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Keren Sharvit • Eran Halperin
Editors

A Social Psychology Perspective on The Israeli- Palestinian Conflict

Celebrating the Legacy
of Daniel Bar-Tal, Vol II.

 Springer

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Preface to the Second Volume

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been waging for decades, resulting in mass losses, destruction, and suffering with profound effects on the members of the involved societies. Furthermore, its effects reach beyond the involved societies and influence regional and global stability. Many attempts have been made to bring this conflict to peaceful resolution, but so far without success. Due to its intensity and extensive effects, this conflict has drawn the attention of scholars from numerous disciplines, who attempted to explain the causes of the conflict and the reasons for the difficulties in resolving it. Among these one can find historians, geographers, political scientists, sociologists, and others. Social and political psychologists have also addressed this conflict, and one of the most influential among them has been Daniel Bar-Tal.

This is the second of two volumes intended to pay tribute to Bar-Tal's scholarly contribution upon his retirement from his position at Tel Aviv University. While the first volume was devoted to Bar-Tal's general theory of the sociopsychological foundations of intractable conflict and the theory's relation to other prominent theoretical frameworks, this volume is devoted to applying Bar-Tal's theory to the specific case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In his most recent book, published in 2013, Bar-Tal acknowledges the immense effects that living in Israel, being exposed to this conflict, and taking part in it have had on his thinking, theorizing, and empirical research regarding intractable conflicts. We too, as his former students, have been inspired by living in Israel and by Bar-Tal's work to continue to investigate the sociopsychological dynamics of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and through them to advance the understandings of intractable conflicts in general.

We were by no means the only fortunate ones to benefit from Bar-Tal's guidance. Over the years Bar-Tal has educated dozens of scholars, most of whom conducted their research in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and contributed to its understanding. Specifically, over the past 15 years, a group of Bar-Tal's graduate students and other colleagues met every other Monday to present their work, exchange ideas, develop collaborative projects, and learn about the work of other scholars. Under the guidance of Bar-Tal and his colleague Amiram Raviv, this group became a cohesive collective and a sort of "intellectual family." To those of us who

took part in that group, Bar-Tal is not just a world-renowned scholar, but also simply Danny, our friend, colleague, and mentor. Through the years of leading this group, one of Danny's dreams has been to publish an edited volume, to which different group members would contribute chapters. He was never able to realize that dream himself, but in a way, we fulfill that dream for him in this volume, since 12 out of the 18 chapters in the volume are written by members of the group who are Danny's former students.

In studying an intractable conflict as complex as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it is very difficult and perhaps nearly impossible to adopt an entirely impartial position. This is true especially if the researchers are also members of one of the societies involved in the conflict. Hence, none of the contributors to this volume can claim complete objectivity. One of our regrets regarding this volume is that we were not able to include a larger number of Palestinian contributors. This is, in part, an unfortunate reflection of the present intractable state of the conflict, in which it is very difficult for Israelis and Palestinians to collaborate with each other. As a result, most of the contributors are Jewish Israelis, and the volume is inevitably biased toward their perspective, though as the different chapters illustrate, this perspective is far from uniform and in fact encompasses a multitude of perspectives. While Palestinian perspectives are admittedly underrepresented in this volume, they are not entirely absent, and we are happy and proud to include chapters by Eman Nahhas and by Anan Srour (with Adi Mana and Shifra Sagy). We can only wish for a future of better relations between Israelis and Palestinians, which, among many positive effects, may also allow more extensive collaborations between scholars and enrich all the parties' knowledge.

This volume begins with an introductory chapter by Keren Sharvit, which presents an overview of Bar-Tal's theory of the sociopsychological foundations of intractable conflict and discusses how the theory can be and has been applied toward understanding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The rest of the chapters in the volume then expand on the different components of the theory and their manifestations in the Israeli-Palestinian context. Part I of the volume is concerned with the effects of the conflict on young children and the manner in which children are socialized. Yona Teichman (Chap. 2) presents a developmental perspective on children's acquisition of stereotypes and prejudice. Meytal Nasie (Chap. 3) then discusses the manner in which children's direct experiences of violence and indirect experiences of education in preschools and elementary schools shape the formation of the sociopsychological infrastructure of intractable conflict. Part II deals with the role of collective memories and narratives in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Rafi Nets-Zehngut (Chap. 4) discusses the Jewish Israeli collective memory of the conflict, the changes it has gone through over the years, and its relation to developments in the conflict and to the Palestinian collective memory. Eman Nahhas (Chap. 5) discusses the collective memory of the 1948 war among young Palestinians in Israel and the manner in which it has been preserved despite attempts by the state to silence it. Then, Srour, Mana, and Sagy (Chap. 6) present empirical findings regarding the reactions of Israeli Jewish and Arab adolescents when presented with the narratives of their own group and the "other" group. Part III deals with societal

beliefs and the ethos of conflict, which are central components of the sociopsychological infrastructure of intractable conflict according to Bar-Tal's theorizing. Eli Podeh (Chap. 7) presents a historical perspective on the Israeli and Egyptian perceptions of each other during the Nasserite period. Neta Oren (Chap. 8) and Ronni Shaked (Chap. 9) then discuss the Jewish Israeli and the Palestinian ethos of conflict, respectively. Part IV deals with the relationship between ideology, ethos, and affective experiences in the context of the conflict. Daphna Canetti (Chap. 10) discusses the relationships among exposure to violence, experiences of distress and threat, the ethos of conflict, and political preferences. Pliskin and Halperin (Chap. 11) discuss the role of emotion and emotion regulation in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the manner in which they may relate to and interact with the ethos of conflict in the Israeli society.

Part V deals with the role of education and educational interventions. Ohad David (Chap. 12) presents an educational case study in which Israeli Jewish children learned about encountering "otherness" while applying the sociopsychological model of identity. Then, Soli Vered (Chap. 13) discusses the potential role of peace education in transforming intractable conflict and the reasons that such education has not been implemented in Israel. Finally, Part VI deals with the role of various actors and potential interventions in possibly advancing peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Nimrod Rosler (Chap. 14) discusses the role of the two national leaders, Rabin and Arafat, in the peacemaking process during the 1990s. Tamir Magal (Chap. 15) discusses the role of civil society organizations in Israel in different phases of the conflict. Maoz and Ron (Chap. 16) discuss the potential of structured encounters between Israelis and Palestinians to promote peace. SimanTov-Nachlieli and Shnabel (Chap. 17) present the needs-based model of reconciliation and discuss how fulfilling Israelis' and Palestinians' needs might encourage them to respond pro-socially toward each other. Lastly, Ofer Shinar Levanon presents the concept of "transitional justice" and discusses the need to integrate it with knowledge regarding the sociopsychological infrastructure of intractable conflict.

Keren Sharvit
Eran Halperin

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