identity and representation, group-based emotions, and particularly collective anger, serve to motivate activism.

Finally, it should be noted that episodes of violence, like conflict, can be seen as opportunities to move toward a change in cultural norms and structural conditions within or between societies, fostering change toward a more lasting peace.

This possibility is largely ignored in the literature. However, the more forms of collective action are seen as *effective* in producing social change, the higher people's intentions to engage in those actions (e.g., van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008), and this should hold true for both peaceful and violent tactics. Violence that is costly in human, financial, and property damage, and/or ineffective in achieving group goals, may thus discredit violent solutions for a considerable period.

The empirical literature has failed to reach a consensus on the relative effectiveness of violence, as compared to nonviolent tactics, in achieving positive outcomes for constituents (e.g., Callaway & Harrelson-Stephens, 2006; Piven & Cloward, 1977, 1991; Stephan & Chenoweth, 2008; Skitka, Bauman, & Mullen, 2004). However, efficacy is not always the primary consideration (e.g., Stürmer & Simon, 2005), and is socially contested (Blackwood & Louis, 2011; Hornsey et al., 2006). Cultural effects, such as a collective rejection of violence after an episode, are also of interest, and have also been largely neglected in the research literature.

For example, Noor (2009) has argued that in Malaysia the intercommunal riots of May 1969 forced the government to reexamine its policies and institute an economic program aimed at redistributing resources among ethnic groups more equitably. The riots were seared in the memories of Malaysians, who continue to collectively share a cultural narrative that vows never to repeat the riots. Anecdotally, *never again* ideologies appear to emerge frequently as consequents of violent episodes. For example, in the United States, post-World War II *never again* sentiments motivated enormous financial contributions to and political investment in the Marshall Plan (funding for mass rebuilding and reconstruction, in contrast to the punitive post-World War I reparations schemes of the Versailles treaty). In Japan, World War II-linked cultural suspicion still constrains foreign military adventures by its citizens, more than 50 years later. It would be interesting to learn more about the conditions under which episodes of violence generate cultural revulsion and normative change. For *never again ideologies* to spread, sources with psychological authority must presumably articulate the costs of war and the possibility of peace, alongside the constellation of emotions that fuel commitment to these ideologies—anger, revulsion, and shame perhaps on one end, and compassion, generosity of spirit, and forgiveness on the other. Contests between these beliefs and emotions are primary features of the *postviolence phase*.

Reconciliation and Sustainable Development

Reconciliation and sustainable development is our third category of interventions and the intervention of choice in postviolence contexts (see Figure 15.2). In 1992, United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali introduced an Agenda for Peace, which underscored the value of peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding in response to protracted cycles of violence (see also Clements, this volume). While traditional peacekeeping could be used to keep would-be combatants apart, and peacemaking could engage conflicted parties in a search for mutual interests, peacebuilding was viewed as a set of actions that would rebuild societies in the wake of violent episodes. It was also recognized that when intergroup relations are marked by a history of violence, overreliance on peacekeeping and deterrent postures without attention to structure-based injustices can lead to the acceptance of “law and order” societies (Galtung, 1969), which leave the underlying social order unaltered and unwittingly set the stage for another cycle of violence. Accordingly, peacebuilding efforts that took place in the aftermath of violent episodes were seen to have the potential to interrupt cycles of violence and yield sustainable peace when implemented effectively with due attention to political and economic matters.

The secretary-general of the United Nations construed the concept of peacebuilding broadly to include actions that took place in the aftermath of violent episodes with the intention of not only rebuilding societies but also creating conditions that would favor good governance and human rights (Secretary-General, 2006). Unlike peacemaking, peacebuilding efforts went beyond the proximal causes of violence and sought to address the underlying roots of the conflict. These roots could be located in structure-based inequalities within a society, largely due to institutions that deprive some segments of society of social, political, and economic well-being. Moreover, these structural problems are often nested within a larger system that requires some restructuring of the roles and responsibilities of actors at the state, regional, and global levels.

Some of the early work of psychologists intervening in postviolence contexts focused rather narrowly on the problem of post-traumatic stress disorders. Restored psychological functioning is, of course, important for the well-being of the individual and for putting together a work force to get on with the task of revitalizing public services and

infrastructure. In addition, it seemed possible theoretically that the well-documented phenomenon of “intergenerational transmission of trauma,” if left untreated, could spark further cycles of violence (Volkan, 2001). Psychologists continue to work on the problem of trauma, however, more recently, mental health and psychosocial practitioners have focused on a wider variety of problems in postviolence settings. These problems include grief and depression along with key psychosocial issues such as family separation, interpersonal and intergroup distrust, and the destruction of community resources (Wessells, 2007). There is also growing awareness of the problem of sexual and domestic violence, and the need for psychological services for victims and perpetrators (McKay, 2006).

COLLECTIVE FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION

At the intergroup level of analysis, there has been a growing appreciation for the devastating impact that intergroup violence has on social cohesion, trust, cooperation, and capital, setting the stage for research on topics such as forgiveness and reconciliation (see Iyer & Blatz, this volume; Nadler, this volume). In recent years, psychologists have contributed a great deal to the development of theory and practice on forgiveness and reconciliation processes (Lederach, 1997; Kalayjian & Paloutzian, 2009). A key question in postviolence contexts is how to assist war-affected people who are coming to terms with their violent experiences, while promoting reconciliation processes more widely throughout society.

Part of the difficulty is that forgiveness and reconciliation have been defined very differently in different sources. Kelman (2008) offers a useful framework to distinguish concepts such as conflict settlement, resolution, and reconciliation. In this approach, *settlement* focuses on managing conflicting interests, and *resolution* changes adversarial relations. These postviolence needs can draw on the intervention campaigns described in the conflict management and violence de-escalation phases described earlier. However, *reconciliation* is more ambitiously defined than settlement or resolution because reconciliation seeks to produce changes in the identities of adversaries. While it may seem counterintuitive to implement these ambitious projects in the immediate aftermath of violence, the salient emotional and psychological costs of the immediate past can create a short window of opportunity during which leaders and followers among

the protagonists want dramatic social change. In the postviolence context, emotions and cognitions are still powerful enough to motivate radical action, but are softening rather than boiling or hardening, thus making reconciliation processes more likely to be successful.

As a further conceptual tool, Nadler has worked to differentiate socioemotional reconciliation from instrumental reconciliation (e.g., Nadler & Shnabel, 2008; see also Nadler, this volume). Socioemotional reconciliation is proposed to occur nearly instantly following the completion of an apology-forgiveness cycle and is based on the idea that the future can be reconciled by having a direct confrontation with a painful past relationship. In contrast, instrumental reconciliation is gradual with the parties seeking a variety of ways to cooperate over time, based on the underlying premise that multiple salutary contacts in the present can produce a reconciled future. Nadler and colleagues have suggested that reconciliation in South Africa was driven by socioemotional changes while peacebuilding in the Middle East seems to conform more closely to an instrumental pattern (Nadler, Malloy, & Fisher, 2008). Notwithstanding definitional problems, some have argued that forgiveness and reconciliation have the potential for interrupting cycles of violence partly because negotiated settlements are more likely to lead to durable peace when accompanied by reconciliation (Long & Brecke, 2003).

Promoting Reconciliation: Early Projects

What is less clear is how to promote reconciliation deliberately. Some of the earliest conceptions of the reconciliation process in deeply divided societies emphasized a set of procedures that would bring groups in conflict together to articulate past pain and work toward envisioning a common future (Lederach, 1997; see also Iyer & Blatz, this volume). Other conceptions suggested a four-step pattern to reconciliation: public truth-telling, justice without revenge, a redefinition of social identities, and a call for a new relationship (Long & Brecke, 2003; see also Hamber, this volume).

It is conceivable that methods of promoting reconciliation vary depending on the particular psychosocial substrates underlying cycles of violence. For example, it has been noted that one obstacle to reconciliation is that cycles of violence can lead to cognitive representations of victimization and feelings of vulnerability (Vollhardt, 2009; Vollhardt, this volume). These memories of harm may be vivid, emotionally charged, and transmitted across

generations through various cultural products such as commemorations, memorials, and stories. Strong emotional responses to victimization (e.g., humiliation, anger, rage, etc.) can give rise to a desire for retaliation and continue the cycle of violence (Bar-Tal, 2003; see also Lickel, this volume). To address the problem, Vollhardt (2009) suggests that interventions could be designed to heighten groups' awareness of the similarities of each others' suffering, thereby transforming destructive beliefs about victimization into constructive beliefs. As with all reframing projects, the psychological authority of the source of the attempted reframe to challenge the existing narrative needs to be carefully considered.

Promoting Reconciliation: The Relevance of Postviolence Contact

Another approach to intergroup forgiveness is the application of intergroup contact theory (Wagner & Hewstone, this volume). Generally, positive intergroup contact, particularly when it encourages cross-group friendships, has emerged as one of the strongest predictors of willingness to forgive the outgroup (Hewstone et al., 2006). Catalysts that mediate the relationship between intergroup contact and forgiveness include increases in perspective-taking, empathy, and trust toward the outgroup. In contrast, inhumanization and anger are associated with lower levels of outgroup forgiveness (Tam et al., 2008). Thus, some scripting of postviolence contact may be important to avoid mutual recriminations and defensive justifications that revictimize and retraumatize vulnerable group members. More broadly, positive intergroup contact experiences through cross-group friendships can serve as a catalyst for forgiveness by serving the dual function of mitigating anger and inhumanization while enhancing empathy and trust.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Although psychological research on intergroup reconciliation is promising, a host of other psychosocial factors are involved in creating the conditions that favor a durable peace in a postviolence context. In particular, psychologists have roles to play in the development of theory and praxis that bears on the problem of human security, as well as social, political, and economic reconstruction in the wake of violent episodes.

A consensus has formed among UN member states and nongovernmental organizations that sustainable peace requires "integrated missions" in which peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding processes

are coordinated and designed to establish minimum conditions for security, economic well-being, and the creation of political institutions that are responsive, transparent, and accountable (Eide, Kaspersen, Kent, & von Hippel, 2005). Wessells (2012) has described the four main tasks of reconstruction, each of which has implications for psychology and peace: (1) building security; (2) physical reconstruction; (3) social reconstruction; and (4) political and economic reconstruction.

Building Security

One important component of building security is providing a mechanism that allows combatants to transition out of their violent role (e.g., in the military) and into peaceful civilian life. A 3-step process, involving disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration, is typically employed (United Nations, 2006). The reintegration step may require vocational training and other forms of educational and social support to enable soldiers to adopt a new social identity based on earning a living and civic responsibility. Stigmatization of former perpetrators also can be a serious barrier to reintegration. Western approaches to security can assist in the process; however, the importance of honoring local practices has become increasingly apparent. For instance, in some cultural contexts, purification rituals for former combatants conducted by a traditional healer in the presence of the whole community can have a dramatic effect on the social identity of former combatants and can reduce stigmatization by community members (Wessells & Monteiro, 2004).

Former combatants who do not successfully transition may turn to crime to meet their basic needs. The problem of crime in postviolence contexts underscores the importance of establishing the rule of law, which in turn requires competent police and a functioning legal system. The simplest lesson learned from violence is that *might is right*, and having learned this lesson, parties to violence must then relearn the alternative belief that there is value to accepting constraints and empowering the weak, and a moral obligation to follow rather than short-circuit due process. Moreover, the escalation of violence often coincides with the undermining of existing systems of authority. Police and courts must demonstrate procedural justice so that post-violence security-based institutions gain legitimacy. What matters, from a psychological perspective, is that people develop a sense of trust in the state, end feelings of alienation, and come to believe that laws serve the public good.

Physical Reconstruction

The challenge of physical reconstruction might seem to involve only bricks and mortar. While this challenge itself is significant, for the purposes of this chapter it is important to note that both procedural and distributive justice issues are made salient by the allocation of resources to rebuilding. Societal divisions and polarization can be created if some members of society (and certain neighborhoods and cities) are given privileged access, or curry favor with political elite. In contrast, a process that is viewed as distributing material resources fairly can promote social unity and confidence in leadership.

Social Reconstruction

Because intercommunal violence is intensely personal, social reconstruction means addressing deep divisions, mistrust, and strong negative intergroup emotions. Among the methods used to promote unity, trust, and positive intergroup emotion is collective planning and action. In addition to helping people regain a sense of control, this approach also promotes a sense of purpose and common identity alongside of sectarian identities. In order to prevent further cycles of violence, a high priority is placed on building capacities for nonviolent conflict resolution along with the demilitarization of society at all levels because violence in families, schools, and communities can undermine social and physical reconstruction and diminish the prospects for sustainable development and peace (Wessells, 2007).

Political and Economic Reconstruction

The development of effective political and economic institutions is important for the equitable distribution of social influence and material resources. If particular groups are discriminated against, divisions within a society may be deepened. As noted above, poorly functioning police, legal, and economic systems may foster a sense of alienation that can fuel further rounds of violence. Where protracted cycles of violence endure, post-violence unemployment rates often hover around 80% (Collier et al., 2003). The transition toward transparent public economies and governments is difficult, and little research has addressed the conditions under which such transitions succeed or fail.

Limitations and Future Directions

In concluding this chapter, we describe some limitations of our analysis and identify some specific challenges for future research. We have focused explicitly on cycles of organized violence rather than

individual violence, the former of which implies decision making, planning and the execution of violence by individuals and groups acting in concert with one another. These organized episodes of violence are overt acts aimed at harming or killing another person or group of people. Episodes are intermittent, intentional, instrumental, dramatic, and represent an acute insult to well-being (Christie, Wagner, & Winter, 2001).

Moreover, we have limited our analysis to three broad categories of peace interventions that are designed to prevent and mitigate cycles of organized violence. We have given less attention to the issue of structural violence, which refers to the larger context of intergroup power differences within which organized violence takes place (Galtung, 1996), nor have we examined carefully relationships between episodes and structures of violence (Christie, 2006).

Since the growth of interdisciplinary programs on Peace and Conflict Studies in 1970s, peace practitioners and researchers outside the discipline of psychology have been increasingly attuned to the distinction between episodic and structural violence (Barash & Webel, 2002). Galtung (1969), for example, drew the distinction between direct violence (i.e., violent episodes) and structural violence, the latter of which depicts the way in which institutions in a society are organized and distribute resources, providing ample goods and services for some members of a society while depriving others. For example, in the economic sphere, structural violence occurs when there are enough material resources to satisfy everyone's needs, yet some people remain deprived of need satisfaction. Politically, structural violence occurs when there is unequal access to political representation and voice in matters that affect one's well-being. Structural violence, also called "indirect violence" (Brock-Utne, 1989), kills people just as surely as violent episodes but does so slowly through the deprivation of human needs (Christie, 1997). Although socially constructed, structural violence is relatively impervious to change and typically cannot be imbued with motives or intentionality. Structural violence is chronic and normalized rather than being an acute and dramatic insult to well-being (Christie et al., 2001).

In short, the three broad categories of peace interventions that we delineated traditionally have been focused on the promotion of negative peace (i.e., absence of direct violence) rather than positive peace, by which is meant the amelioration of structural violence and the promotion of socially just

configurations of power (Galtung, 1996). However, some more ambitious efforts are now being undertaken (see also Clements, this volume; Nadler, this volume), particularly for the category of interventions promoting reconciliation and sustainable development. These efforts aim to build just and inclusive relationships, rather than merely contain physical violence. Along these same lines, the emerging area of peace psychology (Christie, Wagner, & Winter, 2001; Christie, 2006; Cohrs & Boehnke, 2008; Vollhardt & Bilali, 2008) also seeks specifically to develop theories and practices that promote behavior, cognition, and affective states "aimed at the prevention and mitigation of direct and structural violence . . . the nonviolent management of conflict, and the pursuit of social justice" (Christie et al., 2001, p. 7). Moreover, episodic and structural violence are linked with and justified by cultural violence, which refers to the symbolic sphere of our existence (Galtung, 1996). For instance, culturally constructed narratives such as "just war theory" specify conditions when direct violence is justified (Norman, 1995); the "protestant ethic" with its emphasis on individualism and the work ethic has been used to justify enormous structural gaps in well-being both within and between societies (Weber, Baehr, & Wells).

Similarly, cultural narratives accompany peace processes: cooperative narratives accompany conflict-resolving efforts, while emancipatory narratives are linked with the pursuit of social justice. The growing body of research in normative and ideological conflict (Cohrs, this volume; Smith & Louis, 2009), or dissent and resistance (Boehnke & Shani, 2012; Jetten & Hornsey, 2011; Louis et al., 2010; Reicher et al., 2005), has the potential to speak to the questions of how these contested narratives emerge and when they thrive.

The challenge for psychology research and practice is to examine and construct interventions that promote negative peace as well as positive peace, the latter of which would engender structural and cultural transformations within and across institutions. Part of the difficulty is that psychology's dominant narrative is decontextualized and emphasizes objectivity, mechanism, and individualism (Gergen, Gulerce, Lock, & Misra, 1996), characteristics that are ill-suited for social transformation. Not surprisingly, psychological interventions are often aimed at improving an individual's adjustment to her or his environment, without regard for structure-based injustices that constrain individual and group choices and affect human well-being. Moreover, in

relation to violence, the challenge is one of managing the proximal causes of organized cycles of violence to create negative peace, while working toward a deeper understanding of approaches to transforming the structural and cultural context of violent episodes, that is, to also promote positive peace (Christie, Tint, Wagner, & Winter, 2008).

Specifically, three difficult problems remain to be solved by those who would take up this challenge of sustainable, broad-scale intervention. First, *how can positive peace be evaluated?* It is relatively easy to quantify negative peace across a range of dimensions, such as civilian and military deaths and injuries, prevalence of rape and other forms of sexual violence, or property damage to individuals and infrastructure. Because we can measure it, we can assess interventions' success and failure, and differentially promote more effective intervention designs. Evaluating the prevalence of positive peace—the prevalence of social justice—is more open to contest, though macro-level measures of the extent to which a society enjoys a high level of “human development” (i.e., life expectancy, adult literacy, education, income, political representation and voice, etc.) provide a potential starting point. Even so, there remains the challenge of identifying and clarifying relationships between psychosocial processes at the micro-level and macro-level events as reflected in the Human Development Index (Human Development Report, 2007/2008).

Second, *how can we understand social change toward positive peace?* At the individual level, in a context of woundedness and conflicts of interest, what factors enable individuals to find serenity, compassion, and generosity of spirit toward themselves and former antagonists? At the group level, in a context where existing norms support violence and harm-doing, how can we understand the transition toward norms of nonviolence and cooperation? How are leaders empowered to change these norms? How are followers empowered to instigate this norm change? And at the structural level, how do vested interests allow the dismantling of militarist institutions, and the construction of rules of law and cultures of peace?

Third, *how can we build an interdisciplinary understanding* of the complex political science, economics, sociology, criminology, and psychology of peace and violence? How can we communicate it to each other as researchers and decision makers? How can we tailor interventions across all of these dimensions, to create a cascade of change across political, legal, military, economic, psychological,

and cultural systems and build a truly transformative positive peace?

We invite others to join us in grappling with these questions and trust this *Handbook* will inspire research and practice aimed at creating the conditions for a sustainable peace.

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