Identity-Based Conflicts: Perceived Difference *vs*. Perceived Threat

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Various theorists have agreed that a basic assumption about conflict is that it is a natural part of life.[1] Conflict among groups usually pertains to differences or incompatibilities over issues related to "interests, opinions, beliefs, values, or needs";[2] or "goals, scarce rewards, or resources."[3] It has been widely recognized, however, that some of the most recalcitrant of deep-rooted, fundamental conflicts involve identity groups and identity-based disputes. One common thread that runs through Fisher's Eclectic Model of Intergroup Conflict,[4] Azar's model of Protracted Social Conflict,[5] and Gurr's model of Ethnopolitical Conflict[6] is the causative factor of "identity" in intergroup conflicts. This includes concerns for existing needs, social esteem, group dignity, recognition, participation, security, access to resources, and justice.[7]

When these aspects of identities are perceived to be denied, threatened, or frustrated, tensions between different identity groups intensify and the

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[1] Morton Deutsch, "Educating for a Peaceful World," *American Psychologist* 48.5 (1993). Brian Sweeney and William L. Carruthers, "Conflict Resolution: History, Philosophy, Theory, and Educational Applications," *School Counselor* 43.5 (1996).
[2] Sweeney and Carruthers 1996.
[3] Gary Bornstein, "The Free-Rider Problem in Intergroup Conflicts over Step-Level and Continuous Public Goods," *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology* 62.4 (1992).
[4] Ronald J. Fisher, "Toward a Social-Psychological Model of Intergroup Conflict," in *Conflict and Social Psychology,* ed. K.S. Larsen (London Sage/PRIO, 1993).
[5] Edward E. Azar, *The Management of Protracted Social Conflict: Theory and Cases* (Aldershot, UK: Dartmouth Press, 1990).
[6] Ted Robert Gurr, *Minorities at Risk: A Global View of Ethnopolitical Conflicts* (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace, 1993).
[7] Azar 1990. Fisher 1993. Gurr 1993. Also, J. Burton, *Resolving Deep-Rooted Conflict: A Handbook* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1987).

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threat of conflict escalation increases.[8] In such cases, existing tensions might potentially evolve into "deep-rooted conflicts" that rest on underlying needs that cannot be compromised, and where interests and positions are deemed non-negotiable.[9] In sum, "when a conflict between or among parties involves a core sense of identity, the conflict tends to be intractable.[10] In some cases, such conflicts may even escalate to genocidal proportions.[11]

Many social psychologists have attempted to examine how "identity" contributes toward intractability and violence when societies degenerate into identity-based disputes. In her article on identity in former Yugoslavia, Wilmer raised questions for which many still seek to find answers: "How are individuals persuaded to abandon civility in favor of brutality? How are ordinary people transformed into monsters?"[12]

These questions form the premise of this paper as it seeks to examine the link between identity and mobilized action in identity-based conflicts.

Group Identity and Group Behavior

The examination should begin with an insight into how the dynamics of identity mediate group behavior. In this respect, the study is focused on group identity (or what is also commonly known as social identity) as opposed to individual identity. Monroe defines social identity as "social categories, attributes, or components of the self-concept that are shared with others and therefore define individuals as being similar to others." [13] This is not to say that the individual is an unimportant element in group identity; in fact, "group behavior is explained through the individual's ***interaction with others.***"[14]

Identity as a Social Construct

The construction of social identity is seen as "a kind of discursive performance that occurs ***in reference to others*** in particular situations";[15] "generated, confirmed and transformed in the process of interactions between groups and individuals, and forming ***a dialectic between similarity and differ-***

[8] Ronald J. Fisher, *Interactive Conflict Resolution* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1997).
[9] Burton 1987.
[10] Terrell A. Northrup, "The Dynamic of Identity and Personal and Social Conflict," in *Intractable Conflicts and Their Transformation,* ed. Louis Kriesberg, Terrell Northrup, and Stuart Thorson (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1989).
[11] David Moshman, "Us and Them: Identity and Genocide," *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research* 7.2 (2007).
[12] Franke Wilmer, "Identity, Culture, and Historicity: The Social Construction of Ethnicity in the Balkans," *World Affairs* 160.1 (Summer 1997).
[13] Kristen Renwick Monroe, James Hankin, and Renee Bukovchik Van Vechten, "The Psychological Foundations of Identity Politics," *Annual Review of Political Science* 3.4 (2000).
[14] Ibid., 421, emphasis added.
[15] Ibid., 428, emphasis added.

ence."[16] It is, therefore, "always formed through ***complex interrelations*** with other people."[17]

Thus, as a social construct, identity is not primordially intrinsic and inherent, but fluid across time and social contexts,[18] and contingent on the processes of existing social structures.[19] Is it not static, as it retains a constant relationship with the world: people, objects, time, and space.[20] Illustrative of this line of reasoning is the construction of the Karen identity in Southeast Asia where, despite sharing the same lineage, different contingent circumstances and social structures have led to very different identities for the Karens in Burma and the Karens in Thailand.

According to Buadaeng, power relations, political systems, and existing structures in Burma and Thailand differ greatly, and can primarily account for the different Karen identities in Burma and Thailand.[21] The Karens in Burma developed national consciousness and a national identity in the late nineteenth century, establishing their own place in society, writing their own history, and asserting their political and cultural rights as a group, particularly as Christians, against Burmese nationalism, which held Buddhism as fundamental to its identity. This led to a struggle for a separate state and self-determination that continues to this day.[22]

By contrast, the Karens in Thailand have attracted the attention of the Thai public with a clear definition of "Karenness" only in the last two decades: as recently as the 1980s they defined themselves as people who live simple, self-sufficient lives in harmony with the forest.[23] Buadaeng saw how, distinct from the Karens in Burma, the Karens of Thailand have not developed a national consciousness: they have not constructed a unitary national history, attempted to specify their original territory, or adopted a written language as their own.[24] Buadaeng also suggests that the Thai Karens organized themselves to assert their identity as forest conservationists to counter the common stereotype of hill tribespeople or forest destroyers. They assert their place as citizens of Thailand who deserve to be treated no differently than the Thai majority. Unlike the Karens in Burma, who seek separation

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[16] F. Barth, ed., *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1969). Emphasis added.

[17] Karina V. Korostelina, *Social Identity and Conflict: Structures, Dynamics and Implications* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). Emphasis added.

[18] J.M. Sanders, "Ethnic Boundaries and Identity in Plural Societies," *Annual Review of Sociology* 28 (2002).

[19] Korostelina 2007.

[20] Northrup 1989.

[21] Kwanchewan Buadaeng, "Ethnic Identities of the Karen Peoples in Burma and Thailand," in *Identity Matters: Ethnic and Sectarian Conflict,* ed. James L. Peacock, Patricia M. Thornton, and Patrick B. Inman (New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2007).

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid.

from their larger society, Thai Karens seek recognition from and equal respect alongside lowland Thais.[25]

It is obvious that not all Karen people identify themselves in the same way, despite sharing the same lineage, speaking the same language, and occupying the same geographical region. In fact, diverse, mixed, and shifting Karen identities are found on both sides of the Thai-Burmese border. This supports the notion that social identity is a social construction, rather than primordially intrinsic or inherent, reinforcing the idea that its fluid nature influences group behavior and dynamics. Building upon this premise, the paper argues that: (1) the socio-psychological processes and effects associated with the construction and reconstruction of social identity impact group behavior (whether directly or indirectly); (2) as such, social identity can be made more or less salient to bear upon group mobilization; (3) which ultimately causes it to become highly susceptible to politicization by political actors. Nonetheless, its fluidity also means that (4) it is amenable to change and therefore, yields possible maneuvering room for potential intervention, conflict management, and conflict resolution.

The Construction of "Us" vs. *"Them"*

Generally, the social construction of an identity draws on a variety of authentic elements held in common within a group: a common history, language, or religion; common customs, cultural expressions, experiences, values, grievances, and aspirations.[26] According to Kelman, the social construction of an identity implies a degree of arbitrariness and flexibility in the way identity is composed (which elements are accepted and which are not) and how its boundaries are defined (who is included and who is not). This becomes an ongoing process within any identity group.[27] Barth asserts that social identity is primarily a product of border formation: it is articulated at the group boundary since that is where groups encounter each other, and by the contact and contrast between "them" and "us" the identity of any group is defined, modulated, and moderated.[28] It is only ***after the establishment of group borders separating groups from one another*** that each group starts deliberating on what elements to include or exclude.[29]

This hypothesis appears to be consistent with Tajfel's Social Identity Theory, according to which social identity is the "part of the individual's self-concept which derives from his cognitive perception of his membership of a social group, ***together with the value and emotional significance*** at-

[25] Ibid.
[26] Herbert C. Kelman, "The Role of National Identity in Conflict Resolution," in *Social Identity, Intergroup Conflict, and Conflict Reduction,* ed. Richard D. Ashmore, Lee J. Jussim, and David Wilder (London: Oxford University Press, 2001).
[27] Ibid.
[28] F. Barth, ed. 1969.
[29] Ibid.

tached to that membership.[30] Thus, social identity comprises two components: belief that one belongs to a group (e.g., I am a Malaysian); and importance of that group membership to one's self (e.g., I am proud to be a citizen of a multicultural country). The implication is that social identity entails effective and evaluative processes that are above and beyond mere cognitive classification of self and others into a shared category. Strong positive social identification arises when one feels an emphatic attachment between the self and the ingroup as a whole.[31]

Concurrent with this self-identification is self-categorization that results in an accentuation of the perceived similarities between ingroup members, and an accentuation of the perceived differences between oneself and outgroup members.[32] These accentuations apply to all the attitudes, beliefs, values, affective reactions, behavioral norms, styles of speech, and other properties that are believed to be relevant to intergroup categorization.[33] This results in group members attempting to enhance the image of their ingroup in relation to relevant outgroups.[34] The importance of this aspect of group border formation is noticeably demonstrated when the extension of positive self-regard to others stops at the boundary between ingroup and outgroups; where attitudes toward those outside the boundary are characterized by indifference, at best.[35] Studies have shown that there is a high tendency for group members to selectively apply the accentuation effect pertaining to those properties that will result in self-enhancing outcomes.[36] They typically engage in what Hogg and Abrams describe as the trait attribution versus the situational attribution phenomenon: when outgroup members engage in undesirable or negative behavior they tend to make a trait attribution by ascribing such behavior to the inherent traits allegedly possessed by outgroup members. Conversely, when ingroup members engage in similar behavior they tend to make a situational attribution by explaining it in terms of situational circumstances that would account for or even justify such behavior.[37] This creates a breeding ground for discriminatory conduct, stereotyping, racism, and ethnocentrism.

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[30] H. Tajfel, *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 255, emphasis added.
[31] Ibid.
[32] J.C. Turner, *Rediscovering the Social Group: A Self-Categorization Theory* (New York: Blackwell, 1987).
[33] Ibid.
[34] Tajfel 1981.
[35] M.B. Brewer, "Ingroup Identification and Intergroup Conflict: When Does Ingroup Love Become Outgroup Hate?" in *Social Identity, Intergroup Conflict, and Conflict Reduction*, ed. R.D. Ashmore, L. Jussim, and D. Wilder (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).
[36] D. Hogg and M.A. Abrams, *Social Identifications: A Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations and Group Processes* (New York: Routledge, 1988).
[37] Ibid.

Group Prejudice and Stereotypes

The process of group border formation often takes on different forms of complexity. If the real or psychological borders between groups are not clear and groups share similar characteristics, behaviors, and beliefs, minor differences become important and are consistently emphasized to protect the uniqueness of the group. [38] This process happens simultaneously with exaggeration of ingroup homogeneity, therefore making it easier to project distorted perceptions of intergroup differences.[39] The latter would subsequently manifest itself in systematic group-based biases not only in explaining differences between the ingroup and outgroups, but also in explaining group success and group failure.[40] When such distortions are reinforced by enemy images and dehumanization of the members of other groups, they pave the way for policies of "ethnic cleansing," massacres, and genocide.[41]

This happened between the Croats and Serbs, who, despite sharing a common language and culture, differ in religion and historical experiences. Choosing to magnify these differences, they have attempted to define themselves as separate and mutually antagonistic nations.[42] The Croats historically adopted an exceptionally aggressive nationalistic tone, which clearly set the boundaries between (allegedly) "European," civilized, democratic, developed, educated, and Catholic Croats on one side, and (allegedly) "Balkan," primitive, authoritarian, backward, illiterate Orthodox Serbs on the other.[43] The Serbs, on the other hand, saw themselves as "heavenly people" and were fighting for freedom against the "evil, cut-throats, mujahedins, fascist terrorists, and genocidal" Croats.[44]

The continuum of ingroup favoritism and outgroup prejudice arguably encompasses various forms of discriminatory behaviors ranging from constructing an image of "the other," stereotyping, racism, scapegoating, ethnocentrism, xenophobia, and genocide. Sumner describes ethnocentrism as "a universal characteristic of human social groups, whereby a differentiation arises between ourselves, the ingroup, and everybody else, the outgroups.[45] The members of an ingroup are in an interdependent relationship of peace, order, law, government, and industry; while their relationship to all outgroups is one of war and plunder. Such attitudes, inevitably, lead to each group "nourishing its own pride and vanity, boasting itself superior, exalt-

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[38] Brewer 2001.
[39] Sik Hung Ng, "Intergroup Behaviour and Ethnicity: A Social Psychological Perspective," *Asian Ethnicity* 6.1 (February 2005).
[40] Ibid.
[41] Brewer 2001.
[42] Kelman 2001.
[43] Marko Hajdinjak, "From Organized Oblivion to Forced Remembering: Memory and Identity among Serbs and Croats," in *International Symposium: "The Memory of Violence/Genocide: Its Meaning in the Process of Peace Building"* (University of Tokyo: 18 March 2006).
[44] Ibid.
[45] W.G. Sumner, *Folkways* (New York: Ginn, 1906). Cited in Brewer 2001.

ing its own divinities, and looking at outsiders with contempt."[46] This encourages group members to promote trust and cooperation within, and caution, wariness, and constraint in intergroup interactions, giving way to further misunderstandings and distrust amongst each other. Thus, even in the absence of overt conflict between groups, such differentiation creates a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy in the realm of intergroup perceptions.[47] "If most groups are, in fact, ethnocentric, then it becomes an 'accurate' stereotype to accuse an outgroup of some aspect of ethnocentrism."[48]

An illustration of ingroup favoritism can be derived from a 1976 survey of intergroup perceptions conducted by Brewer and Campbell in East Africa.[49] Respondents in the survey were presented with a lengthy list of character traits (both positive and negative) and asked to indicate which groups were most likely to possess each trait. Comparing ingroup and outgroup ratings on the resulting index revealed that all 30 groups in the survey rated their own group more positively than the average rating given to outgroups.[50] Although the assignment of negative traits such as "quarrelsome," "dishonest," and "cruel" varied considerably across outgroups, attributions of positive traits such as "peaceful," "honest," and "friendly" were almost universally reserved for the ingroup.[51]

Group Identity and Perceived Threat

When assessments are relative and evaluative, the better the "other" is judged to be, the stronger the feeling of urgency to catch up. In such a case, ingroup favoritism takes a subtle shift from motivated perceptions that "we are good" to perceptions that "we ought to be better."[52] When all the groups in a social milieu are jockeying for this type of ingroup advantage, the pursuit of positive self-regard can be achieved only at the expense of the other. Such zero-sum perceptions have the potential of creating rigid and emotion-laden positions, especially when any outgroup gain is seen as an ingroup loss.[53]

Nevertheless, research has shown that it is often difficult to justify protecting the ingroup if it comes at the expense of inflicting harm on others. Olzak speaks of the seemingly natural resistance of individuals to collective hostile action: of some 1600 major cultural groups, fewer than 300 have been

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[46] Sumner 1906. Cited in Brewer 2001, 17–18.
[47] R.A. LeVine and D.T. Campbell, *Ethnocentrism: Theories of Conflict, Ethnic Attitudes and Group Behavior* (New York: Wiley, 1972).
[48] Ibid., 173.
[49] M.B. Brewer and D.T. Campbell, *Ethnocentrism and Intergroup Attitudes: East African Evidence* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1976).
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid., 79.
[52] Brewer 2001.
[53] Ibid.

recently mobilized in politicized protest or rebellion, and only some 30–50 wars are ongoing in a particular year despite the mobilized 300.[54] Scholars tend to agree that in order to justify aggression against an outgroup, its goals and values — or its very existence — ***must be seen as a threat*** to the survival of the ingroup and to the maintenance of one's own social identity.[55]

Perceived Difference vs. *Perceived Threat*

At the heart of this paper's inquiry is the question as to what motivates certain groups to seek differentiation in a destructive way, as opposed to others who are able to achieve the same goal in a non-destructive manner. The emotions associated with moral superiority may justify some discrimination against outgroups, but do not necessarily lead directly to hostility or conflict. In various contexts, groups have managed to live in a state of mutual contempt for long periods of time without going to war over their differences. The emotions of contempt and disgust are associated with avoidance rather than attack, so intergroup peace may be maintained through segregation and mutual avoidance.[56] Indeed, research has shown that ingroup favoritism can occur without derogation of outgroups. In a survey of an ethnically diverse teenage focus group in Estonia, Valk and Karu found that while all groups viewed themselves favorably as compared to others, Russians viewed the Estonians positively, although the Estonians did not reciprocate.[57] Nonetheless, the survey showed that both the Russians and the Estonians viewed the Finns positively.[58] The authors drew the conclusion that the Estonians' negative attitude toward the Russians was a likely consequence of the high number of Russians who moved to Estonia during the Soviet Era (1945–1990), causing Estonians to feel politically and culturally threatened.[59]

Research also suggests that groups experience different levels of hostility toward various outgroups, even if some of the outgroups share similar ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Danielidou and Horvath examined the attitudes of 106 Greek Cypriots toward Turkish Cypriots and Turkish nationals who have recently moved to Cyprus.[60] They found that perceived differences in social identity were indeed associated with negative attitudes toward and unwillingness to cohabit with both Turkish groups. According to the au-

[54] S. Olzak, "Ethnic and Racial Social Movements," in *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioural Sciences*, ed. Neil J. Smelser and Paul B. Bates (Oxford: Elsevier, 2001).
[55] Ted Robert Gurr, "Why Minorities Rebel: Explaining Ethnopolitical Protest and Rebellion," in *Minorities at Risk* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 1993). See also Northrup 1989 and Moshman 2007.
[56] Brewer 2001.
[57] Aune Valk and Kristel Karu, "Ethnic Attitudes in Relation to Ethnic Pride and Ethnic Differentiation," *The Journal of Social Psychology* 141.5 (2001).
[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Liana Danielidou and Peter Horvath, "Greek Cypriot Attitudes toward Turkish Cypriots and Turkish Immigrants," *The Journal of Social Psychology* 146.4 (2006).

thors, however, Greek Cypriots seemed to differentiate significantly between Turkish Cypriots and Turkish nationals: they saw less difference between themselves and Turkish Cypriots and had more positive attitudes toward them.[61] Hence, recent Turkish immigrants were generally considered to be a greater threat to their national identity than the Turkish Cypriots who have been living there for centuries.[62]

The examples above illustrate the argument that differences alone do not generate violence between groups, in spite of ingroup favoritism and out-group prejudice typically associated with such differences. Hislope agrees that there are ethnically divided societies that harbor ample reserves of hatred for the "other"; but "hate alone, as well as the mere existence of difference, is not enough to translate emotion into action."[63]

Hence, the link between "emotion" and "action" lies not in perceived difference, but perceived threat, which can lead to violence in two scenarios: (1) when seen as jeopardizing group solidarity; and (2) when linked to the survival of group identity.

Perceived Threat and Group Cohesion

One important observation drawn from various studies is that perceived threat and group solidarity are mutually reinforcing. In their thesis on intergroup relations, Sherif and Sherif[64] maintained that any group, in order to survive as a distinct identity, has to maintain a certain level of internal cohesion. The higher the intensity of perceived threat, the more cohesive a group tends to become.[65] Haddad, in his study of sectarian conflict in postwar Lebanon, found that among the six major confessional groups (Sunnis, Shi'a, Druze, Maronites, Greek Orthodox, and Greek Catholics), the Druze demonstrated the highest level of group solidarity.[66] As a community that has continually lived under persecution and threat from the Maronites and the Muslims, who constitute the majority in Lebanon, the Druze see unity as an essential characteristic for their existence and survival.[67] Haddad claims that they have repeatedly compensated for their lack of numbers with solidarity and military prowess that have permitted them to play an important politi-

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[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Robert Hislope, "From Expressive to Actionable Hatred: Ethnic Divisions and Riots in Macedonia," in *Identity Conflicts: Can Violence Be Regulated?*, ed. J. Craig Jenkins and Esther E. Gottlieb (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2007), 150.
[64] M. Sherif and C. Sherif, *Groups in Harmony and Tension: An Integration of Studies on Intergroup Relations* (London: Octagon Press, 1953).
[65] R.V. Gould, "Collective Violence and Group Solidarity: Evidence from a Feuding Society," *American Sociological Review* 64.3 (1999).
[66] Simon Haddad, "Cultural Diversity and Sectarian Attitudes in Postwar Lebanon," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 28.2 (2002).
[67] Ibid.

cal role, to the discomfort of the government under which they live.[68] It appears that unity has enabled the Druze leaders to propagate their policies as well as engage in rapid mobilization. Haddad found that their group solidarity is evident in many instances: the Druze are "ready to defend a fellow sect member whether or not he or she [is] known to them," while actively sustaining "group bonds by assisting those in need."[69]

Perceived Threat and Security of Identity

Theorists largely agreed that perceived threat to the identity of a group is a potent source of group mobilization, because the threat to one's ethnic group is often seen as endangering not just their physical security, but also their identity.[70] Since identity security is intrinsically linked to physical security, it can be assumed that one will engage in violence to protect their group's ontological security.[71]

Thus, an important link between perceived threat and mobilization is the element of fear. Herz articulates this link through the concept of the security dilemma: the needs for survival induce people to live together; and yet the same needs subject them to uncertainty, mutual suspicion, and fear in regard to the other's intentions toward them.[72] According to Herz, the intention to harm others may not exist at all, but fear will lead them to view all other groups with suspicion, potentially leading to violent action as a result.[73] Herz, therefore, sees the security dilemma as a self-fulfilling prophecy: mutual fear of what initially might never have existed may subsequently bring about exactly that which is feared most.[74]

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, various policy experts posited that "Western Civilization" was facing a major invasion from the forces of Islam. Huntington wrote of the "bloody borders" of the crescent-shaped Islamic bloc, which extends from the bulge of Africa to central Asia,[75] inexplicably excluding Southeast Asia, where half of the world's Muslims live

[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid., 299.
[70] S.J. Kaufman, "Spiraling to Ethnic War: Elites, Masses, and Moscow in Moldova's Civil War," *International Security* 21.2 (Autumn 1996). Barry R. Posen, "The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict," *Survival* 35.1 (1993). Paul Roe, *Ethnic Violence and the Societal Security Dilemma* (London: Routledge, 2005).
[71] Craig Douglas Albert, "Identity and Violence: Analyzing Ethnic Group Behavior in Conflict," in *Panel: Ethnic Violence, Humanitarian Intervention and Human Rights* (Storrs, CT: University of Connecticut, 2008).
[72] John Herz, "Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma," *World Politics* 2.2 (1950). Cited in Korostelina 2007, 141.
[73] Herz 1950.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* 72.3 (Summer 1993).

and where no such equivalent threat is apparent.[76] Huntington saw "Islam" and "Confucianism" as antithetical to Western civilization and suggested the West develop strategies to pit one against the other.[77] Such crisp "West versus Rest" rhetoric has contributed to misunderstanding and distrust, resulting in friction between the West and other parts of the world. This exemplifies Herz's view of how fear can bring about a self-fulfilling prophecy: whether or not the forces of Islam intended to invade the "Western world," a fear of such an invasion might have led many Western countries to undergo security preparations against such a possible invasion. This, in turn, might have been perceived as potential attacks by the "Islamic" forces, contributing to mutual fear, distrust, and tension (and, arguably, prompting the 9/11 attacks). In such scenarios fear can lead to perceived differences crystallizing into perceived threats.

Fisher sees this crystallization process bearing long-term consequences for group identity: when a group acts on perceived threats, its actions may, in turn, be perceived by outgroups as threatening, thus provoking a counteraction.[78] Volleys of retaliatory actions will very quickly send the conflict into a spiral, resulting in ***the conflict being rooted in the identity of the actors involved*** in the longer term.[79] As conflict participants internalize a conflict into their identity, conflicts take on an inertia that can be very difficult to overcome.[80] This would then cause the actions of the outgroups to be interpreted as potentially threatening to ingroup identity and its ontological security.

A study by Robert White in Northern Ireland shows that the majority of victims of Protestant paramilitaries are Catholic civilians, because Protestants characterize them as "traitors" and thus, justifiable subjects of violence.[81] White argues that "because the Irish Republicans are hard to target, the objective of the Protestant paramilitaries is to create enough fear in the Catholic community that they, in turn, force the Republican paramilitaries to quit. At its most basic level, the Protestant paramilitaries view themselves as fighting for tribal survival."[82] In his interviews with members of the Protestant community, White found many enunciating the view that "Catholics are people to be hated because they'll murder us."[83] In a similar vein, many respondents who actively participated in the Irish Republican Movement professed that "they had acquired an Irish social identity by personally

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[76] Diane M. Nelson, "Dispossession and Possession: The Maya, Identiti/Ties and "Post" War Guatemala," in *Identity Conflicts: Can Violence Be Regulated?*, ed. J. Craig Jenkins and Esther E. Gottlieb (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers 2007).
[77] Huntington 1993.
[78] Fisher, "Toward a Social-Psychological Model of Intergroup Conflict."
[79] Ibid.
[80] Azar 1990.
[81] Robert W. White, "Social and Role Identities and Political Violence: Identity as a Window on Violence in Northern Ireland," in *Social Identity, Intergroup Conflict, and Conflict Reduction,* ed. Lee Jussim, Richard D. Ashmore, and David Wilder (London: Oxford University Press, 2001).
[82] Ibid., 142.
[83] Ibid., 143.

experiencing discrimination and devaluation of their Irishness."[84] This has led them to join the movement.

In conflicts such as the one between Israel and the Palestinians, where two sides live in the same space and claim ownership of the same territory, it is not only the actions of the other, but also the identity and the very existence of the other that are perceived as a threat to the group's identity.[85] Kelman saw that the other's presence in the same space, when accompanied by demands for a share in power and of recognition of the other's culture, religion, and/or language, is perceived as a threat to the integrity and cohesiveness of the group's society and its way of life.[86] These dynamics lead to a view of the conflict as a zero-sum struggle, not only around territory or resources, but also around identity, and one that can rapidly escalate to violence.

These examples illustrate how the element of fear could cause perceived differences to be viewed as perceived threats. Cases will show, however, that the crucial factor seminal to mobilized action lies in the "perception" and evaluation of the threats against an ingroup. It is this ***subjective appraisal of threats*** that forms the essential factor leading to mobilization. Diverse groups with strong identities, even amidst perceived threats, have coexisted for centuries yet rarely engage in conflict; while intergroup conflicts in Sri Lanka, Rwanda, Cambodia, Democratic Republic of Congo, etc., have resulted in grave violence and massive loss of lives. It is evident that the highly subjective nature of the perception of threat makes it susceptible to politicization and eventual mobilization to action.

Politicization of Identity

Elites play a significant role in manipulating the dynamics of group identities by influencing the formation of group cohesion and pandering to group fear. Such manipulation oscillates between two vital and connected facets: identity formation and identity salience. In the case of the former, group elites make use of symbols, myths, and narratives to construct an identity and fabricate the boundaries delineating who is included and who is excluded from the ingroup. The construction of the image of outgroups as different or antithetical to the ingroup is also a part of this process. In case of identity salience, the elites use similar techniques to mobilize the group.

Symbols, Myths, and Narratives

In today's globalized world, many societies experience a state of anomie stoked by global and local factors that may relate to the rate of economic de-

[84] Ibid., 146.
[85] Kelman 2001.
[86] Ibid., 192.

velopment or decline, the social dislocations accompanying migration, and breakdown of social bonds, stable identities, power relations, and societal norms.[87] This creates great socio-psychological stress for affected groups. Under such circumstances, elites often emerge in the face of group vulnerability to project themselves as the sole articulators of the group's will.[88] The first challenge they would likely encounter is the fragmentation within the ingroup. In order to inculcate strong identification within the group, elites will often under-communicate internal differences and reduce the actual social complexity to a set of simple contrast.[89] To that end, they nurture collective identity and group cohesion, along relatively unambiguous criteria such as place, religion, mother-tongue, kinship, etc.[90] The elites also use strong narratives that assume a predetermined and shared understanding of history and myth of origin, linking the group's social makeup to its identity so as to create the illusion of homogeneity.[91] Volkan observes that common narratives comprise chosen glories (mythologized and idealized achievements that took place in the past) and chosen traumas (losses, defeats, humiliations — also mythologized — that are usually difficult to mourn).[92] These constitute "a shared mental representation of the event, which includes realistic information, fantasized expectations, intensified feelings, and defense against unacceptable thoughts. These shared elements help individuals to unite around powerful ideas of group gains and group losses."[93]

The elites of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) used symbols, myths, and narratives extensively to construct the Tamil identity in Sri Lanka. In their book on terrorism, Arena and Arrigo relate how the LTTE placed considerable emphasis on the ancestral greatness and glory of the Tamil kingdom.[94] They connect their ideology with judicious use of symbols rooted in Tamil myths, for example the tiger, which represents several emblems like the god Murugan, the ancient Chola emperors, the concept of *maram* (wrath), and the symbol of martyrdom.[95] In constructing their identity, the LTTE highlighted political victimization by the state, historical grievance related to

[87] David Brown, "Ethnic Conflict and Civic Nationalism," in *Identity Matters: Ethnic and Sectarian Conflict,* ed. James L. Peacock, Patricia M. Thornton, and Patrick B. Inman (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007).
[88] Ibid.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Thomas Hylland Eriksen, "Ethnic Identity, National Identity, and Intergroup Conflict," in *Social Identity, Intergroup Conflict, and Conflict Reduction,* ed. Lee Jussim, Richard D. Ashmore, and David Wilder (London: Oxford University Press, 2001).
[91] M.A. Mohamed Salih, "Other Identities: Politics of Sudanese Discursive Narratives," *Identities* 5.1 (1998).
[92] V.D. Volkan, *Bloodlines: From Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1997).
[93] Ibid., 48.
[94] Michael P. Arena and Bruce A. Arrigo, *The Terrorist Identity: Explaining the Terrorist Threat* (New York: New York University Press, 2006).
[95] Ibid., 182.

Sinhalese domination in language and religion, and the perpetual struggle of the Tamil people for socio-political and economic participation. These elements combined to produce a Tamil identity that resonates with its myths, symbols, and narratives manifested through beliefs such as the right to act on the wrath incurred, and practices such as the use of female suicide bombers as a means to inculcate group solidarity.[96] Lahiri contends that the LTTE's use of suicide bombers targeted not only the Sinhalese government of Sri Lanka, but also the Tamil population in the North. Thus, "in the North, the real power of suicide bombing lies in its ability to create internal cohesion amongst the Tamil population through an emphasis on the sacrificing aspect of the act. Acts of suicide bombing and the Black Tigers are essential elements to the LTTE's own mythology."[97] The use of suicide bombers had evidently inculcated a sense of pride in the movement. According to Alex Perry of *Time* magazine, "LTTE's leader Vellupillai Prabhakaran's real genius was to build a culture of sacrifice and martyrdom around his guerrilla force, with himself as demi-god leader."[98] Thus, it is apparent that the identity of the Tamil people was politicized by their leaders to generate solid group cohesion and to cultivate a greater willingness of the Tamils to mobilize against the Sinhalese government.

Although politicization of group identity can sometimes be construed to have been undertaken for the interests of the ingroup, history has shown that political maneuvering can sometimes be undertaken purely in pursuit of the elites' material interests. Khan argues that very often group narratives underplay its "politics" in favor of its "mission" to preserve the ethnic, cultural, and historic identity of the group. Therefore, elites will choose to highlight the "reawakening" of the collective identity and struggle rather than claim that it is a political movement.[99] This has largely been the case in India, where, since 1980, the *Hindutva* movement has steadily increased its influence, culminating in victories in the 1998 and 1999 parliamentary elections. The movement rallies behind slogans calling for India to be redefined as a Hindu country. The rhetoric of *Hindutva* invokes ancient myths of bitter defeats and noble sacrifices, advocating a return to the roots and promoting the vision of India as a *hindu rashtra* — a Hindu nation.[100] According to Eriksen, however, the very notion of *Hindutva*, or Hindu-ness, is a modern one.[101] He contends that the idea of the Hindu identity as an imagined community based on cultural similarity is alien to Hinduism as such, which is a religion

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[96] Simanti Lahiri, "Why Suicide Bombing? The Motives of Suicide Protest in Sri Lanka," in *Annual Meeting of the Western Political Science Association* (Las Vegas, NV: 2007).
[97] Ibid., 17.
[98] Alex Perry, "How Sri Lanka's Rebels Build a Suicide Bomber," *Time*, 12 May 2006.
[99] Adeel Khan, *Politics of Identity: Ethnic Nationalism and the State in Pakistan* (New Delhi: Sage, 2005).
[100] Ibid.
[101] Eriksen 2001.

based on complementarity, difference, and hierarchy.[102] Eriksen sees the movement as a reaction against a growing egalitarianism in Indian society following the 1950s introduction of polices aimed at improving the conditions of the "untouchables," the lowest castes.[103] Many members of the upper castes feel their inherited privilege eroding away, and thus, Erikson contends, "*Hindutva* is largely a movement representing the interests of the disenchanted upper castes."[104]

Strategic Framing

The structuring of a collective identity arguably involves policymaking to maintain and enhance the group identity. In the arena of policymaking, group elites play a significant role in two active enterprises: the continual negotiation and renegotiation of group boundaries; and the strategic positioning of the ingroup vis-à-vis outgroups. It appears that in choosing to stress resemblances or disparities that define the ingroup and its boundaries, group elites can influence boundary enlargement or contraction. This usually involves a deliberate attempt to highlight certain identity markers that emphasize its position vis-à-vis specific outgroups.

Hence, even where a Serb villager in Bosnia had more in common with a Muslim co-villager than with a Serb from Belgrade, the boundaries in former Yugoslavia were drawn not between villagers and city-dwellers but around religion, which was selected as a central marker of collective identity.[105] This, in effect, brought about boundary contraction for all the relevant identity groups.

In the partition of India, the religious and cultural distinction between Muslims and Hindus became a key marker in mobilizing the large Muslim population in favor of Pakistan.[106] According to Korostelina, the Muslim League project to carve a Muslim state out of India involved first the "separation" of Muslims from Hindus as a self-conscious political community and then the creation a Pakistani identity in the context of a Hindu-Muslim dichotomy. Eventually, this led to an exclusive focus on Islamic identity, almost by default.[107]

On the other hand, an example of boundary enlargement is the construction of the European identity within an institutional framework that is essentially supranational. To integrate members that boast diverse ethnic, cultural, and religious heritage, political elites choose to emphasize civic references underscoring citizens' sense of belonging to the EU, narrating "common" EU

[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Ibid., 56.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Korostelina 2007.
[107] Ibid.

values such as welfare state, democracy, liberal economy, rule of law, fundamental human rights, minority rights, and environmental protection.[108]

Salience of Identity and Dehumanization of the "Other"

Korostelina believes that "salience can be said to be the most important component of identity."[109] People for whom ethnic identity is of greater salience have strong feelings about their group membership, evaluate their group positively, and are interested in their group's history and future.[110] It has been noted that if an identity is salient over a long period of time, it becomes a central identity and has strong influence on behavior.[111] Salient identities lead to a rigid, determined, and one-dimensional worldview, thereby producing a "tunnel consciousness" where people perceive the representatives of other groups, situations, and activities through the narrow perspective of ethnic, religious, or national identity.[112] Group elites, attempting to increase the salience of an ingroup, would employ what Moshman describes as "dichotomization," where a homogenized whole is presented by the emphasis on the high degree of similarity and personal values, and the crucial significance of ingroup primacy and interdependence.[113] As salient identity "influences the perception of situations pertaining to ingroups and outgroups … [it] is, therefore, a form of a mobilized identity."[114]

This paper has argued that the higher the intensity of perceived threat, the more cohesive a group tends to become. Elites aiming to mobilize an ingroup commonly attempt to further increase salience by pandering to the fear of the group to magnify the intensity of perceived threat. To stoke the fear of an ingroup, the elites often depersonalize and dehumanize the members of the outgroups and represent them in homogenous terms, as a collective whole, against which the ingroup is sought to be mobilized. As dichotomization invokes the questions of "who we are," which also entails questions about "who they are," it is the answers to those questions that ultimately guide "us" in determining what to do about "them."[115] As such, outgroups are almost always presented in symbolic "dangerous" or "undesirable" images: the portrayal of the Tutsi as "cockroaches" by the Hutu in Rwanda, the delineation of the Jews as "parasites" by Hitler in the Holocaust, the description of the natives as "savages" by the Spanish in the conquest of Hispaniola, etc. The dehumanization is frequently accompanied by

[108] Selcen Öner, "European Identity in the Context of the EU: Construction of the European Identity in Civic and Cultural Terms," *Europolis, Journal of Political Science and Theory* 4 (2008).
[109] Korostelina 2007, 71.
[110] Ibid.
[111] S. Stryker and R.T. Serpe, "Identity Salience and Psychological Centrality: Equivalent, Overlapping, or Complementary Concepts?" *Social Psychology Quarterly* 57.1 (1994).
[112] Ibid.
[113] Moshman 2007.
[114] Korostelina 2007, 76.
[115] Moshman 2007.

a metaphor depicting the ingroup as organic, while the outgroup is characterized as an impurity that must be purged out or a threat that must be eliminated:[116] the metaphor of "pulling out the weed" in Rwanda, "parasites to be removed" in Nazi Germany, and "subversive threats that must be neutralized" in Cambodia. When such vivid metaphors with strong undercurrents of moral imperatives are used, the elimination of the portrayed "threat" becomes a moral obligation of every ingroup member. Thus the acts of killing, maiming, raping, and destroying effectively become a "moral mission."[117]

Very often, members of the targeted group are made to suffer under circumstances that force them to become "just like" the dehumanized characteristics ascribed to them, thus reinforcing the belief that they deserved to be treated in most inhumane manner.[118] This was certainly the case in Guatemala (1982), where the government began a systematic campaign of oppression against the Mayan Indians, who, the government claimed, were sympathetic and supportive of the communist guerillas and who were allegedly working toward a communist coup.[119] Guatemalan army and counter-insurgency forces defined themselves as "killing machines" out to exterminate the Mayan "animals."[120] The Mayans who survived the destruction of their villages ended up desperately seeking food, water, and shelter in the mountains, where, ***forced to live like animals***, they were hunted down as such. In operations known as "hunting the deer," multiple platoons would surround a large forested area into which soldiers would shoot from three sides. Terrified Mayans would flee in the only remaining direction and run into military forces ready to finish the kill.[121]

Nonetheless, elites have a great potential to influence both negative and positive outcomes. The East Timor crisis is an important example to show how group elites have the potential to bring about different outcomes through their deliberate posturing vis-à-vis an intergroup conflict. After Indonesian independence in 1945, the sovereignty, national unity, and territorial integrity of the Indonesian state were considered sacred and nonnegotiable. However, in 1974, East Timor began to establish new institutions, develop education and infrastructure, and shape nationalist ideologies. The Indonesian government, then led by President Suharto, perceived this development as a sign of aspirations for independence. In order to preserve unity and hegemony as the main principles of national identity, the Indone-

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[116] Ibid.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Alexander Laban Hinton, *Why Did They Kill? Cambodia in the Shadow of Genocide* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).
[119] V. Sanford, *Buried Secrets: Truth and Human Rights in Guatemala* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).
[120] Ibid.
[121] Ibid.

sian government began a brutal occupation of East Timor.[122] In 1984, the new Indonesian president B.J. Habibie declared the consolidation of democracy as the most important national interest. On the basis of this new meaning of national identity, the government saw the policies toward East Timor as inconsistent with the vision of Indonesia, a country that was emphasizing human rights, independence, and self-determination. [123] "For these policymakers, resolving the East Timor issue was intertwined with achieving their political project of building a new and just Indonesia where democracy and human rights would have a central place.[124] As a result, the Indonesian government allowed the East Timorese to hold a popular referendum in 1999, which brought about their effective independence.[125]

Arguably, in many cases, destructive conflict can be averted if elites position the ingroup vis-à-vis specific outgroups in a friendly rather than hostile posturing.

Conclusion: Implications for Conflict Resolution

Kelman sees the zero-sum view of identity and mutual denial of the other's identity as serious obstacles to conflict resolution.[126] This is particularly true with highly salient and rigid identities where all issues tend to become existential and compromise solutions might be seen as jeopardizing one's own identity, as in the case of Israel and Palestine. Generally, the demonized other is not trusted to negotiate in good faith or to respect agreements, and even if parties agree to make certain compromises, it is unlikely that these can lead to durable changes in the relationship between the conflicting groups, mutually enhancing interaction, or ultimate reconciliation.[127] Kelman asserts that "lasting change requires mutual adjustments in collective identity."[128]

The notion that identity is a social construction makes such an endeavor achievable. As with construction, the reconstruction of an identity can occur when events or changes in leadership influence the dynamics of identity by tapping into factors such as emotions or stereotypes. Druckman observes how rapidly the Chinese became "good guys" after Richard Nixon went to China, how fast Saddam Hussein became "a devil" after his invasion of Ku-

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[122] L. Tan, "From Incorporation to Disengagement: East Timor and Indonesian Identities, 1975-1999," in *Identity, Morality and Threat*, ed. D. Rothbart and K.V. Korostelina (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 2006).
[123] Ibid.
[124] Ibid., 201.
[125] Paulo Gorjão, "The End of a Cycle: Australian and Portuguese Foreign Policies and the Fate of East Timor," *Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of International & Strategic Affairs* 23.1 (2001).
[126] Kelman 2001.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Ibid., 194.

wait, and how feelings expressed by Americans toward the U.S. military changed dramatically following the Gulf War.[129]

The politicization of identity gives the elites strong agency in the conflict resolution process — just as they are able to pander to the fear of the masses, they are also armed with the capacity to quell or tame such fears. Hamber argues that the underpinning of all political transition processes is a range of social fears, both real and imagined. These are built on the experience of the past, embedded in the present, and mediated through the local and global context, constantly confronting the uncertainty of what might happen in the future.[130] As the possibility of the future can cut both ways, arguably, "peace agreements and those mechanisms born through them, such as truth commissions, are profoundly shaped by this process and by the discourses of fear" as formulated by the elites.[131]

In this respect, maintaining open communication lines across group boundaries can help to allay fears, tone down perceived threat, and expose stereotypes. An appropriate example is the Macedonian case where in 2001, interethnic tensions resulted in violence. The village of Bitola, with a majority Albanian population, experienced riots and interethnic fighting; while Kumanovo, largely inhabited by ethnic Serbs and Macedonians, did not implode. Scholars have attributed this to the significant roles played by the elites in Kumanovo to assuage the volatile tensions between the groups. Hislope credits the town mayor, Slobodan Kovacevski, and Albanian local leaders who "worked tirelessly to ensure confidence and to maintain open, honest communication channels.[132] It was noted that Kovacevski "regularly contacted all the local mayors in the district and urged party leaders to refrain from protest rallies, convinced the police to stop wearing facial masks, and ensured that NGO relief envoys could reach besieged villages."[133]

Nevertheless, when a group has been victimized in the past, it has an increased likelihood of becoming a perpetrator of mass violence, as victimized groups are more likely to respond to a threat with vengeance.[134] In this regard, healing becomes highly important: healing from both individual trauma and group victimization involves reparation of identity, as well as connections to other people and reestablishment of trust between groups.[135] Acknowledgment of the group's suffering by others and the expression of

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[129] D. Druckman, "Nationalism, Patriotism and Group Loyalty: A Social Psychological Perspective," *Mershon International Studies Review* 38.1 (1994).
[130] Brandon Hamber, "Flying Flags of Fear: The Role of Fear in the Process of Political Transition," *Journal of Human Rights* 5.1 (2006).
[131] Ibid., 130.
[132] Hislope 2007.
[133] Ibid., 158.
[134] Ervin Staub, "Individual and Group Identities in Genocide and Mass Killing," in *Social Identity, Intergroup Conflict, and Conflict Reduction,* ed. Lee Jussim, Richard D. Ashmore, and David Wilder (London: Oxford University Press, 2001).
[135] Ibid.

caring and empathy contribute to healing. Staub suggests that perpetrators also need to heal, as their own violence wounds them further.[136] When perpetrators and victims continue living together, as in Bosnia and Rwanda, ample time has to be devoted to healing by both groups, before any reconciliation can take place. Reconciliation, in turn, is required in order to stop a continuing cycle of contempt and violence.[137] In the case of the Armenians who survived the genocide by the Ottoman Empire in the early twentieth century, healing was hindered by Turkey's denial that genocide had taken place and by the complicity of this denial by many other countries. The relationships of the recently created Armenia with other nations, especially Turkey and Azerbaijan, have been affected by this history and the identity it has helped create: an identity that has "components of vulnerability, including a view of the world as dangerous and an ideology of antagonism in relation to Turks."[138]

Kelman believes that the process of learning can help parties to discover that accommodation of the other's identity need not destroy the core of the group's own identity, and that a compromise or collaborative solution to a conflict could become negotiable.[139] The hope is that unofficial third-party consultation, broad participatory negotiations, problem-solving workshops, education programs designed to promote learning about other groups, and other forms of low-key third-party interventions can mutually educate conflicting parties. This, in turn, can make them aware of the interests and identity claims of opponents, create a better understanding of the benefits of future positive interactions, and generate a greater willingness to redefine identities so that the situation is perceived as a positive sum or is transformed into one that allows for collaborative solutions.[140] The goal of these programs is to create an environment that allows groups to maintain their identity and, at the same time, accept other groups.[141]

In the same way that group elites can influence mobilization, they can also bring about reconciliation. Unofficial third-party facilitated workshops and programs aim to bring together high-level, informal representatives of conflicting parties to engage in a mutual analysis of their conflict and a joint formation of ideas for de-escalation and resolution.[142] According to Fisher, a

[136] Ibid.
[137] Ibid.
[138] Ibid., 172.
[139] Kelman 2001.
[140] Ronald J. Fisher, "Generic Principles for Resolving Intergroup Conflict," *Journal of Social Issues* 50.1 (1994). Louis Kriesberg, "The Development of the Conflict Resolution Field," in *Peacemaking in International Conflict,* ed. I. William Zartman and J. Lewis Rasmussen (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 1997). J. Rothman, *Resolving Identity-Based Conflict in Nations, Organizations and Communities* (New York: Wiley 1997).
[141] Ronald J. Fisher, *The Social Psychology of Intergroup and International Conflict Resolution* (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1990).
[142] Ronald J. Fisher, "Training as Interactive Conflict Resolution: Characteristics and Challenges," *International Negotiation* 2.3 (1997).

particular appeal of these workshops is that they can serve a useful pre-negotiation function, either with informal representatives of the leaderships of the parties, or with members of the negotiating teams themselves.[143] Among other things, "these informal discussions can affect attitudes and orientations in positive ways, create conducive atmospheres, establish frameworks, foster the psychological and political conditions necessary for negotiations, improve the relationship between the parties, and deescalate the conflict to the point where negotiations are more effective."[144] Research shows that these workshops have been instrumental in influencing inter-group attitudes toward greater complexity and favorability in conflicts such as the Israeli-Palestinian case, Cyprus, or India-Pakistan.[145]

It is important to remember that conflict is not necessarily negative, even when it relates to identity. Identity-based conflicts can become sources of positive social and political innovation. The engagement with "the other" through conflict resolution mechanisms can help to transform the dissonance of conflict into a resonance of creativity and cooperation through mutual respect, empathy, and an active learning process.[146] This lays the groundwork for groups to start promoting broader inclusive policies, developing mutual respect and trust, and enhancing cross-cultural ties.

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[143] Ibid.
[144] Ibid., 334,
[145] Ibid.; Herbert C. Kelman and Nadim N. Rouhana, "Promoting Joint Thinking in International Conflicts: An Israeli-Palestinian Continuing Workshop," *Journal of Social Issues* 50.1 (1994).
[146] Rothman.