Chapter 12
Trust, Ethics, and Intentionality in Conflict Transformation and Reconciliation

Amal Jamal

Introduction

This chapter examines trust in the context of the Palestinian–Israeli conflict. Trust is important in the inception and development of conflict and therefore also in its resolution. Trust is an inherent factor in all social relations, therefore, it is important to identify any assumptions about these relations that are contingent by trust, especially, if we are to understand the breakdown of trust and its contributions to conflict. Important questions in this regard are who the subject of trust is, and how this presupposed subject determines the meaning, scope and reciprocity of trust. In order to understand this we must contextualize trust and view it from within the particularities of the power structure in which trust is examined. Examining trust in the context Palestinian–Israeli conflict, in which two traumatized groups are engaged in a bloody conflict, wherein distrust has become deeply rooted in both societies' existential self-perceptions becomes an essential task for the resolution of the conflict.

This paper cannot and will not delve into the history of the conflict. Rather, it will explore the deep-seated meanings and perceptions of trust among Palestinian Arabs and Israeli Jews. It argues that the first encounter in settler colonial realities is crucial in the development of the relationship between indigenous populations and settlers. Therefore, Israeli–Palestinian distrust is rooted in the groups' initial encounter, based on their previously established perceptions of trust and the experiences that follow—violence and counterviolence—which condition and continue today's atmosphere of distrust. It also argues that the *face* of the other—cultural and performative—embodied threats and fears that were translated into violent clashes between the two groups. It soon became clear after the groups' initial encounter that their collective self-perceptions are mutually exclusive and

A. Jamal (✉)
Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, Israel
e-mail: ajamal1962@gmail.com

that their attachment to the place which they view as their respective homeland is incongruous. The subsequent encounters between the two sides, in which each side verified that the other could not accommodate their aspirations, deepened this mistrust and institutionalized the conflict as we know it today (Huneidi 2001; Gorny 1987). This means that only by facilitating a new kind of encounter, based on different self-perceptions, can we lead these groups to change.

That said, the paper argues that Palestinians had no reason to distrust Jewish immigrants, given that they were the majority of the population of Palestine, which is integral part of a greater Arab world; and given the small number of Jewish immigrants, who lacked the proper institutions to change the reality on the ground. One could thus argue that the Palestinian view of Jews was based on an open and forthcoming perception of trust. In contrast, Jewish immigrants came to Palestine with a different self-perception and a different perception of the indigenous Palestinians (Gorny 1987). They were less trusting as they were motivated by the culmination of their traumatic experiences, their rising national sentiments and their close ethno-communal and religious orientation. These different perceptions of trust are deeply rooted in the cultural and existential understandings of both sides. Therefore, the development of the conflict and the relations between the two groups were fed by their deep-seated perceptions of trust and the experiences that followed their first encounters. This argument means that trust has functional as well as ethical dimensions that play an important role in protracted conflict. Our understanding of both dimensions of trust is indispensable for any effort to transform the relationship between Jews and Palestinians (Bar-Tal 2013).

The paper explores the meanings of the concepts of trust among both groups and demonstrates that these sets of concepts are based on two different perceptions of ontological and existential security that shaped the initial and subsequent encounters between them (Wright 2010). Following the genealogy of trust in this conflictual context demonstrates that it has realist-functionalist as well as ethical dimensions (Saevi and Eikeland 2012; Fukuyama 1995). These perceptions reflected in the literature on trust demonstrate that different perceptions of trust are related to both different *self*-perceptions and perceptions of others (Keren 2014; Bar-Tal 2013).

Therefore one must distinguish between the various meanings of trust in facilitating settlement, conflict resolution, and reconciliation, if one is to draw any conclusions as to its viability in affecting change (Murphy 2010; Dwyer 1999; Bar-Tal 2000). These processes differ greatly with regard to their goals and psychological dynamics and thus cannot be applied interchangeably. Conflict settlement is strategic and seeks formal, political mechanisms for the eradication of open hostility or violence or as some put it, "peaceful coexistence" (Worchel and Coutant 2008). It does not seek to eradicate structural imbalance between conflicted parties, nor does it attempt to address their long-term needs or a sustainable resolution. In contrast, conflict resolution addresses the underlying causes of conflict and seeks to promote reciprocity and equality, especially with regard to the basic needs of both parties (Rouhana, 2011; Kelman 1998). It does not, however, facilitate a truly sustainable and context-sensitive reading of conflictual relationships, which more

often than not are characterized by asymmetric power relations, long-standing human rights violations and complex psychological and existential dimensions (Schaap 2005; Cohen and Insko 2008). Reconciliation, however, is and should be the ultimate goal if we are to pursue a lasting and effective route to the end of the Palestinian–Israeli conflict.

The root of such a goal—reconciliation that is lasting and effective—is an effective operationalization of trust, requiring one to take into consideration its roles and various dimensions, how they are conceptualized by both parties, and how such conceptualizations interact with various environmental and political elements; only then can it take hold and facilitate a viable and sustainable outcome. The following pages demonstrate that trust is of the utmost importance to reconciliation, especially in the present context, which is characterized by two groups with not only separate, but also contradictory ideologies, narratives and goals. Previous efforts to promote reconciliation between these parties have failed largely because they did not take into consideration the perspectives of *both* parties and the unique character of their trust in negotiating the differences between their respective ideologies and narratives (Jamal 2013). The meanings of trust utilized by both parties, which greatly complement those of the other, must be reconciled by introducing bridging values and convictions that help render the conflict more manageable. This does not and should not mean that the conflict over land and resources are not important, but rather that the conflict is even deeper, since the parties of conflict seem to differ on the basic symbolic and psychological understanding of their mutual realities.

We begin with an overview of the conceptualizations of trust in the literature. The ways in which these different conceptualizations promote certain psychological processes in their various contexts reveal the importance of defining and characterizing trust before operationalizing it in the context of reconciliation. Next, we delve into the particularistic conceptualizations of trust for Palestinians and Israelis, drawing upon their respective linguistic, historical and strategic elements. Finally, we operationalize and evaluate these conceptualizations in the context of the two parties involved. These case studies connect Israeli and Palestinian conceptualizations of trust to the elements needed for reconciliation—the amelioration of structural imbalance or asymmetry and the promotion of a justiciable reading of the conflict—and thus reveal the inherent flaws in past efforts at conflict resolution and reconciliation in an effort to move forward with a new approach.

Conceptualizations of Trust and Its Centrality in Conflict Transformation

Trust has been characterized in the literature as a multifaceted concept encompassing a range of interpersonal elements such as benevolence and vulnerability (Balliet and Van Lange 2013), expectation and commitment (Blackstock 2001),

identity (Druckman and Olekalns 2013), belief (Govier and Verwoerd 2002), and respect (Murphy 2010).

Many scholars agree that trust is about the "willingness to be vulnerable" (Mayer et al. 1995). This means that trust forms a very sensitive sociopsychological arena according to which we are willing to expose ourselves to the free conduct of others, assumes that they behave with good intentions and therefore will not cause us harm (Dickson 2009). This vulnerability requires an inherent risk that relates deeply to the parties' past experiences and histories of interactions (Molm et al. 2009). Despite this history of interaction, we "go beyond what we know" in future interactions, and rely on others, based on their appearance and our beliefs based on this appearance. The role of trust becomes even more complex in social relations when we speak of relations between groups (Sztompka 1999). In such contexts, the chances of taking risks or the willingness to be vulnerable is conditioned by our own precautions, based on the existing power relations (Möllering 2005; Davidson et al. 2004). This means that trust is a result of a relational interaction. It is "lived, felt, and experienced as positively given, when spontaneously it appears" (Saevi and Eikeland 2012: 93). Trust is a "sovereign expression of life" (Løgstrup 1997, 113), due to the fact that it can transform a situation, by freeing people involved in a given interaction from being bounded.

Many scholars of trust view it primarily from its functionalist dimension, as a way to reduce complexity in a situation of risk and uncertainty (Luhmann 1968; Giddens 1990). According to this understanding trust helps in simplifying the number of choices we face and expanding our possibilities of action (Luhmann 1968). Saevi and Eikeland (2012) criticize scholars that reduce trust to its functional role. According to such role "[t]rust seems to be interpreted from its desired outcome, rather than from the ambiguous meaning embedded in the trusting act itself" (Ibid).

Notwithstanding the importance of the functionalist approach, one cannot ignore the ethical concept of trust (Myskja 2008). This understanding of trust places it at the center of morality, since it is based on human vulnerability, as a starting point (Uslaner 2002; Løgstrup 1997). This vulnerability is what makes trust an ethical issue. Myskja argues that "[t]rust is on the receiving end of ethical behavior in the sense that trusting someone involves an appeal that they take responsibility for our well-being—but without any guarantee that they actually will…" (2008: 214). Based on this understanding, proximity is central for establishing trust. Such understanding makes bodily presence in the encounter between people crucial for the ethical meaning of trust. Levinas made this point clear when he spoke of the experience of the *face* of the other as basis for human responsibility, and connects this to human vulnerability (Levinas 1969). He argues that we face difficulties in establishing trust in "disembodied" relations, since we are not presented to each other as truly vulnerable and in need of protection (ibid). Accordingly, trusting each other is a fact of the human condition. It is the norm. Therefore, *distrust* becomes a phenomenon that needs explanation since it is a result of a failure of the normal condition of human society. It is distrust that should be explained, if we are to

understand society. This makes trust central in understanding conflictual relations, raising questions as to the origins of mistrust.

Having pointed out these two understandings of trust and mistrust, it is important to address their place in conflict, especially their relationship with other aspects of conflictual interaction, such its main cultural and material dimensions. Conflict theory has clarified that the cultural and sociopsychological dimensions of conflict are not less but more important than the materials ones. This makes trust a salient issue in conflict analysis. The willingness to assume risk is deeply related to past experiences of groups in conflict, which could be examined through cultural and symbolic codifications embodied in language and discourse of the parties involved in conflict. Experience is an ontological given that conditions our behavior and is interpreted by relating it to relevant features of context. This perception makes the relevance of past experience to our understanding of trust indispensable. When speaking of individuals or groups that experienced traumatic events, such as expulsion, genocide or ethnic cleansing, the persistence of memory of past experiences becomes a strong factor influencing relations with others.

In the context of conflict, the various facets of trust become important to distinguish, as they mitigate certain aspects of the conflicted parties' relationships, such as the impact of their political affiliations, transaction costs, power, and dependence (Druckman and Olekalns 2013; Wu and Laws 2003). Because scholars of conflict recognize the multifarious nature of trust and that it is relationally determined—in other words, it does not exist independent of its context, but as a *product* of its context—it also becomes important when examining state-society relations and democratic institutions, which require trust at all levels of interaction in an effort to stimulate political participation and voluntary compliance with the law and its institutions (Lenard 2008; Jabareen and Carmon 2010). One of the questions that comes to mind in conflict contexts is whether trust forms a precondition for conflict resolution or if it could be built after a rational agreement is achieved based on the existing power structure between the involved parties. It seems that answering this question requires us to delve deeply not only into the scholarly literature about trust, but also to examine the meaning of trust in particular conflictual contexts in an attempt to deduce the role of trust in conflict situations and its transformation in conflict resolution and reconciliation.

Trust as Self-interest Vs. Benevolence

The competing dynamics of benevolence and self-interest are replete throughout the literature on negotiation and conflict resolution. Such conceptualizations of trust are centered around the inherent dynamics of trust which are predicated upon expectations of an 'other' and the benefit to oneself (self-interest) or 'the other' (benevolence) (Yamagishi 2011). Within this conceptual framework, *assurance,* a form of trust which eradicates elements of the unknown, is instrumental in identifying and mediating other dynamics in the negotiation process, such as prudence,

instrumental trust, and calculated trust. Similarly, many scholars who emphasize the benevolent aspects of trust develop similar frameworks of interaction such as hope, "maxim-based trust" and relationship-based trust (Fink and Kessler 2010; James 2002; Lau and Cobb 2010).

This framework is among the most complex and layered of the types of trust because it draws upon unique contextual variables in conflict settings. Studies show that benevolence is mitigated by trust, but mostly so far as it provides parties assurance of favorable behavior (Bhattacharya et al. 1998; McKnight et al. 1998; Druckman and Olekalns 2013; Balliet and Van Lange 2013). Similarly, honesty and deception in conflictual relationships are only employed when they are instrumental to achieving one's goals (Ellingsen et al. 2009). Therefore, while trust as benevolence may on the one hand be conceived as "being nice" and cooperative, such behavior is often predicated by selfish motives and the belief that the other party will assist oneself in attaining the desired goals (Lahno 1995).

In the context of protracted interactions, these behaviors are complicated and often enhanced, as the reputation of 'the other'—based on repeated interaction and generalized expectations, rather than individual actions and the immediate past—can increase benevolence. Studies show that parties even in a conflictual context are more likely to forego short-term advantages and resist deception or counterproductive behavior if the other party possesses a favorable or "trustworthy" reputation; even in the absence of information about past behavior or transgressions (Lahno 1995). It logically follows that the mediating benefits of trust in the unknown become important as they are inextricably linked to the likelihood that one will bestow benevolence upon the other.

Trust as Compassion

Trust, as it relates to compassion, carries with it a number of findings that serve to illustrate the complexity of trust, especially in the context of conflict. Compassion, as conceived as the opposite of anger and diametrically opposed to competition, was found in an experimental setting to be mitigated by trust, but *not* distrust (Liu and Wang 2010). On the other hand, anger was shown to be mitigated by *distrust*, as opposed to trust. Further, conceptualizations of trust with regard to emotions like anger, compassion, or empathy therefore demonstrate that distrust is not merely trust's absence, but a "distinct psychological process associated with different antecedents and consequences" (Liu and Wang 2010; Nadler and Liviatan 2006). From Liu and Wang's (2010) study we can therefore infer that the emotional state of negotiators has a direct link to outcomes and this link can only be *bolstered* by the presence of trust or distrust, not eradicated or reversed. This fact is important in the context of conflict resolution, as it demonstrates that practitioners cannot superficially impose policy to improve trust without first addressing its roots, which is often emotion. These findings further support a relational and multifaceted conceptualization of trust.

Trust as Responsibility

The assumption of responsibility by either party to conflict is seen by most scholars as essential to reconciliation (Kelman 2005; Çelebi et al. 2014). In this regard, conceptualizations of trust and expectation in negotiations based on the assumption of responsibility have also helped to illustrate its impact on other contextual elements of conflict.

For example, the assumption of responsibility within in-group dynamics has been shown to facilitate reconciliation processes, whereas the assignment of responsibility to the out-group impedes out-group trust (Çelebi et al. 2014). With regard to the assumption of responsibility for violence and the inception of the conflict, this is especially true. Mutual and sustainable trust in protracted, violent conflict is thus essential and can only serve to overcome conflict if both parties reframe the way in which they conceive of the conflict and accept responsibility (Bar-Tal 2013; Çelebi et al. 2014).

Tying these findings to the aforementioned findings on emotion and empathy, one's own acceptance of responsibility is often perceived by 'the other' as out-group empathy. Both responsibility and empathy, as well as the misperceptions thereof, are both mitigated by trust (Nadler and Liviatan 2006). In other words, empathy and acceptance of responsibility independently impact parties' abilities to achieve reconciliation and this achievement is further facilitated by trust; however, trust also positively mitigates parties' evaluations of the other as empathetic which also furthers efforts toward reconciliation. Interestingly, these findings also showed that *the appearance of empathy* is a greater determinant of reconciliation than actual acceptance of responsibility, illustrating that accepting responsibility and apologies are not "a magic wand" to erase past wrongdoings—they must be sincere and evince an emotional response by the other (Ibid).

Trust as Inclusivity

Inclusivity toward the out-group in negotiations has been found to facilitate effective negotiation in conflictual situations, despite high transaction costs (Druckman and Olekalns 2013). Inclusivity in conflict resolution most often equates to the abandonment of dichotomous in-group/out-group frames (Druckman and Olekalns 2013; Dovidio et al. 2007; Gaertner and Dovidio 2000; Çelebi et al. 2014). In protracted conflict, it may also include social and psychological processes akin to assimilation, even when acceptance of 'the other' is one-sided (Çelebi et al. 2014). In viewing 'the other' through this latter frame, studies show the impact of inclusivity on negotiations was so strong that it effectively eliminates the impact of contextual or environmental variables, even following a crisis (Druckman and Olekalns 2013). In other words, the assumption of 'the other' as 'one of us' changes the entire character of the negotiation process and enables parties to view issues

from a new perspective that is "immune to cris[is]" (Druckman and Olekalns 2013, 980). This means that the embedded understanding of groupness in conflict situations becomes very important in deconstructing conflictual relations and facilitating reconciliation.

Within in-group relations, where a dominant out-group exercises control of the subordinate in-group (i.e., Gazans or West Bank Palestinians vis-à-vis Israelis), there are also benefits to fostering inclusivity between and beyond one's immediate ethnic or religious group that can be generalized to the broader conflict. Jabareen and Carmon's (2010) concept of "Communities of Trust," which relies on fundamentals of community planning, outlines five characteristics necessary for coexistence in violent or threatening conflictual contexts. Shared beliefs, whether religious, traditional or a common "community ethos" are essential to building stability within in-group relations. One might also infer that the same would be true for parties in conflict trying to affect the common in-group identity model. Along these lines, communities of trust also include shared perceptions of risk (or the assumption of a common enemy), shared interests, shared daily life practices (both informal social interaction and formal practices, such as governmental or procedural interaction) and shared space (Jabareen and Carmon 2010).

It is important in this regard to note that the importance of trust in conflict resolution is apparent at all levels of conflict, not merely at the top where formal agreements are made. Trust as inclusivity necessitates a transformation at the community level which both preserves individual and pluralistic traditions and forms the foundation of a shared identity.

Palestinian and Israeli Conceptualizations of Trust

In the following pages, we delve into the etymology of trust in Arabic and Hebrew, demonstrating that the different perceptions of trust can explain, at least partially, the sources and dynamics of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. Examining the etymology of trust is an important venture, since we are talking about two very similar Semitic languages that have experienced a long period of proximity throughout history and have also been rendered the "language of the enemy" since the beginning of the conflict. This analysis demonstrates that Jews and Palestinians have come to interact, not only having different experiences with strangers, but also diverse perceptions of trust that conditioned the nature of their interaction from the start and molded their relations for the future to come.

Trust as Embedded in Arabic, Arab History, and Culture

Trust has been examined from various perspectives and in different contexts in Arab societies (Jamal, 2007b; Bohnet et al. 2010a, b). Two major fields addressed

are political democratization and business interactions (Ibid). These studies differentiate between cultural and performance-based perceptions of trust established in the literature (Jamal 2007b) and provide valuable findings on the dynamics and centrality of trust in the political and economic life. Notwithstanding the importance of these studies, they do not address the varied conceptualizations of trust in Arab culture and society. As argued earlier, there is a need to delve into these meanings in Arab–Palestinian society in order to reveal its impact on the encounter with Jewish immigrants in Palestine.

The meaning of trust in Arabic may be drawn from two different sources (see also the extensive discussion in the chapter of Alon in the present volume). The first is *thiqah* and the second is *E'a'timan*. *Thiqah* is the common meaning or "immediate" meaning of trust in Arabic. The root of *thiqah* is *"wathaqa,"* which means "tying things together." This means that to trust someone means to be "tied to her or him," in a way that assures compliance with the common cultural codes in the social context (Gregg 2005; Zayour 1987). This meaning of trust refers to a bond, as an inherent dimension of the relationship between the parties that trust each other. In this regard, the bond between the parties cannot be untied or dissolved easily. It is based on "a tying act," which may be achieved initially by free will, but later becomes obliging and the parties are not free or cannot easily untie it. This meaning of trust does not entail separation, since the ties lead to the merging—at least of certain dimensions—of the sides involved. Such a merging is about crafting a new reality in which either side may not necessarily feel comfortable, but have no choice but to interact, based on an ethical grounding. This meaning draws us back to the above discussion about self-interest and benevolence on the one hand and ethical responsibility on the other. Trust as *thiqah* entails all these dimensions, but assumes the good intentions of others as a starting point of the relationship. It is true that the tie between the parties could be motivated by self-interest, but it could simultaneously or consecutively develop new ethical dimensions that are deeply related to benevolence and responsibility.

The root *wathaqa* is deeply affiliated with the concept of *wathiqah*, which means document or contract. The affinity between trust and contract is deeply rooted in Arab culture, entailing the mutuality of the relationship, which gives people full security, as reflected by Athar ben Dorah Al-Taa'i who states that "[a] tie that cannot be untied without permission, since we do not demand from other peoples to sign an agreement" (Ibn Manzur 1883). The ties entailed in *wathiqah* could not but be constructive to all parties involved, despite the fact that the tie may sound a forced one. This lack of flexibility reflects the reality of tribal Arab societies in which members are mutually committed to each other, according to norms and customs established along the years (Bohnet et al. 2010a). This type of unwritten contract is still dominant in the Arab familial structures, preserving a deep component of traditional tribal society even in urban areas and modern social structures (Sharabi 1988).

The contractual dimension of society means that different people share the same space, despite differences between them. This means that difference makes the contract necessary in order to facilitate the mutual commitments and regulate the

interactions between members of the community, based on the accepted norms and customs (Bohnet et al. 2010b). In other words, they must find a way to get along and open new channels of communication that can change the mere ontological reality into a shared, ethical one. For such a process to occur the *Wathiqah*— contract—must be established and actively transformed into one that is both inclusive and compassionate (Ibn Manzur 1883). This means that members of the community or those willing to join the contract are trusted and given the trust-worthiness necessary in order to be part of the community.

The second meaning of trust is Arabic is *E'a'timan*, which is rooted in *A'mn* (security or the opposite of fear). The meaning of this concept broadens the scope of Arab perceptions of trust, since it also entails several layers on which we elaborated in order to understand the ethical and functionalist dimensions of trust. The first dimension is the concept *Amn,* or security, in the ontological sense. This means that trust entails feelings of security and entrusting someone with your own security. It assumes the presence of insecurity on the one hand and of an Other that is a possible threat, on the other. These assumptions lead us to the conclusion that if I am to entrust someone with my security, I must be fully confident that the entrusted party will not cause me harm and will be loyal to my initial intentions, which brought me to trust them in the first place. This meaning entails the responsibility of an ethical Other or the presence of guarantees in the form of norms, customs, or habits granting the entrusting person the peace needed in social interactions (Barakat, 1993). In this context, *A'man*—being secure—becomes an individual or collective reality that lacks the anxiety, embedded in the state of nature, described by Thomas Hobbes or the state of uncivility known in modern social reality (Hobbes 2010; Burnell and Calvert 2004). This meaning of trust addresses the eagerness or basic need for security, stability and tranquility, as reflected in the related concept *A'amenah,* meaning being secure. This meaning assumes the existence of mechanisms of dealing with danger, a topic that has been central in the philosophical and psychological literature on trust (Myskja 2008). It is also a social phenomenon that involves two or more people, who live in proximity and carry the potential to engage with one another either proactively or regressively, with danger.

Having covered the multidimensionality of trust in Arabic language and culture, and showing that it is deeply tied to civility, we may view trust as one of the most important dimensions of political life. Aristotle's *Politics* paid great attention to the importance of trust in establishing civil life and in the development and protection of the common good. Trust as E'a'timan places one's security—even life—in the hands of an Other, assuming a common life to be shared, which must be mutually protected through the active participation in the maintenance of security of the collective (Arendt 1998).

Thomas Hobbes was among the first political philosophers to emphasize the relationship between entrusting a political authority with our security and freedom (Hobbes 2010). According to Hobbes, the act of trust is intrinsic in fear, which forms one of the main motivations in human behavior. The psychology of fear leads human beings to give up on one of the most precious characteristics of human life, namely freedom. In other words, entrusting somebody with our security mirrors the

discussion of self-interest and benevolence above. It is the self-interest of security that leads to the compassionate relationship between the parties involved in this relationship. But one cannot ignore the centrality of the power relations entailed in such a relationship. It is guaranteeing security that motivates people's behavior in uncertain circumstances. This is true in encountering people we do not know and have no common experience with and attempting to recognize their intentions. Security in such situations is not only physical and individual. Our mere being is questioned, something that makes the existential meaning of trust present.

Trust as *E'a'timan* entails another dimension related to *A'manah*, which has two interrelated meanings (Ibn Manzur 1883). The first is trusteeship, honesty, decency, truthfulness, and faithfulness. Being honest, truthful, and faithful is an important dimension of the ethical and functional meaning of trust. This meaning sets a clear precondition on the types of relationship one can develop with an Other. The mere construction of good and friendly relations assumes honesty to be a central building block that relaxes the relations and make them smooth and reliable. In relations of trust based on honesty, each of the sides can not only rely on the other, but also be sure that no matter what happens the other will represent the relations in a positive and friendly way. In other words, good faith and ethical intentions are part and parcel of the definition of trust, as reflected in the meaning of trust as honesty. This meaning is reflected in the adjective *A'min*, which describes a person who is descent, just, and loyal. This meaning is part and parcel of the peace for which we aspire, where members of the community have ethical commitment to be decent to one another, so interactions between them are based on mutual reliance. The importance of this meaning is most apparent in commercial interactions, when people are expected not to cheat in their treatment of strangers.

The second interrelated meaning of *A'manah* is related to the noun in the Arabic language, which deals with entrusting somebody with something that we consider precious that we consider precious to us, whether be it an object or a subject. This dimension of the meaning of *A'manah* is inherently ethical and is based on past experience, something that makes it both a product of caution and incrementalism. In Arabic culture, the protection of *A'manah* could be more precious than the life of the person protecting it. In other words, *A'manah*, which has social and religious connotations is an important concept in Arab culture and is deeply related to the genuine efforts made to protect the *A'manah* (Barakat 1993). In our context, one may speak of the obligation to protect the *A'manah*, or its various parts, depending on who is the agent of *A'amanah*. When it comes to religious belief, A'manah is *Waqf*, which is trust that one cannot give up or compromise, even when this means they may lose their life in protecting it (Ibid).

If one translates this meaning into the context of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict one can see that this meaning is embedded in the intractability of the conflict. As a result of the conflict, in which Jews occupied Palestine, Palestinians lost what they not only conceive as homeland in the modern sense, but also *A'manah*, as a religious endowment that they would be punished for, if not gained back, as explicated in Hamas' Covenant (Sela and Mishal 2000). In such a case, *A'manah* could not have been given up or compromised, but was "hijacked" or "kidnapped" by a

stranger. This meaning of the concept leads us to understanding one of the deep motivations behind the unwillingness of the Palestinians, especially believers, to concede that the land lost not only from the occupation of 1967, but the entire land of Palestine by the Zionist movement, was just; instead it is viewed by many Palestinians—religious and secular—as that which has been lost to colonial invasion.

The second layer of the meaning of the concept *E''a'taman* is rooted in the concept *Eiman*, which means belief, conviction and faith. This meaning takes us even deeper into the sociocultural and the sociopsychological levels of society, emphasizing belief as integral to trust. This meaning demonstrates that sharing faith, beliefs, or values is a central dimension of the concept of trust in Arab culture, alluding to being Moslem, as explicated by Ibn Manzur and illustrated in the Surat Al-Hugairat from the *Qura'an* "It is the believers, who entrusted their faith in God and his prophet and thereby did not fear anymore and sacrificed their resources and their soul for the sake of God, these are the truthful" (Ibn Manzur 1883: 23; Surat Al-Hugairat, A'yah 15). This means that the social, or more accurately the communal, is about the sharing of values, as a fundamental starting point in maintaining society and protecting it. This meaning does not entail the existence of essential characteristics, as much as patterns of thinking and behavior that are socially constructed. The act of *E'a''timan* assumes that the sense of trust is mutual, based on a common language and symbolic codes that form the cultural infrastructure of society. This meaning leads to differentiations in the level of trust based on the sense of normative rather than only physical proximity between the social agents involved. The closer they are in their belief system the more they are able to rely on each other, without fear of betrayal or disappointment. This meaning of trust reflects the "us" versus "them" differentiation, which could be rigid or flexible, based on the level of shared faith or convictions. The closer the latter are, the higher social cohesiveness is and the less conflict there is.

This connotation of trust means that in case of intractable conflict, the belief system become a very central variable in feeding the differences, on the one hand and, when looked at from the point of view of transforming the conflict and promoting reconciliation it could be seen as an avenue to be addressed in enabling change, on the other hand. Assuming that beliefs and convictions are socially constructed, their change becomes a very central precondition in guaranteeing conflict transformation and reconciliation. In other words, for trust to be constructed there is a need for a deep and genuine socialization process according to values and convictions that draw the conflicting sides together, based on the values of tolerance and mutual recognition (Jamal 2013). This understanding demonstrates that conflict transformation is not a matter of striking a deal based on self-interest, which is important and has to occur, but is deeply related to a serious effort to establish common values, beliefs and convictions between the conflicting parties. Good faith is indispensable for such a process to take place. It could start before a formal process of conflict resolution takes place and has to continue after it.

Trust as Embedded in Hebrew and Jewish History and Culture

The Hebrew concept of trust—*Eimun*—is not less complex. The Hebrew concept is rooted in several connotations that together form a thick web of meaning that must be considered when analyzing conflict transformation processes and reconciliation. Let us start first with the basic meaning of *A'man*, which is artist or creator. This meaning is about agency and the creation of "something" in order for the *A'man* to be such. It is about taking action in the material world, which has both symbolic and spiritual meaning. This is a sociocultural action that forms the basic infrastructure of society and of the human condition, as Hannah Arendt reflects in her concept of work (Arendt 1998). This meaning could be better understood if we speak of another layer of the meaning of the concept of *E'imun*, which has to do with exercise. It means making people ready for a future task or mission. When located in the social context it means the socialization of people into society and relations with others. The pattern and values of socialization become very central components of the concept that could be deduced from other layers of the meaning of it, as elaborated in the following sentences.

E'imun as exercising also has a physical meaning. When relating it to other layers of meaning it means the practicing of belief, leading to another meaning deduced from the same root, namely *E'imunah*—faith. This meaning reveals the deep affinity between the Arabic and Hebrew concepts of trust, which are deeply related to the system of belief in society. This makes the belief system into a field of central importance for our understanding of the relationship between Jews and Palestinians, whose each of them share very different, but strong belief system and tradition. The sharing of beliefs seems to form an infrastructure for trust in each of the communities, making any bridging efforts between them, empty effort if it does not deal with the deep system of beliefs and convictions in each of the societies. Since conflict situations are about alternative values, morals, and beliefs, the transformation of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict is a serious challenge, especially as a result of the increasing emphasis of each of the sides on their exclusive belief systems and tradition.

Another meaning of *E'imun* is related to *Nia'man*—*Nia'manut*, which means being loyal and loyalty, respectively. Trust in Hebrew is connotes loyalty, a meaning that is emphasized in the study of trust reflecting benevolence, compassion and responsibility, as explicated above. To trust is about being loyal or faithful to a divine power, a collective or a place. Being faithful creates a deep bond between a group of people with clear boundaries, differentiating between "us" and "them." When speaking of trust in Hebrew the concept entails a shared loyalty to something that becomes an important indicator of the location of people vis-a-vis the collective of believers. Modern Jewish nationalism is based on values and norms deeply affiliated with Judaism, despite the efforts made to portray Zionism in secular civic terms (Don Yehiyeh 1998).

Nia'man has another important meaning related to the social and legal field. The social meaning has to do with being entrusted with something by somebody. We

addressed this same meaning in Arabic, which reflects a social behavior by which a person entrusts somebody else with something to take care of, since the entrusting person either does not want to be identified as doing it or cannot do it. Justice Meir Shamgar said in this regard, "*nia'man*…acts from a stand point of full authority. Despite the fact that *ni'aman* is limited to whatever written in the *nia'manut* document concerning its goals, nonetheless the starting point is that *nia'man* on a property has the power to do with it whatever the owner could have done" (1991). This understanding is deeply related to the belief system of society, where people at risk or in danger of dying seek others to take care of certain responsibilities that they are not able to do or take care of members of their family, especially kids. This meaning is deeply rooted in cultural and religious values and beliefs, reflecting the existence of shared convictions as a precondition for trust to be established. The legal meaning of *Nia'man* deals with appointing a trustee. Trusteeship is about representing the interests or values of somebody based on the belief that this representation remains loyal and faithful. Trusteeship is about loyalty and affinity between the entrusting person or group and the entrusted. Any deviation from this bond leads to distrust and as a result conflict. This understanding leads us to another meaning of the concept of trust, namely *A'manah*, which means contract. *E'imun* and *A'manah* come from the same root and are deeply related. This deep affinity between the two reflects the strong bond between trust and agreement. Trust could be viewed as a type of social agreement between various people based on certain convictions or common values. The contract lasts as long as the trust defines the relationship between the members of the agreement. The lack of trust means the abolishing of the contract, something that echoes the meaning of the social contract, as depicted by Jean Jacques Rousseau, as well as later political philosophers, such as John Rawls (Rousseau, 2010; Rawls 1971). According to the social contract tradition, trust is an infrastructural value that facilitates the communication between the various members of society and enable the construction of agreed upon common life. Distrust, which is not equal to lack of trust could become a destructive mechanism that sabotages social communication and leads to conflict (Maoz and Ellis 2008). In conflict situations, characterized with distrust, there is a need not only to build trust, but also to deconstruct distrust, as an initial step in transforming the conflict. This is even truer in situations of proximity. Being embodied in conflictual reality means that the entire valuational and psycho-cultural belief infrastructure has to be transformed when we speak of reconciliation between the conflicting parties.

Can Palestinians and Israelis Trust Each Other?

At present, one can easily say that Israelis and Palestinians do not trust each other. This statement does not and should not mean that they cannot trust each other *ever*. The questions we must answer are why they cannot trust each other now and what

must happen, so they are able to in the future. Let us address the first question before we come to the second.

There is a need to examine five dimensions of the concept of trust in the Arabic and Hebrew languages and relate them to the cultural and valuational aspects of Palestinians and Israelis in order to answer the first question. Doing so may help us understand how trust is understood by both sides and why the given understandings do not allow for mutual trust. It is argued that these perceptions determine the changes necessary in order to transform the conflict between them and facilitate reconciliation. The following discussion is not conclusive. It seeks to reflect the deepness of the differences between the two sides, something that with due respect cannot be resolved through allocation of disproportionate pieces of land or through policies of national zoning. The following discussion illustrates the dynamics of distrust and the need for serious investment in dealing with its roots, embedded in the cultural and symbolic aspects of both sides' way of life.

Trust as Communal Concept

First, one must acknowledge the similarities of the meanings and connotations of the concept of trust in both societies. Although there are differences in the embedded connotations of the etymology of the concept in both languages and cultures, one cannot but pay attention to the depth of the concept in the cultures of both groups. Each of the concepts of trust assumes communal life, as a given ontological entity. The presence of a collective entity defined by mutual trust is related to the socialization of members of the community into it, rendering trust as a fundamental defining sentiment of the infrastructural relations in society. The relations within each of the communities were strictly defined based on close mental, cultural, and valuational bonds, reflected in contractual relations that one cannot be part of the community without obeying them.

According to the analysis brought above, trust is not a one-time act, but rather is a relational continuous process that is examined and reexamined constantly based on experience. This turns the experiences of each of the communities, internally and externally, into an important indicator of the quality of trust between individuals and groups within and outside the community.

When applying the Arabic and Hebrew meanings of trust to the experience of the two communities one can see that these interpretations of trust were absent from their initial encounter. The constituting moment of the relations between Palestinians and Jews occurred in the early years of the twentieth century. These years could be seen as the "zero point" of the relations between them. These years are years of awakening, astonishment, disappointments, and grief. Each of the sides entered the relationship unwillingly. They came with their deep communal norms, which are fundamentally different. They also came with their past experiences, which were also different. Palestinians lived for centuries under Othman rule, as part of the Islamic empire in which they did not enjoy any autonomy. Jewish

immigrants came from a different traumatic background, seeking refuge in a place in which a different people feels at home.

These are the years when the Palestinians discovered the real intentions of Jewish immigrants, represented by a well-connected and funded Zionist Federation. Although initially Palestinians were mostly indifferent toward Jewish immigration, as refugees that sought shelter from persecution in Eastern Europe and in Russia, their perspective changed when Jews began expressing their national aspirations to establish a homeland of their own in Palestine. These aspirations intensified those gaps between the two communities, instigating Palestinian resentment of the idea of Jewish political presence in Palestine on the one hand and more Jewish insistence on countering Palestinian national sentiment. The British Mandate in Palestine fueled further the differences between the two communities, deepening thereby, the distrust between them. The security, loyalty, faithfulness, and contractual meanings of trust began to take exclusive nature, delineating the antagonism between them. Palestinians began to feel that their security, way of life, norms, and culture are threatened by Jewish increasing presence. Jewish settlers began, on their part, to experience Palestinian resentment of their political aspirations, as a threat that should be dealt with seriously. Already in the early 1920 Jewish immigrants, especially those involved in settling the land, acknowledged not only the Palestinian presence on the land, but also the counter national aspirations of a growingly militant population that sought to protect its possession of its homeland.

The realization of Palestinian aspiration was not recognized and respected by Jewish immigrants, but rather in the contrary. The Zionist movement began establishing a "parallel society," separated from Palestinians, establishing thereby colonial relations, with the clear support of the British Empire. The purchase of lands by the Jewish Agency and the colonization process deepened the suspicion and turned distrust into a defining characteristic of almost every interaction between the two sides. The 1921, 1929, 1936–39, 1948–49, 1956, 1967, 1978, 1982–85, 1987–93, 2000–2003, 2006, 2011, 2015 major clashes between Jews and Palestinians each marked another turning point in deepening the distrust between them. Distrust, as lack of security, truthfulness, agreement, etc. came not only to characterize the relationship between them, but also to motivate each of the sides in each contact between them. The physical proximity between them, especially after 1967 led to furthering the cultural, psychological and normative remoteness between them.

The asymmetric relations between the two sides, especially the imposition of new political and demographic reality in 1948 and the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967, institutionalized the distrust between the two sides. Each of the sides, albeit with different capacities, resources, and means, have constructed their identity in antagonistic terms, establishing exclusive self-perceptions, as a major defining principle of their legitimate existence in Palestine. The continuous Zionist political and demographic expansionist policies, on the one hand and the Palestinian resistance by all means, on the other reflected the incompatible intentions of the two sides, maintaining suspicion as the defining characteristic of the relations between them. Negative experiences and interactions turned insecurity

into another defining characteristic of the relations between them. The rapprochement between the two sides in the years 1993–1996 reflected a serious breakthrough in the relations between the two sides, but seems not to have been able to overcome the deep distrust between them. The dominant self-perception of each of the sides, their sense of security, decency, faithfulness, and communality, were neither seriously addressed nor genuinely transformed. Although attempts were made to address functional meanings of trust, ethical dimensions, which would have demanded the humanization of the conflict and addressing the deep needs of each of the communities, were left outside the negotiating rooms (Bar-Siman-Tov 2015).

The need for ethical proximity, benevolence and compassion were not translated into the communications between the two sides. The asymmetric relations, conditioned the contact between them, where the Israeli side sought to institutionalize its upper hand in the conflict and the Palestinians sought to seize a historic opportunity that grants them a new grounding for their further struggle to realize their aspired for national rights. Mechanisms of historical acknowledgment, such as truth and reconciliation commissions, historical narrative revisions, official apology and public commemoration, and recognition of past wrongs were not integrated in transforming the relationship between the two sides (Bashir 2011; Bar-Tal and Bennink 2004). This common fact left the common self-perceptions of the two sides, including their narrative, justifications and morality untouched, thereby constructing genuine mutual trust based on ethical transformative mutual recognition outside the negotiating room.

Trust as Experience and as Security

Palestinians could be, and are easily targeted by Israeli overwhelming military power. The Israeli security forces managed to penetrate all components of Palestinian society and fully control almost every piece of knowledge about it. The Israeli army has waged wars since 1967 against the Palestinian civilian population in the West Bank, as in 2002, and in Gaza, as demonstrated in the last three wide and devastating military operations in Gaza. The asymmetry in the power relations turns Palestinian life into bare life, making insecurity and anxiety into the defining feature of the relationship with Israelis.

The establishment of the Israeli state and its occupation of the West Bank and Gaza since 1967 make Jewish insecurity mainly personal and limited-to-limited zones, defined by Palestinian resistance to the injustices they face (Canetti-Nisim et al. 2009). Palestinian insecurity, which is collective, as well as personal is continuous and persistent. The state of refugeeness and living under expanding occupation that controls every dimension of Palestinian life leaves no place for security (Azoulay and Ophir 2012). The continuous expansion of Israeli settlements in Palestinian areas of the West Bank, the siege on Gaza, and the hollowing out of Palestinian citizenship inside Israel demonstrate that the asymmetry of power

enable Israelis to hijack Palestinian security (Weizman 2007; Jamal 2007a). This insecurity is deepened through the justification apparatus reflected in the Israeli official discourse, which is not willing to take any blame for the distrust between the two sides.

Palestinians have, and still view themselves as victims of Jewish colonization. Despite their demographic superiority before 1948, they lacked the diplomatic and military power that the Jewish settlements in Palestine had (Khalidi 2006). This asymmetry defined the means by which Palestinians resisted Jewish immigration and settlement. It also determined the way by which Palestinians resisted Israeli occupation after 1967 (Sayigh 1997). Palestinian resistance utilized means that did not always meet high-moral standards, feeding the Israeli denial policy with the necessary data in order to free itself from any responsibility for the tragic deterioration in the relations between the two sides. Palestinians are blamed for the relations of distrust and are depicted as unreliable (McMahon 2010). The internal Palestinian rift between Fatah and Hamas, since the early 1990s and the different future political visions of the two parties creates an ambiguous Palestinian position, as to the real intentions of the Palestinian national movement.

According to Israeli official discourse, Palestinians have a hidden agenda, namely to destroy the Jewish state. This argument, which is deeply embedded in the Israeli diplomacy of denial, reflects the efforts made by Israel to characterize the conflict as if Jews are the victims of Palestinian aggression, which is embedded in the Palestinians being many times framed as *Amalek*. This is the case even when Israel raids Palestinian cities with F-16 jets, destroying complete neighborhoods. Palestinians are depicted as the source of all evils, and as another enemy of the Jewish people amidst history. This perception of Palestinians overshadows the fact that Palestinians have paid a heavy human price for Israeli independence and still suffer from Israeli occupation and lack of any willingness for a compromise.

This does not mean that Israelis do not feel insecure, as a result of Palestinian persistence to demand their homeland or part of it back. It is true that Israeli insecurity is partially fabricated and is part of the Israeli security and diplomatic doctrine. Nonetheless, one cannot ignore the fact that part of the insecurity, especially on the personal level is genuine. This insecurity is deeply related to the Palestinian threat, despite the gaps in the tangible power relations between the two sides. Furthermore, the lack of a unified Palestinian voice and the ambivalence about Palestinian political aspirations make Israelis insecure to take risks that may help in building mutual trust. The unwillingness of Israelis to support transitional justice policies, such as recognition of Palestinian Nakba and taking partial responsibility for it or correcting past wrongs could be related to distrust and lack of confidence in Palestinian "genuine" intentions, namely dismantling the Jewish state. This psychology of suspicion is deeply rooted in Jewish history and provoked by Palestinian resistance activity, notwithstanding the huge gaps of power between the two sides.

Trust as Loyalty

In these given circumstances trust as communal loyalty did not have any chance to rise between Jews and Palestinians neither before 1948 nor after the Palestinian Nakba and later the Israeli occupation of the West bank and Gaza Strip in 1967. The two political communities, albeit differently and with different means and resources, built their perception of loyalty in antagonistic terms. Jewish loyalty is ethno-national, based on exclusive terms, when it comes to Palestinians, even when we speak of Israeli Palestinian citizens. Palestinian loyalty is deeply related to the indigenous self-perception and to the sense of victimhood related to the Nakba and refugeeness. This leads to a negative dialectical relationship between internal and external trust. It is not only that trust as loyalty among Israelis and Palestinians is mutually exclusive, but also antagonistic. The more mutual external distrust there is, the more internal trust is nurtured, as an important psychological mechanism of national security. Patriotism and loyalty feed the national discourse of both sides and confront the other side, as enemy. The Israeli overhand on the militaristic, economic, diplomatic, and discursive levels blind Israelis from any human dimensions in the Palestinian struggle for statehood and liberation. Israeli superiority suppresses Palestinian ability to overcome daily victimhood and extend recognition of the genuine fears of Israelis. Palestinian daily sufferings, whether as refugees or living under occupation, make almost impossible for them to express empathy with Jewish national aspirations and the need for sovereignty. This is especially true after Palestinians expressed their willingness to compromise 78 % of their homeland for the sake of historic settlement between the two sides. The continuous expansion of Israeli settlements and the oppressive hand of the Israeli army in the West bank and Gaza Strip, which reflect the unwillingness of Israelis to compromise (Newman 2014), make Palestinians the ultimate victims of the interaction between the two sides, subsiding any human considerations when it comes to attacks on citizens in the heart of Israeli cities (Brym and Araj 2006).

Trust as Contract

Trust is deeply related to power relations. In cases at which infrastructural trust does not exist, power becomes central. People, whether individuals or collectives, who have power can allow themselves to take risks in their relations with others. Their ability to overcome any betrayal of trust allows them to take measures and adopt behavioral patterns that others may not allow themselves to do. This means that in clear asymmetrical power relations in a setting of conflict the powerful side could take risks if it seeks accommodation or any other type of rapprochement with its adversary/enemy. The risk of trust is not an easy gesture in a bloody conflict such as the Israeli–Palestinian one. However, if it is to happen it is more expected from the powerful party, despite the legitimate discussion that the definition of who is

powerful and who is the underdog is debatable. It is true that despite the power gaps between Israel and the Palestinians, the former shows much lack of confidence on the moral, ethical and existential levels, an epicurean phenomenon in the given circumstances, which could be related to the fact that the two sides of the conflict are supported by external parties, such as the Arab countries for Palestinians and world Jewry for Israel. Notwithstanding this, especially if third parties are involved in the reconciliation process that guarantee the security of the powerful party in case its measures are "misused," the latter is expected to be able to trade power with trust.

This understanding of trust is based on good intentions and genuine willingness to give resolving the conflict a chance. In such case, trust could be understood as contract, as depicted above in the etymology of the concept of trust in both Arabic and Hebrew. A contract is a negotiated agreement based on good faith and the free will and consent of the parties involved. It cannot be based on bad faith or a manipulation. It is not the continuation of the conflict by different means or buying time to improve positions. For a contract to succeed, it has to be a fair contract and not necessarily a reflection of the asymmetry of power between the sides. It has to serve the utility of all parties involved, if it is to promote conflict transformation.

Toward a New Application of Trust in Conflict Transformation and Reconciliation

Trust, no matter what we mean by it is not a metaphysical idea. It is a social, psychological and political practice that is contextually constructed. As indicated above it is not a constant variable, but rather changes according to experience and circumstances (Van Ingen and Bekkers 2015). For the average person trust is a feature that is deeply related to security. The need for security makes the reception of certain values, beliefs and patterns that are perceived to support security much easier than others. When speaking of collective trust, the role of leaders and socializing institutions in establishing trust, determining its form, and content and in defining its object become very important. The boundaries of trust and the identity of those that can or cannot be trusted is gradually determined based on personal as well as collective experiences. In this context intentions become seriously crucial.

The lack of trust between Palestinians and Israelis is not a result of an invisible hand. It is neither a result of occasional experiential circumstances, nor related to physical suffering only. Distrust is not the lack of trust only. It is a psycho-sociological and political situation that is in conflict situations, intentionally constructed and to a great extent strategically orchestrated (see Bar-Tal 2013).

Given that trust forms an important brick in conflict transformation and reconciliation and given that trust is not a simple mechanism, any change in the state of trust has to start with the undeclared intentions of the parties—elites and leaders. It is true that after a century of distrust and mistrust leaders cannot suddenly change

the direction of the tide, but nonetheless, it is possible and could be conducted through the basic integration of historical acknowledgment mechanisms and the integration of transitional and restorative justice (Teitel 2002; Druckman and Albin 2011).

Solutions purported to build trust in conflicted communities are broad and varied, encompassing a range of emotional-psychological objectives to concrete policies for use in negotiation. Despite the apparent lack of agreement between scholars, studies show that trust is not a static element of society and that there is substantial within-person variation of trust over one's life. Therefore, it is hypothesized by many that effective and purposeful negotiation carries the potential to affect trust in parties and overall, bring about successful reconciliation.

For individuals to trust institutions and for institutions to inspire this trust, scholars agree that "universalistic, power-sharing institutions as well as those that sanction noncooperative behavior, provide an environment of credibility—allowing generalized trust to flourish," (Freitag and Bühlmann 2009). Such a solution "provides a basis for expectations of reciprocity" (Freitag and Bühlmann 2009), joint gain and good faith intentions (Olekalns and Smith 2005).

The past experiences of both parties of the conflict, especially the deterioration in their relations, resulted from the unsuccessful Oslo process, which was sabotaged by spoilers in both sides, demonstrate that any efforts for conflict transformation and reconciliation have to be gradual, slow, inclusive, and based on good faith. Creating fundamental changes in the current reality may instigate reactions that spoil the whole effort. Maintaining the current reality is also impossible for those living under occupation and those who fear for their basic ontological security. Therefore, building trust can start with symbolic gestures that provide evidence as to the good intentions and facilitate following steps.

In this context the role of third parties becomes crucial. While studies show third-party facilitators have a marked effect on negation outcomes (Tzafrir et al. 2012; Lewicki et al. 1992), building trust is more effective when initiated from within the region or between affected parties (de Buitrago 2009). In particular, third parties' messages of empowerment have been shown to restore victims' sense of power and perpetrators' moral image, but not in the eyes of 'the other' and only principally in the eyes of the third-party itself (Shnabel et al. 2014). This actually served to be a detriment to reconciliation and negatively and indirectly thwarted perpetrator's behavior in negotiation. Messages between parties, rather than a third-party mediator, have been shown to restore trust between victims and perpetrators (Shnabel et al. 2014). Therefore, a well-thought role of third parties to provide the support needed to build trust is important as a central part of the process.

Conclusion

The conclusion of the discussion so far could be summarized as the indispensability for a new starting moment between Israelis and Palestinians, if we are to turn trust into an instrument and as a condition for reconciliation between the two sides. The ethical and functional meanings of trust are very lacking in Israeli–Palestinian relations. The self-perceptions of both sides are based on narratives and experiences that instigated distrust. Understanding the embeddedness of both sides in asymmetrical proximity makes both sides vulnerable, turning trust into an ethical challenge. Whereas Israelis are vulnerable as a result of their success to become sovereign and have the overhand in every interaction with the Palestinians, thereby justifying the excessive use of force in handling the relationship with the Palestinians, the latter are vulnerable since they are a weak victim that could exploit its victimhood in justifying patterns of conduct that are unethical.

Any effort for reconciliation has to start with the recognition of the mistrust as an ethical challenge. If trusting someone involves an appeal that they take responsibility for our well-being and if acting so is the best examination of morality, then the current situation of the conflict, especially in a situation in which the two peoples live in close proximity, none of them can claim morality. For them to claim morality they have to act morally, as a manifestation of mutual trust. It is only in behaving according to basic moral standards of being responsible for the well-being of the Other that a transformation of the conflict can take place. The overlap in the meaning of trust in the culture of both sides is a genuine indication of the need for much deeper efforts of both sides in order for reconciliation to become an option. Expanding the meaning and perception of trust, as given in the culture of both sides, is a good initial step in instigating a genuine process of reconciliation. For that purpose there is a need for humanistic visionary leadership and well-thought educational program. These exist on the grass roots level, but are unfortunately obstructed by the dominant political elites of both sides.

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