

# Challenges for Peacemakers: How to Overcome Socio-Psychological Barriers

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Boaz Hameiri<sup>1,2</sup>, Daniel Bar-Tal<sup>1</sup>, and Eran Halperin<sup>2</sup>

## Abstract

Resolving intergroup conflicts is one of humanity's most important challenges. Social psychologists join this endeavor, not only to understand the psychological foundations of intergroup conflicts but also to suggest interventions that aim to resolve conflicts peacefully. The present article begins by describing a specific type of conflict, namely, an intractable conflict that has distinguishing characteristics. One characteristic that fuels its intractability is the presence of socio-psychological barriers. These barriers result in one-sided information processing that obstructs the penetration of new information to promote peace: Members of a society immersed in an intractable conflict are frozen in their conflict-supporting societal beliefs. The most challenging question is how to unfreeze these beliefs, to overcome these barriers. Various interventions have been designed to promote intergroup peace, within a new taxonomy specifying the nature and goals of the interventions. Peace-promoting interventions can be divided into three categories: (a) interventions that provide contradictory information, (b) interventions that provide information through experiences, and (c) interventions that teach a new skill. Finally, a number of conclusions and limitations stem from the reviewed interventions, suggesting a new line of intervention based on "paradoxical thinking."

## Keywords

intractable conflict, socio-psychological barriers, conflict resolution, psychological interventions, paradoxical thinking

## Tweet

The article reviews and discusses psychological interventions that aim to unfreeze barriers that fuel intractable conflicts and promote peace.

## Key Points

- Parties to intractable conflict are frozen in their conflict-supporting societal beliefs.
- Peace-promoting interventions can contradict frozen beliefs, provide experience-based information, and teach new skills.
- "Paradoxical thinking" combines these evidence-based features in a new intervention strategy.

## Introduction

One of civilization's most important challenges is to prevent, or at least to minimize, violent conflicts that plague the human race, involving killings and injuries of soldiers and civilians, infrastructure damage, and often atrocities including genocide. These conflicts cause tremendous suffering, loss, misery, and hardship to the members of the collectives involved. This challenge is probably more difficult than it seems, given that since the Second World War, 352 violent conflicts have erupted, and only 144 have been terminated

with peace agreements (Harbom, Högbladh, & Wallensteen, 2006). In the 45-year period between 1955 and 2000, 41 million lives were lost in violent conflicts (Leitenberg, 2006). Thus, social scientists, practitioners, NGOs, international organizations, and some political figures try to find innovative ways to cope with this challenge.

Social psychologists also take part, concentrating on the socio-psychological foundations, rather than on political or ideological disagreements. Their goal is not only to understand violent conflicts but also to contribute to the struggle of finding ways to resolve them peacefully. At the macro level of social psychology, society members involved in a violent and protracted conflict develop a functional, conflict-supporting socio-psychological repertoire of shared societal beliefs, attitudes, and emotions. These become well anchored in the culture, and it is extremely difficult to change them when signs of possible peace appear. This conflict-supporting repertoire is a barrier to peacemaking, and understanding how to overcome these shared beliefs can open society members to

<sup>1</sup>Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv, Israel

<sup>2</sup>Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya, Israel

## Corresponding Author:

Boaz Hameiri, The School of Psychological Sciences, Tel Aviv University,  
Tel Aviv-Yafo, 6997801, Israel.

Email: boazhamei@post.tau.ac.il

consider and be motivated to absorb a new repertoire that enables a peace-building process (Bar-Tal, 2013; Bar-Tal & Halperin, 2011).

Therefore, the present article aims to present ideas on how social psychology can contribute not only to the understanding of ways to advance a peace-building process but also how to structure interventions that could be useful for practitioners and decision makers who are interested in solving intergroup conflicts peacefully. Specifically, the article will describe a particular conflict type, namely, an intractable conflict, and its framework of barriers. Then, a new taxonomy describes interventions developed to change the conflict-supporting repertoire. Finally, conclusions lead to suggestions for future research and applications of the current results to real-life conflicts.

### Socio-Psychological Barriers

Although intergroup conflicts are inherent to human relations, of special interest are intergroup conflicts called intractable,<sup>1</sup> which are also an inseparable part of intergroup relations (Bar-Tal, 2013; Kriesberg, 1998). These vicious conflicts still rage in various parts of the globe, as for example, in Kashmir, Turkey, and the Middle East. They center on disagreements of contradictory goals and interests in different domains, such as territories, self-determination, national wealth, and basic values. Achieving a peaceful conflict resolution requires addressing these real disagreements. However, resolution in this type of conflict is rarely achieved. Intractable conflicts often last for decades and even centuries, causing loss, destruction, and suffering. One major reason for their continuation is the operation of powerful socio-psychological barriers that fuel and maintain these conflicts, as well as impede progress toward their peaceful settlement (Arrow, Mnookin, Ross, Tversky, & Wilson, 1995; Bar-Tal & Halperin, 2011; Ross & Ward, 1995).

In analyzing socio-psychological barriers, our point of departure is that intractable conflicts create difficult life conditions, and to survive this period and meet the conflict's challenges, societies develop functional beliefs, attitudes, emotions, values, motivations, norms, and practices (Bar-Tal, 2007, 2013). These provide a meaningful picture of the conflict situation, justify the behavior of the society, facilitate mobilization for participation in the conflict, and maintain a positive social identity. On the individual and collective levels, the repertoire's elements gradually crystallize into a socio-psychological infrastructure that includes collective memories, shared beliefs (ethos) of conflicts, and collective emotional orientation, which provide the major collective narratives, motivators, emotions, and goals (Bar-Tal, 2007, 2013). This societal repertoire provides a simplistic and one-sided picture that serves as a prism for viewing conflict reality. Eventually, this infrastructure becomes well institutionalized and disseminated, serving as a foundation for the development of a culture of conflict that dominates societies engaged in

intractable conflicts (Bar-Tal, 2013). Although some aspects of the psychological infrastructure can be found in "regular" or tractable intergroup conflict, this entire psychological gestalt distinguishes intractable conflicts.

Society members as individuals are exposed to conflict-supporting narratives through various communication channels, such as families, ceremonies, education systems, media, leaders' speeches, and cultural products, and thus, many of them absorb the contents of these narratives. This psychological infrastructure constitutes a major socio-psychological barrier,

an integrated operation of cognitive, emotional, and motivational processes, combined with a pre-existing repertoire of rigid conflict-supporting beliefs, worldviews, and emotions that result in selective, biased, and distorting information processing. (Bar-Tal & Halperin, 2011, p. 220)

The resulting one-sided information processing obstructs penetration of new information that could facilitate a peace process. Put differently, a proportion of the society is frozen in the collective beliefs of the conflict-supporting narratives and thus, is not even interested in exposure to alternative, contradictory information (Bar-Tal & Halperin, 2011).

### Overcoming Socio-Psychological Barriers

The most challenging question for social psychologists and practitioners is how to overcome these barriers, or in other words, how to change the well anchored conflict-supporting repertoire. Kurt Lewin (1947) originally proposed that every process of societal change has to begin with a cognitive change of unfreezing, in individuals and groups. Indeed, on the individual psychological level, unfreezing usually begins with the appearance of a new idea that is inconsistent with already-held attitudes and causes psychological tension that triggers intrapersonal conflict. This, in turn, may stimulate people to move from their basic positions and look for alternatives (e.g., Abelson et al., 1968; Bartunek, 1993; Kruglanski, 1989). This new idea, an *instigating belief*, motivates reevaluating the societal beliefs of the culture of conflict, and it may lead to their unfreezing (Bar-Tal & Halperin, 2009).

The content of the instigating beliefs may come from different domains pertaining to the image of the rival, the history of the conflict, the goals, new threats, a way of thinking, the need for perspective taking, and so on. The instigating belief must contradict at least some of the beliefs in the system, and apparently have high validity, to cause dissonance (Festinger, 1957). It may suggest, for example, that the rival is human and could be a partner to negotiations, or that the ingroup has performed misdeeds that have violated moral codes, or that the conflict's goals are unachievable, or that the costs of the conflict are so high as to critically damage society. This principle has led to various interventions, developed to unfreeze the minds of society members, to

absorb beliefs that may change the conflict-supporting repertoire. The following section will categorize the various interventions. Many dozens of interventions in laboratories and field have developed, and practitioners have used some of them (e.g., Blumberg, Hare, & Costin, 2006; Gidron, Katz, & Hasenfeld, 2002). This article cannot evaluate each intervention but generally evaluates a few to illuminate their limitations and benefits to advance this line of research and practice.

## A New Taxonomy of Peace-Promoting Interventions

In reviewing the different interventions, a new taxonomy provides a way of organizing them, based on their nature and goals. Empirical examples illustrate each of the categories, coming mostly, although not exclusively, from recent interventions carried out in our labs. Specifically, interventions aiming to change the conflict-supporting repertoire divide into three categories: (a) interventions that provide information contradicting the conflict-supporting repertoire, or that shed new light on the conflict's reality; (b) interventions based on an experience from which an individual may infer a conclusion different from the conflict-supporting repertoire; and (c) interventions in which the participants are taught a new skill that can facilitate unfreezing of the conflict-supporting repertoire. We will now elaborate on each category of peace-promoting interventions.

### *Providing Contradictory Information*

The first category of interventions, which has received considerable attention in peace-promoting interventions research, provides new information to shed new light on the conflict in the widest sense (e.g., about the adversary, the costs of the conflict, goals). These interventions may occur in at least two ways: first, by providing direct information about the given conflict that contradicts the already-held beliefs. This information attempts to persuade society members that their current beliefs are invalid, in comparison with the new information, which is more accurate, better reflecting the conflict reality. The contradictory information is supposed to be credible, persuasive, and even indisputable, to create dissonance, and then attitude change. The second way of intervening provides information about a different conflict or even without a specific context, and expects society members to draw a conclusion concerning their specific conflict.

As an example (Gayer, Landman, Halperin, & Bar-Tal, 2009), direct information elaborated on possible future losses for Jews in Israel if the conflict was to continue. Based on dominant issues within Israeli public discourse, the transmitted information stated that an enduring conflict would lead to an Arab majority within the borders of Israeli control, including the West Bank, posing a significant threat to the establishment of a Jewish state in Israel. The information about

possible future losses associated with the continuation of the conflict, and the possible annexation of the West Bank, led to unfreezing and to higher support for compromises, to resolve the conflict peacefully. These effects were moderated by participants' political orientation, as the intervention had a minor effect on hawkish participants, but a greater effect on dovish ones. Other interventions have presented directly contradictory information based on common ingroup identity, and other group-category-based approaches (e.g., Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000; Shnabel, Halabi, & Noor, 2013; Wohl & Branscombe, 2005), as well as interventions that aim to increase the outgroup's perceived variability (e.g., Er-rafiy & Brauer, 2013; Saguy & Halperin, 2014).

An intervention based on information that does not directly relate to the conflict is a study that provided information about the nature of groups in general. Empirically, hatred reflects an appraisal that the rival holds stable negative characteristics that cannot change (Halperin, 2008). Thus, providing general information that groups are malleable (as opposed to having a fixed nature) would attenuate hatred appraisals. Indeed, in three experimental studies (Halperin, Russell, Trzesniewski, Gross, & Dweck, 2011), diverse samples (i.e., Israeli Jews, Palestinian citizens of Israel, Palestinians in the West Bank) given general information about a group's malleability, without mentioning specific adversarial groups, improved their attitudes toward the rival group, which in turn led to greater willingness to compromise to achieve a peaceful resolution. Another set of studies observed similar patterns among participants led to believe that conflicts are malleable rather than fixed (Cohen-Chen, Halperin, Crisp, & Gross, 2014), further demonstrating how information dealing with the dynamic nature of reality promotes support for peace.

### *Providing Information Through Experiences*

A second major category of interventions in peace-promoting research provides participant experiences aiming to unfreeze their conflict-supporting beliefs. This occurs in at least two ways: first, by enabling an experience that explicitly or implicitly contradicts extant societal beliefs and attitudes; second, by enabling an experience that can attenuate possible resistance that may be prompted by information threatening the ingroup's image or morality.

Contact (originally conceptualized by Allport, 1954) is a prime example of experience-based peace-promoting interventions (Al Ramiah & Hewstone, 2013; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). This line of interventions has been applied to different situations, such as face-to-face contact (Brown & Hewstone, 2005), virtual and "parasocial" (media-derived) contact (Schiappa, Gregg, & Hewes, 2005), "extended" (networked) contact (Wright, Aron, McLaughlin-Volpe, & Ropp, 1997), and imagined contact (Crisp & Turner, 2009; for a recent review, see Al Ramiah & Hewstone, 2013). This intervention demonstrably reduces animosity in several contexts (e.g., Northern Ireland: Tausch, Hewstone, Schmid,

Hughes, & Cairns, 2011; Middle East: Maoz & Ellis, 2008; Bosnia: Čehajić, Brown, & Castano, 2008).

One notable parasocial contact intervention is a longitudinal field study in Rwanda (Paluck, 2009). Some Rwandan participants, randomly assigned to the experimental group, listened to a radio soap opera named *Musekeweya* (*New Dawn*), a fictional story of two Rwandan communities representing either Tutsis or Hutus. The story depicted realistic Rwandans who had to wrestle with typical day-to-day problems. The control participants listened to health-promoting broadcasts. After a year, listening to the radio soap opera, which served as a form of positive parasocial or extended contact (e.g., Wright et al., 1997), substantially affected listeners' perception of social norms regarding intergroup integration, as well as their trust and willingness to cooperate. However, the more directly contradictory educational messages about prejudice, violence, and trauma that were embedded in the radio soap opera did not affect the participants' corresponding personal beliefs (Paluck, 2009).

Illustrating the second alternative, attenuating resistance, builds on self-affirmation processes (Sherman & Cohen, 2006). Offering individuals the opportunity to affirm their positive self-image should enable them to express group-based guilt more freely (Čehajić-Clancy, Effron, Halperin, Liberman, & Ross, 2011). In Israel and in Bosnia and Herzegovina, granting participants the experience of affirming their positive self-image (writing an essay describing personal success) led them to acknowledge their group's responsibility for intergroup atrocities and then to support reparations following an atrocity committed by their ingroup.

### Training Skills

The proposed third category of interventions only recently appears in peace-promoting research. This intervention aims to provide a new skill to help individuals overcome the emotional or cognitive limitations that facilitate freezing and prevent a new view of the conflict situation (e.g., Bar-Tal & Halperin, 2009, 2011; Kruglanski, 2004; Kruglanski & Webster, 1996; Porat, Halperin, & Bar-Tal, 2013). The intervention can occur in at least two ways: first, by training individuals with cognitive-reappraisal strategies that help them to better regulate their emotions in future conflict-related situations; second, by prompting creative, open-minded thinking that will help participants think less automatically, heuristically, or stereotypically, regarding various elements of the conflict, including the rival.

Consider the first way, direct emotion regulation, in the context of intractable conflicts (Halperin, Pliskin, Saguy, Liberman, & Gross, 2014; Halperin, Porat, Tamir, & Gross, 2013). These peace-promoting interventions are based on cognitive reappraisal—a skill that can be learned in a short session—which involves changing the meaning, or appraisal, of a situation, to change an individuals' emotional response (Gross, 2008). The basic assumption behind using cognitive reappraisal in

intractable conflicts is that individuals who learn this skill may later use it automatically to regulate their emotions, reducing negative emotions (e.g., anger), or increasing positive emotions (e.g., hope; Halperin, Cohen-Chen, & Goldenberg, 2014).

For example (Halperin et al., 2013), Israeli Jewish participants learned how to reappraise anger-inducing pictures. The participants applied this skill using general pictures, without mentioning the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, one week before a dramatic event in the conflict's history (i.e., the Palestinian bid in the United Nations). Following the event, those who had learned the reappraisal skill (in comparison with participants in the control condition) expressed less anger and more support for conciliatory policies toward Palestinians both 1 week and 5 months after the training. The reappraisal effect on support for conciliatory policies was mediated by lowered experience of intergroup anger.

Another intervention trains individuals to use various skills that promote unfreezing and leads individuals to adopt more conciliatory beliefs, or to avoid various motivations and biases that lead to selective, distorted thinking. An example of the first could train society members to use perspective taking and empathy to decrease animosity toward the rival group (e.g., Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000; Todd, Bodenhausen, Richeson, & Galinsky, 2011). In conflict, perspective taking and empathy are key skills that can change the socio-psychological repertoire supporting continuation of the conflict. They enable seeing the situation from another's point of view. They open a window to the suffering of the rival, as a victim, and with needs and goals (Brown & Čehajić, 2008; Nadler & Liviatan, 2006).

In one study (Nadler & Liviatan, 2006), participants were randomly assigned to either read or not read an empathic message about Israeli suffering, ostensibly from a Palestinian leader. Among those who already trusted Palestinians, these empathic messages induced conciliatory attitudes, including reciprocal empathy toward Palestinians' suffering. In another large-scale study, Israeli Jewish participants who read a prominent Palestinian's address showing empathy toward the Jewish Holocaust then reciprocated empathy toward the Palestinians (Gubler, Halperin, & Hirschberger, in press).

Regarding the second method, thinking more openly and less automatically, three studies trained participants (Israelis and Palestinians) to be aware of their psychological bias of naïve realism, which makes individuals think their own views are objective and unbiased, whereas others' views are biased by ideology, self-interest, and irrationality. This conviction prevents serious consideration of the others' supposedly biased views and maintains a one-sided perspective, thus deepening misunderstandings, disagreements, and antagonism between individuals and groups. The interventions show that raising awareness of naïve realism can lead to greater openness to the adversary's narrative regarding conflict-related events and to new alternative information about the conflict (Nasie, Bar-Tal, Pliskin, Nahhas, & Halperin, in press).

## Evaluation

These various interventions have indeed yielded promising results in intergroup relations in various contexts and with different outcome variables. Nevertheless, they are less effective in competitive settings or given mistrust and hostility between the groups (e.g., Bekerman & Maoz, 2005; Vorauer & Sasaki, 2009). The problems multiply in long, harsh intergroup conflicts, especially intractable ones that evolve with time. Parties in an intractable conflict cannot disengage because they perceive their goals as existential. This loses control over the course of the conflict, as it enters the path of intractability. Once on this path, it moves along the course of continuing hostility, violence, and animosity that act in perpetual motion and cannot be stopped. This type of conflict is stubborn: “a conflict is intractable if it resists attempts at resolution” (Thorson, 1989, p. 3). The society members in these conflicts are socialized into them from an early age, become deeply involved, and rigidly construct their view—the socio-psychological infrastructure—because societal institutions and communication channels continuously reinforce the conflict-supporting repertoire.

In this context, many of the interventions suffer serious limitations. First, in an intractable conflict, many interventions across the three categories may be ineffective with individuals who hold their conflict-supporting repertoire in at least some of these ways: When the repertoire is central, held with great confidence, and with high involvement (Bar-Tal, Raviv, & Freund, 1994; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993); when this repertoire and especially these beliefs constitute a coherent interrelated structure that forms a conflict ideology (Bar-Tal, Raviv, Raviv, & Dgani-Hirsch, 2009; Tetlock, 1989); when this repertoire fulfills important functions for the individual (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993); and when the beliefs of this repertoire are underlined by a motivational factor—specific closure needs (Kruglanski, 1989, 2004). Society members are thus motivated to view the knowledge they hold as truthful and valid because it fulfills various needs. This psychological state makes it tremendously difficult to change the conflict-supporting repertoire. These individuals not only often refuse to be exposed to the alternative information, but also when exposed to it, they reject it, using different mechanisms including various defenses. For example, when individuals in these contexts encounter opposing viewpoints, or when instructed to empathize with their adversary, they may show resistant or self-serving behavior, rather than empathic reaction (e.g., Vorauer & Sasaki, 2009).

Second, in many cases, the society members are not motivated to change their conflict-supporting repertoire and do not want to participate in the interventions. For example, they may not be motivated to regulate their emotions when considering the direct emotion-regulation paradigm (Tamir, 2009). They feel secure in the situation of conflict (Mitzen, 2006) and its routinization, developing desensitization to threats and dangers on one hand and habituation to conflict context on the other (Bar-Tal, Abutbul, & Raviv, 2014). In this psychological state, contradictory information about

peace possibilities may even lead to stress because of the uncertainty and risk taking.

Third, some of the interventions require specific conditions, such as opportunities to make contact with the rival or listening to the new, alternative information. This means that the interventions cannot be used except under specific conditions. However, intractable conflicts have their own limitations and restrictions. For example, not every conflict allows contact between representatives of the two rival groups. Thus, interventions must consider the parameters of their possibilities (e.g., Bekerman & Maoz, 2005).

Finally, the various interventions do not take into account changes in the context of intergroup intractable conflict, with regard to intensity, violence, availability of resources, levels of mobilization, emergence of alternative goals, level of societal resilience, and so on. The significance of the context lies in its dictating the society members’ needs, goals, and challenges. The context also provides opportunities and limitations for human behavior (Bar-Tal, 2013).

Considering all these limitations, the next section introduces a new intervention, paradoxical thinking, which overcomes some liabilities of the reviewed interventions.

## Improving Previous Interventions by Paradoxical Thinking

*Paradoxical thinking* is the attempt to change attitudes by using new information, which is **consistent** with the held societal beliefs, but of extreme content that is intended to lead an individual to paradoxically perceive his or her currently held societal beliefs or the current situation as irrational and senseless. (Hameiri, Porat, Bar-Tal, Bieler, & Halperin, 2014, p. 10997, emphases added)

Its development is based on clinical psychological treatments that provide individuals with extreme information in line with their already-held beliefs or attitudes, which may change them even when they are extremely negative and entrenched (Frankl, 1975; Miller & Rollnick, 2002; Watzlawick, Weakland, & Fisch, 1974). In our case, the paradoxical-thinking intervention leads to change, even with individuals who do not aspire to change their beliefs and attitudes, as opposed to most cases in clinical psychology. Thus, the consistent-but-extreme new information induces paradoxical thinking, leading to the realization that something is wrong in the extant conflict-supporting societal beliefs. This realization may, in our view, stimulate unfreezing of prior societal beliefs and attitudes, as well as openness to alternative viewpoints.

This method may be useful even for cases with deep personal involvement and when the beliefs and attitudes are held with high confidence, and therefore, attempts to change them meet with resistance. Moreover, in general, the proposed intervention tries not to minimize resistance, but to use the resistance as leverage to create a momentum for attitude change (Knowles & Linn, 2004). The special advantage of this intervention is that by not providing counter-information to induce

inconsistency, it does not threaten individuals' conflict-supportive narratives. Thus, it does not arouse reactance and therefore, does not result in defensive reactions. Furthermore, the intervention is easy to implement, can be used at different phases of the conflict, and does not require special conditions such as contact between the parties in conflict, thereby eliminating logistical constraints and potential reprisals.

The intervention was carried out in a field study conducted in the context of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict (Hameiri et al., 2014). Israeli Jewish participants were exposed to a campaign expressing ideas that are congruent with the shared conflict-supporting societal beliefs, but are much more extreme. Encountering consistent but highly unreasonable arguments would lead participants to realize their current attitudes were nonsensical or inadequate. The intervention, although counter-intuitive, led participants to express more conciliatory attitudes regarding the conflict, particularly among participants with center and rightwing political orientation. Individuals with well-established conflict-supporting views may realize in the process of viewing the extreme messages that their beliefs may be unsuitable. The intervention even influenced participants' actual voting patterns in the 2013 Israeli general elections: Participants who were exposed to the paradoxical intervention, which took place in proximity to the general elections, reported that they tended to vote more for dovish parties, which advocate a peaceful resolution to the conflict. These effects were long lasting, as the participants in the intervention condition expressed more conciliatory attitudes when they were reassessed a year after the intervention.

After establishing in the described study the validity of the phenomenon of paradoxical thinking, we believe that this method of intervention is a promising way that not only suggests a new conceptualized line of thinking but also offers possibilities of unfreezing of conflict-supporting beliefs in certain situations and with society members that other methods did not succeed to change. Yet, there is need in much further research to study the conditions that turn this intervention to be successful (i.e., its effectiveness and limitations). Being at the beginning of this road, we realize that, for example, it is important to find out in what level of absurdity the message has to be in order to be effective, what kind of individuals are affected by this intervention, how many messages have to be presented, and so on. Every new idea begins with the first step and requires extensive research to establish the scope of the paradoxical thinking and then development of full-scale interventions.

## Conclusion

This article presented some thoughts about one of the most plaguing issues that many societies face: how to facilitate peaceful resolution of intractable conflicts. Social psychology has made a meaningful contribution to this endeavor by developing different types of interventions—all with the goal of overcoming socio-psychological barriers that play a major role in preventing information processing that might open new perspectives and facilitate a peacemaking process.

These barriers pose major obstacles in initiating negotiations, continuing them, achieving an agreement, and later, engaging in reconciliation.

Unfreezing represents a key process in overcoming the barriers, as society members destabilize the dominant conflict-supporting psychological repertoire, open themselves to new, contradictory ideas about peace building, and eventually accept them. This process in most cases is long, always beginning with an instigating belief that may come from the person's own clarifications, often as a result of a major experience or accumulating experiences. However, in many other cases, an instigating belief is provided from outside source(s). Our review presented various instigating beliefs coming mostly from external sources, but also in one's own thinking as a result of experiences provided. External provisions of the instigating beliefs and experiences are interventions because an interventionist initiates them with the goal of unfreezing society members' conflict-supporting repertoire. These interventions should interest scientists, practitioners, and decision makers alike.

As a conclusion, we would like to note a number of intervention requirements. First, interventions should be efficient—which means that they must demonstrate that they successfully unfreeze conflict-supporting repertoire and change the views of society members involved in an intractable conflict to be more conciliatory. Second, the developed intervention must not only demonstrate the repertoire change in the laboratory setting but must also be practical in a real-life setting (cf. Paluck & Green, 2009). Moreover, the intervention has to be capable of application in the field with well-demonstrated results. The intervention must have an effect in real life, either on a small group of decision makers, a larger segment of a society, or the public at large. Fourth, good interventions can be implemented via various communication modes, through speeches, meetings, newspapers, TV, and Internet. Last but not least, interventions must adapt to the particular context of each conflict and be evaluated before massive use.

In ending, attend to Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, who visited Israel in 1977 to launch peace negotiations between the two countries. In his speech to the Israeli Knesset on November 20, 1977, he stated,

As we really and truly seek peace, we really and truly welcome you to live among us in peace and security. There was a huge wall between us, which you tried to build up over a quarter of a century, but it was destroyed in 1973 . . . Yet there remained another wall. This wall constitutes a psychological barrier between us. A barrier of suspicion. A barrier of rejection. A barrier of fear of deception. A barrier of hallucinations around any action, deed or decision. A barrier of cautious and erroneous interpretations of all and every event or statement. It is this psychological barrier which I described in official statements as representing 70 percent of the whole problem.

We hope that by shedding light on the interventions that may facilitate the process of peacemaking, we have also directed attention to the conditions, contents, and processes that convince societies to use these interventions in socialization

practices intended to prevent vicious, destructive conflicts and hate cycles, which cost human beings tremendously.

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### Note

1. Intractable conflicts are violent, fought over goals viewed as existential, perceived as being zero sum, and unsolvable; pre-occupy a central position in the lives of the involved societies; require immense investments of material and psychological resources; and last for at least 25 years (Bar-Tal, 2007, 2013; Kriesberg, 1993).

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