

**BRATISLAVA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF
LIBERAL ARTS**

BACHELOR THESIS

Lenka Bilská

Bratislava, April 2012

**BRATISLAVA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF
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*Israeli – Palestinian Conflict:
The Story of Emotions, Narratives & Trauma*

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Declaration of Originality

I declare that this Bachelor Thesis “Israeli – Palestinian Conflict: The Story of Emotions, Naratives & Trauma ” is my own work and has not been published in part or in whole elsewhere. All used literature and other sources are attributed and cited in references.

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Abstract

This thesis is an initial attempt to investigate why the conflict between Israel and Palestine is still present, what are the primary impulses responsible for this situation and whether there is a possibility of a peace among them.

In the first part, concepts related to this conflict are presented and examined. The purpose in this part is to explain very important concepts such as identity-based conflict, ethnic identity, collective memory, cultural trauma, narratives in order to grasp the basic knowledge for further elaboration in this thesis.

The thesis then examines the master narratives of both sides and tries to understand why the narratives are so antagonistic. Further Olga Botcharova's Cycle of Victimhood and Linda Hartling's Humiliation Cycle are demonstrated to explain what needs to be changed in person's life to overcome humiliation. Consequently, there are examples of overcoming humiliation while making initiatives on local and official level.

In conclusion, the thesis argues that certain groups involved in this conflict don't want reconciliation, because they are used for this situation. They are afraid that peace-making process would cause the loss of their identity and power, which would bring instability and uncertainty to the region.

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Abstrakt

Cieľom tejto bakalárskej práce je zistiť, prečo konflikt medzi Izraelom a Palestínou stále prebieha, aké sú základné stimuly, ktoré sú zodpovedné za túto situáciu a či je možné hovoriť o budúcom mieri medzi oboma štátmi.

Prvá časť je venovaná vysvetleniu konceptov úzko súvisiacich s témou. Cieľom je vysvetliť koncepty ako etnická identita, konflikt identít, kolektívna pamäť, kultúrna trauma, výklady. Pochopenie týchto konceptov je predpokladom k ďalšiemu bádaniu v tejto oblasti.

Bakalárska práca sa potom zaoberá či už izraelskými alebo palestínskymi výkladmi histórie a snaží sa zistiť, prečo sú tak antagonistické. Na tomto pozadí sú potom prezentované dva teoretické modely, Cycle of Victimhood a Humiliation Cycle, ktoré sa snažia vysvetliť to, čím by mal človek, ktorý bol ponížený prejsť, aby prekonal bolesť, strach a zahanbenie. Následne na to sú uvedené príklady rôznych iniciatív na lokálnej alebo oficiálnej úrovni, ktoré sa o to snažia.

V závere sa práca opisuje rôzne záujmové skupiny, ktoré sú súčasťou konfliktu, ale ktoré nechcú, aby nastala mierová situácia, lebo takto im to vyhovuje. Tieto skupiny sa obávajú, že zmierovacie procesy by im priniesli stratu sily a identity, čo by v neposlednom prípade prispelo k nestabilite a nejasnosti v regióne.

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INTRODUCTION

*I would like, and only to you do I say this,
To be a girl in another land.
In a country where there is no news,
about people killed and about wars;
In a country which has no army and soldiers,
and where people are not afraid and don't worry;
In a land where peace is constant,
And you can go on a trip everywhere;
... And I am not conceding the state,
I just want this country to be another land.*
(Way of Words, Book D, 1996, p.159)

How nice would it be to just cross the borders and go swim in a sea in another country? How nice would it be to see children playing on a green grass on sunny days? For many people, this is a normal sight. But not for those who live in Israel or Palestine. The almost century old conflict caused many deaths, broke many families, but most of all, buried many unheard hopes for peace.

This bachelor thesis attempts to figure out why the conflict between Israel and Palestine is still present, what are the primary impulses responsible for this situation, and whether there is a possibility of peace among them.

This topic is fascinating for several reasons. First, it combines various fields together. If we want to understand this conflict properly, we have to go deeper into psychology and anthropology to define how and why identity, cultural memory and trauma, and historical narratives are important for this conflict. From the point of view of conflict resolution, we have to observe which kind of solutions would be most suitable. In consideration of international relations, we have to take into account the impact of other states supporting those countries in conflict and their needs. The history of this conflict may help us not to repeat the same mistakes again. Sociology may help us define the role and importance of interest groups and elites in this conflict. The study of this conflict is very complex and understanding the relevance of these fields is the key to a peaceful solution.

The second reason why I like exploring this conflict is the approach I chose. Since the Israeli- Palestinian conflict is an identity-based conflict, I chose to venture in this

direction. The question of identity is so fragile and delicate and that is why a little bit of pressure and misunderstandings can cause incalculable consequences. Emotions are the engine for this conflict. Humiliation, fear, shame, anger, grief, need for revenge are the drives in this conflict. Each side, the Jews and the Palestinians, have their own explanation for the continuation of the conflict. Those perceptions form the historical narratives, which are central to the identities of the two communities, and which are antagonistic in every way. What is a triumph for one side is a catastrophe for the other side.

Narratives lead to the emergence of a cultural memory of a group. If something is done against a particular group, the narrative of a cultural trauma appears among its members and it is passed from one generation to a new one.

This thesis elaborates on the possibility of breaking this vicious cycle of undying revenge. Two models of humiliation will be analyzed here to predict what needs to be changed in order to move towards peace-making process with the purpose to show what is missing in order to prevent this conflict from continuation. After the explanations the thesis investigates why nothing or close to nothing happened towards a tangible peace formation. The thesis tries to answer what prevents reconciliation among the two identity groups and how to achieve it. In seeking the answer, we will turn to the concept of carriers and examine their influence on the perpetuation of the conflict.

Since Israeli-Palestinian conflict is an identity based conflict, new ways in searching for peace must be considered here. Emotions play a very significant role in identity-based conflicts and they may have the power to control every sphere of life and they have powerful consequences if something is damaged. If negative emotions towards the other group multiply and if descendants of injured people keep them as their own, then it may lead to a formation of a biased and negative opinion towards the others. These inherited opinions and standpoints of one particular group towards another are called cultural memory. Cultural memory is so strong because it absorbs all the needs, hopes, fears of one group in relation to another. If the group feels that they were unjustly hurt or humiliated it can lead to a formation of their cultural trauma. Cultural

trauma occurs when there was an incident between ethnic groups that was disruptive to the fabric of the society and the groups cannot go on living as before because they were traumatized in an enormous way, individually and/or collectively. The power of trauma is so strong that it can be transmitted between generations. The only one way to prevent this conflict from continuation is reconciliation based on acknowledgement of the people involved in. Acknowledgement is meant as a mutual understanding of people's behavior, who belong to different ethnic groups. People must comprehend what were the circumstances of one's actions, what feelings and fears they had. If people from opposing groups are able to acknowledge the behavior and the background of one's actions then they made the first, the hardest and the most important step towards the peace-process. When this is actually happening, why there is a problem then. Ethnic communities are social constructs. Their survival in time is not automatic, but is made possible by symbolic carriers of communal ethnic identity, those who hold power and are able to shape and manipulate the historical narratives of the communities. Leaders may be satisfied with the conflict situation or may be afraid that peace-making process would cause the loss of their identity, which would bring instability and uncertainty to the region, and ultimately could cost them positions in power.

CHAPTER 1: Narrative Approaches to Ethnic Conflict and Ethnic Mobilization through Collective Memory

Israeli-Palestinian conflict belongs to the most complicated ethnic conflicts in the recent history. It has already been 64 years full of lost opportunities, broken dreams, breached promises and, what is most important, wasted human lives. Since this conflict is so complex and intangible, the solution is very hard to find and implement into practice. Israeli-Palestine conflict is like a volcano. The crater of the volcano is filled with inexplicit desires and yearning of people for peace. This crater is continually fed with hatred, pain, anger and resentment, so it does not have time to heal at all. The volcano erupts from time to time when it is full. Then it absorbs the negative feelings of people and erupts again. In my thesis, I'm trying to figure out why this is happening and what could be done in order to prevent this conflict from continuation.

The most essential problem is that in ethnic conflicts, identity plays a central role. This is why they are so hard to solve. Identity connects individuals to groups and defines shared worldviews and interests. "Identity-based conflicts in contrast to interest based conflicts are intangible, full of existential needs, depending on the belief system and they are trying to achieve complex goals" (Rothman, 1997, p.7). In interest based conflicts, the central dispute is over tangible resources and concrete defined outcomes. Identity-based conflicts, such as the one between Israel and Palestine, are concerned with intangible needs, for instance the need for dignity, recognition, safety. In order to require those abstract goals, it is necessary to create a space for communication and long-term conciliation. It also must take into account people's needs, fears, and hopes because otherwise it would not be successful (Kusa, Saltsman, Gamaghelyan, 2010, cited in Schuman, 2010, p. 254).

But it is very hard to persuade people from two sides of conflict to talk about something, even if it would help them pacify the tensions. The reason is that in this kind of fights different identities clash. It causes that each side wants to reach their own goals and won't look at the other side's needs. Identity was created as a single and unitary will to belong to a particular group of people with the same history, language, territory, culture. When identities are in conflict, it is very hard to find a

peaceful solution and the mutual relationship worsens. “In identity conflicts people often feel humiliated, threatened or angry, because of the actions of their enemies. They often see the situation as an assault to their dignity and blame the other side for what has been done to them” (Petersen, 2002,) Another very important variable in identity- based conflicts is the role of emotions, which have to be taken into consideration. In identity-based conflicts, emotions are in the same relationship to conflict as oil is to the cars. They control not only how people feel about certain things, but also influence on someone’s behaviour. They are the motivators for the people who are involved in the conflicts. This situation is much more complicated because each and every participant in the identity-based conflict is personally involved in it and tries to overcome his or her own personal struggle. Emotions are responsible for further continuation of the conflicts. According to Sunny, “emotions are the stimulus for the action; they are fundamental to self-identification, to thinking about who “we” are and who the “other” is; they are involved in the social bonds that makes groups, even the whole societies” (Sunny, 2004, p.5). On the basis of emotions, we are able to explain why people do what they do even on the political scene. What is very interesting is that sometimes emotions can be perceived on the basis of what is displeasurable or painful to human beings. For example, during childhood, a child is unconsciously given a connotation towards something. Through socialization, life experiences and a competence to a certain identity group, emotions such as feeling of shame or distrust towards somebody else are constructed. This feeling directs their future actions and gives them the meaning for their lives. Sunny believes that “emotions are experienced and expressed according to a certain paradigms that are largely the stuff of common sense or habit”(Sunny, 2004, p. 13). Those emotions then create myths that are essential for the members of each group. They are essential because they justify group’s actions According to R.D. Petersen, the most important emotions in identity-based conflicts are those four mentioned above: fear, hatred, resentment and rage.”Fear triggers a response in an individual to seek safety, hatred makes people act in order to right a historic wrong, resentment deals with the status or self-esteem, and rage often leads an individual to a self-destruction” (Petersen, 2002)” In the case of long-term identity conflicts, such as the one between Israel and Palestine, people’s relationships has gone bad because of the history of the conflict.

“On both sides people feel ashamed, humiliated, threatened, angry, or resentful” (Petersen, 2002,). Those feelings emerged because there is no trust between people, just blame.

As stated earlier, emotions present in the identity-based conflict have the power to create or to strengthen the feelings of a people in a common identity group. They help to cement the collective memory and the group identity of a particular group. According to J. Assmann “collective memory is a collective concept for all knowledge that directs behavior and experience in the interactive framework of a society and one that obtains through generations in repeated societal practice an initiation”(Assmann, 1988, p.126). The purpose of collective memory is to bind past memories, culture and society together, so they hold stronger and maintain the cultural heritage of a particular identity group. According to Northrup, “group identity is a collective process that connects individuals to groups and defines their shared worldviews and interest”(Northrup, 1989, cited in Ross, 2007, p. 2). Collective memory and group identity are a part of a particular culture where people have the system of beliefs through which they understand the world.. When there is a clash in identity issues, the parties usually have the most exclusive position on a particular event. Since they see just their truth , there is a very small chance for compromise or mutual talks. Sometimes happens that this conflict, based on the collective memory and group identity, is driven to such a big scale that all of sudden it becomes a central part of identity for both sides. It is inconceivable for them to give up, because that would mean losing their own beliefs. In the identity-based conflicts people are fighting by the means of a cultural expressions. To M.H. Ross “cultural expressions are the reflectors of groups worldviews; they help to better comprehend the deepest fears and needs of a group; they play a causal role in the conflict, because they approve certain actions as plausible or not” (Ross, 2007, p. 3). One of the examples of cultural expressions may be the psychological narratives. Psychological narratives are the interpretations of the conflict by each side involved in it. They discuss what were the causes and effects of the conflict, whether a particular situation is promising to them or not. They also mobilize people to act in order to improve their situation and they are the only ‘true’ and plausible explanations for the conflicts. In my thesis, I put a lot of stress on discussing the antagonist nature of the Israeli and Palestinian

narratives, because I believe it is very important to understand their content just so we can better comprehend group's relationship and explanation to the surrounding world.

Those explanations of past actions, beliefs or worldviews are constructed on the basis of emotions and group mutual understandings. Grouping those explanations together, they form narratives. Narratives are explanations for events in the form of common sense accounts that define cultural or ethnic communities. They are important because they show us how individuals or groups understand the social world. They also reveal deep fears, perceived threats, or grievances, they privilege certain actions over others and also, by using them, the communities get stronger (Ross, 2007, p. 24). Obviously, in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, there are two master narratives, that are antagonist in every way possible. What makes them specific is the core trauma on which they are based. What is a triumph for one side is a catastrophe for another side.

The Jewish narrative talks about 2000- years of exile or 2000 years without a homeland. It is a miracle that over the centuries when so many atrocities were done to the Jews, they were strong enough and they survived in such a hostile environment. What is even worse, with the beginning of the 20th century the horrors of the WW II- when the persecution and the Holocaust took place had an enormous impact on Jews. Fortunately, with the help of the Western states, their glorious day came on May 15th 1948, when they established the State of Israel after 2000 years of injustice, humiliation and violation.

On the other hand, the Palestinian master narrative is completely different. Palestinians express anger because, all of a sudden, somebody from Europe and America decided and the territory on which their families had been living for many generations before belonged to somebody else. In their eyes May 15th is a catastrophe or "Naqba" for their nation. They don't understand why it happened and they consider it as an unfear betrayal of stronger and bigger states (Ross, 2007, p. 48-61). Those master narratives have been completely coopted into people's lives. They define the roles of each and every participant of a group. As I mentioned earlier, those two master narratives are competing all the time and they are exclusive and incompatible. Because of the fact that they have already become a part of either the Jewish or the

Palestinian identity, it is not possible to get rid of them. Narratives give people's lives meaning or rules according to which they behave.

When those two powerful master narrative clash they may invoke psychocultural traumas. Psychocultural trauma is "a memory accepted and publically given credence by a relevant membership group and evoking an event or situation in which is laden with negative affect or regarding as threatening in society's existence"(Alexander et al., 2004, p. 44). According to M.C. Ross, it is "apparently irresolvable conflict between groups and claims that engage central elements of group's history experiences, fears, hopes" (Ross, 2007, p. 25). Psychocultural traumas occur when members of certain group feel that they have been humiliated or traumatized and when those events have an enormous perceived impact on their future, because they can't resolve the past atrocities that were done to them. One of the basic characteristics of cultural trauma is that one group does not recognize the existence of the other group's trauma. The problem with this is that trauma narrative can lead to a classical security dilemma. A particular ethnic group see themselves as the victims who were injured many times and therefore they have to defend themselves. But as they defend themselves, they actually provoke the next conflict and the other group perceives themselves as a victim. So the roles changes and the conflict still continues, because people involved in it are not able to open their eyes to understand the other's point of view. Cultural trauma is socially constructed and this is the reason why it is difficult to solve identity-based conflicts when a cultural trauma is integrated into the fabric of the conflict.. Another important fact about psychocultural traumas is that they are rooted and remembered in a particular society's memory and that they have the power to affect or change the behaviour of its members. It is culturally relevant and it is the basic pillar according to which people act. When people have a cultural trauma embedded within their own master narrative, they have one ultimate truth for their members. They possess plausible explanations for all the horrors they had to go through, they have explanations that justify their actions and they have solutions according to which they are going to act to achieve their victory.

Sometimes it happens that psychocultural trauma is modified into a transmitted trauma. According to Kellermann, transmitted trauma is parents' trauma perceived by

their children. It happens when the second generation, those are the children of the people who were humiliated, perceived the trauma of their parents and act as their parents did. He believes that it can be the curse and the legacy. Kellerman made a research and the results were diverse. Either children of traumatized parents were anxious with many provoking ideas or transmitted trauma was a source of creative inspiration for them (Kellermann, 2008, pp. 263-270). In the case of the 64-years old Israeli-Palestinian conflict, new-born children always get the transmitted trauma. It is so, because all the stories of their identity group have already become a part of their identity and there is no possibility of omitting them. The creation of psychocultural and transmitted trauma supports the vicious cycle of ethnic violence. The result is that the children of traumatized parents feel guilty for their parents and they want to rescue them. It may happen that their transmitted trauma is even bigger as the real trauma of their parents and they would fight more even without knowing the real feeling.

So far, it looks like that there is no way for this conflict to even hope for peace. But this thesis elaborates on two theoretical models dealing with preventing conflicts from continuation. The first one is Olga Botcharova's Cycle of Victimhood. It is based on forgiveness and justice as tools for reconciliation and peace (Botcharova, 2006). The main idea is victim's willingness to overcome revenge and acknowledgement on the oppressor's side. After the acknowledgement of both actors the mutual talks may happen.

The second model is from Linda Hartling's Humiliation: Real Pain, A Pathway to Violence (2007). It explains how emotions of humiliation, shame, mutual alienation can cause aggression and violence. The model tries to explain which steps are required to do for peace-making processes.

It may seem that if we apply those two theoretical models into practice, the peace would be the next step. But it is not that easy. One of the possible obstacles for peace solution could be explained through the concept of carrier groups. Carrier groups are collective agents of trauma process that have both material and ideal interest. They are placed in a very important positions in social structure and usually achieve their goals

by rhetoric. They may be the elites or religious leaders whom majority of the people from a particular identity group admire. They are somehow trying to block the process of reconciliation because they are satisfied with the current state (Weber, 1968, cited in Alexander, 1994, p.11).

Since this conflict is so long, the will to win this fight to a successful end is the dream of at least three generations on each side. The feeling of hatred of „the others“ is involuntarily inherited and later on experienced by each of the members of the group. It is already a part of the Jewish or Palestinian identity, to win this fight. Even though in this region there are many ideas, meetings, or projects in order to put aside the hatred between both sides, still the hatred can be felt in the air.

In my bachelor thesis I'm trying to find the way how Jewish and Palestinians may go out of the bloody cycle of hurting each other. The next chapters will explain two theoretical models which show a possibility of preventing this conflict from continuation.

CHAPTER 2: Narrative Model of Identity-based Ethnic Conflict

Cycle of Victimhood and Humiliation cycle

In my bachelor thesis, I'm trying to find an approach, method or an idea how to prevent the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from continuation. In the chapters before, I examined and elaborated on the most important concepts considering Israeli-Palestinian conflict such as identity, collective memory, cultural trauma, historical narratives. This chapter is dedicated to explaining two theoretical models of victimhood in order to find a solution that would help the situation in the Middle East region.

The first model is Olga Botcharova's *Cycle of Victimhood*. She is a well-known conflict resolution expert and this cycle represents the journey of victim's need for revenge towards reconciliation based on forgiveness and restorative justice. She starts her presentation explaining that if there was an act of aggression towards someone, the first thing that needs to be done in order to solve the problem is a will towards peace on both sides. Because of the length and velocity of Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it is impossible to say who started it and who the victim is. Both sides believe that they are the victims, but honestly said none of the sides is innocent. This is what they have to comprehend and acknowledge and then the real peace process may occur. Botcharova also believes that the only way how to find the peace is by the means of a restorative justice. Restorative justice is all "non-military actions and non-official diplomacy approaches, with facilitated dialogues between the hostile communities" (Botcharova, 2006, p. 627). According to her, the next step must be the identification with the victim's suffering and pain. In this way victim can express the grief in order to leave the humiliating feeling and traumatized past memories behind. The victim must undergo five stages to achieve a complex reconciliation. Those steps are realization of loss and mourning, expressing grief, accepting loss and re-humanizing the enemy. The last step is very important, because by re-humanizing the enemy, the act of aggression is and always will be seen as evil but the victim finds out what were the enemy's circumstances. Usually the perpetrators act under an enormous pressure,

which is connected to hopelessness. If the victim understands this, then he can see that there is not that big a difference between him and his former enemy. By going through those four steps the victim left anger to perpetrators behind and he is prepared for the forgiveness. The victim must communicate his pain to the abuser in order to move on. This is his strongest need of all. But he must overcome a need for a revenge and also he must forget about “eye for eye” situation and trying to give the abuser what he was given. When victim and perpetrator communicate, it is essential to make the abuser feel as the victim did. The abuser starts to feel ashamed and that is what is needed. “Shame can be healing, purifying and transformative if it destroys the identity of the abuser and allows building of a new identity” (Botcharova, 2006, p. 623). Shame is very important for this model, because it enables the victim and abuser to comprehend each another feelings. When the abuser feels ashamed, a new bond between them is created and it provides a solid ground for further communication. When the victim and abuser are able to communicate and to share their feelings a time for forgiveness can come. It must start from the victims point of view because he was badly injured not only physically but also psychologically. When the victim forgives the abuser it means that he accepted his loss and that he is ok with the past atrocities that were done to him. Forgiveness is a key to reconciliation, because when somebody forgives, he or she is able to tear away from the past and can start recovering their life. But before the forgiveness stage, the victim must allow himself to mourn about what happened to him. If he doesn't, he would never be able to get rid of pain, anger and his inside would not be healed. It takes a great courage to do it. Plus the victim must realize that what happened to him was not his fault. That he was not asking the abuser to do it by his behaviour. Forgiving does not mean that the victim should forget about what happen to him. If he forgets, it would mean that he just denied everything. Also, he should not be in the forgetting phase for a long time because that means that he is not able remove the humiliating memories from subconscious. Olga Botcharova believes that the victim should remember. It means that he acknowledges his pain and loss, and that he is now no longer dependent on the past memories, because he was able to raise above all the bad things that happen to him. After this realization, an initial process of restorative justice may take place. “It is about restoring human dignity of the victim and about transforming identity of the perpetrator” (Botcharova,

2006, p. 637). This can be done only through the dialogues between former enemies and their future cooperation. The actual reconciliation starts when six steps of restorative justice are completed. Those steps include admitting wrongdoing, public apology, re-visiting the past, negotiating solutions, planning future and symbolic acts of conciliation. Acknowledgement is very important to reconciliation. We actually may say that the completed reconciliation equals acknowledgement and justice at the same time. Acknowledgement enables the victim to heal inside, and gives him the strength to communicate it to the perpetrator. But most of all, acknowledgement brightens up the victim and allows the abuser and the victim alike to be changed through it.

The reason why Olga Botcharova's Cycle of Victimhood is so important to my thesis is quite obvious. I'm trying to find whether it would be possible to prevent the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from continuation. According to this theoretical model, it would be possible only if the victims realized their pain and acknowledged that only mourning and accepting their loss will lead them to a state when they would be able to forgive the other side for what they did to them but also to acknowledge their own mistakes that they did in order to revenge to their enemies. But since the conflict has lasted for more than sixty years, both sides perceive themselves as victims and the other as the perpetrator. They have been in this cycle for so long that everytime when one of them was a victim, they chose the path of revenge so their positions were reversed and changed. According to this model, just by talking and expressing their own feelings and opinions, the bloody cycle can move on from the cycle of revenge to cycle of reconciliation.

Explanation:

Inner cycle – Cycle of Revenge

Step 1 The cycle starts with an aggression and following pain, shock or denial

Step 2 Victim has to realize his loss

Step 3 Emotions stirred by victim's loss cause that the victim is not able to express grief

Step 4 Since the victim was hiding his grief, all the anger is aimed against the abuser

Step 5 Victim can appease his anger only if the abuser is victimized too (eye for an eye)

Step 6 Even when the perpetrator was hurt, it was still not to the level as victim was hurt

Step 7 Victim commits act(s) of aggression and the roles are reversed and the cycle continues

Peripheral Cycle- Cycle to Reconciliation

Step 1 Victim may begin the process of mourning as soon as he realizes his loss

Step 2 Victim must allow self to feel pain in order to leave it later.

Step 3 Victim should forgive himself

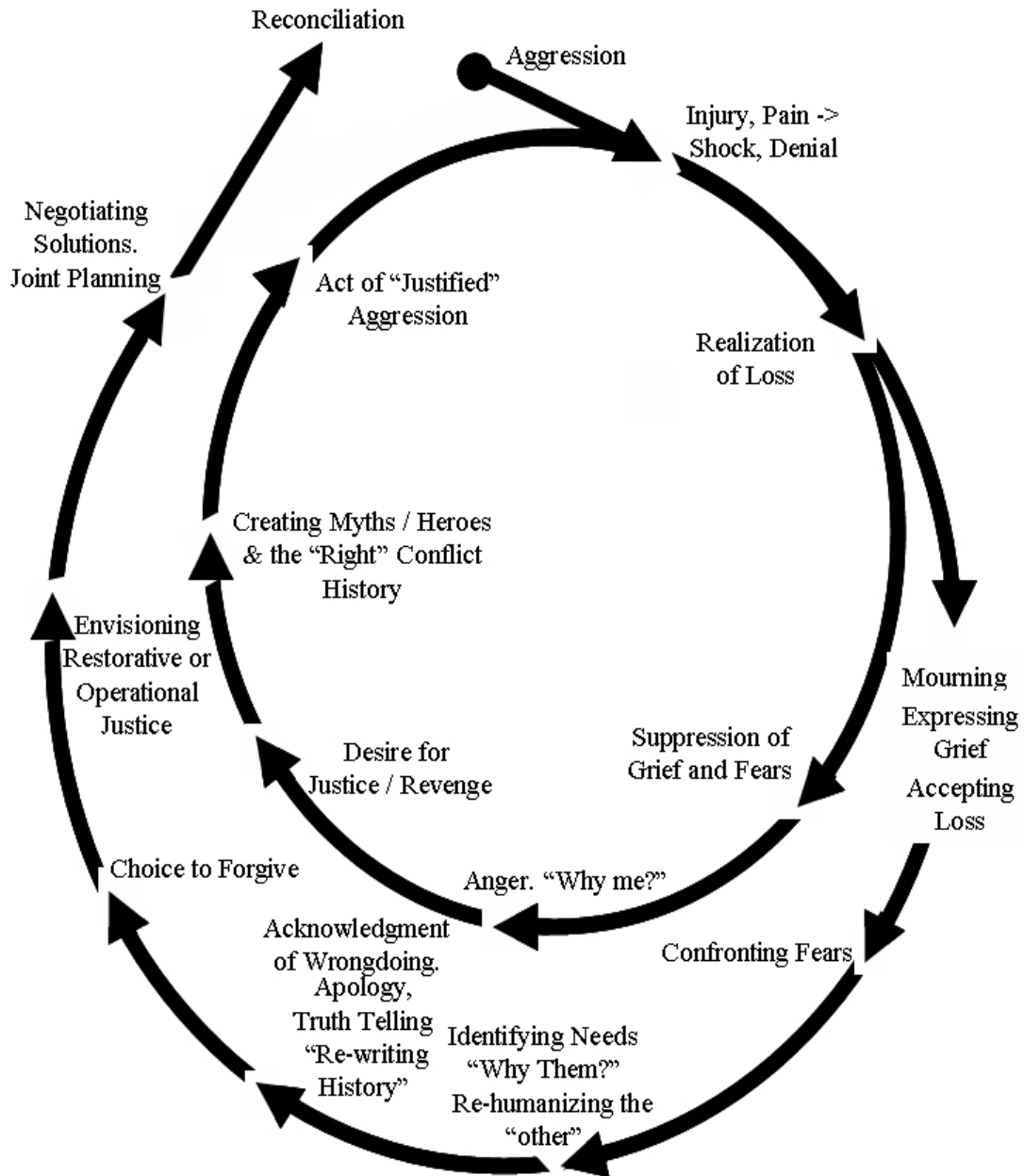
Step 4 Victim's realization that they have similar feelings with the perpetrator

Step 5 Victim's culmination of healing and following forgiveness to perpetrator

Step 6 Dialogues with the former perpetrator

Step 7 Recognizing mutual responsibilities

**CYCLES OF VICTIMHOOD AND TRANSFORMATION:
DESTRUCTIVE VERSUS CONSTRUCTIVE**



The second theoretical model, which I'm using serves to illustrate that humiliation is responsible for the ongoing ethnic conflict between Israel and Palestine. This model was developed by Linda Hartling (2007) and it was described in her work *Humiliation: Real Pain, A Pathway to Violence*. The aim of this paper is to prove that humiliation, which is a social pain, has the same consequences on human body and mind as a long term physical pain. It was proven by two brain researches-Eisenberg and Liebermann, that the impacts of social and physical pain are expressed in the same way in human body.

The first premise of Hartling's study is a fact that people need connections with other people. According to Relation-Cultural Theory, it is a central human necessity. When those connections are broken or damaged, it influences human being to a great degree. They can be injured by humiliation, which Hartling understands as a "profound relational violation or an assault on one's essential need for relationships" (Hartling, 2007, p. 468). In her study, she found out, with a little help of Eisenberg and Lieberman's neurobiological and neuroimaging research, that "social and physical pain share the same characteristics underlying the processing system"(Hartling, 2007, p.469). Better said, physical and social pain triggers the same mechanisms and responses in brain. We can conclude that physical and social pain systems overlap and there is a connection between them. This connection is explained in the SPOT theory made by Eisenberg and Lieberman. Social pain/ Physical pain Overlap Theory tell us that social and physical pain are not that different. As much as human being wants to avoid physical pain, the same way he wants to avoid humiliation, social exclusion or mockery.

Linda Hartling and her team wanted to know more about humiliation. When they found out that humiliation causes the same reactions in the brain as physical pain, they wanted to know whether humiliation increases the risk of violent behavior. The result was that individuals suffering from social pain are more likely to die from risky behavior. The aim of this study was to investigate the connection between humiliation and aggression. On the basis of data from many case studies, Hartling finally formulated her findings:

Humiliation may trigger social pain activating the alarm system of the brain leading to decreased self-awareness in the form of a deconstructed state, which includes emotional numbness. Decreasing self-awareness leads to a decrease in self-regulation, which leads to an increase in self-defeating behavior, including aggression (Hartling, 2007, p. 473).

We can conclude from Hartling's research that humiliation makes people more likely to acquire aggressive behaviour.

In the case of 64-years old Israeli-Palestinian identity-based ethnic conflict we may say that people on both sides were humiliated and that it damaged the ties between them completely. We can assume that it only helps to spread violent and aggressive thoughts into such a big scale that violence will appear. Humiliation may result in aggression. We can see it in many resistance organizations (Hamas) in this territory, which are trying to express their needs in a violent way. Also, according to Hartling's model, people in Israel and Palestine are stuck in this causal model of humiliation and aggression. They can't get out of there because every day appears a new way how they are humiliated and they just want to revenge for it. It has overlaps with Botcharova's model. The trigger is the victim's need for revenge followed by the aggressive behavior. It may result in violent act and the victim becomes a perpetrator and vice versa. The only one way out of Botcharova's cycle is the acknowledgement and realization that both sides made mistakes and it is still worth to forgive. Since Hartling figured that social pain overlaps with physical pain, she proposes a new understanding of "interpersonal, intersocial and international relations around the world without humiliation. Because it is the most wide-spread weapon of mass destruction" (Hartling, 2007, p. 476)

CHAPTER 3: Way to Reconciliation on Communal Level

The previous chapter described two theoretical models which illustrate how the mentality of people involved in a long-term ethnic conflict works. The problem in Israeli-Palestinian conflict is that people experience deep humiliation on everyday basis and they remain locked in the violent and aggressive cycles of need for revenge. They were humiliated, which is according to Lacey (2011), “actually a result of being demeaned because of who you are. It is a very severe injury, because it influences not only the rest of one’s life, but also lives of next generations” (Lacey, 2011, p. 78). Those major traumatic experiences in ethnic conflicts become a part of either Jewish or Palestinian identity. Humiliation is able to live on in the collective memory of the next generations and it is their primary role to gain the lost pride or resolve the loss. In many cases people don’t realize that they were humiliated, they don’t want to accept it. They just feel very angry, because of the injustice that happened to them and they want to resolve it. These models operate from the point of view of individuals, anticipating personal relationships between the parties in conflict. This chapter’s goal, therefore, is to examine whether we can look for reconciliatory measures on a communal level where face to face relations are possible.

Fortunately, there are a lot of initiatives in Israel or Palestine that deal with this problem. They are in the form of workshops, dialogues or in the form of creating new historical textbooks that offer a more open interpretation of the two historical narratives.

Communication between Israelis and Palestinians is very hard. That is why all the initiatives start on a communal level in projects with a small number of participants. It is done in a form of mutual dialogues between people from opposing sides. They talk about each participant’s feelings (fears, needs, hopes, concerns) and opinions. Then the participants from different groups talk with each other. Each time when there is a project involving members from both communities, mediators and facilitators must be involved in order to pacify the tension, and they make sure that the project will go smoothly. Working or mediating these problems is really hard, because people involved in identity-based conflicts “deals with multiple and complex questions that concerns their identity. They have a strong sense of mistrust and

hostility toward the other side and have profound negative stereotypes about them” (Kusa, Saltsman, Gamaghelyan, 2010, cited in Schuman, 2010, p. 258) The conversations I mentioned above usually start with a closed number of people on both sides and they discuss the central matters that underline the conflict. It is very important that people trust and support the mediators, because only that can lead to positive results. In many cases, people personally involved in the conflict start to talk to mediators first and they tell them how they see the roots of the conflict. Afterwards, when they feel secure with the mediators both sides meet and talk about the problem. It is not surprising that both sides will have different underlying assumptions about the background of the conflict. Each side has its own point of view supported by biased and selective perspective. There are many assumptions that are taken for granted on both sides and may lead to misunderstandings and miscommunication in direct conversation. What mediators are trying to achieve is to support the participants while overcoming their humiliation. The goal of each and every one of these meetings is to “re-humanize the other”. This could be done only through empathy, honesty and genuine experience of the other’s point of view. Agreement is not needed here. The will to acknowledge or to understand other side’s story, feelings, motives, is the true victory in these projects. It enables the building of relationships based on mutual trust, and willingness to work together on further solutions (Kusa, Saltsman & Gamaghelyan, 2010, cited in Schuman, 2010, p. 262-264).

This is just one of many practices that take place in order to calm down the Israeli-Palestinian tension in relationship. It is clearly visible that on a local level those initiatives are very successful. Mutual dialogues about the taboo issues, that are much better to avoid in a normal life, improves damaged bonds between people on both sides. We can see that Olga Botcharova’s theoretical model of the Cycle of Victimhood is right on a local level. As she said, each and every victim has to go through the seven steps toward reconciliation. The best way how it can be done is by the means of uninvolved people who are helping with the initial process of mourning and expressing lost. Then it is very important to change the understanding of the participants. By mutual talking, listening to the other side’s situation, one may come to conclusion that although some acts were horrible and evil, the other is still a human being, with the same emotions, needs, desires. It is amazing what a conversation may

be capable of! Dialogues on a local level are a clear example how wounds on both sides can be healed and how the next steps for further commitment are born. Those projects are essential for a peace-making process in Israel-Palestine conflict, because it is not possible to dream of a brighter tomorrow, if the past is full of shadows and dark memories.

Another way which improves the relationships between hostile groups on a local level is through new historical textbooks for pupils. It is evident that the environment in which children grow up have an enormous impact on their worldviews and beliefs, but a proper education may be a way how to give the children a new perspective on a world around them. Creating textbooks with multiple perspectives is important in long term ethnic conflict because, it is a chance for these kids to get to know something else, something they have never thought about, This strategy is not new in the Israeli-Palestine conflict. One of the many projects like this was conducted by Eyal Naveh and his team. Eyal Naveh was one of the co-founders of a very interesting project which aimed to give the children a proper education. His team and him created a completely new textbook for Jewish and Palestinian children in elementary school. The difference of this textbook was in a way how it was structured and written. On one page, there were two columns which were talking about the same event, but one from Jewish and the other from a Palestinian point of view. The space in the middle was dedicated to children's notes. It was a very unique project mixing the two narratives and letting the children to know „the enemy's point of view.“ The textbook was supposed to be put into practice on a local level in a few schools in Israel and Palestine. For some reasons the application of this textbook into practice failed. That is a shame, because this textbook would be such a potential tool in the hands of young people.

The War of Independence

Background

The violent confrontations between Jews and Arabs in the land of Israel started in the early 1920s. For the most part, the Jews defended themselves against attacks by the Arabs. The *Hagana* was responsible for defense of the Jewish community, and sometimes British armed forces intervened to end the violence.

The Hagana was established in 1920 primarily as a regional organization; in each settlement its members were responsible for its own defense. Every Jewish resident of the land of Israel was eligible to join, the main condition being the person's ability to keep the organization's activities secret. At first the Hagana's limited mobility hindered its capability to carry out attacks. After the 1921 uprisings the Hagana expanded by drafting new members, conducting courses for commanders and accelerating weapons' acquisition. Armaments were purchased abroad or manufactured in factories located primarily in *kibbutzim*. The Hagana was under the authority of the elected governing institutions of the *yishuv* (Jewish community in the land of Israel.)

In 1936 there was an Arab uprising which called for liberation from British rule. They attacked British forces and Jews as well. In the course of the revolt the British recommended a solution: To divide the land into two states - Arab and Jewish (the Peel Commission Report). The Arab leadership rejected the proposal of partition. The *yishuv* leadership accepted the principle of partition but opposed the borders suggested by the commission.

At the end of World War II, in spite of revelations about the scope of the Jewish Holocaust in Europe and the murder of millions of Jews, Britain refused to permit the establishment of a Jewish state. In post-war Europe there were over 100,000 Jewish refugees who could not return to their homes, but the British refused to allow them to immigrate to the land

Chapter 2

The Catastrophe [An-Nakbeh] 1948

Contents

- * Historical background: Formative stages of the Catastrophe
- * Events of the 1948 Catastrophe, including eyewitness reports
- * Results of the Catastrophe, including eyewitness reports

This chapter includes:

- * Drawings of Najj Al-'Ali
- * Partition map of November 29, 1947
- * Ghassan Kanafani: *The Land of Sad Orange Trees* (a story)
- * Mahmoud Muftleeh: *Palestine: Thyme and Bullets* (a poem)
- * Photographs of destroyed villages

Glossary

References

Historical background: Formative stages of the Catastrophe

On November 29, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly passed Resolution 181, which calls for the partition of Palestine into two states, Arab and Jewish. This was the start of the countdown for the establishment of the state of Israel on May 15, 1948 and the 1948 Catastrophe, which uprooted and dispersed the Palestinian people.

The Catastrophe was: 1) the defeat of the Arab armies in the 1948 Palestine War; 2) their acceptance of the truce; 3) the displacement of most of the Palestinian people from their cities and villages; and 4) the emergence of the refugee problem and the Palestinian Diaspora.

Carrier groups are one of the primary reasons why this conflict has a long way to reach the final destination- the peace. In this situation, the carrier groups are the most powerful people on a local level who hold the power in their hands. In some cases, the will of, for example, non- governmental organizations that are trying to push this conflict towards reconciliation will not break through. This is also the case of Naveh's textbook. Carrier groups on local level decide that it would not be profitable for them to put this initiative into practice so they didn't give the permission to afford the textbooks to local schools. What's interesting is that carrier groups act in a very symbolic way. Their rhetoric, gestures, or symbols are very powerful. They are trying to use all the historical fact as they needed and to picture the other side as evil and not worth to making concessions. People who were not already involved in the peace-making processes believed to what they said because their popularity is based on the fact that citizens respect them. Ordinary citizens often don't realize the fact that they unconsciously embrace the opinions of carrier groups. And this is the reason why is so hard to make an effort even on a local level. But it is still easier than to make it on official level. The only one way how carrier groups would change their behavior is by changing their nature. They should have the political will to achieve the acknowledgement that would lead to a more stable peace. This could be done if a new carrier group emerged. It means that new carrier group has a new narrative, a new point of view and this would become more appealing to majority of citizens and finally the change would come. The decision holders would be more positive about mutual initiatives and community involvement so the change towards better and more complex peace-making processes would be necessary.

CHAPTER 4: Peace-making Processes On Official Level

In the previous chapter, I described the peacemaking process between Israel and Palestine on local level. As we already know, there are many initiatives on local level that deal with the tensions between the two ethnic groups. What is very important is the attitude of carrier groups. Those are the most influential people in the region and to some extent, they decide what is going to happen. Whether there will be a new, more facilitating approach or whether everything stays the same way. This chapter deals with the peace-making processes on the official level. By that I mean all the approaches, ways or steps that need to be done in order to ease the tensions between Israel and Palestine. Since this chapter considers the official level of conciliation, it is about the possibility of stable peace among Israel and Palestine and what should be in order to at least come near to it.

Kupchan, a very reputable expert in foreign affairs, in his book *How Enemies Become Friends* (2010) maps how the zone of stable peace occurs among enemies. He believes that the zone of stable peace is possible only where there is a notion among former enemies that a war is unthinkable in any case. There are three types of zones of stable peace: rapprochement, security community and a union. Rapprochement is a “move away from the armed rivalry to a relationship characterized by mutual expectations of peace coexistence” (Kupchan, 2010,p. 30). States in rapprochement live comfortably along-side each other, they define their interest independently and they have got separate identities which are compatible. By security community he meant a deeper form of stable peace based on firstly, “significant elements of sovereignty with respect to each other and secondly, sense of we-ness or a shared identity” (Kupchan, 2010,p. 31). p. 31). Then, a union is the highest evolved zone of stable peace. “It is characterized by elimination of each state’s individual sovereignty and minimizing geopolitical significance and territorial borders” (Kupchan, 2010,p. 31). Also, previously shared identity is transformed into common identity. Former enemies can become one of these types by going through four phases of peace process, which are essential for making peace on the official level. Phase one is called unilateral accommodation. It is about the will of one party to make an initial concession to the other party as a sign of a good will. We are talking about credible

and costly commitments to poorer state. Then the target state must decide how to act. Either the target state would reciprocate then a new set of mutual talks may become. If not, then the geopolitical rivalry would continue. The second phase is called reciprocital restraint. This phase is about mutual practice of accommodation and both parties expect reciprocity. In this phase “parties bind themselves to one another through informal pacts and specify the terms of rule-based order, which means that both parties establish shared checks and balances devices” (Kupchan, 2010, p.42). Since the relationship has already changed, each side feels confident about the other’s intention and motivation. The third phase in the peace-making process among the former enemies is called societal integration. It is a very important phase because it entails the involvement of private firms, bureaucracies, interest groups, ordinary citizens and also official elites. It is about regular face-to face meetings between governments elites. In the previous phases, the contact that was sporadic becomes a routine. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, the elites are responsible for the continuation of the peace-making processes, because they are in positions of decision-making and symbolic power. Everything depends on their will to the other state or on their choice affecting the state’s behavior. Elites in the third phase of this peace-making process portray their former enemy as an ally or a friend, and help disarm the nationalist opposition or fundamentalist groups. In this phase, the attitude of ordinary citizens on both sides is important as well. Political support for reconciliation is usually built through education, media, travel, exchange programs sponsored by the governments or the private sector. What is very important and interesting is that people on both sides start to have the “we feeling” - meaning that they no longer take the other state as something else but they partially identify with them. The last phase of the peace-making process is the narrative generation and identity change. (Kupchan, 2010, p. 46-49). “Through generation of new narratives the states engaged in reconciliation recast the identities they hold of each other” (Kupchan, 2010, p. 50). This change actually starts at the level of elites, because they have to change the language toward the other state. What the states often have to change is a new accounting of the past. They have to find and use narratives that downplay conflicts and highlight historical ties and common values. According to Kupchan, these four

phases are a way how to get rid of suspicion and competition and open the door for moderation and cooperation between former rivals and enemies.

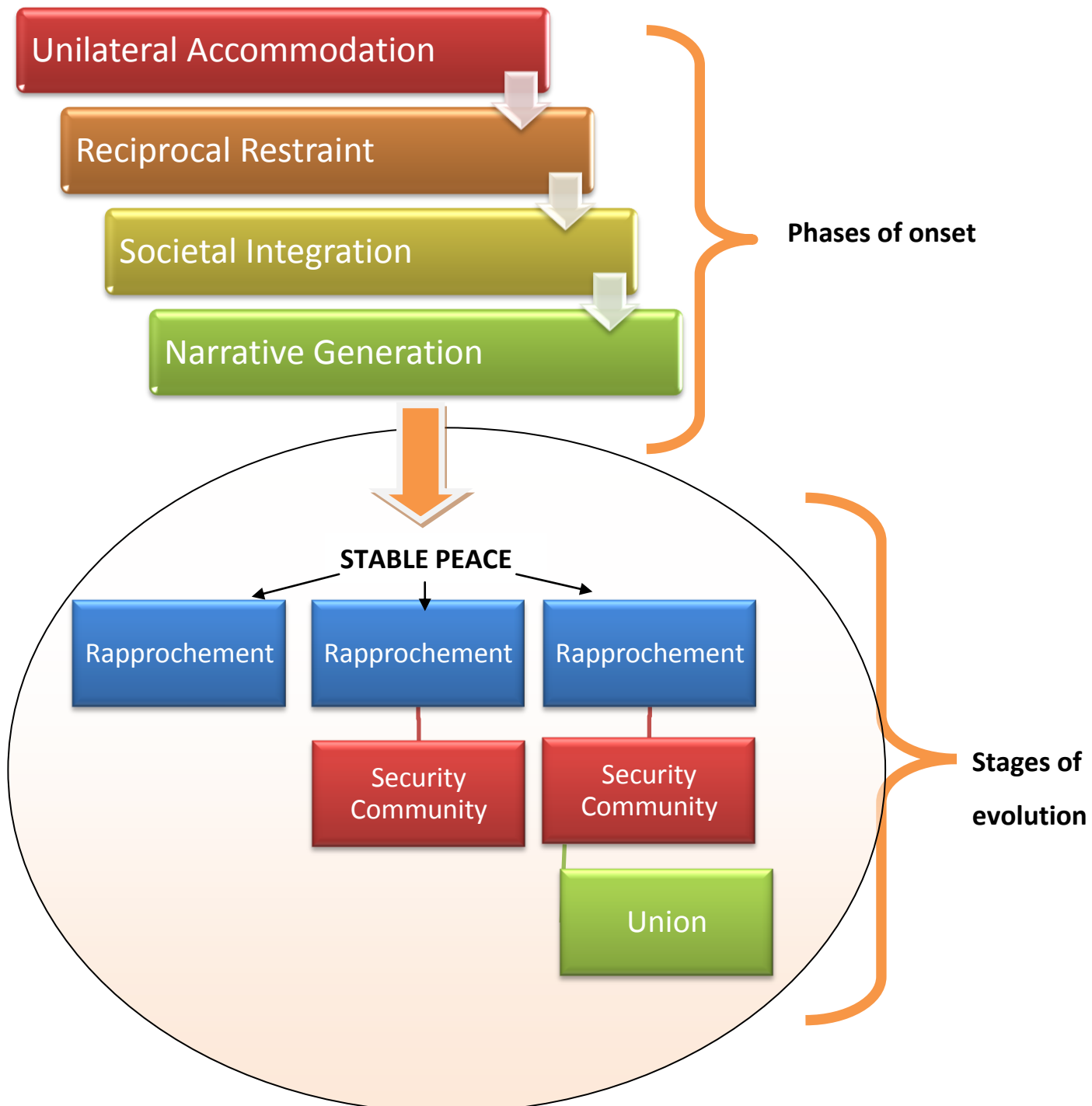


Image 1: The Sequential Pathway to Stable Peace (Source: Kupchan, p. 37)

At this point, Kupchan's theory will be related to the actual situation between Israel and Palestine. It is true that the relationship between Israel and Palestine is rather hostile than mild or moderate, but the four stages of peace process should be fully accomplished in the resolution of this ethnic conflict in the future. Firstly, Israel should choose the way of credible commitments to Palestine. Then Palestine should move and accept those steps. Then the stage of peace dynamic would appear, which would mean mutual and continual restrains towards each other. Thirdly, the elites from both states should realize that the peace is the best thing that could ever happen among those two states and try to spread this feeling among ordinary citizens, private sector and interest or lobbying groups. The final stage of the peace-making process is the hardest one. Former enemies realize that a war would be in many respects disadvantageous and therefore they should change the discourse of their countries by adopting a new identity based on mutual recognition, trust and cooperation with the former enemy which has become an ally. This is a model how the peace-making process should look like between Israel and Palestine but the reality may be completely different. I believe that if Israel and Palestine followed Kupchan's steps there would be no way back to the conflict. Since the final stage is a total change in identity of both involved group and the acknowledgement that "we" is better than "the others", going back into ethnic conflict would be irrational.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

While the previous chapter was about a theoretical knowledge of peace-making processes and their implementation on local level, this chapter deals with what has been going on in practice in Israel and Palestine in the official sphere of peace-making process.

When we want to make peace between states where conflict has been in ongoing for more than six decades, we have to start with the most influential players in the game. We are talking about the most influential players on both Israeli and Palestinian sides. However, we can't forget about the two-level nature of the game between domestic and international interactions. According to Putnam, national governments stand in the middle between the needs of the domestic and international players. National governments are supposed to mediate between them and find favorable conditions for both sides (Putnam, 1988, p. 433-437). In this case it means that in order to reach progress in the peace process, Israel and Palestine must find a way how to appease firstly their internal domestic needs, secondly the needs of each other and thirdly the needs of the international community. For the national governments, it is obviously a very hard task to do. On the domestic level, there are many powerful players or we can say carrier groups that are trying to achieve the most of what they can. National governments itself may consist of such groups and must decide here to whom they "help to find a zone of possible agreement" among the different internal players. This decision has major consequences not only on domestic level, but also on international level. Sometimes it happens that the players or carrier groups that were not successful split and more fractions arise. Since there are more fractions on the political scene, there are more interests to provide for. The leaders of those fractions are usually very charismatic and create new narratives with the purpose to attract as many people as possible. The bigger they are, the bigger the chance to get what they need.

Exactly this situation was visible in March 2012 in Palestine, where there were protests for "the Land Day". What was surprising there were the fights among the Palestinians from the different factions or movements. This showed that even the Palestinian elites are fighting for the biggest power and influence. Each of the fractions use their own narrative supported by their own key dates, explanations of the

world order and with their own chosen trauma. People then choose where they would belong. They can choose according to rhetoric of leaders, actions, etc. But this situation is not good. What it shows is that Palestine is not united. Not only Palestine has to settle up the conflict with Israel, but also Palestine has to settle its domestic policy.

The same also goes for Israel. In their domestic policy, there is no automatic coherent consensus among the elite players or carrier groups, therefore it is very hard in a situation like this to think about international order when there is no order inside the state. The possibility of peace between those two states will theoretically come into fruition only when the fractions on the domestic scene will be able to have peace between themselves at first.

There are two types of fractions in both states. First is the fraction which is made up by the carrier groups which are trying to negotiate conditions for peace among themselves and across the negotiating table. The second type are the fractions made up by the spoilers. As I mentioned earlier, carrier groups use symbolic ways to get their aims. They are trying to maintain the situation and find solutions somehow advantageous for them. On the other side, the spoilers are “the leaders or parties who believe that peace emerging from negotiations threatens their power, worldview, interests, and use violence to undermine attempts to achieve it” (Stedman, 1997, p.5). Spoilers main task is to block the peace-making process. The biggest problem with spoilers is that there are many of them on both sides, the Palestinian as well as on the Israeli’s side. The progress in the peace-making process is then much harder to achieve, because those spoilers are fighting among each other for the biggest influence on the domestic level, plus they are involved in the fight on the international level too. In Palestine there is the Palestine Liberal Organization (PLO), which is has government functions and is made up by Fatah or Hamas by public election. Having been considered a spoiler itself historically, PLO is still viewed suspiciously by many from the outside. In the elections in 2006, Hamas won two thirds of the seats in the parliament and took over the governance of Gaza for the first time. It was a problem because Hamas is considered to be a total spoiler. Total spoilers “pursue a total power and exclusive recognition of authority and their goals are not subject to change” (Stedman, 1997, p. 10). Hamas is not able to agree with Fatah, having even resorted to

armed clashes after the elections, and therefore there are frictions inside Palestine. Both parties notion of peace with Israel is different and it would not be possible until they come along. But firstly, Hamas and Fatah would have to want to ease the relationship between themselves and then they can save the one with Israel.

What may help the spoilers to calm down and to find out that the peace-making process on domestic and also on international level would be a win-win situation for everyone is actually the role of the third side. The function of the third side is to prevent even more destructive conflict from emerging, and also try to resolve the conflict and contain anything that would mean escalating the conflict. "Conflict is never two-sided. Every conflict is actually three-sided. No dispute takes place in vacuum. There are always others around" (Ury, 2001, p.42). By this Ury meant that even Israeli-Palestinian conflict has never ever been only two sided. The third side has always been there and it has always taken action in order to preserve peace. There are two kinds of the third side actors. The first one is a third side on the domestic level, for example the community grassroot activists, social workers, journalists,.... It is the one I have already mentioned in the 3rd chapter. The community that organises the dialogues between people, the community that prepares new textbooks for kids and so on. The community firstly served as a bridge-builder, healer, teacher, provider between the two sides. The second kind of the third side actors is the international community. Its main task is to help as a mediator, referee or a peace-keeper. In the case of Israeli-Palestinian conflict, we may say that the third side on the international level was launched many times since 1930's but recently was the most important in the 2003 initiation of the Road Map. International Community involved was called the Quartet, and was composed of the EU, the USA, Russia and the UN and their function was to facilitate application of the plan's stages, monitor developments and act as intermediary. They had sometimes very difficult times, but they achieved to remove Arafat from the Head of Palestinian Authority, which was very important for further negotiations with Israel. Arafat resigned and Mahmoud Abbas was elected as the Head of Palestinian Authority in 2003. The positive aspect was that Abbas and the Prime Minister of the State of Israel, Ariel Sharon, and later on Benjamin Netanyahu

met much more often than with Arafat. The negative aspect was that the international 3rd side was not able to calm the disputes among the spoilers in the particular states.

If the power that is dispersed between many spoilers was joined into a whole unit by larger consensus, the negotiations between Israel and Palestine would be easier to conduct, because there would be fewer tensions among them. The assistance of the third side is crucial to this long-lasting conflict. But the role of the third side and the peace-making negotiations will come after the victim's process of healing is done. In the Botcharova's and Hartling's theoretical models, we saw how important it is to forgive the perpetrator and to actually rehumanize him. It is the only way how a chance for peace may occur on a local level. The necessary variable for resolving this conflict from continuation is a mutual recognition of each others' trauma and acknowledgment of the wrongdoings conducted against the other in the past. This is a long process and it should start on local level, with the help of local third side. They would do it in the form of dialogues, projects, joint education of people on both sides. Then it could lead to changes on an official level, where the power of spoilers, which don't want peace because they are satisfied with the current state of affairs, will be limited. Then the international community playing the role of the third side may come into practice and mediate the peace process between enemies whose new will is to be able to live side by side.

Israel and Palestine have still a long way to peace in front of themselves. Right now their relations resemble an active volcano that is frequently filled with uncertainty, fear and revenge which can (and does) erupt at any minor change in circumstances. It looks like it never quiets down because after each eruption, the cycle of victimhood and revenge continues to fill it with negative and explosive material.

For the volcano to go extinct, we have to look not only to the conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians, but also within each of the two sides. While there are many spoilers in the region, there are large communities that wish for a peaceful resolution as well. The role of the international community is to support these voices and narratives and help them rise to the status of master narratives that will gradually marginalize the exclusive and antagonistic stance taken by the spoilers.

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ZHRNUTIE

Konflikt medzi Izraelom a Palestínou sa začal pred 64 rokmi a aj dnes to vyzerá tak, že do okamihu podpisovania mierových zmlúv sa ručičky hodín ešte mnohokrát pretočia.

Túto tému som si vybrala preto, lebo ma už dlhšiu dobu fascinovala. Aj napriek tomu, že televízne noviny sú každodenne plné správ z tohto regiónu, chcela som zistiť o tejto téme viac. To je dôvod, prečo sa téma práce sústreďuje hlavne na otázky, ktoré nie sú až tak veľa diskutované, ale pritom sú kľúčové k vyriešeniu tohto konfliktu. Dalo by sa povedať, že táto práca spája do jedného celku viaceré disciplíny. Veľmi dôležitým je tu pohľad psychológie a antropológie pri diskutovaní o identite, etnicite, kultúrnej traume, kolektívnej pamäti či historických výkladoch. Z pohľadu teórie konfliktov je dôležité uvedomenie, že práve kvôli tomu, že tento konflikt je konflikt identít, nové mierové riešenia musia byť dané do praxe. Z pohľadu medzinárodných vzťahov sa tento konflikt nedá riešiť bez pomoci medzinárodnej komunity a bez toho, aké dôsledky majú okolité štáty na Izrael a Palestínu. V neposlednom rade z pohľadu sociológie sa táto práca venuje tomu, akú silu majú záujmové skupiny alebo elity na zmierovací procese.

Práve preto, že tento konflikt nepatrí medzi bežné vojenské konflikty, jeho riešenie musí byť iné. Treba sa naň pozerat' hlbavejšie a delikátnejšie, lebo je o boji dvoch znepriatelených identít, ktoré nevedia nájsť k sebe cestu. Otázka identít je veľmi citlivá a krehká záležitosť. Preto sa občas stáva, že čo i len malé nepochopenie môže mať katastrofálne následky. Emócie tu hrajú zásadnú rolu. Pocit poníženia, strachu, hnevu, ľútosť, či nádeje sú hnacím motorom tohto konfliktu. Tieto pocity ľudia buď sami zažili, alebo sú im odovzdávané v podobe historických výkladov, čo tvorí veľkú časť identít. Čo túto situáciu komplikuje najviac je fakt, že ich identity sú úplne antagonistické. Čo je pre jednu stranu víťazstvo, je pre druhú stranu katastrofa!

Tým, že každá udalosť v tomto konflikte je buď prehra alebo víťazstvo, ľudia túžia len potom, aby druhej strane vrátili toľko, koľko im bolo ublížené. Preto v druhej kapitole analyzujem dva teoretické modely toho, ako tento pocit odplaty zmierniť, ba čo viac, akým spôsobom ho prekonať. V zásade ide o to, že odplata nie je to

podstatné, čo týmto ľuďom pomôže vyriešiť problém. To, čo im to vyrieši, je odhodlanie pochopiť konanie svojho nepriateľa a snaha o odpustenie sebe ale aj iným.

Po vysvetlení teoretických modelov sa práca venuje tomu, či sa vlastne niečo také deje aj v praxi. Tretia kapitola je o snahách o zmenu na lokálnej úrovni. Našťastie v Izraeli aj v Palestíne existuje mnoho projektov, ktoré sa snažia uzmierniť ľudí na lokálnej úrovni. Projekty sú organizované buď medzinárodnými tímami alebo ľuďmi čo tam žijú. Ide o to, aby sa ľudia na jednej aj na druhej strane pokúsili medzi sebou aspoň rozprávať, zdieľať svoje obavy a nádeje a v neposlednom rade možno aj pochopiť, že ten rozdiel medzi nimi vôbec nie je taký markantný ako si mysleli. No niekedy sa však stane, že aj napriek sto percentnej nasadenosti tímu, sa projekt nepodarí zorganizovať a to preto, lebo elity si to neželajú. Možno sa obávajú novej mierovej situácie, možno nechcú prísť o svoju silu a tým pádom z ich prejavov, činov či gést obyčajní ľudia pochopia, že ten a ten projekt je tu nevítaný. Všetko by bolo dobré, keby tieto elity nemali až takú veľkú symbolickú moc medzi občanmi jedného alebo druhého štátu.

Ďalšia kapitola sa venuje tomu, čo by malo byť spravené na oficiálnej úrovni, ak by Izrael aj Palestína chceli byť spriatelенými štátmi. Jedinou cestou pre tento stav je uvedomenie si Izraelčanov aj Palestínčanov, že tento stav je pre oboch nevyhovujúci a že mier by priniesol obom krajinám oveľa viac profitov. Samozrejme, že toto nie je možné zo dňa na deň, ale je potrebný dlhší čas na zmenu myslenia obyčajných ľudí, súkromného sektora, ale hlavne elít, ktoré riadia štát. Toto je kľúč k tomu, prečo sa už dlhšiu dobu nič v otázke zmierovacieho procesu neurobilo. Na oboch stranách sú určité záujmové skupiny elít, ktoré si úspešne nárokuje na kontrolu štátu. Tým pádom majú veľa moci a nechcú sa o ňu deliť (čo by v prípade zmierovacieho procesu museli urobiť). Preto je dôležité dať tieto skupiny elít, ktoré nechcú mier do úzadia. Je to samozrejme tvrdý oriešok, ale pomocou aj lokálnych projektov, aj s pomocou medzinárodnej komunity sa to môže podariť. Konflikt medzi Izraelom a Palestínou je veľmi ťažký a bez pomoci tretej strany, či už to bude komunita zložená z obyvateľov postihnutých štátov alebo medzinárodnej komunity sa nikdy nepodarí prísť do vytúženého konca- mierového stavu medzi oboma krajinami.