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Transitioning to Peace

Promoting Global Social Justice and
Non-violence

 Springer

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Editors

Transitioning to Peace

Promoting Global Social Justice
and Non-violence

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Chapter 1

Transitioning to Peace: Contributions of Peace Psychology Around the World



Wilson López López and Laura K. Taylor

1.1 Introduction

Societies that have experienced protracted conflict produce social ecologies that reinforce and sustain violence (Bar-Tal & Halperin, 2009). Such settings are shaped by the psychosocial infrastructure of violence. This multidimensional framework consists of diverse actors, institutions, practices, and norms around violence, as well as the systems of politics, economics, justice, security, the environment, communication, and culture. In such settings, the daily life of people, groups, and the wider society are compromised by the history of violence.

To consider a transition to peace implies going through long and difficult processes that may seem impossible to overcome (Lederach, 1996, 2005). It is common to encounter fatalism and hopelessness facing these changes, as well as the active resistance from those who benefit from violence. Political and economic actors that have profited from the violence will use their resources to support, justify, and legitimate the armed conflict. Thus, transitions are marked, not only by those who are moving them forward but also by those who are actively trying to have them fail.

In addition to formal processes on the path to peace, such as truth commissions or other transitional justice mechanisms, communities develop their own practices. National, government-led processes have been shown to have long-term societal benefits, such as increased democracy and lower levels of armed conflict (Taylor & Dukalskis, 2012). However, community-led practices contribute to the

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sustainability and embeddedness of peace in such transitions (Taylor et al., 2016). Rooted in daily experiences, these efforts are bespoke and targeted to the specific needs of that society (Taylor, 2016). Together, both types of processes can shift the focus from the past conflict toward future-proofing peace.

Across four sections, this volume weaves together peace processes and practices spanning over 20 countries. Section 1.1 covers diverse countries that have implemented transitional justice mechanisms, such as truth commissions, amnesties, and collective memory, in the construction of a culture of peace. Section 1.2 examines how social movements and media discourses have contributed to the transition to peace. Section 1.3 explores the role of community processes and dynamics in the contribution to sustainable peace amid conflict. Finally, Section 1.4 focuses on the evidence for educational initiatives and those focused on children and young people, with the aim of building long-term peace.

1.2 Transitional Justice Processes in Path Toward Peace

Four chapters cover how transitional justice mechanisms have been applied in different conflict-affected societies.

In Chap. 2, focusing on the case of Chile, Lira takes a critical perspective toward processes that, in the name of peace, require both the victims and the wider society to forget and suppress the horror of political crimes committed by powerful actors. She notes how the field of transitional justice has gradually incorporated impunity and forgetting as tools. These tools, she explains, interrupt processes of memory and truth, which are essential to rebuild and repair a society committed to not repeating the past. Lira argues that peace should never be conditioned on partial impunity. The responsible parties must assume the consequences of their actions in order for a society to shift toward peace. Even with that accountability, she concludes with the recognition that all processes of reparation will be imperfect in the wake of widespread terror.

In Chap. 3, Mathías, Páez, Espinoza, and Rime present critical evidence about the impact of over 60 official truth commissions around the world since 1970. They outline the different areas of emphasis of such bodies, ranging from those that link forgetting with impunity to those which focus on bringing the truth to light. They argue, however, that there is an overall lack of justice rooted in the recognition of past wrongs and of perpetrators seeking forgiveness or offering reparation. These limitations are even more pronounced when armed actors do not fully engage, or even threaten the viability, of a truth commission. Once the commission is established, the testimony offered – from victims, or perpetrators, or both – often has negative implications for individual psychological wellbeing; yet, the ritual of truth seeking has a wider, constructive impact on society. Balancing these competing interests is a key challenge for such bodies. Although the scope of a particular commission may vary, the expectations of society may be broader than the official mandate. Increasingly, there is an expectation that truth commissions also restore

confidence in institutions and foster a commitment to not repeating the past or a norm of non-violence. The chapter concludes summarizing these competing tensions around the expectations, and long-term impact, of truth commissions.

Continuing this theme, in Chap. 4, Neto, Kpanake, Pineda Marín, and Mullet synthesize experiences across a number of countries: Angola, Cambodia, Chile, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, and Timor-Leste. The analysis focuses on the role of amnesties for the political authors and orchestrators of violence. This work touches on the significance and viability of truth commission and related processes of intergroup forgiveness. The authors tease apart how communities understand the political dimension of amnesty and under which conditions it is acceptable, such as the balance of victims' and perpetrators' testimonies. They also find a link from community efficacy to support for intergroup forgiveness, which necessitates processes that are transparent, democratic, and public, rather than reached through closed-door negotiations. Their work has implications for who leads such processes: political leaders, rather than factional dissidents. Their findings have relevance for politicians, social leaders, and communities who are engaged in designing and implementing transitional justice processes.

In Chap. 5, Mullet, López López, and Pineda Marín present evidence on the role of forgiveness and reconciliation in the psychological and social reconstruction. Their analysis highlights the distinct, yet complementary, aspects of such processes. They argue a true commitment to the transition to peace from all actors, the types of offenses included in the mandate, and the conditions around reparation and ensuring that the violence is not repeated are all interlocking factors in the success of reconciliation processes.

Bobowik, Arnoso, Rugar, and Arnoso present new data on the role of collective memory and narrative construction in the case of the Basque Country in Chap. 6. How these concepts get woven into transitions is an understudied area of research, yet, particularly relevant in settings of protracted conflict. The authors outline how memories are modified given the past and traditional conceptualizations of ingroup/outgroup. In the Basque Country, one of the actors was not fully recognized, which created additional concerns of spaces of dialogue among different types of victims. Processes of recognition of suffering, particularly of the "other," complicates the construction of a common narrative of violence. Their research indicates how difficult it is to break the spiral of violence-victimization-legitimation-blame. Particularly in cases of asymmetrical narratives, collective memories are important factors to lay the groundwork for reconciliation.

1.3 Social Movements and Collective Action Promoting Constructive Transitions

These chapters weave together data from different cases to understand the power, and processes, of how individuals, communities, and broader networks can launch, accelerate, and shape the transition to peace.

In Chap. 7, Sirlopu, Çakal, Unver, Salas, and Eller test the intergroup contact hypothesis and common identity model in relation to collective action intentions by majority group members in Chile and Mexico. Their analyses focus on efforts to support policies that will benefit indigenous communities, a stigmatized group in each setting. Their findings have implications for solidarity, as well as intergroup harmony in response to discrimination and acts of violence, particularly mechanisms that foster majority group action.

Tracing the long-term flow of social movements, Zúñiga, Louis, Asún, and Ascencio outline how the non-violent transition from the dictatorship in Chile facilitated a new wave of democratic reform in 2020. Chapter 8 is a powerful case study that analyzes the macro- and meso-level processes related to privatization, inequality, and radicalization. They analyze the different decision points among social movements, including toward violent actions that may fall outside those typically accepted in democracy and peace. Their findings highlight the state's responsibility to create spaces for social movements and protests. If these can be incorporated into democratic processes, they argue, it increases peaceful expression. Repression, however, cultivates more extreme responses, potentially locking in socioeconomic and political patterns of violence.

Chapter 9 presents rich qualitative data and deep reflection among peaceful protestors in Sudan in 2019. Elgizouli, Hussain, and Moss argue that collective action in this movement should be framed as community coping. This lens allows for analytical insights that explain the individual, familial, and community sacrifices made by the protestors. Using WhatsApp as a secure form of communication, messaging during the demonstrations and interviews afterward yielded a rich dialogue. The themes that emerged highlighted the shared stress, along with the ways that communities mobilized a collective response, particularly from the outside in. The authors underscore that this directionality is a shift from the traditional flow from the capital to the outskirts. This shift in during that wave of demonstrations successfully created a cohesive identity focused on plurality, peace, justice, and a lack of corruption. Social networks of youth and women, in particular, became the heart of the revolution despite the violence directed at the social leaders. Echoing the implications from the previous chapter, this case denotes how synergistic, collective action can persist in the face of a repressive regime and, ultimately, reach its goals.

To close this section, a dynamic consideration of the interactions between and among official discourses in Colombia is presented by Barreto. Chapter 10 begins with the discourse of former president Juan Manuel Santos, who led the peace process that officially ended 50 years of armed conflict with the FARC, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, and the current president, Ivan Duque, who ran in

opposition to the peace process. Santos' discourse used emotional and cognitive terms to talk about forgiveness and reconciliation, while Duque instead uses a discourse of legitimating violence against enemies and competitive victimhood. Duque goes further, delegitimizing state institutions such as the truth commission or Special Jurisdiction of Peace. The chapter concludes noting the need to monitor the discursive forms which can shape identity construction and collective action on the path to peace.

1.4 Community Efforts for Peace

Complementing the focus on national transitional justice efforts and contributions of widespread social movements, this section highlights the ways that communities affected by violence initiate their own peaceful resistance.

In Chap. 11, Mukashema presents how local associations support reconciliation processes in Rwanda. Her review unpacks the origins and motivations of two associations, one aiming to create spaces of between victims and perpetrators and one aiming to promote forgiveness and reconciliation. The chapter analyzes qualitative data from these encounters and spaces to understand the implications for mental health and intergroup relations. Key outcomes across the two groups included reconciliation, healing of psychological wounds, and economic sustainability. The chapter concludes with a call for greater empirical study of community-led processes in the transition to peace.

In Chap. 12, Silva, Christie, Pardo Argález, and López López share their experience of psychosocial accompaniment as an exercise of non-violent, collective resistance in a neighborhood outside of Bogotá. The inhabitants, displaced in the 1990s, live in informal settlements that are vulnerable to violent actors, putting them at risk to revictimization. Confronting this threat, the community organized to protect itself, seeking support from other non-governmental organizations, religious groups, and governmental agencies. University professors accompanied this process, learning from the community's effort and knowledge. Tackling social injustice, the community organized shared cafeterias, clothes banks, and medical and psychological services among other ways to support the inhabitants. The chapter also documents difficult moments, marked by fear and anxiety, in the face of eviction. Yet, the state confirmed the community's right to live there, despite the continued threats. The chapter concludes with a reflection on the role of university professors and students working alongside those in vulnerable community contexts to confront injustice.

Tovar and Pardo recount their experience of psychosocial accompaniment in the context of the armed conflict in Colombia in Chap. 13. Following a brief description of the social history, they describe three stories of peaceful resistance during the protract conflict. In the first example, the community organized to preserve collective memory after a massacre of 30 people; in the second example, the search for justice and restitution in terms of access to land; and in the final, the ways in which a community organized to protect itself from forced displacement and proclaim

itself as a neutral territory. This chapter details the rich histories and creative strategies that communities in Colombia have taken to improve coexistence and forge national and international solidarity, along the path of peacebuilding.

1.5 Peace Education and Future-Proofing Peace Transitions

The final section of the book focuses on the future. Our attention is turned to children and young people, and in particular the role that education can play (McKeown & Taylor, 2018), in helping societies to recover from conflict and progress toward peace (McKeown & Taylor, 2017; Taylor & McKeown, 2017).

In Chap. 14, Velez, Bellino, and Moeschberger critique how youth have been viewed in peace processes. Although there is recognition of youth peacebuilding, they note the lack of historical consideration of the economic and political barriers to such action. Moreover, they call for structural transformations of educational systems, rather than one-off programs or interventions. Their analysis also calls attention to broader conditions of inequality and poverty that challenge daily acts of youth peacebuilding. One of the central contributions of this chapter is not only to critique decontextualized support for youth in the transition to peace but also to highlight the multiple ways that young people are themselves transforming conflict. They conclude with a call for more participatory and longitudinal methods that can capture the diversity of youth's contributions to peace.

In Chap. 15, Corredor, Castro, and Jiménez-Rozo discuss how historical memory can be incorporated into curriculum and pedagogy, challenging traditional approaches to teacher training. They propose an interactive methodology, which engages with historical documents, to bring narratives and emotions to life. They argue this approach fosters deeper empathy with victims and survivors. The authors note the aim is not to recreate traumatic experiences, but rather, through a pedagogical framework, offer ways to consider the complexity and multidimensionality of a situation. They conclude the chapter with a suggestion of how this type of educational approach can increase engagement with the past, when looking toward a future of peace.

Bähr, Dautel, Maluku, Razpurker-Apfeld, Shamo-Nir, Tomašić Humer, Tomovska Misoška, and Taylor present findings from their cross-cultural research in the *Helping Kids!* Lab in Chap. 16. This chapter presents data from children in majority and minority communities in Croatia, Kosovo, Israel, Northern Ireland, and the Republic of North Macedonia. The authors note that young people in these contexts may be able to unfreeze conflict dynamics and take steps toward peace. Beyond prejudice reduction, the chapter focuses on prosocial behaviors across group lines. Rooted in the developmental peacebuilding model (Taylor, 2020), the rates of outgroup giving in a simple, child-friendly task are presented. Their findings tease apart universal and unique patterns in the antecedents of children's peacebuilding. Echoing the implications from Chap. 14, they also conclude with a call for longitudinal research conducted across multiple contexts.

The volume closes with a focus on early childhood. In Chap. 17, Dunne, Brennan-Wilson, Craig, Miller, Connolly, Leckman, Aber, Yoshikawa, Fitzpatrick, Pham, Vinck, and Walmsley share a global project on early childhood development interventions and social cohesion. LINKS, an initiative of the Global Health Research Group on Early Childhood Development for Peacebuilding, is partnering with local researchers, non-governmental organizations, national governments, and international agencies in Colombia, Kyrgyzstan, Mali, Palestine, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam. Their chapter introduces their theory of change and describes the impact of their ongoing work in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Mali, and Vietnam. These case studies demonstrate the role of a media initiative to foster social cohesion across gender and ethnic lines in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, carers clubs in Vietnam that increase healthy development and decrease physical punishment, and how the Mama Yeleen program in Mali offers capacity building and training to pregnant women and first-time mothers. From these diverse contexts and experience, the chapter concludes by explaining how an investment in early childhood has not only immediate benefits for children and families but also long-term implications for peacebuilding and deepening social cohesion.

1.6 Implications of This Edited Volume

These chapters weave together global experiences of promoting peace in transitional societies. Together, the contributions call attention to efforts to heal after conflict, rebuild society, and create structures that prevent future violence. Recognizing the complexity of peace (López López, 2020; López López et al., 2021), the authors in this volume demonstrate the interdisciplinary contributions of peace psychology, including voices and perspectives from education, law, political science, and communication. The multilevel nature of analyses across chapters further underscores the holistic approach needed to understand peacebuilding across the social ecology (Taylor, 2020; Taylor et al., 2018; Townsend et al., 2020). The mixed methods (Bretherton & Law, 2015), including participatory action research, qualitative interviews, WhatsApp messaging, experimental and intervention work, and longitudinal cross-national data, demonstrate the innovative ways that academics, practitioners, and the communities themselves are working together in the transition to peace. Finally, prioritizing voices, diverse experiences, and lived knowledge from the communities caught in cycles of conflict unites the chapters of this volume.

The global perspective spans 5 continents with authors from over 30 countries. This approach enables the reader to see both universal elements and context-specific ones. Some chapters are explicitly cross-cultural, comparing the antecedents of children's peacebuilding (Chap. 16) and early childhood interventions (Chap. 17), to how transitional justice processes such as truth commissions (Chap. 3) and amnesties (Chap. 4) have unfolded over time. Reading across the volume, for example, one also can trace how the history of Chilean transitional justice processes (Chap. 1), social movements and current constitutional reform (Chap. 8), is linked

with treatment of minority indigenous groups (Chap. 7). At the same time, state responses to communities' peacebuilding in Colombia (Chap. 10) and Rwanda (Chap. 10), and peaceful social movements in Sudan (Chap. 9) and Chile (Chap. 8), also highlight the dynamic differences across settings. We hope you enjoy reading all of these chapters as much as we have.

Peace, as a process, is never finalized. We offer this volume as an example of the multifaceted and creative ways that individuals, communities, and states around the world are sustaining non-violent transitions on the long and difficult road to peace.

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Part I
Transitional Justice Processes in Path
Toward Peace

Chapter 2

Recognition, Reparation, Justice, and Memory: Chile 1990–2020



Elizabeth Lira

2.1 Introduction

The repressive strategies implemented in Chile by the military junta immediately after the coup on September 11, 1973, prioritized mass detention, the application of brutal and savage torture, and the execution of prominent social and political leaders. Dozens of bodies were found in rivers, streets, or garbage dumps. Thousands of people were dismissed from their jobs in companies, schools, universities, and public offices. Many peasants were expelled from the countryside, at first those who had been social or union leaders, but over time thousands lost their right to land allocation and were purged from the agrarian reform process. Thousands of Chileans and foreigners quickly asked for asylum in foreign embassies to protect their lives.

In conjunction with some Christian churches, the Cardinal of the Catholic Church, Raúl Silva Henríquez, founded the National Committee for Assistance to Refugees to protect the thousands of exiles living in Chile (predominantly Latin Americans), enabling them to leave for host countries between 1973 and 1975 (Lira & Loveman, 2005). In October 1973, supported by the World Council of Churches and the Lutheran Church in Chile, church leaders also founded the Committee for Peace in Chile (Comité de Cooperación para la Paz). However, by the end of 1975, this committee was disbanded due to pressure from the civil-military dictatorship. Following this, the Social Aid Foundation for Christian Churches [FASIC; Fundación de Ayuda Social de las Iglesias Cristianas] was founded, and Cardinal Silva Henríquez founded the Vicariate of Solidarity (Brown, 1987; Lowden, 1996). These agencies provided legal services to the persecuted, seeking to defend their rights in court and protect their lives. They also provided persecuted individuals

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with economic support, in addition to medical and psychological care (Frühling, 1986; Garcés & Nicholls, 2005; Weinstein et al., 1987).

Individuals and families who sought assistance received support from professionals associated with these agencies, mainly lawyers and social workers, who assisted them with meeting their basic needs, further providing medical attention and psychological support that enabled people to survive the difficult circumstances affecting their lives and their families. These professionals documented their work, constructing archives that were fundamental for judicial denunciations under dictatorship, the future recognition of victims by the State, and the implementation of reparation policies during the political transition (Bernasconi et al., 2018).

Efforts by Chilean and transnational human rights and solidarity organizations had limited success in the early years of the dictatorship, with thousands of habeas corpus writs (Recursos de Amparo) rejected by the courts. The regime officially denied the practice of torture and the extrajudicial executions known to be carried out during the first months of the military coup. The regime further denied the disappearance of detainees despite public recognition of thousands of cases. Despite these denials, state terrorism (and dread of state terrorism) resulted in the subjugation and fear of the majority, widespread mistrust, stigmatization, and isolation of the victims.

2.2 Political Reconciliation Dilemmas: Impunity or Truth, Justice, and Victims' Recognition

The political transitions from military dictatorships and civil wars to elected democratic governments observed in Latin America share a common goal, namely, the aspiration to overcome conflict and achieve a political reconciliation, leaving behind political violence and hatred.

During the Cold War, in many countries, activists and social change ideologues (socialists, communists, Christians linked to liberation theology, etc.) were branded as internal enemies and faced outlaw, torture, and persecution. The category of *enemy* included women, men, trade unions, political leaders, indigenous people, priests, and teachers from small towns (McCoy, 2006). In Chile, members of the parties that formed the Unidad Popular, Salvador Allende's government coalition, were declared enemies of the country and outlawed in 1973 (Decree-Law 77).

The fight against "enemies," "extremists," and "terrorists" had been a recurrent argument of the dictatorship to justify systematic torture (National Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture, 2004). However, torture was not a novelty introduced by the military government. In Chile (and Latin America), torture has been an instrument used against political adversaries and "enemies" of incumbent governments since colonial times. The Inquisition, from the end of the fifteenth century until its dissolution in the early nineteenth century, applied torture to those arrested for practicing religions other than Catholic or practicing witchcraft. It

sought to eliminate freedom of conscience in a Christian culture by subjugation, exclusion, or extermination of those who dared to clandestinely hold other beliefs. If, under torture, a person renounced heretical religious practices, they were condemned to “reconciliation,” according to the laws of the Indies (Eymeric, 2006; Gajardo, 1946), wherein reconciliation implied a reintegration into the Catholic community under the stigmatized condition of being a renegade. However, while torture could lead to abjuration (and “reconciliation”), it could also lead to a condemnation to the galleys or being burnt at the stake (Lira & Loveman, 2013).

Reconciliation in the Holy Scriptures, as in contemporary Judeo-Christian tradition, has clear requisites, namely, the importance of acknowledging the origin of the conflict, bearing responsibility for the actions and their consequences, and emphasizing the psychological and moral need to ask for forgiveness not only of the offended person but also of God and the community. Forgiveness from God allows reintegration in the community as a gesture that affirms reconciliation (Lira & Loveman, 2012). The ritualization of forgiveness and reconciliation has become implicit in psychological and cultural models that form part of individual customs in addition to religious and political practices.

After armed conflicts and extreme political repression under dictatorships, the denial of the authorities of any responsibility for the traumatic loss of family members, children, parents, siblings, and colleagues represents a symbolic and practical obstacle to reconciliation. If the victimizers deny or continue to justify the repression, including torture, the basic requirements of acknowledging the wrongdoing and asking forgiveness are absent. For many victims, the traumatic memory of torture remains an unforgettable experience of injustice, humiliation, and abuse. The families of victims of forced disappearances live in merciless pain. For decades, the absence (and loss) of a loved one due to political repression has made it impossible for many relatives to get closure and complete the mourning process. Denial by former dictatorship officials of any responsibility for disappearances reinforces the sense of emptiness and resentment felt by the relatives. The psychological closure of this bereavement depends on the will and decision of the relative, accepting the death of their loved one, which has never been confirmed by the authorities. The moral and political differences over these events of the “past” (that have not passed and are part of the present) constitute enduring and complex obstacles to political reconciliation.

In almost all Latin American countries, political transitions began with amnesty laws to re-establish coexistence with impunity for “all,” declaring that these laws were intended to achieve national reconciliation as a result of the suppression of legal memory (and all forms of useful memory) of past events. Almost everywhere, these “laws of oblivion” have been contested, with varying degrees of success by victims, family members, and political forces that opposed the dictatorships (Loveman & Lira, 2000a, b; Jeffery, 2014).

Political amnesties as instruments for ending violent political conflicts have a long history. Likewise, there have been debates over their legitimacy, scope (and exclusions), practical implications, and reinterpretation since the often-cited Athenian amnesty of 403: “to prevent further infighting, an oath of reconciliation

was sworn, promising to refrain from vengeful action provoked by the memory of past wrongdoing (*mê mnêsikakein*). This solemn pledge became the foundation on which the democracy was reconstructed” (Joyce 2008, p.507). In this case, “reconciliation” even took into account restitution or reparation for confiscated properties and treatment of political exiles (Carawan, 2006).

A more “modern” example of this tradition in Western Europe can be seen in the Nantes edict of 1598 that was issued to end religious wars in France. This edict began by declaring that the memory of everything that had happened between the parties since the beginning of March 1585 “up to our accession to the crown, and during the other preceding troubles and on account of them, shall remain extinct and dormant as though they had never happened” (National Huguenot Society, 1998, p.2).

As can be seen from these examples, historical amnesties sought to prevent reigniting conflict. Suppressing political memory of the violent events of the past was in no way intended to make them psychologically forgotten. In the Western European tradition of amnesties, before World War II and the subsequent development of international rights regimes, “amnesty” entailed *legal* “extinction” of crimes of political violence. However, leaving crimes unpunished threatens the peace achieved.

Across contexts, political reconciliation has been described as a process built through political accords, legislation, and administrative measures seeking to leave behind the conflict-ridden past. However, in recent decades, political forces and changing international human rights conventions have demanded identification, recognition, and reparation for the victims, implementing psycho-social, ethical, and symbolic initiatives that redefine the historical foundations of social peace, with the emphasis deriving from the particular characteristics of the conflict in each country. In Latin America, efforts at political reconciliation can be described as idiosyncratic processes whose particularities express the historical traditions and political culture of each country, framed by the particular conditions of the replacement of military regimes by elected governments. These processes usually last many years, often much longer than the preceding conflict.

Political amnesties have been applied across Latin America since the independence movements of the early nineteenth century. In the name of common good and reconciliation in Chile, the military junta promulgated an amnesty decree-law in 1978. Despite criticism of this decree-law, most of the criminal charges against military, police, and civilian agents of the dictatorship for forced disappearances, torture, and murder that were committed before it was instated were dropped by the courts. However, demands for derogation or reinterpretation of the amnesty decree have continued in Chile from 1998 to present day.

In more recent Latin American cases, impunity as a foundation of social peace no longer prevails as an acceptable legal and political formula. In these cases, victims have demanded truth and justice, opposing pressure for impunity-based reconciliation in the name of social peace. Via testimonies of their lived experiences, these individuals stand up against processes that seek to erase atrocities and prevent the punishment of those responsible in criminal courts. Currently, the available

records documenting violations and the ongoing demand for prosecution of those who have committed human rights violations undermine decrees issued by the military regimes seeking to erase all memory of their crimes. Thirty to 40 years later, criminal prosecutions in Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay have led to hundreds of convictions for human rights violations in the 1970s and 1980s (Lessa, 2019; Lira & Loveman, 2020; Stern & Winn, 2014).

In 1997, the United Nations adopted principles proposed by jurist Louis Joinet to ensure peaceful coexistence and recognition of victims' rights following massive human rights violations committed (The Administration of Justice and the Human Rights of Detainees, 1997). Joinet's proposal linked social peace with the fight against impunity, presenting a vision that diverged from Chile's historical practices of amnesties and broad impunity. This new framework redefined the place of the victims in the political reconciliation process and prompted new questions. What is the role of justice? How much impunity must be accepted in the name of social peace? What does reparation consist of? What is the commitment (and institutional-ity) required to avoid repetition of political processes of violence and death? What is the "truth" about the past based on? The memory of the victims? The version presented by political actors such as the authorities of the transition government, the representatives of political parties, and the dictatorship's past authorities? The documents in the archives of human rights organizations? What are the foundations of social peace that will prevail?

The answers have depended not only on the characteristics and duration of the conflicts in each nation but also on the compromises and agreements of governance of the political forces that negotiated the transitions from dictatorship to democracy. In every case, demands emerged for recognition and reparations for the victims, establishing truth and justice, and somehow assuring, politically, that "never again" [*nunca más*] will human rights be violated. Some of these demands are a profound departure from historical political reconciliations based on legal, political, and social oblivion (*olvido*).

2.3 From Mental Health Rehabilitation Under Dictatorship to Post-Dictatorship Reparations Policy

In 1973, professional solidarity with victims and their families was implemented by lawyers, social workers, medical doctors, psychologists, etc., in human rights organizations. At the end of the dictatorship, psychological support, initiated as emergency responses and crisis intervention, was conceptualized and discussed as the basis of proposals for health rehabilitation as part of a policy of reparation for victims.

The mental health teams created by human rights organizations and specialized non-governmental organizations shared an understanding of the political and social dimensions associated with the consequences of psychological damage arising from

torture, forced disappearance, and extrajudicial executions. These experiences were described as specific traumas, with the mental health teams noting that, in many cases, they were cumulative in the lives of individuals and their families. These mental health teams reviewed the theoretical, ethical, and ideological bases of this work and were concerned with the constraints imposed by the traditional limits and scope of psychotherapy with victims of political repression.

The mental health teams developed psychological interventions aiming to address the repercussions of the traumatic impact of violence linked to political repression. These interventions sought to re-establish the relationship between the individual and reality, recovering their capacity to connect with people and things, to visualize work and their future, and to engage in self-awareness practices. These interventions further increased awareness of available resources and broadened individuals' awareness of the reality they had to live with (Lira & Weinstein, 1984). In 1984, Patricio Vela, a psychologist at the Catholic University in Santiago, described the team approach of FASIC as going "beyond the therapist-patient relationship [starting] from the premise that to overcome the damage suffered, the person must develop the ability to resume the course of [their] life. Therefore, the aim is to elaborate the suffering through a dialectical relationship between the overcoming and internal transformation of the suffering and the transforming potential of the subject of the conditions that originate [their] suffering. In other words, the aim is for the person to be able to resume [their] life project, being able to access the different spheres of social practice, committing [themselves] to society and assuming the responsibility of transforming it" (Vela cited in Orellana & Hutchinson, 1991, 176).

Due to its solidarity component, this work also had a deep ethical meaning for the mental health professionals who participated in it. Many of them assumed this task beyond its occupational or professional significance as a "commitment" to life and the human community being persecuted, despite the personal risks that could affect them. Provision of mental health services became a personal, professional, and political commitment of the therapists (Weinstein et al., 1987).

The mental health teams agreed on the need to denounce what the patients had suffered. They also recognized the need to establish a relationship of trust that could sustain and accompany the overwhelming and intolerable feelings, such as a deep sense of defenselessness, experienced by patients when remembering atrocities suffered. This relationship was described as a *bond of commitment* to the lives of the victims, based on ethical and political *non-neutrality* (Lira & Weinstein, 1984). This kind of therapeutic bond helps to re-establish the patient's capacity to trust others, further establishing a genuine relationship that facilitates the acceptance of losses, hate, sadness, fear, and desperation, but also love, gratitude, recognition, and hope, not only in the context of this therapeutic bond but in other relationships between human beings.

The victims came to realize that individual therapeutic intervention was not enough; they needed to know that their society, as a whole, acknowledged what had happened to them. Individual, social, and *political* reparations were complementary. This approach emphasized the importance of society acknowledging the victims

and highlighted the therapeutic value of public recognition of human rights violations and justice.

At the beginning of the political transition, President Aylwin created the Comisión Nacional de Verdad y Reconciliación (1991) [CNVR] to recognize and redress the victims of human rights abuses that had resulted in death or forced disappearance, due to the acts of state agents or political violence. The commission made recommendations on reparations, including the provision of healthcare services for victims and family members. As an initial symbolic act of reparation, President Aylwin apologized to the victims on behalf of the Chilean State for the human rights violations committed by the military dictatorship.

Psychologists and human rights workers concerned with victims collaborated with the CNVR by proposing recommendations for reparations and highlighting the need for establishing public policies on rehabilitation that included the provision of medical and psychological services. The Aylwin government created the Program of Reparation and Comprehensive Health Care for Victims of Human Rights Violations known as PRAIS [*Programa de Reparación y Atención Integral de Salud para las Víctimas de Violaciones a los Derechos Humanos* 1973–1990] which continues to offer both physical and mental healthcare to surviving victims and family members. The PRAIS initiated its activities in 1991 as a program of the Ministry of Health. In 2004, its benefits and services were incorporated into a new reparations law for victims of human rights violations (Law 19980, 2004). PRAIS recognized all the victims of human rights violations identified by the State as beneficiaries (Domínguez et al., 1994). The PRAIS program included several professionals from the mental health teams of the human rights organizations that operated during the dictatorship throughout the country, gathering their accumulated knowledge and experiences to build a health and mental health reparation program that exists to this day.

The National Congress approved a general law on reparation [Law 19123, 1992], establishing administrative and symbolic reparations for victims recognized by the State. The National Corporation for Reparation and Reconciliation was established by this law for implementing the reparation measures and was tasked with reviewing cases of persons who were not recognized as victims by the CNVR. The final report recognized, in total, 3197 victims. Among them, there were 1102 victims of forced disappearances and 2095 illegally executed persons (Corporación Nacional de Reparación y Reconciliación 1996).

The Aylwin government also created the National Office for Returning Exiles [Oficina Nacional de Retorno] (1990–1994). Its primary responsibility was to promote reintegration programs for exiled Chileans who returned to the country. It was estimated that 52,577 individuals returned to Chile, with approximately 18,000 families. This program received the support of foreign governments and international agencies (Lira & Loveman, 2005).

Politically motivated dismissal was another form of political persecution. Hundreds of thousands of people from urban and rural centers lost their jobs during the dictatorship. In 1993, Law 19234 created the Program of Recognition for the Politically Dismissed [Programa de Reconocimiento al Exonerado Político], currently “Oficina de Exonerados Políticos,” and established pension benefits to

improve retirement pensions for persons who lost their jobs for political reasons. Following this, Law 19582 (1998) and Law 19881 (2003) extended categories and deadlines for receiving qualification requests (Lira & Loveman, 2005). By 2010, 157,624 applications were approved.

In 1995, the government initiated the Program of Reparation for Peasants excluded by the military junta, for political reasons, from benefits of the Land Reform policies of the Frei (1964–1970) and Allende (1970–73) governments. The military junta's Decree-Law 208 (1973) barred peasant leaders and activists from receiving lands distributed by the land reform program. From 1994 to 2019, thousands of peasants were recognized as political exonerates according to the legal provisions in force. However, this recognition took decades because the hatred and resentment linked to the agrarian reform were a persistent obstacle to the recognition and reparation of the excluded peasants and rural workers (Loveman & Lira, 2020).

2.4 Victims of Torture: Recognition, Reparation, and the Judicial Fight Against Impunity

In 2003, the government of President Ricardo Lagos created the National Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture [Comisión Nacional sobre Prisión Política y Tortura] (CNPPT) for the recognition of the political prisoners and tortured victims. The CNPPT report confirmed 28,459 cases of torture and political imprisonment (Comisión Nacional sobre Prisión Política y Tortura, 2004).

Law 19992 (2004) established reparation pensions and grants of other benefits in favor of individuals who had been identified by the CNPPT as victims of detention and torture for political reasons. The law indicated that victims “shall be entitled to receive from the State the technical support and the necessary physical rehabilitation to overcome physical injuries that arise from political imprisonment or torture” if such physical harms are considered permanent and affect the educational, occupational, or social integration capacity of the beneficiary. The Law established the same administrative measures for all qualified victims without considering individual-specific damages and their consequences for providing specific reparations.

In 2009, the Chilean government created the Advisory Commission for the Qualification of Disappeared Detainees, Victims of Extrajudicial Executions, and Victims of Political Imprisonment and Torture between September 11, 1973, and March 10, 1990 (Law 20405, 2009). This commission confirmed 5 additional cases of forced disappearances, 25 extrajudicial executions, and 9795 additional cases of political imprisonment and torture (Comisión Presidencial Asesora, 2011).

Article 15 of Law 19992 (2004) classified the documents, testimony, and background information provided by the victims to the CNPPT for 50 years from 2004. The victims were not consulted on this provision of the law when they gave their

statements to the commission. After 2015, a number of victims initiated legal actions to declassify their testimonies, to “counteract the biological impunity implied by the 50-year embargo” by claiming personal ownership of the truth handed over to the commission in the search for justice (Bernasconi et al., 2019).

The testimonies of torture collected in the reports of the CNPPT made it possible to identify the horrific cruelty and brutality against female prisoners, especially those who were detained because of their leadership status. Sexual torture was a widespread practice. Nearly 3600 women testified that they had suffered some kind of sexual abuse, and many of them pointed out that their testimony was the first time that they acknowledged and related what they had endured (CNPPT, 2004).

Methods of torture have always attacked one’s body and identity through physical and psychological pain, seeking to make prisoners betray their social bonds, loyalties, and convictions. Torturers sought to make victims renounce their ideology, their religion, their beliefs, their traditions, and their companions. They wanted to nullify their resistance, threatening them with death and extreme suffering. Survivors have experienced cumulative losses due to their detention, affecting their emotional integrity. Survivors suffered assaults on their bodies, sexual harassment and rape, and invasion of their privacy and sleep. Further, they were exposed to hunger and extreme conditions of heat or cold and forced to hear or to observe the torture and abuse of other prisoners, mainly relatives and friends. After near-death experiences and enduring the systematic devastation of their dignity and human condition, most of the survivors were traumatized.

Torture victims have demanded recognition and reparation. Some of them sought truth and justice, fighting against the impunity of the victimizers before tribunals. The case of Haydee Oberreuter illustrates these efforts. She was a university student leader and was arrested at age 19; according to the laws in force, she was a minor. Her public denunciations and legal actions, initiated in 1976, had no results for years. In 2000, she was part of the group of 257 political prisoners who filed a criminal complaint against ex-dictator Pinochet and other officials responsible for these crimes. From 1998 to 2002, 299 individual and collective complaints were filed by relatives of victims of forced disappearances, of extrajudicial executions, and of torture.

Haydee Oberreuter testified before the CNPPT. A lawyer, Vicente Barzana, who did not know the victim filed a legal complaint [querrela] regarding the crimes against humanity and torture against Haydee Oberreuter, based on statements that appeared in an interview published under the title “The Navy tortured me until I lost my son.” Vicente Barzana pointed out that he had a legal right to file the criminal complaint because “all Humanity is the injured juridical good [bien jurídico]” and anyone, knowing such serious facts, was authorized to do so (Matus, 2014). The two lawsuits were joined in a single process. The first sentence, in 2014, recognized that she had been tortured. This decision was confirmed by the Court of Appeal and in the Supreme Court’s verdict issued in 2016.

As in many other legal proceedings for human rights violations, the defense of the accused denied they had practiced torture. In their statements to the judge, the defendants claimed not to remember the facts, and not to have known the victim,

denying their participation and official functions in the interrogation center despite evidence to the contrary. The court ratified the sentence that condemned the three retired Navy members to 3 years and 1 day in prison (according to the law in force in 1976) with the benefit of probation, in accord with the Chilean Penal Code. The sentence characterized torture as a crime against humanity. Compensation was ordered, based on the documentation proving the damage caused and establishing the State's obligation to compensate the victim. An order to the treasury to pay the victim 80,000,000 pesos (USD 123,000) in damages was ratified. The Supreme Court sentence was issued 41 years after the events. None of the sentences referred to the injuries suffered by the victim and performed by her captors against her will with a military Chilean special forces tactical knife [corvo], nor did the sentences refer to the traumatic effects of the damage caused, despite forensic medical documentation being available to prove this (see Pachi Bustos' "Haydee y el Pez Volador"). The facts denounced in her case, as in many others, exceeded the legal framework applied and highlighted the gap between "justice" and the provisions of the criminal and civil codes in force, as has occurred in numerous cases of human rights violations and particularly in cases of torture.

When domestic judicial actions were exhausted, two "victims of torture" cases were submitted to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in 2002, namely, the "Leopoldo García Lucero" case and the "Military Tribunal Maldonado and others" case. Almost 10 years later, the cases were submitted to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. In 2013, the court ruled on the case of Leopoldo García Lucero, a former political prisoner who lived in England since being expelled from the country in 1975 after 2 years of detention and torture, the consequence of which was a permanent disability (Corte Interamericana de Derechos Humanos, 2013). The court established that it was the obligation of the State to seek justice and reparation for the damages caused and that this obligation did not require the victim to sue. It also examined the State's reparation policies that could benefit Mr. García Lucero and determined that it could not analyze whether the reparations were "sufficient, effective and complete," given that "such an examination should begin by analyzing the damages generated by the acts whose execution began after Mr. García Lucero's detention in 1973" (Corte Interamericana de Derechos Humanos, p.64–65). The court ordered the State of Chile to provide Mr. García Lucero with the means to obtain medical attention that would have been provided by the health reparation program [PRAIS] if he had lived in Chile, viewing the health reparation committed by the State as a form of reparation.

The court established that the judgment "constitutes per se a form of reparation" (Corte Interamericana de Derechos Humanos, 2013, p.83–84). The court ordered the State of Chile to continue and conclude the investigation, within a reasonable time, into the events that occurred to Mr. García Lucero between September 16, 1973, and June 12, 1975, without Decree-Law No. 2191 [the 1978 amnesty decree] constituting an obstacle to the development of that investigation, to uncover the information ordered in the judgment, and to pay the amount [£20,000] established for non-pecuniary damages [daño inmaterial]. The Inter-American Court of Human Rights established that it would oversee "full compliance with the Judgment and

will conclude the case once the State has fully complied with its provisions” (Lira 2018, 109).

The second case, “Military Tribunal Maldonado and others,” concerns some of the air force personnel who had resisted the 1973 coup and been sentenced at the Air Force Military Tribunal [Consejo de Guerra] between 1973 and 1975. These ex-military personnel demanded an annulment of the Tribunal’s verdict because the convictions were based on confessions obtained under torture. The court ordered the State to quash the sentences, and the Chilean Supreme Court complied with this requirement in 2016: “It is declared that the convictions of the Consejo de Guerra are null and void because those convicted were sentenced with insufficient evidence, after being tortured (...) and the innocence of 87 persons [86 men and one woman] convicted by special courts in time of war was decreed” (Lira & Loveman, 2020, p.46–50).

In July 2017, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights announced the admissibility of petition 188–11 by the National Union of Former Political Prisoners (case No. 13334) on behalf of 1719 Chilean survivors for denial of justice and insufficient reparations, bringing together the petitions of 4 groups of former political prisoners.

In January 2019, the Chilean Judicial Branch [Poder Judicial] provided information on 447 relevant sentences handed down by the Supreme Court between 2002 and 2018 for crimes against humanity. The data, broken down by crime, show that 175 sentences are for aggravated kidnapping, 108 for aggravated homicide, 50 for simple homicide, 37 for simple kidnapping, 16 for illegal detention, and 9 for torture, among others. In 2019, there were seven specially designated judges (*ministros en visita*) investigating crimes against humanity throughout the country. As seen in this summary, the number of torture cases handled by the Supreme Court is nine, and although most of them involve more than one person, this figure is substantially lower than the number of victims recognized by the State. Also included were 15 cases of application of torment, a crime listed in the penal code in force until 2016, adding up to 24 cases of complaints of torture or torment ruled on by the Supreme Court.

In recent years, five women represented by Corporación Humanas have filed complaints of sexual-political violence (sexual torture) during the dictatorship. The processes are still in progress. Corporación Humanas has also asked the government to classify the crime of sexual-political violence as a crime against humanity, distinct from torture, without the right to a pardon, and with penalties commensurate with its gravity (Corporación Humanas, 2020).

Some organizations for victims of torture participated in the development of the Chilean Congress of Law 20968 (2016) “Crimes of Torture and Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment,” adopting the definition of torture from the international conventions of human rights. This new legislation amended the Penal Code in force since 1874 and established penalties in line with the categorization of torture as a crime against humanity. However, it also established that acts committed before its enactment would be governed by the regulations in force at that time.

2.5 Final Reflections

Torture has been a method to subdue and degrade: to destroy a person morally and psychologically by violating their rights. Torture is almost always a traumatic experience, and its consequences are prolonged over time. The recognition of victims and the reparations established by governments are of great importance for victims' recovery, but they do not overcome the irreparable nature of torture as a traumatic experience that is cumulative in nature with lifelong consequences. This knowledge also underpins the legal and ethical notion that torture is a crime against humanity. However, despite its limitations, access to justice continues to be a tool for moral and psychological reparation for most victims.

The decision to prosecute those found responsible involves a complex process, and most victims do not take this route. Legal action restores recognition of people's rights and condemns the conduct that violated them. But when the offense is profound and prolonged and the formality of the sentence fails to punish in proportion to the damage caused, removing the perception of impunity that accompanies the victims becomes difficult if not impossible. Without criminal convictions and sentences, however, impunity would have been absolute.

The political reconciliation observed in Chile and other Latin American nations today could not have developed from social peace based on shared impunity. Recent decades have shown that political reconciliation can be achieved with public truth about human rights violations, reparation for victims, the rule of law and justice, and building an ethical-political framework that places recognition, reparation, and justice for victims at its center. However, the consequences experienced by victims, which are manifested in the seriousness of the physical, psychological, economic, social, and moral damage suffered, cannot be resolved by the limited scope of the State's reparation policies in Chile. Victims' testimonies highlight the irreparable nature of the trauma they endured. At the same time, these victims are spokespersons for the ethical malaise of society in the face of injustice and impunity for atrocious crimes.

Victims' processes of managing the traumatic experiences and losses suffered vary. Some have sought to forgive after psychological, ethical, spiritual, or religious processing. But for many, it is not possible to forgive, much less forget. For others, the trauma is sustained: the impossibility of assuming and dealing with these traumatic experiences maintaining their suffering. For most victims, social and political recognition of their experiences is a prerequisite for psychological healing. However, for others, public acts of reparation do not even begin to attenuate their experiences. Regardless, it has been fundamental for authorities to recognize that what happened was a violation of their human rights, validating their experience that was denied during the time of dictatorship.

For centuries, impunity was the basis of political reconciliation processes, taking the form of amnesties that suppressed the prosecution of crimes committed during the conflict. Under these premises, the crimes, perpetrators, and victims vanished. The suffering and trauma of the victims were a private matter. It was imperative to

turn the page and “legally forget” what had happened. The political conflicts of the twentieth century resulted in thousands of victims across Latin America, with transitions from dictatorships to democratically elected governments strained by contradictory visions. For some, it was necessary to recognize the victims. For others, peace depended on impunity guaranteed to all those involved through inclusive amnesties as the basis for social peace. The political transition in Chile established the truth about human rights violations as the basis for policies and measures of reparation implemented from 1990 to 2020 to recognize and redress the victims.

The requirements for reconciliation between perpetrators, regime supporters, and victims of human rights violations have been antagonistic for decades. Regardless of the laws of reparation, despite the recognition of the victims by the State, despite having declared in the courts that torture and the forced disappearance of people are crimes against humanity, social peace seems to depend on the effectively recognizing of the rights of all, learning to reflect on the consequences that human rights violations have on social and political coexistence, and making efforts to remove injustices and inequalities installed in the political system.

I could not close these reflections without pointing out that reparation measures can contribute substantially to improving victims’ quality of life, especially by offering medical and psychological care as part of their right to reparation. The initial solidarity during the dictatorship contributed to restoring confidence in other human beings as a basic condition for living together in peace, sustained the organized capacity to resist abuse, and ended the dictatorship. However, the growing perception in society that injustices remain, that torture has not ended, and that the formal recognition of rights is not enough radically threatens this coexistence as was made clear in the social explosion of October 2019 in Chile, questioning the scope of the reparation, justice, and memory of the recent past and making visible the fragilities of the social peace achieved.

The struggle for public recognition of their rights and the sanctioning of those responsible has been a form of personal reparation for many victims. “Feeling” repaired, despite the limitations of the State’s policies, has been a subjective dimension linked to experiences of violations of dignity being recognized, participation, and solidarity in different instances, but that requires indispensable recognition by the State. Judicial decisions in criminal prosecutions recognize that the suffering and damages experienced are not only private matters but also of public and political concern, validating the experience of the victims despite the denial of the perpetrators. Judicial rulings constitute a form of reparation desired by the victims that contain truth, recognition, and justice, but as this chapter has shown, it is an imperfect reparation.

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Chapter 3

Truth Commissions: Individual and Societal Effects



Anderson Mathias, Darío Páez, Agustín Espinosa, and Bernard Rimé

3.1 Collective Violence and the Transition Toward a Peaceful Coexistence

While there have been discussions around an overall decrease in the levels of collective violence in recent decades and a trend toward increased respect for human rights (Pinker, 2018), unfortunately, episodes of collective violence by authoritarian governments are numerous. They entail human rights violations, group-based animosities, and negative emotions such as hate and feelings of revenge toward out-group members. To deal with these challenges, societies must develop ways to decrease hostility and promote the reconstruction of social cohesion. Although collective violence has negative repercussions for individuals and groups, many people also report positive effects (or at least recovery) in the long term (Blackie et al., 2017). People exposed to collective violence can manage to reduce the consequences and preserve their emotional balance, sometimes contributing to the resolution of the conflict. Transitional justice rituals such as truth commissions (TCs) can assist with this process, ascertaining the facts and managing stress, facilitating a healthy emotional distancing from the event in the long run. This can result in post-traumatic growth, meaning a positive psychological adjustment following a traumatic event. Post-traumatic growth focuses on the positive aspects that underlie

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overcoming trauma, such as the improvement of the social bonds between people who experienced the same trauma, the appreciation of life, and personal or spiritual growth (Hawley et al., 2017).

However, after episodes of collective violence, distrust and feelings of revenge often prevail. That is why transitional justice rituals are necessary to fuel reconciliation (Martín-Beristain et al., 2010). These rituals aim to decrease negative inter-group stereotypes, promote tolerance toward the outgroup, and ensure the reconstruction of social cohesion (Páez, 2010). To achieve that, these rituals face great challenges, such as having to account for difficult emotions (i.e., hate, fear, guilt, shame, distrust, etc.) as well as having to meet the opposing expectations and needs of the groups involved. Although the challenges are great, TCs' rituals are related to positive societal outcomes when they are positively evaluated (Mathias et al., 2020).

3.2 Psychosocial Effects of Participating in TC Activities

3.2.1 *The Benefits of Testifying Before TCs for Victims*

Participation in TCs' restorative rituals is supposed to help victims because they satisfy their needs for security, validation, recognition of their suffering and life story, control/empowerment, and self-esteem/dignity. There is the assumption that testifying before TCs is a healing experience for survivors, and healing has been a central concept in the literature on reconciliation and in political rhetoric around TCs. The assumption is that TCs can provoke catharsis and psychological healing with the process of giving testimony serving a therapeutic function. Much of what has been published on these processes highlights cases of victims who forgave the perpetrators (Hamber & Wilson, 2003).

Many authors view testifying as a ritual of both healing and condemnation of injustice. As was proposed by two clinicians working with political refugees in Denmark in the 1980s, "The concept of testimony contains both connotations of something subjective or private, and something objective, judicial, or political. When victims give testimony to the repression and torture to which they have been subjected, the trauma story can be given a meaning, can be re-framed: private pain is transformed into political dignity. In the context of testimony, shame and guilt connected with the trauma can be confessed by the victim and re-framed" (Agger & Jensen, 1990, p.1). Previous conclusions were based on clinical experiences with political refugees (mainly South Americans) in Scandinavia but were largely shared.¹

¹To be fair and accurate, this statement emphasizes the effect of reframing and overcoming negative self-conscious emotions through testifying. There is partial evidence that confirms both; for example, victims participating in trials in Guatemala, more so than non-participants, shared a positive sense of their experience and struggle in the courts (Lykes et al., 2007), and victims participat-

Some qualitative studies also reported the beneficial effects of “truth-telling” in TCs. For instance, interviewed victims reported that testifying before a Peruvian TC was a positive experience. Some of them referred to it as cathartic (Laplante & Theidon, 2007). These positive effects have been linked to recognizing the victims’ dignity, providing a social framework for individual experiences, and facilitating spaces for the expression of emotions and empathy. Testifying allows survivors to share their stories and suffering, empowering formerly voiceless people. TCs usually act as a form of institutional recognition of victims’ and survivors’ citizenship and dignity (Lira, 1997).

3.2.2 *Affective Cost of Testifying Before TCs*

Clinicians’ opinions, however, showed more ambivalence about the effects of testimony in transitional justice rituals (Hamber, 2009). Studies also report no positive effects on or increases in the negative emotions and symptoms of victims who gave testimony and participated in TC activities. Experiences with TCs and tribunals in South Africa revealed that participation in such tribunals had both positive and negative emotional consequences for the individuals involved (Hayner, 2011). On the one hand, the survivors experience social recognition, pride, relief, and a feeling of completion from having had the opportunity to express their feelings publicly, under oath, in a solemn setting. On the other hand, revisiting past traumas has frequently caused unexpected and intense emotional reactivations of painful internal experiences and, over time, contributed to a state of re-traumatization (Kanyangara et al., 2007).

The victims’ expectations of the processes and the conditions in which testimonies are given have profound effects on the individual testifying. For example, the testimony and interview processes could have negative effects on survivors if conditions of respect, contention, social support, and adjusted expectations are not assured (Martín-Beristain, 2008). Moreover, people usually testify with no clear expectations around whether the perpetrators will be brought to justice. Although there have been a small number of cases where the “miracles of reconciliation” are reported by participating victims and perpetrators, some aspects of the reconciliation process including, for example, “sunset clauses,” which protect police and military officers’ jobs, have fueled rather than healed the victims’ trauma (Hamber, 2007).

A study on the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Kaminer et al., 2001) suggested that TC participation had no significant impact on decreasing the symptoms of victims that participated in the trials. This study compared three conditions (public testimony, private testimony, and no testimony) and found no association between TC exposure and depression or TC exposure and anxiety.

ing in the Gacaca People’s Courts in Rwanda reported diminished feelings of shame (Rimé et al., 2011). However, this statement was interpreted as indicating the cathartic disappearance of emotions and grief linked to trauma, which was not the case.

Kaminer et al. (2001) further report that there were no significant differences in rates of depression, PTSD, or other anxiety disorders between participants who gave public testimony, a closing statement, or no testimony at all. Although some individuals may have experienced testifying as either generating or relieving stress, it would appear that, for this sample, testifying or not testifying did not have a significant effect on psychological health. Simply put, TC participation had neither a notable therapeutic effect nor a notable counter-therapeutic effect.

A retrospective survey in South Africa compared individuals exposed to the TC via the media with those who attended the TC or provided information to it, finding that the latter two groups reported higher anger and lower forgiveness (Stein et al., 2008). The fact that direct participation decreases forgiveness and increases anger, while exposure to a TC shows positive effects on public opinion, supports Durkheim's ideas that expiation rituals are relevant for society, but not necessarily for victims and perpetrators.² Stein et al. (2008) further demonstrated that participants who felt disappointed with TC activities reported higher anger. Moreover, compared to those with a positive experience of testifying, individuals who reported a negative experience (i.e., felt that the TC did not spend enough time on them, did not listen to them, or treated them with little respect) scored significantly higher on distress and anger (Stein et al., 2008).

A large epidemiological study in Rwanda supported the existence of negative effects of participation in local tribunals, with Gacaca participants reporting higher symptoms of trauma and depression when compared with non-witnesses (Brounéus, 2008). These results remained highly significant even after controlling for traumatic experiences, sex, marital status, and other variables. In-depth interviews with women also revealed that the experience was more re-traumatizing than healing, with trauma, ill-health, isolation, and insecurity dominating their lives after they participated in the process. These participants were threatened and harassed before, during, and after giving testimony in the Gacaca (Brounéus, 2008).

Another retrospective study was carried out with 127 respondents, including 87 victims or witnesses who had testified at the International Criminal Tribunal for the

²“Piacular” or expiation rituals are characterized by sadness, fear, and anger. Such rites ordinarily follow some collective disaster and may involve forms of self-suffering. Rituals related to punishment of deviants are externalized forms of this type of ritual. The acts of punishing a crime or past collective misdeed reaffirm values and shared morals. Symbolic and actual punishment solidify what constitutes intolerable behavior enacted by deviant members of society, simultaneously reaffirming a sense of solidarity and social cohesion. As Lukes (1973) argues, for Durkheim, the punishment of criminals was not an individual retribution or deterrent, but a way of reaffirming common values and morals. In other words, it was a way of strengthening social ties. By punishing, rules are reinforced. For Durkheim, rituals of social control and punishment are assumed to have a functional effect. From this point of view, TCs, trials of the victimizers, reconciliation ceremonies, official apologies to the victims, and the commitment to not repeat the mistakes of the past are activities that can be conceived as rituals, which, by means of expiation, help to restore social relationships (Páez, 2010). Durkheim argues that these acts of legal punishment are not crucial for victims and criminals, but rather to society as a whole. Studies of transitional justice activities show a similar profile; opinions about them are more favorable among the public, and their impact is greater on the public than on the direct victims.

former Yugoslavia in The Hague. The cathartic feeling that some witnesses experienced disappeared soon after their testimony or after they returned to their towns, especially for those who faced familiar loss, eviction from their home, or job loss. Many respondents reported feelings of anger and helplessness once they learned about the limited punishments for the perpetrators (Stover, 2005).

3.2.3 Self-Selection Bias: Are Those Who Gave Testimony Different from Those Who Did Not?

The results of these cross-sectional studies have been questioned. It is important to note that these studies used non-random samples and were retrospective, not longitudinal, and therefore have limited internal validity and limited generalizability. Moreover, the observed relationships between increased levels of distress/anger and decreased forgiveness following participation in a TC do not necessarily mean that the TC had a negative effect. Rather, these findings may suggest that those with increased levels of distress and decreased forgiveness as a result of the events at the core of the TC (e.g., human rights violations) may have been more likely to choose to attend TC meetings. Simply put, it may be the case that more assertive and motivated survivors who are also distressed victims choose to give testimony, and this self-selection may explain the association between testifying and participating with higher anger and a lower intention to forgive.

Longitudinal studies, however, show that self-selection is only a partial explanation. Longitudinal studies with control groups found that people and zones from Rwanda and Sierra Leone that performed TC activities³ showed an increase in post-traumatic stress and depressive symptoms, as well as an increase in personal and collective negative emotions, such as anger, fear, and sadness (Cilliers et al., 2016; Kanyangara et al., 2014).

The first of several longitudinal studies compared the effects of participation in Gacaca trials (Kanyangara et al., 2007). Fifty survivors of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda and 50 prisoners accused of being responsible for genocidal acts completed four scales 45 days before and 45 days after they participated in Gacaca trials. The scales assessed negative emotions presently felt concerning the genocide, perceived emotional climate, negative stereotypes of the outgroup, and perceived similarity

³Activities related to transitional justice include the creation of TCs. However, participation in ordinary justice trials, in the international tribunal at The Hague, or in popular tribunals such as the Gacaca case in Rwanda are also considered activities linked to these processes of overcoming past collective violence (David, 2017). Finally, traditional cultural ceremonies of reconciliation are also considered part of these processes. These have been more frequent in Africa, and Cilliers et al. (2016) focused on them. Only in Peru is there ethnographic information on the application of rituals of atonement or punishment to members of the community (generally former members of guerrilla groups of the Shining Path), who were publicly beaten and forced to help victims of the guerrillas, as rituals that would allow the reincorporation of these “black sheep” into the community (Laplante & Theidon, 2007). However, this is not a widespread practice.

among outgroup members. Findings indicated that participation in Gacaca provoked a reactivation of negative emotions in both groups and also impacted negatively on the perceived emotional climate. The social ritual of Gacaca elicited an emotional communion among participants and fostered intense emotional manifestations and re-evocations of the genocide. Moreover, emotions of sadness, fear, disgust, and anxiety increased after the Gacaca, especially among survivors. Guilt increased among the imprisoned perpetrators of human rights violations but not among the survivors. In sum, all emotions that were congruent with the group experience (e.g., fear was more central to the re-evoked experience of the survivors and guilt to that of the perpetrators) were enhanced by participation in the Gacaca. This was corroborated by the fact that, overall, survivors experienced more fear and anger, while perpetrators more guilt.

A second large quasi-experimental study compared Gacaca participants with people who did not participate in the trials. The previously described measures of emotion were administered to victims of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda and imprisoned perpetrators accused of genocidal acts before and after their participation in the trials. Control groups of victims and perpetrators who did not participate in the trials completed the same measures before and after. The perpetrators and victims who participated in Gacaca manifested an increase in fear, sadness, and anxiety. Moreover, a third study found that, in the Rwanda case, participants in TC activities reported an increase in negative emotions, greater doubts about Gacaca, reduced trust in the imprisoned perpetrators' apologies, reduced inclination to forgive, and increased vengefulness and opted more for intragroup contact and less for intergroup contact (Kanyangara et al., 2014). These findings align with the belief that Gacaca's ability to help heal suffering decreases after the experience.⁴ However, participation in Gacaca trials showed some desired emotional effects, such as a decrease in victims' sense of shame and an increase in perpetrators' sense of guilt.⁵ Perpetrators also reported a positive collective emotional effect. This entailed a decrease in the negative emotional climate and an increase in the positive climate, while victims showed an opposing pattern. This trend could be explained by the minor (or lenient for victims) sentences and the end of uncertainty (Kanyangara et al., 2007; Rimé et al., 2011).

Cilliers et al. (2016) examined the effects of reconciliation activities carried out by a Sierra Leonean non-governmental organization called Fambul Tok. As a part of this effort, community-level forums, in which victims detailed war atrocities and perpetrators confessed war crimes, were set up. Random assignment was used to study its impact across 200 villages, drawing on data from 2383 individuals. Findings showed that reconciliation had negative psychological consequences, worsening psychological health and increasing depression, anxiety, and

⁴However, an important minoritarian group stated that in follow-ups or post-tests, participation in Gacaca was found to help people heal from the traumatic experience of genocide.

⁵A decrease in shame for victims and an increase in guilt for perpetrators are congruent with approaches that emphasize the exchange of status and moral emotions in these types of ritual; see Rime et al. (2011).

post-traumatic stress disorder in these same villages. For a subset of villages, outcomes were measured at both 9 and 31 months post-intervention. These results showed that the effects persisted into the longer time horizon.

Thus, participation in trials took an affective toll on the people involved. Participation in Gacaca trials and activities alike to transitional justice increased negative emotions, while no changes were observed for non-participants (Kanyangara et al., 2007). In conclusion, participation in a transitional justice ritual such as Gacaca has a marked affective cost for both victims and perpetrators. These findings are entirely in line with the follow-up data collected from witnesses that participated in Gacaca (Brounéus, 2008) and are also consistent with clinical observations that suggest that participation in truth and reconciliation processes involves a risk of re-traumatization (Hamber, 2007; Hayner, 2011).

3.2.4 What Could Be Done to Decrease the Negative Effects of Giving Testimony?

The increase in negative emotions among participants of transitional justice rituals suggests that some measures are needed to prevent re-traumatization. Globally, results suggest that there are six factors associated with a negative experience of testifying or participating in TC activities:

- Participants' expectations being disappointed, leading to unfulfilled expectations.
- Limited or non-existent material and symbolic reparation and recognition.
- Frustration with the quality of information about killings, disappearances, etc.
- A distressing experience (e.g., feeling that the TC did not spend enough time, did not listen, etc.).
- Lack of socio-emotional support (e.g., feeling they were not treated with respect, they were left alone with their negative emotional arousal, etc.).
- Potential danger and worry about the consequences of testifying, particularly in hamlets and small towns (Brounéus, 2008; David, 2017; Kanyangara et al., 2014).

From a constructive point of view, the lessons derived from these factors are as follows:

- There is a need to know the expectations of the victims and to make explicit what the commission can do. In addition to the need to clarify and adjust expectations, participants need to be prepared for their testimony before the TC to reduce surprises.
- There is a need to give symbolic and material recognition. TCs should recognize survivors' and victims' claims and dignity; acknowledge the truth; and, at least symbolically, afford them reparations.
- There is a need to ensure that the most reliable and comprehensive information is given; pseudo-formal information without real content should be avoided.

- Commissions should take care in their treatment of the victims, who must perceive a high degree of procedural justice (i.e., that they are being listened to, that they have time to speak, that their rhythms are respected, etc.). Commissions should provide a fair procedural context that respects victims and avoid excessively long processes, extensive confrontations with perpetrators, repetitive witnesses, and re-traumatization (Martín-Beristain, 2008).
- Survivors should be accompanied in their pain and assured of emotional support, and witnesses also need to be encouraged to bring someone with them as social support and to share with others what they have heard and seen (Staub et al., 2003).
- Victims should be assured of their safety and not be abandoned in threatening contexts after testifying without any protection (Martín-Beristain, 2008).

Finally, it may also be argued that the perceived absence of justice (i.e., the punishment of perpetrators) and reparation (i.e., lack of compensation for survivors) in the South African TC and Gacaca processes, which brought about protests from many survivors, may have been a barrier to emotional recovery. More importantly, the lack of change in the socioeconomic situation of the survivors may create anger and skepticism that are displaced onto the TCs (as seen in the case of the Peruvian TC; Espinosa et al., 2017).

3.2.5 Positive Social Effects of TCs' Rituals

Partial evidence suggests that participation in trials that entail limited justice and reparation could empower survivors, a finding that was confirmed in a study of Mayan direct and indirect victims of a massacre in Xaman in Guatemala (Lykes et al., 2007). Active participation in trials and rituals of transitional justice can enhance perceived control and self-esteem. The testimony and interview processes can have positive effects on survivors, such as empowerment. Lykes et al. (2007) focused on the case of a Mayan community that suffered a massacre at the hands of the Guatemalan Army and wanted to obtain justice for the violations of their human rights. However, this proved to be difficult because of the impunity policy that was maintained during the post-conflict transition by the Guatemalan government and military. Participant observation revealed how the massacre had created an emotional climate of fear and sadness, how people coped with it, and how it evolved. The emotional climate of fear and the symptoms of post-traumatic stress appeared to have been the most intense immediately after the massacre because of the shock and the emergency that was created. This reaction took a toll on both individuals and the community but was gradually reduced over the first year. During the trial (three years after the massacre), government lawyers and judges sought to hold the victims responsible for the massacre, blaming them for their vindictive attitude.

Some direct and indirect victims participated as witnesses in a trial against members of the Guatemalan Army that killed 11 members of the Xaman community after the end of the civil war. The participation of victims and affected community

members in the trial was evaluated utilizing structured interviews. The interviews included measures of coping, emotional reactions, and basic social beliefs such as a sense of justice, control, and meaning. Findings indicate that a negative experience of participation in the trial was associated with re-experiencing fear, anxiety, stress, and depression. However, active coping and social sharing to understand the events that had occurred were found to help construct a positive interpretation of the events and emphasize the community's struggle against impunity in Guatemala. The trial participants reported less fear of army retaliation, higher expectations of justice, more positive appraisal of social mobilization, higher perceptions of injustice, higher agreement with the positive effects of social sharing, and higher social cohesion (i.e., they agreed more with the statement "the community was united and supported the trial") in comparison with non-participants. Participation in the trials, even in the context of perpetrators' impunity, still reinforced victims' group cohesion and social identity as Mayan Indians. Participants reported higher levels of adaptive coping and higher support of collective mobilization than non-participant survivors (Lykes et al., 2007).

Similar results were observed in South Africa, with TC participant victims reporting higher levels of political trust and efficacy than non-participant victims (Gibson, 2004). Comparing the responses of the general South African population and participant and non-participant victims, Backer (2005, p.39) concluded that "another pattern that is evident in these comparisons is that the victims who participated in the TC processes tend to exhibit a greater level of political trust than the general public, but the differences are generally modest. This finding offers suggestive evidence that the TC process may contribute to the development of support for and faith in important aspects of the political system. Most notably, confidence among participating victims in the Constitutional Court is quite high. At the very least, the data do not indicate that their level of political trust is lower than it might have been in the absence of the TC, using the general public opinion as a benchmark of expectations. The same cannot necessarily be said about non-participating victims, who generally exhibit attitudes that are both distrusting and lower than either of the other samples." We can conclude that participation in transitional justice rituals has positive effects on self-efficacy and self-esteem.

Other correlational studies also found that TCs were associated with more macro-social positive outcomes. One study on TCs evaluated its associations with the current positive emotional climate and collective and personal trust in institutions with samples from six South American countries that had been through dictatorial regimes or extensive periods of political violence during the second half of the twentieth century (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay and, Peru). Positive evaluations of TCs' activities were associated with a more positive view of the current socio-emotional climate (Mathias et al., 2020). A multiple regression controlling political position, age, and sex showed a similar multivariate association or Beta, suggesting that positive views of TCs help to reinforce positive views of the social climate, independent of political position. A meta-analysis found a significant and generalizable effect of positive evaluations of a TCs on the emotional climate; collective trust in institutions; and personal confidence in the government, the

legislative power, and the judiciary system, but not in the police nor the armed forces. Demonstrating the importance of complementary measures and temporal immediacy, the relationships between positive TC evaluations and trust in the justice system were higher in countries where trials were conducted and the TC was carried out at the end of the period of political violence. A complementary study found some evidence for positive outcomes of participating in and being a witness in or giving testimony before a TC (Mathias et al., 2021). Comparing victims that participated or gave testimony with victims that did not participate in TC activities, the former reported a more positive view of transitional justice activities, a more positive social climate, and higher trust in democratic institutions. Regarding individual outcomes, giving testimony to a TC was related to an ambivalent emotional reaction, with participants reporting higher positive and negative emotions than non-participant victims. Giving testimony was related to inhibition regarding talking about the traumatic past, but also to more social sharing of emotions related to the TC.

Congruent with these correlational studies, longitudinal studies with control groups found that people and zones from Sierra Leone and Rwanda that performed TC activities showed an increase in trust and prosocial behavior and a decrease in negative outgroup stereotypes, respectively. These findings further suggest that transitional justice activities provoke positive psychosocial outcomes (Cilliers et al., 2016; Kanyangara et al., 2014).

Increases in social trust and the institutional trust effects of TCs are important because collective trust is a strong facilitator of forgiveness and reconciliation, facilitating the reconstruction of social bonds and peaceful coexistence. On the other hand, negative emotions and a strong ingroup identity are obstacles to forgiveness and reconciliation (Van Tongeren et al., 2014). Transitional justice activities, therefore, face the challenge of strengthening and empowering victimized communities, allowing the victims to express their emotions while also preventing a strong focus on group dynamics and negative emotions. One way to achieve that is to orient the processes toward the construction of a peaceful future (Ugarriza & Nussio, 2017). If the ingroup's past suffering is usually used to legitimize current aggression (Bartal & Halperin, 2013; Sabucedo et al., 2003), a future orientation in transitional justice rituals could prevent these cycles of revenge.

Another important aspect of the TC ritual is perpetrators' acknowledgment of their responsibility for doing harm. This is related to a decrease in the victims' animosity, reducing their negative emotions (Iqbal & Bilali, 2018). Although complete forgiveness is challenging and a peaceful coexistence with some level of social trust is a more realistic goal, the social contact promoted in the transitional justice activities could be a facilitator of this process (Cehajić et al., 2008).

3.3 Conclusion

The studies reviewed in this chapter lead to the conclusion that transitional justice activities, such as the TCs in Africa and Latin America, the People's Courts in Rwanda, and reconciliation activities in Sierra Leone, on the one hand, involved reactivation of negative emotional experiences in survivors and victims. In that sense, they took an individual emotional toll, and the idea of cathartic healing must be questioned. On the other hand, participation in such activities empowers survivors and victims and allows them to re-evaluate and grow after the traumatic experience. Considerations are necessary to decrease this emotional cost, and they were described in Sect. 3.2.4. Although we have essentially reviewed studies in the same areas we have directly investigated, we believe the overall evidence is coherent and convergent (see David, 2017).

Transitional justice activities, and TCs in particular, help to recognize the truth of past events and to build a collective attitude of overcoming mistakes. Regarding this, the evidence is not only correlational but also longitudinal, showing a significant positive effect on the reconstruction of social ties, decreasing negative stereotypes, and increasing social and institutional confidence. Rebuilding interpersonal and institutional trust appears to be a central, if difficult, element. However, this is limited too. The existence of real reparation policies, the speed of the implementation of transitional justice activities, and the existence of justice processes that punish perpetrators are contextually relevant factors. In addition to these macro-social effects, consistent with the idea that these activities allow for the reconstruction of social cohesion, as postulated by Durkheim to be the objective of collective rituals, there is also evidence of effects on direct victims and survivors. Although these cause victims to revisit difficult emotions linked to past experiences, they also increase some positive emotions such as hope, decrease shame, and increase self-efficacy, particularly if the victim's dignity is recognized, claims are made, they are listened to, and reparation is provided.

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Chapter 4

Citizens' Views on Amnesties, Truth Commissions, and Intergroup Forgiveness



Félix Neto, Lonozou Kpanake, Claudia Pineda Marín, and Etienne Mullet

4.1 Introduction

In more than 60 countries, Truth Commissions have played a central role in the process by which the country has tried to rebuild itself after a period of division, violence, or war (Hayner, 2006). Truth Commissions are at the heart of the dilemma between the pursuit of justice (in the strictest sense of the term) and the desire to restore order to society following violent conflicts. This is the classic dilemma of order versus justice (Gaddis, 2003). Criminals can only be prosecuted and given a just sentence if a certain order is present in society. Without order, there is no justice. On the other hand, a certain order can be maintained in society, even if justice is largely absent. This involves, however, the use of force. When force is still largely in the hands of unjust politicians, a compromise must be found by the actors of political change insofar as their objective is to restore a certain level of justice in society without taking the risk that this force will be used against them and the people they represent.

The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission is probably the best known at the global level. It has served as a model for many subsequent

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commissions and is in some ways the touchstone against which other commissions have been judged. Yet at the time of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, similar bodies had already been in operation for some 20 years in various countries in post-conflict or troubled political situations. In the 1970s, these Truth Commissions were above all commissions of inquiry whose mandate was often limited to one type of human rights violation, whose life span was short, and whose financial and human resources were scarce (Hayner, 1994). One of the first of these Commissions of Inquiry was set up in Uganda by President Amin to investigate crimes committed under the first years of his regime. Despite the unfavorable context, this four-member commission uncovered numerous human rights violations to such an extent that President Amin had no choice but to fire the chairman of the commission, sentence one of its members to death, allow a third member to flee the country in a hurry, and inform the media that the violations in question were the work of exiled opponents and local guerrillas (Carver, 1990). In Sri Lanka, no less than four such commissions were set up from 1978 to 2011, and a new one seems to be planned, which casts doubt on their impact (Chandrashekar, 2019; Gómez, 1998). In Nepal, a commission with extended missions was set up in 1991. It functioned for some months as a Truth Commission, and then, given the problems posed to the government in power, it was converted into a commission of inquiry (Hayner, 2010). In Chile, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was able to fulfill its purpose in 1991, but the final report, the Rettig Report, was made inaccessible to the public (Weissbrodt & Fraser, 1992). The emergence of this type of commission can, therefore, be followed over some 20 years, and the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission can be seen as the product of a process of learning by trial and error.

One of the observations that can be made about these commissions is that they have always been planned in a top-down fashion (Lundy & McGovern, 2008). After a period of turmoil, the new power decided to set up a Truth Commission, more or less on the model of previous commissions, with or without the support of the international community. The populations to whom these commissions were addressed have rarely been widely consulted on the functions of such a commission, i.e., on what a truth commission should be, or even if it should be at all, given the current situation in their country. As stressed by Lundy and McGovern (2008, p. 100), “the tendency to exclude local communities as active participants in transitional justice measures is a primary flaw, raising fundamental questions of legitimacy, local ownership, and participation.” Much of the criticism and confusion surrounding the functioning of Truth Commissions are, therefore, probably indicative of a deep problem, namely, a lack of consensus between government and the general population, and possibly among the general population themselves, on what can and cannot reasonably be expected from these bold experiments (Verwoerd, 2003).

In this chapter, we will summarize the results of studies that have set out to gather citizens’ views on the organization and missions of commissions of this type. We believe it is essential to study in an empirical, systematic way the perspectives of citizens who were impacted by injustice and, once these perspectives are known, factor them into the design and implementation of political procedures seeking to

address injustice. How can a commission, one of whose essential missions is to work for the respect of human rights, fully achieve its objectives if its starting point is the denial of these fundamental rights? How can a commission whose foundations are not firmly anchored in the fabric of the communities it serves hope to be effective in the long term?

For practical reasons, we will proceed from the particular to the most general. We will first present the results of studies on one of the specific missions of these commissions: granting of political amnesties to perpetrators of violence. Next, we will present the results of studies that have examined how citizens of countries that have experienced the internal conflict or foreign occupation view these commissions. We will conclude with the results of studies on a more general topic, namely, intergroup forgiveness. How do the citizens of these post-conflict countries conceptualize this type of process?

4.2 Citizens' Views on Political Amnesties

4.2.1 *The Research*

Amnesties are often systematically granted by transitional regimes to perpetrators of past violence as a means of putting an end to the fighting, restoring peace, and achieving democracy without too much bloodshed (McEvoy & Mallinder, 2012). However, amnesties come at a price. They may be seen by victims and others as fundamentally unjust and immoral. Once amnesty is granted, perpetrators can no longer be prosecuted, and sometimes the mere mention of their crimes can become illegal. All too often, amnesty beneficiaries are unwilling to show the slightest sign of remorse and remain convinced that their past political conduct was right. In such circumstances, granting a full amnesty may be tantamount to supporting these individuals' conviction that they were not fundamentally wrong, even if they committed crimes against humanity. Amnesties may also be considered economically (and socially) inappropriate. Members of dictatorial regimes have often used their position to favor their supporters and in the worst cases to amass huge amounts of property. This wealth would be better used if it was redistributed to the victims and invested in productive activities that contribute to societal well-being. Finally, amnesties may be considered politically dangerous. If perpetrators are not adequately punished and do not realize that their conduct was immoral, they can become a threat to democracy. They may use their wealth and remaining influence to try to obstruct the progress of the new political regime.

Gibson (2002) was the first to examine citizens' perceptions of the fairness of political amnesties with a sample of South African citizens. From 1948 to 1994, South Africa had a racial policy known as apartheid. People were categorized in accordance with their race, receiving different rights and restrictions based on this categorization. The white minority enjoyed a high standard of living, while the

black majority had limited access to income, education, and housing. According to the Polynational War Memorial (2020), at least 4,000 people were killed during the fight for equal rights. After the end of apartheid and the election of Nelson Mandela as President of South Africa in 1994, the new government established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 1996. One mission of this commission was to grant political amnesties to former perpetrators of violence.

Using a simulation paradigm, he examined the factors influencing South African peoples' judgments as to whether an amnesty was fair or not (i.e., acceptable or unacceptable). He created vignettes depicting situations in which amnesty was granted. Four factors were considered in the vignettes, namely, distributive justice (i.e., the extent to which the victims had been properly compensated for the harm inflicted on them), restorative justice (i.e., the extent to which the victims accepted the apology that was offered by the amnesty applicant), procedural justice (i.e., the extent to which the victims had the opportunity to voice their grief publicly and receive the recognition that they were unjustly wronged), and retributive justice (i.e., the extent to which the amnesty applicant had already suffered as a consequence of the revelation of his/her past behavior before amnesty was granted).

The participants came from four communities in South Africa. Each participant assessed the perceived fairness of the amnesty in one of the vignettes and indicated the extent to which each form of justice had been done. As can be observed in Fig. 4.1, fairness judgments depended on the extent to which distributive, procedural, and retributive justice have been applied. In addition, perceived fairness correlated positively with the expressed feelings that (by order of impact on global judgment) distributive, procedural, restorative, and retributive justice had been carried out. The main conclusion of this study was that considerations of justice matter when judging the fairness of amnesty, and the sincere apology of the amnesty applicant and the opportunity for the victim to tell their story (two symbolic factors) have as much impact as monetary and punitive factors on perceptions of fairness.

Kpanake and Mullet (2011a) replicated the results of Gibson's (2002) study with a different population that had suffered a different type of violence, namely, the Togolese population. Since its independence in 1960, Togo had experienced a succession of military coups until President Gnassingbe Eyadema came to power. He ruled in a dictatorial manner from 1967 to 2005. Upon his death and following a presidential election, his son, Faure Eszozima Gnassingbe, succeeded him as president. At the time of Kpanake and Mullet's (2011a) study, Togo was experiencing a political transition. Reconciliation talks between the government and the opposition were underway, and an agreement was achieved between the parties that resulted in the opposition being invited to participate in a transitional government and the population becoming aware of the intention to create a Truth Commission with the support of the United Nations.

Kpanake and Mullet's (2011a) study also sought to complement Gibson's (2002) study by focusing not only on measuring the impact of justice factors but also aiming to characterize the participants' judgment process. For this reason, a within-subjects design was employed, and the same four justice factors were considered (Anderson, 2019). A fifth factor, however, was taken into account, namely, the

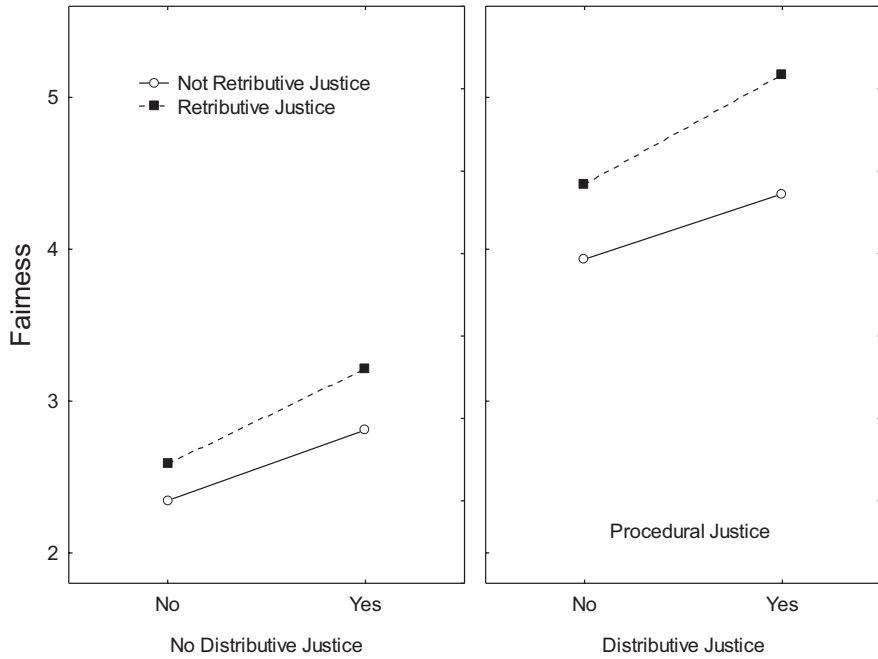


Fig. 4.1 Fairness ratings are on the vertical axis. Whether procedural justice has been rendered is on the horizontal axis. Each curve corresponds to a level of retributive justice. Each panel corresponds to a level of distributive justice

quality of the information on abuses of the past regime that the amnesty applicant was prepared to reveal. The applicants' willingness to contribute to establishing the truth about the past is generally considered to be the main condition for the granting of amnesty by truth commissioners (Slye, 2000).

Kpanake and Mullet's (2011a) main results are displayed in Fig. 4.2. Of the 48 vignettes presented, only 5 had acceptability scores significantly above the midpoint of the scale. Acceptability scores were quite high when a sincere apology was offered (i.e., when claimants demonstrate that they realize that their conduct was wrong), claimants demonstrated their willingness to contribute to the truth-seeking process, and at least two of the other three factors have a positive value (e.g., claimants suffered personally as a result of their misconduct, and victims were properly compensated). The mental schema that characterizes an individual's judgment of the extent to which a political amnesty is fair can, therefore, be formulated in simple algebraic terms:

$$\text{Acceptability} = (\text{Information} \times \text{Restorative Justice}) \\ (\text{Procedural Justice} + \text{Distributive Justice} + \text{Retributive Justice})$$

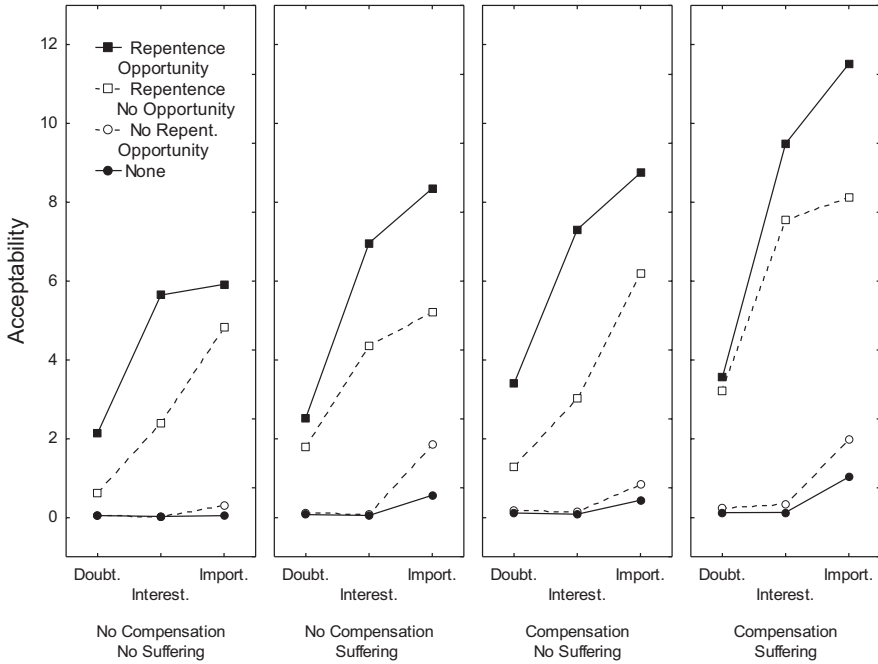


Fig. 4.2 Acceptability ratings are on the vertical axis. The quality levels of the information reported are on the horizontal axis (*Doubt.* Doubtful, *Interest.* Interesting, *Import.* Important). Each curve corresponds to a combination of the factors Repentance on the part of the applicant (Restorative Justice) and Opportunity for victims to express their story (Procedural Justice). Each panel corresponds to a combination of the factors Compensation of the victims (Distributive Justice) and Applicant’s Suffering (Punitive Justice)

This formula groups the five components into two sets. The first set relates to the applicants’ behavior (i.e., whether or not they have agreed to cooperate with the new government and have acknowledged that their past conduct was inappropriate). Each component of this set conditions how the other component impacts acceptability. The second set of three components relates to what is offered to the victim as compensation. These factors act cumulatively. The more respectful the judicial procedure is of the victims, the higher their material compensation, and the higher the price paid by the perpetrator, the higher the judged level of acceptability. Finally, the first set of components conditions the impact of the second set. It is only when applicants show both willingness to cooperate and remorse that the level of compensation offered to the victim is considered relevant in judging acceptability.

Of these two sets of components, the first was, in the participant’s eyes, by far the most important. Amnesties apply first and foremost to the perpetrators, not to the victims. It is, therefore, only logical that the applicants’ actual behavior be considered paramount concerning possible compensation for the victims. Full compensation of the victim is not considered sufficient for the granting of an amnesty to be considered fair, a result that is in line with Gibson’s conclusions (2002). As

important as it may be, adequate compensation is, from the citizens' viewpoint, a secondary element. Appropriate compensation, through various forms of justice (including procedural and distributive justice), must, in any case, take place (i.e., it must be independent of any amnesty process). Therefore, the argument that victims have been decently compensated cannot justify an amnesty process.

A more recent study conducted in Colombia by Pineda Marín et al. (2020a) replicated Gibson's (2002) and Kpanake and Mullet's (2011a) findings. It further defined the various personal positions of Colombian adults regarding the granting of amnesties. From 1964 to 2016, a low-intensity civil war opposed Colombia's successive governments, communist guerrillas, paramilitary groups, and crime syndicates as they fought to retain control of state territory or to impose a revolutionary regime. Violence only began to diminish at the beginning of this century, as the insurgents gradually lost control of their territory. The national army secured and stabilized the liberated areas, and the paramilitaries themselves gradually demobilized (Granada et al., 2009). A peace process was initiated in 2012, and a peace agreement was reached in 2016. According to the Registro Único de Víctimas (2019), 165,271 citizens may have been the victims of homicides, met death in other circumstances, or disappeared.

Three of the factors analyzed above were taken into account, namely, the quality of the information revealed, the degree of repentance shown by the applicants, and the degree to which they are currently suffering from the situation (e.g., psychological distress). A fourth, related factor was introduced, namely, the degree to which applicants have participated voluntarily in the actions of the perpetrators of violence (e.g., was the applicant abducted as a child or did they volunteer?).

Using cluster analysis (Hofmans & Mullet, 2013), four qualitatively different positions were identified. The first (20% of the sample) was a position called "never acceptable." Participants that endorse right-wing politics, participants with socioeconomic status, and participants living in the capital city endorsed this position more often than other participants. In contrast, some participants (13%) considered all amnesties as largely acceptable, thereby expressing a second position labeled "broad agreement."

The third position (45%) was called "quality of information and remorse." This position was similar to the one described in Fig. 4.2. Acceptability judgments were higher when the complete truth had been revealed and the applicant expressed remorse. Moreover, the effect of repentance was stronger when the full truth was revealed than when no information was given. Furthermore, judgments were higher when the applicant was abducted as a child rather than when they participated voluntarily. This effect of the voluntary factor was stronger when the full truth was revealed than when it was not. Younger participants and those living in the capital city endorsed this position more often than other participants.

The fourth position (8%) was unexpected. It was called "voluntariness and remorse." It introduced a slightly different viewpoint on the issue, a viewpoint which, although it was a minority one, was nonetheless widespread among the older and less educated. According to them, in judging the character of the applicant, the initial voluntariness must be taken into account in all cases in which he repents. If

the applicant was forced, then repentance is sufficient for the amnesty to be considered acceptable. If the applicant did participate voluntarily, then they should demonstrate a minimum of goodwill (e.g., at least give some information) for their amnesty to be considered acceptable. The idea is always to ensure that there has been a change in the applicant that makes them worthy of the amnesty.

4.2.2 Summary

In the reviewed studies, the amnesty applicants' personality was always considered to be key in judging the acceptability of granting amnesties. If applicants demonstrated that they have changed their perspective and that, as a result of that change, they are now aware of the harmful nature of their past actions, then they are deemed worthy of amnesty. In all other cases, and even if the victims of their group's actions have been largely compensated, they are not worthy of amnesty. This is an expression of simple popular logic. Firstly, one cannot amnesty a person who, because of their unchanged convictions, may, at the whim of opportunity, become a nuisance to society again. Secondly, the compensation of victims has virtually nothing to do with a political amnesty process. For example, proposals such as "if we are not contemplating an amnesty for those responsible for the crimes committed, there is no need to worry about compensation for victims" are nonsensical.

4.3 Citizen's Expectations Regarding the Organization and Missions of Truth Commissions

4.3.1 The Research

Although, according to Verwoerd (2003), the work of most Truth Commissions has likely benefited societies as a whole and violence has subsequently decreased (without being eliminated everywhere), the principle underlying these commissions has been severely criticized. One such criticism is that these commissions were often the result of a compromise between emerging forces (e.g., liberation movements) and former authoritarian regimes. Some authors have argued that in South Africa, for example, the powerful corporations, which unconditionally funded the apartheid regime, supported the change to escape increasing international sanctions and to obtain better economic opportunities. According to these critics, the pursuit of justice may have been sacrificed in the name of achieving political and economic goals (e.g., Biko, 2000). Another type of criticism is that these commissions did not sufficiently prosecute the perpetrators, showing great leniency towards some of them (e.g., Cárdenas et al., 2015). As a result, citizens may be led to believe that even the new regime can break the law and fail to enforce justice (Wilson, 2001). This view

is strengthened by the daily violence that some of these countries are still experiencing (e.g., South Africa) (Campbell, 2005). Even when material compensation has been offered, the fact that the right of victims to obtain full justice may be ignored through an amnesty process certainly causes them disappointment (Jenkins, 2002). Furthermore, some authors have argued that public disclosure could constitute a traumatic exposure. Traumatic effects on the victim, family members, Truth Commission members, commission staff, and the public have been reported (see Chap. 3 in this volume). Other criticisms are more general. Despite the specification of their mandate, these commissions have often been criticized for failing to develop a model of reconciliation at the most appropriate level, that is, at the intergroup level.

As stated above, much of the criticism and confusion surrounding these processes are indicative of a lack of consensus on what can and cannot reasonably be expected from these commissions. There was, therefore, a strong need to examine the personal views of ordinary citizens on the possible objectives, functions, powers, and composition of Truth Commissions. Minow (1998) identified 11 theoretical aspirations for Truth Commissions:

- Overcoming the common and official denials of atrocities
- Gathering detailed facts to meet victims' need for knowledge, to build a record for posterity, and to provide a minimum of public accountability for perpetrators
- Ending and preventing violence through the transformation of opposition into words and institutional practices
- Creating a sufficient basis for the construction of a domestic democratic order that respects human rights
- Consolidating and legitimizing the new democratic regime
- Promoting reconciliation between former opponents and groups of opponents
- Promoting psychological healing of individuals, groups, victims, bystanders, and offenders
- Restoring the dignity of victims
- Punishing offenders
- Expressing the fact that such collective violence should never happen again
- Constructing an international order that has the capacity to prevent and respond to atrocities

Other authors have subsequently endorsed some or all of Minow's objectives (Crocker, 2000; Hayner, 2002; Long & Brecke, 2003).

Inspired by Minow's rigorous analysis, Mullet et al. (2008) studied a sample of participants from Timor-Leste, one of the most recent countries to have adopted a Truth Commission at the time of the study. Before 1974, Timor-Leste was a Portuguese colony. The process of decolonization that took place after the Portuguese Revolution was interrupted in 1975 by the invasion of Indonesian troops, who occupied the entire territory. More than 300,000 people died during the first six years of the conflict. Thousands of people were tortured and raped, and a climate of fear was maintained for the next two decades. Under pressure from the United Nations (UN), Indonesia relinquished its claim to the territory in 1999. Before leaving, militias and

Indonesian troops destroyed basic infrastructure, including hospitals. In 2002, Timor-Leste was recognized by the UN as an independent state. At the time of Mullet et al.'s (2008) study, Timor-Leste was still in turmoil, and neighboring countries had sent troops to try to end the violence between the government and part of the military. From 2002 to 2004, the population of Timor-Leste became aware of the work of Truth Commissions, observing the successes and limitations of these commissions and discussing them with their friends and relatives (Babo-Soares, 2005).

Mullet et al. (2008) translated each of Minow's theoretical objectives into items on the questionnaire assessing participants' views of the possible missions of a Truth Commission. In addition to completing this questionnaire, participants were also invited to express their personal views on the composition of the commission and who can (or should) testify to the commission. Agreement was reasonably high (81%) for the statement "after a politically very troubled period, recourse to such commissions is necessary," and majority disagreement (59%) was observed for the item "these types of commissions are, in most cases, a barrier to justice." Participants agreed that members of the commission should be independent of the political system. The presence of religious people, historians, journalists, lawyers, sociologists, philosophers, and psychologists was favored. Participants overwhelmingly agreed (84%) that "these types of commissions should hear anyone who requests a hearing" and disagreed that "these types of commissions can compel someone to appear and testify." For the perpetrators of atrocities, however, opinions were mixed, with 55% of the sample agreeing that "appearance before the commission should be mandatory."

An exploratory factor analysis on the items derived from Minow's analysis found eight factors. The first two factors were called "shame, punishment and obtaining reparations" and "prevention of political instability and mob violence." Only 35% and 32% of the sample, respectively, considered these objectives to be necessary objectives. The third factor, which 49% of the sample agreed was a necessary objective, was called "identify, denounce, and banish" (e.g., "publicly denounce the perpetrators of atrocities").

The fourth, fifth, and sixth factors were called "healing the moral wounds of perpetrators," "restoring collective dignity" (e.g., "restoring the collective dignity of victims"), and "enforcing the new government" (e.g., "strengthening the legitimacy of the new government"). More participants agreed that these factors were necessary objectives, with ratings ranging from 60% to 73%. Simply put, rehabilitating perpetrators, restoring collective dignity, and reinforcing the new government were, in general, seen as necessary goals for Truth Commissions.

The seventh and eighth factors were called "reconciling opposing parties and strengthening respect for human rights" (e.g., "rebuilding a sense of community in the country") and "knowing and communicating the truth" (e.g., "ensuring that atrocities are known throughout the country"). Most participants (78%) agreed that these were necessary objectives for a Truth Commission. Simply put, reconciliation, strengthening respect for human rights, and knowing and communicating the truth were generally seen as fundamental goals for Truth Commissions.

An important finding from Mullet et al.'s (2008) study is that participants expressed structured views on the missions of Truth Commissions. Despite the use of a tool that was not necessarily familiar to them (a questionnaire), participants were able to respond in a sufficiently consistent manner, highlighting a clear factor structure. If their responses had been random, no structure would have been evident, and the results of this type of survey would have been highly questionable.

Most participants were, therefore, apparently aware of the limited scope of Truth Commissions and did not show unrealistic expectations of what could be achieved through them. They did not expect Truth Commissions to have a strong therapeutic effect on victims of atrocities, and they agreed that some short-term political objectives can be part of the objectives of Truth Commissions. They strongly appreciated the "symbolic" nature of Truth Commissions (rather than their judicial or therapeutic nature).

Kpanake and Mullet (2011b) replicated the findings of Mullet et al.' (2008) study with a new sample of participants living on another continent, sharing a different culture, and having had a different transition experience, namely, Togolese adults. Participants were interviewed in 2007, and because the Togolese President did not officially announce the establishment of a Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation Commission until 2008, this second study was purely a prospective in design. In addition to Minow's original objectives, objectives such as compensating victims and recommending institutional and economic reforms were also considered.

A huge majority agreed with the view that, after a politically very troubled period, recourse to this type of commission is necessary (97%) and disagreed that commissions are, in most cases, a barrier to justice or that after a very troubled political period, the use of commissions is laughable. Like the Timorese participants, the Togolese participants agreed that commission members should be independent of the government. A majority of participants were hostile to the idea of members being appointed not only by the President and the government but also by the victims, the United Nations, or the Organization of African Unity. Most participants suggested that the members should be democratically elected. Participants agreed that the commission should hear anyone who requests a hearing and could compel someone to testify and that appearance should be mandatory for perpetrators.

In order of agreement level, the priority objectives were the promotion of reconciliation between former opponents, the creation of a sufficient basis for building a national democratic order that respects and enforces human rights, the collection of detailed facts to meet victims' knowledge needs, the building of a record for posterity, the provision of a minimum of public accountability for the perpetrators, the restoration of victims' dignity, and the overcoming of communal and official denial of the atrocity. The consolidation and legitimization of a new democratic regime were not considered an objective, which can be explained by the fact that, in Togo, the new government has visible links to the former regime.

In addition to these five objectives, four others emerged as priority objectives, namely, the expression that such collective violence should never happen again, the construction of an international order capable of preventing and responding to

atrocities, the compensation of victims, and the end of violence as a means to solve conflicts. As in Timor-Leste, participants clearly expressed their disagreement that the commission should work to punish or banish the perpetrators and their accomplices from the country or political life. Furthermore, economic reform did not emerge as a priority objective.

Aguilar et al. (2011) conducted a similar study in Spain. After the Civil War of 1936–1939, Spain was governed in a dictatorial manner by General Franco. Close to Nazism in its early days, the regime gradually evolved towards more moderate positions, but any opposition to the regime was severely repressed. It was only in 1976 that democracy was restored after the death of the dictator. Aguilar et al. (2011) examined Spanish people's support for the creation of a Commission of Inquiry in their country (e.g., “from your point of view, should an investigation commission (independent from the government) be created to clarify human rights violations that took place under Francoism?”). Overall, support was low, with only 40% of the sample agreeing. Participants who agreed with this item endorsed left-wing politics, were younger and nonreligious, had families that sided with Republicans, or were victimized during the Franco regime.

Cárdenas Castro et al. (2017) conducted a similar study in Chile. From 1973 to 1990, Chile was ruled by an authoritarian right-wing regime after a coup that overthrew the democratically elected socialist president. Approximately 2000 people were killed during the military operations. Between 10,000 and 30,000 people were subsequently victims of state violence against opponents (Polynational War Memorial, 2020). In 1990, following democratic elections, the dictator remained head of the military but relinquished the office of president to the elected leader of a political coalition. A National Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established to investigate politically motivated killings and disappearances during the dictatorship. Cárdenas Castro et al. (2017) examined Chilean people's level of support for their 1991 Truth Commission and the perceived extent to which this commission had fulfilled its missions, specifically:

- The extent to which the Truth Commission contributed to relatives' knowledge of the truth about their loved ones
- The extent to which justice has been imparted to human rights' violators
- Whether the Truth Commission contributed to the creation of a comprehensive history
- Whether the Truth Commission contributed to the prevention of subsequent violence

Cárdenas Castro et al. (2017) found a high level of support for the Truth Commission, further observing a positive correlation between support for the Truth Commission and perception that its goals had been achieved. Cárdenas Castro et al. (2017) also found that support for the Truth Commission was negatively associated with emotions such as anger and sadness.

Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica (2011) examined people's opinions regarding the effect of the Justice and Peace Law issued in 2005 to guarantee victims of the armed conflict the right to truth, justice, and reparation. Only a minority

of participants stated that they know the law well (71% acknowledged that they have only heard about it but they do not know much about it). Nonetheless, the majority of participants believed that the dispositions of the law have ensured that victims receive reparation for the damage caused to them (69%), allowed for clarifications of the truth regarding paramilitary crimes (67%), and have been an aid for reconciliation (67%).

In terms of the specific factors that can contribute to reconciliation, participants positively valued compensation to victims for the harm done to them (71%), prosecution of members of illegal armed groups and state agents responsible for serious human rights violations (55%), and knowledge of the truth about what has happened concerning the conflict and serious human rights violations (52%). Only 40% of participants agreed that publicly remembering the crimes of the past would be aid for reconciliation.

In another study in Colombia, Pineda Marín et al. (2020b) examined a novel aspect of these objectives and missions that was not addressed in previous studies, namely, their indivisibility. Simply put, Pineda Marín et al. (2020b) explored whether citizens conceive the objectives of Truth Commissions as a simple set of particular aspirations that are more or less independent of each other or as a set of aspirations to be pursued jointly. Drawing on previous work, Pineda Marín et al. (2020b) selected a subset of missions people generally consider to be fundamental. These five missions were:

- Obtain the truth about what happened (i.e., obtain information about where abuses and torture took place and where the bodies of the victims lie)
- Promote the fullest possible reconciliation between the opposing groups, respect for human rights throughout the country, and be an example of the respect for human rights
- Restore the dignity of each of the victims and each group of victims, and restore also, as far as possible, the dignity of the perpetrators
- Identify the perpetrators of the violence, to publicly blame them and obtain reparations from them
- Contribute to the legitimization of new democratic governments, and prevent political instability and violence

By an orthogonal combination of these five missions, scenarios were created, which depicted a different projected Truth Commission. A sample of Colombian citizens rated the level of “goodness” of each type of project. As can be observed in Fig. 4.3, all factors had an impact on participant’s judgments. This result is, however, trivial; it simply illustrated the fact that the participants understood the judgment task assigned to them. The important result was in the pattern formed by the curves. For a commission project to be a good project, it was, from the citizens’ point of view, necessary that all the five missions outlined above be included. If one of them was absent, then the corresponding proposed project was not considered satisfactory. As can be observed, only two projects received mean ratings above the middle of the response scale.

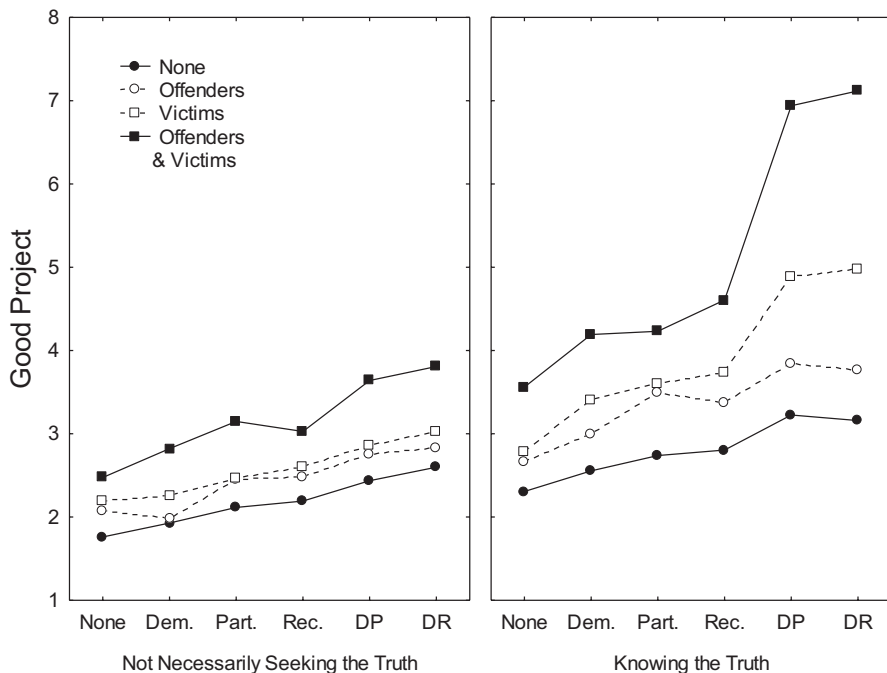


Fig. 4.3 Ratings in terms of “good project” are on the vertical axis. The horizontal axis carries the combinations of the factors Consolidation of democracy and Reconciliation (*None* Neither of the two objectives, *Dem.* Legitimizing the democratic government, *Part.* Promoting at least a partial level of reconciliation, *Rec.* Promoting the fullest possible reconciliation, *DP* Legitimizing the new democratic government and promoting a certain level of reconciliation, *DR* Legitimizing the democratic government and promoting the fullest possible reconciliation). Each curve corresponds to a combination of the factors Identification of perpetrators and Restoration of the dignity of victims. Each panel corresponds to a level of truth-seeking

4.3.2 Summary

The citizens of Timor-Leste, Togo, Chile, and Colombia did not show any hostility to holding Truth Commissions. Some participants in Timor-Leste had firsthand experience of this type of commission, and others hoped that such a commission would be established. With the exception of the Spanish cohort, all participants considered that Truth Commissions could play a positive role in restoring relations of trust between opponents. These observations help to explain why criticism, sometimes virulent, has been leveled at these bodies. For them to be considered acceptable by citizens, they must, as is visible in Fig. 4.3, meet several criteria simultaneously. This is the fundamental difference between Truth Commissions and Commissions of Inquiry.

In all cases in which truth-seeking is not an objective of the proposed Truth Commission, its establishment does not seem justified, even if it intends to honor

the victims and to promote reconciliation. It is important to distinguish between a position of principle and legitimate dissatisfaction. According to a majority of citizens, Truth Commissions are not, in principle, bodies to be rejected. On the other hand, if these bodies do not respect a certain number of elementary ethical principles or only focus on one of them without consideration for the others, then people's dissatisfaction with the work of these bodies will increase. However, one should not condemn all commissions of this type solely because some of them have not functioned well or that certain hearings have gone badly.

4.4 Citizens Conceptualizations of Intergroup Forgiveness: Seeking and Granting

It is questionable whether forgiveness is a relevant topic in government and politics in general. Forgiveness seems to be a rather unrealistic and inconsistent way of responding to anything political (Digeser, 1998). Indeed, forgiveness has long been conceived by moral philosophers, and then by clinical and social psychologists (Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2000), as a process that involves first and foremost two people directly related to the transgression (i.e., the offender and the offended or, if there have been several offenders, a series of offending dyads). This conceptualization of forgiveness as a strictly interpersonal process does not, however, take into account the facts that (a) many, if not most, of the wrongs committed in the context of social life are collective (e.g., wars, terrorism); (b) responsibilities for them are often shared by many individuals, at the same time or different periods; (c) it is often impossible to do or obtain justice for these wrongs; (d) the confession of these wrongs must be a collective enterprise to be complete; and (e) the appropriate healing of the victims can only be undertaken at the community level. All of these facts, however, seem to have been well understood by some visionary rulers (Amstutz, 2004; Barkan, 2000).

Accordingly, Tavuchis (1991) suggested three alternative structural conceptualizations in addition to the interpersonal one (which illustrates only the individual-individual dynamic). Specifically, Tavuchis's (1991) structural conceptualizations are (a) individual-community (e.g., where a politician apologizes to their constituents for mistakes made), (b) community-individual (e.g., where a court apologizes to a person who has been unjustly convicted), and (c) community-community (e.g., when a German President apologizes to Jews for Nazi crimes on behalf of the Federal Republic). Chapter 5 in this volume already deals with forgiveness in a post-conflict context. Studies in Northern Ireland, for example, have sought to measure Protestants' willingness to forgive Catholics (e.g., Moeschberger et al., 2005). The Intergroup Forgiveness Scale, developed by these authors, includes items such as "to what extent do you feel compassion towards members of the other community?" This scale measures the emotional relationship that a participant has with another community. These studies generally use a series of items much closer,

therefore, to the second dynamic proposed by Tavuchis (1991), namely, individual-community rather than the dynamic that would correspond to intergroup forgiveness, namely, community-community.

4.4.1 Seeking Forgiveness in an Intergroup Context

Several authors have explored the community-community dynamic because of its relevance to forgiveness in political contexts both generally and in the context of peacekeeping. Kadiangandu and Mullet (2007) studied a sample of Congolese citizens living in Kasai Province. In 1989, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, President Mobutu was forced to abolish the one-party political system and reform the government. To remain head of state, he decided to revive ethnic conflict, a diversionary tactic familiar to political leaders. For example, in 1992, to achieve complete ethnic cleansing, President Mobutu expelled Kasaians who had lived and worked there for years from their homes in Shaba. These people were subjected to numerous atrocities and humiliating treatment before and during the mass exodus to Kasai (Kakonde Luteke, 1997). In 1997, President Kabila's army finally defeated government forces and seized power. Since then, these displaced Kasaiian people have attempted to heal their wounds with the help of international nongovernmental organizations. Kadiangandu and Mullet (2007) examined Congolese people's views regarding the meaningfulness of seeking intergroup forgiveness and how seeking intergroup forgiveness, if deemed meaningful, could take place. Their questionnaire contained questions or statements that referred to concrete aspects of the process of forgiveness (e.g., "can a group of people ask another group for forgiveness?," "the request for forgiveness should be accompanied by proposals for new kinds of solidarity," and "the request for forgiveness should concern all the actions performed in a specific period of time").

Findings revealed that a majority of participants agreed that seeking forgiveness as an intergroup process makes sense (i.e., only about 14% stated that a group of people could not ask another group for forgiveness). Furthermore, participants had clear views regarding the process of asking for intergroup forgiveness. First, seeking intergroup forgiveness was viewed above all as a democratic process. Simply put, participants thought that (a) public discussions and voting should take place before any concrete actions by politicians and (b) that the people who speak on behalf of the whole group must be democratically designated. Second, intergroup seeking of forgiveness was viewed as a collective and global process (i.e., participants believed that it should be requested on behalf of the whole community and that it should involve everyone and address all of the actions committed). Intergroup seeking of forgiveness was, however, not seen as a regional or continental process.

Third, seeking intergroup forgiveness was viewed as a public process with special deference to the offended group. Participants agreed that the process should take place concretely in several parts of the offended party's territory, inside its symbolic buildings (the presidential palace), and using its language. Fourth,

participants believed that requesting forgiveness promoted reconciliation between the two groups. They agreed that concessions should be made, if needed, to facilitate the process. In addition, they agreed that both parties should make plans for the future, namely, to live in a more interdependent and cooperative fashion. The process of asking for intergroup forgiveness was, however, seen as distinct from the initiation of a commercial agreement, a military treaty, or a judicial procedure. Participants agreed that asking for forgiveness should occur soon after the events. Finally, statements referring to the offering victims various kinds of compensations received only moderate agreement.

A subsequent study by Neto et al. (2007a) examined the generalizability of Kadiangandu and Mullet's (2007) results. The same questionnaire was administered to four samples of participants from Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, and Timor-Leste. Angola was a Portuguese colony from the fifteenth century to 1975. In the early 1960s, two independence movements, namely, the Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MLPA) and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), took action against the Portuguese army. However, the parties behind these movements were divided, and, once independence was achieved, they fought against each other. In 1991, an agreement was signed by the two parties that stipulated that an electoral process should take place for the appointment of a democratic government, but the election results were contested, and the civil war resumed. In 1994 a second agreement was signed, which also failed. The UN Security Council imposed sanctions on UNITA, and the government, mainly the MLPA, launched a massive offensive and took military control of major cities. In 2002, a lasting peace agreement was finally signed. It is estimated that during the 25 years of civil war 1,500,000 people died, and hundreds of thousands were left homeless (Weigert, 2011).

Like Angola, Mozambique was a Portuguese colony. In 1962, several anti-colonial movements created the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO). FRELIMO fought sporadically against the Portuguese army and, in 1974, took control of the capital. After the country's independence, FRELIMO aligned itself with the Soviets, which led another anti-communist movement to launch a series of attacks on basic facilities, plunging the entire country into civil war. In 1990, the two movements agreed to enter into direct dialogue, and in 1992, a new constitution was adopted, with periodic elections agreed on by both sides. During the negotiations, the UN provided technical support, and immediately after the signing, the UN operation in Mozambique was set up to monitor the implementation of the peace process. As in Angola, the cost of this violence was high. The number of deaths due to the civil war is estimated to be 1,000,000, and the number of refugees who, fearing the consequences of the civil war, sought asylum in neighboring countries is estimated at 1,700,000. In addition, 4,000,000 people have been displaced and lived as refugees (Cabrita, 2001).

Guinea-Bissau was also a Portuguese colony. The African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde led the political struggle and the insurrection for independence. Since independence in 1973, the country's political and economic situation has been unstable. The army plays a key role in the political life of the country. Six attempts to overthrow power through violence were recorded, and

all but one of the presidents were deposed before the end of their terms. Although the history of Guinea Bissau did not feature military confrontations between organized rival armies, like Angola and Mozambique, a coup in 1998 led to civil war. With government forces supported by neighboring states, the rebels eventually signed a peace agreement. However, in 1999, brief fighting resumed, and the president was overthrown. Guinea Bissau is plagued by drug trafficking and is classified as a *narco-state* by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (Chabal & Green, 2016). The drug trade is an important source of income for the country's population. It is suspected that the repeated attacks against politicians and the military were orchestrated primarily by leaders of drug cartels.

As in the previous study, Neto et al. (2007a) found that a majority of participants (85% in Angola, 88% in Guinea, 90% in Mozambique, and 88% in Timor-Leste) agreed that a group of people can ask another group for forgiveness, with seeking intergroup forgiveness viewed as a popular, democratic process. Participants were willing to acknowledge, however, that people in charge politically (e.g., political parties, the Head of State, etc.) may initiate the process. Seeking intergroup forgiveness was also seen as a collective and global process (although participants tended to exclude the very people who were responsible for the atrocities from the requesting process). Seeking intergroup forgiveness was viewed as a public process that may imply the expression of particular sentiments or emotions (e.g., contrition, remorse, and repentance). It was also viewed as implying concrete behaviors attesting to the sincerity of the demand (e.g., a gift of money, punishment of the people responsible for the atrocities, etc.). Finally, as in previous research, participants viewed requesting forgiveness as essential in promoting reconciliation between two groups.

Several differences were observed across contexts. Specifically, more Angolan participants viewed forgiveness as a holistic process that involves all the members of the requesting group (i.e., those who were directly responsible for the atrocities, those who wished to seek forgiveness, those who were reluctant to seek forgiveness, etc.). Similarly, more Mozambican participants viewed forgiveness as a broad, international process. This likely reflects the way Mozambican factions reached an agreement, that is, through the effective, although indirect, mediation of the UN. Finally, more Timorese participants agreed that requests for forgiveness should be accompanied by commercial offers, proposals for new kinds of collaboration, and acts of reparation for the harm done.

In summary, across the five groups that have been studied in the reviewed studies (Angola, Congo, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, and Timor-Leste), a majority agreed that (a) seeking intergroup forgiveness makes sense; (b) seeking forgiveness must be a popular, democratic, and public process (i.e., not a secret elite negotiation); (c) the process must be initiated and carried out by people in charge politically; and (d) the process must be aimed at reconciliation, not at humiliating the requesting group.

4.4.2 *Granting Forgiveness in an Intergroup Context*

Neto et al. (2007b) examined the views and attitudes of Timor-Leste and Angolan citizens regarding the meaningfulness of granting intergroup forgiveness and how granting intergroup forgiveness, if deemed meaningful, could take place. Mullet et al. (2014) subsequently published a synthesis of these data in addition to data gathered from three samples in Congo, Cambodia, and Mozambique. Their questionnaire was similar to the one used in the studies regarding the forgiveness seeking (e.g., “can a group of people forgive another group of people?,” “forgiveness should be accompanied by proposals for new forms of collaboration,” and “a fraction of the offended group (members of a political party) may forgive in its own name”).

Only 11% of the participants from the four countries disagreed that a group of people can forgive another group of people. However, when apologies from the offending group were absent, the disagreement percentage jumped to 48%. More Cambodian participants insisted on the necessary presence of apologies from the offending group (for intergroup forgiveness to be meaningful). The study by Neto et al. (2007b) was methodologically more ambitious than the previous studies on the seeking of forgiveness. It also aimed to uncover a model for granting forgiveness through exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses. Nine distinct factors were found.

The first factor was called the “role of traditional and religious authorities.” It loaded items related to the possible role (e.g., deciding or speaking on behalf of the group) of religious authorities and traditional authorities (i.e., the local kings and chiefs). Participants agreed that it would be the role of respected members of society to speak on behalf of the forgiving group, but disagreed that it is the traditional authorities who can decide to forgive. The second factor was called the “role of politicians.” Opinions between groups differed widely. For example, 60% of Congolese participants agreed and 79% of Cambodians participants disagreed that the Head of State may make the decision to forgive.

The third factor was called the “role of international bodies.” In general, participants disagreed that people from another group that was not associated with the offenses and people from international organizations are in the best position to speak on behalf of the forgiving group. The fourth factor was called the “role of citizens.” Participants agreed that public discussions should be organized to decide whether the group is going to forgive or not and that there should be a public vote to appoint the individual(s) who will speak in the name of the group who is asked to forgive. Moreover, the majority of participants agreed that forgiveness must be announced during a dedicated public ceremony and that it is a delegation of several people (not a single person) that must speak on behalf of the forgiving group.

The fifth factor was called “process aimed at reconciliation.” Participants agreed that forgiveness should be accompanied by symbolic acts of reconciliation, determination to make sacrifices that can ease the process, and proposals for new kinds of solidarity, complementarity, collaboration, alliance, cooperation, and cohabitation.

The sixth factor was called “group-wide and national process.” Participants agreed that forgiveness must be granted on behalf of the totality of the forgiving group and must cover all members of the requesting group. They disagreed with granting forgiveness to a fraction of the offending group (e.g., members of a political party) and only granting forgiveness to the members of the requesting group who are not guilty of crimes. They also disagreed that forgiveness may cover some but not all of the acts committed during a determined period of time. The seventh factor was called “public process.” Participants agreed that forgiveness should be announced face to face, in the presence of at least one person from the requesting group, in one or several international languages in addition to the language of the forgiving group, and that it should be documented (i.e., written down).

The eighth factor was called “process not subordinated to reparation or compensation.” Participants disagreed that forgiveness should be accompanied by a request for money, business proposals from the forgiving group, acts of punishment by the forgiving group on the persons responsible for the offenses, acts of punishment by the forgiven group on the persons responsible for the offenses, and requests for reparation or compensation. Finally, the ninth factor was called “receivers of the forgiving message.” Participants agreed that forgiveness should ideally be announced to particularly respected members of the other group.

In all of the reviewed studies, and as expected, a majority of participants believed in forgiveness as an intergroup process. The level of agreement across different countries regarding what can be called the spirit of the intergroup process was high. For the majority, (a) the aim of the intergroup forgiveness process is reconciliation with the former offender, (b) the process need not be strictly conditioned on adequate reparation and compensation or the prosecution of the individual(s) responsible for the atrocities, (c) the process must be democratic (i.e., forgiveness should not be decided solely by politicians or by traditional or religious authorities), (d) the process belongs to the forgiver-forgiven dyad (i.e., interference from the international community should be minimal), (e) the process should be public (and not a negotiation between members of the elite) with forgiveness announced to the whole community using a range of international languages, and (f) the process should be all-encompassing (i.e., it should encompass all the members of the requesting group, all the members of the forgiving group, and all the offenses).

4.5 Conclusion

In summary, the results observed in most of the reviewed studies are largely consistent. Citizens have structured opinions about (a) the conditions under which political amnesties can be considered as justified, (b) about the possible missions of Truth Commissions beyond the granting of amnesties, and (c) about the psychological foundations of political amnesties and Truth Commissions (i.e., about seeking and granting intergroup forgiveness). Given that contexts differ across countries and given that citizens may have different views on the components of amnesty, Truth

Commissions, and intergroup forgiveness, it is prudent, before launching such processes, to conduct local investigations, and this chapter described validated tools that may be used in these investigations. When initiating these types of political procedures, there is no reason for politicians to continue to only consider top-down processes.

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Chapter 5

Forgiveness and Reconciliation in Post-Conflict Settings



Etienne Mullet, Wilson López López, and Claudia Pineda Marín

5.1 Introduction

After a period of conflict, a country must rebuild its material infrastructure such as roads, schools, hospitals, farms, and factories. It must also rebuild trust and cooperation among its people, that is, its psychological infrastructure. The rebuilding of material infrastructure is inevitably a challenging task. The rebuilding of psychological infrastructure may be no less daunting, especially if the conflict was internal. After a long period of civil war or after genocide, for example, rebuilding trust between former enemies and actors and bystanders may seem like an unattainable objective. Rebuilding psychological infrastructure is, however, an inescapable objective. Enduring dissension, lasting resentment, and a spirit of revenge can only contribute to diminished well-being and happiness for every citizen except those who exploit the troubles for profit.

Damaged psychological infrastructure may be a serious barrier to rebuilding material infrastructure. In a climate of suspicion, affected areas cannot quickly redevelop, and overall prosperity is delayed. Targeting interpersonal and intergroup forgiveness and reconciliation within the country is, therefore, not just a laudable political objective but also a practical one. This is why reconciliation was proposed as an additional social indicator of development (Gibson, 2007), along with classic indicators such as education and life expectancy. For all these reasons, it is useful to

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examine how, in countries that have experienced bloody internal conflicts, former opponents can engage in forgiveness and reconciliation processes.

The first set of studies to empirically assess people's willingness to forgive or reconcile after a conflict were conducted in post-war Lebanon (Azar et al., 1999). Soon after, Gibson (2002) published his first work on political forgiveness in South Africa, Lopes Cardozo et al. (2003) published two studies on revenge that were conducted in Kosovo, and Reed and Aquino (2003) published research on willingness to forgive perpetrators of the September 11 attacks. Next came a series of studies conducted in Northern Ireland (McLernon et al., 2004), Rwanda (Pham et al., 2004), Israel and Palestine (Nadler & Liviatan, 2006), Uganda (Vinck et al., 2007), Latin America (Manzi & González, 2007), and Mediterranean countries (Conejero et al., 2014). This chapter reviews these studies (65 in total).

5.2 Lebanon

From 1975 to 1990, there were numerous instances of bloody conflict between Muslim and Christian communities in Lebanon. Unfortunately, the 1990 peace agreement between these communities caused divisions within the Christian community and led to a civil war between Christian factions who accepted part of the agreement and those who rejected all of it. According to the Polynational War Memorial (2020), at least 132,000 people were killed during these periods of fighting. Two studies have been conducted that involved members of six of the main religious communities.

Azar et al. (1999) examined Lebanese people's willingness to forgive a severe offense perpetrated by a combatant during a fight using a scenario-based technique. Vignettes were created that depicted a confrontation during which a male combatant severely hurt a child. Four factors were manipulated, namely, the combatant's intent to harm (e.g., whether he had intentionally shot the child), consequence severity (e.g., whether the child had now fully recovered), the religious proximity between the combatant and the victim's family (e.g., whether the combatant was a Christian), and apologies from the combatant (e.g., whether he directly expressed his remorse and begged the family for forgiveness). Adults from the three main Christian communities (Catholic, Maronite, and Orthodox) participated in the study. When apologies were present, or the consequences were less severe, or there was no intent to harm, participants reported greater willingness to forgive. Findings further revealed that combatant's religious group (i.e., whether the combatant was a member of participants' religious group or another) did not impact willingness to forgive (i.e., participants were equally likely to forgive combatants who shared or did not share their religious beliefs).

Azar and Mullet (2001) extended this study by incorporating three new samples from the Druze, Shiite, and Sunni Islamic communities. They found that these participants were, overall, willing to forgive to the same extent that the Christian participants were. Azar and Mullet (2001) further report that consequence severity,

intent to harm, and apologies (which were important factors among Christians) were of similar importance for these communities. Finally, the religious similarity factor proved no more important among Druze, Shiite, and Sunni Islamic communities than it was among Christians.

To summarize, these studies highlight the importance of the circumstances of an offense on an individual's willingness to forgive, even in tragic situations such as a fight between rival factions, thus aligning with Fehr et al.'s (2010) conclusions.

5.3 South Africa and Togo

From 1948 to 1994, South Africa applied a racial policy known as apartheid. Under this policy, people were categorized in accordance with their race, receiving different rights and restrictions based on this categorization. The white minority enjoyed a high standard of living, while the black majority had limited access to income, education, and housing. According to the Polynational War Memorial (2020), at least 4000 persons were killed during the fight for equal rights. After the end of apartheid and the election of Nelson Mandela as President of South Africa in 1994, the new government established a Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 1996. Two studies, namely, Gibson (2002) and Allan et al. (2006), examined South Africans' views of the work of one of its subcommittees, the Amnesty Committee.

Gibson (2002) assessed people's opinions regarding the granting of political amnesty by the committee (e.g., "do you approve of amnesty being given to those who admitted to committing atrocities during the struggle over apartheid?"). A majority of Black people (72%) agreed with the committee's granting of amnesties, even if these amnesties were directed at other segments of the population; however, only 34% of the sample considered the amnesties to be fair for the victims. A majority of members from the other communities disagreed with the granting of amnesty. Feelings of reconciliation (i.e., a mixture of interracial reconciliation, support for a human rights culture, political tolerance, and institutional legitimacy) were lower among Black people (33% of Black participants agreed at least somewhat) than among White people (56% agreed at least somewhat) or Colored people (58% agreed at least somewhat) (Gibson, 2006).

Allan et al. (2006) examined willingness to forgive among victims of gross human rights abuses. Participants were asked to indicate whether their tormentor had offered excuses, admitted guilt, apologized, and/or expressed genuine remorse and, finally, whether they were willing to forgive. The highest forgiveness ratings were observed in situations in which perpetrators had offered apologies and/or expressed genuine remorse. Only 20% of victims, however, reported that they had forgiven their tormentor, with 45% reporting that they were in the process of forgiving.

If the majority of the population that had suffered most under the apartheid regime or an authoritarian regime can agree with a political forgiveness process, it is likely because they realize that it was the result of a necessary political

compromise. In addition, Allan et al.'s (2006) study aligns with the research conducted in Lebanon. Specifically, circumstances matter at the time of forgiving, and sincere apologies from offenders can impact forgiveness.

5.4 Former Yugoslavia

From the secession of Slovenia in 1991 to the NATO bombing of Serbian troops in 1999, former Yugoslavia experienced a series of separate but related conflicts, namely, the Croatian War of Independence, the Bosnian War, and finally the Kosovo War. At least 130,000 people were killed during this decade (Polynational War Memorial, 2020). Six studies have examined the willingness of Bosnians and Kosovars to forgive the Serbs. Also relevant here are the results of a study conducted in another former Communist country, Czechoslovakia. What was assessed in these studies was one person's willingness to forgive a whole group.

In a study conducted just after the NATO bombing that ended ten years of violence, Lopes Cardozo et al. (2003) assessed, in two annual surveys, feelings of hatred and revenge (e.g., "do you have feelings and fantasies of taking revenge over what has happened to you and your family during the war?") among Kosovar Albanian adolescents and adults. In 1999, about 90% of participants reported feelings of hatred, 47% expressed feelings of revenge, and 56% reported that they would act on their feeling of revenge. In 2000, the corresponding figures were 61%, 39%, and 47%, demonstrating a decrease over time. These negative feelings were positively associated with nonspecific psychiatric morbidity and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Čehajić et al. (2008) examined the extent to which young Bosnian Muslim students from Sarajevo were willing to forgive the Serbs (e.g., "I am prepared to forgive Serbs their misdeeds") for the atrocities that were committed during the Bosnian War (1992–1995). The mean agreement rating was quite low (3.18 on a scale ranging from 1 to 7). Individual differences were, however, strong. Forgiveness ratings were positively associated with empathy (e.g., "usually, I am able to understand Serbs' point of view"), comfort with proximity/social distance (e.g., "I wouldn't mind if my next door neighbor was a Serb"), perceived out-group heterogeneity (e.g., "I don't think that Serbs are all alike"), and having intergroup contacts (e.g., "I feel close to my Serbian friends"). Čehajić and Brown (2010) subsequently showed that young Bosnian Serb students were quite ready to acknowledge in-group responsibility (e.g., "I acknowledge that my group is responsible for crimes committed"). The mean agreement rating was 4.85 on a scale ranging from 1 to 7.

In a study conducted in Bosnia, Kirchhoff and Čehajić-Clancy (2014) assessed the effect of public apologies on willingness to forgive. The majority of participants defined themselves as Bosnians (or Bosniaks), but some of them were Serbs or Croats. The participants were asked to imagine that the representatives of one of the other groups had decided to apologize publicly for the crimes their group had committed during the war. An example of a public speech was the following: "We

apologize that we have destroyed cultural monuments and killed civilians of your group. What happened was a violation of prevalent norms. We have caused you suffering and damage. Your group is an important part of Bosnia and Herzegovina.” Some of these messages contained only the statement of apology and the naming of the transgression. Other messages were, as in the example, more complete. Participants’ mean rating of willingness to forgive following each message was about 3.70 on a scale ranging from 1 to 5 and did not vary as a function of speech completeness.

With a sample of adults of Bosnian ethnicity, Voci et al. (2017) assessed the relationship between forgiveness of Serbs (e.g., “Bosnia Herzegovina will never move on from the past until the two communities learn to draw a line under the past”) and social relationships with Serbs. The mean agreement rating was 2.22 on scale ranging from 1 to 5. Forgiveness of Serbs was positively associated with out-group trust (e.g., “generally speaking, would you say that most members of the other community can be trusted”), social distance, and postwar contacts.

Rupar and Graf (2019) assessed the relationship between Croat and Bosniak students’ willingness to forgive each other (e.g., “Croats should be forgiven for what they did to Bosniaks during the war”) and the perception of the other group as still being a threat (realistic or symbolic) to one’s group (e.g., “the other group threaten the values of my community”). The mean willingness to forgive was 2.87 on a scale ranging from 1 to 5. Forgiveness was negatively associated with both perceptions of the other group as a threat and negative depictions in the media (e.g., “how often do you get *positive/negative* impressions about the outgroup from what you hear or read about them in the news?”). However, forgiveness was positively associated with support for own group’s apologizing to the other group (e.g., “I think that my group should apologize for the atrocities that were committed during the war”).

Only one study has been conducted in Czechoslovakia. David and Choi (2006) examined whether former political prisoners were willing to forgive the persons responsible for their imprisonment (e.g., “have you forgiven anyone who wronged you in the past?”). Findings revealed that 42% of the sample had forgiven (these participants were mostly regular churchgoers or had received an apology for the harm done to them) while 52% of respondents had not forgiven (6% were indeterminate).

Overall, willingness to forgive in former Yugoslavia was medium at best. These findings may be explained by the fact that many non-combatants were killed and that, although the Serbian President apologized in 2013, people tended to doubt the sincerity of this apology because it came from someone who denied that any genocide had been committed at Srebrenica. A similar result was observed in Czechoslovakia. It is not surprising that people imprisoned for their political beliefs would be unwilling to forgive. Nonetheless, and as in the two preceding sections, the offender’s apologies matter. The mere presence of an apology affects willingness to forgive. Willingness to forgive is also, unsurprisingly, associated with the resurgence of intergroup trust and intergroup personal contacts.

5.5 September 11 Attacks

The September 11 attacks of 2001 were a series of [terrorist attacks](#) against the United States that were perpetrated by al-Qaeda. They resulted in about 3000 fatalities. Two studies have assessed the extent to which US students were willing to forgive the perpetrators.

Reed and Aquino (2003) used complex, moral identity items such as “is it morally appropriate to forgive those responsible, meaning negative emotions like hatred and anger should be replaced with positive emotions like compassion and love?.” The mean agreement rating was 2.42 on a scale ranging from 1 to 5 (i.e., quite low). Ratings were higher among participants who thought of themselves as caring and compassionate people.

In a study that was conducted three weeks after the events of September 11th but published later, Brown et al. (2008) examined the opinions of samples from Pennsylvania and Oklahoma, using items such as “I have already forgiven the attackers.” The mean agreement rating was 2.41 on scale ranging from 1 to 9 (i.e., quite close to the disagreement pole). Persistent anger was negatively associated with forgiveness.

In a related study conducted in the United States, Kira et al. (2009) examined the extent to which Iraqi refugees were willing to forgive politicians in charge during the Saddam Hussein regime (e.g., “I am not able to forgive people who collaborated with Saddam”). The mean agreement rating was 4.09 on a scale ranging from 1 to 5.

In these three studies, willingness to forgive was quite low. This can be explained by the fact that the perpetrators’ intent to harm was clear, no apologies had been made by al-Qaeda or by ex-members of the Saddam regime, and the consequences of the al-Qaeda attacks were, at the time of the studies, still clearly visible in the New York skyline (i.e., high consequence severity).

5.6 Northern Ireland

From 1966 to 1998, Northern Ireland experienced a political and nationalistic conflict termed “The Troubles” in which Irish Republicans (Catholics) and Unionists (Protestants) were in conflict (McLernon et al., 2002). About 3000 people were killed during what can be considered a low-level civil war (Polynational War Memorial, 2020). Nine studies have examined an individual’s willingness either to forgive a person from the other side (as in the studies in Lebanon and the former Yugoslavia) or to forgive the group as a whole (as in the studies on September 11 attacks).

McLernon et al. (2004) assessed the extent to which Catholics were willing to forgive someone from the Protestant community for verbal abuse or physical injury experienced during The Troubles. Participants were invited to recount a time they had experienced verbal abuse or physical injury during The Troubles and then to

complete a questionnaire based on the Enright Forgiveness Inventory (e.g., “to what extent have you forgiven the person you have described?”). The mean agreement rating was quite low, 2.87 on a scale of 1–6. Forgiveness was negatively associated with the perceived severity of the incident (see also Hewstone et al., 2004).

Moeschberger et al. (2005) examined the extent to which Catholic and Protestant students were willing to forgive the other community. They created the Intergroup Forgiveness Scale using items like: “Only when the two communities of Northern Ireland learn to forgive each other can we be free of political violence.” The mean agreement rating was 4.26 on a scale ranging from 1 to 5. Willingness to forgive was strongly positively associated with affective empathy (e.g., “to what extent do you feel compassionate towards members of the other community?”).

Using the same scale, Hewstone et al. (2006) showed that Protestants ($M = 3.82$) were willing to forgive the other group more or less to the same extent as Catholics ($M = 4.07$). Forgiveness ratings were positively associated with perspective-taking (e.g., “I try to look at both communities’ side of the conflict”) and trust. Forgiveness ratings were negatively associated with identification with ones’ community (e.g., “my community is an important group to me”). Personal suffering was, however, only very weakly negatively associated with willingness to forgive.

Tam et al. (2007) used a more complete Intergroup Forgiveness Scale with items such as “I forgive the other community for past paramilitary activities.” The mean level of agreement was 2.85 on a scale ranging from 1 to 4. Forgiveness ratings were negatively associated with anger toward the other group (e.g., “I feel furious”) and with negative views about the other group (e.g., “I feel suspicious”).

Using the same scale, Myers et al. (2009) explored additional constructs such as feelings of guilt (e.g., “I believe that I should repair the damage caused to the other community”) and perceived victimhood (e.g., “overall do you consider yourself to have been a victim of The Troubles?”). The mean agreement rating was 3.24 on a scale ranging from 1 to 4. Forgiveness ratings were moderately negatively associated with participants’ identification with their group (e.g., “would you say you are a person who considers the Catholic/Protestant community important?”) and positively associated with feelings of guilt toward the other group. They were only weakly associated with victimhood.

Leonard et al. (2015) compared adolescents and adults’ willingness to forgive the other group. Adolescents’ mean forgiveness ratings were slightly lower ($M = 3.04$ on a scale ranging from 1 to 5) than adults’ ratings ($M = 3.33$). They were positively associated with feelings of guilt.

Voci et al. (2015) compared again Catholics and Protestants’ willingness to forgive. Forgiveness ratings were, as in Hewstone et al. (2006), slightly higher among Catholics ($M = 4.09$ on a scale ranging from 1 to 5) than among Protestants ($M = 3.79$). Forgiveness was negatively associated with identification with their group and positively associated with number of friends from the other group.

Finally, Cohrs et al. (2015) assessed the relationship between willingness to forgive and perceived victimhood. They used items that were different from the ones in the other studies (e.g., “I would encourage my community not to have ill thoughts about the other community’s motives”). The mean agreement rating was 4.20 on a

scale ranging from 1 to 5. Forgiveness ratings were positively associated with measures of social reconstruction (e.g., “I also sympathize with those on the other side who have lost someone”) and negatively associated with a feeling of perpetual group victimhood (e.g., “All our enemies throughout history share this in common – they want to get rid of us”).

The findings in this section offer, in some way, the reverse image of the findings discussed in the above section on former Yugoslavia. Willingness to forgive the other group was uniformly high. In Northern Ireland, much fewer people have been killed, and public apologies have been made by representatives of one side to the people of the other side many times (e.g., Prime Minister Cameron apologizing, in 2010, for Bloody Sunday). Even if Catholics’ willingness ratings were higher than Protestants’ ratings, and if adolescents’ ratings were lower than adults’, these differences were quite small. Willingness to forgive was positively associated with the ability to appreciate the other group’s perspective, empathy, collective guilt, and contact with the other group. It was negatively associated with anger, negative views about the other group, and identification with one’s own group. Interestingly, forgiveness was not strongly associated with a personal experience of suffering but rather with the idea that one’s group was the subject of perpetual victimization.

5.7 Rwanda

The 1994 Rwandan genocide was a mass slaughter of **Tutsis**, moderate **Hutus**, and other minorities in **Rwanda**. According to the Polynational War Memorial (2020), about 510,000 people were killed in just three months, with other sources indicating higher figures (United Nations, 1999a, 1999b). This mass slaughter was, in some respects, a replica of the one that occurred in neighboring Burundi in 1972 at the hand of the Tutsi government. Five studies examined survivors’ willingness to forgive and its relationship with mental health. An additional study conducted in post-genocide Cambodia is also reported in this section.

Pham et al. (2004) worked with adult victims, who had been forced to flee their homes, had a close member of their family killed, or had property destroyed/lost. They considered four aspects of reconciliation, namely, social justice (e.g., “if my neighbor were in trouble, I would assist him, no matter what his ethnicity is”), non-violence (e.g., “it is inappropriate for government authorities to ask civilians to use arms to promote a political party”), sense of community (e.g., “trust among neighbors has improved since 1994”), and sense of interdependence (e.g., “have you shared a drink with a member of another ethnicity during the past month?”). Overall, 64%, 46%, 48%, and 68% of the sample, respectively, agreed with these four statements. Post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms were negatively associated with a sense of community and a sense of interdependence.

Staub et al. (2005) created a reconciliation scale that consisted of items such as “I can begin to forgive those of the other group who make amends for what their group did” and “there can be a better future with the two groups living together in

harmony.” The mean agreement rating was about 5.04 on a scale ranging from 0 to 10. Participants thus seemed to be relatively neutral regarding the issue of reconciliation. Their attitude toward others evolved positively, however, as a function of attendance at therapeutic sessions.

Mukashema and Mullet (2010) developed a Reconciliation Sentiment Scale adapted to the Rwandan culture, which consisted of items expressing intrapersonal (e.g., “I feel I can now be in control of myself when I am in the presence of the people who harmed me”) and interpersonal (e.g., “I feel I am willing to share pleasurable activities again with the people who harmed me”) components of reconciliation sentiments. The mean agreement ratings were 6.66 and 4.90, respectively, on a scale ranging from 0 to 10. The interpersonal component was associated with fewer problems sleeping, less anxiety, fewer perceptions of personal difficulties, and greater age. Mukashema and Mullet (2013) subsequently examined the relationship between dispositional forgiveness, reconciliation sentiments, and mental health observing mean agreement ratings of 5.87 and 6.00, respectively. The interpersonal component was positively associated with unconditional forgiveness, namely, the ability to forgive irrespective of circumstances (e.g., “I can easily forgive, even when the offender has not apologized”). As in the 2010 study, it was positively associated with mental health (but not with age). The intrapersonal component was, however, positively associated with lasting resentment (e.g., “I cannot forgive even if the consequences of the material harm are minimal”). This unexpected association likely relates to the strong self-control these participants need to exert when they are in the perpetrators’ presence. Mukashema et al. (2017), using an adaptation of their Reconciliation Sentiment Scale, reported high levels of reconciliation sentiment among perpetrators (i.e., participants who took part in the genocide and who had been detained). Finally, Mukashema and Mullet (2015) reported that most victims of the genocide (85%) did not believe that perpetrators or bystanders’ offspring shared their parents or grandparents’ blame.

Heim and Schaal (2014) assessed readiness to reconcile among Rwandan adults. They created a Readiness to Reconcile Inventory (e.g., “in Rwandan marriages, group membership plays an important role” and “I am careful towards Rwandans whom I don’t know”), observing a medium mean agreement (i.e., 5.40 on a scale ranging from 0 to 10). Readiness to reconcile was strongly negatively associated with negative emotions toward God (e.g., “how often do you experience situations in which you feel rage towards God?”) and with negative religious coping (e.g., “wondered whether God had abandoned me.”). It was also negatively associated with anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder and positively associated with openness.

About 20 years before the genocide in Rwanda, the Cambodian genocide was carried out by the Pol Pot government to force Cambodia to become communist. About 250,000 persons were killed (Polynational War Memorial, 2020). Other sources give much higher figures. In a study conducted in post-Khmer Rouge Cambodia, Field and Chhim (2008) assessed the relationship between feelings of revenge (e.g., “I want to see them hurt and miserable”) and attitude toward the Khmer Rouge Tribunal (e.g., “would you be willing to testify as a witness in the

tribunal?") among people who suffered at the hands of the Pol Pot regime. The mean revenge rating was 2.81 on a 1–4 scale. Ratings were positively associated with attitudes toward the tribunal, trauma symptoms, and disclosure (e.g., "how often do you talk with your children about what happened to you during the Khmer Rouge regime?"). They were negatively associated with socioeconomic status and growth-related coping (e.g., "how much has recognizing something of personal value been helpful to you in coping with what happened during the Khmer Rouge regime?").

Considering the results of these studies, we find ourselves at what appears to be an intermediary between those of Northern Ireland and the former Yugoslavia. In Rwanda, willingness to reconcile was, overall, neither high nor low. Although the death toll was very high, the political situation in Rwanda is now stable. A government composed of a majority of politicians who were former victims has been in place since 1994. This government has consistently endorsed reconciliation policies. In Cambodia, ratings of willingness to reconcile were higher. This may be explained by the fact that the genocide took place years before the Rwandan genocide. A novel finding of these studies was the positive relationship between reconciliation and mental health.

5.8 Israel and Palestine

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been an ongoing struggle between the Israeli army and various Palestinian liberation organizations since the creation of the state of Israel in 1949. About 17,000 persons have been killed since the beginning of the conflict (Polynational War Memorial, 2020). Ten studies assessed Israeli Jews' willingness to forgive or to reconcile with Palestinians. Four studies examined Israeli Arab's views, and one examined Palestinians' views.

Nadler and Liviatan (2006) presented Israeli students with a statement by a male Palestinian leader expressing or not expressing empathy toward the suffering of Israelis. They then assessed attitudes toward reconciliation using items such as "you cannot help but feel empathy for the prolonged suffering of the Palestinians." The mean agreement rating was about 4.43 in one study and around 4.11 in the other on a scale ranging from 1 to 7. Trust in Palestinians was associated with attitudes toward reconciliation in a complex way. When trust was high, ratings were a direct function of the Palestinian leader's expression of empathy. When trust was low, they were an inverse function of empathy such that willingness to reconcile was lower when the leader expressed empathy toward the Israelis than when he did not. In the latter case, empathy by the Palestinian leader was perceived as an insincere political maneuver.

Hamama-Raz et al. (2008) assessed the relationship between reconciliation and peace attitudes (e.g., "in light of the terror attacks, I think we should reach an agreement with the Palestinians as soon as possible") and forgivingness with a sample of adolescents from Jewish and the Arab communities. Among Jewish participants, the

mean agreement rating was 2.76 on a scale ranging from 1 to 5. Ratings were positively associated with unconditional forgiveness and negatively associated with lasting resentment and revenge (e.g., “I can truly forgive only if I have been able to take revenge”). Among Arab participants, the mean agreement rating was 3.18, and ratings were only positively associated with unconditional forgiveness.

Shnabel et al. (2009) examined the effect of two types of political leaders’ messages on Jewish or Arab adults’ views on reconciliation (e.g., “this message increases your willingness to promote reconciliation between the nations”). These statements were presented either by a Jewish leader or by an Arab leader. They comprised either expressions of empowerment of the other group (e.g., “we should acknowledge the right of Arabs in Israel to be independent and to determine their own fate and future”) or expressions of acceptance of the other group (e.g., “we should understand and accept our brothers the Jews”). The mean agreement rating was about 3.40 on a scale ranging from 1 to 5. Among the Jewish participants, ratings were slightly higher when the leader of the other group spoke of acceptance rather than empowerment. Among Arab participants, this was reversed (i.e., ratings were slightly higher when the leader of the other group spoke of empowerment, not acceptance).

Shnabel et al. (2013) also assessed the effect of different messages on Jewish and Palestinian students’ willingness to forgive (e.g., “I would like my group to forgive the other group for its violent acts”). Participants were presented with a short text that was neutral in content (the control condition), contained an archeological report that emphasized that Palestinians and Jews originated from a common primordial culture (the common identity condition), or with an intelligence report stating that Jews and Palestinians are both the victims of a prolonged conflict resulting in substantial individual and national losses of all kinds (the common victim condition). Among Palestinians, the mean agreement rating remained low in all three conditions: 1.87, 1.80, and 2.60, respectively, on a scale ranging from 1 to 7. Among Jewish participants, ratings were higher in all three conditions, especially in the common identity condition (3.43, 4.17, and 4.12, respectively). In an additional study involving Israeli Arabs, a common perpetrator identity was added. Among Israeli Arabs, the mean agreement ratings were substantially higher than had been the Palestinians’ ratings in the first study and were higher in the common perpetrator condition than in the control condition (3.60, 3.61, 3.89, and 4.20, respectively). Among Jewish participants, ratings were somewhat higher than those of the Israeli Arabs, but the pattern was similar (3.49, 4.18, 4.39, and 4.77, respectively) with the highest ratings observed in the common perpetrator condition.

SimanTov-Nachlieli and Shnabel (2014) assessed changes in antisocial tendencies (e.g., “I would like Israel to use unrestricted force in response to any act of terrorism”) and changes in prosocial tendencies (e.g., “I would like Israel to provide humanitarian aid to Gaza”) induced by recalling painful incidents. Participants were asked to recall and write down either an episode in which Palestinians harmed Israeli (the victim condition), an episode in which Israeli harmed Palestinians (the perpetrator condition), or both kinds of episodes (the victim-perpetrator condition). In the victim condition, the mean antisocial and prosocial ratings were 6.42 and

3.81, respectively, on a 1–9 scale. In the perpetrator condition, the inverse pattern was observed: 5.04 and 6.30. In the third condition (the victim-perpetrator condition), prosocial ratings were 6.06 and 5.01 (i.e., closer to those observed in the victim condition than in the perpetrator condition).

Working in a city close to the Gaza Strip, Klar and Schori-Eyal (2015) examined residents' willingness to apologize to the Palestinians (e.g., "the State of Israel should apologize for its actions during the military operations in Gaza") and to help them rebuild their infrastructures (e.g., "I think Israel should help Gaza residents who lost their homes to rebuild them"). In both cases, the mean agreement ratings were extremely low (1.74 and 1.94 on a scale ranging 1–7). Ratings were positively associated with moral responsibility (e.g., "I feel morally responsible for the situation of the Gaza Palestinians") and were higher ($M = 4.86$) for items taken from the Intergroup Forgiveness Scale (i.e., items expressing more abstract views on forgiveness).

Noor et al. (2015) examined the willingness of Israeli people, in general, to forgive the Palestinians (e.g., "my group should forgive the Palestinians for the suffering they have caused us during the conflict"). The mean agreement rating was 3.38 on a 1–7 scale. Ratings were strongly associated with trust in the Palestinians (e.g., "do you generally have trust in the good intentions of ordinary Palestinians?"), with a perception of shared victimhood (e.g., "the heartache due to losing one's family members to the regional conflict is the same for both Israelis and Palestinians"), and with a vision of the benefits of peace (e.g., "The costs of continuing the regional conflict are higher than the costs involved in ending it").

Harth and Shnabel (2015) assessed the effect of short excerpts reporting the historical wrongs committed by Palestinians (the victim condition) or committed against them (the perpetrator condition) on Jewish participants' willingness to reconcile (e.g., "I feel increased willingness to act to achieve peaceful coexistence between Jews and Arabs"). In a first, baseline condition, there was no message. In the second condition, the Palestinian condition, participants were presented with a conciliatory message from the representative of this group (e.g., "the Jews in Israel are entitled to security and self-determination; we must fully respect their right to live with their heads up"). In the third condition, the Jordanian condition, a representative of this neighboring country issued the conciliatory message. In the baseline condition, mean agreement ratings were 2.67 in the victim condition and 3.39 in the perpetrator condition on a 1–7 scale. In the Palestinian condition, ratings were 3.81 and 4.09. In the Jordanian condition, they were 3.85 and 4.59 (i.e., a conciliatory message from a third party induced more changes than the same message issued from direct opponents).

Shnabel et al. (2015) assessed the effect of the political context on Israeli Arab students' willingness to reconcile with the Jews. All participants were presented with a text describing what has been called the "Arab Spring." In one condition, the text ended with an indication that the Arab Spring would affect political rivalries within Israel (the instability condition). In the other condition, participants were not presented with this part of the text (the stability condition). All participants subsequently read a speech made by the Israeli Prime Minister, in which he apologized

for past injustices perpetrated against the Arab minority. Willingness to reconcile was subsequently assessed (e.g., “this statement improves the atmosphere between Arabs and Jews in Israel”). The mean agreement ratings were 3.80 in the stability condition but 2.92 in the instability condition on a scale ranging from 1 to 7. This difference was largely because, when considered in the context of the unrest of the Arab Spring, the Israeli Prime Minister’s message was seen as less sincere than when considered in a context of stability.

Wohl et al. (2015) presented Jewish participants with a paragraph stating that “Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, backed formally by Ismail Henia (Head of the Hamas), intended to publish an announcement regarding the declaration of a unified Palestinian government. Importantly, within the context of this announcement, Abbas would include an apology to Israel for killing innocent Israelis in one specific incident within the conflict.” Participants’ willingness to accept Abbas’ apology (e.g., “Abbas and Ismail Henia’s words should be taken seriously and their apology should be accepted”) and their willingness to engage in a peace process (e.g., “if Abbas offered such an apology, Israel should initiate a formal meeting with him”) were subsequently assessed. The mean agreement ratings were 3.12 and 3.25, respectively, on a scale ranging from 1 to 6. Ratings were positively associated with the belief that groups, in general, can change (e.g., “groups can do things differently, but the important parts of who they are can’t really be changed”).

Overall, Jewish participants’ willingness to reconcile with the Palestinians is, with the exception of those residing close to the Gaza Strip, slightly higher than the neutral point and is impacted (least temporarily) by immediate circumstances. Specifically, when painful circumstances are recalled (such as a Palestinian attack), willingness to reconcile decreased somewhat (even if the army retaliates with force). Moreover, when conciliatory gestures from Palestinians (or from Jordanians) are made public and are deemed to be sincere, willingness to reconcile increases somewhat, however, these changes are likely elusive. In daily politics, good news and bad news alternates, meaning that the Jews people’s willingness to reconcile probably fluctuates weekly around a medium level.

In contrast, the Palestinians’ willingness to reconcile is low and does not seem to be impacted by temporary circumstances. One reason may be that, in real life, they have many opportunities to see themselves as victims. Human losses from 2009 to 2020, for example, have been estimated at 3600 (compared to about 200 among Jews; B’Tselem, 2020). Among the Israeli Arabs, the willingness to reconcile with the Jews is midway between that of the Jews and that of the Palestinians (i.e., a little below the mid-point of the agreement scales). It is also prone to fluctuate somewhat as a function of immediate circumstances, such as an empowering message from Jewish representatives (provided that this message is considered sincere).

5.9 Uganda, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Sierra Leone

In the Ugandan Bush War of 1980–1986, the Ugandan government fought against the rebel National Resistance Army. At least 130,000 people were killed during the war (Polynational War Memorial, 2020). Despite the victory of the National Resistance Army, partisans of the former regime and other rebel factions remained active, especially in Northern Uganda. One such group is the Lord's Resistance Army. They relied heavily on forcing abducted children to train as soldiers and battle government soldiers in Northern Uganda and neighboring countries (and are still active). Local communities suffered atrocities from both sides.

Vinck et al. (2007) assessed the way adults living in villages and camps for internally displaced persons in Northern Uganda viewed how peace could be achieved. While 66% of the sample favored non-violent means, 27% favored violent means. Participants with trauma symptoms, participants with depressive symptoms, and less educated participants favored violent means more often than did other participants.

Two studies, namely, Bayer et al. (2007) and Alipanga et al. (2014), examined former child soldiers who had been violently recruited by armed forces. Bayer et al. (2007) assessed the relationship between psychopathology and openness to reconciliation (e.g., “I am going to pay back the persons who harmed me for what they did” and “I am ready to forgive the persons who harmed me”) among former child soldiers in rehabilitation centers in Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Trauma symptoms were significantly negatively associated with openness to reconciliation and were positively associated with feelings of revenge. In a study conducted in Northern Uganda, Alipanga et al. (2014) examined child soldiers' revenge attitudes using similar items, observing a mean revenge rating of 1.58 on a 1–5 scale.

In a related study conducted in Sierra Leone, Hinton (2011) presented street children (aged 5–17 years) with his War Forgiveness Scale. All of the children had suffered trauma due to violence in the war (e.g., parents and siblings killed, homes burned, amputations, etc.). Within this sample, 55% stated that they were willing to forgive those who physically abused them during the war, and 93% thought that people should forgive those who committed various types of violence and atrocities during the war. In another related study conducted in Nigeria, Ogunbamila (2015) assessed the willingness to forgive among farmers who had to flee their ancestral communities due to interethnic conflicts, a situation that was similar to that experienced by many Ugandans (e.g., “I let go of the resentment I felt toward them”). The mean agreement rating was 3.04 on a 1–5 scale. Forgiveness ratings were negatively associated with encouragement by their hosts to retaliate and positively associated with the time since displacement.

In these somewhat sparse studies, taking revenge and using violence to achieve political ends were rejected by most people but not by all, especially if neighbors

supported the recourse to violence. As in the studies conducted in Rwanda, better health was associated with a greater willingness to reconcile.

5.10 Chile and Colombia

From 1973 to 1990, Chile was ruled by a right-wing authoritarian regime after a coup that overthrew the socialist democratically elected president. About 2000 people were killed during the military operations. Between 10,000 and 30,000 persons were subsequently the victims of state violence against opponents (Polynational War Memorial, 2020).

Manzi and González (2007) examined the extent to which Chilean students who endorsed right-wing or left-wing politics were likely to forgive members of the other political group for the human rights violations that were perpetrated before and during the dictatorship (e.g., “I reached the conclusion that I am prepared to forgive the Right (Left) for their misdeeds”). Participants who endorsed right-wing were more forgiving ($M = 5.20$ on a 1–7 scale) than those on the Left ($M = 4.40$). Among participants on the Right, ratings were negatively associated with anger and positively with demand for truth (e.g., “it is necessary to clarify what happened to all the victims of human right violations regardless of their political positions”). Among Leftists, ratings were negatively associated with anger and positively with collective guilt (e.g., “thinking about how we have treated the Right makes me feel guilty”) and shame (e.g., “the way the Right is seen today by the rest of the world is becoming more negative because of the way we treated the Left in the past”). Noor et al. (2008) replicated this study with another group of students. Rightists were again more forgiving ($M = 5.17$) than Leftists ($M = 4.07$). Empathy and trust toward members of the other group affected the forgiveness scores. As in the case of the studies analyzed above in the section on Israel and Palestine, participants who aligned themselves with the victims were less willing to forgive than those who identified as Rightists. A parallel study by the same authors, using similar material, found lower willingness to forgive among Chilean students than among Northern Irish students ($M = 5.10$).

Cárdenas et al. (2014) examined how Chileans (who may or may not have suffered under the dictatorship) perceived the likelihood of victims forgiving those who harmed them (e.g., “with respect to the period of past national collective violence, do you consider it likely that people who were affected by past violence can forgive those who inflicted this violence on them?”). Ratings were low ($M = 2.12$ on a 1–7 scale) and did not differ as a function of past suffering. In a related study conducted in Peru (Espinosa et al., 2017), likelihood of forgiveness ratings was similarly low ($M = 1.98$ on a 1–5 scale), although slightly higher among direct victims ($M = 2.15$) than among other participants ($M = 1.93$). Ratings were positively associated with positive attitudes toward the Chilean Truth Commission. The notable differences in mean ratings between this set of studies and the preceding one may be partly explained by the way forgiveness had been assessed. In particular, to

imagine the degree to which a group of people of which you are not necessarily a part is willing to forgive is a delicate exercise.

From 1964 to 2016, a low-intensity civil war opposed Colombia's successive governments, communist guerrillas, paramilitary groups, and crime syndicates as they fought to retain control of state territory or to impose a revolutionary regime. According to the Polynational War Memorial (2020), about 32,000 persons were killed during this time. According to other sources (Registro Único de Víctimas, 2019), the figure is much higher; 165,271 citizens may have been the victims of homicides, met death in other circumstances, or disappeared. Three studies have examined Colombian people's perspectives on forgiveness and reconciliation with perpetrators of violence. One study measured the level of reconciliation sentiments among the perpetrators.

In a study conducted before the peace accords of 2016, López López et al. (2013) presented their participants with realistic scenarios inspired from the early work by Azar et al. (1999) and Gibson (2002). Vignettes were created that depicted a former perpetrator of violence (as a member of the guerrillas, of a paramilitary group, of the military, or a drug cartel) who asked for forgiveness from a victim's family. Three factors were manipulated in the scenarios, namely, (a) the degree of responsibility (organizer, mere agent, or passive bystander), (b) the type of crime committed (murder, kidnapping, destruction of property, or theft), and (c) the presence of apologies (no apology at all; acknowledgment of responsibility only; acknowledgment and begging of forgiveness; or acknowledgment, begging of forgiveness, and offering reparations). Through cluster analyses, the authors found that 38% of participants, mostly from the wealthier segments of society, believed that forgiveness should never be granted to any of these perpetrators, irrespective of circumstances. Twenty-nine percent expressed similar views but were less blatantly hostile to forgiveness. In contrast, 15%, mostly from the poorest segment of society, believed that forgiveness should be granted systematically, and 18%, also mostly from the poor segments of society, believed that forgiveness could be granted each time former perpetrators expressed genuine remorse (and, in the case of former organizers, if they offered adequate compensation and had not committed very severe crimes).

In a subsequent study, López López et al. (2018b) examined Colombian citizens' positions on reintegrating former perpetrators into society and the effect of the legal/political context on willingness to reconcile. The scenarios used were similar to those in the previous study. On three different occasions, the participants were asked to indicate, either their level of willingness to forgive, their level of acceptance of these individuals in the neighborhood, or their level of acceptance of them as co-workers. Participants in the "Justice" condition were informed that the former perpetrators depicted in the stories had been detained, judged by a criminal court, and incarcerated. Participants in the "Amnesty" condition were informed that, by the decision of the government, these perpetrators were part of a group that had been fully amnestied. Participants in the baseline condition were told nothing. Four personal positions were observed, namely, "never forgive or reconcile under any circumstances" (31%), "hesitant to forgive or reconcile" (24%), "always forgive or reconcile" (14%), and "forgiveness and reconciliation depend on the circumstances"

(14%) (17% of the sample was undetermined). In the granting of amnesty condition, the percentage of participants expressing a “never” position was much higher than it was in the other two conditions (i.e., higher than the justice and baseline conditions). Willingness to forgive and willingness to reconcile were very strongly linked, with 92% of the participants who were hostile to or hesitant about forgiveness being unwilling to have former perpetrators live in their neighborhoods and 94% being unwilling to have them as co-workers.

In 2016, Pineda Marín et al. (2019) assessed the relationship between Colombian people’s positions on forgiving perpetrators of offenses against women during the armed conflict and their attitudes toward the peace process (e.g., “to what extent do you think that the current peace dialogs in La Habana are necessary for stopping the violence in the country?”). The levels of approval for both peace dialogs and former members of illegal armed groups participating in politics were lower among participants endorsing a “never forgive” position than among others. More participants who endorsed an “always forgive” position than participants who endorsed a “never” position believed that Colombian security depended on the peace agreements.

Finally, López López et al. (2018a) assessed the level of reconciliation sentiments among former members of Colombian paramilitary or guerrilla groups that were detained in rehabilitation centers. They used an augmented version of the Reconciliation Sentiment Questionnaire (e.g., “I don’t feel any fear of revenge from the people I (we) have harmed”). Overall, participants believed that they had achieved some measure of reconciliation with the people they had harmed. Most participants view themselves as able to control their nervousness and impulses in situations where victims were physically present or mentioned. Most participants felt reasonably sure that their victims did not intend to seek vengeance. However, a minority (mostly former members of the guerrillas and detainees who did not attend rehabilitation programs) were not convinced that acts of vengeance would not be enacted against them. A majority of participants were, to some extent, willing to trust and cooperate with former victims and likely the society at large. However, only a few of them were convinced that it would be possible to do so.

These studies revealed that willingness to forgive or reconcile was not reducible to single ratings along linear scales. Willingness to forgive appears to follow a cognitive schema that indicates the conditions in which forgiveness may be granted. Necessary components of this schema are likely, as shown in López López et al.’s (2018a) study, as well as in earlier studies conducted in South Africa and in Lebanon, the perpetrator’s level of intent to harm (and level of responsibility), the severity of the harm (and its present day consequences), and the perpetrator’s subsequent apologetic behavior. For many people in Colombia, forgiveness seems impossible. For others, depending on the political circumstances, forgiveness must be granted in most cases. For others still, forgiveness follows the same rules in post conflict situations as it does in daily life. The fact that very few participants adopted positions that demonstrate at least a minimal deliberation (i.e., weighing of pros and cons) had taken place before deciding on forgiveness (i.e., members of the “depends on circumstances” cluster) is surprising. Fortunately, a complementary study by

Pineda Marín et al. (2018) showed that the seemingly very unforgiving attitudes expressed by Colombian people were specific to post-conflict situations. When Colombians' willingness to forgive was examined in situations having nothing to do with the civil war (e.g., medical error), Colombians' reported greater forgiveness (i.e., willingness to forgive was higher, depended more on circumstances, and was similar to that found in other countries in similar conditions).

5.11 Mediterranean Countries

From 1959 to 2011, Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA), an armed leftist organization in the [Basque Country](#), engaged in a violent campaign of bombings, assassinations, and kidnappings throughout the territory of Spain. After a peace conference, the ETA agreed in 2011 to cease the armed conflict. Conejero et al. (2014) examined the willingness to forgive the separatist organization among adults living in the Basque Country (e.g., "if the necessary conditions were to arise in the future, to what extent do you believe these people should be forgiven?"). The mean agreement was 3.18 on a scale ranging from 1 to 7. In a subsequent study conducted in the same part of the country, Conejero et al. (2016) showed that willingness to forgive the ETA and the perpetrators of street violence was positively related to ideologized identity (e.g., "to what extent do you identify with the Basques") and empathy with ETA members (e.g., "to what extent do you feel sorry for the families of Basque prisoners") and negatively related to empathy with ETA victims.

The "Years of Lead" was a period of political turmoil from 1969 to 1988 originating in Italy and later spreading to neighboring countries. It was characterized by [left-wing terrorism](#) (e.g., Red Brigades) and [right-wing terrorism](#) (e.g., [Ordine Nuovo](#)). Regalia et al. (2015) examined the conditions under which forgiveness of terrorists would be supported by Italian citizens (e.g., "I think it is now possible to forgive the terrorists of the Years of Lead"). The mean agreement was 2.26 on a 1–6 scale. Trust and empathy with terrorists positively correlated forgiveness ratings.

In 1974, Operation Atilla (the Turkish invasion of Cyprus) led to the partition of the Republic of Cyprus into two areas. Huge displacements of populations took place between northern Cyprus (the Turkish area) and the rest of the island (the Greek area). Stathi et al. (2017) assessed Turkish Cypriots' willingness to forgive the Greeks for prior discrimination or violence during the displacements (e.g., "Cyprus will never move forward until Turkish Cypriots forgive Greek Cypriots"). The mean agreement rating was 3.64 on a scale ranging from 1 to 7. Forgiveness ratings were negatively associated with intergroup anxiety (e.g., "to what extent would you feel suspicious when interacting the Greek people"), intergroup threat (e.g., "Turkish Cypriot norms and values are being threatened because of Greek Cypriots"), and dehumanization (e.g., "how much do you think that the word 'beast' can describe Greek Cypriots?"). Forgiveness ratings were positively associated with support for a policy of reparations (e.g., "would you encourage the Authorities in the North to seriously consider new offers for a solution raised by the Greek side?").

In all three cases, willingness to forgive or to reconcile was quite low. This may be explained by the fact that no apologies have been offered to victims. The terrorist organizations in Italy and Spain remained convinced, until the end of their operations, of the merits of their action. In Cyprus, the political situation is still deadlocked. The Turkish government has sought to become a member of the European Union but has always refused to acknowledge the existence of the Republic of Cyprus, a member of the very union Turkey wants to join.

5.12 Conclusion

Given the diversity of cultural contexts, methodologies, and findings of the reviewed studies, drawing general conclusions from this body of work is extremely challenging. Considerable differences exist between groups and contexts regarding willingness to forgive past collective wrongs and willingness to reconcile with former opponents. The mean willingness to forgive and reconcile rating among Catholic and Protestants in Northern Ireland was very high, whereas the mean willingness rating of Palestinians to forgive and reconcile with Israelis was very low. Considerable differences also exist among the members of groups regarding their willingness to forgive past personal or collective wrongs or to reconcile with former opponents, whether individuals or groups. Even when willingness to forgive appeared to be weak at the group level, a certain proportion of participants in each sample were, as shown in the studies in Columbia and Kosovo, favorable to the idea of forgiving or had already forgiven.

Group differences can be partly explained by participants' past personal experiences (e.g., whether many participants in the study had personally endured the consequences of the offense), the severity of the offense, the time elapsed since the events (and a concomitant reduction in feelings of insecurity), and the ongoing nature of the disputes. Differences may also be explained by public actions taken by offenders (e.g., seeking forgiveness). Individual differences can be explained by personality factors such as empathy and perspective-taking abilities, forgivingness or resentfulness, trust and confidence in strangers, and the ability to relate with out-group members. At a higher level, forgiveness and reconciliation may also be associated with personal, philosophical, or religious positions regarding the way people should live in society.

One important practical lesson is that, as stressed by Fehr et al. (2010), in post-conflict situations, as well as in daily life, circumstances matter. For example, sincere apologetic behavior by senior politicians from one side of the conflict (or from both sides), when it happens, can change the world. One of the most memorable instances of public repentance in the twentieth century was performed by German Chancellor Willy Brandt in 1970 (Shriver, 1995). During a stay in Poland in December 1970 to conclude an important treaty between Poland and the Federal Republic of Germany, Brandt went on a pilgrimage at the Warsaw memorial to the Jewish ghetto uprising of 1943. After having laid a wreath, and to the astonishment

of those present, he fell on his knees before the monument, expressing his repentance for National Socialists' crimes against the Jews. The Chancellor's gesture had a deep impact on the citizens of both countries, as well as among Israeli Jews. Brandt was criticized by many people in Germany and by some political leaders of the countries concerned. He simply responded, "I did what men do when words fail." His public gesture of repentance paved the way for reconciliation with both the Jews and the Polish. By now, 50 years later, the states of Israel and Germany have normal relations (e.g., Germany is Israel's most important trading partner in Europe), and Poland and Germany are neighbors who maintain appropriate, if not cordial, relations and belong to the same political union. Failure to recognize Brandt's achievements and contributions to reconciliation would be an extreme disservice (Shriver, 1995).

Acknowledgments In Memoriam Ed Cairns.

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Chapter 6

Collective Memory in the Basque Country: The Interplay Between Construals of Victimhood and Perpetratorship



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6.1 Introduction

Communities that are transitioning to peace face a need to find answers to a series of painful questions. *What* has happened? *Who is responsible* for what has occurred? *Who are the victims* of violence that has taken place (see Bilali & Vollhardt, 2019)? Usually, no single memory emerges, but rather multiple, frequently conflicting, “memories against memories” arise while other memories fade (Jelin, 2003). In the case of traumatic political pasts, which bring major threats to national cohesion and critical changes in social relationships (Hilton & Liu, 2008), the plurality and the dynamic nature of narratives about the past are even more evident, and their complexity and emergence (vs. silencing) may depend on political interests.

Yet, research on narratives of collective victimhood and perpetratorship has frequently failed to account for this complexity. It often has studied only selected conflict and post-conflict societies from Western societies and the Global North (Vollhardt, 2020; see also Chaps. 4 and 5 in this volume) and mostly contexts where the moral roles of victims and perpetrators are clear-cut or binary. However, these

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mutually exclusive construals are too simplistic and frequently counterproductive for a transition to peace (e.g., Bilali & Vollhardt, 2019; Dixon et al., 2020; Jankowitz, 2017). Even in the European context, many cases of conflict are underrepresented in the literature, frequently because they do not “fit” neat models and theories based on the dominant oversimplified understanding of intergroup relations. In reality, most violent conflicts involve “dual” social roles of groups involved as both victims *and* perpetrators (e.g., SimanTov-Nachlieli & Shnabel, 2014). Moreover, in the cases of within-group conflicts, such as State violence perpetrated against the citizens of a country, the “sides” of the conflict are particularly “blurred” and difficult to define (Bobowik et al., 2017). Addressing these issues in the context of collective remembering of experiences of victimization and perpetratorship is of utmost importance because collective memories have been shown to carry long-standing consequences, including difficulties in repairing damaged social relations. Thus, there is a pressing need to unveil the complexity of an intergroup conflict that goes beyond mere differentiation between “us” and “them” (Dixon et al., 2020) and top-down approaches to transitional justice (see Chap. 4 in this volume), encompassing the reality of transitional societies and thus enriching our understanding of intergroup relations more broadly. This can be achieved by taking into account sensitivities of the sociopolitical context of interest, such as multiple and intersecting experiences of victimhood and perpetratorship (Bilali & Vollhardt, 2019).

To expand research on collective victimhood and responsibility to less visible and more complex sociopolitical realities, we study narratives of past collective violence in the context of the Basque Country. This region suffered one of the most enduring violent political conflicts in Europe. In this context, victimhood and perpetratorship social roles are frequently intertwined or blurred. For example, members of the police bodies have been responsible for the deaths and tortures in the framework of the State repression but are also victims of threats and murders by the leftist Basque nationalist and independentist organization Euskadi ta Askatasuna (ETA, meaning “Basque Country and Homeland”). In parallel, ETA members have been perpetrators of terrorist attacks but also victims of State repression. Finally, some have suffered from multiple forms of victimization, namely, State violence during the Francoist regime and ETA attacks while occupying political responsibilities in the democratic period.

This chapter includes five sections. In the first section, we introduce the context of the Basque Country, largely underrepresented in research on transitional justice and peace. Second, we define collective responsibility and review literature on the importance of perpetratorship construals in transitional societies, as well as present data on their structure in the Basque context. Third, we identify and contextualize collective victimhood, providing empirical evidence for the existing types of collective narratives of suffering in the Basque Country. Fourth, we highlight the need for addressing the complexity of social roles in transitional societies and describe the interplay between the construals of responsibilities and victimhood in the Basque society and their link with personal experiences of victimization. Finally, we delineate implications for practitioners and researchers in transitional justice and peace.

6.2 The Basque Context

The conflict over the independence of the Basque Country has been the longest-running violent conflict in Western Europe (Espiau, 2006). In response to Franco's dictatorship and the repression of Basque culture, language, and self-governance, an armed organization, ETA, emerged in 1959. Over the decades of the conflict, ETA caused 837 deaths, with hundreds of people kidnapped or injured (1959–2009). In 2011, ETA declared a permanent and general ceasefire.

At the same time, State forces were involved in political violence during the dictatorship but also in democracy. The Anti-Terrorist Liberation Groups (GAL) (i.e., parapolitical groups that worked between 1983 and 1987) are responsible for 27 murders, mainly including ETA members or Basque nationalists but also people who were known to have no ties to political violence. Besides these groups, State repression caused more than a hundred deaths and injuries during the protests, with thousands of complaints of torture currently under investigation. A recent report by Etxeberria et al. (2017) evidenced 4113 cases of torture between 1960 and 2014, with the Civil Guard, national police, and the autonomous regional police in the Basque Country involved or responsible for 1792, 1785, and 336 cases, respectively.

To understand the dynamics of visibility and invisibility of different types of victimization and responsibility in the Basque Country, it is essential to account for the complexity of these processes. For instance, some of the groups that were victims of the State during the Franco regime came to power in the democratic period, and their police forces were involved in the arrest and application of torture to other nationalist groups situated more to the left (Etxeberria et al., 2017). Further, public opinion has maintained for many years a serious social concern about ETA's terrorism exclusively (Llera & Retortillo, 2004), and only recently have victims of torture during democracy received a wider recognition (Etxeberria et al., 2017).

In this context, due to social polarization, the different parties involved in the conflict have built defensive memories, emphasizing their suffering and minimizing or denying the suffering of the other (Martín-Peña & Opatow, 2011). However, after the ceasefire declared by ETA, a more inclusive narrative about the violent past emerged. One of the most significant experiences that facilitated the development of this narrative was the initiative known as "Glencree," which was a space for sharing experiences between victims of all types. After five years of work, participants of this initiative jointly published a manifesto in which they described their experiences, including, among others, the search for a common language to refer to the violent past and the need for reparation for all victims. Other relevant steps have taken place in Basque municipalities, including tributes to different types of victims with the participation of historically confronted political parties.

6.2.1 *Narratives of Perpetratorship: From Denial to Acknowledgment*

In the aftermath of violence, societies face a need to identify the party responsible for the transgressions that have occurred. While in clear-cut contexts this may be straightforward (i.e., perpetrators should accept the responsibility), in societies where all sides committed atrocities, the picture is more complex, and all parties must address their wrongdoings. One of the important dimensions on which attribution of responsibility varies is the target of responsibility (Bilali & Vollhardt, 2019). On the one hand, it includes denial of one's responsibility and attributions of responsibility to the others and, on the other, acknowledgment and acceptance of one's group responsibility for inflicted harm.

6.2.2 *Denying One's Group Responsibility While Blaming the Adversary*

Groups tend to deny their responsibility for committed transgressions (Cohen, 2001) or are reluctant to recognize violence inflicted upon the adversary (e.g., Vollhardt, 2013). For example, in the Basque context, the armed organization ETA used the concept of *ekintzak* (i.e., actions) as a euphemism for attacks to reduce the moral conflict involved in political assassination. For its part, the State called for a fight against terrorism as a strategy to legitimize the practice of social control and political repression. The lack of recognition both in the legal sphere (i.e., equal rights or compensations) and in the sphere of group esteem may further increase tensions and impede efforts to restore damaged relations. The denial of responsibility for past harm may obstruct the reconciliation process by increasing intergroup animosity and reducing hope that justice or relationships between members of former adversary groups can be restored. Furthermore, this group denial is usually complemented with attributing responsibility to other actors in the society, either an adversary group or some third party, which can decrease support for reparations and promote pro-war attitudes (Bilali, 2013; Bilali et al., 2012).

6.2.3 *Acknowledgment of One's Group Responsibility: Inclusive Construals of Perpetratorship*

In contrast, accepting the responsibility for in-group crimes is necessary to break the cycle of violence (Christie et al., 2008). The acknowledgment of responsibility for perpetrated violence serves as recognition of others' suffering. It brings back intergroup equality and delivers a message that violence will not reoccur (Cohen, 2001; Staub, 2006). Research has indicated that taking responsibility for harmful

acts restores empathy toward victims (Čehajić-Clancy et al., 2009) increases willingness to offer reparations (Čehajić-Clancy et al., 2011) or establish intergroup contact (Mazziotta et al., 2014), as well as shapes different intergroup processes important for improving intergroup relations (e.g., guilt and shame Čehajić-Clancy & Brown, 2014; Wohl et al., 2006). In addition, reinforcing a common perpetratorship identity (i.e., acceptance that all parties involved in the conflict committed crimes) was shown to facilitate increased willingness to forgive (Shnabel et al., 2013). However, existing empirical evidence has not accounted for the interplay between acknowledging one's group *and* the adversary group's wrongdoings. The acknowledgment and assignment of responsibility may act as a bidirectional and simultaneous process.

6.2.4 Responsibility Constellations: Beyond the Binary Perspective

Post-conflict scenarios usually trigger processes of searching for the meaning of what has happened (Arnosó-Martínez et al., 2012). In most sociopolitical contexts, the ways of representing the past (i.e., forms of violence and its perpetrators) include multiple visions, which reflect divergent psychosocial trajectories, motivations, identities, ideologies, or generational cohorts socialized in different contexts and narratives of the past (e.g., Arnosó-Martínez et al., 2012; Reidy et al., 2015; Taylor et al., 2020). In the following section, we provide evidence that responding to a question about who is responsible for the harm done can unravel multiple, frequently denied, forms of violence perpetrated.

6.3 Exploring Reconciliation Processes in the Basque Country

We analyzed these processes in the context of the Basque Country. Our sample were 351 Basques from diverse segments of society who responded to an online survey about political violence that has occurred in the region (56.2% female; $M_{age} = 41.95$; $SD = 14.36$). Most of the participants resided in three regions of Basque Country, namely, Gipuzkoa (51.6%), Bizkaia (29.5%), and Araba (9.3%). Around 85% of participants had a university education and were strongly identified as Basque ($M = 5.55$, $SD = 1.69$) and weakly as Spaniards ($M = 2.45$, $SD = 1.71$), even though the first language of the majority of participants (69%) was Spanish.

As a subset of a larger questionnaire about the reconciliation process in the Basque Country, respondents indicated their experience of victimization during the conflict (i.e., whether they or somebody they know has suffered the violence) and also reported to what extent they agreed or disagreed that specific social agents were

victims of or responsible for violence in the Basque Country. As for victimization, 29.6% of the sample reported that they had not been affected by the violence that occurred in the Basque context, while 70.4% have suffered some form of violence directly (i.e., themselves) or indirectly (i.e., a family member or a known person). More than one-third of the sample (37%) reported having suffered political violence (25% of whom were arrested, 7.1% tortured, 7.1% imprisoned, 15.1% threatened, 3.2% extorted, 4.8% exiled, and 35.7% experienced other types of psychological violence). Additionally, around three-quarters of the sample (73%) expressed having a close relative or friend who had suffered political violence due to arrest (69.4%), torture (51.6%), imprisonment (55.2%), or being threatened (56%), and nearly one third (31.5%) reported murder. Out of those who experienced violence, one-third (34.2%) attributed responsibility only to the State, and 16% viewed ETA as the only responsible agent for this violence. Around 20.2% of the sample perceived both ETA and the State as responsible.

First, we examined participants' attributions of responsibility, using a factor analysis with the principal axis factoring extraction method and direct oblimin rotation. We found four factors with eigenvalues greater than one, explaining in total 65% of the variance. As a robustness check, we also ran a principal component analysis (PCA) based on the K1 rule and additionally conducted parallel analysis (O'Connor, 2000), following best practices for factor analysis (see Costello & Osborne, 2005). The results of both PCA and parallel analysis confirmed the four-factor solution.

Factor one included Spanish nationalism, Spanish police and justice forces, political parties, and media and explained 33% of the variance. Factor two comprised ETA, the *abertzale* (i.e., nationalist) left movement, and Basque nationalism, accounting for 14% of the variance. Factor three contained items on personal or community responsibility (12% of the variance explained). Factor four referred to antiterrorist and parapolice groups (GAL, GAE, BVE), and extreme right, accounting for 8% of the variance. This fourth construal of perpetratorship distinguishes State responsibility, linked to Spanish nationalism, from ETA responsibility, connected to Basque nationalism and the *abertzale* left, further differentiating the repression perpetrated by the parapolice groups and extreme right. Descriptive data indicated little clarity and consensus regarding the acknowledgment of these multiple and nuanced responsibilities, whereas social responsibility was completely rejected (see Table 6.1). Specifically, participants ascribed equal levels of responsibility to the Spanish State and ETA, $t(336) = -.84, p = .403$, and attributed greater responsibility to the parapolice groups than both of these groups, $t(318) = -10.16, p < .001$ and $t(327) = -7.64, p < .001$, respectively. An exception to this was social responsibility, which was lower than for the remaining social agents (the Spanish State: $t(333) = 21.30, p < .001$; ETA: $t(338) = 20.80, p < .001$; parapolice groups: $t(322) = -26.73, p < .001$).

Table 6.1 Exploratory factor analysis for responsibility items

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4
1. Responsibility: Spanish State	4.58	1.48	–	–	–	–
2. Responsibility: ETA	4.68	1.43	–.02	–	–	–
3. Responsibility: society	2.68	1.34	.34**	.18**	–	–
4. Responsibility: parapolice groups	5.47	1.56	.48**	.20**	.15**	–
Items						
Media	4.34	1.81	.80	.03	.03	.05
Political parties	4.70	1.71	.78	.11	–.06	.08
Judicial system	4.64	1.87	.78	–.16	.04	–.13
Autonomous police	3.80	1.92	.77	–.03	.05	–.10
Spanish nationalism	4.76	1.86	.64	–.03	.08	–.12
National police, Civil Guard	5.07	1.80	.56	–.07	.08	–.37
<i>Abertzale</i> (i.e., nationalist) left	4.52	1.95	–.13	.89	.06	–.06
Basque nationalism	3.66	1.81	.22	.65	.07	.14
ETA (and its environment)	5.85	1.49	–.18	.57	–.07	–.30
I have been responsible	2.29	1.53	–.12	–.01	.96	–.07
My group (my people)	2.30	1.45	–.03	–.01	.92	–.01
Society in general	3.45	1.73	.19	.08	.46	.06
Antiterrorist groups (GAL, GAE)	5.60	1.67	.03	.03	.01	–.90
Basque-Spanish Battalion (BVE)	5.28	1.84	.01	.05	.10	–.84
Parapolice groups, groups of the extreme right	5.58	1.62	.31	.02	–.07	–.68

Note: We used the principal axis factoring extraction method with direct oblimin rotation. ***p* < .01

6.3.1 Narratives of Victimhood: From Exclusive to Inclusive Construals

The concept of “collective victimhood” means that people who identify as members of a social group share a belief that their in-group has been intentionally and unfairly harmed by another group (Bar-Tal et al., 2009; Noor et al., 2017). Cultivated through generations, perceptions of collective victimhood make a conflict intractable and resistant to resolution because they imply a biased memory of intergroup conflict, that is, a perception of rival groups as more hostile and downplaying their suffering (Noor et al., 2012; Schori-Eyal et al., 2017). The perception of collective victimhood has been shown to incite hostile behavioral responses in the context of intergroup violence, such as support for military actions or unwillingness to compromise (Schori-Eyal et al., 2014). In the aftermath of conflict, collective victimhood may substantially hinder intergroup relations, including trust toward the adversary, willingness to forgive (Green et al., 2017), or disposition to socialize with the other parties (Jasini et al., 2017).

Yet, the implications of group victimhood likely depend on the way it is collectively construed. Members of wronged groups experience and construe their group’s victimization subjectively. These subjective construals of victimization are called collective victim beliefs (Vollhardt, 2012, 2020). Importantly, scholars have

differentiated between two types of collective victimhood beliefs, namely, exclusive (including competitive) and inclusive ones.

6.3.2 Exclusive Victimhood Beliefs: One Group's Suffering

Perceiving the victimhood of one's group as unique and distinct (i.e., exclusive collective victimhood, Vollhardt, 2012) or considering one's group suffering to be more severe than that of the adversary (i.e., competitive victimhood beliefs, Noor et al., 2012) has been linked to intergroup competition and further fueling the conflict. One correlate of these narratives is the delegitimization of the other's narrative. For example, in the Basque Country, some have denied the existence of torture in police stations, accusing victims of lying and thereby denying their suffering and recognition as victims of political conflict (Pérez-Sales et al., 2016).

Empirical findings demonstrate that such exclusive victimhood consciousness is associated with decreased trust and/or empathy toward the adversary in Rwanda and Burundi (Vollhardt & Bilali, 2015) and Northern Ireland (Noor et al., 2008). These beliefs also obstruct efforts to repair damaged social relations, reducing willingness to grant intergroup forgiveness in Northern Ireland (Noor et al., 2008), post-dictatorship Chile (Noor et al., 2008, Study 1), Bosnia and Herzegovina (Rupar & Graf, 2017), and the Israeli-Palestinian context (Shnabel et al., 2013), in addition to reducing willingness to engage in contact with members of the adversarial group in Central Africa (Vollhardt & Bilali, 2015) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (Rupar et al., 2020).

6.3.3 Inclusive Victimhood Beliefs: The Adversary's Suffering

However, it is possible to transcend the interests of one's group to produce memories that converge in the construction of a culture of peace based on respect for human rights. The awareness of "inclusive victimhood" emphasizes similarities between victim experiences of one's group and those of the other's group. This form of victimhood includes a recognition that others have also been or are victims, in a similar way to one's own group (Shnabel et al., 2013; Vollhardt, 2012, 2020). Such constructs require strengthening a category of a superordinate social identity (Gaertner et al., 1993), based on common experiences of oppression or collective violence shared by different victimized groups either in the same conflict (e.g., recognizing that both victims of the Spanish state and ETA victims suffered in the Basque context), in an unrelated social context (e.g., recognizing that Basques suffered as Irish Republicans did), or involving broader perceptions of similarities between the suffering of the in-group and other groups worldwide (e.g., acknowledging that other groups in the world have suffered in the similar way Basques did; see work on

“general inclusive victimhood beliefs,” Vollhardt et al., 2015). That is, inclusive construals of victimhood can be either universal or specific (see Cohrs et al., 2015).

Furthermore, inclusive victim beliefs are expected to improve intergroup relations in post-conflict settings. Research has shown that the sense of inclusive victimhood improves intergroup relations across different contexts. These perceptions were linked with prosocial responses and the acknowledgment of out-group suffering among American Jews (Vollhardt, 2013), willingness to reconcile in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Noor et al., 2015), prosocial responses toward the adversaries in Central Africa (Vollhardt & Bilali, 2015), willingness to engage in intergroup contact in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Rupar et al., 2020), or lessening support for aggressive policies across diverse contexts (Adelman et al., 2016). However, these presumably inclusive construals may have limited potential to improve (or even worsen) intergroup relations when they are not entirely universal but rather selective. In this line, Cohrs et al. (2015) showed that inclusive victimhood correlated positively with intergroup forgiveness when it was based on a universal notion of inclusivity and tended to correlate positively with competitive victimhood when based on a selective notion of inclusivity.

6.3.4 Victimhood Constellations: Beyond the Binary Perspective

The concept of inclusive victimhood calls for approaching identities as a complex structure, based on the relationship between multiple and compatible victim identities. Yet, existing research has been mostly limited to examining shared narratives involving two groups in conflict, and less is known about the intersection of multiple, non-binary narratives of victimhood. In the context of multiple forms of violence, different victimization experiences result in the propagation of a politicized “hierarchy of victims” (e.g., Jankowitz, 2017), that is, beliefs about who deserves the status of “victim,” which may have detrimental consequences for transitions to peace and overcoming clashing identities and narratives.

Public debates over the moral status of victims are usually front and center in transitional societies because it determines who deserves compassion and support (Jankowitz, 2017) and thus symbolic (e.g., apologies) and instrumental (e.g., financial compensations) reparations. In this sense, an official classification into the category of “victim” may favor access to reparations for damages suffered. However, sometimes, victims can also move away from that definition and claim the status of political activists (Arnosó-Martínez & Pérez-Sales, 2013). In the Basque Country, some ETA victims have established the Association of Victims against Terrorism and have received compensations and institutional commemorations. In the case of State victims, self-definitions of “victim of torture” have been marginal (i.e., State victims tended to believe that being a victim of State repression was a consequence of their commitment to the social and political struggle in the territory).

In this context, we examined to what extent different social agents could be included in the social category of “victims of violence.” Using the principal axis extraction method, a factor analysis yielded three factors with eigenvalues greater than one, accounting together for 68% of the variance. Additional factor analysis as well as parallel analysis, both conducted with a principal component extraction method, confirmed the three-factor solution. More precisely, we found three dimensions of victimhood, differentiating between victims of State repression (Factor one), direct and indirect victims of ETA (Factor two), and political prisoners as victims of State repression (Factor three). Factor one included individuals injured or killed by police or parapolice forces and tortured in police stations and explained 35% of the variance. Factor two (24% of variance explained) referred to those threatened or injured in the ETA attacks and their families, as well as direct victims of ETA (e.g., killed, kidnapped, or threatened by the armed organization). Factor three (9% of variance explained) included former ETA members who were imprisoned outside of the Basque Country (under the prison dispersion law) and their family members, as well as ETA members who died handling explosives or fled to other countries. Further, our analysis revealed that participants strongly agreed that both the Spanish State and ETA victims deserved the status of the victim equally, $t(328) = -1.59, p = .11$ (see Table 6.2). An exception to this generally high recognition of victimhood was political prisoners responsible for acts of terrorism, who were considered to be “victims of political conflict” less than the Spanish State and ETA victims, $t(328) = 19.82, p < .001$ and $t(328) = 16.33, p < .001$, respectively.

6.4 Victimhood and Responsibility Narratives Intertwined

As we argued earlier, violent conflicts are usually characterized by “dual” social roles of both victims *and* perpetrators (Gausel et al., 2018; SimanTov-Nachlieli & Shnabel, 2014; Vollhardt & Bilewicz, 2013), “blurred” group boundaries (Bobowik et al., 2017), or even *multiple* types of responsibilities or victimizations. That is, victimhood and perpetratorship of a group, either in the same conflict or at different moments in history, can intertwine and thus have consequences for intergroup relations (Green et al., 2017).

Typically, each party in a conflict delineates boundaries between the innocent (i.e., victims) and guilty (i.e., perpetrators), construing wider, and normally conflicting, perceptions of victimhood and responsibility (Jankowitz, 2017). The claim for victim status thus serves to exclude oneself from the perpetrator role (Noor et al., 2012). Research has corroborated that the notion of collective victimhood thwarted the acknowledgment of past in-group wrongdoings committed among non-Jewish Poles during the Second World War (Vollhardt et al., 2015) and among Serbs in the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Čehajić-Clancy & Brown, 2010). Yet, empirical evidence has also indicated that collective victimhood was positively associated with acknowledgment of the suffering inflicted by one’s nation on others during the First World War (Bouchat et al., 2017), suggesting that, when a group assimilates

Table 6.2 Exploratory factor analysis for victimization items

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1.	2.	3.
1. Victims of the police forces	6.30	1.08	–	–	–
2. Victims of ETA	6.41	0.94	.32**	–	–
3. Victims of the Spanish State (former ETA members)	4.50	1.89	.50**	.001	–
Items					
Persons killed by police forces	6.56	1.09	.93	.03	–.12
Persons killed by parapolice forces	6.62	1.04	.88	.10	–.14
Members of abertzale (i.e., nationalist) left tortured at police stations	6.26	1.34	.80	.002	.09
ETA members tortured at police stations	6.20	1.41	.71	.05	.28
Persons wounded by police forces during protests	5.95	1.47	.63	.05	.28
Persons who died under police custody	6.18	1.45	.61	–.04	.21
Persons threatened by ETA	6.37	1.15	–.04	.92	–.01
Persons threatened by ETA who had to leave Basque Country	6.20	1.37	–.12	.86	.01
Persons who suffered economic extortion because of ETA	6.17	1.36	–.06	.85	.01
Persons kidnapped by ETA	6.68	0.84	.17	.76	–.11
Persons wounded by ETA	6.08	1.42	.25	.72	–.07
Family members of ETA victims	6.62	0.92	–.09	.71	.19
Persons killed by ETA	6.72	0.80	.20	.70	–.12
Prisoners accused of terrorist acts (guilty of blood crimes)	3.69	2.33	–.14	.001	.89
Prisoners imprisoned outside of Basque Country (penitentiary dispersion)	4.79	2.17	.15	–.04	.85
Prisoners accused for terrorist acts (not guilty of blood crimes)	3.90	2.32	.04	–.04	.84
ETA members that are refugees in other countries	4.59	2.26	.12	.04	.77
Persons who died manipulating the explosives with which they intended to attack	3.69	2.33	–.04	.03	.72
Family of prisoners that are imprisoned outside of Basque Country	5.23	2.03	.28	.01	.65

Note: We used the principal axis factoring extraction method with direct oblimin rotation.
 ** $p < .01$

dual roles in a conflict, collective victimhood does not necessarily translate into a denial of others' suffering.

Moreover, research from the Basque Country (Bobowik et al., 2019) showed that the defensive construals of perpetratorship (i.e., the responsibility assigned to police forces and the Spanish State) were related to greater perceptions of collective victimhood. In contrast, the attributions of responsibility to Basque nationalism and ETA were negatively associated with the endorsement of collective victimhood. However, when the narratives accounted for each other, attributions of responsibility to Basque nationalism were no longer associated with victimhood, suggesting that these narratives may coexist and cannot be reduced to a zero-sum relation.

In this setting, to delineate a collective narrative typology based on the interplay between responsibility and perpetratorship attributions, we performed a cluster

analysis with the scores obtained in the victimhood and responsibility dimensions. We used k-means clustering and compared four different cluster solutions to select the most optimal and informative number of clusters. We opted for a cluster solution with four collective memory profiles (see Table 6.3).

The first cluster (named VICTIM), including 17.4% of participants, reflected partially inclusive representations of victimization, recognizing police victims *and* ETA victims and, to a lesser extent, ETA members who might have been retaliated against by the State. This partially inclusive victimization opposed a rejection of societal responsibility, with a tendency to minimize the responsibility of paramilitary groups or that of the State. Thus, a selectively inclusive victimhood construal emerged, with overall lower levels of collective responsibility.

The second cluster (30.2%, named STATE) was characterized by greater demand for accountability from the State and vigilante forces and a minimization of the responsibility of ETA and society. This responsibility of the State was combined with a greater perception of victimization of police victims and the recognition of ETA members as a victimized group (although the victimization of those harmed by ETA was still recognized). The prominent in this cluster narrative of violence caused by the State can be supported with quotes by participants surveyed in an independent study (unpublished data, Bobowik et al., 2012), such as: “There has been torture, murder, humiliation, [and] prisoners separated from their families and friends

Table 6.3 The collective narrative typology: cluster analysis

	Cluster 1 VICTIM <i>M</i>	Cluster 2 STATE <i>M</i>	Cluster 3 ETA <i>M</i>	Cluster 4 INCLUSIVE <i>M</i>
Responsibility: Spanish State	3.15	5.16	3.73	5.85
Responsibility: ETA	4.02	3.42	5.68	5.55
Responsibility: society	2.54	2.18	2.16	4.09
Responsibility: parapolic groups	3.03	5.74	5.91	6.39
Victimhood: victims of the police forces	5.44	6.75	5.91	6.77
Victimhood: victims of ETA	6.01	6.19	6.69	6.64
Victimhood: victims of the Spanish State (former ETA members)	3.85	5.87	2.44	5.61

Notes: Cluster 1, high inclusive victimhood, moderate inclusive responsibility; Cluster 2, responsibility and victims of the Spanish State; Cluster 3, responsibility and victims of the ETA; Cluster 4, high inclusive victimhood and responsibility. In order to select a cluster solution, we compared several alternative options. A four-cluster solution fitted the best theoretical reasoning behind the complexity of different construals. The two-cluster solution was too simple to explain the complexity of the different representations of victimization and responsibility (two groups with either high or low scores on all variables emerged). The three-cluster solution, although it did reflect some of the existing tensions in relation to responsibility, did not allow us to identify those who share a more competitive notion of perpetratorship where the State responsibility would be emphasized and ETA responsibility minimized. The five-cluster solution in addition differentiated those who scored low on most representations with exception of the victims of the ETA (with also a relatively low mean). However, the cluster that emerged included 20 participants only, while the remaining clusters had from 2.7 to 5.4 times as many participants

incarcerated until today” or “detained, prisoners, tortured, denial of the rights to our culture and language.”

The third group (28.8%, named ETA) highlighted ETA victim’s status but also acknowledged people affected by repressive practices of the police and parapolic groups. However, this group of participants refused to categorize the retaliated ETA members as victims. As for responsibility, this group highlighted the role of both ETA and the parapolic forces, whereas it minimized the State responsibility and rejected social responsibility. This cluster portrays a part of the society that, although capable of recognizing State violence in the dictatorial context, denies the State’s responsibility in the democratic period and highlights the responsibility of ETA. Quotes obtained from an unpublished dataset (Bobowik et al., 2012) are in line with this construal: “Attacks of ETA, threats to right-wing people, revolutionary tax, politicians threatened, not being able to say your ideas on the street,” “most of the ETA attacks have targeted my political group,” or “death threats and extortion by ETA; ETA in different attacks against socialist politicians.”

Finally, the fourth cluster (23.6% of participants, named INCLUSIVE) portrayed an inclusive construal both in terms of victimhood and perpetratorship, with similar recognition of *all* victims of violence (slightly more moderate in the case of ETA members persecuted by the State but still including them in that category) and a consideration of the responsibility of multiple agents (with a tendency toward greater responsibility of the State and the parapolic forces). This inclusive narrative also has support in quotes contained in an unpublished dataset (Bobowik et al., 2012): “Damage done by political parties, terrorist activities, by both sides, bad choices and decisions, lack of forgiveness and humanity,” “in general, there has been damage everywhere and everyone has their share of responsibility,” or “aggressions by the State and by ETA gunmen.”

We further checked the relationship between each cluster and personal experiences of victimization, namely, whether individuals victimized by ETA, the State, both, or were not affected by political violence fell into specific narrative profiles reflected in the cluster analysis. We found that there was an interdependency between the type of collective narrative endorsed and self-reported personal experience ($\chi^2_{(9)} = 69.68, p < .001$). We observed that 48.2% of ETA victims tended to construct a collective narrative of conflict based on the suffering of ETA victims (cluster ETA), and almost a third of them (28.6%), although partially recognizing inclusive victimization, are still reluctant to admit that the State bears responsibility (VICTIM). Despite this, a fifth part (19.6%) of this cluster shared an inclusive view of the past (INCLUSIVE). Among State victims, 45.8% emphasized the responsibility of the State and paramilitary groups (cluster STATE). A third (31.7%) shared an inclusive construal of the past (INCLUSIVE), but still, 16.7% of these victims downplayed the role of the State as compared to ETA (cluster ETA).

In the case of the victims on both sides, we observed that 31% shared a selectively inclusive representation of victimhood but still deemphasized the responsibility of the State (cluster ETA). Further, 29.6% viewed victimhood and perpetratorship in unselectively inclusive terms (INCLUSIVE), whereas 28.2% downplayed the responsibility of ETA (STATE). Finally, among the non-victimized participants,

30.8% were primarily concerned with violence perpetrated by ETA (ETA), and 28.8% minimized responsibility of the State and paramilitary groups (VICTIM). Yet, 27.9% tended toward minimizing ETA's responsibility (STATE), and 12.5% shared an inclusive narrative of both victimhood and responsibility (INCLUSIVE).

6.5 Implications for Transitional Justice and Peace Research and Practice

The Basque society has witnessed how different narratives of collective violence emerged or had been silenced, depending on political interests and subjective experiences of those in power at a particular time in history. After the ETA ceasefire in 2011, a peace process began in which different agents had been reconsidering their positions and taking steps toward recognizing others, although at present this is an ongoing process. Our findings have important implications in the context of this political reality. Accordingly, the data presented in this chapter, collected in 2016, illustrate either more selective or indiscriminating inclusive narratives of victimhood (and to a lesser extent in the case of perpetratorship).

The narratives of the past in the Basque context have likely been transforming over time from ones of polarization to more inclusive versions, oriented toward the acknowledgment of others' suffering. Although our data points out the recognition of a more inclusive narrative of victimization, in the case of acknowledging responsibility, and specifically the responsibility of the State, a more protracted process of collective memory-building might be necessary. One also needs to consider that this reality is embedded in a historical trajectory where the Spanish State, with high impunity concerning human rights violations perpetrated since Franco's dictatorship, has not made progress in implementing policies promoting transitional justice. For example, the political debate sparked by the exhumation of Franco accounts for the resistance of the Spanish State to take measures oriented at seeking truth, bringing justice, and reparation concerning different forms of violence and repression in which the State participated. Hence, although our data are a valid photograph of the mosaic of collective memories, they reflect a specific moment of the history of the Basque conflict, and longitudinal research is necessary to develop a fuller picture of collective remembering and the interplay between victimhood and perpetratorship narratives in this setting. For instance, accounting for the period in which actors were victims or perpetrators and the power held by each of the groups in the dictatorial past and the democratic present is essential to understand the complexity of the representations of collective violence in this context.

Furthermore, the literature suggests that different roles in intergroup violence, their construals, and power dynamics between groups in conflict (Bilali & Vollhardt, 2019; Vollhardt, 2020) impact how people respond to policies and interventions designed to deal with the violent past. Thus, a remaining question is what are the implications of these complex construals for the reconstruction of the sociopolitical fabric in a post-conflict society. There is plenty of scope for further progress in

understanding these narratives' consequences not only in terms of common reconciliation outcomes but also considering their consequences for the present-day power dynamics between social actors involved and their collective behavior. For example, shifting the focus from forgiveness and intergroup harmony could help to understand how these narratives translate into particular behaviors or support for specific policies, including financial reparations but also the disclosure of the truth regarding violations of human rights, or whether these construals motivate the victimized groups to engage in collective action to contest discriminatory treatment in the present. Further work is certainly required in the Basque context to facilitate both the reconciliation and the truth-seeking processes.

In this sense, there is still a long way to go. Further peace and justice research and initiatives should consider unequal power distribution during and after the conflict to restore full political participation and ensure true social coexistence. Recent literature suggests that in societies where violence has been symmetric, that is, has affected different sides of the conflict, community members are more in favor of reconciliation and see it as compatible with seeking justice; in contrast, asymmetric violence was found to hinder pacification processes (Penić et al., 2020). Yet, defining a conflict as symmetric or not is a complex task because multiple factors determine it. Among other things, it depends on who held or holds the power to define the conflict itself and grants the status of "victim," whether it has occurred in a context of open war or not, the number of victims, *and* forms of violence employed by each of the sides. In the case of the Basque Country, although the number of people tortured by the State is much higher than the fatalities caused by ETA, the seriousness of the mortality of violence inflicted by ETA and the systematic denial of torture have been used to define the conflict in asymmetric terms, which explains the existing tensions in the current process toward pacification.

To overcome these tensions, it is necessary to provide open spaces for debate and collective sharing of *all* memories, including those that have been silenced, and — once all types of violence are acknowledged — to explore to what extent they *can* coexist and/or deserve equal recognition. In addition, this process requires constant cultivation of democratic practices, based on humanizing experiences of others, dialogue nurtured by empathy and trust, and bottom-up approaches to peacebuilding (see Gready & Robins, 2014 on transformational justice; see Chap. 4 in this volume). Literature confirms that transitional processes aimed at building an inclusive and integrated memory of the violent past stimulate a public debate that further contributes to forging a collective conscience about what happened and increasing respect for human rights (Martín-Beristain et al., 2010).

6.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, we have shed light, on the one hand, on the construction of clashing collective memories of political violence, which may further obstruct the processes of dialogue and transitions to peace. On the other hand, we have highlighted that the

reconstruction of these memories, based on mutual recognition of suffering and acknowledgment of responsibility, can bring about peacebuilding and social change oriented at ending the unequal power distribution among the involved parties in many transitional or post-conflict settings. These latter goals are still in process in the Basque context, and good progress has been made in recent years. The rebuilding of the social fabric in the aftermath of collective violence requires identifying the common bases between those who have had divergent victimization experiences and between those who have been direct victims and those who have not. We believe that a careful examination of the complexities in existing collective memories can help to recognize more sensitively the multiple necessities of all parties involved in a conflict. Such a nuanced, plural, and shared collective memory in transitional societies should be a basis for both institutional policies and social activities that can further contribute to peace, equality, and respect for human rights.

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Part II
Social Movements and Collective Action
Promoting Constructive Transitions

Chapter 7

The Energizing Role of Contact and Common In-group Identity on Collective Action Among Non-indigenous Groups in Mexico and Chile



David Sirlopú, Huseyin Çakal, Halime Unver, Natalia Salas, and Anja Eller

7.1 Introduction

The psychology of social change typically focuses on how disadvantaged groups address and attempt to change inequalities that undermine their group (Wright & Lubensky, 2008). This body of research has demonstrated that disadvantaged group members are motivated to challenge inequalities based on their group membership, which boosts their beliefs in the group's capacity to achieve this change and their anger over the unfairness they suffer continually (van Zomeren et al., 2008). However, much less is known on how advantaged groups react to disadvantaged groups' attempts to bring social change. Understanding how advantaged groups react to social change attempts is important as groups do not exist in isolation. Successful social change requires the advantaged group to weaken their hold on their privileges (Pettigrew, 2010), acknowledge the existing inequalities, and support social change (Çakal et al., 2019; Reimer et al., 2017; Selvanathan et al., 2018).

In the present research, we investigated how and when members of advantaged groups would be motivated to support social change. More specifically, we focus on

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the role of two key prejudice reduction strategies, intergroup contact and common in-group identity, in mustering support for social change that would benefit members of disadvantaged groups in the context of indigenous versus non-indigenous groups in Mexico and Chile.

A large body of evidence has demonstrated that positive intergroup contact and common in-group identity can dampen social change motivations among the disadvantaged (Çakal et al., 2011; Dixon, et al., 2012; Saguy et al., 2009). However, more recent research has shown that these so-called “sedative” effects that mollify the disadvantaged group’s motivations for social change can have the opposite effect among the advantaged groups. Thus, positive contact with minorities and identification with a superordinate category could increase advantaged groups’ members’ awareness of the discrimination suffered by disadvantaged people and may intensify their emotional experiences related to the minorities’ plight (Çakal et al., 2019; Reimer et al., 2017; Selvanathan et al., 2018). Consequently, these cognitive and affective reactions may motivate the advantaged group to engage in collective action on behalf of minority groups (Politi et al., 2020). In that vein, we wish to contribute to this debate by investigating whether intergroup contact and common in-group identity motivate advantaged group members to support social change via solidarity, group efficacy perceptions, and anger.

We first review the literature on the so-called sedative effects of contact and common in-group identity among the disadvantaged. We then examine the “not so sedative” roles of intergroup contact and common in-group identity to create solidarity and improve group efficacy perceptions among the advantaged groups. Specifically, we test whether quantity and quality of contact and common in-group identity at the national level motivate advantaged group members to engage in solidarity-based collective action and support policies that benefit the disadvantaged indigenous group. Likewise, we want to examine whether these previous effects occur via increased perceptions of solidarity, group efficacy perceptions, and anger among non-indigenous people from Mexico and Chile. By focusing on such non-WEIRD (**W**estern, **E**ducated, **I**ndustrialized, **R**ich, and **D**emocratic; Henrich et al., 2010) populations, we want to contribute a more inclusive social psychology of intergroup relations.

7.2 Intergroup Contact and Collective Action

The assumption that intergroup contact and the conditions for its optimal functioning (Allport, 1954) are “still our best hope for improving intergroup relations” (Wright et al., 2005, p.119) is based on the recurrent negative relationship between contact and prejudice (McKeown & Dixon, 2017; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008). Since its inception over time, intergroup contact has been associated with positive intergroup relations across different groups, cultures, and methodologies (Pettigrew et al., 2011). In all these scenarios, the outcomes have successfully underpinned its main premises. Intergroup contact reduces prejudice and improves intergroup

relations when groups involved in the contact situation have equal status and share some mutual goals and when legal and social norms support their interactions.

More recently, intergroup contact is also criticized for its “sedative, ironic, or paradoxical effects” among disadvantaged groups. For example, contact may buffer the link from relative deprivation to collective action among minority members (Çakal et al., 2011). At the same time, contact also decreases perceptions of threats, which can motivate intentions to improve the conditions for the disadvantaged in-group (Çakal et al., 2016b). For disadvantaged groups, contact creates an illusion of fair treatment and improves attitudes toward the advantaged out-group members, therefore weakening support for social change (Saguy et al., 2009).

Nevertheless, most of this research has focused on the negative consequences of intergroup contact among disadvantaged groups. As Simon and Klandermans (2001) argue, groups co-exist and interact with each other, and the positive effects of intergroup contact and common in-group identity in improving intergroup relations hold for both parties involved in intergroup situations. These positive effects of contact could also energize social change motivations for a fairer society among the members of the advantaged group. Complementing the focus on the sedative effects of contact on disadvantaged groups, in the present research, we focus on the effects of quantity versus quality of contact on social change among the advantaged group.

Inspired by the idea that contact can be a powerful tool for improving intergroup relations, studying the effect of the quantity and quality of contact with out-group members has become a topic of great interest. The contact amount involves quantifiable aspects of the number of members of an out-group that a person knows and the frequency with which these encounters occur. The quality of the contact, however, can refer to aspects such as the status of the actors, the social atmosphere surrounding the interaction, or the characteristics of the relationship, such as the degree of intimacy, trust, or friendship with out-group members (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011).

There is ample evidence on the simultaneous use of quality and quantity of contact, i.e., treating them as a single index (Binder et al., 2009; Tam et al., 2007; Voci & Hewstone, 2003). However, it is also not uncommon for researchers to decompose these dimensions to observe their differential effect on attitudes (Eller & Abrams, 2003; Van Dick et al., 2004). This distinction is theoretically important because a high frequency of contact does not ensure a reduction of prejudice. Moreover, positive affective bonds with out-group members have been shown to reduce anxiety towards them (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2011).

In sum, emergent findings across various intergroup settings show that contact can indeed motivate members of advantaged groups to support social change benefiting disadvantaged groups. For instance, Reimer et al. (2017) showed that positive contact with LGBT individuals motivated heterosexuals to engage in collective action benefiting those groups. This effect was mediated by identification with the social movement for LGBT rights and improved attitudes toward LGBT people. In a similar vein, Selvanathan et al. (2018) demonstrated that, among White Americans, more contact with Black Americans is associated with greater support for collective action benefiting Black Americans via empathy and anger over injustice. More

recently, findings from three advantaged groups in Northern Cyprus, Romania, and Israel showed that positive contact garnered support for collective action by the disadvantaged groups by reducing anxiety while increasing intergroup trust and perspective-taking (Çakal et al., 2019).

Meta-analytic research shows that contact reduces prejudice by increasing knowledge about the out-group, reducing anxiety about the intergroup contact, and increasing empathy and perspective-taking (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008). Thus, contact could improve the information about the challenges the disadvantaged indigenous people face and increase perspective-taking and empathy as previous cross-sectional research demonstrated (Çakal et al., 2019; Selvanathan et al., 2018). These processes can then trigger perceptions of solidarity and motivate social change among advantaged groups (Droogendyk, et al., 2016; Meleady & Vermue, 2019). In a similar vein, contact with the disadvantaged groups could reinforce perceptions of similarity with the disadvantaged out-group and increase cooperation (Wright & Richard, 2010), which may have stronger group efficacy perceptions.

Despite this growing body of evidence with advantage groups for the link from contact to support for collective action by disadvantaged members, these findings fail to demonstrate whether (a) positive effects of contact on social change extend to more radical attempts (i.e., violent collective action to improve the rights of the disadvantaged); (b) quality versus quantity of contact have differential effects on social change attempts, support for policies versus non-violent versus violent collective action; and (c) how contact would fare against other prejudice reduction strategies (i.e., common in-group identity) that are known to improve intergroup relations, to increase solidarity across different groups, and may be linked to group efficacy perceptions of the disadvantaged.

7.3 Common In-group Identity: Sedative Effects on Collective Action

Like intergroup contact, the common in-group identity model (CII; Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000) has also been touted as another influential strategy for reducing prejudice and negative stereotypes. This model suggests that members of opposing groups should decategorize themselves from their respective “rival” groups. They should then recategorize into a superordinate entity, namely, a category that subsumes original social identities and their negative out-group bias. Therefore, being members of different groups is transformed into a positive in-group bias toward this new superordinate group that now comprises the individuals from two previously rival groups.

Notwithstanding the amount of empirical research that stresses the importance of CII as a strategy to reduce prejudice and improve intergroup relations, some scholars call these results into question when this concept is examined in terms of social change (Dixon et al., 2005, 2012; Klein et al., 2007). For instance, generating a CII

shared by members of advantaged and disadvantaged groups shifts the focus from structural inequalities to individual differences (Dovidio et al., 2012). This shift creates an illusion of “meritocracy.” For example, disadvantaged minorities may perceive that, irrespective of their “sub-group” identity, all individuals in the superordinate group have the same opportunities, fair access to economic, social, and political opportunities conditions (Ufkes et al., 2015).

Unlike intergroup contact, there are only a handful of studies on the “mobilizing” effect of CII among advantaged groups (Dovidio et al., 2016). Banfield and Dovidio (2013, study one) manipulated intergroup threat and CII to analyze how both were interacting on opinions regarding whether racial disparities are caused by discrimination in US society or are instead the responsibility of Black people. Results showed that when White participants were in a threat situation, and the superordinate category was salient, they were more sensitive to bias against Black people and were more motivated to protest. In the same vein, other researchers (see Röpke et al., 2019) have examined the effect of the “all humanity” category as a type of CII. Their findings showed that contact between German university students (industrialized nation members) and a fictitious fellow from South America (developing country member) yielded more identification with humanity, which promoted more willingness to engage in responsible actions linked to climate change.

Although scarce, these findings show that similar to the energizing effects of contact, CII could positively affect social change motivations among the advantaged group. In the present research, we extend this line of inquiry by investigating alternative processes (i.e., solidarity, group efficacy perceptions, and anger) through which CII could exert its positive effects on social change among advantaged groups.

7.4 Solidarity, Group Efficacy Perceptions, and Anger as Mediators of Collective Action

Emergent research suggests that contact and CII could energize collective action via several intermediary processes. One process is solidarity-based collective action (henceforth labeled as solidarity), which refers to a process by which majority members willingly “actively challenge the authority in solidarity with the minority” (Subašić et al., 2008, p. 331). As for intergroup contact, Dixon et al. (2015) found that positive contact was associated with Indian residents participating in public actions to improve their Black neighbors’ conditions. Solidarity has also been proven as an effective mediator of CII. Stewart et al. (2016) tested a model to examine factors that could motivate international observers to support the Arab rebellions. Results showed that social dominance orientation predicted collective action through four mediators, namely, solidarity, belief in Arab competence, group efficacy perceptions, and anger. Additionally, solidarity had a mediational effect on collective action via anger and group efficacy perceptions.

Another mediator included in the research on collective action is group efficacy perceptions (Klandermans & van Stekelenburg, 2013). This concept refers to group members' beliefs that organizing and working together can attain group outcomes (van Zomeren et al., 2010). Among disadvantaged groups in India, the link between intergroup contact and social change motivations on behalf of all disadvantaged groups was mediated by group efficacy perceptions related to common disadvantaged groups (Dixon et al., 2017). Mixed results exist in the case of advantaged groups. Recently, Roblain and Green (2021) hypothesized that perceived polarization within the society predicts collective action through immigration attitude as self-defining and group efficacy perceptions. This model was tested in two European countries (Belgium and Switzerland), and in two of the three studies that were conducted, the researchers found that group efficacy had a direct and significant effect on the tendency to act on behalf of immigrants. However, there was no significant effect of perceived polarization on group efficacy perceptions.

Finally, there is evidence that anger triggered by collective disadvantage is associated with willingness to engage in social change attempts (Miller et al., 2009; van Zomeren, 2013; van Zomeren et al., 2008). However, to date, only one study investigated the role of anger in predicting motivations to engage in social change attempts benefiting the disadvantaged out-group. Across three studies in the same number of intergroup contexts, Klavina and van Zomeren (2020) found that anger targeting the advantaged out-group perceived to be responsible for the inequalities faced by a disadvantaged out-group was directly associated with both in-group and solidarity-based out-group collective action. Since there is scarce literature on the role of anger as a mediator of collective action in advantaged groups, our study contributes to fulfilling this gap. To sum up, preliminary evidence suggests that both intergroup contact and CII could energize social change by motivating advantaged group members to engage in various forms of political behavior. The two studies we report replicate and extend this line of research by (a) differentiating between dimensions of contact, i.e., quantity versus quality; (b) focusing on solidarity, group efficacy perceptions, and anger at inequalities faced by the disadvantaged out-group as intermediary mechanisms; and (c) differentiating between different forms of collective action (i.e., support for policies benefiting the disadvantaged out-group versus non-violent versus violent collective action in favor of the disadvantaged out-group). Below, we outline the intergroup context in which we conducted our studies. In Study 1, we test a model in which we enter dimensions of contact and CII as independent variables, solidarity and efficacy as mediating, and support for policies and non-violent collective action on behalf of the out-group as dependent variables. In Study 2, we expand this model by adding anger as the third mediating variable and testing whether these effects also extend to violent collective action intentions.

7.5 The Context of the Present Research

In Mexico, up to 60% of the population identify themselves as Mestizos, namely, a person of combined Indigenous and Western descent, while around 30% of the population identifies as being part of one of the numerous indigenous groups living in this country. In Chile, although most of its population can be considered Mestizo, very few Chileans recognize that they have Indigenous blood and instead tend to identify with their Western heritage only. For example, about 11% of people identify themselves as members of the nine indigenous people officially recognized by the State. Among them, Mapuche people are the largest, and many of them (particularly those living in the South of Chile) oppose the privatization of their original land. This situation has generated violent protests as well as violence from Chilean authorities (Gerber et al., 2016).

In both Mexico and Chile, indigenous people face material shortages and greater illiteracy, relative to the total population. This untenable situation has generated discontent among some indigenous groups, which led to the occasional use of violence to draw State attention to their rights, for example, the Zapatista movement in Mexico or Mapuche arson against the properties of those who have usurped their land. In some cases, these demonstrations have generated support from other indigenous groups and young non-indigenous people in Mexico and Chile who identify with the history of subjugation of these minorities in their respective countries.

Scarce research on non-indigenous solidarity with indigenous peoples and support for their rights suggests that although indigenous social movements have garnered some support, the specific psychological antecedents are not clear. In Mexico, for instance, the biggest and most active armed social movement, the Zapatistas, managed to form a successful network of support that included non-indigenous actors (Olesen, 2004) via publicized demonstrations and marches (Tilly, 2004). In a similar vein, following the nationwide suppression of civil rights and liberties during the Pinochet regime, the Mapuche social movement has become increasingly violent (Kowalczyk, 2013; Mallon, 2005). The most recent data available on the Mapuche conflict shows that in 2016 alone, there were 233 confrontations with varying degrees of violence between Mapuches and state forces (MACEDA, 2020). This is a sharp increase from 62 confrontations in 2006. Recent research shows that non-indigenous people in Chile support Mapuche rights and social movements because they perceive Mapuches as an important part of Chile's identity and as equal citizens (Center for Intercultural and Indigenous Studies, 2019). Both factors were linked with support for the Mapuche protests, including the violent ones (Pehrson et al., 2011). The present research expands upon these findings by considering the role of contact and CII.

7.6 The Present Study

We propose a theoretical model in which quantity and quality intergroup contact with indigenous groups and CII predict willingness to engage in collective action and support for policies on behalf of indigenous from Mexico and Chile via solidarity, group efficacy perceptions, and anger. This research complements and extends results obtained in previous studies (Çakal et al., 2016a; Eller et al., 2016) conducted among the indigenous populations in both countries.

Accordingly, we expect the quality of contact to motivate non-indigenous members of the Mexican and Chilean societies to support policies and collective action intentions benefiting disadvantaged indigenous out-groups via solidarity, group efficacy perceptions, and anger (H1). Second, we hypothesize the contact's quantity has similar effects on support for policies and collective action intentions, but we expect these effects to be less pronounced than the effects of quality of contact (H2). Third, and in line with the previous research on the positive effect of identity on efficacy perceptions (Saab et al., 2015; Shi et al., 2014), we predict that CII will motivate social change attempts on behalf of the disadvantaged groups via efficacy perceptions in Study 1 and via efficacy perceptions and anger in Study 2 (H3). Fourth, we expect anger (in Study 2) to be associated with violent collective action only (H4).

7.6.1 Study 1

We conducted Study 1 in Mexico Distrito Federal, the capital of Mexico. Our choice of this place was determined by the higher concentration of indigenous individuals in different neighborhoods of the city. A more detailed description of the process leading to data collection can be found in Eller et al. (2021). Here, we report a portion of the same dataset that has not been published before.

7.6.1.1 Method

The sample consisted of 237 undergraduate students (55.7% females; $M_{age} = 21.5$ years old; $SD = 3.27$) who self-identified as non-indigenous were recruited via social media websites to participate voluntarily in a research study on intergroup relations in Mexico. After giving consent, participants completed an anonymous paper-pencil questionnaire.

All variables were measured by multi-item 5-point Likert-style scales in which higher values (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree) indicated higher levels of that variable. We tested the convergence of items in each measure and the overall reliability of the measure using Cronbach's alpha (Cortina, 1993).

Quantity of contact with indigenous people was measured with two items. Specifically: "How often do you have direct face-to-face interactions with

indigenous people?” and “How often do you visit an indigenous people or how often do they visit?” ($\alpha = .62$).

Quality of contact with indigenous people was measured with three items related to whether Mestizos describe their interaction with these people as cooperative, positive, and respectful ($\alpha = .84$).

Common in-group identification as Mexican was measured by three items adapted from Luhtanen and Crocker (1992). Specifically: “Being Mexican is an important part of my identity,” “I am very happy to be a Mexican,” and “I have a strong sense of belonging to the Mexican community” ($\alpha = .91$).

We measured group efficacy perceptions using three items ($\alpha = .72$) derived from van Zomeren et al. (2004). Specifically: “We Mestizos can change our relations with indigenous people by our own effort,” “Working with other Mestizos I can change the conditions of indigenous people,” and “It would make a lot of difference if I took part in an effort to change the conditions of indigenous people for the better.”

Solidarity with indigenous groups was measured with three items ($\alpha = .89$) adapted from Batson et al. (1997). Specifically: “All Mestizos should work together to improve the position of indigenous people,” “All Mestizos must stick together and work with each other to change the position of indigenous people,” and “All Mestizos would be better off if they worked together to improve indigenous peoples’ position.”

Out-group-oriented collective action on behalf of the disadvantaged out-group was measured with three items from Çakal et al. (2011): “I would be willing to sign a petition to improve the current situation of indigenous people,” “I would be willing to sign up for a neighborhood project to improve the current situation of indigenous people,” and “I would be willing to participate in a peaceful demonstration to improve the current conditions for indigenous people” ($\alpha = .71$).

Support for policies benefiting the disadvantaged out-group was measured with three items ($\alpha = .75$) adapted from Smith et al. (2008): “More money should be spent on the schools in indigenous neighborhoods, especially for preschool and early education programs,” “The government has a special obligation to help improve the standard of living for indigenous people,” and “Special funds should be allocated for special training programs for unemployed indigenous people.”

7.6.1.2 Results

We tested a theoretical model in which we entered dimensions of contact (quantity and quality) and CII as predictors; solidarity and group efficacy perceptions as mediators; and support for policies benefiting the disadvantaged indigenous group and intentions to engage in collective action on behalf of them as dependent variables in Mplus (Muthén & Muthén, 2008a, b). We constructed latent variables and tested the convergent and discriminant validity of our variables via a confirmatory factor analysis. Results showed that all of our observed variables satisfactorily loaded onto their respective latent variables (above .500; Kline, 2016). The

proposed model fit the data well ($\chi^2 = 192.393, p < .05, df = 131, CFI = .96, RMSEA = .045, RMSEA\ CI\ 90\% .030-.058, SRMR = .050$; good fit is indicated by non-significant χ^2 , .06 or lower RMSEA; .95 or higher CFI; and .08 or lower SRMR values; see Kline, 2016). We report the descriptive statistics and zero-order correlations between our latent variables in Table 7.1.

We then tested if quantity and quality of intergroup contact and CII had any effects on collective action intentions on behalf of the disadvantaged indigenous out-group and support for policies benefiting them via solidarity and group efficacy perceptions. The proposed model (Fig. 7.1) explained 49% of the variance in our dependent variables: collective action tendencies and support for policies benefiting the indigenous, respectively; and explained 16% and 10% of group efficacy perceptions and solidarity (our mediating variables), respectively.

We found that intergroup contact ($\beta = .25, p < .001$) and quality of contact ($\beta = .29, p < .05$) had a direct positive effect on collective action on behalf of indigenous. In a similar vein, quality of contact ($\beta = .30, p < .05$) had a positive effect on solidarity, and CII as Mexican had a positive effect ($\beta = .38, p < .001$) on group efficacy perceptions. Solidarity, in turn, had a positive effect ($\beta = .64, p < .001$) on support for policies and on non-violent collective action ($\beta = .34, p < .001$). We then estimated all possible indirect effects of our predictor variables, quantity, and quality of contact as well CII via our mediating variables, solidarity, and group efficacy perceptions, using bias-corrected bootstrap sampling with 5000 resamples (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). To do so, we created point estimates for each effect (PE). We report these PEs below with confidence intervals (CI). Here we report the significant paths only. Results revealed that quality of contact had an indirect positive effect (PE = .10, CI %99 [.012, .211]) on collective action intentions and on support for policies (PE = .19, CI %99 [.115, .290]) via solidarity with the indigenous. Contrary to our expectations, we did not find any indirect effects of CII on support for policies or collective action tendencies.

Table 7.1 Descriptive statistics and correlations between the latent variables in the model (Study 1 Mexico)

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Contact	1.80	.78	–	.19 **	.03 ^{ns}	.10 ^{ns}	.07 ^{ns}	.24**	.05 ^{ns}
2. Quality of contact	3.44	1.09	–	–	.21**	.25**	.11 ^{ns}	.38 **	.16 ^c
3. Common in-group identity	4.13	1.01	–	–	–	.07 ^{ns}	.35**	.22**	.18**
4. Solidarity	4.25	.87	–	–	–	–	.31***	.40**	.52**
5. Group efficacy perceptions	3.92	.92	–	–	–	–	–	.25**	.30**
6. Collective action	3.95	.93	–	–	–	–	–	–	.28**
7. Support for policies	4.43	.70	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

Notes: Standardized coefficients are shown. Scales ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). *ns* non-significant; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .001$

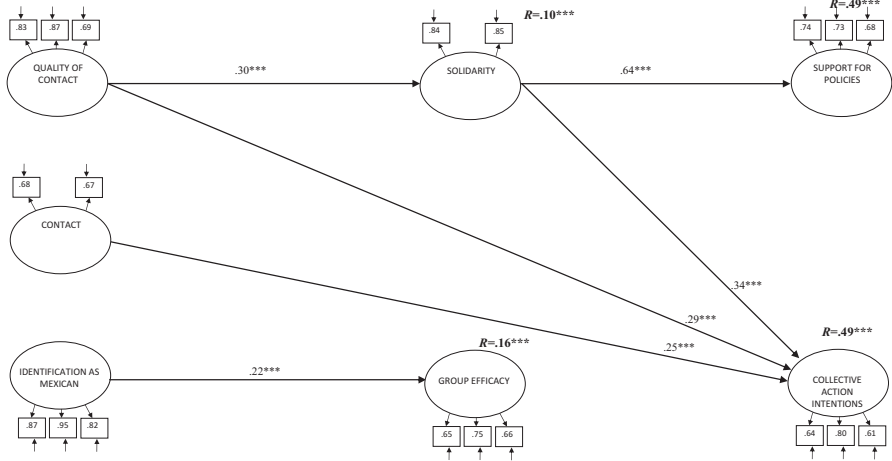


Fig. 7.1 SEM model showing the direct and indirect effects of quality of contact and quality of contact on support for policies and collective action intentions benefiting disadvantaged indigenous out-group (Study 1, Mexican Mestizo Ingroup)

Table 7.2 Model fit comparison of the tested model and alternative models (Study 1 Mexico)

Models	χ^2	df	RMSEA	RMSEA CI 90%	CFI	SRMR	Models compared	$\Delta \chi^2$ (df)
1. M1	192.323*	131	.045	.030–.058	.97	.050	—	—
2. M2	227.890**	137	.053	.041–.065	.94	.069	M1 VS. M2	38.7449(6)**
3. M3	231.392**	.139	.053	.041–.065	.94	.074	M1 vs M3	43.0923(8)**

Notes: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .001$

7.6.1.3 Alternative Model Testing

To rule out alternative explanations of these results, we tested two theoretically plausible alternative models (see Table 7.2). One could argue that both contact and quality of contact could predict membership to a common group which in turn could foster perceptions of solidarity and group efficacy which in turn could predict support for collective action and support for policies. Alternatively, contact and quality of contact could predict a strong sense of solidarity with the indigenous which in turn could predict CII, which in turn could predict collective action tendencies and support for policies by increasing perceptions of efficacy. Both models had poorer fit values compared to our proposed model (M2 $\chi^2 = 227.890$, $p < .001$, $df = 137$, CFI = .94, RMSEA = .053, RMSEA CI 90% .041-.065, SRMR = .069; M3 $\chi^2 = 231.392$, $p < .001$, $df = 139$, CFI = .93, RMSEA = .053, RMSEA CI 90% .041-.065, SRMR = .074). Thus, we rejected both alternative models.

7.6.1.4 Discussion

Results showed that dimensions of contact and CII as Mexican positively influenced social change motivations to benefit the disadvantaged indigenous out-group. More and higher quality of contact was related to more willingness to engage in collective action. Quality of contact was indirectly associated with collective action and support for policies. Perceiving indigenous contact as of higher quality was associated with perceptions of increased solidarity to this group, and perceptions of increased group efficacy, in turn, were associated with more willingness to engage in collective action and more support for the indigenous.

Contrary to our expectations, identifying as Mexican (that includes all peoples of Mexico) did not have any effects, directly or via efficacy, on willingness to engage in collective action or support for policies. This suggests that contact and CII effects on social change motivations operate via distinct processes. As our findings show, quality of contact emerged as the strongest of our three independent variables, while the quantity of contact was only associated with collective action intentions. This is in line with previous research, which shows that contact quality has an overall stronger effect on attitudes (Islam & Hewstone, 1993). Our results suggest that among non-indigenous Mexicans, quality but not the quantity of contact or CII relates to solidarity. In the context of the present study, however, CII did not affect solidarity or any of our dependent variables. We discuss the possible explanations of this non-finding in the general discussion.

In Study 2, we replicated this approach in Chile and extended the investigation to examine the potential mediating role of anger for non-violent collective action on behalf of the disadvantaged.

7.6.2 Study 2

Findings from Study 1 provided only partial evidence in support of our hypotheses. For instance, the predicted positive effects of CII on social change were limited to improved perceptions of group efficacy and did not extend to social change motivations. Moreover, we did not test whether any of our independent variables would be associated with anger and whether their possible positive effects on social change would extend to more radical attempts (i.e., violent collective action). With this in mind, we conducted our second study in Chile, a country with a much smaller, but equally politicized, population of indigenous people.

We recruited 209 participants from two universities in the southern city of Concepción who describe themselves as Chilean non-indigenous people (35.4% females; $M_{age} = 19.8$ years old, $SD = 5.96$).

We used the same scales as in Study 1. Therefore, here we only report the alpha reliability values to avoid repetition: quantity of contact with Mapuches ($\alpha = .84$); quality of contact with Mapuches ($\alpha = .76$); common in-group identification as Chilean ($\alpha = .91$); group efficacy perceptions ($\alpha = .84$); solidarity with Mapuches (α

= .89); out-group-oriented collective action on behalf of the disadvantaged out-group ($\alpha = .79$); and support for policies benefiting the Mapuches ($\alpha = .78$). We also measured anger experienced because of the disadvantages faced by Mapuches. Participants responded to the following: “Thinking about the disadvantages Mapuches face today in Chile, to what extent do you experience the following emotions?” (anger and outrage; $\alpha = .78$). Finally, violent collective action tendencies were measured by two items: “I would not mind participating in a violent demonstration to improve the conditions for Mapuches” and “I think violent demonstrations are a useful way to improve the conditions for Mapuches” ($\alpha = .78$).

7.6.2.1 Results

Model Construction

As in Study 1, we first ran a confirmatory factor analysis to test the validity of our latent variables and the fit of our model to the data. As expected, all items had good factor loadings (above .500), and our model fitted the data well ($\chi^2 = 303.142, p < .05, df = 217, CFI = .96, RMSEA = .045, RMSEA CI 90\% .032-.056, SRMR = .050$). The descriptive statistics and zero-order correlations between our latent variables in the model are reported in Table 7.3.

As for dependent variables, our model explained 83% and 22% of the variance in non-violent and violent collective action tendencies, respectively, and 54% of the variance in support for policies benefiting the disadvantaged Mapuche out-group. Regarding the mediating variables, our model explained 11%, 12%, and 12% of the variance in solidarity, group efficacy perceptions, and anger, respectively. See Fig. 7.2.

Like Study 1, quantity of contact had a direct positive effect on non-violent collective action intentions ($\beta = .15, p < .001$). Quality of contact with Mapuche people had a positive effect on solidarity ($\beta = .30, p < .001$), and CII as Chilean had a

Table 7.3 Descriptive statistics and correlations between the latent variables in the model (Study 2 Chile)

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Contact	1.55	.80	.39**	.13 ^{ns}	.12 ^{ns}	.09 ^{ns}	.17*	.28**	.13 ^{ns}	.10 ^{ns}
2. Quality of contact	3.40	.93	–	.31**	.32**	.37**	.29**	.48**	.33**	.14**
3. Common in-group identity	3.77	1.00	–	–	.14*	.26**	.20**	.23**	.16**	.13 ^{ns}
4. Solidarity	4.01	1.01	–	–	–	.49***	.29**	.60**	.60**	.10 ^{ns}
5. Group efficacy perceptions	3.66	1.04	–	–	–	–	.38**	.58**	.40**	.14 ^{ns}
6. Anger	2.74	1.16	–	–	–	–	–	.56**	.28**	.37**
7. Collective action	3.53	1.06	–	–	–	–	–	–	.54**	.28**
8. Support for policies	4.01	.95	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	.06 ^{ns}
9. Violent collective action	1.48	.98	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

Notes: Standardized coefficients are shown. Scales went from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). *ns* non-significant; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .001$



Fig. 7.2 SEM model showing the effects of quality of contact, quality of contact, and common as in-group identification as Chilean on support for policies and collective action intentions benefiting disadvantaged indigenous out-group (Study 2, Chilean Non-Indigenous Ingroup)

positive effect on group efficacy perceptions ($\beta = .22, p < .001$). In addition, quality of contact also predicted group efficacy perceptions ($\beta = .21, p < .001$) and anger ($\beta = .23, p < .001$) too. As for our mediating variables, solidarity had positive effects on collective action ($\beta = .45, p < .001$) and on support for policies ($\beta = .55, p < .001$), whereas efficacy had a positive effect on collective action ($\beta = .22, p < .001$), and anger had a positive effect on violent collective action ($\beta = .47, p < .001$).

We followed the same analytical strategy as in Study 1, and we tested the indirect effects of our predictor variables via all possible paths. Results revealed that quality of contact had indirect positive effects on collective action intentions via solidarity (PE = .13, CI %99 [.018, .289]), group efficacy perceptions (PE = .05, CI %95 [.001, .147]), and anger (PE = .10, CI %99 [.043, .175]). In addition, quality of contact also had an indirect effect on violent collective action intentions (PE = .11, CI %99 [.038, .187]) via anger and on support for policies (PE = .17, CI %99 [.020, .355]) via solidarity. Like Study 1, CII did relate to higher solidarity, but this effect did not extend to any social change outcomes.

7.6.2.2 Alternative Model Testing

As in Study 1, we also tested two theoretically plausible models to rule out alternative explanations of our results (see Table 7.4). Like Study 1, in the first alternative model (M2) we entered contact and quality of contact as predictors; CII, solidarity, group efficacy perceptions, and anger as serial mediators; and non-violent and violent collective action tendencies and support for policies as outcome variables. For the second alternative model (M3), we entered contact and quality of contact as

Table 7.4 Model fit comparison of the tested model and alternative models (Study 2 Chile)

Models	χ^2	<i>df</i>	RMSEA	RMSEA CI 90%	CFI	SRMR	Models compared	$\Delta \chi^2$ (<i>df</i>)
1. M1	303.142*	217	.045	.032–.056	.96	.050	–	–
2. M2	321.465**	226	.046	.034–.057	.96	.055	M1 VS. M2	18.094(9)*
3. M3	340.744**	.228	.050	.039–.061	.95	.074	M1 vs M3	36.854(11)**

Notes: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .001$

predictors, solidarity and CII as serial mediators, anger and group efficacy perceptions as parallel mediators, and non-violent and violent collective action tendencies and support for policies as outcome variables. Both models had comparatively worst fit to data (M2 $\chi^2 = 321.465$, $p < .001$, $df = 226$, CFI = .96, RMSEA = .046, RMSEA CI 90% .034-.057, SRMR = .054; M3 $\chi^2 = 340.744$, $p < .001$, $df = 228$, CFI = .95, RMSEA = .050, RMSEA CI 90% .039-.061, SRMR = .074) than our theoretical model. Therefore, our original model was retained.

7.7 General Discussion

Over the last few decades, the number of social movements has increased worldwide. However, their causes, forms of expression, and results are diverse (Louis et al., 2020). Undoubtedly, this situation has promoted the increase in research on collective action. Research on intergroup contact has mostly focused on the factors that de-motivate disadvantaged groups from engaging in social change (Dixon et al., 2012; Wright & Baray, 2012). It is important to recognize that sometimes demands for change can be supported by advantaged groups (Reimer et al., 2017). In this vein, we conducted two studies on non-indigenous people from Mexico and Chile to analyze the processes that can boost support for indigenous populations.

Intergroup contact and CII are criticized based on their paradoxical effects on social change in some contexts. The present research challenges this premise across two studies. We show that contact, especially the quality of contact with the disadvantaged and CII at the national level, motivates support for equality policies and collective action tendencies for non-indigenous people in Mexico and Chile. Although CII at the national level was associated with increased levels of solidarity with the disadvantaged group across both studies, it was only indirectly associated with increased willingness to engage in collective action on behalf of the disadvantaged indigenous group in Chile.

In these contexts, intergroup contact, but not CII, was linked with social change motivations on behalf of disadvantaged groups among members of advantaged groups. In Study 1, the quantity and quality of contact with Mexican indigenous people were associated with motivations to engage in collective action in favor of indigenous groups and support policies that benefit them. This effect, however, was not homogeneous. For example, the link from the quality of contact to public policy

support was mediated by solidarity. This result resembles that of other investigations (see Dixon et al., 2017). The CII as Mexican, however, was indirectly associated with collective action through group efficacy.

These results reflect that intergroup contact and CII can motivate social change through different mechanisms. We found partial evidence in favor of the first hypothesis. Quality of contact was associated with support for policies and collective action intentions via solidarity in Study 1, and via solidarity and anger in Study 2 (H1). Surprisingly, though the quantity of contact was directly and positively associated with collective action intentions in both studies, partially contradicting our second hypothesis (H2), the mediation effects were not significant. Our findings partially supported H3. In Study 1, there was no effect of CII, direct or indirect, on support for policies or collective action intentions. In Study 2, efficacy perceptions mediated the link from CII to willingness to engage in collective action. Finally, we found support for anger's association with violent collective action in Chile (H4).

These results enhance understanding of the effects of contact and CII on social change on behalf of disadvantaged groups on several fronts. First, we show that the dimensions of intergroup contact have differential effects on social change. We demonstrate that intergroup contact can energize social change among advantaged groups. This is an important step forward and calls for more research on other alternative processes through which contact can energize social change attempts. Research investigating whether the quality of contact via solidarity and anger would work similarly for activists or politicized individuals, compared to ordinary citizens, would be particularly welcome. This line of research could also unpack why contact, but not CII, is associated with increased solidarity. Second, we also show that for advantaged groups, anger resulting from the disadvantaged groups' plight is an important emotional process for social change. Previous research shows that anger about the in-group's disadvantages was unrelated to violent collective action (Tausch et al., 2011) among the members of the disadvantaged groups. Here, we provide the first direct evidence of the important role that anger can play in instigating out-group-oriented and solidarity-based collective action among the members of the advantaged group.

Previously, we showed that identifying with a common disadvantaged group and a common in-group at the national level, including the advantaged group, could motivate collective action among the disadvantaged indigenous communities in Chile and Mexico (Çakal et al., 2016a). Data from the present research extend these findings by showing that CII may not have the same energizing effects on social change among the advantaged. This is interesting and calls for new research for several reasons. Although we support the positive association between CII and group efficacy perceptions, these positive associations did not extend to social change motivations. This either shows that the energizing effects of CII among the advantaged groups are limited or require other additional facilitating factors, such as trust in the out-group or state institutions. Second, in multicultural societies, the CII's content and boundaries are generally determined by the advantaged groups (Dovidio et al., 2012). In our case, advantaged groups in Mexico and Chile may not see the indigenous group members as part of this superordinate group at the national

level. Future research investigating how CII is perceived and performed could answer these questions.

We acknowledge several limitations of our data and findings. First, our design is correlational and therefore cannot ascertain causality. Second, our participants are university students which limits generalization of our findings to adult populations (Çakal et al., 2019; Peterson & Merunka, 2014). Finally, our findings are limited by the number of psychological processes and measures that we include in our study. For instance, we measure CII at the national level. It is difficult to know the extent to which advantaged group members perceive the disadvantaged out-group members as part of this common group. Future research could extend these findings by including alternative processes (e.g., negative contact, perceived status, or even inclusion of the out-groups in the superordinate identity).

In conclusion, our findings show that contact may be associated with social change motivations among the advantaged groups through solidarity, group efficacy perceptions, and anger. Moreover, these associations extend to violent collective action intentions. Surprisingly, we found no evidence of the energizing role of CII. Given that groups do not exist in isolation and social change involves all the social groups in the context, our findings do bring good news. For advantaged groups, prejudice reduction strategies could be harnessed to bring social change. However, more research is needed to clarify the role of other dimensions and forms of contact and the related mediating processes. In a similar vein, there is a need to understand the consequences of CII on social change, especially in multicultural societies like Mexican and Chilean societies. Finally, our findings emphasize the need for more culturally sensitive and inclusive psychological research on processes underlying social change.

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Chapter 8

The Chilean Transition: Achievements, Shortcomings, and Consequences for the Current Democracy



Claudia Zúñiga, Winnifred Louis, Rodrigo Asún, and Carlos Ascencio

8.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we describe the evolution of Chilean democracy from its reinstatement in the last decade of the twentieth century to the “social outbreak” of 2019 that put its apparent success in question nationally and internationally. This chapter is structured for two levels of analysis, namely, the historical one, where we succinctly describe the main processes experienced by Chilean society in the last 30 years, and the psychosocial level, where we present the possible group and societal mechanisms that can help to understand these historical processes. This analysis allows us to understand the medium-term and long-term limitations and risks of democratic, peaceful, and “agreed transitions,” which at first may seem very successful. We believe that this understanding encompasses possible lessons to be applied, both to the future of Chile and other processes of peaceful democratization.

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8.2 Evolution of Chilean Democracy: From Its Success to the Outbreak of Unrest

8.2.1 *Is Chile an Example of a Successful Transition?*

The military dictatorship (1973–1990) led by Augusto Pinochet was established after a violent coup overthrew the socialist government of Salvador Allende. In the context of the twentieth century Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States, the Nixon and Ford administrations not only celebrated the Chilean coup but also did everything they could to support the regime, including ignoring human rights violations (Harmer, 2013; see Chap. 2 in this volume).

In its second term, the Reagan administration realized that right-wing dictatorships imposed by the United States were more of a justification than a deterrent to the communist left, so they began to withdraw their support (Lemus, 2001). Thus, parallel to the collapse of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe in the 1980s and 1990s, several conservative dictatorships that were supported under the pretext of stopping the communist threat also crumbled after losing their *raison d'être*. Within a few years, South African apartheid and the authoritarian regimes of South Korea, Paraguay, and Chile itself, among others, collapsed (Feria-Vázquez, 2018). This period has been called the second wave of democratization in Latin America since in 1992 there were only two dictatorial regimes in the region (Mainwaring & Pérez-Liñán, 2005).

Nevertheless, the change in the international climate was, by no means, the only or main factor explaining the triumph of democracy in Chile. Domestic civil society and political organizations played a very important role.

The first protests against the Chilean dictatorship were rather symbolic, to denounce the systematic violation of human rights (see Chap. 1 in this volume). Given the brutality of the regime, the protests were very limited (Rovira, 2007). However, in the 1980s, after the 1982 economic crisis, protests and demonstrations were organized throughout the country. In the absence of legal unions, the labor movement began to reorganize, taking advantage of the loopholes of the dictatorial legislation, to promote class mobilizations and weaken the regime (Feria-Vázquez, 2018). People gradually lost their fear of repression, allowing a progressive renaissance of civil society that began to press for the end of the dictatorship. The Catholic Church, university students, and young people were especially important, as all these actors mobilized together and achieved a significant position of power (Rovira, 2007).

Parallel to the resurgence of civil society, various political groups in opposition to the regime (communists, socialists, and Christian-democrats) began to find common ground. Despite their differences, they shared the objective of restoring democracy (Rovira, 2007). In this sense, the long duration of the Chilean dictatorship was a key factor for rapprochement between former rivals, since there was time for a social learning process to take place, which allowed the consolidation of subsequent inter-elite agreements (Cavarozzi, 1992).

These agreements were also possible due to the struggle of various guerrilla groups which, by demonstrating their resilience and organization, frightened sectors close to the dictatorship with the potential appearance of a low-intensity military conflict (Goicovic, 2015). However, at the same time, the fact that these armed groups were harshly repressed by the State showed the most radical groups the scarce viability of defeating Pinochet through the use of force (Gómez, 2010), making it more desirable for all parties to reach agreements.

Between 1986 and 1989, a series of meetings took place between civic-military representatives and the coalition against the dictatorship. In these meetings, the steps to be taken to end the authoritarian regime were debated and defined. Thus, on October 5, 1988, a plebiscite took place between two options: the continuity of Pinochet or a democratic election of President of the Republic in the year next. The option contrary to Pinochet won with 54.7% of the votes (Rovira, 2007). According to Arcaya (1999), this result was a relative tie. The losers were not humiliated, and the winners were not victorious. Hence, the elites of the previous regime had sufficient strength to impose their own constitutional and legislative framework, which the democratic opposition was forced to accept (Feria-Vázquez, 2018). What was carried out, therefore, was a negotiation in which the democratic sectors were forced to choose the lesser evil (Moulian, 1994). It seems it was a price that was worth paying, since in 1989 the opposition coalition won the presidential and legislative elections and in March 1990, a democratically elected president took office.

Since then, Chilean democracy has been consolidating, and the country is often lauded for its successful democratic transition and political and economic stability (Delamaza, 2015; Letelier & Dávila, 2015). Although some anti-dictatorship guerrilla groups continued to fight, they faced harsh repression that ended with numerous deaths and their military defeat (Goicovic, 2015).

According to The Freedom House (2020) score and Polity score (Marshall et al., 2016), Chile is one of the countries with the highest levels of democracy in the world, at the same level as the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom, for example. It is described by The Freedom House (2020) as “a stable democracy that has experienced a significant expansion of political rights and civil liberties in the last four decades,” and in the Transparency International Index (2020), it is classified as one of the least corrupt countries in Latin America.

Between 1990 and 2004, Chile had an average growth in gross domestic product of 6% and reduced the percentage of the population living below the poverty line from 40% to 20%. This economic growth allowed a large sample of the population to emerge from poverty and enter a new status: the middle class (although many of them continued to live on low wages).

At the same time, there has been a significant increase in school and university enrollment, which has allowed many families from lower-class backgrounds to access higher education (Canales-Cerón et al., 2016). There has also been an accelerated modernization of urban space and an expansion of technological networks. Consequently, it is possible to argue that the country’s population has better average material conditions than in the past and that of the other countries in the region (Rovira, 2007).

Despite a few dissident sectors that were critical of the model the country was following (Moulian, 1997), economic success generated a significant degree of acquiescence of the population with the new democracy and the economic system inherited from the dictatorship, which was expressed in broad electoral support for the political parties that led the transition process. Therefore, we can conclude that the Chilean transition developed very successfully – or can we?

8.2.2 The Outstanding Issues

One of the peculiarities of the Chilean transition is that the dictator was not only still alive when the democratization process began, but he continued in power, first as commander in chief of the army and then as lifetime senator. These measures guaranteed him and his family total immunity, at least within the national territory (Arcaya, 1999). This strongly influenced the negotiation processes between the supporters of the dictatorship and the leaders of the opposition parties (Linz, 1992).

Unlike other institutional transition processes, that is, transitions that start with the rules and procedures previously established by authoritarian governments (González-Martínez & Nicolás-Marín, 2010), in Chile it was not possible to start a constitutional process and enact a new Magna Carta. The constitution inherited from the dictatorship contained substantial impediments to reform, such that (except for some modifications) it continues to be enforced to this day (Huneus, 1995).

The Chilean transition also does not produce a break with the previous regime in terms of the economic model, but rather the opposite (Rovira, 2007). The neoliberal process was accelerated, with massive privatizations of public services and the reduction of the role of the state. The privatizations that took place in Chile were not limited to those goods that are traditionally understood as tradable in the market but included services such as water, health, education, and pensions. Hence, the economic criteria of the market colonized almost all areas of life. The expansion of the educational system at all levels has been achieved through increasing its level of privatization to the detriment of public education (Bellei & Vanni, 2015), and one consequence of this process has been that the level of spending by families to finance the education of their children has increased, reaching one of the highest proportions in the world (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2015).

In addition, despite the decrease in poverty, the level of inequality remained stable and did not show signs of declining until the beginning of the twenty-first century, remaining at very high levels considering the national gross domestic product (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2018). Furthermore, although there have been some improvements through relatively recent reforms, Chile has not built a social security system that can support the population in difficult times. The health system is highly fragmented among an expensive and high-quality private subsystem and a free-but-precarious public system; unemployment insurance is weak; and the pension system is private, managed by Pension Fund

Administrators (AFP), a system imposed in 1981 by the civil-military dictatorship, constituted by private companies with multimillion-dollar profits and capital of two-thirds of the Chilean gross domestic product (Gálvez & Kremmerman, 2020).

The perpetuation of the economic policies of the previous regime, during democracy, was possibly based on the acquiescence, or at least the passivity, of the majority of the population. After the transition, people tended to abandon the political and civil society organizations, which had been strong in the final years of the dictatorship. This new apolitical and individualistic citizen focused on the private and family sphere, taking advantage of the access to consumption, personal success, and upward social mobility that was offered (Feria-Vázquez, 2018).

This process of political demobilization was supported by political parties since a demobilized society would offer a greater room for negotiation to the political elites, in which they were trying to integrate (Sastre, 1997). Thus, the Chilean transition began when the group of elites against the dictatorship gained power thanks to the resurgence of civil society, but ended with inter-elite pacts in which the position of civil society was neglected (Rovira, 2007).

8.2.3 *The System Weakening*

The lack of citizen participation continued to increase over time. Both the militancy of political parties and the percentage of the population that voted in the elections decreased notably from the middle of the 1990s onward (Bargsted et al., 2019). This facilitated agreements between parties and made electoral results more predictable (since the electorate was small and relatively old). At the same time, the decreased engagement of the parties alienated them from the population, diminishing their social legitimacy (Artaza, 2019) and their ability to channel social demands.

Since the turn of the century, economic growth rates began to decline progressively, reaching a certain stagnation in per capita wealth by 2015 (World Bank, 2020). Families are compensated for this less auspicious economic situation through debt. More than 70% of households have expenses greater than their income. In 2003, the total debt was equivalent to 38% of the annual household income, and by 2018, this figure reached 71.5%. In addition, workers face the certainty that their pensions will be even lower than the low wages they receive, as currently, the average amount of pensions in Chile is below the minimum wage (Stecker & Sisto, 2019).

Parallel to the stagnation of the economy, acceptance of the neoliberal model also began to erode, and the value of egalitarianism began to gain greater importance among the population. When comparing surveys applied in the early 1990s (1989–1993) with those of the recent decade (2010–2014), significant changes in citizens' values are observed. For example, regarding income equality, on a 10-point scale (1 = incomes should be made more equal; 10 = we need larger income differences as incentives), the mean rating in this period fell from 5.7 to 3.4. For wealth accumulation; on a 10-point scale (1 = people can only get rich at the expense of

others, 10 = wealth can grow so there's enough for everyone), the mean decreased from 7.3 to 5.8 (World Values Survey, 2015).

In the educational field, the increased coverage of secondary and higher education led to expectations of intra- and intergenerational social mobility (i.e., a norm was that each person's life would be better than that of their parents). But with the economic stagnation of recent years, this expectation has not been fulfilled. Young people and their families have made strenuous efforts to access higher education, with enormous economic costs that haunt them for much of their adult life (Canales-Cerón et al., 2016). But the benefits of this effort, in terms of employment, remuneration, and status, have tended to decline.

Therefore, education has lost its value as a tool for social mobility, and for many, it has also lost its value to generate significance. In the so-called commodification of professions, universities manufacture graduates who provide services in the market. Professionals provide services for which they receive fees, but with their activity, they do not necessarily serve the common good of society. Many professions today have only an economic value, but at the same time, they are less and less profitable.

The loss of meaning in education hit one of the pillars of the system, namely, the value of meritocracy. The most desired jobs tended to be monopolized by the elite due to the resources that they had beyond the education system. This phenomenon coincided with the uncovering of a series of corruption scandals and impunity that affected institutions, politicians, businessmen, and public figures, which further weakened people's trust in the system (Saldaña & Pineda, 2019), laying the foundations for the "social outbreak" that it would end questioning it definitively.

8.2.4 The "Social Outbreak"

Although the intensity and scale of the "social outbreak" that erupted in October 2019 was a surprise for all actors, the growing social unrest that affected the vast majority of Chileans had been evident for some time. From the return of democracy in 1990 to the mid-2000s, Chile was characterized by low levels of protest and social mobilization, compared to other countries in South America. From 2006 onward, however, the protest increased significantly, extending to a diversity of previously demobilized groups (Medel & Somma, 2016).

A milestone commonly highlighted is the array of protests that took place in 2006, called the Penguin movement, due to the colors of the uniforms of most Chilean schools (Donoso, 2013). This process began when a new generation of high school students united by the same classic economic demands (lower cost of education and more public transport for students) and began to question the institutional framework for education (i.e., privatization, inequality, and the decline of public schools, among other problems). Some years later, the university students were the protagonists of the social mobilization, with the 2011 protests (Guzman-Concha, 2012; Valenzuela et al., 2012) internationally called "Chilean Winter," for having

reached its peak at that time of year. At that time, hundreds of thousands of people participated in rallies organized under slogans criticizing key aspects of the Chilean educational and economic system (Asún et al., 2019).

The regional uprisings in Magallanes (2011), in Chilean Patagonia, also stand out, demanding solutions for local problems, but also deeper changes such as respect, recognition, and decentralization, in one of the most centralized countries in the world (Sandoval et al., 2020). Since 2016, marches in multiple cities called by the “No More AFP” group, protesting against the Chilean pension system, have joined the constellation of mobilizations for structural changes. Feminist mobilizations have also been reinvigorated with the slogan “Not one less,” against gender-based violence. The movement exploded across universities, during the so-called feminist May in 2018, in response to allegations of sexual harassment and abuse.

Special mention should also be made of the Mapuche movement, which, during the first democratic government, was actively involved in the government-led process of creating new indigenous institutions. Many of the most important leaders of the movement at the time participated in these institutions. But in the late 1990s, a branch seeking autonomy developed within the Mapuche movement, and the demand for some form of political autonomy gained in importance and gradually eclipsed the other sectors. Actions such as land takeovers and the burning of forestry plantations, trucks, and machines belonging to companies operating in claimed lands have been employed by some Mapuche organizations (Bidegain, 2017; see Chap. 7 of this volume).

The 2019 outbreak started with secondary school students using social networks to evade paying Santiago’s subway fares, as a way of protesting the sudden increase in the cost of the ticket. In just 1 week, protests escalated across the country, and the police began to strongly repress the demonstrators. The situation worsened, and the violence took over the streets of the capital, with the burning of various subway and bus stations, looting of supermarkets, and attacks on hundreds of public and private facilities. The closure of several vandalized subway stations meant that many inhabitants of Santiago, especially the middle and working class, saw their daily transport times lengthen considerably and the quality of their journeys degraded. Despite this, surveys conducted in late October and early November showed that more than 70% of the Chilean agreed that the protests and marches should continue (Cadem, 2019).

On October 19, 2019, President Sebastián Piñera announced that the increase in the cost of subway tickets was suspended and decreed a State of Emergency and curfew in several cities. However, citizens continued to demonstrate. On October 20, 2019, in a statement to the nation, President Piñera said: “We are at war against a powerful, implacable enemy, who does not respect anything or anyone and who is willing to use violence and crime without limit” (Navarro & Tromben, 2019). This remark further fueled the protests, and violence was multiplied in various cities of the country and neighborhoods of the capital. On October 25, 2019, a massive march was called in all the cities of the country. In the capital downtown, the largest demonstration the country has ever seen was held, with hundreds of thousands of people demonstrating on the streets of Santiago.

In addition to government errors in the political management of the conflict, another element that radicalized the protests was the strong police repression, which had its roots in the institutional violence, police excesses, and other human rights violations that continued during the first years of democracy. The police forces, accustomed to having “carte blanche” during the dictatorship, lacked a democratic culture (Feria-Vázquez, 2018). In the last decade, there has been a reactivation of repressive violence by the state against mobilized citizens, which has involved increasing police violence (Donoso & Salinero, 2016). Police use of anti-riot equipment such as water cannons and tear gas is often indiscriminate and disproportionate (Human Rights Watch, 2004).

In connection with the outbreak of protest of October 2019, more than 8000 people were detained between October 18 and December 6. The public prosecutor has reported that there are ongoing investigations related to 26 deaths that occurred in the context of the protests, and cases of people with eye or facial injuries (e.g., due to rubber bullets) would exceed 300. On December 13, 2019, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (2019) released a report on Chile, which stated that, during the recent mass protests and state of emergency, the police and the armed forces failed to comply with international norms and standards on the control of assemblies and the use of force and with their duty to distinguish between people who were protesting peacefully and violent protesters.

Surveys carried out between October and November 2019 showed that young people were the main protagonists of the present social unrest. Over half of respondents between 18 and 35 years old participated in some form of protest during this period (57%), and most legitimized the mass evasions as a form of protest against the subway fare increase (79%). Many also believed that the crisis was mainly the expression of generalized social unrest (81%), and only 8% considered it to be a problem of public order and organized violent groups, as the government had proposed (Cadem, 2019).

During the demonstrations, the demand for structural changes emerged with increasing force, as well as the proposal by several sectors that this could only be achieved through a new constitution. As a way of channeling citizen demands, on November 15, 2019, the government and the opposition agreed to hold a plebiscite, in which citizens would decide whether or not they wanted a new constitution. This plebiscite was held 1 year after the eruption of the “social outbreak.” In October 2020, the option favorable to constitutional change triumphed by a large majority (78.3%). Chile now begins a process of reinvention that can lead to an important and necessary social change. But this process begins during an economic situation that strongly deteriorated both by the “social outbreak” and the COVID-19 pandemic. It remains to be seen if the protests (and their level of violence) will restart once the health emergency ends.

8.3 Psychosocial Aspects of the Chilean Protests

In the preceding section, we have attempted to briefly describe the evolution of Chilean democracy in the last 30 years. We will now try to elucidate some of the psychosocial mechanisms that could be at the base of these processes.

To begin, we must recognize that despite the country's low economic growth in recent years, and the constraints of its democracy, in objective terms Chile has much better living conditions and opportunities than in the past and higher than those of neighboring countries. However, social psychology has shown that revolutions, uprisings, and social outbreaks are not directly caused by material deprivation. They are generated primarily by the clash between cultural expectations and the possibilities that material life offers (Gurr, 1970). This phenomenon can be especially noticeable in younger generations, who do not have biographical experiences of times of greater scarcity, which can lead older generations to feel relative satisfaction with the current level of well-being. Anger, resentment, and feelings of injustice accumulate when the illusions are not fulfilled or are indefinitely postponed, and there are no alternative aspirations in which to deposit them. These feelings of deprivation may become stronger when young people have the perception that meritocracy does not work and that the elite acts in a corrupt way and monopolizes the best positions in the labor market, thanks to their social and family connections.

Pertinent to understanding the Chilean case, one of the most recognized models proposed from social psychology to explain protest behavior is the Social Identity Model of Collective Action (SIMCA, van Zomeren et al., 2008). SIMCA identifies precisely the perception of injustice and the emotions it triggers (such as anger) as one of its main predictors of participation. Identification with the in-group (a sense of "we"; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Thomas et al., 2012) also stands out as critical, especially when identity is politicized (Simon & Klandermans, 2001). During the recent outbreak of protests, a new discourse has arisen that positions "we the people" in opposition with the political, economic, and social elites to whom the causes of the problems are attributed. This new understanding of social positions has undermined citizens' identification with authorities and the State, diminishing subjective perceptions of common interests and shared identities, which could lead to mutually beneficial cooperation and, instead, has fostered perceptions of threat and division, which lead to conflict (Haslam et al., 2010; Louis et al., 2020).

Another variable considered by the SIMCA model is people's perceptions that the collective action will be effective. Recent experiences, both national and international, seem likely to have shown citizens that street protests are effective in influencing political authorities. The organization costs for such protests also have decreased, thanks to new information and communication technologies, making it easier to initiate and coordinate protests than ever before (Millaleo & Velasco, 2013).

Focusing especially on young people, the frustration they experience as a result of the doubtful returns that their educational and labor investment will have could lead them to what Kruglanski and colleagues have called the quest for significance (Kruglanski et al., 2014, 2018). According to these authors, the central motivation

at the base of radical behavior is the basic human desire to matter, to be someone, and to be respected. When an individual experiences a loss of personal or group significance, a quest is activated (Kruglanski et al., 2013), which can be found in participation in protests or political radicalization. This could be the case for many young people who have dropped out of the educational system, are unemployed, or are studying careers that have lost their status or demand in the market.

Another psychosocial element that undoubtedly had an impact on the high participation in the mobilizations was the strong repression that instead of reducing the protests had the opposite effect of strengthening them and radicalizing a subgroup of demonstrators. A further elaboration of SIMCA (van Zomeren et al., 2018) and empirical evidence (Ayanian et al., 2020) highlights the role of moral convictions, and violated moral beliefs in particular, as catalyzing forces for social movements to erupt. In this case, we believe that the strong repression of initially peaceful protests violated people's deep convictions regarding rights in democratic contexts and helped build a shared identity (Drury et al., 2016) that empowered the demonstrators, thereby increasing the legitimacy of the movement and support for action (Jiménez-Moya et al., 2019).

Regarding the radicalization of a part of the protesters, evidence shows that when people feel powerless to face injustice or influence relevant political decisions, because the government either does not respond to them or responds with repression, radical actions are more likely to be resorted to (Becker & Tausch, 2015; Jiménez-Moya et al., 2015). We can hypothesize that the citizens perceived the repression as a signal that conventional forms of collective action would be ignored, leading to radicalization in response (Lizzio-Wilson et al., *in press*; Louis et al., 2020). More broadly, it is possible that the strong repression of the protests and the government's attempt to frame the social movement as a law and order problem led by criminal groups gave young people justification for violence (i.e., if the attack on the group is violent, then the defense of the group must be too). As Drury and Reicher (2005) have shown, if participants consider that police actions in the context of social mobilization are illegitimate, they tend to legitimize active opposition to the police.

Thus, the relationship between the demonstrators and the government and police forces in Chile can be described as what Moghaddam (2018) has called mutual radicalization: specifically, the process during which two groups radicalize one another, become increasingly extreme in their views, develop an increasing distrust of one another, move further and further apart in the process, and often take actions that are contrary to their apparent self-interest. The mutual radicalization process takes place when the actions of one group trigger a more extreme response in a second group, and this, in turn, triggers further radicalization in the first group. This psychosocial process includes group mobilization, extreme in-group cohesion, and antagonistic identity transformation. Mutual radicalization often develops into a pathological state when the only way members of each group feel they can gain is to inflict pain on the out-group. They behave according to the principle that a loss for the other group becomes a perceived gain for their own group.

In summary, we believe that the increase in relative deprivation, a greater perception of injustice, the construction of a politicized social identity, the greater perception of the effectiveness of protest actions and their lower organizational costs, the quest for significance in some sectors of the younger generations, the empowerment of demonstrator in the face of repression, and the mutual radicalization between protesters and police forces are psychosocial processes that help us understand the “social outbreak” of 2019.

The structural constraints of the Chilean democracy, such as the maintenance of the neoliberal economic model imposed in the dictatorship, the need for reforms in law enforcement institutions, the lack of a social protection system in line with the country’s economic development, and the distancing of the elites from the rest of the citizens, among others, have created the conditions for these processes, leading to massive demonstrations that surprised Chile and the world. Below we try to uncover some lessons from this experience that could be useful for other democratization processes.

8.4 Conclusions: Lessons from the Chilean Transition

Several authors have praised the Chilean transition for its peaceful nature (Arriagada & Graham, 1994). However, although this peaceful transition has had the invaluable benefit of saving lives, at the same time, it has had the high cost of not immediately implementing all the necessary changes because consensus had to be reached with the supporters of the authoritarian government.

Hence, we believe that a peaceful transition requires compromising certain demands and understanding that not all the desired changes will be possible in the short term. A peaceful transition also requires the elites to not lose sight of the need to gradually implement such changes in the medium term and long term. Clarity about this point would facilitate realistic expectations among citizens (i.e., a democratic transition may only solve problems related to the political regime, but does not necessarily mean the end of the social and economic problems). In addition, leaders should keep in mind that although the changes must be carried out slowly, it is necessary to move persistently in the direction of social change because, otherwise, sooner or later, inequities may generate social unrest and even disenchantment with democracy (Puig, 2009).

Another element to highlight is that the center-left political parties that governed the country from 1990 to 2010 did so without incorporating the civil society. These parties actively encouraged the decline of community organizations through clientelistic practices, such as providing goods and resources directly to individuals. These practices may have fostered citizens’ disaffection with politics: by distancing people from institutional forms of political expression, this approach increased the risk that when social conditions became intolerable, citizens have no other means of expression and participation than social protest.

Contemporary societies today face increasingly complex problems, which require coordinated work between various actors for their resolution. In this context, the collaboration between governmental actors and civil society is essential, sharing the task of looking after the public interest and solving problems that affect citizens. It is key to have institutional structures that encourage and facilitate this collaboration, while appropriately recognizing the roles, responsibilities, and values of both civil society and the government sector (Sociedad en Accion, 2020). In Chile, these institutional structures have yet to be developed.

Social protests are part of today's democracies and constitute one of the ways by which citizens can influence politics and promote social change (Della Porta, 2014). However, to be a facilitator of transformations, and not become a risk for the process by increasing resistance to changes, protests must be oriented toward what Shuman et al. (2020) call "constructive disruption," that is, focusing on non-normative non-violent collective actions that are an effective form of protest to pressure governments while reducing the resistance of elites to make concessions. The governments for their part must learn to adequately address social mobilizations. Otherwise, there is a serious risk that the demonstrations will become radical, which makes conflict resolution even more difficult and can lead to processes that affect the quality of democracy.

When it comes to a social crisis like the one Chile faces, the challenge is for all actors. The government must stop thinking that its main concern is public order, and the opposition must stop focusing its efforts on destabilizing the government. At this stage, there is no doubt that both parties should be motivated by the possibility of making structural changes in the economic, social, and police systems. It is time for the government and opposition to assume their historic responsibility, stop blaming each other, acknowledge their mistakes, and act accordingly, working together to achieve shared goals.

If they are unable to find a way for dissenters, civil society, and political elites to work together, Chileans could be laying the foundations for future elections to find results that "no one would have expected" (such as Brexit in the United Kingdom, Trump in the United States, or Bolsonaro in Brazil). Turning away from inclusion could lead to a new era of division and unrest, further undermining the possibility of democratic and transformative change.

According to Moghaddam (2018), the key elements that facilitate deradicalization processes are:

- (a) That the parties in conflict imagine peace as beneficial to the extended in-group. For this element to be fulfilled, it is required that the in-group is imagined as extended, through a process of recategorization, where individuals change from interpreting intergroup relations in terms of "us" and "they" to "we."
- (b) The development of mutual motivation to change toward constructive relations. This challenge is to motivate the two groups to change their relationship from one of conflict to one of peace. For groups trapped in mutual radicalization, the biggest obstacle is to challenge the belief that peace is possible only after the other is defeated or destroyed.

- (c) The groups can adopt new, mutual superordinate goals. When the groups adopt goals that both want to achieve, but neither can achieve without the cooperation of the other, the prospect of constructive engagement greatly increases.

We believe that implementing a democratic process of constitutional change may be an opportunity to advance the deradicalization processes. All of the actors will be summoned to work for a common goal, and this could strengthen a shared identity. The population could gradually stop seeing politicians as distant actors, the state as an exclusively oppressive entity, and the police as an enemy force.

A democratic transition is defined as a process of regime change, characterized by uncertain development, with rules constantly redefined and where democracy is only one of the possible outcomes (Araya, 2011). The study of the transitions reminds us that democracy does not come naturally after institutional breaks. Rather, democracy only occurs when society fights for it and remains in its permanent defense and vigilant of its daily practices (González-Gallego, 2011).

Turning from Chile to the broader context of scientific research on social movements in societies in transition, it is clear that new research is needed to develop theory and tools that engage historical trajectories, regional differences, and diverse levels of analysis from interpersonal and intragroup to intergroup and multilevel social networks (Louis et al., 2020). Research is needed that seeks to understand the changing dynamics of national inequality and power, for example, the responsiveness of protesters to state actions (e.g., repression), as well as the responsiveness of state actions to protestors (e.g., neglect, dialogue, demonizing, violent destructiveness) (Louis & Montiel, 2018; Smith et al., 2019). Such analyses are challenging for many reasons, including the dangers that authoritarian regimes pose to the scholars who engage them (Montiel, 2018). Yet, in light of the immense waves of protest which have emerged in 2019–2020, and which have in turn attracted new waves of authoritarian repression and police violence, that have provoked further protest, the data are present to study mutual radicalization in multilevel models at scale. We look forward to the new research, and as scholars and citizens, we can only hope that the data and theories will soon emerge that show how to turn peaceful, democratic collective action into positive, transformative social change.

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Chapter 9

“Chanting at 1 pm Revolution Time”: Collective Action as Communal Coping in the Sudan Revolution



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The demonstrations used to start at 1 pm. People started calling it Revolution time. At 1 we were all supposed to chant revolutionary slogans on the street if we were part of the revolution. It was phenomenal. Until 12.58 you may have doubts, and think, ‘Will I be the only one chanting?’. The same at 12.59. But then at 1, we all chanted. And then you knew everyone around you were fellow revolutionaries. – Kamal

9.1 Introduction

At any given time, collective action and active resistance are part and parcel of different people’s lives across a multitude of settings. Psychology has contributed extensively to understanding processes of collective action (Drury & Reicher, 2005; van Zomeren, 2013). An aspect less explored by the discipline is collective action in repressive contexts (i.e., high-risk contexts where people continue to participate in protests and revolutions while knowing that they risk being killed or arrested for their participation). This is the type of collective action we explore in this chapter. We argue that collective action research within psychology has not focused sufficiently on these contexts (see similar calls in Becker and Tausch (2015)) and that different theoretical frameworks may be a better fit for unpacking such collective action. To explore this, we discuss the revolution in Sudan.

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In a coup in 1989, led by Al-Turabi, the National Islamic Front (NIF) brought Omar al Bashir to power in Sudan, ousting the government of prime minister Al-Mahdi.¹ Before the 2019 revolution, Sudan had two former people-led revolutions that overthrew the government, specifically, the 1964 October Revolution where people overthrew military leader Ibrahim Abboud and the 1985 protests that ended with the fall of the military dictator Jaafar Nimeiri (see Berridge, 2015).

From 2011 to 2012, participants in an interview study in Sudan (Khartoum, Juba, and Kassala) reflected on how the then incumbent and widely unpopular National Congress Party (NCP) regime of Bashir had stayed in power for decades. As one political representative described: “This regime manages to stay in power. There is a clever, genius mentality behind it...” (as cited in Moss, 2019, p. 1015). Data from this interview study highlighted five key aspects that participants believed facilitated the regime maintaining its power. Specifically, the regime created a secure, repressive base, employed divide-and-rule strategies, controlled the media, created a confusing and closed system, and, finally, did not overtly push people too far (Moss, 2019). Many participants spoke at length about the last factor and gave concrete examples as to how the regime had managed to play this threshold in ways to hinder an uprising. For example, the regime allowed some media to operate in addition to state media, gave in to popular calls for specific infrastructure, and retained fuel subsidies. The government managed to balance an image of not pushing people too far, simultaneously moving forward with its unpopular agenda when tensions had somewhat cooled.

However, from 2011 tensions were rising in Sudan. Despite uprisings being met with a harsh response by the regime’s security forces, this time “calls for a ‘revolution’ were hard to silence” (El-Gizouli, 2012, p. 46). In September 2013, mass protests against the regime over government cuts in fuel subsidies were met with brutal state repression, leaving 185 protesters dead (Baldo & Oette, 2019; see also Ali (2019) for resistance through women’s groups on social media in 2016). The regime repression, however, did not spark widespread collective action at that stage. Although, many said it was only a matter of time. As a political party representative in 2012 said, “Sudanese people have done these things [overthrown governments] two times before. We are waiting for a trigger” (as cited in Moss, 2019, p. 1013).

The trigger came in the form of soaring bread prices in December 2018. The rising bread prices, a result of the government removing subsidies (Thomas & El Gizouli, 2020), led to protests in the southern towns of Mayerno and Addamazin (Alaraby, 2019) and then in the northern town of Atbara, 350 kilometers north of Khartoum (Berridge, 2019b). These protests quickly spread throughout the country (El-Gizouli, 2019a; Elsheikh, 2019), and changed in focus from lowering bread prices, to a movement to remove the regime (Maclean, 2018). By February, 40 people had been killed (BBC, 2019), and President Bashir declared a state of emergency. He went on to dismiss his cabinet and governors to defuse the protests.

¹ December 1999, NIF split into a ruling National Congress Party (NCP) and the opposing Popular Congress Party (PCP) under the leadership of Al-Turabi.

Nonetheless, the protests continued escalating and resulted in a sit-in in front of the army headquarters by early April 2019. By mid-April, Bashir was toppled by the military in a coup, and the military began talks with the opposition. Protests continued as people wanted a civilian government. From December 2018 to the 9th of April 2019, an estimated 117 civilians had been killed in demonstrations (Dahab et al., 2019), and the sit-in massacre in June left at least 241 protesters dead (Fricke, 2020). By September 2019, the new government, headed by prime minister Abdalla Hamdok, took office. This new government was set up as a 3-year power-sharing agreement between the army, civilian representatives, and protest groups (BBC, 2019).

9.1.1 A Slightly Different Chapter

In this chapter, Sudanese revolutionaries Kamal (evolutionary biologist) and Hussain (physician) and Sudan researcher Moss (political psychologist) explore the revolution. There are two sources of data, namely, Kamal and Hussain’s accounts, of the revolution (where they both participated in the protests) and WhatsApp conversations with other revolutionaries (i.e., protesters) that Moss collected from April to September 2019.

There are two key aims in our chapter. First, we want to highlight collective action in high-risk contexts. In settings such as Sudan, collective action is extremely costly in terms of potential consequences for the involved protesters. The 2013 uprising faced brutal violence, particularly from the ruling NCP’s security department supported by poorly defined mercenaries. The 2019 uprising also faced brutal violence orchestrated by the regime’s National Security and Intelligence (NSI) department, particularly its notorious Operations Division. Extensive, lengthy, organized collective action was required to overthrow the regime. Understanding how individuals in these high-risk settings work to transition away from conflict toward more peaceful coexistence through revolutionary means must be explored from within. The motivations and the drivers of such collective action are potentially quite different from the ones driving collective action with few or mild ramifications for participants. Complementing the rich literature stemming from less consequential collective action alternatives, such as university students participating in experimental studies (e.g., van Zomeren et al., 2012), this chapter focuses on real-life decisions with potentially extreme consequences (see Acar and Coşkan (2020) and Becker and Tausch (2015) for an emphasis on the need for such work). For example, getting shot or imprisoned in an institution infamous for the widespread use of torture (including sexual torture) are real risks when participating in this type of collective action. Thus, real-life resistance with real-life consequences in extreme contexts is a valuable and necessary addition to the collective action literature. Notable psychological research in repressive settings includes Ayanian et al. (2020), Hasan-Aslih et al. (2019), McGarty et al. (2014), and Uluğ and Acar (2019).

Second, with this chapter, we also want to highlight ownership of knowledge production. Accounts exploring brutal, real-life resistance often position participants' agency and decisions as research subjects. Such work is still valuable to our understanding of collective action. However, this chapter attempts to learn more directly from revolutionaries. Stakeholders positioned as direct knowledge producers enable new insights and perspectives (see Maseko (2020) for a discussion on who gets to produce knowledge; see also Acar et al. (2020) for different accounts of varied research teams and knowledge production). Stakeholders positioning themselves as direct knowledge producers enhance understanding and enables new insights.

9.2 Collective Action as Communal Coping in Sudan?

A central question for collective action research in psychology is focused on participants' motives for participation (Stryker et al., 2000). Different approaches to collective action (Drury & Reicher, 2005; Simon & Klandermans, 2001; Stürmer & Simon, 2004; van Zomeren, 2013; van Zomeren et al., 2008) emphasize core motivations shown to be relevant in different research contexts. For example, in the extended Social Identity Model of Collective Action (SIMCA; van Zomeren, 2013), the core motivations are group identification, group-based anger or perceived injustice, group efficacy beliefs, and moral convictions. However, as mentioned above, collective action research in psychology is frequently conducted in non-repressive, Western settings and emphasizes motives for participating, rather than obstacles to participation. The latter are essential to consider in repressive settings. For example, in their research on academics in Turkey, Acar and Coşkan (2020) highlight that the frequently emphasized motivation of efficacy in collective action studies in non-repressive settings may be limited or eliminated in repressive settings through demobilization tactics (e.g., arrests, threats, violence, censorship of media; Moss, 2019).

In Sudan, Kamal and Hussain emphasized aspects that are not captured by the standard collective action frameworks. Instead, their accounts resonated more with a communal coping framework. Communal coping stems from regarding an event as a shared stressor, as well as regarding the handling of the stressor as a shared undertaking, and typically "involves as a stressor that is experienced by an entire group of people" (Afifi et al., 2006, p. 381). Lyons et al. (1998, p. 580) define communal coping as "the pooling of resources and efforts of several individuals (e.g., couples, families, or communities) to confront adversity." Communal coping reduces uncertainty and strengthens the collective. This framework is typically applied to understand collective stressors such as war or a natural disaster (see, for example, Afifi et al., 2012; Pennebaker & Harber, 1993), i.e., settings "where the lives of many are impacted by the same stressor and joint efforts are required to effectively manage the stressor" (Lyons et al., 1998, p. 580). Throughout time people have come together to handle threats, situations, and stressors that could not be

handled individually (Lyons et al., 1998). A revolution is a relatively extreme form of handling a stressor (i.e., overthrowing the government that is causing the strain on people’s lives). The communal coping framework is useful to explore collective action in repressive settings as it aligns with the two key features of coping, namely, an appraisal of the situation as threatening and an action to address the threat (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). When both the threat and action are communal, as we argue is the case for the Sudan revolution, the communal coping framework is relevant. Comparing collective action and communal coping, it is noted that “collective action merely assumes that the group responds to a stressor in some aggregated fashion. In contrast, communal coping requires that the members of a group assume mutual responsibility for a stressor and act on it together in a proactive manner” (Afifi et al., 2006, p. 381, see also Lyons et al., 1998). Communal coping further entails “synergistic or collaborative energy” of the members of the community in acting on and handling the stressor (Afifi et al., 2006, p. 381). Although communal coping may not capture all elements of collective action, we propose that this sense of experiencing the stressor, as shared and further experiencing a shared responsibility for handling the stressor, speaks volumes to the revolution in Sudan, as we shall explore in this chapter.

9.2.1 Approach

The chapter integrates two data sources, namely, conversations between the three authors and WhatsApp material from 13 revolutionaries.

9.2.1.1 Author Conversations

Both Kamal and Hussain participated in the revolution together and separately. They are both academics at the University of Khartoum, and Moss has known Kamal for years. Moss reached out to Kamal for this chapter, and he invited Hussain to join. Together the three of us have discussed the revolution, the lead-up, why it emerged in 2019, their participation, the demobilization, the violence, and the costs. We have written the chapter together, all three commenting on the text and editing it. Particularly in research in conflict settings, the “insider-outsider” dynamic is focal (Acar & Uluğ, 2018; Karasu & Uluğ, 2020). Co-authoring this chapter allows for a more grounded textual process where both the “insider” and “outsider” perspectives are included (see discussions on heterogeneity in the research group in Taylor et al. (2020)). Therefore, this approach provides a direct link to how this revolution looked from the inside – both for Kamal and Hussain, but also through WhatsApp conversations.

9.2.1.2 WhatsApp Material

Research in conflict settings requires more stringent and comprehensive ethical discussions, deliberations, and reflexivity (Acar et al., 2020; Moss et al., 2019). Social media offers new, valuable data collection approaches, yet, few methodological discussions exist on interviews using digital messaging technology (notable exceptions include Gibson (2020) for interviewing youth using WhatsApp, see also Enochsson, 2011; Gibson, 2017; Hinchcliffe & Gavin, 2009; Lannutti, 2017). WhatsApp was a much-used channel of communication in the Sudanese uprisings (for work on collective action processes and social media, see Pond and Lewis (2019) and Tréré (2015)). WhatsApp was seen as a more secure platform than direct phone calls, although Moss worried about participants' safety if their phones were to be confiscated (see Moss (2021) for the methodological challenges and advantages of this WhatsApp research in Sudan). Through discussions with Sudanese contacts, this was the most fitting and familiar platform for engagement, as most of the revolutionaries were already using it to communicate.

Moss had a research permit from the Norwegian Centre for Research Data. From April to August 2019, Moss started collecting data from 13 revolutionaries in Sudan. The contact was established through mutual acquaintances. Of 15 revolutionaries approached, two did not respond and the rest agreed to participate. Participants answered 11 open-ended questions developed based on news updates, previous research, communications from the umbrella association of different trade unions – the Sudan Professionals Association – who organized many of the protests, and input from social media such as Facebook, blogs, and Instagram. The responses, in texts and recorded messages, provided valuable insights into individual decisions, collective processes and how they made sense of ongoing collective action.

Questions were as follows:

1. Why did people engage in these protests now, from December? Why was this special?
2. When did you join the protests? Why did you join?
3. Who has been leading the protests? What do you think of the Forces for change?
4. What do you hope will be the end result of these protests? Who should the new government be?
5. What expectations do you have for the further process? Positive/negative?
6. What motivates you to continue protesting?
7. What would make you stop protesting?
8. What do you think of this military coup in April?
9. Do you think the protesters can change the future of Sudan? How?
10. What do you think it will take to replace the new military regime as well? How far are you willing to go in these protests?
11. What do you think the military regime is going to do to stay in power?

Moss also wanted to be able to follow up with participants as the protests continued. This developed relatively organically. Following their initial responses to the 11 questions, Moss thanked them and asked if they would consent to follow-up

questions. Nine of the 13 participants agreed to and engaged in follow-up contact (two with some WhatsApp contact, 7 with more frequent WhatsApp contact). These participants were between 20 and 45 years old, three women and six men. Moss then followed up when new events occurred (e.g., killing of protesters, sit-in massacre, establishment of a transitional government, etc.), and also a few times without there having been significant events or changes. Some of the participants would also reach out with details, opinions, and updates. In addition, four of the participants sent pictures (42 pictures in total) and two sent videos (12 in total). Three participants also sent different official statements, papers, or different speeches (mostly in Arabic, some in English).

9.2.1.3 Integration

In this chapter, we draw on the authors’ conversations and WhatsApp material. All data are subjective, but valid accounts of the process (Burr, 2015). The immediacy of the WhatsApp data (e.g., revolutionaries were texting Moss while at a sit-in, on their break before their next shift, outside office building as the internet was cut, etc.) makes for a good combination with the reflective conversations. We analyzed the WhatsApp material and conversations using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2013), generating two main themes to understand the collective action in Sudan as communal coping, namely, the shared stressor and the shared approach, with each theme divided into three subthemes (see Fig. 9.1).

Drawing on the communal coping literature, these themes allow for insights into how these revolutionaries in Sudan experienced the 2019 revolution.

9.2.2 The Shared Stressor

According to both Kamal and Hussain, the experience of a shared obstacle or stressor (as the communal coping literature would say) was key for the revolution to grow as it did.

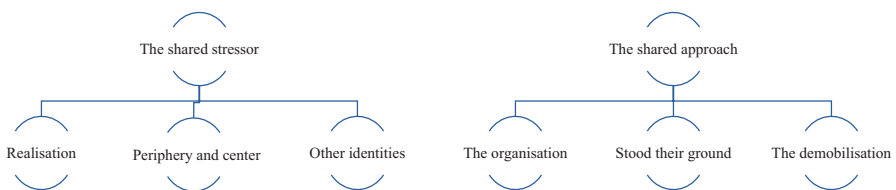


Fig. 9.1 Thematic map

9.2.2.1 Realization That the Stressor Was Shared

According to the communal coping literature, people need to see the stressor as a shared one, impacting the relevant community at large (Lyons et al., 1998). An obstacle to former uprisings in Sudan had been whether people agreed on the shared stressor. Hussain talked about the significance of the realization that the stressor was shared in the 2019 revolution:

The main thing that made this revolution possible was that we realized we were all feeling the same. For 10–20 years the majority of the people here have had a negative view of the government, it was the prevalent point of view. But people were not sure if how they felt was how everyone else was also feeling. This is the most important. We reached the understanding that we were all feeling the same.

This sense of experiencing that this stressor was *shared* was crucial, as Hussain continues:

Most of the people saw the government as a problem. But we did not know. The pro-government media propaganda was not successful in convincing people they were a good regime, but it successfully convinced people that other people supported the government and that the challenges Sudan faced could only be solved by that government. The media was therefore very important for making people accept the status quo.

Then, through collective uprisings and social media, people across the country realized that most people (or at least many more than they had previously been relatively certain of) were united in this call for removing the regime. Hussain emphasizes the value of this realization:

Once it got to a certain point, it came evident to everyone that all wanted this. There was no other way out of this. (...) We had tried everything else. These people [the government] were not going to change.

Hussain explained that the momentum toward a mass movement was different from previous attempts:

It was apparent in households; meetings and it was different from other times. Even people who had criticized the government said to their children on those earlier occasions: Don't get involved, stay in school. They were scared for them. This time, there was unanimous support.

Kamal and Hussain both emphasize that the role of social media was not to build consensus but instead to help people realize they already felt the same:

Hussain: Social media was important to reflect the consensus rather than forming it. Most people had already formed similar opinions, and they were now showing these widely held opinions through social media. They could demonstrate their consensus through social media, but they could not have built the consensus through social media had it not already been there.

Kamal: For the consensus to occur, they had to have the same idea, and they needed to know they all had that same idea. Without social media, they would not have known that they had the same idea.

Thus, the tipping point occurred when the majority realized the stressor as shared. Strictly speaking, however, the stressor was not shared evenly, as certain groups and regions were much more harshly affected by the Bashir regime’s policies (such as Darfur, Nuba Mountains, the Blue Nile, and groups such as women and Southern minorities in the North). Thomas and El Gizouli (2020, p. 1) emphasize that, in contrast to the urban-based elite, “the rural peripheries... had arguably suffered and resisted the Bashir regime for much longer.” However, within the communal coping framework, “communal coping involves thinking and acting as if a stressor is shared... regardless of whether the stressor produces similar consequences for all” (Lyons et al., 1998, p. 583; see also Sandbakken & Moss, 2021). Yet, despite differences, the plight of the peripheries was included in the core of the revolution.

9.2.3 *Periphery and Center*

Berridge (2019a, b) discusses the parallels between the 2019 revolution and the two previous people-led revolutions in Sudan, namely, the 1964 October Revolution and the 1985 April Intifada. A key element raised is the difference in the center-periphery dimension, where the first two uprisings began in the urban centers and never fully translated to the peripheries, whereas the 2019 revolution was ignited in December 2018 in the southern towns of Mayerno and Addamazin and then in the northern town of Atbara. The uprisings quickly spread to various parts of Sudan, making it a collaborative effort rather than merely an urban protest. This unfolding is linked to the element of time as well (Berridge, 2019a). Where the 1964 October Revolution took 4 days to topple the Abboud regime, the 1985 April Intifada lasted 11 days before Nimeiri’s regime fell. The Bashir regime persisted through months of protest. Hussain explains:

The length gave it a sense of permanence. A sense of agreement. It was well thought out and for every day that went by, people would not be swayed from it. The length was important for the process to take form, as people were welded together.

The revolution had time to spread, and for various marginalized groups to join the call for representation. For example, “justice for the peripheries” became one of the key slogans for the revolution. This focus on inclusion created a larger goal that people could come together over. The Bashir regime had effectuated an identity hierarchy through tribal, divide-and-rule policies (Moss, 2017), and the revolution challenged this through its inclusive approach. Elhassan (as cited in Elmahadi, 2020) explains why these regional connections and conversations were crucial for the movement:

I think over the last thirty years, or maybe even more, Sudan has been very divided along tribal lines and so this was policy. This was national policy to keep people divided, to keep them pitted against each other so that there wouldn’t be any unity or solidarity. And so now, getting folks to interact with each other on a meaningful level (...) has created a bond

between people that wasn't there before. The fact that people (are) chanting "We are all Darfur" in the streets of Khartoum is a huge step forward.

Kamal also talks about the slogans of the revolution and how the "We are all Darfur" taps into "a very old sense of solidarity and union that has existed for a long time."

This inclusive focus was echoed in the WhatsApp conversations, where many focused on the slogans on freedom, peace, and justice. For example, participant 13 said (14 April 2019): "I joined the protest when it started in Khartoum I don't remember when exactly and I joined for the same reason all Sudanese joined – for freedom, peace, and justice." The participant emphasises this inclusive focus, when saying he joined "for the same reason all Sudanese joined." Elsheikh (2019, p. 469) writes that the slogan "Freedom, peace, justice, and revolution are the people's choice" was made popular and that it spoke directly to how the previous regime had failed the people. This sense of shared loss (i.e., shared stressor) is mirrored by a focus on shared activities to address the stressor. Participant 13 further says that stopping racism was a key aspect of the revolution. On justice, he specified: "All we need is to see justice. We want the previous regime's criminals brought to justice not only for killing protesters but also for Darfur killings and corruption." Here the participant emphasizes the plight of the peripheries as a key concern for him in the urban center. This was echoed by participant 5 (15 April 2019):

What motivates me is the souls we lost, the thousands of souls we lost both in the revolution and in Darfur and Nubia mountains and the south, and any other Sudanese souls lost because of this totalitarian regime.

Here the injustices perpetrated on the peripheries are explicitly drawn upon as a reason to continue with the demonstrations. The participant uses a shared sense of "we" in "the souls **we** have lost, the thousands of souls **we** lost" grounding the loss in a shared Sudanese setting.

9.2.4 Other Identities

The sense of coming together over a collective stressor was not limited to the center-periphery categories. People also spoke of women getting their rights and various groups in society. Participant 5 said (15 April 2019):

I joined the revolution because of the oppression that we face as Sudanese people and women especially due to the authoritarian regime. I want every person in my country to have their basic rights, and that is impossible to happen under this regime.

Berridge (2019b) explains: "the transitional government, although far from being fully gender balanced, has more representation of women than any other in Sudanese history, and just yesterday we saw the appointment of Sudan's first female chief justice." Yasir Arman, deputy chairman of the SPLM-N (the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North), a political party in the opposition, wrote in February 2019:

It is worth mentioning the wider participation of women and that the discourse of this new generation is generally embracing diversity, equal citizenship, anti-racism, and the other demands of this revolution. It is well summarised by one of the dominant slogans asking for ‘freedom, peace and justice,’ which are the cardinal issues challenging nation-building in Sudan (2019, p. 1).

When the final deal came together, participant 13 said (18 August 2019): “We are so happy. (...) It is a democratic regime right now. Women’s rights. Even LGBT are going to have rights.” There were many references to the “Sudanese” needing to be a more encompassing identity, with space for different groups of people. For example, participant 9 said (13 April 2019): “I dream of a Sudan where I can live with dignity and the lifestyle I choose, and I’d like the Sudanese children of the future to have the chance to live here and not feel the way I felt growing up.”

In the discussions of the revolution, it is clear in the wording that this was seen and experienced as a shared undertaking and shared responsibility. Kamal explains: “No one were spared, we were all involved. The question was just which announced demonstration were you going to participate in?” Hussain also emphasizes that there were demonstrations in every neighborhood, and that “all participated in the demonstrations.” Political figure Arman (2019, p. 1) also emphasized this all-encompassing feature of the revolution: “It (the revolution) has involved rural and urban Sudan, women, youth, students, professionals, political parties and movements, civil society groups, and activists from all walks of life...”.

Combined, the sentiments in this first theme speak more to a shared project than to a distinct shared identity. Lyons et al. (1998, p. 585) specify this in their work on communal coping: “the orientation of the group may be specifically problem-focused.” As El-Gizouli wrote back in 2012 (p. 56), “A Sudanese Breeze will only arise if the fractured *nas* (common people) is healed and if sectarian identity is replaced by a unity of purpose that united the ‘disposed of’ against their oppressors.” Both Kamal and Hussain emphasize the value of this realization that people in general experienced this shared stressor, meaning the collective could come together to overcome it.

9.2.5 *The Shared Approach to Overcome the Stressor*

9.2.5.1 **The Organization**

Both Hussain and Kamal emphasized how well organized the revolution was. Kamal explains:

It was extremely well organized, up to the routes of the demonstrations. They used to start at 1, and they were organized mainly by the Sudan professionals association. They used every possible means to communicate with people, through Facebook and social media, WhatsApp, even phone calls.

Hussain, too, recognized the Sudan Professionals Association (SPA):

Probably since the first time since the mid-90s, a body formed in the political arena, the Sudan professionals association. It had a huge influence on the people. It did not freeze at the common obstacles that the traditional parties face. The pro-government media were not prepared for this. They were not ready for this. So these circumstantial reasons and the organizational reasons all got in tune and made the revolution inevitable.

Although recognizing the leadership of the revolution, both Kamal and Hussain are clear on the key feature of the revolution, namely, the youth. The revolution was driven by youth, and youth also were overrepresented among the revolution's many casualties. Kamal explains:

Different age groups participated physically, but the youth were the vast majority and the actual driving force behind this revolution. Once I was stuck with a group of fellow revolutionaries in a house during the dwindling of a demonstration, hiding from pro-government forces. I was astonished to realize that the other people in the room with me were between 14 and 19. Only two out of the fifteen were in their early twenties. The revolution was fuelled by very, very young people.

Another group frequently mentioned as crucial for the revolution is women. Kamal shared a story, signifying the role of women in this process:

On the 22nd of February 2019, Bashir called a state of emergency. That night, people were in the streets demonstrating their rejection of Bashir's move. But, on the 23rd people were reluctant to take to the streets again in fear of what might face them considering the new state of emergency. After thoughtful discussions on social media, people were motivated to march again on the 24th of February. That day, one of the most successful demonstrations in Omdurman was held, and another demonstration took place in one of the universities, which was owned by the Minister of Health, one of the regime hawks. The demonstration in the university was violently cracked down, with security forces storming into the university campus. It was all live-streamed by a couple of the students. University students were beaten up so horribly. Parents were rushing to the campus to save their children, and they were also beaten and humiliated, and many were arrested. This incident took its toll on people's morale. The flame of the revolution was going out. But then, the next morning, female students at Ahfad University (an all-female university) went on to have their mightiest demonstration, yet. Security forces came to stop it, and they caught one of the demonstrating girls, wanting to arrest her. They put her in their security vehicle, but the other girls attacked the security forces, and grabbed their fellow student, and brought her back to the campus, all by sheer brute force. The security forces were astonished, they were not at all prepared for such a reaction. That very story got published all over the country. Later in that evening, Bashir added specific rules to the state of emergency, explicitly declaring that all unauthorized assemblies or demonstrations were strictly prohibited in addition to giving extended authority to all security forces to enter any building to arrest anyone they wanted without a warrant. But, to no avail. The Ahfad University story had reignited the flame of the revolution too high to be extinguished.

Kamal goes on to emphasize that those Ahfad students were the only ones who protested that day, saying their demonstration was in solidarity with the university students of the day before that the security forces had treated harshly. This speaks both to an example of the role of women in the protests, but also of collective solidarity, that groups were standing up to ill-treatment of others.

Social media became a crucial organizing tool. As in the story above, it was important both for livestreaming security forces' actions, as well as a tool for spreading stories of resistance. "Social media has helped the youth greatly in

organizing and building a strong network, while also aiding in providing a degree of coordination and some sort of leadership among the activists” (Arman, 2019, p. 2). Kamal expands on the role of social media in promoting the revolution:

The times for the demonstrations, the routes for the movement, live feeds of what was happening in other areas of Sudan, this was very important. It gave us all a feeling of being part of something powerful and magnificent. In some areas of Khartoum, there would perhaps be few people protesting. If it had not been for social media, these people could have been scared they were on their own, but through the live feed they saw huge numbers in Burri or Omdurman, and this motivated them to carry on. Social media also had important tactical value. If people were trapped in an area and live-streamed this, protests in other neighboring areas could redirect their route and come and help them by ambushing the pro-government police forces or at least distracting them.

Thus, social media also helped to underpin a sense of togetherness across space and time. A crucial aspect of the organization was, according to Kamal and Hussain, what was going on in residential areas. Hussain explains:

The way residential areas were organized is an important aspect. Doctors, students, and other groups before the SPA had an important role, but this is different now. It is organized at the levels of towns, residential units. When protests were broken up, people went back to their areas and took up the revolution there. They made the revolution part of their daily lives.

This made the demobilization of the revolution harder, as people continued after being broken up in the larger protests (see Support Chamber for Neighbourhood Committees, 2019).

Thus, organized leadership for a movement driven by youth, but also featuring women centrally, successfully unfolding across neighborhoods, was at the heart of the 2019 revolution.

9.2.5.2 The Demobilization

While the opposition to the regime was *mobilizing* the people, the regime engaged in active *demobilization* (i.e., actively tried to hinder the protests). The Sudanese revolution was extremely risky for the revolutionaries, as NCP had stated they would go “from power to the grave” (see Moss (2019) for an account of their extensive demobilization tactics in earlier phases of their regime). The Bashir regime had a variety of security forces at its disposal (El-Battahani, 2016), who engaged in violence and intimidation. The regime also used repressive strategies, such as cutting off the internet, to try to disrupt organizing among protesters. At the same time, the state repression, which was meant to scare people off and make the costs for participating high, demonstrated some strategic choices.

Kamal: Most of the casualties were men. There were few women who were killed. I believe the government militias were purposely avoiding female casualties, as they believed that would have put oil on the fire.

Moss: Would more female casualties have increased hatred?

Kamal: If more women would have been killed, that would have infuriated people even more, yes.

This may speak to a balancing of demobilization tactics up against mobilization consequences and a weighing of the consequences of different actions in the specific setting (see Moss, 2019).

These demobilization tactics did lead to partial demobilization of the revolutionaries several times throughout the lengthy revolution. Despite this, the response among the revolutionaries was stronger. For example, on the 3rd of June 2019, the sit-in that the revolutionaries had outside the military barracks was stormed by a variety of security forces (El-Gizouli, 2019b), and up to 241 protesters were killed (Fricke, 2020). On the 5th of June, participant 13 reached out to Moss on the storming of the sit-in:

- Participant 13: Hello there.
 Participant 13: We are having a dark time in here.
 Participant 13: Two of my friends got killed.
 Participant 13: And four of my friends were injured by bullets.
 Participant 13: One of my family members are also heavily injured.

However, the participant emphasized that he was going to continue protesting.

Participant 9 (14 June 2019) said that the massacre was a demoralizing blow to the protests: “The sit-in which was the state and live icon for the revolution is over, but the spirit didn’t die completely but the risk is too high at the moment.”

Another demobilization tactic was when the regime turned the internet off. Participant 9 explained (14 June 2019):

- Participant 9: In a semi-blackout here with no Internet except for landlines and they are not very popular.
 Moss: Where is the SPA? Are they not communicating with the people?
 Participant 9: The main channel for communication was the internet and you don’t hear them much except a few text messages (hard to confirm if it was them) the first days, and then silence again so they lost communication with most of the population.

After a period, this changed, and the internet returned with increased fury from the revolutionaries as videos, and footage of the violence was shared between people. While the violence certainly made collective action difficult, it was also frequently throughout the process referred to as a motivating factor to keep protesting to overcome the stressor, i.e. remove the regime. Participant 9 (13 April 2019) emphasized that the cost of the revolution was a key motivation to keep him going:

Moss: What motivates you to continue protesting?

- Participant 9: Seeing my Sisters, mothers, and brothers facing death 24/7 for the future of our country makes me want to be there taking the same chances until change happens. Seeing that no bullets are enough to break us up or kill all of us is what gave us a chance and my presence there increases the odds of not facing that risk.

This message speaks to the communal aspect and the strength in numbers. The bullets are not enough to break up the communal efforts because there are so many protesters that the security forces will not manage to kill all of them. Therefore, individual protesters view their presence and participation in the protest as important, further viewing the presence of every other individual participating in the

protests as important. Handling the stressor together, despite demobilization tactics, is crucial for success.

Later, in July (the 9th of July 2019), the same participant gave an account of people lost, but still being willing to protest:

One old high-school friend was one of the first to get killed and friends of friends, I think protesting will be the first option of many if they had to resort to it again, yet the majority are tired and looking forward to a peaceful transition.

The promise of a peaceful transition that matched the peaceful demonstrations utilized by the revolutionaries was a core motivator in standing their ground in the face of brutal state violence.

9.2.5.3 Standing Their Ground

To overcome the shared stressor, the revolutionaries showed incredible resilience and persistence. Part of this, Kamal explains, is linked to the use of nonviolent tactics:

People were willing to go the whole way, using peaceful means. People just continued. Sudanese people have a strong and genuine belief in peace and their rights, and they were just fed up. The combination resulted in this revolution.

Across different WhatsApp conversations, it was frequently emphasized that the revolution was peaceful, which was also a key feature of the protests’ successful organization (see Chap. 12 in this volume, for nonviolent collective action in the Colombian setting). For example, when asked how far they were willing to go in these protests and how to replace the new military regime, participant 6 replied:

Civil strikes, then civil disobedience, and all types of peaceful protests. We are willing to go very far for many people have died so far and they just can’t be in vain, I doubt that we will ever resort to violence though.

Similarly, when asked why the revolution worked out this time, participant 13 (18 August 2019) pointed to the peacefulness of the protests:

Moss: What do you think was the key to making this a success?

Participant 13: Peaceful protesting

Participant 13: None of the civilians used even one Molotov against the previous regime.

Participant 3 (24 April 2019) agreed when asked what motivated him to continue protesting: “Peaceful protests have proven to be a success.” Opposition politician for SPLM-N, Arman (2019, p. 1) wrote in February 2019: “The ongoing non-violent Sudanese revolution is the widest peaceful mass movement that Sudan has ever witnessed since its independence in 1956.” The fact that, in the face of violence and repression, people managed to stick with their peaceful approach and stand their ground was mentioned as a motivation for many of the participants.

The continued resistance in the face of oppression resonated with the protesters and also inspired others to join. Participant 6 (31 May 2019) shared why he had joined the protests:

Mid-January is when I started participating. I joined because the protesters did not seem to back off even though there were arrests, violence, and murder... It finally looked like there could be hope.

Moreover, participant 4 (28 April 2019) was motivated to continue protesting because “the protest itself and the power of the people of Sudan is a great motive.” Participant 2 (23 April 2019) told Moss what it would take to make him stop protesting:

I will only stop protesting when I am sure that our demands are well-considered, and reform has taken place otherwise I will continue protesting even if they arrested or killed me.

The protesters were thus committed to the cause, and as they were experiencing this shared stressor, they banded together in handling the stressor (see Lyons, et al., 1998), drawing strength also from these setbacks and the demobilization tactics.

The longevity of the process, as emphasized by Berridge (2019a), became part of the identity of the revolution and strengthened the commitment to the process. Kamal explains:

It took time. The revolution in Khartoum started on the 25th of December and went on for five months. We started to gather, and then we started to call each other: “Tomorrow I am going to the Khartoum demonstrations,” “I will go to the Burri demonstrations,” and it started to be a social norm. With all of us standing our ground, the government started to doubt if they could withstand this.

Participant 3 (24 April 2019) summarizes this phenomenon, “so far protesters have proven their strength and patience, and no doubt they will do whatever it takes to achieve their goals.”

In July (9 July 2019), participant 9 gave an account of people lost and emphasized that they were still willing to protest:

One old high-school friend was one of the first to get killed and friends of friends, I think protesting will be the first option of many if they had to resort to it again, yet the majority are tired and looking forward to a peaceful transition.

Combined, the organisation of the revolution, and demobilisation tactics of the regime motivated participants to stand their ground. Protesters were committed to overcoming the stressor together and reached a point where they were not willing to back down despite brutal demobilization tactics.

9.3 Discussion

The Sudan revolution reveals how people increasingly realized they were facing a shared stressor, namely, the Bashir regime, and were able to confront the stressor together. The regime tried to demobilize the efforts, and for some time, the momentum of the revolution came in ebbs and flows. However, the revolution in Sudan is an example of how large-scale people’s power efforts can pay off. On the 6th of August 2019, participant 9 highlighted that people were relieved with the signed

deal establishing the transitional government: “Yes the majority are happily celebrating in the streets shouting ‘Civilian’ and starting conversations with ‘Mabrook [congratulations on] the civilian government’” Participant 13 (18 August 2019) was also happy with the signed deal, and proud of their achievements, writing to Moss:

- Participant 13: We are surprised of what we can do
 Participant 13: Do you remember the great sit-in in front of the military base??
 Participant 13: In there we made a small democratic country
 Participant 13: We practiced democracy!!

Together people managed to overthrow the government that represented a common stressor to a wide variety of people’s interests. Kamal explains:

The interests of all different classes of people in Sudan converged in the realization that the regime was a shared major obstacle. This was the motive for collective action.

However, processes of communal coping and collective action are dynamic. Returning to Afifi et al. (2006, p. 381) emphasizing that communal coping entails “synergistic or collaborative energy” of the members of the community in acting on and handling the stressor. “This synergy was definitely there in the beginning,” Kamal emphasizes, and says people experienced both the shared stressor and the need to come together to overcome this stressor. However, this has changed, Kamal explains:

After the ousting of Bashir, this convergence was lost. Now class interests are diverging again. This transitional period is not going smoothly. That is why the main coalition of the opposition that had led the revolution – The Forces of Freedom and Change alliance (FFC)- is losing its validity. Ousting Bashir was a shared goal, a shared project. It was possible to unite all these different classes for that, but retaining this unified direction is impossible. Now we are seeing this diverging of interests.

The process of coming together, realizing the stressor is shared, pooling resources and efforts to overcome the shared stressor together, and in that process drawing on synergies that enabled the success in the Sudanese case, is a remarkable achievement. The shared project was completed, and managing to identify new shared projects is currently proving to be extremely challenging. Such post-collective action phases should be the focus of future studies.

Exploring mobilization and demobilization in repressive settings is a needed addition to the collective action literature in psychology (Acar & Coşkan, 2020; Becker & Tausch, 2015), as is being more mindful of what voices are included and who gets to be the knowledge producers in psychological work on collective action (Maseko, 2020). The Sudanese Revolution of December 2018 speaks volumes to the very core of our argument that collective action can learn from communal coping. Chanting slogans at 1 pm assured individual protesters that they actually belonged to a group, that they shared a common realization of a shared stressor, and that they were handling this stressor together.

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Chapter 10

Government Discourse in the Context of the Transition to Peace in Colombia



María Idaly Barreto-Galeano

10.1 Introduction

The armed conflict in Colombia is one of the most enduring conflicts in Latin America. From a psychosocial perspective of political violence, this conflict is characterized by the opposing groups' need to justify violent actions to reduce their negative emotional impact on the country's citizens. On one side are the insurgent groups that oppose the established social order, and on the other, legally entitled to the use of force, are the military forces responsible for maintaining the security and stability of the democratically elected government. In both cases, studies involving a textual analysis of the discourse of political violence show that opposing parties use beliefs that delegitimize the adversary (Borja et al., 2008; Sabucedo et al., 2006). This mutual delegitimization of the different legal and illegal armed actors contributes to psychosocial barriers that hinder the construction of a peace culture.

In contrast to the above, the hope is that during negotiations and the transition to peace, the legal and illegal actors contending for power will pursue and achieve their objectives with nonviolent actions and discourses that de-escalate the opponent's use of delegitimizing language. Nonetheless, agreement on these two conditions can be complex. In Colombia, for example, the last two negotiations with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – Ejército del Pueblo; *FARC-EP*) were characterized by conflict. In the case of the peace talks between the Andrés Pastrana Arango administration and the *FARC-EP* (1998–2002), the talks were held amidst an armed confrontation between the guerrilla group and the military forces of Colombia. Under these conditions, the *FARC-EP* continued its violent actions and combined them with discourses aimed at legitimizing political violence and delegitimizing the

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adversary (Apter, 1997; Barreto & Borja, 2007; Sabucedo et al., 2006). In turn, an analysis of President Pastrana's official discourse showed that the government did not alter discourse that delegitimized the opponent, and when the negotiations failed, the government placed the blame solely on the adversary (Borja et al., 2009).

Under different negotiation conditions, the Juan Manuel Santos Calderón administration began peace talks with the FARC-EP in 2012. These negotiations were carried out under a unilateral or bilateral ceasefire and concluded in 2016 with the signing of the "Final agreement for the termination of the armed conflict and the construction of a stable and lasting peace," which was based on six points: (a) comprehensive rural reform; (b) political participation; (c) bilateral and definitive ceasefire, an end to hostilities and the laying down of arms; (d) a solution to the problem of illicit drugs; (e) reparations to victims, a comprehensive system of truth, justice, reparation, and non-repetition; and (f) mechanisms for implementation and verification (Mesa de Conversaciones, 2016). Additionally, an analysis of the discourse of the parties at the negotiation table showed the de-escalation of language delegitimizing the opponent and an effort to create discourses of tolerance and coexistence (Barreto et al., 2019a, b).

For its part, the opposition party, the Democratic Center (Centro Democrático; which is the party of the current president, Iván Duque Márquez), questioned the terms of the peace agreement and heightened the polarization of the discourse on Twitter through material delegitimizing of the parties at the negotiation table (Barreto et al., 2019b). Consistent with the above, an analysis of conversations on Twitter during the peace plebiscite showed significant differences in the use of the emotional category of social anxiety during the opposition's campaign to vote no (Pulido et al., 2020), which won with 50.21%, compared to the 49.78% proportion of yes votes (Registraduría Nacional del Estado Civil, 2016). As a result, the government agreed with all the parties (including the opposition) on modifications to the agreement, which were ultimately approved by the Congress of the Republic of Colombia.

Consequently, there is hope that in the post-agreement period, given the conditions of a bilateral and definitive ceasefire, an end to hostilities, and the laying down of arms stipulated in the agreement to end the conflict, nonviolent actions will be accompanied by new discursive frameworks that will make it possible to establish trust between the parties, with the aim of social legitimization and political participation. In this regard, Cromwell and Vogeles (2009) argue that nonviolent actions make three main contributions to building cultures of peace (p. 231): (a) "promot[ing] social norms that eschew violence, even without any kind of overarching commitment to pacifism"; (b) "help[ing] to build trust among individuals and groups, even when they find themselves in contention"; and (c) "empowering groups who might otherwise be excluded, broadening democratic participation and valuing intergroup communication."

In addition to the establishment of an agreement and nonviolence, the transition to peace thus involves recategorizing the insurgent group as a political group. However, its legality and legitimacy as a political group are based, among other things, on the mutual agreement that "both sides should accept each other on both

the personal and national levels. It means mutual inclusion, legitimization, and humanization” (Bar-Tal, 2009, p. 370). In the case of the FARC-EP, legality was achieved in October 2017 during the Juan Manuel Santos administration, when the National Electoral Council (Consejo Nacional Electoral; CNE) recognized the legal status of the FARC political party, which maintained the same acronym despite having a different name: the Common Alternative Revolutionary Force (Fuerza Alternativa Revolucionaria del Común). This legal recognition of the insurgent group as a political party allowed the FARC to participate in Colombia’s legislative elections in 2018.

In terms of legitimacy, part of the process of recategorizing FARC is linked to the government discourse as the mutual acceptance expressed by Bar-Tal (2009) is a necessary element for building cultures of peace and involves changing the mutual delegitimization that has been promoted by the parties in armed confrontation for decades through discourses that humanize the adversary and legitimize the resolution of conflicts using nonviolent means.

Table 10.1 shows the linguistic categories identified in the discourses of different actors involved in the armed conflict in Colombia who, during decades of armed confrontation, constructed discourses that legitimized political violence (illegal groups) and delegitimized the adversary (legal and illegal groups). Similarly, linguistic categories were identified during the negotiation process in Colombia that, conversely, are linked to discourses legitimizing peace and the adversary and renouncing the use of violence as a means of achieving political objectives.

As stated above, this chapter presents the results of an analysis of the government discourse of the two different administrations that have been in power since the agreement with the FARC political party. The first is the administration of former

Table 10.1 Discursive categories associated with the delegitimization and recategorization of the adversary

Political context and conflict resolution	Structure and function of the discourse	Categories of analysis
Instrumental use of violence	Beliefs legitimizing political violence	Causes of strife, impossibility of achieving a peaceful end to the conflict, recognizing the existence of a conflict and victimhood (Barreto & Borja, 2007; Borja et al., 2009; De la Corte et al., 2007, Sabucedo et al., 2002)
	Beliefs delegitimizing the adversary	Negative characterization of traits, dehumanization, comparison groups, proscription, use of political labels (Bar-Tal, 2000), attribution of external responsibility, and a negative characterization of the adversary’s actions (Borja et al., 2008)
Nonviolence	Beliefs legitimizing peace	Human rights, dialogue and ceasefire, recognition of and reparation to victims, reference to the existence of a conflict, reference to peace (Barreto, et al., 2019b)
	Beliefs legitimizing the adversary	Humanization, forgiveness, reconciliation (Barreto, et al., 2019b; Bar-Tal, 2009)

President Juan Manuel Santos; the negotiation, signing, and implementation of the peace agreement took place during the first 20 months of his administration. The second is the current president, Iván Duque Márquez, whose administration continues to implement the agreement. This analysis will allow us to identify the institutional discourse posted on the digital social network Twitter, which has proven to be a communication platform that enables the identification of political agendas and official discourse contained in short messages (maximum 280 characters) posted in real time (Tamburrini et al., 2015). Accordingly, the research objective was to verify whether the ideological rhetoric in the government discourse during the post-agreement period created frameworks for building a culture of peace that would enable the recategorization of the opponent and social reconciliation.

10.2 Method

10.2.1 Study One

10.2.1.1 Dataset in Twitter

The information available on the official Twitter accounts of the Colombian presidents Juan Manuel Santos Calderón and Iván Duque Márquez was downloaded using the NCapture plugin for NVivo (Version 11). The observation window was established based on the date of the presidential inauguration, when power changed hands (August 7, 2018). The cutoff date was established using the strategy of moving backward and forward from a critical event. For Santos' government discourse, the cutoff date was established as October 31st, 2017, when the CNE recognized the legal status of the FARC political party (legally recognized as the Common Alternative Revolutionary Force). For Duque's government discourse, the cutoff date was established as the same number of days that were analyzed for President Santos. A total of 3997 tweets were analyzed ($n_{Santos} = 1514$; $n_{Duque} = 2483$), as shown in Table 10.2.

Table 10.2 Observation window in Study 1

Critical event	Administration	2017	2018	2019	Observation window
Legal recognition of the Common Alternative Revolutionary Force (FARC) political party	Juan Manuel Santos Calderón (August 7, 2010–August 7, 2018)	October 31, 2017 to August 7, 2018 1514 Tweets			Backward: 281 days
	Iván Duque (August 7, 2018–present)	August 7, 2018 to May 14, 2019 2483 Tweets			Forward: 281 days

10.2.1.2 Procedure and Textual Data Analysis

For the statistical analysis of textual data (Barreto, 2020a; Bécue-Bertaut, 2010), Spad7 software was used. The analysis was carried out at two levels: (a) one-dimensional, using lexicometric analysis (vocabulary, vocabulary of repeated segments, concordances, and specificities methods) and (b) multidimensional, using correspondence analysis. In the representation of the factorial plane, the words associated with the discursive categories of delegitimization and recategorization of the adversary were visualized. Seventy-eight percent of the textual corpus was retained. Words with a frequency of 1, words containing Arabic numerals, and 1- and 2-letter Spanish prepositions (*a, de, en* [the, of, in]) were eliminated.

10.2.1.3 Results

The results of the key topics posted show that the Santos administration referred to the peace process and achievements made during its term. In comparison, the hashtags used by the Duque administration focused on the government plan, emphasizing the future construction of the country and the orange economy (Table 10.3).

Regarding the words that appear most frequently (not tagged), the Juan Manuel Santos administration centered its messages around peace, per the 2014–2018 Development Plan, titled “Everyone For a New Country, Constructing a Peaceful, Equitable and Educated Colombia” (Departamento Nacional de Planeación, 2015), with the Security, Justice and Democracy Policy for Peace-Building. The most

Table 10.3 Hashtags with the greatest frequency of appearance

Santos	Count	Duque	Count
#acuerdodepaz (#peaceagreement)	27	#bogota	355
#lociertoesque (#whatistrueis)	26	#envivo (#live)	208
#revoluciondelainfraestructu (#infrastructurerevolution)	25	#construyendopais (#constructingthecountry)	165
#graciascolombianos (#thankyoucolombians)	21	#elfuturoesdetodos (#thefuturebelongstoeveryone)	103
#colombiaavanzo (#colombiaadvanced)	18	#colombianopara (#colombiadosnotstop)	80
#eleccionescolombia (#colombiaelections)	13	#cartagena	70
#colombiaavanza (#colombiaadvances)	12	#elquelahacelapaga (#whatgoesaroundcomesaround)	66
#gobiernoenlafrontera (#governmentontheborder)	12	#economianaranja (#orangeeconomy)	47
#lapazelmejorlegado (#peaceisthegreatestlegacy)	10	#nuevayork (#newyork)	39
#asiavanzacolombia (#thisishowcolombiaadvances)	8	#duqueeneeu (#duqueintheus)	37

frequently mentioned words acknowledge the conflict and reference the victims. In turn, the Iván Duque administration centered its messages around security and equity in accordance with the 2018–2022 Development Plan, titled “Toward a Pact for Colombia, with Legality, Entrepreneurship and Equity” (Departamento Nacional de Planeación, 2018) and the Defense and Security Policy for Legality, Entrepreneurship, and Equity (Table 10.4).

Along the same discursive lines, the comparative results of the government discourses show significant differences along two fundamental axes: economic and sociopolitical (Table 10.5). Regarding economics, Juan Manuel Santos’ contributions are notable for providing information on inflation and foreign investment, while Iván Duque’s are characterized by economic reactivation. Differences in

Table 10.4 Words with the greatest frequency of appearance

Santos	Count	Duque	Count
Peace	325	Colombia	441
Colombia	291	Country	428
Country	270	Us	363
Thank you	180	Our (male singular)	333
Our (female singular)	151	President	309
Colombians	143	Government	278
Better	133	All	235
We are	123	Our (female singular)	227
Building	121	Colombians	208
All	111	Development	203
My	107	National	163
Me	106	We want	156
We have	87	Security	152
Our (male plural)	82	We have	147
Government	80	We are	134
Our (male singular)	80	Go	129
Be	73	Plan	127
World	72	Our (male plural)	123
Makes	70	Publishes	118
Always	70	Equity	116
Life	66	Commitment	113
We have	64	We have	110
Go	64	Venezuela	101
Follow	60	Force	99
To make	59	You have	97
Victims	59	Be	97
Congratulations	57	Social	96
Support	56	Peace	96
Conflict	55	Investment	91
Job	55	Dialogue	91

Table 10.5 Characteristic words

Santos	IF	GF	Duque	IF	GF
Peace	325	421	President	309	362
Thanks	180	229	Entrepreneurship	75	76
Building	121	150	We want	156	176
Conflict	55	55	Our	333	413
Better	133	184	Workshop	72	73
Right	40	47	Legality	72	74
We have	28	30	Plan	127	142
I	106	180	Pact	81	85
Lives	32	37	National	163	193
Lacking	26	28	Dictatorship	49	49
News	29	33	Development	203	247
Elections	24	26	Equity	116	132
Inflation	19	19	Confront	69	73
My	107	189	Dialogue	91	101
You	47	66	Declarations	41	41
Advancing	28	33	Meeting	61	65
Today	277	592	Government	278	358
Advances	49	72	Venezuela	101	116
Now	31	39	Pleased	50	52
Always	70	117	We are grateful	37	37
We will continue	38	53	We have arrived	62	67
We proposed	15	15	Citizenship	50	53
I am grateful	36	50	Reactivation	34	34
Foreigners	14	14	Terrorism	49	52
Reconciliation	18	20	We are seeking	33	33

Notes: *IF* internal frequency; *GF* global frequency; All the words presented are significantly unique, with a value of $p < .001$

sociopolitical discourse are based on the differences in government plans. Santos posted messages recognizing the existence of the conflict, building peace with reconciliation, and the promotion of conventional forms of political participation (elections). In turn, Duque's posts emphasized the three pillars of his administration's plan: Entrepreneurship, legality, and equity. There is also rhetoric associated with terrorism and opposition to the government of Venezuela (dictatorship).

More precisely, the rhetorical differences during the post-agreement period are identified in expressions that (a) recognize the existence of the conflict, (b) promote the pursuit of peace, (c) promote the pursuit of social reconciliation, (d) mention terrorist threats, and (e) redefine the adversary and promote political participation. As presented in Table 10.6, the concordance analysis shows that in the Twitter posts made during the observation window, only President Santos recognized the conflict, and he referred to it within the context of its ending.

Table 10.7 presents the context of the word peace, which had a different and more prominent meaning in the Santos administration ($n = 325$). Santos focused on

Table 10.6 Context of tweets containing the word conflict (TF = 55)

Tweet ID	Santos (<i>n</i> = 55)	Duque (<i>n</i> = 0)
930641659645308929	The Special Justice for Peace is a way to guarantee victims' rights to justice, truth, reparation and nonrepetition. This is how we ensure that there is no impunity for crimes committed during the conflict . https://t.co/bpexaqYGwl	
952985845988028417	We have judges in the Special Jurisdiction for Peace who will be an example to the world that it is possible to seek peace and overcome a conflict , however long it lasts. https://t.co/mzB4I38LSM	
992923716345573376	The conflict has produced 8.6 million victims, 7 million requests have already been answered and more than US\$3 billion has been invested in reparation. We know that this is still lacking, and we will continue to be committed to responding to all of them. https://t.co/sDuQyUA2i	
1024662412832776192	Eight years ago, we proposed to end a conflict that was killing the children of a single nation. We made that happen and today we are building together #PeaceIsTheGreatestLegacy. This belongs to all Colombians	

Note: Tweets that exemplify the semantic meaning of the words were selected from among all tweets

building peace, including with the guerrilla group called the National Liberation Army (Ejército de Liberación Nacional; ELN), while Duque referred to consolidating peace with legality.

Table 10.8 presents the contexts for the use of the word reconciliation, which is prominent in the posts by Juan Manuel Santos, which express a vision of social reconciliation. President Duque only mentioned the word in reference to the National Peace Council, which was part of the Peace Agreement, and decreed that the government and the state must comply “in matters of peace, reconciliation, coexistence and nonstigmatization” (Decreto 885, 2017, p. 4).

Table 10.9 presents the context of the word terrorism, which is more prominent in the Duque administration (*n* = 49). In both administrations, terrorism is seen as a threat to Colombian society, and, in the case of Duque’s discourse, it is linked to the guerrilla group ELN and the term dictator, in reference to the Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro.

In terms of the definition of the adversary, the references to the ELN by both administrations express the desire to negotiate peace and the demand that the guerrilla group put an end to hostilities in order to make advances in the talks (Table 10.10).

Regarding the recategorization of the adversary, references to the FARC in the post-agreement period during the Santos administration were aimed at recognizing it as a political party. In turn, the Duque administration recognizes the FARC as one of the parties to the agreement and emphasizes the illegal armed actions of the dissidents from the former guerrilla group (Table 10.11).

Table 10.7 Context of tweets containing the word *peace* (TF = 421)

Tweet ID	Santos (<i>n</i> = 325)	Tweet ID	Duque (<i>n</i> = 96)
966717060846845952	With the signing of the agreement between @CIDH and the JEP [Jurisdicción Especial de Paz, or Special Jurisdiction of Peace], we will have technical cooperation for implementing the #PeaceAgreement to continue advancing. We value the trust between the inter-American system and our institutions	1035649515896954881	We have asked the UN Secretary General, @antonioguterres, to extend the Mission for the Verification and Implementation of the peace agreements in Colombia for an additional year. This contributes to our desire to not destroy them and to make the necessary corrections
1024722406231994368	The participation of society is on the agenda with ELN. It requires optimal conditions, hence the priority of a ceasefire. We have the protocols in place. @ONU_ es will verify whether the incoming government maintains them. #PeaceIsTheGreatestLegacy	10377502386588867200	I am pleased to inform the country that on October 22, I will meet with His Holiness Pope Francis @Pontifex at the Vatican. We will discuss Colombia's equity agenda, as well as our government's commitment to legality in order to consolidate peace
925422437398908929	I met with Canadian business leaders. Thanks to the peace -building, they want to invest more in energy, pharmaceuticals, and tourism	1115626536948858880	We will continue to work to consolidate peace with legality. This implementation strategy is focused on the rights of the victims and their reparation, as well as on stabilizing the territories most affected by violence. #UnitedForTheVictims #9A
1011392815677526022	Building peace is about saving lives. #WhatsTrueIs we are accomplishing it	1056613956012384257	We have come to El Catambo to honor our word: to tell you that we are going to bring peace back to every corner of this region. We will use persuasion and offensive capabilities to defeat those who wish to live in illegality and hijack the hopes of the citizens

Table 10.8 Context of tweets containing the word reconciliation (T = 20)

Tweet ID	Santos (n = 18)	Tweet ID	Duque (n = 2)
935365402544222208	I am grateful to @CamaraColombia for approving the statutory law of the JEP. With this step, we advance toward peace. Transitional justice guarantees the rights of the victims and lays the foundation for the reconciliation of Colombians	1072629142892498945	The creation of the National Council for Peace, Reconciliation and Coexistence is not a formality. This administration's desire is that this institution will help us construct the National Development Plan, designing public policies that will endure beyond 2022. #WeBuildPeace
938223093327200256	The truth is an antidote to new cycles of violence and that is what the victims are requesting. With the Commission for the Clarification of the Truth, which will begin to operate in 2018, what happened will be clarified and will help us to move from hate to reconciliation https://t.co/awUkY2zIdi	1072595905403076615	#Bogotá I We participated in the session of the National Council for Peace, Reconciliation and Coexistence, which will assess the process of strengthening and establishing the Territorial Peace Councils. We promote dialogue in all arenas. #WeBuildPeace https://t.co/0jKsmVXGkT
949029006233473025	We have made clear advances in implementing the three pillars of the Peace Agreements: (1) security, (2) reconciliation and coexistence, and (3) opportunities for Colombians. We still have more challenges to confront and we will work tirelessly to that end. https://t.co/qG1ertT5Gk		
994630098459471875	Victims will always be the focus of peace-building. I ratified this in the panel "Peace and Reconciliation are Possible. Colombia is an Example." Listening to their testimonies has been the greatest inspiration to never give up. https://t.co/nxkpGeYkey		

Table 10.9 Context of tweets containing the word terrorism (TF = 52)

Tweet ID	Santos (<i>n</i> = 3)	Tweet ID	Duque (<i>n</i> = 49)
1011712543428169731	We are approaching one year of peace-building, with important advances: the lowest homicide rate in the last three decades, 24 per 100,000 inhabitants, and fewer cases of extortion, terrorism , and theft. The challenge is still significant, but we are on the right path	1079778209590362114	#Cartagena I Today I say to the members of the Public Forces, that at this Bicentennial, we have to hold our heads high and our bodies upright to fight for a new liberation of Colombia. To liberate ourselves from terrorism , drug trafficking, corruption, and polarization
957434217532706816	I am grateful for the solidarity of Colombians, presidents and institutions on such a painful day, we are with the families of the victims and the injured. #WeWillNotBe intimidated by terrorism , we will continue to fight it with conviction. Now more than ever, we must be united!	1065006914835234822	#Barranquilla I Legality is above crime. Legality is above terrorism . Strength and unity of force is the foundation to ensure that never again, in our territory, will they use arms to attempt to take what belongs to us #FAC99Years
1011712543428169731	During these 8 years, we have enacted an intelligence and counterintelligence law, and we have developed a national policy against money laundering and the financing of terrorism . We have never given up in the fight against drug trafficking	1126894705613201408	#Cartagena Nicolas Maduro's support of the ELN is a violation of UN Security Council Resolution 1373. I have asked Foreign Minister @CarlosHolmesTru to take these allegations to the Lima Group. The dictator has been violating International Law, promoting terrorism
		1086453249627095040	If the ELN truly wants peace, it needs to show the country concrete actions, such as the immediate release of all the kidnapping victims and an end to all its criminal actions. #UnitedAgainst Terrorism

Table 10.10 Context of tweets containing the word ELN (TF = 86)

Tweet ID	Santos (<i>n</i> = 22)	Tweet ID	Duque (<i>n</i> = 64)
1024723196531093504	We have laid the foundations for the ceasefire with the ELN . We hope that the next administration will decide to continue. We will also provide you with reports on the negotiations. The advances we made today have never been made before. #PeaceIsTheGreatestLegacy	1027027854696083456	We will make a judicious, prudent, and analytical assessment of the last 17 months of talks with the ELN . A credible process must be based on a total end to criminal actions, strict international supervision, and defined timelines
1024722406231994368	The participation of society is on the agenda with ELN . It requires optimal conditions, hence the priority of a ceasefire. We have the protocols in place. @ONU_es will verify whether the incoming government maintains them. #PeaceIsTheGreatestLegacy	1035343699738275841	A government cannot negotiate kidnappings; it must demand compliance with the law. If there is a desire for peace from the ELN , it should release the kidnapping victims. The @mindefensa has provided all the necessary protocols
949771228084137984	We are more than willing to extend the ceasefire with the ELN and renegotiate the conditions for a new ceasefire	1053433622886256641	I want to reiterate our position on the process with the ELN . We have every intention of sitting down to talk, as long as they hand over all the kidnapping victims and put an end to their criminal activities in the country. We believe in a peace based on legality and justice
962457362597646336	ELN does not have the capability to carry out military coups; they are only terrorists, and this affects the civilian population and the environment. They say they want peace, but they contradict themselves with the facts and as long as there is not a minimum level of consistency, it is going to be very difficult to resume the talks	1086443425187184640	Systematic deception and irrational violence have characterized nearly three decades of failed talks with the ELN . The list of terrorist attacks, kidnappings, and crimes is well known to Colombians. The common denominator is a disregard for life

Table 10.11 Context of tweets containing the word FARC (TF = 31)

Tweet ID	Santos (<i>n</i> = 18)	Tweet ID	Duque (<i>n</i> = 13)
1017929601501278209	Seeing @Timo FARC and members of the party leadership sitting in front of the @JurisdicePaz demonstrates that everything that was said about impunity was false. Nothing more than an invention. This is how we are building peace	1038440989722071041	Amagá I We congratulate the Public Forces, which report that alias "David," the main leader of the FARC dissidents in the Pacific, has been killed. He was responsible for drug trafficking, homicides, extortion, forced displacement, and kidnappings. We are advancing in the 100-day Shock plan.
984191111060172800	Today we met with members of the FARC party. @JurisdicePaz will verify whether the charges against "Jesús Santrich" are for acts that occurred after the #PeaceAgreement. The rules of the game are clear, and we will enforce them	1094727397965000706	We are following up on operations that resulted in the capture of Jesús Monterrey, alias "Muelas," a member of residual FARC groups in Arauca, who reportedly kidnapped and killed the patrolman Jonathan Smith in Fortul. We hope that the weight of the law will fall on those responsible for this event
972163924232753158	We are doing everything to ensure a smooth election. They will be the first with no conflict with FARC . There is no cancellation or transfer of seats. We went from 194 municipalities at a high risk in 2010 to 52 priority municipalities and 13 at a high risk today	1110606265737187331	We met with Norwegian Foreign Minister Ine Eriksen Soleide and Ambassador John Petter Opdahl and discussed bi-national agenda items as well as opportunities for cooperation in environment and renewable energy. We shared advances in the implementation of the agreement with FARC
930643618745999360	FARC 's participation in politics, which the court also approved, does not mean that they do not have to fulfill their obligations to tell the truth and make reparations to the victims	1125544501525794816	Olindo Perlaiza Caicedo, alias "Olindillo," a drug trafficker requested for extradition by the United States, has been captured. He attempted to break into the peace process with FARC , but thanks to international cooperation, the office of @ComisionadoPaz alerted the #JEP and he was not allowed to enter

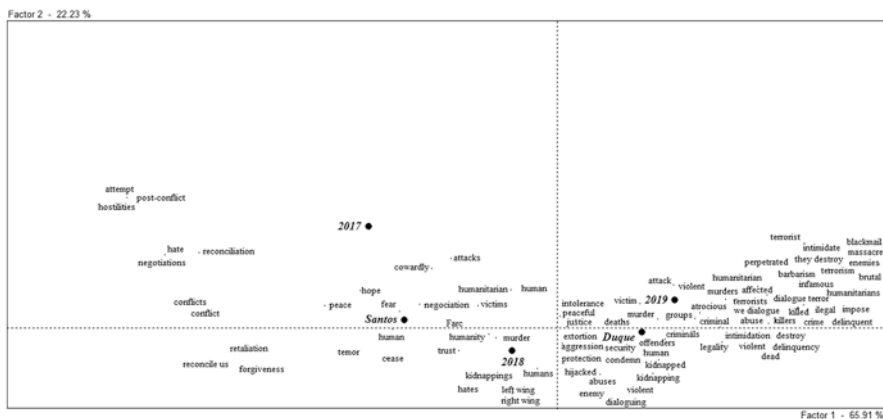


Fig. 10.1 Comparative factorial planes of the two administrations

Finally, to obtain a multidimensional view of the rhetoric associated with the delegitimization of the adversary, the correspondence analysis on the factorial plane (Fig. 10.1) shows the position of words referring to the delegitimization and recategorization of the opponent in the posts by the two presidents. The analysis focuses on the first axis as it is the most explanatory (65.91%). The upper and lower left quadrants show the lexical profile of the Santos administration during the post-agreement period. The profile shows the administration recognized the conflict and the new political party (FARC), promoted social reconciliation (forgiveness and reconciliation), encouraged the political depolarization of peace (left wing/right wing), and mentioned the violence in Colombia (attacks, kidnappings, and murder). In contrast, Duque’s discourse (upper and lower right quadrants) referred to the guerrilla group ELN and contained expressions linked to the category of prescription. This discourse is characterized by expressions that show a willingness to enter dialogue and to achieve peace with legality.

The significance of and differences in the emotional expressions by the two presidents should be noted. In the case of Santos, the lexicon communicates positive emotions such as trust ($S = 18; D = 16$), hope ($S = 19; D = 10$), reconciliation ($S = 18; D = 2$), reconciling ($S = 5; D = 0$), and forgiveness ($S = 2; D = 0$). He also used words that express negative emotions, such as fear ($S = 6; D = 3$), hatred ($S = 6; D = 0$), and dread ($S = 5; D = 1$), in a context that encourages leaving the emotions linked to the armed conflict behind. In turn, Duque communicated positive emotions such as justice ($S = 37; D = 80$), protection ($S = 22; D = 41$), security ($S = 45; D = 152$), and negative emotions such as terror ($S = 19; D = 10$).

10.2.1.4 Conclusion for Study One

The results above show that the government discourses emphasize the government's achievements in a manner consistent with the official programs, with thematic prominence of peace in the case of Santos and of security in the case of the Duque administration. Although the two presidents emphasize peace as a government goal, the analysis of the contexts made it possible to identify two distinct approaches: that of Santos, which was oriented toward peace with social reconciliation, and that of Duque, which focused on peace with legality. These discursive differences are consistent with the national security policies implemented during the post-agreement period. Similarly, the results made it possible to identify that the emotional expressions associated with peace are different in each administration and are linked to the administration's ideological positions (Barreto, 2020b). The center-right Santos administration promoted reconciliation and forgiveness, while the right-wing Duque administration advocates for justice and protection. The two visions of peace have different mechanisms for implementation in order to overcome the psychosocial barriers and the destruction of the social fabric resulting from decades of conflict and violence.

10.2.2 Study Two

10.2.2.1 Dataset in Twitter

The information available on the official Twitter account of the current president, Iván Duque Márquez, was downloaded using the NCapture plugin for NVivo, version 11. The observation window was established from the date of President Duque's inauguration (August 7, 2018) until July 30, 2020, the day on which the Special Jurisdiction for Peace "order[ed] the government to adopt actions to guarantee the life and security of the appearing parties of the deceased FARC-EP who signed the peace agreement... after verifying that despite the labor carried out by a number of public authorities, a serious violation of their fundamental rights still exists (more than 200 of the appearing parties have been murdered), a phenomenon that has been sufficiently documented by the United Nations Verification Mission and the Kroc Institute" (Jurisdicción Especial para la Paz, 2020). A total of 6336 tweets were analyzed ($n_{2018} = 1256$; $n_{2019} = 3541$; $n_{2020} = 1539$).

10.2.2.2 Procedure and Textual Data Analysis

For the Statistical Analysis of Textual Data (Barreto, 2020a; Bécue-Bertaut, 2010), Spad7 software was used. The analysis was carried out at two levels: (a) one-dimensional, using the specificities method to establish differences in posts from 2018, 2019, and 2020; and (b) multidimensional, using correspondence analysis. In

the representation of the factorial plane, the words associated with the discursive categories of delegitimization and recategorization of the adversary and frequently appearing repeated segments were visualized. Seventy-eight percent of the textual corpus was retained. Words with a frequency of 1, words containing Arabic numerals, and 1- and 2-word Spanish prepositions (a, de, en [the, of, in]) were eliminated.

10.2.2.3 Results

The results of the analysis of posts made by the current president, Ivan Duque Márquez, are consistent with those presented in study one. Accordingly, this analysis presents the discursive differences between the different years of his administration. Since August 2018, the discourse has been characterized by an emphasis on equity and the fight against corruption. In 2019, the agenda focused on international relations with President Nicolas Maduro of Venezuela and the case of Jesús Santrich (a FARC-EP negotiator who currently leads the dissidents), employing delegitimizing categories such as the use of political labels (dictatorship, revolution) and proscription (terrorism and drug trafficking). Finally, in 2020, the agenda has focused on the health emergency caused by COVID-19 (Table 10.12).

The correspondence analysis represented on the factorial plane (Fig. 10.2) shows the positions of words referring to the delegitimization and recategorization of the opponent in Duque's official posts on Twitter. The analysis focuses on the first axis, as it is the most explanatory (63.56%). This chronological analysis shows that in 2018, the peace agreement was recognized, with a special emphasis on two points: reparations to the victims, through the comprehensive system of truth, justice, reparation, and non-repetition, and the solution to the problem of illicit drugs, supported by the axes of government policy (legality, entrepreneurship, and equity) with a positive emotional tone (peace, justice, security, trust, hope, and dialogue). In 2019, there was a change in the rhetoric toward the proscription of the adversaries (dissidents from the FARC, the ELN, and the Venezuelan government), coupled with the negative emotions of fear and zero tolerance, as well as the positive emotion of protection. In 2020, the discourse continues to be based on the proscription of the (illegal) adversaries, the fight against drug trafficking, organized crime, and corruption. The word "conflicts" is used to refer to conflicts between powers and conflicts of interest between politics and justice. Nonetheless, the discourse that predominates in 2020 is related to the coronavirus pandemic.

10.2.2.4 Conclusion for Study Two

The results of the chronological study show that the government discourse related to the delegitimization and recategorization of the adversary in the Duque administration primarily focuses on points in the agreement related to reparation to the

Table 10.12 Characteristic words per year

2018	IF	GF	2019	IF	GF	2020	IF	GF
Financing	29	47	Dictatorship	75	86	Pandemic	295	295
I want	53	126	Colombia	703	1089	Covid	172	172
Pact	59	151	Venezuela	120	155	Measures	204	287
Me	50	123	Revolution	43	47	Implemented	64	64
Citizenship	34	72	Terrorism	65	78	Coronavirus	62	62
Anti-Corruption	17	25	Assembly	57	67	Health	155	248
Technique	13	16	Lime	25	25	Isolation	51	51
Christ	9	9	Siege	25	25	Fans	45	45
Budget	25	49	Genuine	33	35	Questions	47	49
Participation	36	85	Democracy	74	92	Preventive	41	43
Days	51	138	Industrial	35	38	Protocols	45	50
Come on	80	251	Renewables	41	46	Log on to	33	33
Workshop	39	97	Headquarters	43	49	Mandatory	35	36
Dialogue	50	137	Deforestation	33	36	Emergency	60	90
Attend	13	19	Maduro	29	31	Virus	27	27
Equity	84	275	Diplomat	29	31	Hygiene	26	26
Corruption	39	101	Center	84	110	Distance	24	24
Make	52	149	Energies	47	56	Tests	33	39
Give him	19	36	Gaps	54	66	Confront	120	257
My	45	125	Event	39	45	Quarantine	20	20
Plan	72	231	Games	36	41	Answer	22	23
Dose	10	13	Jesús	27	29	Mitigate	31	39
I said	12	18	Fourth	33	37	Balance	37	52
We come	24	54	Pan-American	19	19	Biosafety	18	18
I hope	14	24	Growth	105	143	National	207	563
Rutte	6	6	Amazon	32	36	Mask	17	17
Mark	6	6	Drug Trafficking	111	153	Actions	69	139
Dissuasive	6	6	Edition	18	18	UCI	16	16
Kidnapping	15	28	Santrich	22	23	Colombians	228	648

Notes: IF = internal frequency; GF global frequency; All the words presented are significantly unique, with a value of $p < .001$

victims and the justice measures adopted by the Special Justice for Peace for those who have been reincorporated into the FARC-EP. It also identifies adversary groups, including the Venezuelan government of Nicolás Maduro, the ELN guerrilla group, and FARC dissidents, as violators of moral and social norms. The analysis of emotional expressions shows that the president began his term in 2018 with positive emotions of security, confidence, hope, and the rejection of hatred and shifted in 2019 to fear, terror, and protection.

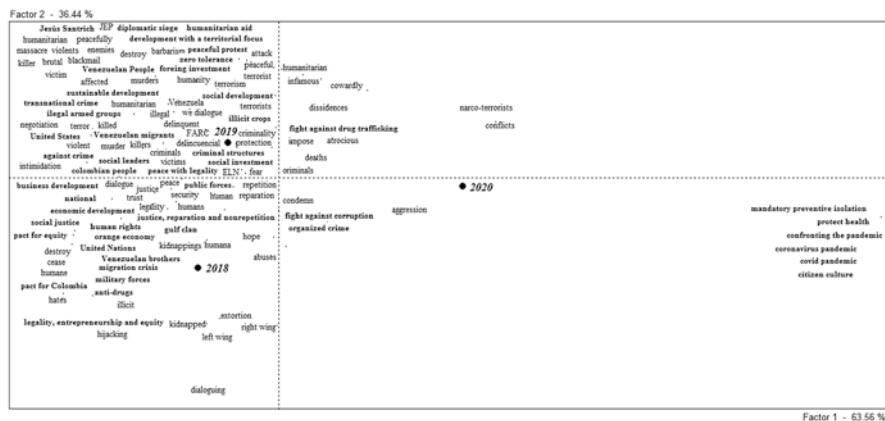


Fig. 10.2 Factorial plane of the discourse of the Duque administration

10.3 Summary and Conclusions

The signing of the agreement to end the armed conflict in Colombia in 2016 was a historic and polarized event, with different parties accepting and rejecting the points agreed upon at the negotiation table. Despite the differences, the pursuit of and consolidation of peace has been part of the rhetoric of both the government and different sectors of Colombian society (Barreto et al., 2019a). In this research, the studies showed two different rhetorical perspectives for managing peace in a manner consistent with the government plans of the two presidential administrations that have been responsible for implementing the agreements. Of course, the scope was limited to publications on the digital social network Twitter and in a text-only format.

Nonetheless, the transition from an ethos of violence to an ethos of peace in Colombia goes beyond the signing of the agreement with the FARC-EP and the public expression of a desire for peace. It requires structural and nonviolent transformations coupled with joint actions and cognitive and emotional frameworks that enable the recategorization of the opponent and reconciliation with different sectors of society. From a psychosocial perspective, reconciliation has been identified as a fundamental variable in the transition to peace and the reconstruction of the social fabric (Alzate & Dono, 2017).

Bar-Tal (2009) proposes different methods that encourage and facilitate reconciliation in post-agreement processes, including using communication as a way to transmit ideological beliefs that humanize and recategorize the adversary. The results of this study show that at the beginning of the post-agreement process, during the Santos administration, reconciliation was publicly promoted on Twitter. These findings are consistent with the five theoretical and empirical categories identified by Alzate and Dono (2017) in studies on reconciliation: (a) psychosocial recovery through a discourse that promotes forgiveness; (b) bringing the opposing

parties together by establishing trust; (c) resignifying the ingroup and outgroup by recognizing and recategorizing the political group and encouraging peaceful forms of political participation; (d) expressing positive emotions such as hope, which convey the possibility of overcoming the conflict and achieving peace by leaving behind hatred between the opposing parties; and (e) managing the conflict through dialogue and negotiation, including with other illegal armed groups, such as the ELN.

The cognitive and emotional frameworks of reconciliation created during the Santos administration were modified by the Duque administration, whose communication is characterized by the following: (a) a one-way psychosocial recovery that is justified through the law of truth, justice, and reparation to the victims; (b) distancing from and opposition to the legitimacy of the FARC political party; (c) competitive victimhood, which is negatively related to reconciliation as each group emphasizes its victims and their suffering compared to the other party, which reactivates ingroup and outgroup differentiation (Alzate & Dono, 2017); (d) the association of the emotions of security and protection with the fear and terror caused by groups operating outside the law; and finally (f) the nonrecognition of conflict, which leads to a policy of security and confrontation that is accompanied by delegitimization of the adversary.

This change in the government discourse is consistent with the change in government, which shows the importance of discourse studies situated in a sociopolitical context. Textual discourse analysis has been consistent with global indicators of peace and dominant ideological positions that are linked to politically polarized societies (Barreto & Medina-Arboleda, *in press*). It is thus our responsibility to continue analyzing the discourse of different government actors, political leaders, and organizations to monitor the cognitive and emotional frameworks linked to social reconciliation or, conversely, to warn against constructing the image of an enemy and escalating the conflict and the violence. As Bar-Tal (2009) argues: ... peaceful resolution of the conflict does not guarantee lasting peaceful relations. Parties may negotiate an agreement of conflict resolutions, but often this only concerns the negotiation leaders and is not relevant to the group members. In such cases, conflict can erupt again (p. 374).

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Part III
Community Efforts for Peace

Chapter 11

The Role of Local Associations of Survivors and Ex-detainees in the Process of Reconciliation in Rwanda: The Case of *Amataba y'Abunzubumwe*



Immaculée Mukashema

11.1 Introduction

The 1994 genocide perpetrated against the Tutsis caused immeasurable psychological suffering and the destruction of the psychosocial fabric and had enormous material consequences (Taylor, 1999; Stover & Weinstein, 2004). Efforts were made by political leaders (in a top-down way) to manage these consequences as well as possible, and efforts were also made (in a bottom-up way) by multiple individual initiatives initiated at the lowest level of Rwanda's social and political administrative organization.

This chapter describes a case study of a spontaneous local small-scale association of diverse community members, namely, genocide survivors and ex-detainees for genocide crimes, to illustrate how such initiatives contribute to reconciliation, healing, and economic reconstruction. However, these “grassroots” initiatives for managing post-conflict situations have not been sufficiently examined yet. Due to their almost elusive nature (from the perspective of Western observers), the academic literature has tended to minimize (if not ignore) them. However, in my view, the contribution of these many local associations has been richer and more consequential than generic “top-down” attempts at management.

According to Mukashema et al. (2018), more empirical research is needed on the work of associations that facilitate grouping of diverse community members to determine their role in the forgiveness-reconciliation process and to assess the effects of this work, not only on people's mental health but also, more generally, on their well-being and happiness. Living together harmoniously, getting along well, making compromises daily, and working together toward common objectives are significantly positively associated with mental health. Moreover, historically in

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Africa, aid values have placed a strong emphasis on human care through social networks (King et al., 2016).

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated governmental restrictions, this chapter cannot, as was initially intended, present the voices of multiple associations that operate spontaneously and sustainably within the Rwandan population itself. These associations have been proven successful. They have contributed to the healing of psychological wounds, reconciliation of former enemies, and economic reconstruction of the localities in which they have operated. All these contributions would deserve, in less troubled times, a more in-depth analysis. However, instead, the exploration presented here will only concern a group of popular rapprochements, conceived and created by genocide survivors, namely, *Amataba y'Abunzubumwe* (located in the Huye District in the Southern Province of Rwanda).

A variety of emotional experiences led genocide survivors, with the help of the local political and administrative authority, to reach out to former detainees for genocide crimes, even though these ex-detainees still constituted a form of “danger” for the survivors. Despite the emotional difficulties specific to each side, survivors and ex-detainees managed to form an association that was named *Abunzubumwe*, meaning “*those who are united*.” Once created, this group was later able to benefit from the professional guidance and support of a major reconciliation association, namely, Association Modeste et Innocent. Association Modeste et Innocent is a nonprofit organization founded in 2000 by individuals with various backgrounds (i.e., genocide survivors, genocide witnesses, men, women, religious, nonreligious, adults, and youth). Association Modeste et Innocent works, like other organizations of the same type, to promote reconciliation processes and nonviolent resolutions of conflicts. Association Modeste et Innocent also supervises various local psychosocioeconomic programs.

The choice to study this small-scale association (*Abunzubumwe*) was dictated by the specificity of its creation and its particular way of moving toward unity, forgiveness, reconciliation, and productivity. While other groups that also benefit from the guidance and accompaniment of larger structures, such as the Association Modeste et Innocent, have generally been created within the framework of the activities of these larger structures, *Abunzubumwe* was a spontaneous creation. This helps to precisely determine the original moment of its creation, on the very first founding act. Moreover, this group was established extremely recently, illustrating that the need to restore the social fabric of fractured societies can still manifest itself in an acute way more than a quarter of a century after the catastrophic events that caused the initial fracture. In other words, if there can be no statute of limitations for crimes of genocide, there can be no statute of limitations for attempts to repair the psychological, sociological, and material effects of these crimes.

Once integrated into the larger Association Modeste et Innocent structure, *Abunzubumwe* changed its name, becoming a so-called bridging group. To better reflect the accompanying and professional approach of the broader structure, it was renamed *Amataba y'Abunzubumwe*, where *amataba* defines “a practical approach that helps social groups living in situations of separation and violent antagonism, tension, fear, hatred, and mistrust to gradually come closer and recreate a more

harmonious life together” (Association Modeste et Innocent, 2000). The full name of the group reflects the fact that the members of the group are united by applying the *amataba* approach.

This chapter therefore aims to (a) describe the Amataba y’Abunzubumwe bridging group; (b) elucidate the psychological motivations underlying the creation of this unlikely group; (c) understand the role of the Association Modeste et Innocent in the process of forgiveness and reconciliation between the victims and perpetrators; (d) illustrate the emotional climate of encounters between genocide survivors and ex-detainees for genocide crimes; (e) report the kind of information that is expected by the total group members and the kind of information that is provided; (f) qualitatively assess the effects of Association Modeste et Innocent’s interventions on mental health, well-being, and happiness; (g) compare the situation of the beneficiaries of this type of action with that of those who did not benefit or did not want to benefit from it; and (h) list the challenges to the reconciliation process.

11.2 The Beginnings of *Abunzubumwe*

To achieve our objectives, we interviewed 40 members of *Amataba y’Abunzubumwe* group and 1 male political-administrative authority from the locality where the group members live. We also interviewed the following officials of the Association Modeste et Innocent: a male member of the coordination of activities, a female founding member, and a male field worker. A telephone interview was also conducted with the Executive Secretary of the Rwanda National Unity and Reconciliation Commission.

The local association is currently composed of 40 individuals living in the same village in the south of the country. Half members of this local association ($n = 20$; both men and women) are genocide survivors and the other half are ex-detainees ($n = 20$; all men). Most members are widowed, having lost their spouses due to the genocide. Most members are now elderly, with 35 of them aged between 65 and 80 years old.

The psychological motivations underlying the creation of this group of survivors and ex-detainees are that each of them had lived all their lives since the end of the genocide in perpetual distrust and suspicion. Each expected retaliation or negative acts from members of the other group. However, to live in suspicion is not to live. Members of both groups realized that it was more important than anything else to recreate a protective environment where one could be assured of safety. They wanted to eliminate not only the danger that some might pose to others but also, and most importantly, the sense of imminent danger experienced by all. Particularly for the survivors, being together could be beneficial in terms of a sense of security concerning the ex-detainees.

Initially, ex-detainees reported feelings of distancing, ambivalence, fear, and doubt. They never participated in genocide memorial ceremonies. They said that they did not recognize themselves in the group of survivors, nor did they see a

connection between themselves and the survivors, and they were afraid of being harmed. The ex-detainees believed that even though they were going to participate in commemorations, they would be labeled as noncompassionate followers and detached observers. They said that they wondered if their presence would simply be seen as if they were people who were merely curious to see a performance. At the same time, the ex-detainees were also afraid that they would be subjected to acts of revenge in the memorial square itself.

As expressed by a male ex-detainee, “We felt that there was no meeting point between us and them. I was scared, I told myself that I didn’t care whether I went to the genocide memorial sites or not. I told myself that if I went there, there was nothing to do, they would hurt us. I felt that no good could come from them to us. I told myself that if we went there, things could turn against us and make us suffer the harm that we did to the victims. In the memorial square, there were public testimonies given by survivors who testified about what happened to them during the genocide. Names of some of us were mentioned. I felt that if I went there, they could use these testimonies to put me back in prison.” Another male detainee stated, “At first we would see genocide survivors go alone to the genocide memorials at the memorial sites, but we would stay at home because we wondered what would happen if we went too; what the survivors would say about us. Wouldn’t they think we were following them as curious?”

In the beginning, feelings of revolt, anger, and fear were expressed on the side of the genocide survivors. As expressed by a male survivor who had in the past actively participated in the search for justice (Kanyangara et al., 2007): “During the time of the genocide, I was very young, only 14 years old, today I am 40 years old. In the period that followed, I didn’t speak to anyone, no one spoke to me because of the way I behaved. When the *Gacaca* courts were set up, I participated as a judge. This allowed me to hear information directly concerning my own. I was very sad and angry that when we went to the memorial sites for the victims of the genocide, the ex-detainees did not go there to join us. I felt inside me that if I was an authority and had the power, I would hurt them. I was very sad about that. In my heart, I wanted them to go back to jail.”

Noting that the ex-detainees did not participate in the events commemorating the victims of the genocide, and after experiencing the malicious words of an ex-detainee, one genocide survivor took (after seeking the advice and permission of his fellow survivors) the initiative to reach out to the ex-detainees. Aware that he could not act alone, he asked for support from the local political and administrative authority to help him invite all ex-detainees to participate in a joint meeting. This survivor offered to take charge of the actual organization of the meeting and to lead the discussions. The local authority invited the ex-detainees and some of them responded positively to the invitation. The survivor who initiated the idea urged the ex-detainees to join the survivors in the commemoration of the victims of the genocide. The ex-detainees received this call favorably, arguing that up until then they had not found an adequate way to join survivors in genocide memorial events. The efforts of the survivor, who was emotionally motivated by a strong sense of insecurity, thus made

it possible to somewhat reduce the distance between the survivors and the ex-detainees.

When asked to reminisce about this founding event, the survivor who initiated the group's meeting said: "I had an experience of words with a sense of genocidal ideology being spat at me in the mourning period of 2015. An ex-convict said to me: *Hey you, you are crying for yours, when are we going to cry for ours?* From this, I felt that we were in danger from these people and I felt sorry that I could not do anything about it. There were behaviors of denial of the genocide that was growing in our locality. To report these behaviors to the authorities required proof, but we could not get that proof. Therefore, because of this experience and the fact that the ex-detainees were not joining us in the commemoration of the victims of the genocide, it hurt me. I began to think about what I could do about it. Then I asked myself how the ex-detainees and the survivors could meet and get together." A little while later, to calm his emotions, this person added: "In 2017, we were in a meeting to prepare for the commemoration activities. After I asked and obtained permission from my fellow genocide survivors, I asked the administrative authority to help me invite the ex-detainees to a meeting, which the authority did. I held a meeting with them to ask them why they were not helping us to commemorate the memory of the victims. They told me that they saw that we were a group only composed of survivors and that they could not find a way to enter this group. I told them that this was the reason I was approaching them. I explained to them that we recognize (as victims), that even though they participated in committing the genocide, they were not its planners. Therefore, they told me that they would be happy to join us. However, even with this agreement, we could see that they were afraid, just as the survivors were afraid. Members of both groups were afraid that they might hurt each other."

Information from the other side came from a male ex-detainee who attended the first meeting. When asked to reminisce about this founding event and the survivor who initiated the group's meeting, he said: "It was this man who brought us together [he named the survivor who had the initiative to invite them to the meeting]. He could see that we were not participating in the genocide commemoration activities, but when we crossed paths, he would say good words to me. This made me begin to feel liberated from my anxieties little by little. He finally asked the administrative authority to invite us to a meeting. There in the meeting, he explained to us how important it was for us to participate in the commemoration activities. We understood well, received the call, and then we began to participate in these activities. We even discussed together with the survivors how to organize ourselves to get together, survivors and ex-convicts, after the public ceremonies, and to chat while sharing a traditional drink. We began to feel comfortable, realizing that we no longer had reason to worry about survivors hurting us."

After their joint participation in the genocide commemoration events, some of the members on both sides went a step further to find together other activities that would bring them closer together. One male survivor said: "In addition to participating together in genocide memorial activities, we began to come together around common activities and events. For example, we created a tontine [a saving box], in which we put together a little money, accessible to each of us under the fair

conditions that we knew we had established. In addition, we start visiting each other and expressing compassion for one of us who had suffered in one way or another, such as through the loss of a child. We started repairing the houses of our members, building new houses at our level and with our physical strength, and then the administrative authority came to our aid by providing us with metal sheets to cover the new houses that we had built ourselves.” In turn, an ex-inmate proudly added, “Today, we have a common bee breeding project.”

11.3 *Abunzubumwe Becomes Amataba y’Abunzubumwe*

These first efforts to address the challenges of feeling distant were considered successful. By now, members from both sides had managed to come together and were often meeting for agreed-upon common activities. However, it soon became clear that technical and professional assistance, as well as third party’s perspective and support, were essential if further progress was to be made. From 2019, Association Modeste et Innocent came to play this role, with the technical expertise needed to bring former antagonistic parties together in a sustainable way (Association Modeste et Innocent, 2000). Mutual understanding and forgiveness had to be sought. This was the way to heal psychological wounds and make economic development possible again.

As stated by an ex-detainee: “When Association Modeste et Innocent came to us, they found us already organized into a group that included genocide survivors and ex-detainees. Association Modeste et Innocent began to give us training on the relationship between ex-detainees and survivors. It was with the training we received from Association Modeste et Innocent that we began to beg for forgiveness to those we had offended.”

Association Modeste et Innocent acts in collaboration, on the one hand, with the National Commission of Unity and Reconciliation and, on the other hand, with political and administrative bodies at all levels. A field worker explained: “Association on Modeste et Innocent works closely with the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission and local government bodies. These bodies know the needs of the population.” Association Modeste et Innocent (like other partners) informs the authorities about its action programs and the political authorities orient Association Modeste et Innocent toward the population. “We do what we do on behalf of the political and administrative authorities. We are like the arms of those authorities; we manage to go where those authorities have not arrived yet. And we go there under the mandate of the administrative authorities.”

An official of the National Council gave us his point of view. He made a point of confirming that “Association Modeste et Innocent is one of the partners of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission. This partner is working in the areas of healing and peace building; it is doing work that brings visible transformation. It applies one of the approaches that we appreciate, oriented to psychosocial healing, as it gives patent results in terms of social transformation.”

In turn, a member of the local administration in Huye readily admitted that “Association Modeste et Innocent, as an organization with expertise, gives us training with clear messages. It helps us in the areas of mental, material, and financial reconstruction. The new group—[*Amataba y’Abunzubumwe*]—has reached the level it is at today, thanks to Association Modeste et Innocent’s interventions. When we show them a problem that we have in the population, this group intervenes to solve or mitigate it. Association Modeste et Innocent is an important partner for us.”

11.4 Principles of Group Formation According to Modeste et Innocent

A member of the field workers of Association Modeste et Innocent explained the principles of group formation: “We work in collaboration with the political-administrative of the district. This level of the district directs us to the political-administrative sectors and the latter indicate to us respectively the administrative cells that have more worrying problems, problems that Association Modeste et Innocent’s intervention programs are in a capability to, at least partly, solve. Once we arrive at the place indicated to us by the authorities, we form groups there. In the present case of our program to promote the process of reconciliation and non-violent resolution of conflicts, as well as psycho-socio-economic support, we form *reconciliation groups* consisting of twenty members, including ten survivors and ten ex-detainees. We make sure that each of the ten on one side has a direct correspondent in the other group, the correspondence is based on the relationship of offending/offended in the first degree. The level of the administrative cell being the one that connects us to the most vulnerable people, from whom we form/establish groups ourselves – normally – but when we were directed to this administrative cell, in particular, we found a group that was already self-constituted. However, even though we found them quite happy to have been able to get together on their own, all of them still had concerns about each other. There were still suspicions of the survivors towards the ex-detainees and vice versa. Not all of them were feeling well until, after the process of our intervention, we were able to bring them up to the level where they found serenity in their lives again.”

Reconciliation is a process that requires the implementation of approaches and techniques adapted to the local circumstances of the conflicts and the forms of social distancing observed in each case. There is no universal model. As one of the field workers of Association Modeste et Innocent stated, “We start by working with survivors separately and ex-convicts separately, allowing members of each group to challenge members of the other group as they see fit. In each group, members say whatever they want about the other group, but we ask them to allow us to communicate their feelings to the members of the other group.” The emotional climate of intra-group meetings with survivors can be tense and recriminatory. One of the field workers of Association Modeste et Innocent stated, “The survivors can say that the

ex-detainees, as people who killed, cannot change to be good people, we don't even know how they were released by the authorities, they hurt us, and they asked forgiveness from the State, not from us." The emotional climate of encounters between ex-detainees may be no less tense. One of the field workers of Association Modeste et Innocent stated, "For example, ex-inmates may say that even though we have been released, we notice that the survivors are still angry with us, we thought they would take revenge, we don't have insurance."

When, after being informed of the recriminations of the antagonistic group, each of the two groups meets the other, the emotional climate tends to calm down. Grievances were expressed separately and no longer suppressed. It was therefore time for appeasement. One fieldworker said, "The two sides are finally put together and allowed to discuss face to face the reciprocal accusations that had been made separately. They end up agreeing on some things and disagreeing on others, but they enter into a contract stipulating that they definitely will live together, and how they will live. The activities that will unite them will include commemorations, body searches (which imply indicating specific places where the horns of genocide victims were thrown) and the search, together, for a common economic activity."

Once mutual grievances are shared in joint meetings and some form of agreement is reached, the group's accompaniment continues. The fieldworker said, "In the early stages of their work together, they are still afraid of each other so that even when meeting in one place they get back into homogeneous subgroups out of fear of each other. But as Association Modeste et Innocent continue to accompany them with training, with our techniques, helping them to differentiate between evil and the perpetrator of evil, they come to realize that even those who have killed have succumbed to the misfortune of letting evil enter into them, but that they can be successfully helped to rid themselves of evil. At the end of the process, they form a more united group, but Association Modeste et Innocent continue to help them heal their psychological wounds, each one individually, because true reconciliation is not achieved at the same time for everyone and depends on several factors, some of which are related to everyday living conditions."

People who have had these types of experiences often testify to the positive effects of the intervention on mental health, well-being, and happiness. One female survivor said, "When Association Modeste et Innocent came, it found us together and added the strengths we needed. Because of the meetings, we no longer see ourselves as survivors or ex-convicts, we have become *one*. When one of us, no matter whom, has a problem, we all work together to solve it. We owe this step to Association Modeste et Innocent that accompanied us, that was very close to us." One ex-detainee added, "When Association Modeste et Innocent came, he found us grouped as survivors and ex-detainees. But it helped us on how we could come together from our two respective extremes, from the peak of wickedness for us ex-detainees and from the valley of lament/sorrow for the survivors, so that we could all find common ground. Today we are happy, we are on level ground, and we are with those we have harmed. We have offended people with whom we used to live well before. Even though justice pursued us and we were punished, we have repented thanks to Association Modeste et Innocent."

A male civil servant who was the local leader of the village testified that, in his view, “*Amataba y’Abuzubumwe* is now a group that serves as a good example of what is possible in terms of unity and reconciliation. Its members are well united, they help each other, they have become like brothers after so much hatred and mistrust that characterized them and according to what happened.” Summarizing the overall situation in the surrounding villages and neighboring provinces, a coordinator of Association Modeste et Innocent said: “To see how our objectives – summarized in the slogan, *Stand Up and Work Together* – are being achieved, we must look at the progress we have made, we must look at the bridging groups we have created, bringing together genocide survivors and those who participated in the genocide. Today, these groups have been extended to their descendants. These young people from both sides are being brought together in groups, just like their respective parents. We started our activities in only one district, but today we have expanded to other districts. In collaboration with the Unity and Reconciliation Commission, we have done good work in districts known to have suffered exceptionally from the consequences of the genocide. In particular, we have done good work in districts in the Southern and Western Provinces.”

For a field worker, the very success of their mission comes from the fact that decisions are always made in the field, collectively, according to the moment and the circumstances. He said, “Instead of doing something important to a person but which the person is not interested in, it is better to do something less important but which the person wants and is involved in. Authorities certainly do very good things, but as it comes from the authority, it refers to the law. I think our success lies in sitting down with the people. That is the role of the field worker. That is the secret of the field animator. It’s to live with the people and to find out what the people want. It is to go with the persons who have problems, to live with them, to accompany them so that they can get out of their problems on their own – by themselves but accompanied. When they are in their hives and their honeycombs, I am with them. When they build the houses, I am with them.”

11.5 Forgiveness, Reconciliation, and Healing Do Not Take Place in a Vacuum

The challenges faced by the associations and their field agents are significant. The first of these challenges lies – as everywhere else in fact – in the disproportion between the task at hand and the human resources available. One fieldworker said: “We are proud of the work we do, but it is like a drop in the ocean. We accompany 20 people per group per administrative unit. You understand that if, for example, 100 people need accompaniment and we only accompany 20 people, -for lack of means that would allow us to accompany more-, it is a challenge. It can happen that the remaining 80 people recontaminate those who had reached a good level of reconciliation. Sometimes we come up against this kind of situation, where the

ex-detainees have been told that they are deceiving others (by the ones who have not been accompanied in the process of reconciliation) and that this makes them fall back into the previous situation. Just as the survivors can be accused of being traitors, which makes everyone uncomfortable.” This field worker adds, “If in one district we can reach only two out of fourteen administrative areas among five out of thirty administrative districts, you understand that a huge gap remains. We have a lot of calls for interventions that we can’t afford to respond to. So we are doing a good job but on a small sample. We make a positive contribution, but when it is evaluated at the national level, this contribution appears to be minimal.”

Another challenge is associated with the obvious fact that reconciliation, healing of psychological wounds, and economic development interact. They form a trilogy in which each component affects the others. A field worker explains the vicious circle he sometimes witnesses: “For example, when they are hungry, when they have no shelter, then the widowed victims say to themselves that if they had never been widowed, they would not be living like this. It is difficult for people to reconcile when they still have serious problems with day-to-day living. Without addressing the trauma, reconciliation is not possible. These are aspects that seem to interfere with each other. When one is missing, the other does not work well. Reconciliation, healing of psychological wounds, and economic development or ways out of problems that get in the way of normal material life are so interdependent that if you seek to achieve one of them, you must necessarily address the other two. When one is not achieved, the other two are not possible. That’s why, if you want to intervene on one of the aspects, you must automatically intervene on the other two.”

In his attempt to take stock of the activities carried out in its geographical area, the same agent adds: “Integral human development is not fully achieved. We manage to provide the basic means so that the beneficiary can continue on his own, but we cannot support them a hundred percent, since we are not able to satisfy all that is asked of us. We absolutely can’t, especially for those aspects that require money. Regarding the level of attainment of our objectives and the trilogy (reconciliation, healing of wounds, and development aid), and although these three aspects should be attained at an equal level, we still have a gap. The level of attainment of reconciliation can be estimated at eighty percent, the level of attainment of healing of psychological wounds at seventy percent, while, concerning economic development, it is not even at fifty percent. Since economic development lags far behind reconciliation and healing of wounds, this can cause a setback in the last two, which requires that before the group is weaned off, it may take three or four years or more.”

These concerns regarding the limitations of Association Modeste et Innocent’s work (owing to lack of resources) are also expressed by those who have engaged in Association Modeste et Innocent’s interventions. An ex-detainee states: “We, as members of our reconciled group, live well, we get along well. But, outside our group, there are people who don’t understand the fact that we have been reconciled. For example, I have my brother who does not understand me. However, I have recommended someone to him who will explain it to him little by little, and as we also testify that uniting with the survivors is a good thing, he too will eventually be

convinced. The others will also end up asking for forgiveness, as we have done, and we are sleeping well today.”

11.6 Conclusion

Although limited, this qualitative study contributes to the Western observer’s understanding of the mechanism for moving toward reconciliation. In the case of the *Amataba y’Abunzubumwe* group, it all started with one person. This person felt, like many others, that living in a climate of permanent suspicion was simply not living. This person likely had a particularly high propensity to forgive ingrained in himself, because, despite the tense situation, he did not hesitate to address the ex-detainees in a relatively warm manner. This person convinced people around him that things needed to change. He convinced them that to get back to a life worth living and that they had to move on. He convinced them to get together and tell each other things. His determination was contagious. As a result, the *Abunzubumwe* small-scale association was formed.

As a constituted group, *Abunzubumwe* was able to benefit from the support of Association Modeste et Innocent, an expert association in the field of reconciliation which has been operating in Rwanda since 2000. The movement of mutual rapprochement initiated within *Abunzubumwe* was thus able to grow, bearing fruit in terms of the recovery of a more normal type of life. Many ex-detainees have asked for forgiveness, and the survivors have agreed to either forgive or consider the possibility of forgiveness. Common activities took place, and mutual aid was, quite naturally, reestablished. As one ex-inmate stated, “people started sleeping better again.” The movement has even extended to the descendants of the protagonists who, if they cannot be considered guilty of actions committed by their parents (Mukashema & Mullet, 2015) can, by their dynamism, infuse additional energy into the movement. This progression from a situation of petrified distrust to a more fluid life situation cannot be mandated (i.e., there is no legal tool that can establish it or political incentive that can compel it). In fact, political incentives to force reconciliation can only hinder any positive movement. It is at the grassroots level that everything is played out, providing (of course) that the political climate is favorable.

The above suggested pathway fits quite well with the pattern of relationships between forgiveness, reconciliation, and mental health observed by Mukashema and Mullet (2010) in their studies conducted in Rwanda. These authors showed that Rwandans conceived of reconciliation in terms of two components, namely, an intraindividual component (e.g., “I feel I can now be in control of myself when I am in the presence of the people who harmed me”) and an interindividual component (e.g., “I feel I am willing to share pleasurable activities again with the people who harmed me”). Only the second component was associated with mental health (Mukashema & Mullet, 2010). The more survivors had regained the ability to interact with penetrators of violence, the better their mental health. This is also what the

excerpts reported in this chapter suggest. When survivors and ex-detainees were able to start interacting again, among other things, good sleep returned.

Mukashema and Mullet (2013) have also shown a link between the general readiness to forgive and the interpersonal component of reconciliation. It is those who are capable of unconditional forgiveness (i.e., a transcendental form of forgiveness) that are most likely to reconcile. This also aligns with excerpts in this chapter. When a particularly forgiving person expressed the intention to make things change, the movement began. Finally, Mukashema et al. (2018) also showed that the links between reconciliation and both forgiveness and mental health were strong. Given the relationships usually observed in this type of study, the link between willingness to forgive and mental health was weaker. This is consistent with the idea that unconditional forgiveness (the kind that can occur even in the worst of circumstances) can have an impact on mental health primarily because it creates the possibility of inter-individual reconciliation.

We can therefore conclude that despite the small sample of people who, at our request, testified about their experience as members of *Amataba y'Abunzubumwe* and despite its limitations (due to the total lack of financial support) of the empirical studies conducted by Mukashema and Mullet in the 2010s, there is a convergence of results. Symmetrically, it seems equally fair to say that the intervention model followed by Association Modeste et Innocent is well-grounded in locally obtained scientific evidence (see also Bono et al., 2008; Hamama-Raz et al., 2008).

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Chapter 12

Psychosocial Accompaniment of Collective Nonviolent Resistance in an Informal Settlement



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12.1 Introduction

At the time of writing this chapter, the world is struggling with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and many countries are seeing widespread protests against racism and the use of excessive force by police. The combination of these events has shined a light on people's frustrations regarding systemic disparities in human well-being and the importance of taking action to promote social justice. By social justice, we are referring to the degree to which social systems are structured to treat people with respect and dignity, preserve basic human rights, and disperse benefits and burdens fairly (Jost & Kay, 2010). While the pandemic is unlikely to remain a central feature of our lives, the plight of marginalized people worldwide has the qualities of an intractable conflict, an existential struggle between the haves and the have-nots that is marked by the perception of incompatible goals, persistence over generations, and repeated cycles of collective violence.

A key question that arises is how to resist injustice and promote more equitable systems that beneficially impact human well-being? In terms of potential solutions, the civil rights movement in the United States is often offered as a template (Chong, 1991). This movement was able to overthrow racial segregation laws through the effective use of nonviolent resistance. While it is possible to identify cases in which violence has been used effectively to reach policy goals (Horowitz & Reiter, 2001), an abundance of evidence supports nonviolent resistance for promoting social justice (Chenoweth & Stephan, 2011).

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Examining 323 major resistance campaigns from 1900 to 2006, Chenoweth and Stephan (2011) compared the effectiveness of those that included violence and those that did not. A campaign was considered violent if it involved actions that resulted in physical harm to people or property such as bombings, kidnappings, and the destruction of infrastructure. Nonviolent methods included boycotts, strikes, protests, and other forms of organized noncooperation. Overall, nonviolent resistance was more than twice as effective as violent campaigns in achieving strategic objectives. In contrast to violent methods, nonviolence had the advantage of enhancing domestic and international legitimacy and inducing broader-based participation than violent efforts. In addition, Chenoweth and Stephan (2011) found that government forces could more easily justify violence against armed insurgencies, whereas the use of violence against nonviolent resistance movements was more difficult to justify and more likely to backfire against the government.

The need to find effective ways to pursue social justice can be seen in the existence of nearly one billion people who live in informal settlements (Seto et al., 2010). Known by other names, such as shantytowns, squatter settlements, slums, and illegal settlements, people who live in these settlements are among the most marginalized in the world, struggling to satisfy basic human needs and rights. People who have the status of “informal dwellers” experience insecurity in land tenure and often lack access to water, sanitation, education, and employment opportunities. The grievances of settlement dwellers have resulted in “service delivery protests” worldwide in an effort to secure basic amenities and a sense of dignity. In South Africa, for example, media reports indicate that grievances associated with the failure of post-Apartheid governments to provide basic services have resulted in more than 3000 local protests, approximately 1 per day, between 2009 and 2017, and police reports suggest the number might be 4 times higher (Alexander et al., 2018). Occasionally, nonviolent service delivery protests are successful, but because they are typically localized and fragmented, they lack the power of protest movements that are able to garner the support of domestic and international audiences (Paret, 2018), which is one of the necessary conditions for successful outcomes (Chenoweth & Stephan, 2011).

Despite an increase in the use of nonviolent campaigns worldwide since the 1960s (Perkoski & Chenoweth, 2018), there remain challenges to promoting and engaging in nonviolent action, such as violent repression, killings, and other potential counterreactions (Koren, 2014), potential breakdowns of nonviolent protestors’ discipline (e.g., protestors spontaneously resorting to violence within a nonviolent action or campaign), and premature endings of nonviolent campaigns due to superficial concessions (Davies, 2014). These challenges are compounded by the difficult conditions experienced by people involved in protests, which often take a toll psychologically, resulting in emotional distress, disruption of social bonds, and substance misuse (Herbert, 2018).

12.2 Psychosocial Accompaniment and Nonviolent Action

Traditional psychological approaches have sought to mitigate psychosocial distress through interventions designed to help individuals adjust to their difficult living conditions. However, consistent with the movement to decolonize psychology, there have been calls for psychosocial accompaniment, which represents a radical shift in the locus of change, from individual adjustment to structural and cultural changes that enhance human well-being. Psychosocial accompaniment, a growing area of praxis among researchers and practitioners in the social and behavioral sciences, requires a fundamental reorientation of the typical professional role, from expert and detached authority to engaged and humble learner (Adams et al., 2015; Watkins, 2015). Martín-Baró et al. (1994) note that this pivot helps practitioners and other professionals acquire an in-depth understanding of both oppressed individuals and marginalized conditions, facilitating better analysis.

As the process of psychosocial accompaniment unfolds, the participating practitioner's subjectivity gradually changes. Any sense of cultural supremacy begins to diminish as hierarchical thinking and perceived dominance or verticality in relationships are replaced by a more egalitarian orientation. As this more equitable relationship is built, the practitioner walks alongside the community members, learning from them directly in an experiential way. Watkins (2015, p.331) puts it this way:

The one who accompanies knows how to resist leading when it is important that others do so. She values being alongside others, working together with them, enjoying the mutual empowerment and greater understanding that arises when all partners are involved in knowledge-making. She has practiced holding her plans and interpretations lightly, choosing instead to hear the desires and meanings of others.

Psychosocial accompaniment illuminates the humanity and dignity of marginalized others and challenges the racialized colonial standpoint on truth that is too often assumed to be universal, authoritative, and context-independent (Adams et al., 2015). Under ideal conditions, the practitioner remains open to self-critique and assists in community-based actions, advocacy, organizing, and policy development.

In what follows, we present a case study that demonstrates successful use of nonviolent action to resist eviction from land in Altos de la Florida, an informal settlement on the outskirts of Bogotá, Colombia. We highlight the role of Codo a Codo and other nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that provided support for the nonviolent resistance and therefore, in important ways, served as proxies for widespread societal support. The kind of support provided by Codo a Codo has the features of psychosocial accompaniment.

12.3 Geopolitical Context of Altos de la Florida

Altos de la Florida is an informal settlement in Soacha, Colombia. The city of Soacha, named after the sun God of the pre-Columbian Muisca people, lies just west of Bogotá, the capital of Colombia. Beginning in the 1970s, Soacha and its neighboring municipalities underwent exponential growth due to the arrival of migrants, from rural areas and Bogotá, looking for inexpensive housing and fleeing from urban guerrillas and paramilitaries. New housing in Soacha was built on unincorporated areas of rugged uphill terrain on the edge of the Bogotá savannah, a plateau within the Eastern ranges of the Colombian Andes.

According to the Colombian Ombudsman's Office (People's Defender), the first settlers in the area were assisted by guerrilla groups such as M-19 in the late 1980s. Because the Southern Motorway connects Soacha to important cities in the Andean and Southern regions of Colombia, guerrillas living in Bogotá often passed through Soacha on their way to training and operations in the mountains of Colombia. Some guerrillas settled in Soacha, spreading their political message, a mix of socialism, anti-imperialism, and nationalism (Rodríguez Rocha, 2017), and providing some government functions such as the development of infrastructure and the provision of security. Upon their disbandment in 1990, the relative absence of government was filled by other guerrillas, such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, and groups affiliated with the Colombian Self-Defense force, a paramilitary organization (Defensoría del Pueblo, 2018).

Between 1996 and 2006, forced displacement increased greatly in Colombia (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2018), and many more people fled toward the main cities. By then, the process of illegal settlement had a degree of organization. Upon reaching the hills of Soacha, the newcomers were often welcomed by "tierreros," individuals often affiliated with the many controlling groups described above, who scammed people by selling illegal plots of land. Full of hope, but unknowingly unentitled to the land, the new squatters then set out to build shacks, footpaths, and illegal connections to the power grid. Some people started charcoal piles, slag heaps, and firework factories to make money, while others commuted every day to Bogotá to work as street vendors, panhandlers, or hustlers.

Today, Soacha proper is 19 km² in size (Alcaldía de Soacha, 2020), and home to 640,143 people (Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística, 2018). Another approximately 4000 inhabitants live scattered across the 165.45 km² of the remaining rural area. More than 60% of its population live in poverty (Cortés Ferrández et al., 2017). Our focus in this chapter is on the collective action and resistance that took place in Altos de la Florida, in the sixth and outermost district of Soacha.

Altos de la Florida spans Esparto Hill, a terrain that is highly susceptible to landslides. According to a recent population census, about 3600 people lived in Altos de la Florida in 2017, but it has been recognized that the neighborhood hosts a significant floating population. The high unemployment, crime, and poverty rates make the area less desirable for permanent dwelling, and thus the goal of newcomers is

often to use Altos and other neighborhoods in Soacha as stepping-stones to Bogotá and its perceived better opportunities.

In the early years of Altos de la Florida, cooperation among community members was not politically driven so much as a response to immediate needs for shelter and other necessities of life. In an interview we conducted with members of the community in late 2019, they recalled that, in the end, “we were all here for a common goal, our economy [to improve our financial situation],” and as more and more people arrived, transportation up and down the hill and throughout the fledgling neighborhood became more urgent. Scattered community efforts began to build primitive pathways that cars could traverse. Occasionally, the neighbors would convince nearby construction projects to lend (or for a small price rent) them equipment for this purpose, but it was focused on the short term.

However, their needs were many and dire. Like many informal settlements, Altos has always been affected by two pressing service delivery matters, namely, the lack of a water supply and refuse disposal. Obtaining electricity (albeit illegally) was a relatively simple matter of acquiring cables, climbing poles, and tapping into the power grid, but water and refuse disposal required more specialized infrastructure, which meant major construction work because of the rugged terrain.

While water, electricity, and refuse disposal are essential, the inhabitants of Altos de la Florida always name legalization of the settlement as their most significant need. Without official recognition by the municipality, there would be no legal recourse against usurpers, and the threat of eviction would always be present. Organizing as a community to meet these needs is a challenge in an area so remote, underserved, and regarded by many members of the community as a stepping-stone, and not as a permanent dwelling.

12.4 The Beginning of Community Development

As the population grew and their needs became more pressing, some community members became aware that the Colombian legal system had provisions for the formation of a private nonprofit organization called a Community Action Board (JAC in Spanish). JACs are the legal embodiment of a group of people that can lodge requests to local, regional, and national governments. These community-based boards were intended to give community members oversight of public services and abilities to improve them through democratic means. At the same time, JAC provided a legal framework that clarified the relationship between the municipal governments and communities. Creating a JAC requires that (a) at least 75 residents of the community express an interest in being involved and (b) a board of dignitaries is elected to preside over the JAC, so it is entirely driven by community members.

As per the recollection of a community member, the first Altos JAC was formed in 1989 but only got official recognition in 1998 (Rodríguez Muñoz, 2015). It represented a key political gain because the community now had a form of political

participation and a way to have their voice heard. Indeed, the main goal of a JAC is to foster the development of communities through respect, solidarity, tolerance, dialogue, collective action, sustainability, and self-management (Congreso de la República de Colombia, 2002). The requirement to meet regularly is a milestone in a context where people are understandably suspicious of each other and face the pressing needs of building and maintaining shelter, finding some sort of job, and taking care of their own as they negotiate their new circumstances. In such a context, those who are not kin are more of a threat than an opportunity; however, a legal mandate to meet and talk about community issues can be an antecedent to a range of psychosocial gains such as a feeling of belonging in a community along with a sense of common goals.

As expected, JACs helped formalize the requests for a proper water supply. After months of negotiations, the municipality agreed to send a tank car up the hill every 15 to 20 days to provide water that the families gathered in large cans. This represented a major sociopolitical gain, namely, one of the first instances of achieving a community goal through political participation. However, this gain was not beneficial in the long term. At first, the tank car was paid for by the mayor's office, but in 2000, the Bogotá Water and Sewage Company took over, and, as a result, people in Altos de la Florida paid more per cubic meter than what some of the wealthiest inhabitants of Bogotá paid for water.

Accordingly, the community along with NGOs continued to put pressure on the municipality. Records from the Soacha mayor's office show inhabitants of Altos de la Florida requesting information about legislation and public utilities during "The Mayor in your Neighbourhood" events held periodically by the municipality. At the same time, the community received assistance from the Transitional Solutions Initiative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to meet with authorities and elevate claims (UNHCR Colombia, 2013). The years of continuous lobbying finally led to the allocation of resources for a pump that would provide a proper water supply network to the neighborhood (Periodismo Público, 2019).

Despite the leverage that a JAC organization provides when negotiating community amenities, the lack of a sense of community means that not many people can or want to be on the boards and work actively with the JACs. The dignitaries are also unpaid volunteers, and it is understandably challenging to find someone to pass the torch to in a community where most struggle to make ends meet as it is. As a result, many dignitaries have been in their position for nearly a decade, and as the community grows and changes, there seems to be a sense of stagnation and separation between the interests of the JACs and those of the newcomers. Clearly, there is more to community than politics and legal representation.

12.5 Codo a Codo and Psychosocial Accompaniment in Altos

As the influx of displaced people in the late 1990s began congesting Altos de la Florida, many NGOs and international assistance offices started providing services to the community. Some, like the United Nations (UN), mostly provided funds for infrastructure and productive projects, but others such as Codo a Codo, knowing that there was a fine line between assistance and paternalism, focused on community-building through gatherings, workshops, and activities designed to get people together and establish enduring, collaborative relationships.

The focus of Codo a Codo is to build a sense of community. “Codo a Codo,” literally “elbow to elbow,” means “(working) hand-in-hand.” Codo a Codo was founded in 2001 by a group of volunteers led by sister Norma Inés Bernal with the goal of lending a hand to victims of displacement upon their arrival at Bogotá by providing them with opportunities to acquire new skills and finding a dignified job. Most of the population they started to work with lived in Altos de la Florida, where community members experienced poverty, interpersonal violence, crime, gender violence, a lack of infrastructure, and other difficult life conditions.

In collaboration with community members, Codo a Codo created several programs designed to facilitate the restoration of human rights and dignity. These included a “work and housing” project that was geared toward providing job skills and building living quarters, an adult school, a music school, a playhouse, and a thrift shop.

Today, many of these programs are run by previous beneficiaries. Codo a Codo currently conducts its daily activities from a three-story house where various services are available such as low-cost nursing and dental care, a library with computers and an Internet connection, homework assistance, and spiritual and religious support.

12.6 The Threat of Eviction

As the community continued to grow and develop, it attracted the attention of the presumed legal owners of the occupied lands, who began demanding that the community be expelled from the land. As it turned out, some of the titles to land were from pre-Republican times, and the boundaries had been poorly defined. The municipality attempted to map the terrain and update the cadastre but at the same time experienced pressure to evict the presumed usurpers. The people living in Altos de la Florida were therefore about to face a challenge to its growing sense of community and its very existence, one that demanded that people be brought together not by mandate, but through solidarity.

One night in 2002, a police squad was sent with very short notice and made the first of many attempts to reclaim the land. The neighbors set up an impromptu resistance, and between the fierce stand of the people and the ruggedness of the terrain,

the ousting was stopped, but with a high psychological cost to the community: “It was very hard. We heard that the police were at the bottom of the hill and everybody came out, but sometimes it was a false alarm, but when people were off-guard the police arrived. We had covers made of branches [to protect and hide ourselves] and the mounted police destroyed them, stepped over the children ... it was very traumatic for us because they stepped on us.”

Under the threat of new eviction attempts, some of which were made by the mounted police, the community needed to strengthen community relationships and create a barebones neighborhood watch system (i.e., families would take turns keeping their eyes on the valley and alert the others upon seeing police or army personnel). Some families provided coffee and biscuits for the watchers, while others brought wood for the fire. Early social bonds developed through actions such as burning a campfire to provide warmth, preparing communal meals, and fixing warm beverages for the group. People not only kept each other company, but they also got to know one another, started developing friendships, and built a sense of trust and solidarity. A member of the community remembers that “it was by uniting that we overcame all that; protecting ourselves, protecting the community, protecting the children. Not allowing them to get us out.” In the face of adversity, the spark of a sense of community was lit: “when they came to get us out we just had to unite because we were a community, it was not just me that was getting kicked out, it was also my neighbor, it was all of us.”

After a couple of years of uncertainty and fear, the government notified the community that an eviction could not take place before an updated mapping of the area, which made it clear to community members that the location of the plots of the presumed legal owners was uncertain. The news was received optimistically by the community: “that’s when we learned that we were not invading ... because they did not have ownership of these lands.” However, capitalizing on this news meant that the community had to learn more about itself. Thus, with the aid of NGOs and religious organizations, a group of volunteers conducted a door-to-door survey and census in 2006. At the same time, the mayor’s office and the governorship started the formal mapping.

In 2006, the mapping of Altos had reached a point where the prosecutor’s office determined that the eviction could proceed. The community was notified, and a date was set. Fears reignited and the need for a new strategy emerged.

12.7 Nonviolent Community Resistance to Eviction: Planning and Preparing

12.7.1 The Beginning

The NGOs and the religious groups proposed facing the eviction with a nonviolent strategy in the interest of preventing violent clashes and fatal injuries: “So we all gathered and asked, well, what are we going to do to avoid deaths, that was the first item, and to avoid violence? Eviction or no eviction, let there be no violence.” The first concrete action was to revisit the old neighborhood watch strategy: “we sought to keep permanent sentinels, day and night, because we knew that there would be an eviction but we didn’t know what time it would be, and we had the experience of the first one which had taken place at night (2 am).”

About 6 months before the planned eviction, Codo a Codo volunteers surveyed the community to understand legalization, financial and living conditions, and started discussing potential actions against eviction with each family, emphasizing nonviolence. This was followed by more formal visits and gatherings with the support of the JAC chairs and religious organizations such as the Diocese and the Intereclesial Commission.

The plan for resistance was also conducted during these meetings. First, the community reflected on how violence achieves nothing in the end and the importance of standing up for one’s rights peacefully. They also examined their arrival and stay in Altos, recounting their mistakes and what they had learned in the process. Practice was also important, and nonviolent exercises that enabled members to analyze the consequences of violent actions and the power of a nonviolent approach were also conducted. Finally, psychosocial accompaniment was provided to those individuals whose fears were overwhelming.

In the end, successful execution of this plan required the consolidation of trust among the actors in the community and supportive organizations as well as a sense of unity. Community members and the organizations agreed that the eviction attempt was to be met in silence and without violence, with the aim of protecting lives. Emphasis was placed on the importance of no one going “off-script” because that would put the entire movement at risk of failure.

12.7.2 Children First

Days before the eviction, the organizations assembled different groups and explained the finalized plan. Nuns with the Codo a Codo Association gathered the children, told them what would happen during the event, and instructed them on how to act. “We cannot react by screaming or anything like that. We will stay silent – our language will be a white flag. When we see that they come closer, you will wave your flags.”

The men were instructed to position themselves behind the children and the women on the day of the eviction. A Brazilian Jesuit who had worked in the favelas in Brazil was in charge of keeping them in line, as one of the nuns remembers: “Men are more violent than the rest, and to keep them from uprising, we told the priest ‘You have to keep them quiet.’”

Some people harbored fears that the strategy would not work. “We had the anxiety that the kids would go first, and everybody’s reaction is not the same ... myself, I prefer to be on the front, with my kids behind me,” one of the women remembers. Many men were skeptical and one of them recalls that “we were ready to throw them rocks, we had small mounds of rocks prepared.” In fact, some of the community leaders doubted that nonviolence could be effective and sustained so they sent their kids away to family members elsewhere just in case violence erupted. Some who stayed prepared for the worst-case scenario: “Sister, I believe in you, but just in case I have a few stones in my pockets.” One of the sisters said: “If we see them coming onto us, we step forward to protect the children.”

12.7.3 Implementation of Nonviolent Resistance: Of Children, Songs, and White Flags

By dawn on the day of the planned eviction, the community was still putting the flags together. Lookouts had been up all night waiting in case of a surprise early eviction, but, fortunately, it seemed the event was going to take place during the day. A communal pot was brought to make breakfast, and canelazo (a homemade drink made of sugar cane alcohol, water, and cinnamon), which warmed the community members’ hearts in the cold morning. The community was supported by representatives from many different associations such as the Intereclesial Commission for Justice and Peace, the Claretian Missionaries, and the Diocese of Soacha. The press was also covering the situation.

At last, early in the morning, the watchers alerted representatives from many institutions that the infamous Mobile Anti-Disturbances Squad (MADS) had finally arrived at the hill to carry out the eviction. Because it was expected that many of the residents and their children would soon be homeless, staff from the Colombian Family Welfare Institute were present to take about 300 children into custody, using shelters that are known to be crowded and understaffed.

MADS had the task of breaking up the anticipated hostile resistance. Up on the hill, sister Norma from Codo a Codo grabbed her loudspeaker and yelled “no one scream, no one move, everybody just wave your flags, and if anyone is going to do something, the others need to keep them quiet.”

As the MADS took positions and the officials reached the settlement, they were faced with a stunning scene; the hills were covered by lines of people in formation, waving white flags and singing peace hymns. “We were all, both young and adult, within the same spirit. All we did was sing songs of religion, peace, and hope.” The

first line was the children, followed by their mothers and other women, and the men lined the back of the formation. Everybody remained in line, and every instruction by the authorities was met with silence or singing, with no aggressive action whatsoever. The prosecutor looked on, dumbfounded, and finally proclaimed that the eviction could not take place “even if it costs me my job.”

The community erupted in joy: “there was more disruption then [when they left], than when we were in formation!”. The cheerful mood soon gave way to a luke-warm peace, because the community understood that, even though the day’s battle had been won, the eviction had only been postponed, and it could only be stopped by the desired legalization: “We felt at ease, but not so much ... we had to negotiate, we did not know whether we had to pay again for our lands, because they were asking for a lot of money.” This quote illustrates that the community believed the sum that the entitled owners requested was outrageous. “But if we had already lived there for so long, why would we have to pay an amount that was way over what we paid when we first got here?”.

12.8 The Rocky Path to Political Strength

The community needed further organization to be better placed for negotiations. The first idea was to elect representatives to negotiate, but the floating nature of the neighborhood’s population disrupted the formation of enduring links and fuelled distrust. Hence, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) suggested formalizing an organization formed by the presidents of the JAC and appointed advisors from international NGOs and religious communities who worked in the neighborhood. The plan was approved, and ASOVIAFLO (Altos de la Florida Householders Association) was established to add to the community representation in political scenarios.

The creation of ASOVIALFLO gave the community a stronger legal representation and hence opened a spot for the community at a very large table consisting of the entitled owners, the government mapping authority, the mayor’s office, all entities responsible for infrastructure, the chamber of commerce, and other bodies. It was agreed that negotiations would happen on a weekly basis, which gave the community hope that the matter would be settled relatively quickly, but they were soon to understand that sociopolitical gains such as their recognition as an association come with issues too: the negotiations dragged on for 3 years until a price that the residents agreed to pay was set.

At the time of this writing, all the studies and paperwork have not yet been completed. The community reckons that the municipality is struggling to find the resources to help buy the land, and meanwhile, the population dynamics of the neighborhood have continued to change. After so many years, the original community is barely recognizable, and through growing disinterest and hopelessness, the process has nearly stalled.

However, the existence of ASOVIALFLO means that there is still some connective tissue that holds the community together in political terms. In 2009, Altos de la Florida was again threatened with an eviction notice. At the negotiation table, the association was able to convince the other entities (especially the representatives of the legal owners of the lands) that the process was going well, the end result would satisfy all parties, and that conducting the eviction would jeopardize what had been achieved thus far. With a few hours to spare, the parties agreed that the community could stay put, and negotiations would continue.

On the day of the eviction, the authorities presented themselves to carry out the ousting, only to find that the people were not leaving and that the plaintiffs did not seem interested in forcing them to do so; behind-the-scenes brokerage had prevented another traumatic eviction, this time capitalizing on both the nonviolent resistance of 2006 and on the political leverage gained by the community. In the following section, we offer an example of the role that psychology programs can play in promoting psychosocial accompaniment.

12.9 Ongoing Psychosocial Accompaniment by Pontificia Universidad Javeriana

For the past few years, psychology students from the Jesuit Pontifical Xavier University have engaged in psychosocial accompaniment with members of the Altos de la Florida community. Five faculty are involved as instructors and supervisors. Students (typically groups of five to nine) are dispatched to the community during their fourth year of study in psychology after a careful context analysis using primary (i.e., interviews, walks, participant observation, informal chats) and secondary (i.e., NGO reports, early alert bulletins by the Ombudsperson's Office, newspaper stories, research) sources. This context analysis provides students with opportunities to grasp the complexity of social dynamics in the area. While in Altos de la Florida, students conduct ethnographic work within the Codo a Codo programs, visiting with families, playing with children, helping at the playhouse and library, doing reading workshops, and other activities. In this way, students are able to enter the daily routines of the neighborhood, have firsthand contact with the emotional experiences of the community, and better locate opportunities to strengthen the existing capacities and create new spaces to reflect and transform.

This psychosocial accompaniment is based on the idea that individual and collective impact cannot be isolated from the historical, social, political, and economic context, especially in such complex and contradictory areas as those afflicted by latent sociopolitical violence like Altos de la Florida. The spirit of the process is one psychosocial accommodation, that is, walking alongside with humility and learning from people in oppressed communities where they work, casting aside the lens of pathology and individualism. Permanent reflexive action guided by these principles

enables students to cocreate accompaniment strategies with the community that are based on how they perceive their needs.

12.10 Nonviolent Action Today in Altos de la Florida

Altos de la Florida continues to be a troubled area, where many forces converge to maintain a context of poverty and violence. Local and regional authorities are slow to respond, overwhelmed from dealing with the needs of many other communities. National and regional resources are routinely diverted by corrupt officers and institutions. The powerful industry of drug and arms trafficking maintains undisputed control of entire blocks and roads. Society at large generally looks at victims of the conflict and people at the fringes of cities with contempt, and national governments have never shown much interest in their situation. The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 further disrupted the precarious local economies through mobility restrictions and shop closures.

Things are not much brighter from the inside. The area continues to absorb people fleeing from renewed rural violence and escapees from the poverty of neighboring Venezuela, and the lack of infrastructure and wealth have prevented the creation of an appropriate welcoming community. This has led to an “every man for themselves” kind of worldview that seems like a regression to some: “We were fighting for a common goal, our lands ... that made us join together ... but our union ended because most sold their plots, new people came and those people don’t seem to care because they didn’t suffer [what we suffered]... they have no sense of belonging.”

However, glimmers of hope come from new groups emerging from the seeds of past collaboration. The authors were warmly welcomed in 2019 by young leaders from the Codo a Codo Association under the wing of sister Norma Bernal. Some of our hosts were the sons and daughters of communal leaders who follow in their parents’ footsteps in their own ways. We asked members of the community what they thought helped maintain a nonviolent orientation to resist the evictions peacefully. They spoke about the value of dialogue (“We learned that dialogue is powerful”) and the importance of leadership in helping to dispel any thoughts of resisting in a more aggressive way: “sister Norma was running all over the place, repeating what we should do.” In this sense, a feeling of not being alone, of being part of something bigger, could maintain motivation and help sustain the movement. “Union makes us strong,” asserted one of the women. The importance of critical reflection and learning was emphasized: “We have taught a lot, and we have learned a lot too ... we have learned the parts of each process, we have learned globally and it has been useful to everybody” (Uniminuto [En Sua], 2016).

12.11 Conclusion

Efforts to build a healthy and sustainable community in Altos de la Florida are beset with a number of challenges. One such challenge is that many people view Altos as a temporary stepping-stone to settle in other places rather than Altos itself. There is also an issue with some programs offered by well-meaning organizations that interfere with the development of a well-functioning community. Sister Norma, for example, regretted that the UNDP unwittingly poured resources into the community without contingencies attached and hampered the development of individual and collective agency for several years.

Nonetheless, it is also clear that psychosocial accompaniment can be a powerful tool in the emancipatory toolbox, particularly if practitioners are able to experience the pain and struggles of those who are accompanied, refrain from proposing solutions, listen intently, and support strategies as they emerge from the community (Gutiérrez, 1983). Gutiérrez offers several insights that are germane to psychosocial accompaniment. He notes: “the poor are a by-product of the system in which we live and for which we are responsible” (p. 45). It follows that poverty does not call on us to marshal generous material relief so much as it presents an imperative to build a new social order. For this purpose, we argue that psychosocial accompaniment is extraordinarily well suited provided practitioners work alongside and support those who wish, not so much for development, but for liberation.

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Chapter 13

Psychosocial Accompaniment and Everyday Peace in Colombia



Claudia Tovar Guerra and Verónica Pardo Argáez

13.1 Brief Context of Sociopolitical Violence and Its Main Effects on Communities and Individuals

For more than 60 years, Colombia has endured a prolonged war. This war has undergone complex transformations throughout its history, mainly comprising its degradation and generalization to the entire national territory (Pardo, 2018).

One of the main origins and continued drivers of sociopolitical violence in the country has been land ownership. During the 1920s and 1930s, there were two societal projects underway, namely, one that valued land ownership and one that “proposed the construction of a national economy supported by industrial development and a solid rural middle class” (Fajardo, 2015, p. 4). For a while, the latter gained traction with liberal governments and peaked with Law 200 of 1932 “that sought to limit excessive [accumulation of] unproductive properties, as well as backward ways of labor exploitation” (Giraldo, 2015, p. 13). Later though, these processes were weakened with Law 100 of 1944, when political interests reimposed “archaic ways of labor in country estates” (Giraldo, 2015, p. 5). According to Giraldo (2015), there was a shift from liberal reform to a more repressive regime where forced displacement and massacres were generalized, allowing for the consolidation of a large property-centered agrarian model, with a vacant land policy that disadvantaged small farmers and privileged large agricultural businesses and investments.

This chapter is a product of reflections derived from the work of training psychology professionals, psychosocial accompaniment, and academic research conducted by the authors in community settings across several regions in Colombia.

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The exports of bananas, coffee, sugar, woods, barks, leathers, minerals, and gold have contributed to the monopolizing appropriation of land, restricting the development of middle-sized and small farming properties. This explains the big land concessions granted between 1827 and 1931 and the expansion of large estates into vacant lands (Pécaut, 2015). Due to these concessions, “peasants had to ‘jump over’ this encirclement and go far over into new settlements beyond the agrarian frontier, boosting a spiral of land valuation through the cycle ‘settlement-conflict-migration-settlement’ that endures to this day, pushed by the armed conflict, both legal and illegal mining activity, and illicit crops” (Fajardo, 2015, p. 7).

The dispossession of lands prevents peasants and small farmers from growing crops autonomously, forcing them to depend on work from large estates where labor conditions were inhumane and slave-like. This situation motivated several mobilizations and protests, the first of which was headed by the Quintín Lame in the province of Cauca. This movement led to the native rebellion in the south of the country because it coincided with the dockworker and railway worker strikes that were suppressed by the onslaught of the business owners (Fajardo, 2015).

These issues around labor and access to land continued to drive protests throughout the 1920s, with the most intense driven by the abusive practices of the Tropical Oil Company in 1924 and 1927, and by the United Fruit Company in 1929. These protests were severely repressed and gave rise to the *masacre de las bananeras* [massacre of the banana fields]. Very few of these protests succeeded, but over time they helped to build a culture of resistance.

In 1929, the global financial crisis caused thousands of rural workers to lose their jobs, and the prevailing agrarian regime seemed to be on its way out. This set the foundation for the formation of several political groups such as the Communist Party and the *Unión Nacional Izquierdista Revolucionaria – UNIR* [Revolutionary Leftist National Union] led by Jorge Eliécer Gaitán (Fajardo, 2015), who was assassinated on the 9th of April, 1948, a pivotal event for Colombian history that was instrumental in consolidating “liberal” *guerrillas* (Sánchez Gonzalo, 1989).

After this assassination, rural areas were ravaged by terror at the hands of the police, the army, and armed groups coordinated by the state armed forces in line with the “counterinsurgency order.” During this time, there was a wave of expulsions and massacres of hundreds of peasant families in addition to the usurpation of their lands. These conditions continued to favor the commercial development of agricultural businesses and served as motivation for the adoption of economic development strategies in the same vein (Fajardo, 2015). These expressions of violence led to a new political climate in the 1950s wherein the confrontation between elites transformed into a fight between the State and a massive organized resistance of popular sectors, as shown by the uprising of 50,000 combatants at the orders of the guerrillero Guadalupe Salcedo, although not all of the resistance was armed (Fajardo, 2015). This marked the advent of an intense period called “The Violence” between 1948 and 1966 (Giraldo, 2015). Thus arose the armed insurgence that still exists today. In 1964, the Marquetalia operation that originated from the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) [Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces] was implemented.

A few months later, on the 7th of January 1965, another insurgent group was established, namely, the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) [National Liberation Army]. In 1967, the Ejército Popular de Liberación (EPL) [Popular Liberation Army] formed, and in January 1974 the “Movimiento 19 de abril M-19” [19th of April Movement] was founded, among other insurgent groups that appeared in Colombia in the 1960s and 1970s (Giraldo, 2015).

In this context, during the *frente nacional*¹ period, economic development was described as “war against the population, the destruction of entire communities, the displacement of survivors, the dispossession of land and wealth economic growth. This growth was made possible because of availability of labor and unoccupied lands and favored capital accumulation” (Fajardo, 2015, p. 26).

Another contributing factor was drug trafficking since territorial dominion had been gained through strategies aimed at controlling illegal crop fields and laboratory sites, regulation of the illegal market, and tribute collection along the entire drug industry supply chain. The *guerrillas* entered this scene, as did the paramilitary groups later, as armed actors were required for military control and seduced by the great amounts of money circulating. While this happened, two further strategies, namely, the corruption of public servants and politicians, were set in motion (Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2018).

Additionally, “paramilitarism boosted the concentration of arable land ownership, associated with transnational agricultural and mining business capital, intensifying the existing dispossession issues” (Fajardo, 2015, p. 39).

These situations consolidated and exercised direct, structural, and cultural violence in Colombia. According to Johan Galtung (2003), the rural civilians have been exposed to forced displacement, selective assassinations, massacres, torture, threats, prosecution, enforced disappearances, and forced recruitment (i.e., direct violence).

Sociopolitical violence has led to a concentration of wealth in the hands of few, exclusionary elite holding political power, the prevalence of poverty (especially in the countryside), high levels of inequality, poor access to rights and adequate living conditions, and poor access to basic goods and services (i.e., structural violence). In this scenario, a polarized social and political culture has formed that denies (and even annihilates) the participation of political stances outside of the two traditional ones, dehumanizing those who do not think, act, or endorse the same ideologies, further turning these individuals into enemies and legitimizing discriminating against them.

These violations of human rights have left deep physical and psychosocial marks on the victims, injuring their dignity, transforming and limiting their aspirations for

¹The *Frente Nacional* [National Front] was a political pact between liberals and conservatives active in Colombia between 1958 and 1974, and by extension refers to the historical period between those years. The main characteristics of this period were the succession of four coalition government periods (16 years); the equitable distribution of ministries and bureaucracies in the three branches of public power between the parties (executive, legislative, and judicial branches); a presidential candidate elected by bipartisan agreement and the equitable distribution of the parliamentary seats until 1968.

the future, destroying the social fabric of communities, hindering the continuity of ancestral knowledge and cultural traditions, as well as impeding the political participation of people, creating new acculturation processes and the construction of identity.

Throughout this time, individuals and communities have had to develop strategies to face and manage multiple instances of vulnerability and violence, creating nonviolent ways to transform and resist these realities. Thus, along with the experiences of history through violence, communities and social organizations have been building their own stories through peace.

13.2 Three Levels of Communitarian Peace Initiatives in Colombia

It is not possible to recount all grass-roots peace and community initiatives within this chapter. However, according to our experience and knowledge of several of these initiatives, we can categorize them into three groups or levels.

The first level involves taking steps to build and protect collective memory as a form of resistance to the injustices that the group has been subjected to and in an effort to prevent repetition. This may be conducted by a group of people that bond over common experiences and move to promote a public process of memory and denunciation, such as the “Colectivo 16 de Mayo” created in the municipality Barrancabermeja in 1996. After a massacre perpetrated by paramilitary actors left 32 victims (7 people murdered and 25 people missing), social organizations made the massacre visible in the media, turning it into a matter of public interest. The national government recognized the legitimacy of the social organizations and decided to respond to their demands, clearing a path for the consolidation and implementation of public policies directed toward peace.

The second level consists of efforts to seek justice and the restitution of rights that have been violated, move forward with legal processes, and use constitutional tools for integral reparations of injuries caused. For example, consider the case of *las Pavas*, where the expansion of crops of palm oil for the production of combustible oil jeopardized the territorial sovereignty and food security of the communities, giving rise to dispossession and abandonment. The communities argued that the recovery of peasant agriculture was essential for the conservation of common goods, biodiversity, and the fight against poverty (Espinosa-Manrique & Cuvi, 2016).

The third level comprises the community processes that have an integral scope, involving a disposition for resistance to the armed actors that seek to dispossess them, threaten their lives, intimidate them, and limit their existing possibilities. It is based on declaring their territory and community as neutral and then devising creative nonviolent strategies for protecting lives, de-escalating hostilities, improving internal coexistence, developing resources to bolster well-being, and amplifying their solidarity network beyond the local setting. These processes require the

organization of a community life that integrates productive, educational, cultural, and coexistence aspects. An example is the San José de Apartadó Peace Community established during the 1990s in the Urabá region of the Province Antioquia, which suffered under the armed conflict when hundreds of peasants had to face violence. In the face of these circumstances, a group of peasants in nearby Veredas decided to become a neutral community. This meant no participation in any kind of conflict, giving no information or aid to any of the groups, and adopting values that brought unity and tranquility within the group.

These three levels are not mutually exclusive. Resisting or neutral communities often do undertake and maintain processes in the other two levels, and whoever advances vindications of rights can further memory-saving processes to bolster legal action. However, bringing a perspective anchored in the community to these processes, beyond the narratives of external allies and transcending the state-centric outlook, allows us to see the reach of peace-building efforts.

13.3 Perspectives on the Construction of Peace in the Colombian Context

There have been several varied efforts at building peace in Colombia across settings, from universities to territories and communities. Each of these efforts contributed to the construction of an understanding around the concept of peace that, little by little, shaped beliefs, perspectives, and ways of thinking about peace.

As a rule, both in Colombia and other countries around the world, the history that is taught in schools is centered around knowledge about the main wars and incidents of violence recorded as milestones of economic, political, and social transformation, giving violence a symbolic and representative place as a driver of history. As such, violence is presented as having a principal role in strategies to achieve peace. This point of view dominated higher education and academic research in politics and sociology for a long time, viewing violence as an element that maintains order, and hence subject to monopoly by a legitimate entity like the State².

In a similar vein, with the same emphasis on violence, many academics and researchers conceptualized violence as a key to understanding and seeking peace. Vicent Fiças (1987), in his well-known recapitulation of studies on peace, refers to these stances as “violontology” and “polemology.”

Later, during the second half of the 1980s, the first studies on peace that centered on peace negotiation processes commenced. These studies viewed peace as “negative peace” (i.e., peace is the absence of direct violence, such as a ceasefire (Pardo & Ramos, 2005)). These studies also focused on governments that adopted a

²This idea was proposed by Max Weber in his classical work “Politics as a vocation” and has been central to modern understanding of the function of the State as a regulator and guarantor of peace and order between citizens.

negotiation solution to resolve armed conflict within their peace public policy (Hernández, 2009).

A substantial portion of these research efforts was made from the point of view of a “Liberal Peace” (Cruz & Fontan, 2014; Landaluze, 2017) that aims to maintain public order and is especially focused on supporting neoliberal economic policy, the monopoly of arms, and emphasizes guaranteeing conditions of political and economic security and stability, and neglecting the guarantees and conditions necessary for true social reparation, non-repetition, and the implementation or execution of transitional justice.

In the 1990s, conceptualizations shifted to focus on other processes, actors, scenarios, and methods for the construction of peace in Colombia. These brought to the fore the historic processes of people, communities, social organizations, women, youth, churches, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and victims of the conflict that have utilized alternatives to the violence and that go beyond the peace negotiation process. This answers to an irenologic³ line, as the science that studies peace from the stance of peace, where conflicts are a possibility of transformation that is nonviolent and creative.

In this vein, it is understood that better comprehension of conflicts (and not violence), their essence, and nature facilitates getting closer to peace. This approach recognizes that, in daily life, actions promote coexistence, respect, and the protection of life, solidarity, and collaboration. In other words, actions directed toward peace (Moreno-Parra, 2014).

As stated by López (2004), “the peaceful experiences of exchange, cooperation, solidarity, and diplomacy have been predominant throughout history.” However, these practices have been normalized as part of daily life, making their impact and relevance to human, political, and social relationships invisible. Until recently, research about those experiences had been scarce, demonstrating an overemphasis on the role of violence in history” and creating obstacles to recognizing peace throughout that same history.

As Conflict Theory proposes, peace refers to those practices and scenarios where conflict has been regulated in a nonviolent fashion in high violence contexts like Colombia. This translates into the organization and strengthening of communities that aim to defend and demand their rights, developing procedures for resistance, collaboration, visualizations, and reporting, in addition to building autonomy, self-determination, and sovereignty, while recognizing the particularities of each population.

³Irenology: “as the science that studies peace, has been present since the origins of humanity. In Greek mythology, Eirene was the daughter of Zeus, and Themis. Along with her sisters Dike and Eunomia, they comprise the triad of the “Hours or Seasons.” According to Homer, the Hours were the Olympic deities of climate and the ministers of Zeus. Their function was to regulate the seasons and to favor fertility on Earth. As goddesses of law and order, they maintained the stability of society. Eirene was a product of the logical relationship between Justice and Good Government, while allowing the existence of both and was related to the concepts of flowering and bearing fruit” (Moreno-Parra, 2014, p. 208).

In the words of Esperanza Hernández (2009), “transformative pacifist powers, imperfect peace, and heartening realities for this country (...) civilian potentials for peace” (p. 2) occur in different scenarios of civil society, such as art, artists, collectives, and cultural groups, universities, NGOs, churches, and community and social ethnic-territorial movements that build multiple social alternatives and actions following the contextual, cultural, and geographic reality in which they are situated.

This breaks away from a concept of peace as something perfect, finished, utopian, remote, and unactionable in the present, allowing conceptualizations of peace as a process more than an end. Simply put, this enables us to think about peace as inherently imperfect, as an unending *process*. As Gandhi put it, “there is no path to peace, peace is the path.” An imperfect peace that recognizes peace-building practices in daily life, views conflict as both an important part of the present and an opportunity to create and transform, and helps to plan for a future that may feature conflict. Moreover, this view of peace recognizes that it is always unfinished (i.e., an ongoing process) and therefore facilitates a broader, more holistic, less fractionated understanding of peace where all realities are allowed. This view of peace is more inclusive and everyday ideas, attitudes, and values of peace are promoted.

This is a peace that is not predefined and does not align with a prewritten set of instructions. As proposed by Cruz and Fontan (2014), a “subaltern peace” is a peace bottom-up, that is “the protagonist of its own reality and focused on the community as a weaver of its own processes” (p. 137). For this reason, it invites us to reject the idea that building peace is just an issue for experts and external agents with a programmed agenda. Therefore, it is necessary to reflect constantly to identify colonialist practices and give way to local knowledge and processes.

According to Roger Mac-Ginty (2014), everyday peace is directly related to the agency that humans have to face conditions of violence and thus connected to resilience, stress management, and the strategies people devise to achieve reconciliation and rebuild social networks. This includes the reconstruction of trust and the survival and protection mechanisms fashioned and maintained from their own cultural and historic knowledge.

In the same vein, it is important to ask another question: what is the utility of taking a stance of imperfect peace, everyday peace, and subordinate peace in communal and institutional work? Adopting this stance involves recognizing the social significance of our own history, exploring past experiences of peace. This brings about hope and is profoundly mobilizing. Rescuing these histories of peace implies recognizing their complexity and contemplating the multiple dimensions involved. Simultaneously, it shows us the many ways there are to build peace in situated contexts with their display of creativity and moral imagination, as Lederach (2016) proposed. It takes us away from Manichaeist posturing and allows us to advance toward depolarization.

13.4 Psychosocial Accompaniment in the Construction of Peace in Community Settings

Until now, we have offered an overview of the different ways peace is built in Colombia and the perspectives and meaning ascribed to peace that underlie these efforts, emphasizing initiative bottom-up and the community setting. Next, we will address what psychology has contributed, and by extension, what role psychologists have played in these efforts, and from what perspective these efforts have been launched. We will also describe the approach we propose should be taken.

Conceptualizing peace as the absence of conflict or the maintenance of law and order was aligned with the view of the armed conflict in Colombia as a war of ideologies, between sides or actors that were well differentiated. This view implies that peace could be achieved by defeating an enemy, or by negotiating the ceasefire and ending the effects on the civilian population, which were understood to be an involuntary product of crossed fire. This view further implies that peace could only be achieved with medical, moral, and economic attention.

Within that frame, the participation of psychologists and other professionals was not a contribution to peace, but a part of the humanitarian aid package. The first approach undertaken focused on the effects of armed violence and forced displacement on mental health. This approach recognized traumatic consequences, life crises, and bereavement for losses due to assassinations and forced disappearances. The cumulative knowledge of psychology had theoretical and technical advances that could be applied without hesitation to the people affected. That is how the first toolbox in psychology that gathered perspectives on trauma, crisis, and bereavement was deployed in the work with victims (Tovar, 2013). These theories and techniques:

...were circumscribed to a medical model under an outline of diagnosis (based on symptoms), prognosis, and treatment (or therapy). The task was to identify the symptoms derived from the adverse experience and to combat them with the methods developed, tested, and divulged throughout more than a century of psychological and psychiatric knowledge, especially in Europe and the US. (Tovar, 2013, p. 394)

This formula, apparently reliable and evidence-based, rests on several premises that are not met within the Colombian armed conflict. First, in environments without armed conflict, the person affected by a violent event is not surrounded by a generalized situation of violence that is affecting their social group. On the contrary, in many of the situations of political violence, the community as a whole suffers from victimization (especially in the case of massacres). For example, consider the event in Bellavista, Bojayá in 2001 where 117 civilians died in an encounter between the FARC and the paramilitaries (AUC) when a bomb fashioned with gas cylinders fell on the church where the villagers were taking refuge. Given the family composition of the Chocó population (extended families and kinship relationships between the majority of the people that live in a village) practically all of Bellavista lost a friend or a relative and was bereaved. In a case like this, emotional effects are not a strange occurrence. They are widely shared and require a shared address as well.

Second, the traditional approach presupposes that, before treatment starts, the source of injury has been resolved, or the victim has been taken outside of the damaging environment. In the Colombian case, professionals have had to act in the middle of social circumstances associated with persistent war.

Third, professionals would act under the assumption that, when a person is victimized, they tend to generalize their case and develop a paranoid fear of others and their environment. However, in armed conflict contexts, the victimizer and their intentions to prosecute and harm are not a paranoid delusion product of an inadequate generalization; they are an undeniable reality.

Finally, in situations outside of war, in the cases where there are accosting perpetrators, the citizen protection and justice apparatus, as well as the social services and the informal support network of the victim, will cooperate so that the people responsible are punished and the threat is removed. In an environment of armed conflict, the reality is frequently social control, daily tension, and impunity, which makes revictimization highly likely.

Even if it is true that the main contribution of the medical model of mental health was to decrease psychological suffering and to help the individual resume their daily life, it was insufficient to maintain those achievements in the long term. However, the main criticism came about when the nature of armed conflict became more understood more broadly. This occurred in the framework of interdisciplinary dialogue that derived in a process of hypothesis formulation that allows the recognition of forced displacement as a war strategy that armed actors use and that has political, military, and economic reference points (Pérez, 2002).

Initially, structural aspects of the armed conflict were emphasized, especially the economic considerations (Castillo, 2004; CODHES, 1999; Fajardo, 2015; Lozano & Osorio, 1999; Pérez, 2002; Reyes, 1997). This allowed recognition of the fact that armed actors were motivated by factors that transcended the dispute for territorial control and required the clearing of large extensions of land since it was related to economic dynamics in which several social and political actors (foreign and domestic) had an interest in. In the end, the motivation was to facilitate traffic and deploy megaprojects.

At the same time, peace studies advanced worldwide, shifting from the view of peace as order and the absence of confrontation toward the more complex view proposed by Johan Galtung, which included cultural and structural aspects of violence for the first time.

In this new landscape, the tools of traditional psychology, psychiatry, and sociology were found to be extremely limited in understanding the complexity of the emotional, relational, and social effects. It was shown that the way to inflict damage to victims included manipulating their dwellings, bodies, minds, and social bonds. Thus, the violent act and its emotional effects were beginning to be seen within a broad context of the interests at play and a dynamic in which the social and the political were inextricably intertwined with the understanding and feelings of victims and society as a whole.

With this in mind, many professionals and academics took a sober distance from peace perspectives derived from the medical model and showed that, in addition to

the aforementioned limitations and their out-of-context applications, its effects served the armed actors for several reasons. First, centering the effects, responsibility, and care actions around the individual meant that political, social, and cultural aspects of people's lives were left behind, ignoring the context that generates, maintains, and feeds violent conflict. A clear example of this is to label social leaders as paranoid and work individually to alleviate their suffering while not doing anything to protect them and validate the social role they play. Second, by deploying only individual care techniques, such as classic therapy, it is impossible to provide all people affected. This further shifts responsibility to each individual for their own problems, ignoring collective processes and decreasing the likelihood of common resistance in the affected territories. Third, by maintaining the pretense of "neutrality" or academic asepsis, professionals did not feel responsible or capable to report or denounce violations or interests at play, nor did they feel required or able to create protection strategies for victims and communities.

In an effort to propose alternatives and ways of understanding, a new perspective emerged in the country, namely, the psychosocial approach. This view, although interdisciplinary in nature, has a salient contribution to psychology and is a product of the efforts of several disciplines and sectors (civil society, church, state, and academia) to communicate with one another and understand contexts and individuals with respect to their emotions, experiences, actions, interactions, and the social fabric (Bello, 2001; Castaño, 2003; Martín Beristain, 2000).

This new approach proposes transcending the individualizing perspective of emotional injury, extending beyond the pathologizing of victims, and favoring a contextual view that integrates structural and cultural dimensions to understand the suffering of people and the rupture of social bonds within and between communities, in addition to the personal and collective resources available for recovery. Indeed, what this approach emphasizes, even more, is its political character, since it centers around the subject of rights and pushes for a contextual view that recognizes personal experience.

The representatives of this school of thought have discussed the construction of peace in several scenarios and with several approaches, including its more liberal modality, that focuses on the efforts in facilitating a negotiated peace and supporting the institutions that emerge from there that affect the lives of victims, perpetrators, and society as a whole⁴. They have sought to escape the constant demand to be symptom reducers, managing tears and preventing revenge, to be actively involved in a critical and outspoken stance in the face of interests that underlie the violent strategies used by legal and illegal armed actors, social injustice and its structural

⁴The different peace processes in Colombia have produced a whole institutional apparatus within the state intended to take on the challenges of implementation. Currently, as a product of the final Agreement between the government and the FARC-EP *guerrilla* in 2016, such institutions constitute the integral system for truth, justice, reparation, and non-repetition. It comprises the following: The Special Jurisdiction for Peace, The Commission for Uncovering of Truth, and The Missing [enforced disappearance] Person's Unit. Other civil society organs are also counted as advisory bodies, such as the National Peace, Reconciliation, and Coexistence Council.

components, cultural meanings that legitimize the use of violence, and the intersection of identity markers and the dynamics of war.

Thus, even though the medical model persists in many scenarios, research topics and intervention reports have shifted from these processes (i.e., centering around symptom inventories, the prevalence of mental health disorders, the adaptation of displaced peasants to live in the cities, and dysfunctional behavior in the affected population) to concerns such as collective memory (Castro Sánchez, 2006; Girón & Vidales, 2010; Grunebaum & Castillejo Cuéllar, 2007; Jaramillo, 2016; Molina & Páez, 2010; Salcedo, 2005), collective identity (Jimenez, 2004; Osorio, 2004), the social construction of victimhood (Daniels Puello, 2003; González, 2002), and the differential impact of conflict across ethnicity, age, and gender groups (Bello, 2001; Duque, 2000; Meertens, 2003).

At the same time, the continuous outreach of professionals and academics to communities in their regions has involved gaining a deeper understanding of the nature of violence associated with armed conflict and a better comprehension of lived experience and resistance in local communities. Simultaneously, a reflective look at the positive and noxious effects of one's own work has been added. From all that experience in psychosocial teams, a new school has emerged that prefers to call their work "accompaniment" instead of "intervention."

Psychosocial accompaniment involves questioning the position of "experts" that professionals and academics assume, as well as their tendency to create dependent relationships with the community (that are often detrimental long term). Psychosocial accompaniment has demanded the recognition and documentation of the high degree of exhaustion of the care teams, due to the type of support work to other people in contexts of violence and injustice and conditions hazardous to their life and well-being. It has also been recognized that interventions were invasive, failing to consult the will, availability, and unmet needs of people and communities, barging into the local environment without care for consequences.

Hence, to accompany, get involved, and commit to the people and their initiatives, emphasizing the communities' own resources, including the care of the team itself in the routines and aims of the projects, and cementing the reflective and genuine receptiveness are essential components (Sacipa et al., 2005). We argue that the outlook of imperfect, everyday peace, subordinate peace emphasized in this work is consistent with psychosocial accompaniment.

While psychosocial accompaniment may not be an adequate approach in all scenarios, it does undoubtedly have the best capacity to transform communal and daily living environments. Outside of care centers, medical practices, laboratories, and cold institutional infrastructure, community work meets the complexity of life. It cannot (and does not want to) isolate variables, control factors, and classify population groups. Its outlook exists in the same vein of what Martínez (2014) calls "involvement" that challenges the pretense of an aseptic outlook that disguises its political function, obscures power relationships, promotes asymmetric relationships, limits active participation of communities, and impoverishes the potential of fieldwork since due to its lack of reflection. Similarly, in the context of cooperation for development, there have emerged critical proposals that invite us to

“re-politicize” our work (Belda-Miquel et al., 2018), re-situating aspects such as solidarity, opting for the oppressed, idiosyncratic knowledge of peoples, self-reflection, and critique at the center of our approaches.

In this way, even in the twenty-first century, community work takes us back to the teachings of the “sensing-thinking” sociology of Orlando Fals Borda, the psychology of liberation of Ignacio Martín Baró, the critical pedagogy inspired by the popular education of Paulo Freire, the barefoot economy of Manfred Max Neef, among other Latin American schools of thought that, by way of daily contact with community life to gain pertinence heuristic capacity and transformation potential. Each of these is inspiring to community psychology in the continent (Montero, 2003). However, it is not the end of the road, there is new knowledge being produced, tools are being renewed, the context is being reexamined, and we are simultaneously facing a globalized world as proposed by Mark Burton and Carolyn Kagan (2016) and, in a multiscale perspective, as practiced by resisting communities (Tovar, 2015).

At this point, the reflection about the central actor for the construction of peace has already transcended the subject of rights that was the protagonist of the psychosocial approach. New approaches are currently discussing political actors, political subjectivities (González et al., 2013; Tovar, 2015), and decolonizing practices (Flórez Flórez & Olarte Olarte, 2020) that are not tied to the state-centric view of politics and what is political.

At the same time, subaltern peace, bottom-up, and everyday peace obey a logic that goes beyond demanding rights which accompaniment and involvement schools have understood. Beyond the rights enshrined in charters and supranational documents (that pretend to be universal but have been largely unmasked), peace is framed in the life lived, how each community has built plural universes throughout its history, diverse worlds that go beyond human groups, and embrace nature as a mother and sister. Guided by Escobar (2015), we could say that to accompany means to connect and resonate with those universes and, by their side, to resist the hegemonic forces that opened up the bloody paths of civilization and progress, and to prepare ways to build other possible worlds.

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Part IV
Peace Education and Future-Proofing
Peace Transitions

Chapter 14

Supporting Peace by Broadening “Youth” and Attending to Their Diverse Development in Transitional Societies



Gabriel Velez, Michelle J. Bellino, and Scott Moeschberger

14.1 Introduction

Younger generations have been increasingly recognized as essential actors in transitional justice and peace building. This development is evident in various areas such as reports on engaging youth in peace processes (e.g., Ramírez-Barat, 2012), the proliferation of programs to bring together young people from groups in conflict (e.g., McKeown & Taylor, 2017), significant resources devoted to preventing youth recruitment into armed groups (Simpson, 2018), and explicit incorporation of education as an intergenerational transitional justice mechanism (Bellino et al., 2017; Murphy, 2017). These programs and policies often aim to promote individual orientations and actions to end conflict and build sustainable cultures of peace, including rejecting recruitment into armed groups, voting, resolving conflict, advocating for social change and justice, upholding the human rights of others, and more. Such goals are consequential and inherently recognize the value of young people in building peace.

Still, the focus on young people in these settings remains limited and seldom involves young people in the processes that impact them. Official transitional justice mechanisms and international discourses primarily address specific groups (e.g., victims, those recruited into armed groups, etc.). This framework reinforces ideas

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that reconciliation and justice apply uniquely to these groups while missing out on connecting with the diverse experiences of young people more broadly. Another critique of work with children and youth is that it tends to orient young people toward particular roles and official discourses in formalized peace processes and political efforts. On the whole, and as we detail more specifically below, policy and programming tend to be imposed from the top-down, focuses on individualized outcomes, and is disconnected from children and young people's various lived experiences. These predominant frameworks connect to conceptualizations of young people as passive consumers being shaped without recognizing their political presence or power.

In this chapter, we argue for expanding how, who, and in what ways youth are considered in transitional societies, as well as how they initiate and participate in local processes of building cultures of peace. We use "transitional" throughout this chapter to refer to societies undergoing peace processes or extensive peace-building efforts after conflict or widespread atrocities. Though we recognize "transitional" is a label without a clear endpoint, we focus on the years after the end of hostilities or atrocities. We begin by surveying predominant approaches in key areas where transitional processes interface with young people. We aim to identify trends in critiques of three prominent and developed areas of programming, namely, reintegration, education, and memorialization. We order our review in this way to highlight trends in how youth are considered and positioned. These limitations lay the groundwork for our presentation of a more inclusive and contextually sensitive guiding framework. The following section begins this argument by describing the concept of everyday peace (Berents & McEvoy-Levy, 2015). Everyday peace draws attention to how young people cope, respond, and build peace in families, peer groups, schools, and communities while allowing space for the contested and challenging complexity of peace in a transitional society. It also centers not just young people's formation as future adult citizens, but their actions and involvement in their present lives. Building on everyday peace, we argue for a developmental approach with recognition of the varied ways that young people make meaning. This expanded focus includes applications for incorporating a broader range of youth and their perspectives, as well as bridging gaps between national processes and young people's local lives.

14.2 How Are Children and Young People Positioned in Transitional Societies?

In the aftermath of mass violence, states and communities face enormous political, infrastructural, and security challenges. Other sectors are often prioritized over the restoration of social rights, even though other services (like education) are highly valued among populations impacted by conflict (Novelli et al., 2015). Young people are critical stakeholders in the dimensions of demobilization, disarmament, and

reintegration (DDR) of war-affected children and youth, education, and memorialization.

First, there is often attention to the psychosocial and physical challenges of former child combatants and victims. Education and memorialization are also central and interconnected foci as transitional processes move toward considering legacies of past atrocities, prevention of future ones, and collective healing. In discussing memorialization, we draw on Barsalou and Baxter’s (2007) conceptualization as varied forms of collective remembrance.

For each area, we discuss themes in how youth and their roles in peace building are conceptualized through theory and programming. This groundwork will serve as a counterpoint to highlight alternative approaches through everyday peace in the next section, as well as for our argument for the holistic and ecological potential of a comprehensive developmental framework. Before delving into each, it is important to note that these three areas are not inclusive of all ways that transitional processes engage with young people. For example, as a restorative focus grows in transitional societies, adolescents and young adults can play pivotal roles in policy and programming that seeks to address past harms through this reparation, reconciliation, and community building (Stovel & Valiñas, 2010).

14.2.1 DDR and War-Affected Children and Youth

Spanning security and social issues, a primary focus in transitional societies is demobilizing and reintegrating armed groups, as well as providing psychosocial and material support for the most affected populations. These immediate concerns are no different with respect to younger generations. In this section we highlight two critiques of this programming, as it tends to be implemented, namely, (a) the passive categorization of children and youth and (b) the lack of contextualization and dynamics across social contexts (i.e., communities).

The effects of armed conflict on young people’s development have been cataloged and studied in a wide range of contexts across the world. Empirical work has centered on psychosocial health, including the prevalence of trauma and PTSD (Bayer et al., 2007), and the effectiveness of interventions addressing these mental health concerns (Qouta et al., 2012). This literature makes clear that war and violent conflict is a traumatic experience that disrupts developmental processes and has short- and long-term implications for children and youth. These impacts can include difficulties in trusting others, focusing in educational settings on learning, and developing lasting relationships (e.g., Betancourt & Khan, 2008).

In transitional justice, there has been a particular focus on children who directly experience and perpetuate physical acts of violence. For direct victims, many efforts to support young people are inattentive to local contexts and cultures, apply non-holistic frameworks that overlook multiple interconnected social influences and do not adequately provide for young peoples’ active participation and agency (Wessells, 2017). Children and youth are often given minimal power to shape programs

targeting them, and these programs are often based on Western models and frameworks. These issues can lead to approaches that curtail developmental growth, including processes of healing, self-efficacy, and meaning-making of the experiences of violence (Barber & Schluterman, 2009). For example, the labels “childhood” and “adolescence” are based on American and European cultural contexts that carry embedded implications about autonomy and vulnerability. Furthermore, many programs rely on the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders’ classifications of anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues that are based on Western conceptions of psychopathology (Daiute, 2006; Wessells, 2017).

The predominant frameworks with former child soldiers face similar challenges, though there has been greater attention to individuals’ perspectives and motivations. In addressing recruitment and retention into armed groups, DDR programs are often driven by counteracting the reasons for joining and preventing recidivism (Simpson, 2018). Youth perspectives are critical to this work because of the diversity of pathways for these former combatants. For some, the allure of becoming armed actors includes status, resource control, and social and economic power, while others are forcibly recruited. Reintegration often entails mental health needs, as well as facing limited formal educational opportunities, negative stereotypes, and social rejection and isolation lasting multiple generations (Ferguson et al., 2015). The recognition of these various challenges has led to more holistic interventions, though these interventions often still overlook cultural contextual factors and lack nuanced considerations of systemic influences (Shepler, 2014). For example, a study of former child soldiers in Uganda highlighted that while formal supports provided services related to education, health care, and economic development, these resources were often disconnected from informal supports (i.e., family members, communities, and peers) who participants highlighted as critical to their resilience and reintegration (Vindevoel et al., 2014).

Some scholars push for modifying these orientations by employing ecological systems and community-based lenses to resilience (Vindevoel, 2017). They argue that current approaches are deterministic, pathology-focused, and centered on individuals’ personal traits or cognitive-emotional challenges (Peltonen & Punamäki, 2010; Wessells, 2017). Programs may also not be attuned to the diversity of the young people they serve. For example, gender is often overlooked, with girls and young women emerging as less visible than males. In some cases, interventions are offered to former combatant male youth only, rendering the experience of girls during armed conflict (and their reintegration needs) invisible (Betancourt et al., 2013). War-affected young people face a variety and diversity of obstacles and everyday challenges linked to sociopolitical systems, such as limited educational opportunities, under and insecure employment, isolation, and stigma (Miller & Rasmussen, 2010). Furthermore, the roots of conflict and engagement with armed groups may be driven by structural inequality and lack of various resources, which cannot be addressed without a holistic approach.

Integrating these elements, some scholars recommend interventions that focus on environmental influences on resilience, coping, meaning-making, and outcomes (Betancourt & Khan, 2008; Wessells, 2017). Programs that employ this

developmental view foster community relationships and resources (Betancourt & Ettien, 2010; Vindevogel et al., 2014). For example, formal school-based interventions often teach social skills and cognitive-emotional coping strategies (i.e., situating resilience in individuals). A community-focused intervention, however, could involve a cooperative, community-driven civics curriculum based on projects with local partners to promote cohesion and inclusion (Vindevogel, 2017). Such a shift addresses the gap between formal transitional processes and local realities for war-affected young people by attending to systemic obstacles, community reintegration, and social cohesion.

14.2.2 Education

Schooling after conflict is associated with child protection, a return to normalcy, and societal opportunities for fostering social cohesion, reconciliation, and economic growth (Baxter & Triplehorn, 2004; Buckland, 2005). Investments in education for young people ideally yield a “peace dividend” in that “demonstrable improvements in educational access and quality can provide an incentive for potentially aggressive parties to buy into peace” (Barakat et al., 2008, p. 10). However, education is often seen as a unidirectional transmission of new narratives about the state, rather than an ongoing, interpretive, and dialogical process of coming to terms with historical injustice (Bellino, 2016; Bellino et al., 2017). Recurrent critiques emerge about how education has been (under)utilized in transitional justice processes (Cole, 2007; Murphy, 2017); however, this trend is shifting. For example, in recent decades there have been increased efforts to engage with educational stakeholders (including young people) through the work of truth commissions (Paulson & Bellino, 2017). These efforts have encompassed public hearings with youth stakeholders, the creation of child-friendly materials, and formal outreach efforts between formal justice mechanisms and schools.

In this section, we underscore three principal critiques centering on formal education in transitional societies. Specifically, (a) the routine positioning of young people as future peace builders without engaging in historical critique, (b) the prioritization of curricular reforms in absence of wider structural transformations across the educational sector, and (c) inequities in how interventions are distributed across social groups. The nature of these engagements has significant short- and long-term implications for young people’s learning and their sociopolitical development.

First, studies examining educational intersections with transitional justice processes find that education tends to be recognized for its positive, peace-building potential in shaping future citizens. Lynn Davies (2017a, 2017b) argues that “justice-sensitive education,” like all transitional justice mechanisms, needs to employ a “two-way gaze,” which “uses deep understanding of society’s past to promote a realistic new future” (Davies, 2017b, p. 4). Educational reforms discursively prioritize young people’s knowledge and dispositions toward peacebuilding, aiming

to sensitize young citizens about human rights and democratic freedoms. Often, however, these forward-looking reforms are disconnected from the historical events that breached these contracts or root causes such as colonization, state repression, and land dispossession (Paulson, 2015). Oriented in the future, they also position young people as peace-building citizens “in-the-making,” discounting their potential role as peace builders in the present. Moreover, peaceful promises may feel out of sync with young people’s everyday experiences in societies undergoing political transitions. For example, Guatemalan youth coming of age in a repressive postwar context find that “the rules of the authoritarian past do not fully apply, nor do the rules of the elusive democratic future, yet elements of both coexist” (Bellino, 2018b, p. 380). Youth awareness of historical legacies informs the nature and likelihood of their civic participation, both in the present and as they become legal adults, yet few have opportunities to critically investigate the historical origins of state repression in their formal education. Contested histories are routinely omitted from the classroom to avoid (re)traumatizing, politicizing, or provoking youth (Bellino, 2017; Freedman et al., 2008). The absence of a “backwards-looking gaze” (Davies, 2017a, 2017b) is especially problematic when educational institutions have played a role in conflict dynamics, whether actively through biased, hate curriculum, or inadvertently as armed groups violently converted schools into recruitment centers. The fact that young people’s educational spaces and experiences may have been shaped through abuse and neglect, structurally denied due to marginalization, or violently interrupted by conflict is rarely acknowledged in common efforts to reimagine schools as an idealized space for creating the next generation of peaceful citizens.

Second, educational reforms proposed in societies undergoing transition after violence often look to the curriculum (i.e., what students learn) in isolation of other features of the system, such as pedagogical methods and the various contexts in which their learning takes place. There is consensus that curriculum matters, given its potential to foster social unity and discord, and the priority need to remove inciting material that promotes discriminatory attitudes (Davies, 2017b). However, what schools teach cannot be decontextualized from how schools teach or the broader structures that enable and constrain access to particular groups or regions. Citizenship and human rights education reforms in post-apartheid South Africa were thwarted by schools’ differential access to material resources, profound levels of poverty, and teachers’ inability to discuss differences (Tibbitts & Weldon, 2017). White supremacy and racial hierarchy were embedded in the school structures so that a new curriculum could not overcome these legacies without addressing systemic reform. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the negative impact of segregated schooling has “effectively undone progress made by other efforts” (Murphy, 2017, p. 66). A new curriculum needs to be accompanied by structural remedies for historical and regional inequities, as well as professional development for educators. Yet, these reforms are less frequently embraced than revising curricular content to align with transitional values and goals. Relatedly, what and how educators *teach* is often privileged over what and how young people *learn*. Most research centering on educational reform is focused on the “intended curriculum” as it is written and *intended* to be used in classrooms, with less attention to how teachers enact the curricula and

to young people’s interpretations and responses (Velez, [in press](#); Williams, 2004). There is also little attention to how school-based experiences are nested within a wider range of educational and sociopolitical contexts that may align and conflict with messages in school.

In most contexts, young people are rarely consulted to shape the nature and content of their learning. Perhaps, then, it seems unreasonable to expect that young people have a say in their curriculum, pedagogy, and opportunity structures in transitional settings. On the other hand, not recognizing young people’s potential removes them as agents of transitional justice, capable of—and likely to—asking questions about historical injustice, reconciliation, and democratic participation. At the very least, the lived consequences of conflict and related peace and justice processes enter the classroom, whether or not teachers and students are prepared to understand, discuss, and critique them (Bellino, 2017; Rodriguez-Gómez, 2017).

Third, inequitable access and quality of educational institutions further complicate these challenges. Opportunities introduced as efforts to redress the denial of educational rights can risk exacerbating grievances between groups if resources are not seen as equitably distributed (Burde, 2014). Likewise, there is a distinction between rights guaranteed to all minors, such as the right to education, and reparations intended to compensate for the denial of these rights. Correa (2017) writes that “the provision of schools, teachers, and school libraries should be considered as reconstruction and as the fulfillment of [universal rights and obligations] ... These efforts should be aimed at *all* children, without distinguishing victims from nonvictims” (p. 158, emphasis added). Similarly, curricular interventions targeting selective populations risk being (re)interpreted through a deficit lens. Bilingual and intercultural educational reforms in Guatemala, for example, have been viewed in some communities as a mechanism to reinforce indigenous marginalization and provoke further division in future generations, even while they are presented as efforts to correct for the history of monocultural, monolingual, exclusionary, and assimilationist practices in schools (Bellino, 2018a). A similar policy in Peru “suggests that the indigenous are responsible for undoing their own marginalization by learning Spanish while absolving the rest of Peruvian society from making equal efforts to learn the [indigenous] languages that have been marginalized” (Valdiviezo, 2009, p. 154).

Finally, an important caveat is that any formal educational intervention risks excluding young people not enrolled in schools. In the aftermath of mass violence and displacement, the majority of young people may very well not be involved in formal education or may not view it as a pathway toward a sustainable future. Looking beyond schools (i.e., to socialization, media, and other everyday experiences of cultural and historical framing) is critical for including youth who have been systematically excluded from civic institutions. These informal forms of education also draw our attention to the ways that young people learn about, relate to, and respond to societal transitions while developing in multiple social and cultural contexts.

14.2.3 *Memorialization*

Often overlooked in formal peace processes, memorialization has significant implications for youth involvement in the transition toward justice (Light & Young, 2015). Broadly, the processes of memorialization, or acts of “collective remembering” (Barsalou & Baxter, 2007), take many different formats ranging from museums and memorials to commemorative events. These practices are about creating spaces to mark the history and stories connected to significant times of injustice and oppression. Acknowledging and naming events of the past through symbolic means are one part of the journey toward healing in transitional societies. As noted by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, “by making memory of the victims a public matter, [memorials] disburden their families from the sense of obligation to keep the memory alive and allow them to move on” (2008, p. 23). At a societal level, memorialization can serve as a key element of reconciliation by “the creation of new national identities and, in some cases, new myths guiding the nation” (Barsalou & Baxter, 2007, p. 6). In this section, we highlight how the absence of youth voice in research and official discourse manifests as (a) being positioned as consumers of memories (rather than active participants) and (b) a lack of understanding of the developmental influence of memorialization.

Symbolic memorials can formally acknowledge atrocities that have occurred, such as genocide and overlooked historical events, and provide ways to share communities’ stories. Still, these practices are often context-specific and can be contested because of the subjective nature of memory and the politicized nature of formal commemoration. Memorialization projects may be connected to informal movements within societies and communities in transition, which leads to spontaneous and evolving processes in the sites themselves. There are many recent examples of this phenomenon in the memorialization of victims of police brutality in the United States. The Black Lives Matter movement has used a dynamic combination of social media and protest to foster an evolving range of memorialization for victims. These informal spaces provide a counter-narrative that challenges how events, narratives, and history are portrayed in official channels.

Recently, research and popular discourse have become increasingly focused on the role of symbols and memorialization as societies grapple with lingering effects of conflict, whether in the midst of transition or centuries after declarations of peace (Moeschberger & DeZalia, 2015). However, there is little research on the complexities of how these memorials contribute to both formal and informal peace processes (Light & Young, 2015), or young people’s understandings of injustice. This is even more evident in the lack of investigation into how youth experience and are influenced by these sites and experiences and the infrequency with which they are consulted regarding the impact of such symbols.

For youth, these memorials often serve as a way to learn about historical contexts and events that they likely did not experience firsthand. While they live in societies that bear the marks of history, without memorials young people may be less cognizant of their connection to the past. In this way, memorials are an important part of

transmitting culture between generations (Moeschberger, & DeZalia, 2015). For example, many youths in Northern Ireland (particularly in Belfast) live in the shadow of murals that commemorate specific dates and events from the troubles, ranging from bombings and hunger strikers to monarchs who won certain battles. Flags, graffiti, and parades play a key role in delineating and defining to which “community” the youth belong and inculcate an awareness of their shared history, often focusing on the most traumatic events from that history. To this end, research in Northern Ireland has demonstrated children become increasingly adept at sorting symbols related to their ingroup (Taylor et al., 2020). While the educational component remains a key feature of the memorialization process, it still views youth as “consumers” of the memorial rather than participants in the process of creation and recreation of narratives. Young people may be asked to interact with the material and connect the events to modern situations, but they are often viewed as passive participants due to a lack of political power or adult status. This can lead to a disconnect between generational experiences of how groups remember. Youth may not feel the same immediacy or emotional connection to events that impacted their parents or grandparents. Despite this gap, the opportunity for school and other community groups to experience these points of remembrance can offer a powerful learning experience for diverse groups of youth. For example, in Colombia, lessons on the armed conflict can be connected through partnerships and learning exchanges with towns like El Salado that experienced massacres (Grupo Memoria Histórica, 2009), or visits and testimonies from indigenous leaders whose people have suffered atrocities at the hands of various armed actors. The financial, logistical, and emotional challenges are substantial, but such experiential learning can increase empathy, historical understanding, and ultimately lead to greater awareness of current events, particularly for those populations who identify as less affected.

Inherent in the memorialization process is the focus on educating and remembering, and particularly on the transgenerational transmission of memories. Research could help understand how memorialization shapes collective remembering, particularly for those who may not have experienced the events. Given that youth, especially younger children, are highly impacted by visual images and symbols, it would also be fertile ground to explore both positive and detrimental impacts of visual images in the collective remembering process. This is particularly important for memorials using traumatic images that could inadvertently be creating secondary traumas in an attempt to acknowledge violent events. For example, in Northern Ireland, murals were used extensively by both communities to memorialize contentious events from the peak of “The Troubles.” It is common to see buildings covered with huge paintings of hooded gunmen alongside threatening messages of conflict and division. Little research has explored the impact on youth of growing up in the shadow of these murals. It would be helpful for the psychological community to study the impact of these individual and collective memory efforts on young people’s understanding of citizenship and belonging. A powerful example of understanding the impact of visual images is reflected in Larkin’s work on post-war youth in Beirut and “memoriscapes.” This work examines how youth in this context combine encoding of the visual history of war (i.e., landmarks, buildings, etc.) with oral

narratives from older generations in their attempt to position themselves in current society (Larkin, 2010). Lastly, more active involvement in the memorialization process offers the opportunity to help shift young people from passive consumers to change agents connected to civic engagement and citizenship.

14.3 Broadening Youth Involvement Through Everyday Peace

Even as young people's roles in building peace have become increasingly recognized across domains of transitional justice, there generally remains a lack of nuanced appreciation of their lived realities and everyday actions that contribute to peaceful societies. Peace building is "youth-ed, or socially constructed around age divisions and age-based vested interests and ideologies" (Berents & McEvoy-Levy, 2015, p. 116), with young people often considered either as threatening, unstable, and resistant to needed change, as vulnerable and immature, or as passive receptacles to be molded for future development (e.g., Bähr et al., 2021). In this section, we focus on how to approach the complexity and diversity of young people's experiences in transitional settings by discussing their psychological processing and agency in their everyday lives and local communities.

Berents and others argue for studying, conceptualizing, and supporting youth in transitional societies through everyday peace: how "people within everyday structures...mobilise and act to minimise risk, to foster relationships and to build structures and practices of peace" (Berents & McEvoy-Levy, 2015, p. 116). This frame eschews the top-down liberal framing of peace building while focusing on resilience and everyday practices as inherently interwoven into community-level dynamics. Everyday peace centralizes young people's processes of negotiation, coping, and resistance in the present. It encompasses both negative and positive peace (Galtung, 1969) as children and youth respond to interpersonal and structural violence as well as demonstrate care and build relationships (Vaitinen et al., 2019). While all young people may not be directly involved in peace-building projects in formal transitional justice processes, they can demonstrate orientations and commitments to peace in the "small, creative acts of the everyday" (Nordstrom & Robben, 1995, p. 7). Youth engagement in peace building is not limited to the goals and intended outcomes of education, memorialization, and DDR programs. Envisioning youth roles through this framework can include a wide array of actions such as engaging in their studies, making money to support their families, or simply dancing and sharing in moments of shared happiness (Berents & McEvoy-Levy, 2015). Though such actions are not formally considered peace building, they create positive coping mechanisms and build a social fabric that is important to local-level and ordinary citizens' experienced peace.

Everyday peace highlights gaps that exist between national and international transitional justice mechanisms and the ways that diverse individuals make sense of

what peace means in their lives and communities. Peace is an abstract term that is neither monolithic nor neutral but rather defined through discourse, collective representation, and meaning-making (Velez, 2019). Understanding and supporting young people in transitional societies entails exploring what peace means to them as young people: how it intersects with their identities, how they view its possibility, and how they react to discourses and events in the public sphere. This meaning-making is central in how young people participate in formal processes and engage in acts of everyday peace because it underlies how they find ways of coping, resisting violence, negotiating situations of insecurity, and acting collectively. For example, in interviews with a diverse range of Colombian adolescents, participants expressed struggling to understand how the ongoing peace process related to their own lives but described how they could contribute to peace through maintaining inner calm, resolving conflicts, being tolerant, and fostering harmonious communities (Velez, 2019).

A localized focus on meaning-making also rejects predominant approaches that, perhaps unintentionally, burden individuals with the onus for peace. Schools, neighborhoods, and people within them inherently influence young people’s connection to peace. Their engagement is not simply based on decontextualized social skills or individual abilities (Peltonen & Punamäki, 2010; Vindevogel, 2017) but rather how they understand themselves in relation to their contexts and act to build peace in line with these meanings. Peace does not emerge just from being taught about the past, going to memorials, or eschewing violence. Rather, it is an interactive dynamic played out in daily life and the dynamics between individuals, communities, and societies.

14.4 A Developmental Approach Based on Youth Meaning-Making

Everyday peace draws attention to the local realities and responses of young people in transitional societies. Yet, there is also a temporal element: transition and peace do not happen within a moment or year but rather involve drawn-out processes over time. Consideration of young people and transitional societies, therefore, should encompass developmental processes and trajectories as individuals grow and change amid contexts in flux (Taylor, 2020). A focus on the daily lives of young people in their local contexts prioritizes their agency, meaning-making, and orientations toward peace and conflict. It also highlights the connection between developmentally appropriate tasks and peace, for example, through how young children form friendships across ingroup/outgroup divides (Mojanchevska & Tomovska-Misoska, 2021). Importantly, this focus on development over time integrally involves an awareness of the current moment: unlike some peace-building initiatives and education programs that focus on the future potential of youth as adults (i.e., who will

construct a peaceful society), this framework centers the potential and value of youth as youth.

Bringing developmental theory and everyday peace together bridges transitional justice and peace building with dynamic individual and collective psychological processes embedded in local contexts. This integration highlights how peace and transitional justice touch the lives of all young people in these settings and necessitates creating spaces for young people to grapple with, contest, and complicate narratives of what peace means and entails. After integration of developmental theory and everyday peace in this section, in the next section, we provide concrete implications and suggestions for what this synergy could entail.

Developmental frameworks are not new to theory, empirical research, and peace-building programming in transitional societies. They have been employed in psychosocial interventions (Wessells, 2017), peace education theory and programs (Oppenheimer, 2010), and models of intergenerational transfer of conflict identities and narratives (Hammack, 2011). Still, as we demonstrated in previous sections, discourse and initiatives targeting youth are often limited to particular populations (e.g., victims or perpetrators of violence), employed deterministically (i.e., as a model of deficit or pathology), narrowly framed (focusing only on specific outcomes or on the short-term impacts of interventions), or remain disconnected from the diversity in young people's perspectives and positionalities.

Programming may be designed to promote resilience and prosocial civic engagement, but often without full consideration of the contextual factors, resources, collective dynamics, and responses of the participants themselves, all of which are integral to these outcomes. Supporting young people's resilience, coping, and peace-building potential requires attentiveness to nuanced and dynamic interactions between individuals and their socioecological contexts (Betancourt & Ettien, 2010). This is a difficult balance to achieve in practice. On one hand, interventions that target individuals through social skills or conflict resolution often overlook structural inequalities and inequities, as well as the actions youth, are already taking (e.g., Shepler, 2014; Vindevogel et al., 2014). On the other, focusing on risk and protective factors in families and neighborhoods can lead to deterministic perspectives, removing an individual's agency to influence collective dynamics and their resilience (Wessells, 2017). Young people interpret experiences of conflict, discourses, formal programs, socialization, informal education, and other features of their everyday lives as supports and challenges. They then orient themselves and respond with coping strategies based on how they perceive the demands and expectations of them, the opportunities available to them, and who they are (Spencer et al., 2006). For example, even a detailed and critical curriculum about past atrocities and human rights abuses will not lead young people to actively uphold the rights of their peers and community members if these narratives are contested within their families, do not connect with their lives, or ignore the power and influence armed actors to continue to wield. Along these lines, work with children in Sierra Leone has demonstrated that the proliferation of children's rights discourse has actually led children to leverage these rights in opting out of school. Viewing schooling as

uncompensated labor, they instead seek opportunities that will allow them to improve their economic and social standing (Bolten, 2018).

Everyday lives drive meaning-making and identity development. Broader events, norms, and laws filter down to individuals and their immediate social contexts (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In this way, transitional processes (peace negotiations, truth commissions, trials, etc.) are mediated through local institutions and people. They play out, for example, in schools through curriculum or discussions of current events, in the media children and youth consume, and through storytelling at home and in the community. But these experiences are not deterministic: they are interpreted by young people, who then respond with orientations and behaviors enacted in these local contexts. Young people also shape and influence the groups and communities to which they belong (Berents & McEvoy-Levy, 2015). Furthermore, young people may differentially talk about and react to ideas about peace, conflict, historical memory, and other salient social issues based on the social context. As they are forming their own identities as embedded within different groups, they may take on different perspectives and attitudes with their friends, within their school, and with family (Shirazi, 2012).

Considering these dynamics opens up greater recognition of the diversity of youth and their responses, including how they join or reject peace-building efforts that are or are not connected to formal transitional processes. For example, amid an almost decade-long national peace process in 2019, youth in Colombia were heavily involved in widespread protests demanding change on a number of social justice issues, calling for increased funding of universities, revised labor laws, and action to combat rising violence targeting indigenous community leaders. Some entered this movement through organized student groups on their campuses, others joined without such institutional connection, and yet others eschewed the protests because of differing political beliefs. A unifying concern, however, was about unfulfilled promises and government shortcomings in relation to the peace process and its potential to address direct and structural violence. To study and truly understand the developmental trajectories of youth in transitional societies, we must be open to these various responses and explore how they emerge from and are enacted in the everyday lives of young people.

The integration of a developmental framing of meaning-making and everyday peace also provides a lens to consider intersectionality within transitional societies. The complexity of conflict creates intersectional experiences of oppression and marginalization that feed into direct, structural, and cultural violence. These positionalities are tied to race/ethnicity, gender, religion, geographies, and other elements of individual and group identities (Rooney & Aoláin, 2018). The developmental frame we have detailed highlights the unique interaction between individuals and context(s) that is attentive to these intersectionalities (Velez & Spencer, 2018).

Children and youth are not simply victims, perpetrators, at-risk, citizens, or other labels, but rather are agents experiencing, interpreting, and in some cases resisting multiple forms of violence. Therefore, a holistic attentiveness to development necessitates being willing to listen to and engage with young people when they express denial, lack of interest, or seeming disregard for the aims and purposes of

policy and programming in transitional societies (e.g., Bellino, 2018a). Given these challenges, however, how can a developmental framework based on everyday peace be more intentionally implemented in working with young people in transitional settings?

14.5 Implications and Applications

If the goal of peace processes is not simply to end overt hostilities between groups, but to build sustainable cultures of peace, then the lives, perspectives, and empowerment of all young people must be considered. The call to be attentive and incorporate young people's voices in policy and programming is not new, but there are important implications of this framework we wish to highlight. This reorientation entails going beyond representative bodies (i.e., youth councils or leadership groups) and peace education training programs that engage select groups. Attention to meaning-making means incorporating diverse voices from the beginning, making efforts to understand and reach young people who are often overlooked in these societies, and developing programming with youth participation in the process. It also means being attentive to how young people are already constructing peace, rather than a future focus on developing them into peace builders, as well as to their intersectional experiences tied to gender, race, geography, and other social and political identifiers. In practice, however, there are substantial challenges to involving broad, diverse groups of young people in this way. In this section, we offer suggestions for concrete applications that can be considered as the first steps and progress toward enacting the more inclusive framework we present in the previous section.

First, memorialization, peace-building programming, and educational curriculum require contextualization and flexibility. The goals of engaging with young people may be clear: promoting prosocial development, creating sustainable cultures of peace, constructing historical memory that upholds the rights and dignity of victims, and providing mental health resources. Achieving these goals requires attention not only to context but also to how young people understand their society, themselves, and the programming targeting them. For example, teaching conflict resolution based on theoretical models or curricula developed in other places most likely overlook the challenges, identities, and capabilities as young people perceive them. Ideally, young people themselves are involved in the creation of these resources and strategies. However, this is not always feasible. Therefore, concretely, this approach could draw on the knowledge of those who work closely with young people in schools and communities, rather than relying on a select group of consultants. Teachers, religious leaders of youth organizations, and others serve in critical mediating roles between young people's psychological development and broader national processes (Bellino, 2016; Davies, 2017b).

Second, a developmental focus on meaning-making entails a willingness to hear and be open to youth perspectives, even when they clash with the perceived needs

and goals of transitional societies. Some young people will challenge and push back on interventions, education, and memorialization incorporated into programming targeting youth. They may deny narratives of past atrocities, contest them, or simply express a lack of interest. Furthermore, young people may not identify with the labels (e.g., victim, peace builder, traumatized, etc.) that are placed upon them by top-down transitional justice processes. The reasons for such orientations and actions can only be understood through openness and nuanced consideration of the varied influences and young people’s experience of them as challenges and supports. Examples include family members who may have been part of armed groups or struggle with their own traumas related to the conflict, the intensity of the atrocities committed being dissonant with their privileged daily lives, and greater investment in establishing a peer group or exploring their own sexuality. In some cases, young people may appropriate discourses of peace and human rights to ends that seem counterintuitive to adult-determined aims and desired outcomes (Bolten, 2018). Finally, young people’s ideas and perspectives are likely to change and develop based on context and their own growth. They may engage with narratives and different people in different ways, sharing one perspective with their parents, another with teachers, and another with peers as they adapt narratives and discourses to their understandings of themselves and their social positions (e.g., Shirazi, 2012).

Awareness of these influences and the connected meaning-making is only a first step. Recognizing this diversity leads to the following question: What should be goals for these youth as citizens developing in a society striving to address past injustices and move toward a peaceful future? In other words, what should policy and programming with youth look like if we anticipate some youth won’t truly agree, respond, or show interest in learning, memorializing, or addressing the psychosocial impacts of the past? Based on our developmental focus on meaning-making, we propose creating spaces that allow for youth to engage from their diverse perspectives and work with each other through these challenges. Rather than set curriculum, trips to national memorials, or interventions measuring success by individualized psychosocial measures, work with young people in these settings can prioritize open forums for them to create meaning for themselves. What does peace mean to them, why might the conflict matter in their lives, what goals do they have for their own and their communities’ futures? This approach is flexible to the different ways that youth enter these spaces (and the influences on them) while providing for freedom and exploration that can then be structured and supported organically. It also allows for space to consider dynamics of gender, race/ethnicity, and more broadly the intersectional experiences of certain groups of young people who may occupy unique positionalities in relation to past conflict and present peace building. Starting here is particularly important given generational divides; even within communities, young people’s experiences of conflict and peace will be fundamentally different than that of adult educators and policymakers.

This developmental framing necessitates viewing youth as more than consumers or passive receptacles. Young people, despite generational divides and diverse experiences of conflict, may be involved in the creation of memory spaces that connect with their lived experiences and preferred native spaces. While they may inherit a

violent society, not of their making, expressive outlets like art, graffiti, and performance may help them be active participants and find paths to express hope for a more peaceful and just society.

Critically, this approach has a risk of validating all viewpoints, including those that deny or feed into further violence. There must be space to name the atrocities that happened, to uphold the dignity of those who suffered, and to identify and address injustices that occurred. This balance is not simple. Still, the foundation must be based on where youth are and what they are thinking in order to provide authentic support for young people to critically examine, understand, and engage with the complexity of conflict and its impacts.

Finally, segments of younger generations may not have directly experienced violence and its reverberations. Privilege based on socioeconomic status, geographical location, or other factors insulate some from personal connections to atrocities. Still, they are citizens who interpret and respond to formal transitional justice processes experienced through, for example, stories in the media, as enacted in school settings, in discourses about different groups in society. Their meaning-making and development in relation to peace—including the resulting ways they contribute to or undermine everyday peace—matter for building peaceful communities and societies. Therefore, a final recommendation is that policy and programming do not just focus on victims, perpetrators (i.e., former combatants), or generations to come (such as through memorials meant to foster historical memory into the future). While it may be difficult to include the voices of all young people during transitional times, there is a particular need to study and address the population living through these times and processing what such a transition means.

14.6 Conclusion

Peace building and transition from conflict-ridden pasts are complicated societal endeavors. Work with young people is just one element of what it means to heal, rebuild, enact justice, construct truth, and prevent repetition. Still, children and youth are the foundation of a different future. Their importance has been increasingly acknowledged in transitional justice mechanisms, particularly in relation to DDR, education, and memorialization. Their developmental trajectories as individuals, members of society, and citizens involve multiple systems changing over time, as well as their own psychological processing and response.

In this chapter, we have detailed main critiques of how children and youth and framed in three predominant areas of transitional justice. We then use these limitations to argue for expanding how young people are considered and engaged by considering the developmental processes of meaning-making with a focus on everyday peace: the everyday lives experiences and actions that young people as young people cope and navigate diverse positionalities within transitional societies. While we argue that this approach can expand the considerations of youth and allow for more contested, challenging spaces in transitional societies, we also recognize the

need for particular interventions to address issues of justice and trauma. This balance speaks to the difficult challenge of balancing and prioritizing that must occur in these contexts.

There is room for expanding the predominant frameworks. Sensitivity to meaning-making and everyday peace entails engaging with young people in more nuanced ways across time. Developmental meaning-making is a dynamic process; it is not momentary or malleable on short-time scales and involves multiple, changing inputs. Young people’s psychological engagement in peace building in a transitional society cannot be measured in relation to one intervention, interviewing them at a single time point about their perspectives, or using pre/posttest designs to evaluate the impact of curriculum. These processes are iterative and nuanced, and thus the methods used to understand them should be multiple, including anthropological studies (e.g., Bellino, 2017), broad and systematic survey work (Sánchez Meertens, 2017), youth participatory action research (Amambia et al., 2018), and community asset mapping (Lazarus et al., 2017). These approaches provide young people with both space and agency to influence peace-building action, rather than simply being conceptualized as passive objects of study. The study of their meaning-making, as well as the development of programming and curriculum with this developmental framework in mind, should be regarded as an iterative and ongoing process: carried out with young people in various ways over time, and adapted to better understand and address the ways young people enact everyday peace (Power et al., 2018).

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Chapter 15

Document-Based Historical Role-Playing as a Tool to Promote Empathy and Structural Understanding in Historical Memory Education



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15.1 Introduction

The multivoiced, perpetually contested nature of historical truth in post-conflict societies is not consistent with the “names, dates, and places” approach that has traditionally dominated curricula in history classes (Barton, 2001; Corredor et al., 2018; Reisman, 2012; Reisman et al., 2018). This incompatibility stems from the fundamental opposition between an epistemic stance that sees accounts of the past as unified and objective, and one that sees them as the product of the efforts of societies to conciliate diverse experiences and voices, in open, yet coherent narratives, to support the reconstruction of the social fabric and the promotion of a critical perspective as a component of an engaged citizenry. The narratives of historical memory must not, however, be confused with personal opinions. They connect personal, collective, and expert accounts of conflicts, so wounded nations can talk about the past, agree on the basic facts of what happened, agree that what happened should not be repeated, and identify the political, social, and cultural conditions that led to atrocities (Corredor et al., 2018). In this process, the voices of victims have a central role because reparation and rights restoration require their voices to be heard and vindicated in academic research, legal decisions, and public narratives.

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Consistently, historical memory education (HME) emphasizes the importance of pedagogical change as a prerequisite for providing reparation and guaranteeing non-repetition (Corredor et al., 2018). In this task, a productive strategy is the incorporation of pedagogical experiences in history and arts education that have been shown transformative educational effects (Halverson, 2005; Reisman, 2012). This chapter presents an educational experience in HME that uses both document-based activities and role-playing. These experiences were implemented as design experiments and documented in two Colombian schools (Corredor, 2020). Both document-based historical learning activities and role-playing have characteristics that make them valuable assets for the transformation of pedagogical practices in history education, to make consistent with the principles and goals of HME. In the following section, we review the main aspects of these types of educational activities.

15.2 Document-Based Activities in HME: Modeling Historical Inquiry

Document-based curricula have been developed as a way to incorporate disciplinary aspects of historical practice into social science education. Research in historical expertise has shown that historians do not take primary sources as literal, objective, recollections of historical events. On the contrary, historians apply diverse cognitive heuristics directed toward identifying the perspective from which accounts were built and nuancing their interpretation accordingly (Wineburg & Reisman, 2015). Historians also compare different accounts to corroborate details, build meticulous representations of the circumstances surrounding historical processes, and conduct close reading of language and word choices when interpreting documents (Martin & Wineburg, 2008; Reisman, 2012; Wineburg, 1991). More broadly, historians use conceptual frameworks to organize, contextualize, and historicize documents and sources and give coherence to historical research (Traverso, 2012).

Document-based activities incorporate practices of historical inquiry that are related to key features of quality instruction in history (Reisman, 2012; Reisman & Fogo, 2016). Specifically, document-based activities require presenting background historical knowledge and modeling of historical reading to help students to develop the heuristics used by experts when analyzing sources. Document-based activities gravitate around the discussion of historical questions and include collective knowledge construction focused on students' meaning-making. In this way, document-based activities introduce students to activities that resemble authentic historical inquiry and that involve deliberation among equals frequently in the format of small-group and whole-class discussions (Reisman, 2012). Presenting authentic historical research permits students not only to approach how professional historians make sense of the past but also to face dilemmas of the present that span from political participation to the identification of fake news (Corredor et al., 2018; Wineburg, 2018).

Document-based activities in history education have been developed in initiatives that aimed at transforming educational activities in history and the social sciences (Reisman, 2012). These initiatives aim at including authentic opportunities for historical inquiry in which students are invited to use evidence and develop independent interpretations of the past. In this context, questioning and evaluating historical documents play a central role. This is opposed to traditional practices based on rote memory that have traditionally dominated history teaching (Monte-Sano et al., 2015). In order to change these practices, a whole-class discussion has been proposed as an instrument to transform the classroom knowledge production process (Reisman et al., 2018). In discussing historical questions, students participate in collective processes of knowledge construction, experience practices of authentic historical research, and develop the agency necessary to actively read and interpret sources (Wineburg & Reisman, 2015).

Despite this, in the initial stages of interventions, teachers struggle to involve students in a whole-class discussion (Reisman, 2015). An alternative to facilitate this transition is the incorporation of activities inspired by the tradition of identity-focused educational interventions. This type of activity has characteristics that facilitate emotional and identity engagement and can serve to introduce document-based lessons without relying on teachers' skills to direct whole-class discussion or engage students. The following section presents an educational experience that incorporates narrative construction and identity exploration through role-playing and artistic expression of personal narratives.

15.3 Identity-Based Narrative Interventions in the Classroom: The Role of Role-Playing

Narrative is a basic mechanism of identity and sense-making (Bruner, 2004). It is through narrative that individuals are introduced to the social world and understand essential interactional elements of social life. Recently, narrative activities involving artistic production have been conceptualized as spaces for identity exploration and positive youth development. In these spaces, adolescents have the opportunity of performing personal narratives, through dramaturgical projects or digital media production which permits the exploration of possible selves and the experience of collective identity exploration (Halverson, 2005, 2010, 2013). Narrative exploration, in this context, allows youth from stigmatized groups to process social pressures through collective representation and develop positive identities of themselves.

Explanation in history is also inevitably narrative (Burke, 1993). Instead of using isolated determinants or facts as explanations, historians weave individual intentions and structural factors in configurations that are time-dependent (Corredor et al., 2018). The articulation of the past is not assumed to be an expository task, in which claims and arguments are presented in completely modifiable orders, but a narrative one, in which an event precludes another one and takes with it the structures

and intentions that propel historical change. History is in some way argumentation by narration. Only through narrative the conundrums faced by historical actors are conveyed, providing an authentic sense of the complexity of the past (Gilligan, 1993; Seixas, 2017). Empathy in historical contexts depends on establishing a temporally located sense of the sociopolitical and cultural norms, an understanding of the others' lived experiences, and a clear knowledge of the events that led up to and accompanied the historical situation being studied, which does not imply, however, a total closure of the always present historical debates. In this sense, narrative works also as a mechanism to develop historical empathy.

A viable strategy to integrate narrative structures in classroom practice is the incorporation of role-playing activities. Role-playing activities have been proposed as a means to expose students to the simulation of complex social situations with empathic and problem-solving goals and also as a tool to empower students and legitimize their voices in the learning space (Ellenwood, 2017; Posti-Ahokas, 2013). When role-playing, students assume the position of actors in a given social situation and pretend to act according to the emotions, beliefs, and constraints faced by those actors. This type of activity pushes students to take perspective and use information regarding the role-playing actors and situations to decide in the simulated scenario. Role-playing activities are narrative in nature because they entail social interactions organized temporally and depicting the classic elements of narrative structures: goals, intentions, and constraints (Bruner, 2004). These types of activities also include social dynamics and unexpected turns as additional elements in the narrative structure.

15.4 Document-Based Role-Playing as a Tool in HME

This chapter describes an educational experience in which students participated in a document-based role-playing design experiment. Design experiments allow researchers to implement and document how pedagogical conjectures transform and impact educational practices (Cobb et al., 2003). In this context, we wanted to observe how role-playing activities potentiate the effects of document-based strategies on historical understanding and empathy, which are both core dimensions of HME (Corredor, 2020; Corredor et al., 2018). The basic conjectures of the intervention were related to the theoretical findings presented in the prior sections. The first conjecture is that document-based activities improve students' understanding of history's epistemological nature. In particular, through document analysis, students get a stronger sense of the multivoiced and negotiated nature of disciplinary history. This type of activity also provides students with direct experience with the analysis of sources, including official documents, truth reports, and news accounts, as imperfect representations of the past, and with the process of building a context for interpretation that characterizes historical practice. The second conjecture is that role-playing helps the incorporation of document-based activities and the understanding of historical practice. This is so because role-playing activities give a social

context to classroom activities and incorporate not just discourse but embodied enactment, which enriches the experience of students (Francesconi & Tarozzi, 2012). In some way, this conjecture aimed at connecting with students' social and cultural identity through the provision of an interpretative personal context for historical practice. The third conjecture is that role-playing activities foster empathy by inviting students to solve actual situations and take positions situated in authentic contexts. The problem of transfer in education has been broadly discussed in educational literature, being the issue of how well traditional educational practices translate to the solution of actual problem situations (Lobato, 2006; Perkins & Salomon, 1992). In general, the practices of abstract algorithms, rules, and principles are not adequate to convey the actual significance and use of school knowledge in everyday life, whereas experiences in actual social settings and authentic task are easier to map to out-of-school contexts (Carraher & Schliemann, 2002; Lobato, 2006). Whereas most of this research has been conducted in the context of math and science instruction, the inability of traditional social science curricula to become relevant to students' lives (Perkins & Salomon, 1992) might be related also to the lack of authenticity of its tasks. In the social sciences, transfer to everyday situations is necessary because it allows students to connect school learning with the solution of social dilemmas and the fulfillment of civic roles, such as voting and political participation. The orchestration of document-based activities and role-playing might help to increase the authenticity of history education, by embedding source analysis and other historical heuristics in narrative interactional situations with a strong ludic component.

15.5 Context and Activities

This intervention was conducted in two public schools in Bogotá during 2014 and 2015, using the methodology of design experiments (Cobb et al., 2003). Participants were 51 ninth-grade students. The context was a typical lower-middle-class context in Latin America (families struggling day by day to get by, hardly making ends meet, putting their kids through school with hard work and dignity). The intervention was one of several HME initiatives derived from transitional justice measures, focused on repairing victims at a symbolic level and guaranteeing non-repetition. All of this happened during the Colombian Peace Process and prior to the 2016 plebiscite. The intervention lasted 2 months. It comprised two art-based activities and two document-based role-playing activities. Additionally, students participated in pre- and post-test interviews and tests, and in the introduction and closing sessions. The document-based role-playing activities are described in the following sections. The two art-based activities are not described here for space reasons, but they focused on the body as the primary territory and a tool to develop empathy with other people's emotions in the context of the conflict, as suggested by HME models (Corredor et al., 2018).

15.5.1 The Trial: Your Honor... Who Should Own These Lands?

The first activity asked students to represent a land restitution trial by taking the position of displaced peasants, landowners, and jurors. In this task, they had to interpret the law and the evidence contained in primary and secondary sources associated with violence-related displacement in Colombia. This activity portrayed a simulated land-restitution trial (Corredor-Aristizábal et al., 2015). Land-restitution processes were legal mechanisms created in 2011 by the victims and land-restitution law (Summers, 2012), which was the framework for restorative justice, reparation, and non-repetition of the agreement with paramilitary groups signed during Uribe's administration. The whole story is complicated, but the basic idea is that during the early 2000s paramilitary groups, directly or through figureheads, acquired extensive rural properties, through actions that combined intimidation, atrocious acts, and legal procedures (Dejusticia, 2016). In the second stage, non-belligerent actors, such as large landowners and companies, acquired the properties secondhand. Land-restitution trials aimed at protecting the original owners' rights but had the complication of requiring proof that current owners acted in bad faith, which, in practice, requires showing that they knew about or, worse, were directly involved in the actions that led to displacement (Dejusticia, 2016). As in other historical scenarios (Gross & Terra, 2018), a great debate has arisen regarding whether second-hand buyers knew about the origin of the lands and whether they profited deliberately from violence as opportunistic oppressors, as considered by many peasant communities. This complexity provided us with a fertile scenario to promote document-based historical discussions in a situation with no single-sided easy answers. Staging this activity as a trial did not intend to portray the land problem as a black and white issue with binary logic. On the contrary, the intent was to depict how the complexity of historical memory cannot be solved with a legal decision, and there are always open questions, associated with complex social dynamics.

The activity started with an introduction to the topic of displacement and its relationship with armed violence. In this introduction, students saw and discussed two short documentaries. After that, the class was divided into four groups: jurors, demobilized paramilitary, landowners, and peasants. Each group received a package of materials with (a) an informative page describing the characteristics of the assigned role and the context of the trial, (b) several documents with information to support the enactment of that role, and (c) a guide with possible questions that might arise during the trial.

At the beginning of this moment, each group of students should read the informative page which presented the goals of each ingroup during the trial and also the reasons why they were participating in it. Demobilized paramilitaries were participating in the trial as witnesses in the context of their agreements with Uribe's government that led to the Law of Peace and Justice (Summers, 2012). The Law of Peace and Justice was part of the 2005 demobilization process of rightist paramilitary groups, which, unlike the 2016 agreement with the leftist guerrillas, was never

publicly voted and led to a great deal of controversy about the government's concessions to the paramilitary (Laplante & Theison, 2006). To understand this tension, political positions in favor and against the 2016 Peace Agreement need to be understood. Groups in the extreme right opposed the Peace Process under the argument that Colombia had not had an armed conflict in the country but a criminal enterprise against legal institutions, and, therefore, no political agreement to end the war was necessary. They were against restorative justice and in favor of retributive justice. On the other hand, supporters of the peace process in the center and left of the political spectrum considered that there was a conflict explained to, a certain extent, by the State's inability to solve economic and social problems and by limited democracy, which made necessary an agreement that modifies the structural factors underlying the conflict. From these two basic positions, a complex political configuration emerged, in which the land-restitution problem was embedded (Branton et al., 2019; Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, 2013; Matanock & García-Sánchez, 2017).

In this activity, peasants' goal is to claim their right to the land that was taken from them, and their arguments are related to the way they were displaced from their original lands through human and property rights violations. Landowners argue that they did not know about the origin of the lands, that they acted in good faith, and that lands will be more efficiently used under their control. The jurors' goal was to collect and evaluate the different arguments to render a verdict in the trial, according to the victims and land-restitution law. The judge, which was enacted by a member of the research team, asked questions and supported argumentation and deliberation without providing explicit opinions regarding the results of the trial.

Documents were presented in short vignettes that focused on a possible argument in a trial and included excerpts from different documents (e.g., a truth commission and memory reports, the news, etc.). The documents were edited to facilitate readability, as suggested by Reisman (2012) and Wineburg and Martin (2009). That is, students only read a portion of the document that was relevant to the argument. Additionally, the vocabulary was simplified, and the language of the text was conventionalized and reordered to facilitate comprehension. Documents included an edited version of the victim's and land-restitution law and a supporting glossary with definitions of words and concepts included in the documents that students had a high probability of not knowing.

The guide of possible questions helped participants to anticipate the argumentative lines that could arise in the trial and, this line, to organize the exploration of the documents. Both the questions' guide and the informative page acted as cognitive and collaborative scripts, supporting students' document exploration and organizing their interaction and cooperation in the process of knowledge construction (Kobbe et al., 2007; Kollar et al., 2006).

After student groups reviewed the materials and produced tentative answers to the questions using the documents that they received, the enactment phase of the role-playing activity started. At this point, peasants and landowners presented their arguments in the trial and called students representing demobilized paramilitaries as witnesses. Jurors listened to the arguments and rendered a verdict. The judge guided the whole process and asked questions to all groups but did not participate in the

final decision. Through successive implementations, the materials were refined, and important elements were added to the activity. Realistic details in the role-playing activity seem to increase students' engagement with the activity. For example, providing typical hats to peasants and robes to jurors increased the narrative power of the activity and the identification with the role. Similarly, the provision of lollipops representing lands only to landowners at the beginning of the activity served to represent the way in which structural inequality affects individuals at the personal level. Of course, lollipops were available for all students and were provided to all students at the end of the activity, as part of the closing moment.

The closing moment was the third part of the activity. At this point, using the format of whole-class discussion, students deliberated about the results of the trial and wrapped up the main findings of their exploration of the documents. That is, they discussed what they had learned during the trial. Additionally, the closing activity included a moment of reflection putting the trial in perspective as an opportunity to improve and repair social injustices and to heal. At this moment, lollipops were given to all students in a final act, exemplifying the healing effects of restorative justice. Although the research team was clear that the land struggle continues and peasant leaders are being assassinated, given the age of the students, it was necessary to provide a closing moment and end the activity in a positive tone.

15.5.2 3, 2, 1... Showtime: Reporters Looking for the Truth

The second activity was the elaboration of a TV news program in which students took the role of journalists, anchors, and reporters and had to inform about the assassination of political leaders in the 80s and 90s. This activity asked students to build a script for the news program using the information available in historical documents, and, in this sense, it required them to engage in investigative journalism. Additionally, by design, the activity had a politically broad focus. That is, documents were related to the assassination of political leaders across the political spectrum, which is a defining feature of Colombia's history of restricted democracy, limited possibilities of political participation, and violent elimination of political adversaries. Although assassinations happened across the political spectrum, nothing compares to the political genocide committed against the leftist political party Patriotic Union, in terms of the systematicity, duration, and national coordination of the attacks (Gomez-Suarez, 2007). We decided, however, that including victims from different political parties would help a larger number of students to connect with the activity.

The activity asked students to explore the personal lives of political leaders but also their political ideas, as a way to connect the activity with a broader discussion of structural and political elements, such as the proposal of different ideological positions. Similarly, documents showing the levels of impunity in Colombia were presented, so students could explore the limitations of the justice system, particularly, in relation to the political leader cases.

The activity has four distinct phases. In the first phase, a relaxation activity is presented. This activity uses mindfulness techniques to increase students' awareness of their own emotions. After that, students are asked to identify their emotions regarding a very important person in their lives and reflect how their normal emotions will be disrupted in case of facing a personal loss. The instruction for the letter invites students to express their emotions to a person who played a very important role in their lives, expressing their feelings and gratitude. This letter was designed in line with gratitude letters of positive psychology, which have shown positive effects on mental health and well-being (Wong et al., 2018). In the second phase, students prepare the newsroom simulation. Initially, a presentation of background knowledge regarding the political leaders is conducted using video documentaries. After that, students read and discuss in groups sets of documents devoted to specific leaders. Each set of materials highlighted either personal life, ideology, or the criminal investigation of the case. These materials are prepared following the same guidelines used in the first activity (Reisman, 2012; Wineburg & Martin, 2009). The documents had some key terms that were in bold underlined font, and students were informed that they could ask any member of the research team about its meaning. Subsequently, a whole-class discussion was conducted regarding three topics, namely, similarities in personal life, differences in ideology, and the results of the criminal investigations. In the third phase, the role-playing activity is conducted. Roles in the newsroom are assigned, and students in groups have to write a "libretto" for the news program, to be displayed on a teleprompter. The parts and role of the program are presented in a collaboration script (Kobbe et al., 2007; Kollar et al., 2006) that established the parts of the show, the main topics that should be addressed, and the roles that had to be played (i.e., anchor, reporter, director). After that, a whole-class discussion focusing on the main conclusions of the experience in terms of the intrinsic value of human life, the understanding of ideology, and the problems to bring justice to these crimes is initiated. Finally, the fourth activity is a closing phase wherein students repeat the relaxation exercise conducted at the beginning of the activity and reflect on the importance of recognizing and understanding their own emotions and the resiliency of human beings facing adversity.

15.6 Observations and Main Themes

During this design experiment, several themes were generated (Braun & Clarke, 2006). These themes were identified by triangulating several sources of information, including videos of the activity, photos of the students doing the activity and the products, a field diary that was filled by one or several researchers participating in the activity, and post-intervention interviews. These observations were obtained through emergent thematic analysis by one of the authors and then checked and refined by the other two authors, as a way to obtain additional triangulation. Here we describe the three main themes observed in both activities. Many of these themes were observed the first time the activity was conducted, and then pedagogical

conjectures were refined and implemented for the second time the activity was run. This strategy allowed us both to improve the pedagogical flow of the activity and to increase our theoretical understanding of the cognitive and identity processes underlying them. The significance of these activities needs to be understood in terms of the effects they had on the comprehension of the armed conflict, which initially was highly underspecified. At the beginning of the activity, for instance, most of the students did not differentiate between right-wing paramilitary and left-wing guerrillas. A researcher notes in the field diary during the first week of the intervention that:

Most students say they do not know what happen in “El Salado.” Additionally, they have problems to differentiate between the actors of the conflict, specially, between paramilitaries and guerrilla.

This lack of historical knowledge is, in part, the result of reforms in social science education in Colombia that aimed at developing general citizen competencies, by focusing on the development of empathy and socio-cognitive skills, without including direct teaching of historical content (Restrepo, 2006). This situation is also the result of the reluctance of many educational actors to discuss content related to the armed conflict critically and comprehensively (Padilla & Bermudez, 2016). The overall change is evidenced in the final interviews in which students showed progress in their understanding of the Colombian armed conflict. The following excerpt is an example of how students learned to differentiate between paramilitaries and guerrillas in this particular historical context:

It was more or less a confrontation between paramilitaries and guerrilla, and the town was in the middle of the two, and, then they [the paramilitaries] believed that the people was with the guerrilla.

These changes were modest but implied gains in terms of students' historical knowledge (Corredor, 2020). For space reasons, we do not describe them in depth. We focus, however, on the interactional dynamics underlying these changes, which emerged in the classroom as a result of the pedagogical configuration created by the activities. Some of these themes are presented in the following section.

15.6.1 Opening Spaces to Subjugated Voices

A theme that was evident early in the intervention was that role-playing in HME allowed opening spaces for subjugated voices. In this sense, this type of activity allowed the open exploration of experiences traditionally ignored in dominant historical narratives. Importantly, role-playing in weaker positions seemed to have a stronger empathetic and cognitive effect than doing it in positions of power. Unknowingly, we replicated the methodology of the Theater of the Oppressed, which was long used in popular education by the Latin-American Left cultural movement (Boal, 1985; Schaedler, 2010). In the first activity, for example, students taking the role of peasants in the trial seemed to grasp a deeper understanding of the profound injustice represented by the spoliation of land through violence, and the

inability of the legal system to correct this damage. This observation was shared by several members of the research team who noted that students in this position seemed to demonstrate a higher understanding both of land inequality and peasants' suffering. More generally, it seems that being in the subjugated location helped students to better comprehend the constraints of the situation and to have a stronger empathic connection with the victims. Initially, this result was not observed in students participating in the other groups. However, the second time the activity was conducted, the topic was included in the closing discussion of the activity, which allows students to exchange impressions and to share what students in the peasants' group learned and felt. This experience fostered a broader reflection regarding the experience of displacement and spoliation and the search for land restitution. An experience that can only be shown, not told, by bringing the voices of peasants into the activity and by addressing the combination of historical forces that they faced through the emerging narrative of the trial. The effects of this experience were consistently expressed by students in the final interview:

I represented the multinational company and I felt motivated to defend it, but, if you listened to what the peasants said, you realized what is wrong with our country.

For example, [I learned] how the ones from the economy [the company] took possession of... I mean... they took the lands from the peasants from the only thing they had. For example, I will help or I will put them in a habitat or a space in which they can accommodate themselves better, where they can cultivate and harvest, recovering their goods.

A similar situation was observed in the second activity when a student talked publicly about how her family supported one of the political leaders mentioned in the activity. To understand the importance of this fact, a little historical context needs to be provided. During the 1980s and 1990s, Colombia witnessed the extermination of the Leftist political party, Patriotic Union, in what has been described as a political genocide (Gomez-Suarez, 2007). During this period, between 3000 and 5000 members of this party were systematically murdered across the country. For many years, additionally, having belonged to this party carried a stigma, and members were reluctant to talk publicly about it. During the intervention, this female student found a space to present the story of her family and to talk about something that she never was able to tell anybody. By opening a space for subjugated voices, the activity allowed this student to open up and impact the public narrative, transforming our educational activity into a genuine act of reparation. It is possible that in this context, other students or their families had been displaced violently from their homes, as it is common in many lower-class neighborhoods of Bogotá. The activity, then, created an opportunity for them to connect school activity with their own personal histories.

15.7 Do Not Fear Moral Conundrums

HME faces students with complex issues regarding the atrocities of the past. An easy temptation is to guide students to politically correct answers, even if those answers do not emerge from the collective construction process, but from the preferences of teachers, instructors, or researchers. Another temptation is to avoid complex questions altogether. In our observations, however, an emerging theme was the productive effect of moral conundrums.

During the trial, for example, lands were assigned by jurors to the current landowners several times. This result sparked debate among students and protests by students representing peasants, which conveyed a feeling of injustice with the outcome of the trial. However, the conversation that follows enriched the understanding of both the victims' law and the emotions involved. In the whole-class discussion at the end of the activity, complaints by students representing peasants were addressed, and the conversation led students acting as jurors to explain that they were just following the specifications of law, even though they empathized with peasants. This conversation brought the feeling of injustice to the center of the activity allowing to connect empathy with a reflection about the peace and law system. This reflection allowed students to explore issues of institutional design which, given their age, represented a starting point to understand the structural elements underlying the Colombian conflict, even though it could not capture the whole complexity of an expert account of the land-restitution problem. That is, the moral dilemma faced by jurors helped to connect empathy with structural understanding, as it was expressed by several students in the final interview:

Well, I think that first it is necessary to achieve the peace, and then when the peace is done that the land needs to be given back to the people.

[I learned] that the peasants ended up without their land, and the businessmen end up owning them.

In the second activity, this type of dilemma was observed when judging the personal value of leaders, the intrinsic value of human life, and the ideological differences among them. Students participating in this activity were aware of the dichotomy between personal and political life, and the moral tragedy that assassination implies. Often depicted under the general label of "politicians," negative features of this category were assigned to the leaders. For example, the need to keep a clean public image despite shady private behavior, or the constant look for power that characterizes, at least from the students' point of view, political activity. However, students discussed how those features or their ideological positions were not an excuse for assassination. That is, they talked about how a persona can be greedy, arrogant, or self-interested, without deserving to die because of that.

15.8 Connect with Political and Economic Issues

By design, the activities presented in the intervention led students to discuss broader economic and political issues. In the first activity, two core elements were considered: first, the issue of land inequality and, particularly, the characterization of how violence has contributed to increasing the unequal accumulation of land; second, the design of legal institutions, and, specifically, the analysis and debate of the victims and land restitution law. In the second activity, documents were organized to help students to understand the ideological differences between the different leaders and, in general, to comprehend their public role beyond their personal life. Additionally, the problem of impunity as a structural factor in our legal institutions was also discussed. In other words, activities were designed to generate empathy but also to talk about events, actors, institutional designs, and cultural and economic issues, that is, to talk about the structures that interact with and model human agency, which is a core element in HME's goal of warranting non-repetition (Corredor et al., 2018). Classroom observations showed that this approach helped students increase their understanding of structural elements, which is consistent with prior literature (Corredor, 2020). In many cases, this improvement started with the basic elements of historical understanding: events and actors. Although a simple advancement, identifying events and actors was an important achievement, given that initially students have strong misunderstandings even at this basic level, for example, confusing guerrillas and paramilitary groups, or being unable to identify the political party to which a leader belonged. In other cases, gains were more profound, including a basic understanding of the role of geography and economics, represented in the form of land inequality, and also of the importance of political and legal institutions, as shown by the concepts of ideology, law, and impunity. In the following excerpts, it is possible to observe how students developed an understanding of structural factors, particularly, regarding the role of resources and geography as engines of conflict. It is possible to observe how they get a basic idea of the existence of different political parties and also how they interpret the failures in the justice system. In the last excerpt, an observation from the field diary of the trial shows how students discussed the relationship between land and identity, connecting a structural factor with an empathic attribution:

The businessmen wanted to take the land from the peasants, and the peasants did not want this because what they were going to obtain was minimum compared with the territory they had and because, I mean, this was what they had for them, this was all they had, and obviously, if they lost it, they wouldn't end up with nothing.

I think it was for the strategic point where they were. There is rich in geography also. So, the multinationals were interested in people to be obliged to sell their lands.

We talked about three political leaders that were very important. From the conservative and liberal party. They had something in common: that they had ideals.

The victimizers also like they are going to keep doing it, because sometimes, justice is not made.

They [students] also express during the discussion in groups that the peasants had right to the land because it was part of their life, of their story and identity, and that for that the fair decision was to give the land back to them.

15.9 Conclusions: A Tool for Developing Empathy and Structural Understanding

The observations of this study illustrate how document-based role-playing can serve as a tool in HME. This is so because this type of activity presents a narrative context in which to embed the exploration of documents and other elements of historical inquiry. In this process, complex issues such as the interpretation of sources and the understanding of historical causality become situated in functional interpersonal narratives, producing an increase of both empathy and structural understanding. Consequently, this type of narrative embedding of historical practice facilitates the introduction of document-based activities in classroom activities.

Activities in this study were designed following basic principles of HME, that is, they were student-centered, collaborative, and digital (Corredor et al., 2018). Activities also incorporated recent developments in educational research (Halverson, 2005, 2010, 2013; Kobbe et al., 2007; Kollar et al., 2006; Martin & Wineburg, 2008; Reisman, 2012; Wineburg, 1991). Our design shows that it is beneficial to incorporate pedagogical concepts developed for the teaching of other subject matters to the teaching of history and historical memory. Scripts come from research on science education, and role-playing activities are inspired by art pedagogy. Our design is not thought of as a straitjacket. It is an example that teachers and educational designers can use to create new variations. Its spirit is to show how these types of activities produce learning and favors pedagogical change, not to impose a specific design. The intervention was successful because activities were constantly adapted to students' characteristics and school resources. The richness of the experience came in large part from the collaborative work of the research team in the assessment and the adjustment of the activities.

Document-based role-playing activities are particularly powerful because they lead students to enact the positions of historical actors and therefore to understand both their points of view and their strategic goals in relation to structural elements in history. Emotional empathy also seems to be developed by these activities because students have to face some of the structural constraints and historical forces that survivors had to face.

It is important to note that the results of this study are not perfect. In many cases, the gains were modest. Students learned to distinguish guerrilla from paramilitaries, to name the political parties and describe in thick strokes their differences, to intuit how resources and territory mark the development of conflicts, and to discuss broadly how laws constraint individuals' intentions and agency. This is not trivial, however. Adults educated in traditional history classes seem to neither grasp nor care about the complexity of contemporary politics. In times of political apathy and institutional crisis, of fake news and growing intolerance and inequality, under the shadow of populism that does nothing but resemble the years previous to WWII, not only historical memory but also a basic historical comprehension, citizen literacy of some sort, comes in handy.

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Chapter 16

Helping Kids! Cross-Cultural Research on Children's Prosocial Behavior in Societies Transitioning to Peace



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16.1 Introduction

Research and policymaking during peace processes typically focus on traditional positions of power, such as political leaders, military and armed actors, or formal institutions. Although these are essential mechanisms for change, a fundamental aspect of any sustainable transition to peace is working with the generation raised in the wake of war.

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The cross-cultural project *Helping Kids!* recognizes that children can foster a transition to a peaceful future, despite growing up in contexts of intergroup conflict (Helsing et al., 2006). The project is framed by the Developmental Peacebuilding Model (DPM; Taylor, 2020) and informed by the growing body of research that conceptualizes young people not as powerless victims or violent perpetrators but rather as potential protagonists for peace (McKeown & Taylor, 2017; O’Driscoll et al., 2018). *Helping Kids!* also builds on research with adults that has explored how prosocial behavior across group lines may be promoted through Altruism Born of Suffering (ABS; Staub & Vollhardt, 2008; Taylor & Hanna, 2018).

In this chapter, we first argue that a focus on children is essential for positive peace. Second, we present a brief background on how children are affected by different types and phases of intergroup conflicts across five *Helping Kids!* contexts (Northern Ireland, Croatia, Kosovo, Republic of North Macedonia (RNM), and Israel). In each of these contexts, the vast majority of children attend separate educational systems. Third, we explore intergroup prosocial behavior across all five contexts. Finally, we make recommendations for future research and practice.

16.2 Fostering Positive Peace Among Children

A peace agreement does not in and of itself make society peaceful (Mac Ginty et al., 2007). The transition to peace is often marred by lingering social division even after a conflict has officially ended (Wohl & Branscombe, 2005). The legacy of ethnic division underpins continued tension and hostility (Shirlow et al., 2013). Socialized in ethnically divided environments (Barber, 2008; Reidy et al., 2015), children develop an understanding of the sociopsychological infrastructure, or *conflict ethos* (Bar-Tal, 2000), through the transgenerational narratives of group suffering (Taylor et al., 2020c). Shifting away from a narrow focus on negative peace (i.e., ending direct violence), *Helping Kids!* explores how children can promote positive peace (Galtung, 1969), that is, going beyond the mere absence of physical violence toward positive, harmonious intergroup relations (Taylor & Christie, 2015), or warm peace (Bar-Tal, 2011). Through focusing on distribution equality, human rights, opportunities, and psychological security, this understanding supports a departure away from the narrow conceptualization of peace as merely the absence of conflict but rather embraces the perception that the absence of structural violence is essential for a peaceful society (Galtung, 1969). Thus, positive peace includes major transformations within transitional societies (Bar-Tal, 2011).

Positive peace is underpinned and maintained by peacebuilding, a future-oriented, long-term process of forging constructive societal relations (Lederach, 1997). Building on the growing body of social and developmental research that focuses on the peacebuilding potential of children (e.g., McKeown & Taylor, 2017; Taylor & Glen, 2020; Taylor et al., 2020b), *Helping Kids!* recognizes children as *resources for* peacebuilding, rather than *recipients of* peacebuilding initiatives (Taylor, 2020). This focus remains even for those in the “post-accord” generation,

or children born after a peace agreement (Burns et al., 2020; Taylor & McKeown, 2017). The protracted insecurity after a formal peace agreement continues to shape the contexts in which children develop a sense of self and various overlapping identities (Cummings et al., 2013, 2014, 2016; Merrilees et al., 2014; Taylor et al., 2017). In order to better understand children's contributions to positive peace, *Helping Kids!* adopted a cross-cultural research approach to identify the unique and universal aspects of promoting prosocial behaviors toward the conflict-related outgroup.

16.3 Prosocial Behavior: Achieving Peace Through Helping the "Other"

In contrast to past research, which has extensively studied the negative impact of conflict on children (Cummings et al., 2017), *Helping Kids!* highlights children's prosocial behavior and its peacebuilding potential in transitional societies. Prosocial acts have been defined as voluntary behaviors primarily aimed to benefit another person (Eisenberg et al., 2015). Framed by the Developmental Peacebuilding Model (DPM; Taylor, 2020), different types of prosocial behavior aim to promote constructive social change across levels of the social ecology. For instance, prosociality at the microsystem level may include sharing, helping, and comforting (Schroeder & Graziana, 2015), as well as cooperation (Dovidio et al., 2006). Civic engagement and volunteering are aimed at social change in the exosystem, while political activism aims for broader macrosystemic change. Central to each type of prosocial act is the target (i.e., the recipient). The DPM argues that outgroup prosociality, particularly toward the conflict rival, is the foundation for children's peacebuilding (Taylor, 2020). Distinguishing between different outgroup targets (individuals, the group as a whole, broader collective culture), the DPM outlines various ways through which prosocial behavior in post-accord settings can foster positive peace. The DPM suggests that microsystemic, interpersonal forms of prosocial behavior such as cross-group helping in early developmental stages enable macrosystemic structural change. Thus, small-scale interpersonal prosociality is crucial since it initiates wider societal peacebuilding. The developmental perspective of the DPM stresses that with greater agency and autonomy, children are able to transform the post-accord society on an extensive scale.

Exposure to ethnic conflict has been associated with lower levels of general (i.e., target not specified) prosocial behavior in children (Keresteš, 2006; Kijewski & Freitag, 2018; Rohner et al., 2013). Outgroup-specific prosocial behavior may be perceived as disloyal toward ingroup members (Abrams et al., 2008), resulting in social penalties (Abrams et al., 2014; Pinto et al., 2010) or physical punishments (Monaghan & McLaughlin, 2006). In intergroup conflicts, prosocial behavior benefiting the outgroup is especially low when children strongly identify with their

ingroup (O'Driscoll et al., 2018). These social challenges may shape children's outgroup prosociality in conflict-affected contexts.

Yet, altruism may interrupt cycles of violence. Altruism Born of Suffering (Staub & Vollhardt, 2008; Taylor & Hanna, 2018) proposes that after individually or collectively experienced harm, victims may feel the need to help others. For example, prolonged exposure to sectarianism was related to later civic engagement among adolescents in Northern Ireland (Taylor et al., 2018). Moreover, intragroup threats related to higher general and outgroup-specific prosocial behavior a year later (Taylor et al., 2014). ABS further identifies empathy as a key mediating process. Among emerging adults in that same context, empathy was found to mediate the link between perceived harm and desire to help others (Taylor & Hanna, 2018). Cross-sectional research with elementary school children, and a two-wave study with adolescents, also found empathy to be linked to outgroup prosocial behavior via outgroup attitudes in a post-accord context (Taylor et al., 2020b).

Empathy also has been shown to be a key mediator in the link from intergroup contact to less outgroup prejudice (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008). Intergroup contact has been linked with greater outgroup inclusion in Kosovo (Maloku et al., 2020) as well as more outgroup prosocial behavior among adolescents in Northern Ireland (McKeown & Taylor, 2018). Intergroup contact has therefore been identified as a tool for peacebuilding interventions (Christie, 2006). Particularly in settings of ethnically separated schools, integrated education and shared education have peacebuilding potential (Ben-Nun, 2013; Loader & Hughes, 2017), through facilitating positive intergroup relations (Siem et al., 2016) and cross-group friendships (Irwin et al., 1991). Moreover, pedagogical practices, such as cooperative learning, can increase prosocial behavior and decrease aggression (Choi et al., 2011). Thus, both higher quantity and quality contact can promote support for peacebuilding, which in turn, can relate to constructive youth outcomes, such as civic engagement (McKeown & Taylor, 2017).

One method designed to enable positive intergroup contact is the transformation of the divided education system (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000). Shared education is an alternative schooling approach in which children continue to attend separate schools but come together in locally tailored and culturally relevant contexts (Loader & Hughes, 2017). Enabling cross-group contact, while at the same time maintaining separate schools to protect the different cultural, religious, and linguistic identities, shared education represents an innovative method for educational transition. This form of promoting intergroup relations may be more likely to gain the support of different stakeholders in post-accord contexts.

Although this aforementioned research shows promise in children's peacebuilding potential, the majority is carried out in a single context. A deeper understanding necessitates comparative studies that can tease apart unique and universal patterns.

16.4 Comparing Across Contexts

To contextualize the *Helping Kids!* findings, a brief comparison of research contexts will highlight the shared and distinct nature of the five conflicts (Table 16.1). In-depth conflict analysis is beyond the scope of the current chapter; instead, these brief descriptions focus on the contemporary impact of the conflict on children.

All of the conflicts are protracted (i.e., lasting longer than 25 years) and very resource-consuming (Bar-Tal, 2013) and will be presented in the order of their official peace agreement. The four European contexts are post-accord (Northern Ireland, Croatia, Kosovo, and RNM), while the fifth, Israel, represents an ongoing intractable conflict.

16.4.1 Northern Ireland: The “Troubles” Between Protestants and Catholics

The Northern Ireland conflict between the two ethno-nationalist groups – Unionists/Loyalists (mainly Protestants) who desired the continuation of the union of Northern Ireland with Britain, and Nationalists/Republicans (mainly Catholics) who desired reunification of Northern Ireland with the Republic of Ireland – intensified at the end of the twentieth century. The armed conflict known as “The Troubles” (1968–1998) started, in part, out of the campaign in Northern Ireland for civil rights for Catholics. During this period, approximately 3600 people died, including 274 children (Fay et al., 1999; McEvoy & Shirlow, 2009). The conflict was officially

Table 16.1 Summary of key demographic information across *Helping Kids!* research contexts

	Northern Ireland	Croatia	Kosovo	RNM	Israel
Primary rival groups (and %)	Protestants (48%) and Catholics (45%)	In Vukovar: Croats (57%) and Serbs (35%)	Albanians (87%) and Serbs (8%)	Macedonians (64%) and Albanians (25%)	Jewish (74%) and Arab-Muslims (~17%)
Official peace agreement	1998 Good Friday/Belfast Agreement	1995 Dayton Peace Accord	1999 Kumanovo Agreement	2001 Ohrid Framework Agreement	1993 Oslo Accord
GDP per capital in international \$	UK: 48,169	29,200	13,017	17,378	40,337
Population	1.9 million	4 million	1.8 million	2 million	8.9 million
<i>Helping Kids!</i> Sample size	n = 299 (52% Protestant, 48% Catholic)	n = 136 (66% Croats, 34% Serbs)	n = 220 (54% Albanians, 46% Serbs)	n = 194 (46% Macedonians, 54% Albanians)	n = 387 (53% Arab-Muslims, 47% Jews)

Note. There are other small ethnic groups in each context

resolved in 1998 with the Belfast Agreement; yet, intergroup hostilities continue to shape lived realities in Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland remains highly divided (Gillespie, 2010), with a separate educational system (O'Driscoll et al., 2018). Currently, 48% of the population identifies as Protestant, and 45% as Catholic.

16.4.2 Croatia: Different Narratives of Croats and Serbs

After Croatia declared independence in 1991, a brutal war swept the country. A symbol of Croatian national suffering during the war (1991–1995) was the city of Vukovar, which, prior to the war, was a well-integrated, multi-ethnic community. Today, Vukovar has a population of 27,700 residents, of which the majority are Croats (57%) and Serbs (35%) are the largest minority group. Even 25 years after the Erdut Agreement was signed, the city and surrounding towns are dealing with interethnic divisions. For example, Croat and Serb children attend separate kindergartens and elementary schools. Social reconstruction efforts show only minor improvements (Čorkalo Biruški, 2016), primarily due to the different interpretations of war-related events (Čorkalo Biruški & Ajduković, 2009). The two groups interact differently with the post-accord generation regarding the war; Serbs question the need to address war crimes, while Croats tell children to never forget (Reidy et al., 2015).

16.4.3 Kosovo: Tensions Between Albanians and Serbs

One of the deadliest wars in Europe since World War II has worsened the relationship between Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo. Although the conflict officially ended with the 1999 Kumanovo Agreement, intergroup tensions continue. The recent declaration of independence from Serbia (2008) is viewed very differently by the two groups; celebrated by the Albanian ethnic majority (87%), the ethnic Serb minority (8%) regards it as an unjust separation from Serbia (Judah, 2008). Interaction across ethnic lines is minimal, and preference to remain separated prevails among both groups (Maloku et al., 2019). Attending separate educational systems since the 1990s, children grow up unable to speak each other's language. An inclusive society remains elusive in the newborn country, home to one of the youngest populations in Europe (Kosovo Agency of Statistics, 2017; Maloku et al., 2016).

16.4.4 Republic of North Macedonia (RNM): Recent Conflict Between Macedonians and Albanians

After independence in 1991, a tense relationship between ethnic Macedonians (64%) and ethnic Albanians escalated into 6 months of violence in 2001, when Albanians (25%), the largest minority group, demanded greater rights (Koppa, 2001; Reka, 2008). Although the Ohrid Framework Agreement was signed, the population still remains highly divided along ethnic lines. There is still a high level of distrust and social distance between the groups (Maleska, 2010). For example, ethnic Albanians are mostly present in the northwestern and western parts of the country (in some places up to 90% of the population). Children are educated in separated classes based on ethnicity and language (Lyon, 2013), which complicates communications across such divisions.

16.4.5 Israel: Intractable Conflict Between Israelis and Palestinians

Israel is influenced by the intractable conflict between Israelis and Palestinians (Bar-Tal, 2011), which is situated in regional tensions between Israeli/Jewish and Arab/Muslim populations. The conflict demands an extensive investment of both material and psychological resources (Kriesberg, 1993), in part, because of the overlapping territorial self-images shaping the contrasting identities (Liu & Paez, 2012). The dispute is shaped by power asymmetries, which influence the conflict dynamics (Rouhana & Fiske, 1995) and intergroup attitudes in adults (Shamoa-Nir & Razpurker-Apfeld, 2019) and children (Shamoa-Nir et al., 2021). Despite various attempts of the formal resolution, since 2000 more than 10,000 people, including 2152 children, have died as a result of the conflict (Huesmann et al., 2012). Against this backdrop, Jewish and Arab/Muslim citizens within Israel are largely educated in separate schools (Bekerman, 2007).

16.4.6 Divided Social Realities

Despite the unique nature of each of these conflicts, one similarity is a divided educational system. Such daily divisions reinforce an “us” and “them” mentality (Abrams & Rutland, 2008). For example, students attending separate schools have a limited understanding of and more negative attitudes toward the other group (Hayes et al., 2007, 2013; Hughes et al., 2013; Stringer et al., 2000, 2009). Yet, despite this social reality, there is a potential to build positive peace. The following sections explore how children may begin to contribute to these processes, even when raised in the context of intergroup conflict.

16.5 Ingroup and Outgroup Prosocial Behavior in *Helping Kids!*

Building on this body of work, and local partnerships in each context, *Helping Kids!* examines the development of intergroup relations among children in conflict-affected societies (Taylor et al., 2020a; Tomovska Misoska et al., 2019, 2020), with a focus on factors that can promote or dampen outgroup prosocial behavior.

Overall, 1236 children (52% female) participated in the series of interactive games, with some variation in sample size across contexts (Table 16.1). In each context, we sampled elementary school children attending separate schools, aged 5–11 years old ($M_{\text{age}} = 8.57$; $SD = 1.93$), from both majority and the primary minority ethnic group. Consistent with ethical procedures approved by participating universities, we had principal and parental permission and child assent.

In Northern Ireland, Croatia, Kosovo, RNM, and Israel, the same child-friendly resource allocation task was applied (adapted from O’Driscoll et al., 2018); participants were allowed to share seven stickers between an ingroup and outgroup member. Given the zero-sum nature of these conflicts (i.e., where a gain for the outgroup can be perceived as a loss for the ingroup), these resource allocation tasks may have important, long-term peacebuilding implications (O’Driscoll et al., 2018; Shamoanir et al., 2021).

If children’s sharing was based on chance alone (i.e., no distinctions by group membership), children would give an average of 3.5 stickers to each target. In each context, outgroup giving was significantly lower than that expected “at chance” value (all $p < 0.001$). That is, in Northern Ireland, Kosovo, Croatia, RNM, and Israel, children gave significantly fewer stickers to an outgroup member than if they were making those decisions based on chance.

Moreover, across all five contexts, children allocated more stickers to ingroup members compared to outgroup members (Fig. 16.1; all $p < 0.001$). For example, in Northern Ireland ($M_{\text{in}} = 3.96$; $M_{\text{out}} = 3.04$; $SD = 1.12$), Croatia ($M_{\text{in}} = 3.98$; $M_{\text{out}} = 3.02$; $SD = 0.69$), and the RNM ($M_{\text{in}} = 4.14$; $M_{\text{out}} = 2.86$; $SD = 1.68$), on average, children gave approximately four stickers to ingroup and three stickers to the outgroup member. That is, of the seven stickers, children gave the “extra” sticker to an ingroup member. This difference was slightly more pronounced in Kosovo ($M_{\text{in}} = 4.68$; $M_{\text{out}} = 2.32$; $SD = 1.22$) and Israel ($M_{\text{in}} = 5.19$; $M_{\text{out}} = 1.81$; $SD = 1.34$). The ingroup bias in prosocial behavior is not surprising at this age but does have long-term implications for how resources are distributed across rival groups in conflict-affected contexts.

If we assume, therefore, that there will be an ingroup bias given the odd number of stickers, children would be expected to give four stickers to the ingroup and three stickers to the outgroup target. This next set of analyses revealed that in Northern Ireland, Croatia, and RNM, children did not statistically deviate from this hypothesized ingroup-giving bias. For example, after allocating the first six stickers fairly across groups, children chose to give the seventh sticker to an ingroup member on average. In Kosovo and Israel, however, children’s bias in giving was more

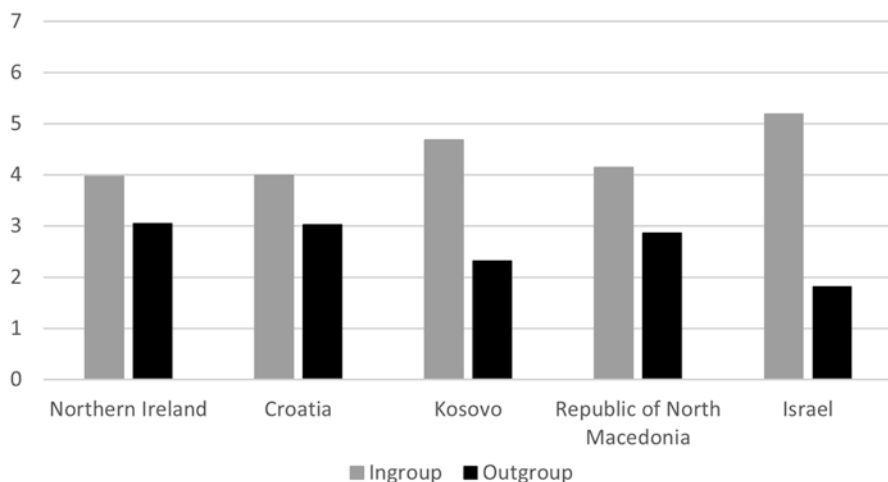


Fig. 16.1 Ingroup vs. outgroup giving among elementary school-aged children across five contexts of intergroup conflict. (Note. All differences between ingroup and outgroup giving are significant at *** $p < 0.001$)

pronounced (both $p < 0.001$). That is, children chose to give fewer stickers to an outgroup member, even after adjusting for an expected ingroup bias given the odd number of stickers used in this task.

Finally, patterns in outgroup giving were compared across context. Using Croatia as the reference group with the most even distribution across groups, there were no significant differences in outgroup giving compared to Northern Ireland or RNM. Children in Kosovo gave significantly fewer stickers to outgroup members than Croatia, Northern Ireland, or RNM, and children in Israel gave the fewest stickers to outgroup members (i.e., less than outgroup giving in Kosovo and other contexts).

Comparing these findings, the intensity and salience of the most recent period of intergroup conflict may play a role. That is, where peace agreements have been signed and a relative period of stability maintained (i.e., Northern Ireland, Croatia, RNM), there are higher levels of outgroup giving, on average, compared to those where the violent conflict was more recent, with a higher relative level of fatalities (i.e., Kosovo) or underlying conflict remains unresolved (i.e., Israel). This type of cross-cultural comparative research helps to shed light on similarities and differences across different conflicts.

With this basic foundation, *Helping Kids!* is beginning to look at the predictors, moderators, and mediators of children's outgroup prosocial behaviors. For example, a recent paper found that the effect of age on outgroup prosocial giving was serially mediated by the child's ingroup symbol preference and negative outgroup attitudes in Israel. The multiple-group chain mediation was held across both majority (i.e., Israeli/Jewish) and minority (i.e., Arab/Muslim) groups (Shamoa-Nir et al., 2021). Identifying the processes that underpin social and developmental processes of

prosocial giving across group lines in conflict-affected societies has implications for future interventions.

16.6 Conclusion

Societies transitioning to peace face important dilemmas. In reconstruction efforts, resources must be allocated to help rebuild infrastructure, develop communities, and provide a secure future to all citizens. At the same time, children born into social divisions are influenced by the conflict narratives of those around them (Taylor et al., 2020c), perhaps contributing to their biased resource distribution. Understanding how children adopt behaviors consistent with past divisions versus behaviors that contribute to unfreezing conflicting group boundaries (Taylor et al., 2014) has important peacebuilding implications. Through outgroup prosocial behavior, children can create an environment of harmonious intergroup relations, challenging the internalized conflict ethos (Taylor, 2020).

Relevant to this edited volume, preliminary findings from *Helping Kids!* suggest that there are some shared patterns in the development of children's prosocial giving to outgroup members. Comparisons across five *Helping Kids!* contexts also demonstrate the need for cross-cultural collaboration to further understand similar and diverging patterns in children's prosociality in these adverse contexts. For example, in Northern Ireland, Croatia, and RNM, children showed an ingroup bias, which was more pronounced in Kosovo and Israel, where the intergroup violence is relatively more recent. This finding suggests early intervention immediately after the peace agreement has been signed may be key to future-proof a peace process so that positive peace can take root. This chapter also argues that children's interpersonal prosocial behavior intended to benefit the conflict-related outgroup can be considered as peacebuilding. This novel approach, outlined in the Developmental Peacebuilding Model (Taylor, 2020), can inform future peace psychology research and practice.

The findings presented in this chapter should be considered in light of two limitations. First, the data present a cross-sectional snapshot of one developmental period. Future research should include longitudinal designs that allow for modeling trajectories of prosocial behavior across childhood and adolescence in intergroup conflicts (e.g., Taylor et al., 2018). Second, in intergroup conflicts, outgroup helping may not always be positive. That is, research into the motivations of majority groups helping minority status groups has been linked with the desire to maintain a relative position of social dominance (Nadler et al., 2009). In order to draw a holistic picture, we recommend research on motivations and potential unintended consequences of children's intergroup prosocial behavior.

There is great peacebuilding potential in children's outgroup prosocial behavior in societies transitioning away from violent conflict. As such, interventions with children, adolescents, and young adults may face difficulties in delivery due to the divided nature of social life. In Northern Ireland, one means for increasing the

quantity and quality of intergroup contact, while recognizing the underlying reasons for separate education has been advanced. In this context, “shared education” provides a mechanism for transforming deeply divided educational systems. Although a relatively new initiative, there appears to be support, both among schools (Gallagher, 2016), families (Bähr et al., 2020), children, and the wider community (Hayes et al., 2007). Various forms of “shared education” are also being developed or implemented in the other contexts considered in this chapter, such as the RNM (Loader et al., 2018) and Kosovo (RIT, 2019). In this light, peace education initiatives that establish the foundation for positive intergroup relations and mutual understanding (Kupermintz & Salomon, 2005) may help to strengthen a society's lasting transition to peace.

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Chapter 17

Promoting Social Cohesion and Peacebuilding Through Investment in Early Childhood Development Programs



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17.1 Introduction

This chapter will provide an overview of early childhood development (ECD) and its links to social cohesion and peacebuilding. It will explore an operational definition of social cohesion in an ECD context, present case studies from the LINKS project including program adaptations, describe the development of social cohesion measures, and reflect on some of the key learning from undertaking this work on a global scale.

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17.1.1 Background

It is estimated that approximately 250 million children below the age of 5 in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) are at risk of not reaching their full potential (Black et al., 2017). Children in LMICs are also more likely to experience conflict which can exacerbate existing inequities and have profound consequences in terms of access to health care, nutrition, adequate shelter, and education (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; Duncan & Brooks-Gunn, 1997; Slone & Mann, 2016; Walker et al., 2007, 2011). Risk factors include premature birth, poverty, malnutrition, exposure to violence, under-stimulation, and poor health all of which are addressed in high-quality early childhood development (ECD) services (Walker et al., 2007, 2011). ECD services seek to address and mitigate the impact of adverse experiences on young children by providing a wide range of programs and interventions designed to support healthy development during this phase. They may include some combination of prenatal health provision; home-based programs for parents and caregivers; health, social care, and education services provided through community-based centers or schools; and the provision of childcare centers, nurseries, and preschools. There is a strong body of evidence suggesting that quality early childhood care and education programs have a positive short-term effect on children's IQ, school readiness, and academic achievement and on their social and emotional development (Anderson et al., 2003; Burger, 2010; Camilli et al., 2010; Heckman, 2012). In addition, the sustained benefits of these programs have been found to endure into adulthood (Nelson, 2000; Tanner et al., 2015).

The landmark series, *Advancing Early Childhood Development (ECD) from Science to Scale* (Black et al., 2017; Britto et al., 2017; Richter et al., 2017), highlights the importance of ECD in the sustainable development agenda for LMICs and demonstrates how investment in ECD services can contribute to achieving the sustainable development goals (SDGs) by promoting healthy development, reducing inequities, and strengthening coordination across sectors (Richter et al., 2017). The SDGs were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and provide a roadmap for a better and more sustainable future for all (United Nations, 2015). The SDGs encompass a set of 17 interrelated goals designed to address a range of global challenges including but not limited to education, poverty, climate change, and peace and justice. The Lancet Series highlights how ECD is uniquely placed at the intersection of a wide range of services and provides multiple entry points for interdisciplinary multi-sectoral approaches (Britto et al., 2017) that can provide an important catalyst for broader social change by linking and improving relations between communities, service providers, and governments. Underpinning the work of the LINKS project are the arguments that “[t]here can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development” (United Nations, 2015) and the role of ECD in achieving both. It is hypothesized that ECD and other key social services can play a role in contributing to sustainable development and peacebuilding and promote social cohesion in conflict-affected contexts (CACs) by improving outcomes for children,

their families, and communities, thus breaking intergenerational cycles of poverty and inequality.

17.1.2 Operationalizing Social Cohesion in an Early Childhood Development Context

Peace does not mean the absence of conflict but, rather, the existence of inclusive and socially embedded mechanisms and competencies for dealing with conflict in nonviolent ways (Anderson, 2004; Galtung, 1969). Achieving and sustaining peace is an ongoing process that occurs at multiple societal levels through peacebuilding. Peacebuilding is conceptualized as the prevention of the emergence or recurrence of conflict and where there is social cohesion and inclusion; where there is full participation and where social systems serve the whole of the population (Moshe, 2001). It involves much more than seeking to halt violent conflicts through brokering ceasefires (i.e., peacemaking) or supporting the implementation of a ceasefire agreement (i.e., peacekeeping). Rather, it requires a proactive and coordinated range of measures that seek to build and sustain social cohesion by avoiding polarization, mitigating conflicts, and thus reducing the risk of lapsing or relapsing into violence (i.e., peacebuilding). Peacebuilding thus necessarily includes *reactive components* that seek to address existing social divisions, prejudices, and forms of discrimination and inequalities that inevitably arise from conflict. However, it also requires *proactive components* that seek to reduce the risk of further conflict by addressing its root causes by promoting mutual understanding and respect, creating societal mechanisms that enable the resolution of conflict without resorting to violence, establishing inclusive social structures, and promoting opportunities for all through sustainable economic and social development (Leckman et al., 2014; Ponguta et al., 2018).

Social cohesion is just one dimension of peacebuilding and relates to the extent to which social groups and institutions coexist peacefully (Pham & Vinck, 2017). Social cohesion is a concept with a long history and has been redefined and adopted by new disciplines from sociology, psychology, and, more recently, public health (Bruhn, 2009). When considered in isolation, social cohesion is an abstract concept that is difficult to measure. However, Pham and Vinck (2017) argue that conceptualizing the various dimensions of peacebuilding as an aggregation of measurable domains can help to define indicators and measures associated with each domain, and thus the overarching dimension. Social cohesion consists of five such domains, namely, trust, community engagement, social distance and relations, support and solidarity, and, finally, identity, inclusion, and belonging (see Pham and Vinck (2017) for a detailed discussion). Pham and Vinck (2017) also highlight the interaction of “vertical” (i.e., between individuals and groups and government institutions) and “horizontal” (in terms of relationships between individuals, between individuals and groups, and also between groups) factors.

While ECD services are not typically associated with peacebuilding efforts, the mechanisms by which they can contribute to achieving the SDGs (Black et al., 2017) also provide a pathway through which they can contribute to peacebuilding and social cohesion. The effects of conflict permeate through each socioecological structure, affecting relationships between and among children, families, communities, civil society, and governmental bodies (Ang, 2018; Betancourt et al., 2012; Taylor, 2020). Thus, strategic investment in effective ECD services has the potential to mitigate many of the direct impacts of conflict on children and can also make a major contribution to trust-building and improved relationships between individuals, families, institutions, and groups, and wider efforts to promote sustainable development and peacebuilding, which in turn strengthen social cohesion in CACs. ECD services are well placed to engage with families and communities delivering much more than improved short- and long-term outcomes for individual children (Panter-Brick et al., 2020). In particular, the role that fathers can play needs more attention (Panter-Brick et al., 2014). By being at the heart of local communities, and engaging directly with families, they can also be a major vehicle for change in enabling and sustaining horizontal and vertical social cohesion.

17.2 The LINKS Project

LINKS is the shortened name for the NIHR Global Health Research Group on Early Childhood Development for Peacebuilding at Lancaster University and Queen's University Belfast (QUB). LINKS brings together an international network of researchers, early childhood experts, and practitioners to support the development and evaluation of ECD programs in low- and middle-income countries impacted by divisions and conflict (Colombia, Kyrgyzstan, Mali, Palestine, Tajikistan, Timor-Leste, and Viet Nam).

One of the main aims of LINKS is to develop an international evidence base to determine what works where and for whom in relation to the provision of ECD services for social cohesion and peacebuilding in CACs. The evidence generated through LINKS will help to identify the key components of ECD programs that can contribute to each domain of social cohesion. Not all the domains of social cohesion are addressed by individual ECD programs; however as the remainder of this chapter will demonstrate, the programs within LINKS can achieve this collectively albeit to a greater or lesser extent depending on the context.

17.2.1 Pathways to Address Social Cohesion in Early Childhood Programs

The ECD projects affiliated with LINKS provide multiple pathways to address social cohesion. The main pathways involve direct work with young children, work with families, and engaging with local communities through preschool programs,

parenting programs, or a combination of the two. Thus, the programs differ across contexts and in their composition. The social cohesion outcomes targeted by each ECD program also vary according to their target population as outlined in detail in Table 17.1.

The following section provides a case study of the preschool-based ECD programs in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan as an example of ECD programs that have an explicit focus on social cohesion constructs. The case study also highlights how such programs can provide multiple pathways to address horizontal and vertical social cohesion by targeting young children, their parents, and the wider community.

Table 17.1 Overview of LINKS' early childhood development programs and target social cohesion domains

Type of ECD program	Country	Program description	Program components	Social cohesion domain ^{target} population
Preschool program	Kyrgyzstan	Media and curriculum-based preschool program designed to promote respect for diversity with regard gender and ethnicity	Preschool curriculum	Engagement _{p,co}
			Media messages	Identity, belonging, and inclusion _{ch,p}
			Persona dolls	Social distance and relations _{ch,p}
			Parent training component	
			Teacher training to deliver curriculum	
	Tajikistan	Media- and curriculum-based preschool program designed to promote respect for diversity with regard gender, ethnicity, and disability	Preschool curriculum	Engagement _{p,co}
			Media messages	Identity, belonging, and inclusion _{ch,p}
			Persona dolls	Social distance and relations _{ch,p}
			Parent training component	
			Teacher training to deliver curriculum	
			Multi-lingual education component	
	Timor Leste	Community-based alternative preschool program	Preschool provision	Engagement _{p,co}
			Involvement of local community in management of preschools	Support and solidarity _{p,co}
			Parenting program	Trust _{p,co}

(continued)

Table 17.1 (continued)

Type of ECD program	Country	Program description	Program components	Social cohesion domain ^{target} population
Parenting program	Mali	Community-based program in which women from the community volunteer to be trained as “role model mothers” to provide advice and support to new and expecting mothers	Promotion of positive parenting practices	Engagement ^{p,co}
			Delivery of health messages	Social distance and relations ^p
			Parent support groups	Support and solidarity ^p Trust ^p
	Viet Nam	Parenting program designed to provide early childhood education support to promote parental self-efficacy and healthy early childhood development	Parent education curriculum	Engagement ^{p,co}
			Parenting groups	Support and solidarity ^p
			Signposting to support and community-based services	Social distance and relations ^p Trust ^{p,co}

Notes. The programs in Colombia and Palestine are still in the development/adaptation phase and are not included here. *Ch* Child, *P* Parent, *Co* Community

17.2.1.1 Case Study 1: Promoting Respect for Diversity Through a Media-Based Early Childhood Program in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan (officially the Kyrgyz Republic) and Tajikistan (officially the Republic of Tajikistan) are located in Central Asia and share a land border. The two countries were part of the former Soviet Union until its collapse in 1991 and disputes surrounding border demarcation and access to natural resources have led to sporadic outbreaks and escalations of violence in the border areas between the two countries (Kurmanalieva, 2019; Toktomushev, 2017). Both countries are classified by the World Bank as lower-middle-income countries, with a significant proportion of the population living below the poverty line. In addition to high under-five mortality, low enrolment rates in pre-primary education programs mean that a significant proportion of young children in these two countries are at risk of not meeting their full potential (United Nations Children’s Fund, 2019a, b). The development of the ECD programs in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan was undertaken as part of a joint cross-border project designed to target areas that have historically been deprived of social services and to address issues of inequalities in conflict-prone territories in both countries. In addition to providing positive early childhood experiences, the pre-school programs are also designed to improve respect for differences relating to ethnicity, gender, and disability in young children, and were adapted from an ECD

program (Media Initiative for Children: Respecting Differences Program) originally developed in Northern Ireland (NI) by Early Years, the organization for young children. By equipping them with the necessary skills and ability to recognize and challenge prejudice and divisions the ECD programs aim to empower children, their parents and ECE teachers, and the wider community to contribute to the creation of an inclusive, tolerant, and peaceful society.

The programs in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan were developed in partnership with United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) country offices in each country and supported by Early Years to ensure they reflect the local context and address social cohesion priorities in each country. Although the content of the programs is specific to each country, the overall design and delivery are based on the same general principles and share common core elements. The programs comprise specifically designed TV messages that are included as part of an existing national children's TV series in each country; curricular resources for use with preschool children; and training for teachers and parents. The core elements of the program are early childhood education (ECE) teacher training and experiential learning on the relationship between ECD and peacebuilding, the acquisition of prejudice and the tools to create a culture of respect for difference; age and culturally appropriate learning materials for children; child-friendly media messages; parental support programs and experiential learning; and community dialogue.

By promoting respect for differences relating to ethnicity, gender, and disability, and engaging parents (including fathers) from minority and majority ethnic/linguistic backgrounds, the ECD programs are expected to promote horizontal social cohesion by reducing negative stereotypes and prejudices held about different groups, promoting, and increasing positive intergroup contact, and building trust between different groups of people. The programs also have the potential to contribute to vertical social cohesion in the longer term by building trust in and improving engagement with social service providers and local government services. There is also the possibility that the program will be part of a national scale-up of preschool services in both countries. The specific social cohesion domains targeted by the program are attitudes toward ethnic diversity and inclusiveness (identity, belonging, and inclusion; social distance and relations), parental engagement (engagement), and engagement between people from different ethnic backgrounds (social distance and relations).

The above example demonstrates how preschool programs can incorporate a focus on social cohesion in an age-appropriate way and facilitate children to be active agents of change by challenging existing divisions and breaking down barriers between different groups in society from an early age. Preschool programs can also act as pathways for engaging educators and parents in social cohesion work, not only in terms of supporting children but also in terms of providing opportunities for them to challenge their attitudes and prejudices and promote positive intergroup contact with individuals from a variety of backgrounds. The use of the media also creates widespread awareness and support for the program across the wider community.

17.2.2 Measuring Social Cohesion

This next section provides a brief overview of the development and adaptation of social cohesion measures for use as part of the LINKS project. Despite a long history of measuring social cohesion and peacebuilding, this effort has not often been directed toward measuring the various outcomes in the context of high-quality effective ECD services. To address this gap, the LINKS project undertook the development of social cohesion measures that can be applied to ECD and social cohesion and peacebuilding in a range of contexts. The development of the social cohesion measures was informed by the Education, Peacebuilding and Social Cohesion (EPSC) Assessment Framework (Pham & Vinck, 2017) and supported by the framework developers in the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative. The EPSC Assessment Framework is not a static scale or measurement tool, rather it provides an approach for identifying priorities, monitoring the progress of programs or services, and serving as an engagement tool in consulting with stakeholders (Pham & Vinck, 2017).

Following the identification of target social cohesion domains and expected outcomes for each program, questionnaires were developed to measure the various outcomes for different groups of participants (i.e., children, parents, teachers). For example, in Mali, Viet Nam, and Timor-Leste, a common focus across each of the ECD programs was on improving support and solidarity, engagement, and trust. Therefore, the social cohesion questionnaires used in these countries included questions designed to measure outcomes within each of these domains. The social cohesion questionnaires used in Mali and Viet Nam also included questions designed to assess social distance and relations outcomes as this was a specific focus of the ECD programs in these two countries, but not in Timor-Leste. Although there were similarities in the questionnaires used to assess social cohesion outcomes in each of these countries, the specific questions used were designed to ensure that they were culturally and contextually appropriate for each country and ECD program.

In addition to developing new social cohesion questionnaires for some of the programs, questionnaires that were designed to measure respect for differences relating to ethnicity, gender, and disability were adapted from the evaluation of the Media Initiative Respecting Difference program in Northern Ireland for use in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. In adapting these measures, specific consideration was given to the cultural symbols included in the measure to ensure that they were relevant to the Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan contexts. For example, in Northern Ireland flags are a symbol of affiliation to specific ethnoreligious groups with a long history of conflict; therefore, in the original measure, flags were used to assess preferences related to these ethnoreligious groups. However, the use of flags as a cultural symbol was not appropriate for the Kyrgyz and Tajik contexts. Instead, cultural symbols that were embedded in the ECD programs in these countries, such as national dress and musical instruments, were used.

The social cohesion measures developed and adapted as part of the LINKS network have been piloted in each of the partner countries and provide an important first step in evaluating social cohesion outcomes in the context of ECD programs in

LMICs affected by conflict. The future work of LINKS will involve further testing of these measures to support the development of a global evaluation and measurement tool to support ECD for social cohesion programming and evaluations.

17.2.3 Program Adaptation and Social Cohesion

Just as the nature of conflict varies from one context to the next, so too do social cohesion priorities. Therefore, interventions must be aligned to maximize their impact in terms of setting, goals, and purpose (Glasgow et al., 1999). Taking into account that it is often the case that interventions are somewhat context-specific (Burchett et al., 2018), and that programs that are not adapted to context tend to be less effective (Sundell et al., 2016), the LINKS project adopts a realist approach, attempting to understand what works for whom, how, and under what conditions, rather than just relying on programs that have been shown to work previously (Pawson & Tilley, 1997). One of the greatest strengths of the LINKS project is its international network as it has facilitated exploration of the relationship between ECD and social cohesion across a range of different contexts.

For some of the programs, there was already an explicit focus on social cohesion constructs within the program content (Case Study 1) while for others, adaptations were made to program content (Case Study 2) or the mechanisms through which the programs were delivered (Case Study 3). The following case studies highlight some work that has been undertaken to date to adapt ECD programs to local contexts and embed a focus on social cohesion outcomes.

17.2.3.1 Case Study 2: Embedding Social Cohesion in Program Content in Viet Nam

Viet Nam (officially Socialist Republic of Viet Nam) has a population of 96.4 million and is located in South East Asia, sharing land borders with China, Laos, and Cambodia. After gaining independence from France in 1945, the country endured years of protracted violent conflict, including the “VietNam War,” which resulted in millions of deaths and severely impacted the country’s economy. However, since the introduction of new economic policies in 1986, Viet Nam has transitioned from one of the world’s poorest countries to a lower-middle-income country (United Nations Children’s Fund, 2019c). In more recent years, the government in Viet Nam has adopted a nurturing care framework for ECD and was among the first of the LINKS’ partner countries to embed social cohesion priorities in national policy.

The Holistic Parenting Program (HPP) is being implemented in Viet Nam as one part of the nationwide integrated early childhood development (IECD) strategy. The HPP is delivered by communal, and village-trained facilitators to parents of children aged from birth to 8 years of age through community-based parenting clubs which are held at the community and village levels and take place weekly over

8 weeks for 4 months. The HPP was adapted from the “Nobody’s Perfect” parenting program, a national Canadian parenting program for parents of children up to 5 years of age who were socially and geographically isolated. The original program provided parental education and support to encourage early healthy childhood development. Evaluations of the “Nobody’s Perfect” program in Canada showed that attendance at the program improved parental resourcefulness, parent-child interactions, and parental self-efficacy. However, these evaluations did not include a control group, and the specificity of the program to the Canadian context makes it difficult to generalize the findings to other contexts. Despite these limitations, there is some evidence to suggest that the “Nobody’s Perfect” program is effective at improving parental outcomes, and the program has since been extended and adapted for use in low- and middle-income countries, including the Dominican Republic and the current program (HPP) in Viet Nam.

The HPP was adapted with the support of a professional early year consultant, and specialist programmatic input from Early Years. Drawing on their experience of designing Early Years programs in CACs, Early Years provided expert advice on the adaptation of the program to ensure its core components facilitated social cohesion between individuals, families, and communities. The main purpose of the HPP is to promote social cohesion through community engagement and enhanced support and solidarity within families and between communities. It teaches parents about healthy child development and directs them to relevant, local early child development services which can provide necessary support and promote greater community engagement. The program also promotes positive discipline methods aiming to reduce the occurrence of physical punishment and encourage positive relationships between children and their caregivers. The parenting groups are composed of parents from different ethnic and household economic backgrounds facilitating a forum for greater engagement and improved relationships with other caregivers from different ethnic and household economic backgrounds.

17.2.3.2 Case Study 3: Promoting Social Cohesion Through Program Delivery in Mali

Mali (officially Republic of Mali) is a landlocked country located in West Africa and has a population of more than 19 million people, with approximately 75% living in rural areas. Over half of the population are aged below 18, and around 17% below the age of 5. Mali is one of the poorest countries in the world with an estimated 44% of the population living below the poverty line. In recent years, the country has experienced several humanitarian crises, including the ongoing conflict and security issues in the north and central regions, as well as dealing with one of the highest under-5 mortality rates (10.1%) in the world (United Nations Children’s Fund, 2019d).

In Mali, the focus is a community-based program, *Mama Yeleen* (role model mother), in which women from the community are trained to provide advice and support to new and newly expectant mothers. The focus of the program is the child’s

first 1000 days; however, part of the role is also encouraging mothers to take their children to ECD centers, so necessarily this includes mothers with older children as well. The program's overall aim is to establish a caregiving community and to improve positive parenting practices and reduce parental stress. Fathers are both a direct and indirect target of the program. The Mama Yeleen program also aims to establish women networks capable of serving as platforms of reflection on women and family issues, for outreach to women throughout their communities, and for providing mutual support.

Mama Yeleen was an existing initiative supported by UNICEF and had been piloted in several regions across the country before partnering with LINKS. The focus of this partnership was on incorporating social cohesion into the program by diluting existing program content or sacrificing any of the core messaging around child and maternal health. Instead, the roll-out of phase two of the program on a larger scale and in new locations provided an opportunity to incorporate intergroup contact, which has the potential to reduce intergroup prejudice (Pettigrew et al., 2011), by bringing together women from different backgrounds, including class, culture, and ethnicity. Specifically, the delivery mechanism for Mama Yeleen aims to facilitate contact between women who are participating in the Mama Yeleen program with women within the same communities who are not directly participating in the program and establishing relationships between women from different communities and ethnic groups who are participating in the program. This approach aims to foster community engagement, reduce social distance, and improve relations between different ethnic groups and increase support and solidarity within and between communities and strengthen vertical social cohesion between the Mama Yeleen groups and local and regional governments.

The above examples demonstrate the potential for adapting existing ECD programs to incorporate a social cohesion focus that is relevant to the local context, as well as different approaches to program adaptation. Engagement with country teams from the outset was key to ensuring that adaptations were done to the highest possible standard. In line with best practice, discussions with stakeholders, observations, and reviews of existing work were used to explore the feasibility of adaptations in each context (Bonell et al., 2020) and to avoid potential negative outcomes for participants (Loren & Oliver, 2014). Teams also continued to observe and monitor implementation to ensure that interventions could be fine-tuned and continue to evolve, as is often the case when interventions are put in place to respond to a crisis or urgent need (Warsame et al., 2020).

17.2.4 Reflections and Key Learning from the LINKS Project

This section reflects on some of the challenges encountered in undertaking a global research project in CACs, as well as the key learning that arose from these challenges. This will be of particular interest to researchers planning to undertake similar activities in CACs, as well as policymakers, program developers, and funders

responsible for commissioning these activities. It will also be of interest to other scholars in terms of contextualizing existing and emerging research findings from CACs. Reflecting one of the key priorities of the funder for each of its Global Health Research Groups, LINKS has a strong emphasis on capacity building and collaboration. The work of the project to date has demonstrated and reinforced that considerable strength can be drawn from existing in-country expertise and the inclusion of in-country teams in key decision-making. However, when undertaking collaborative research, especially when collaborations comprise high-income countries (HIC) and LMIC partners, it is important to be cognizant of and try to mitigate inherent power imbalances (Addo-Atuah et al., 2020). In fact, one of the key challenges in undertaking this project was deciding how best to manage and develop effective partnerships with a global network of researchers from diverse backgrounds and how to do this remotely and sensitively from a HIC context.

One of the greatest successes of the LINKS project to date is the strength of its global network, not just in terms of the breadth and depth of subject expertise it encompasses but also the collegiality and working relationships it has fostered across a wide range of social, economic, and cultural contexts. Managing a global network has not been without its challenges, including time zone conflicts, language, and cultural barriers, and competing work priorities. However, regular, meaningful contact, including in-person country visits, regular team meetings via online platforms, and the project's signature research network meetings (RNMs) have ensured that these challenges did not become barriers. Country visits provided an opportunity for the core UK-based team from Lancaster University and QUB to meet with the in-country research teams, UNICEF country office program leads, and other key stakeholders, and learn about the local context and social cohesion priorities. During the RNMs, the whole network (including the core team, in-country research teams, and various strategic partners) came together twice a year for 3 days to share experiences and updates and to engage in training and capacity building. Investing in meaningful engagement from the outset provided a strong foundation from which to build and maintain long-lasting partnerships.

Reflecting the need to actively manage the power imbalance of a HIC/LMIC collaboration, wherein the HIC institutions oversee research plans in each country and manage project finances, the core LINKS team has strongly advocated for shared ownership throughout the collaboration process. For example, each in-country research team led the development of a situational analysis outlining key features of their context, including conflict analysis, an overview of ECD provision and social cohesion, and peacebuilding priorities. These reports were instrumental in informing program adaptations and research plans for each setting. Each country team was also actively involved in agreeing and refining the evaluation measures for each program through a process of constructive dialogue with the core team and other strategic partners. In addition to ensuring the cultural appropriateness of measures (such as the example of cultural symbols in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan), the country teams also led and coordinated the fieldwork in their respective settings, often responding to challenging weather conditions, including the rainy season in Timor-Leste and temperatures above 40 degrees Celsius in Mali. The country teams also

trained fieldworkers, piloted measures, and reported on their suitability and managed the data collection and input process for each stage of the evaluation, with ongoing support and advice from the core team throughout, ensuring that local expertise and knowledge were guided by high-quality evidence-based approaches.

Embedding shared ownership as a core feature of the LINKS project also guided the team's approach to capacity building which evolved from a focus on building capacity within partner country teams to recognizing and engaging with opportunities for mutual capacity building across the network. The RNMs provided dedicated time for the core team and country researchers to further develop and refine research plans, as well as opportunities to learn from other colleagues in the network about the work they were undertaking in their respective fields. This included presentations from the partner country teams and training delivered by strategic partners with expertise in the areas of early childhood, social cohesion, and innovative research methods. These sessions benefitted the entire network, including novice researchers and subject experts alike by developing a shared understanding of the unique and common features of the ECD programs and social cohesion priorities in each setting, and the necessity of adopting a pragmatic and realist approach to the research (Dhillon & Vaca, 2018; Kabongo et al., 2020). A detailed discussion of the importance of approaching capacity building as an ongoing, dynamic, and mutually beneficial process is beyond the scope of this chapter but should be a key consideration when undertaking collaborative research projects with partners in LMICs and CACs.

17.3 Conclusion

By supporting and evaluating ECD programs that include a focus on social cohesion, the LINKS project will contribute to existing evidence on the importance and measurement of this important pillar of sustainable development. It will also highlight the utility of locally adapted programs (Barrera et al., 2017) and inform decision-making around ECD programs in terms of quality and access (Britto et al., 2011). As a result of this project, a global network of researchers and early childhood specialists has been established to promote social cohesion and peacebuilding through high-quality ECD programs. Considerable capacity has been built within and across the network, ready to be mobilized and applied to new contexts and challenges. Ultimately, the strength of this global partnership will be its collective voice in disseminating the findings of this work through international engagement and advocacy to bring about positive change in ECD practice and policy (Britto et al., 2017).

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