

Everyday Reconciliation

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When we turn on the TV after a long day at the office, at school or wherever else we might have spent our day, we are overwhelmed with stories of conflict. These can be large-scale conflicts like wars between nations, medium-scaled like those between political parties or small-scaled like the stories we hear about neighbours quarrelling over property and students fighting in classrooms.

We are surrounded by conflict. However, conflict tends to co-exist with cooperation. Even during a war between two nations for example, there is intra-national cooperation while the inter-national conflict occurs. Cooperation creates solidarity among members; it creates a sense of 'mutualism' and, in many cases, a sense of shared identity. Conflicts, on the other hand, tend to highlight differences and intergroup tensions. So how do we go from conflict to cooperation? Or, reversely, how do we go from cooperation to conflict?

The focus of this chapter is to consider different approaches to reconciliation and offer insights into intra-group reconciliation within the context of inter-group conflict, an area somewhat under-theorised in the reconciliation literature to date. We argue that we must examine the role of 'everyday reconciliation' in promoting inter-group peace-building not just among local communities but also among politicians and policy makers. By 'everyday reconciliation' we focus on the ways in which our daily encounters with social and political representations of the past can be re-interpreted to create more nuanced images of conflicts and foster more critical and aware future generations. While theories of inter-group conflict resolution tend to draw clear boundaries between victims and perpetrators, reality is usually messier. Thus, we argue that it is important in theorising about conflict, to take into account not only what occurs, but also how it is understood and talked about within local contexts. Or, to be more precise, how it is *socially represented*. We do so by exploring the ways in which education, inter-generational dialogue and identity politics promote or inhibit the ways in which individuals can critically reflect on their nation's past.

The chapter is divided into three sections where we examine different processes intended to promote reconciliation. These include (1) top-down approaches that focus on justice, (2) bottom-up approaches that focus on socio-emotional aspects and (3) a more multi-layered

approach that examines the connections between intra-group processes and inter-group relations.

1. Top Down: Promoting Reconciliation through Justice and Punishment

In conflicts, an imbalance is created between individuals, groups or societies that might be material, through inequalities in geopolitical space, resources or number of casualties. It can also be symbolic, where a conflict creates an inequality in social status or social identity recognition. Top-down approaches tend to focus on the former imbalances rather than the latter. This section focuses on three different top-down approaches to conflict resolution as a process leading to reconciliation, including procedural justice, retributive justice and restorative justice, discussing their relevance for peace building.

1. a. Procedural Justice: Fairness and Legitimacy of Decision-Making Process

A procedural justice approach to reconciliation emphasizes that the actual process of conflict resolution should be perceived as fair. The argument behind this approach is that if the procedure is considered fair, the institutions distributing punishment become legitimate and thereby people will be more likely to comply with the outcome (Jackson et al., 2012). Two aspects of this are particularly significant here; 1) the symbolic value conveyed through process and 2) the role of voice in decision-making.

Procedure and Identity

According to the group-value model proposed by Lind and Tyler (1988) a procedural justice approach to punishment communicates to individuals their value as members of specific groups to society at large. As Murphy (2011) explains, “fair procedures communicate respect and value, while unfair procedures communicate disrespect, marginality or even exclusion from a valued group” (p.212). This argument is evident in studies examining the role of identity on perceptions of fairness, legitimacy and attitudes towards procedural decision-making processes (e.g., Bradford et al., 2014). Thus, identity has implications for our perceptions of what is just. Yet these perceptions are not simply subjective beliefs but can also be reflections of social reality. Take the example of undocumented immigrants. They fall out of the category of ‘legal citizens’ and are therefore not afforded the same rights by authorities as ‘in-group members’ are. This lack of recognition of minority groups “has implications for people’s abilities to participate in the public sphere” (Hopkins & Blackwood,

2011, p. 215). In line with this, studies have shown that minorities indeed tend to perceive political institutions like the police, as less legitimate compared to majority members (Factor et al., 2014), partly because systems of minoritisation are associated with bodies like the police and instances of institutional discrimination. These issues also tie closely to the lack of representation, or voice, in political institutions.

Procedural Voice

Tyler (2000) highlights that having a ‘voice’ is a key element of procedural justice. Individuals “feel more fairly treated if they are allowed to participate [...] by presenting their suggestions about what should be done” (ibid, p. 121). Maoz (2001), examining the role of ‘voice’ in dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians, found that participants of majority group-status tended to dominate dialogue, however with time and frequency of meetings this tended to move towards a greater symmetry. Further, he flags up that this does not necessarily mean that minorities feel powerless and voiceless when faced with majorities, but rather than their choice of silence can function as a form of resistance. Thus, voice and silence can both function to convey or challenge political power. What this kind of work emphasizes is the need to understand that some forms of reconciliation may not necessarily lead to justice for minoritised groups, and hence are sometimes resisted. As Dixon, Levine, Reicher & Durrheim (2012) have argued, attempts to improve intergroup relations and reduce prejudice, in particular, may very well end up bolstering structural inequalities between groups. Hence, reconciliation programmes may also sometimes inadvertently support conditions of inequality and injustice. What is important to examine is the perception of justice and legitimacy and the ways in which these may connect to real possibility for agency and social change (Howarth, Wagner, Kessi and Sen, 2012). In sum, when tackling an inter-group conflict, perceived fairness and legitimacy is not only a matter of institutional processes, but is intrinsically linked to our social identities and membership in various social groups.

1. b. Retributive Justice: ‘Just Desert’ and Restoration of Equality

Retributive justice “refers to the repair of justice through unilateral imposition of punishment”(Wenzel et al., 2008, p.375). The emphasis, unlike with procedural justice, is on the end-result rather than process as justice is found in the symbolic outcome that punishment brings. When considering retribution we look at the importance of two issues: 1) the rationale behind punishment and 2) the individualisation of guilt.

Why Punish?

Retributive justice has been heavily criticized for conceptualizing crime through a Westernized ideology, where an offense is considered not a violation of an individual but rather a violation of the law and the institutions that uphold it (Clark, 2008). Nevertheless, identity plays a role in shaping the motives behind punishment as “people’s notion of justice following a transgression depends on how they construe their relationship to the offender and interpret the incident” (Wenzel et al., 2008, p.376). For example, if the victim considers the perpetrator an out-group member, motives behind retribution may focus on status and power restoration. This motive functions to safeguard the positive self-image of the in-group members by distancing them from any similarities to the offender. In contrast, when the goal is to restore a social consensus to the importance of norms and rules, offenders are usually considered as part of the in-group and restoration of norms allows for a restoration of the offender back into their community.

Individualising Guilt

In a context of inter-group conflict, international crime courts are set up with the hope that individualising guilt will remove “blame from entire ethnic, religious or political groups and therefore negates collective guilt” (Clark, 2008, p. 336) and reduce the likelihood of revenge (Stover & Weinstein, 2004, p.14). A problem with this approach is that it is often done in isolation from the affected parties. For example, the twin Criminal Tribunals set up in former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and Rwanda (ICTR) have been criticised for their geographical distance from the regions in question (Stover & Weinstein, 2004). In the case of FY it is believed that the actual work of the ICTY has had little influence on public opinion as this has instead been shaped by local elites and “by the manner in which the local media depicts proceedings at The Hague” (Klarin, 2009, p.90).

In addition to problems of location, cultural and community knowledge is sometimes not adequately accounted for in the set-up of international courts. For instance, in the TRC in Sierra Leone, the dichotomous divide between perpetrators and victims did not resonate among locals, as ‘perpetrators’ of crimes were considered family and/or friends rather than outsiders (Millar, 2012). Thus, in the context of a collectivist culture like Sierra Leone, the imposition of individualised understandings of justice can actually be more harmful than helpful by creating divides between people that were not initially there. Indeed, one of the

dangers with retributive justice is that it treats offenders and victims as two separate categories, often seen in isolation from one another.

1. c. Restorative Justice: Local Involvement, Restoration & Healing

An alternative for reconciliation beyond the punishment paradigms of procedural and retributive justice is restorative justice: “a process whereby parties with a stake in a specific offense resolve collectively how to deal with the aftermath of the offense and its implications for the future” (Marshall, 2003, p.28). The emphasis is on repair and healing of victims, offenders and the local communities affected by conflict. Unlike retributive justice, which conceptualizes crime as a violation of the law, restorative justice understands crime as a violation against individuals and their relations (Clark, 2008). Thus, this approach highlights social context, social relations and communities in a top-down reconciliation process.

Restorative Justice as a Second Chance

The literature on restorative justice has focused on how to repair relations between victims and offenders through various programs such as family group conferences, community boards and victim-offender mediation programs. These programs centre on interaction between affected parties with specific goals for each. For the victims, the programs allow an input in the process, an ability to have voice, for the community it allows for re-affirmation of social values and norms, and for the perpetrators it offers an opportunity to apologise for their crime, get the counselling and rehabilitation they need to become a part of the community again. Thus, the focus is on giving people a second chance and mending relations with the community as a whole.

Reconciliation through Local Restorative Justice

Unlike procedural and retributive approaches to justice, restorative justice is connected most directly to the reconciliation literature where scholars have focused on how institutions and authorities can promote social restoration without resorting to punishment. However, it is not only third-party actors or governmental institutions who initiate peace-building processes in post-conflict societies but rather, when it comes to restorative justice measures, civic society members come to play a crucial role. For example, in Rwanda, individualised notions of conflict resolution set up by international actors have been coupled with local *gacaca* courts allowing communities to be directly involved in the process (Clark, 2008).

In other contexts, like East Timor, local communities have focused on innovatively adapting traditional practices to reintegrate refugees and rebuild social relationships (Babo-Soares, 2004) and in Serbia, several NGOs have been set-up to deal with issues including returning refugees home, reconciling different versions of the past through dialogue and offering creative spaces like theatres to promote inter-group dialogue (Clark, 2008). There are benefits to these 'local' programs that international justice courts do not have, including 1) their embeddedness in the local context, 2) their involvement and engagement with affected individuals and communities and 3) their attunement and ability to narrow in on specific inter-group problems (ibid). Such international and local approaches should be considered as complimentary aspects promoting reconciliation on different levels of a conflict.

2. Bottom-Up Reconciliation

For reconciliation to be meaningful and lasting it is necessary to reconstruct previously disrupted interpersonal and intergroup relations. There is an extensive literature available on bottom-up reconciliation focusing on the different pre-conditions for peace-building to start, the different expectations, needs and wants of victims versus perpetrators as well as the different ways in which reconciliation can be achieved, depending on if the final goal is integration or separation. Though bottom-up reconciliation focuses on the everyday community level, politics and institutions nevertheless play an important role in providing a public space for promoting peace building but also giving individuals the means with which to do this. By participation we do not mean simply exercising citizenship rights, but also having the ability to politically engage in constructing and shaping representations of reality and possibilities for change (Howarth, Andreouli & Kessi, 2014).

This section will begin by exploring the role that memory has in shaping in-group identities as well as inter-group relations. Following this, we look specifically at the ways in which identity politics work in contexts of conflict, discussing how both concepts can be used to mobilise social action for conflict, but equally to mobilise action for intergroup cooperation and reconciliation.

2.b. Memory

Gillis (1994, p.3) wrote that “memories and identities are not fixed things, but representations or constructions of reality, subjective rather than objective phenomena.”. After a war, collective memories of a past become key components in justifying the continuation of conflict or supporting its resolution. Recently, literature has discussed the similarities

between collective memories and social representations of the past (Wagoner, 2015) and within this section we will use the two terms interchangeably.

The past, seen as a social construct, is dynamic and constantly being reshaped by the concerns of the present (Halbwachs, 1992). Collective memories of past conflicts or group divisions are kept alive through their association (or anchoring) into new events (Schuman and Rodgers, 2004). Thereby, memory can come to play a role in not only hindering reconciliation, but also in justifying a continuation of conflict through a narrative of defense against a potential out-group threat. Indeed, Monroe (2012), in her discussion on the different 'types' of people in Nazi Germany showed that supporters of the Nazi regime justified their actions as exercising defensive action against a growing and threatening out-group, the Jews. Similarly, in the Israel-Palestine conflict, memory serves to connect Israelis 'historically to the territory and region' while delegitimizing the out-group in the process (Hammack, 2009, p.52).

Politicians and authorities also hold a stake in what we consider historical facts as specific historical narratives become 'official' through their institutionalization in history textbooks, commemoration events and other cultural symbols. As Wilmer (2002) argues, "historical narratives, as a consequence of publicizing education, have become instruments of political agency [...] [they] are routinely appropriated to legitimate political acts" (p.80-81).

So what can be done to reverse this process? Much the same as politicians can use negative memories to legitimate political acts; they can also do the opposite. Social representations of the past can promote reconciliation by allowing for mutual recognition of different 'truths'. However, while confronting the past is important, creating a shared version of the past is not necessarily the end goal, nor is it always possible. Rather, it may suffice to acknowledge and accept the existence of different collective memories and official 'truths' (Kelman, 2008). Thus, memories can function to promote positive inter-group relations by the use of 'positive propaganda' (Hartmann, 2014) that emphasises the heterogeneity of in-groups and creates shared identity dimensions across groups.

2.c. Identity

We have argued that social representations of history function as building blocks of social identities. For example, in former Yugoslavia, the revival of ethnic identities prior to the outbreak of war led to a strong emphasis on differences in language, religion and culture creating a widening gap between the co-existing national groups (Stover & Weinstein, 2004, p. 146). This emphasis on differences that were prior seen as unproblematic was a way for

political leaders to gain power and mobilize people for action (Elcheroth et al., 2011). As Wilmer (1998) explains “the process of constructing a ‘state’ identity is often implicitly nothing more than the articulation of a hegemonic group’s identity *as the civic identity*.” (p.107). In former Yugoslavia, this was evident as groups like Serbs and Croats, who had been seen as equals within each nation, suddenly turned into minorities and foreigners in their supposedly own country. Thus we need to understand how politics play a role in shaping our sense of belonging and how the boundaries of our in-group are shaped by the political goals of elites.

So again we ask, what can be done to reverse this process? Some propose making identities complex, highlighting within-group diversities and out-group heterogeneity, going beyond the us/them distinction (Maalouf, 2000), while others advocate the promotion of dual identities where a superordinate identification becomes the uniting factor (Kelman, 2004). The rationale behind both arguments is that creating an awareness of the differences among out-group members as well as creating mutualities across groups will allow for a ‘humanization’ of the other as well as an increased perspective-taking (Čehajić & Brown, 2010). Superordinate identification in particular has been linked to increased across-group helping behaviour (Monroe, 2012) and willingness to forgive perpetrator groups (Wohl and Branscombe, 2005).

Thus, there are a number of different ways to promote more inclusive identities, create commonalities across groups and increase cooperation between groups. One of the most important things to consider however is the role of fear and threat in keeping conflicts alive and hindering reconciliation. Conflicts that extend over time, can sometimes become ‘intractable’ leading to zero-sum identities. In other words, a negative interdependence becomes created between my in-group and your out-group and this negative relationship is maintained by fears of future conflict. These fears, in turn function to legitimize a sense of threat to the in-group and the need to act defensively before the other strikes (Sapountzis & Condor, 2013). Several studies have shown how majority groups and/or perpetrator groups position themselves as victims under threat, justifying their actions from a position of defense rather than aggression (Monroe, 2012; Reicher et al., 2005). Thus, we see the need for identities to be re-negotiated in order for inter-group reconciliation to be successful. How exactly this can be done is the topic of the next section, as we argue that overcoming identity threats and fears are only possible by first acknowledging the wrong-doing of one’s own in-group, which in turn allow for a more nuanced understanding of past conflicts and inter-group relations.

3. Everyday Reconciliation

There is a problem, or rather a gap, in the current literature on inter-group reconciliation. Theories focusing on the various requirements, stages and sides involved in reconciliation tend to do so in a binary way. However, as Hammack's (2009) work on the reproduction of conflict through narratives shows, these theories at times prove to be problematic when the question of peace-initiation is considered. Although individuals can come to accept some of the pre-conditions for reconciliation, such as recognition of outgroup, acknowledgment of their rights to territory or other claims, who is responsible for initiating peace is not always clear – as in-groups do not consider themselves responsible for that part. Herein lays the core issue and the focus of this last section – *who* is to begin the peace-process and *how* do we get them to do it?

Much of the literature discusses the various needs of victims vis-a-vis perpetrators when it comes to psychological, emotional and social changes. However, in conflicts that have been prolonged over time, how can we really say that there is a clear division between the victim and the perpetrator group? Further, if we hypothetically manage to do so, we are faced with yet another problem. Do these groups themselves accept these labels? As is well known, there is a tendency in inter-group conflicts for both sides to claim victimhood at the hands of the other. Thus, how do we get to the point where one group accepts its wrongdoings and acknowledges itself as the perpetrator group, or at least *one* of the groups of perpetrators, that needs to take the first step towards reparations? We will argue in what remains of this chapter that this can emerge from everyday, intra-group reconciliation.

Everyday reconciliation refers to the daily encounters with past conflicts and how these are managed within the in-group. By doing so, this approach starts with looking at the definition of 'us' and how this in turn has consequences for how we see 'them'. It is common to find that in inter-group conflicts, the atrocities performed by the in-group are often silenced or minimised both within institutional contexts, like schools and the governments, as well as culturally, through symbolism and 'selective' memory in everyday encounters and debates. Thus, everyday reconciliation aims to explain how an in-group accounts for and comes to terms with its past transgressions. Therefore, we argue that we need to place greater attention on processes of intragroup reconciliation, where the focus becomes on overcoming the in-groups past and hopefully furthering more tolerant, critical and open future generations.

3. a. Rarity of Self-Criticism

It is expected of perpetrator groups to acknowledge their transgressions against other groups and to ask for forgiveness in order to initiate a process of inter-group reconciliation.

However, how much evidence is there that this actually occurs? Though there has been an increased use of political apology for past atrocities this top-level acknowledgement may not reflect the opinions or beliefs of the everyday citizen, but rather be seen as an attempt to better the public image of a nation. Unfortunately, even in this case where an elite apology is offered, it is usually for events of great temporal distance. In a meta-analysis of studies on self-criticism within nations concerning their ‘shameful’ pasts, Leach, Zeineddine and Cehajic-Clancy (2013) found that acknowledgement and criticism was rare. Their meta-analysis shows a great absence of guilt, shame and responsibility for the past in studies relating to diverse historical periods, geographical locations and with various temporal distances to the present. This finding is rather telling and ironic as those nations that are involved in setting up international tribunals, demanding other nations to acknowledge their wrong-doings, are in turn not willing to practice what they preach. In Britain and the Netherlands for example, little agreement was voiced with criticism of their colonial actions and compensation was not considered necessary (Leach et al., 2013). We then ask; in situations where ‘perpetrators’ are expected to initiate reconciliation but no one is willing to acknowledge that they fit the bill – how do we move on?

3.b. Education

There is an existing debate within the education literature as to the purpose of history education in schools. Should history be seen as a body of unquestioned knowledge which creates belonging and cohesion or should it function to teach young generations the skills to be critical and aware of the multiple perspectives and interpretations through which history can be narrated? Educating students about their country’s past helps to create and define what it means to be a citizen, and yet in relation to peace-building efforts and managing inter-group relations, history education tends to be pushed to the margins (Van Ommering, 2015). In contrast, Marko-Stöckl (2007/2008) argues that the foundation for reconciliation is in schools. It is in this context that conflicts and differences are kept alive as new generations are taught to understand the ‘other’ as an enemy and as different from the self.

However, and most importantly, it is also in this context that a national consciousness and identification with a nation’s past, present and future occurs (Van Ommering, 2015). In other words, teaching history is a way of learning about ‘us’ and ‘our’ past. In doing so, a

dominant perspective on the past is enforced and criticism may be limited. Indeed, the rarity of self-criticism in history education has been studied and confirmed as post-conflict textbooks have shown to emphasize a sense of victimhood within groups emerging from conflict (Dutceac Segesten, 2011). Thus, the way history is being taught is critical for the prevention of future conflicts and the creation of a stable peace. This is because “the young must learn critical thinking about the causes of the recent wars, and the nature of stereotyping, tolerance and human rights” (Elcheroth et al., 2014, p. 324).

Further support for this argument can be found in Licata and Klein (2010) discussed in Leach et al.’s (2013) meta-analysis. Their study showed that across generations in Belgium, young students and parents tended to report more feelings of guilt about their colonial past than did grandparents. This was explained as an outcome of the recent institutional switch towards a more negative framing of Belgian colonisation. In other words, schools were influential in creating a rise in self-criticism as the institutional ‘facts’ were teaching Belgians that they had a negative past which needed to be acknowledge. In addition, studies have shown that narratives of the past that offered more explicit and detailed accounts of events tended to increase feelings of self-criticism and anger towards one’s in-groups actions in the past (Leone & Sarrica, 2014). Thus, rarity of self-criticism might be an outcome of uninformedness rather than indifference. In other words, there are more factors that need to be considered when judging the ability with which young people are able to be critical of their in-groups past, one of which is family socialisation.

3.c. Intergenerational Dialogue

When approaching intergenerational transmission of knowledge, specifically knowledge of past atrocities, the literature tends to be divided on the traumatic versus healing outcomes of this process. Though this debate is outside of the scope of the current topic and chapter, the point we wish to discuss is the social role that intergenerational dialogue can play in allowing future generations to become more open citizens. When looking at the role of intergenerational dialogue and trauma, research on children of Holocaust survivors in Brazil found that the transmission of trauma was more common in families that silence the past compared to those with more open styles of communication (Braga et al., 2012). Silencing the past is often justified through arguments of protection, not wishing to burden their children with stories of what they suffered through themselves (Obradovic, forthcoming). In addition, silencing of history can become harmful to the intergenerational transmission of not only history, but also culture and traditions (Wallace et al., 2014). In other words, silencing

the past can have consequences for identity as the inability to know one's past the same way as one's parents can create differences in how history is incorporated into one's sense of self and membership in a wider community. In turn, this can lead to a sense of discontinuity as younger generations become unable to share their (critical) feelings about the past with older generations, while older generations in turn are unable to pass on their stories and memories to younger family members.

In their research on intergenerational dialogue in Rwanda, Wallace et al. (2014) found that the positive outcomes of dialogue for youths included the emergence of critical thinking, greater positivity towards the future and possibilities of reconciliation as well as a removal of fears of discussing the past and initiating dialogues with other community members. Thus, there are benefits to this kind of dialogue as it not only opens up space for more community-wide dialogue, but also teaches younger individuals that the past is not necessarily a shameful topic to be avoided. Rather, this kind of dialogue creates possibilities for stories of *positive* inter-group cooperation and relations to be told, giving the past a more nuanced image. Furthermore, it allows young people to be a part of the debate about reconciliation. Research in Northern Ireland and Bosnia showed that younger people felt that their potential as peacemakers or troublemakers in the future was largely shaped by the behaviour of politicians and older generations, a process being negatively influenced by the lack of intergenerational dialogue (Magill & Hamber, 2011).

3.d. In-group identity matters

A study carried out in Serbia by the first author (Obradovic, forthcoming) exploring the relationship between social representations of the past and identity found that there was a close link between remembering and in-group belonging. Forgetting the past was equated with self-blaming and the perspective of the 'other', thus limiting the extent to which younger generations could be critical of the past without simultaneously feeling a sense of betrayal of their in-group. In this context, echoing Braga et al's study above (2012), though participants were not part of the same families, there was a noticeable lack of familial dialogue on the past, contradicting the great emphasis both generations placed on remembering. In addition, the dialogues people have about the past and the identities derived from it are not only shaped by their social groups and environment, but also by which discourses afforded legitimacy on a political level (Penic, Elcheroth & Reicher, 2015).

Thus we need to consider the role that everyday reconciliation has for promoting more inclusive and open identities, but also, how this use of everyday dialogue, imagery and social

representing functions to create just the opposite of inclusive identities. For example, the political manipulation of social representations of identity can function to justify social exclusion of specific groups, a strategy used in many countries such as the UK, France and Greece where the rise in support for nationalistic political parties is linked to an increased sense of out-group hostility. This is precisely what everyday reconciliation can challenge. By promoting intergenerational dialogue, inter-group cooperation, creating more critical education and allowing people to ask questions without being positioned as other, we can work to overcome identity fears by nuancing representations of the past. Here, politicians and policy makers can help by emphasising the contextual difficulties and issues that led to conflict, creating awareness of the circumstances that caused war. This will (hopefully) lead to an understanding of in-group and out-group members as humans acting in difficult situations, creating more understanding and acceptance of what was done by and to one's in-group.

4. Conclusion

The present chapter has mapped out several different approaches to reconciliation, drawing on both legal, top-down approaches as well as more bottom-up or mixed approaches. While the discussion has highlighted the importance of bottom-up theories and practices of reconciliation, it is important to note that we do not ignore the significance of third party members in promoting peace. These actors can play crucial roles in promoting effective contact, dialogue and cooperation between groups as well as regulate this process as it occurs. In addition, communal practices like the work of NGOs, grass-roots movements, school projects and community activities should be promoted and funded. Here, political leaders play important roles as authorities within a nation, whose support of reconciliation will have a tremendous influence on the progress of peace building. However, this support needs to be genuine, not to be confused with a strategic political goal or motive to enhance one's own power, and it needs to be connected to the perspectives of those 'on the ground'. Hence we need to be critically reflective about reconciliation – who proposes it, for whom and to what end.

In other words, we need to be critical about what reconciliation means to the various actors involved in the processes. The three distinct sections give us an insight into the various ways in which not only conflict but also the peace-process itself can be conceptualised differently depending on whose interests are being met. In other words, the different parties involved may represent the same reconciliation initiative differently. Thus, the normative

assumptions around what is considered ‘successful’ reconciliation need to be explored and debated. Policy makers are in a unique position to join in on this debate with social psychologists, peace psychologists, educators and NGOs to draw on their extensive research and knowledge in creating the best-fit practices for their own particular context. This literature should not be read as generalizable but rather as different approaches that worked in different context. Thus, more emphasis should be placed on contextual sensitivity when employing different peace-building strategies.

Last but not least, it is important to note that reconciliation is not only a process of mending relations with outside groups but also relations with inside groups; those in the past and those in the future. Without accepting and knowing history as a story filled with both the good and the bad of a nation, future generations will not learn to be critical and open to different narratives of history. Rather, the future will be shaped by the concerns of the past, the historical drama in which an in-group is trapped in, with a focus on intergroup conflict and out-group blame, making it impossible to rid itself of the burden of seeking protection, security and safety from the ‘imagined’ threats of tomorrow.

This focus on everyday reconciliation should be an important step to develop in examining how we can move from contexts of inter-group conflict, to contexts of cooperation and intergenerational, intergroup and international dialogue.

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