13 Modelling reconciliation and peace processes

Lessons from Syrian war refugees and World War II

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Introduction

Humans have searched for peace as long as there have been humans. But the database left from human history is dire: It has not come. Lofty ideals and assumptions of human goodness express hope of peaceful, loving companionship of all people. Our intellectual disciplines compel us to think that if our strategies are based on knowledge, positive outcomes will happen. But there are barriers, conditions and limits. This chapter unpacks the fundamental issues that undergird such efforts and describes a model of key elements of processes that regulate reconciling and peacebuilding. Uniquely, the starting point is people perhaps most qualified to address the concerns – whose feelings about the issues are most grievous and deeply felt – refugees from the war in Syria, 2011–2020. The following five steps help unpack our argument:

1. Quantitative and qualitative findings from a large database on Syrian refugees (Sagir 2018) give a close-up, comprehensive look at a severe "refugee problem" in one locality. This case study constitutes a snapshot of refugees globally and raises questions that a model of reconciling and peacebuilding must address. Small interdependent reconciliatory steps may nevertheless signal a process of reconciliation to begin and continue.
2. A theoretical argument is made for the personal, social psychological and cultural issues to be included in a successful approach to reconciliation and peace – individual, local or global. The focus is on processes of collaborating in reconciling, not static states or end goals. The key is to collaborate in small, reciprocal, trust-inducing steps under a common superordinate value and goal not achievable by either party alone, not to initially state ultimate ends.
3. The above principles can lead to computational modelling of the process of reconciling in which success depends on taking steps of an acceptable size, small enough not to violate the expectations of the adversary, while all sides share the same superordinate values and confront a common enemy – whether

a human or non-human existential threat. Given these conditions, the probability of each adversary taking a cooperative step and it being reciprocated is increased. They may jointly accomplish something that otherwise cannot be done, fostering near-term reconciliation and long-term peace. If functional and adaptable in a multilevel sense, a model can be extrapolated to apply to various contexts, populations and combinations of variables. Its input variables can be manipulable and testable at different parametric levels and combinations over varying time spans. Computer simulations can test hypotheses about variables that may predict reconciliation and peacebuilding. A validated model could be used to make forecasts – probabilistic predictions of reconciliation and peaceful outcomes.

4. This kind of information can be provided to individuals, agencies, or governments who make decisions that affect reconciling and peace – between individuals, groups, and countries – so their decisions are based on knowledge, not the latest opinion poll (Richer and Haslam 2016). The principles underpinning the argument and model are applicable to any challenge that confronts opposing parties, whether it is an intergroup or international conflict or a nonmilitary existential threat. The Covid-19 virus constitutes such a threat. If all parties respond to it collaboratively, they may not only save lives, but begin a reciprocal sequence of reconciliatory steps toward each other as well.

Refugees close-up: The Syrian example

The world's biggest example of a "refugee problem" at the beginning of the 21st century is the 5,000,000+ Syrians, refugees of the civil war that is ten years old as of the year 2020. It began in 2011 after three middle-school-aged boys wrote an anti-government note on the side of a building in a small farming town, Dara, in southern Syria (Alpert and Marrouch 2012). This simple act prompted violent government responses. Counter actions by opposition groups were met by the government with lethal violence. The so-called *Islamic State of Iraq and Syria or the Greater Levant* (IS, ISIS or ISIL; Daesh in Arabic) entered and by force, threats to life and killing occupied large swaths of Syrian land. Its leader proclaimed that Allah made him the new Caliph – a seat empty for about 90 years. For partially overlapping reasons (considering refugees from Syria and elsewhere, mostly the Middle East), the scope of the problem became greater than at any time since the end of World War II (United Nations 2015).

Our initial concern is on how refugees respond to the idea of reconciling with their perpetrators. A snapshot of refugees globally appears in the following section of this chapter. Those fleeing Syria went to several countries, but about 3.5 million are in Turkey (UNHCR 2018), because southern Turkey borders northern Syria where much of the fighting occurred. Fleeing to Turkey was the shortest route by which to escape hostilities. In this context, Sagir (2014, 2016, 2018, in press), supplemented by Paloutzian and Sagir (2019), between 2014 and 2017 collected quantitative data on over 2,500 refugees, plus qualitative data via 100

in-depth interviews. Before presenting these findings, let us look at their war experiences, losses and traumatic events.

What did Syrian refugees face?

There were few safe border-crossings. The Turkish town of Kilis, 90 km from Aleppo in Syria, is one of them. Its southern boundary is the international border. Before the war its population was approximately 100,000. By 2013–2014 it hosted about 10,000 refugees; this number swelled to 100,000. Kilis is now home to 200,000 people, approximately evenly split between Turks and Syrians. At the height of refugee traffic, it was a transfer point for Syrians to go elsewhere in Turkey.

Upon crossing the border, refugees walked about 1 km to a fenced rectangular asphalt-covered area about the size of a soccer field. Along one length of it, containers were set end to end. At first, refugees slept in them. But as the number of refugees increased, living and sleeping areas were created elsewhere, so the containers stored clothing, children's toys, and other supplies. A middle school, approximately 50 meters away, was in view of it. At times, ISIS fighters came to the border with shoulder-mounted rocket launchers and fired shells into the town. Several students and an adult died at the school because a shell hit them and blew them up. Photos depicting this were on a bulletin board in the container field. The refugees understood that they were still at risk.

The Syrians were not ordinary migrants. Their basic need was not income; it was security – to save their lives (UNHCR 2016). Almost 100% of the research participants said their most important reason for going to Turkey was "to be safe" (Sagir 2018). The citizens of Kilis provided this and helped them, with help added by non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Kilis underwent rapid change as both shipping container ("container") and tent cities were built. Temporary housing areas were equipped with facilities or services such as a school, worship centre, health centre, children's playgrounds, psychologist, art centres and a small toilet and bathroom for each family. Temporary housing spread throughout Turkey and included containers, empty buildings in poor sections of towns, garages, alleyways, tents and parks. It continues as of 2020.

The refugees' biggest challenge was the language barrier. They spoke Arabic; the Turks spoke Turkish. Both countries are culturally Muslim, but some clothing and other customs differed between the two peoples. For example, how a woman wore a hijab (head scarf) could identify her as Syrian, i.e., as an "other." Approximately two-thirds of the refugees were women, one-third men. The men tended to be older because the young men were either engaged in combat in Syria, or dead. Approximately 50% were children. They mostly viewed ISIS/ISIL/Daesh and Syrian President Assad as the perpetrators.

War trauma

To understand Syrian refugees' feelings about forgiveness, reconciliation and revenge, we must first understand that the traumatic events they endured were of

a magnitude far greater in number and in kind than those typical in life without combat. Sagir (2014, 2018) collected data during the height of the war relevant to these issues.

Sagir (2014, 2016) surveyed 553 refugees in Kilis. The percentage who reported being victims of war-caused traumas are as follows: Being bombed (48%), assaulted (35%), tortured (24%), shot (24%), having to use guns, knives or other weapons to defend self and family (21%), living in squalid camps (20%), being held hostage (11%), raped (3%) and attempting suicide (8%).

Sagir (2018, in press) later surveyed 2018 participants in four cities in Turkey. All suffered war-caused traumas: 67% were bombed; 55% forced to evacuate their homes and in all cases before crossing the international border were internally displaced persons (IDPs); 46% were shelled. Others were assaulted (40.4%), shot (31.1%), tortured (30.9%), imprisoned (37.1%), sniper-attacked (39.8%), forced into squalid camps (20.3%), faced suicide bomber attack (19.8%), had to use weapons to defend self and family (16.1%), kidnapped (13.3%) and raped (4.7%). All faced at least one traumatic event. The maximum number experienced by a refugee was 11; the mean number per person was 4.45.

The data reported above are part of the refugees' war histories. Even so, such information may have been received as a nuisance, not as a problem for all to solve collectively, like the present global Covid-19 threat (Cascella et al. 2020). People far from the action may have responded as if war refugees had nothing to do with them. But as we write this, we face the worldwide Covid-19 pandemic. It shows that every traumatic event, whether suffered by Syrian refugees or the pandemic of today, may be relevant to all.

Let us examine whether these refugees might be inclined or at least open to reconciling with those who harmed them. If so, what needs to unfold for a process of reconciling to begin? Do they first need to forgive, as is often assumed (Kalayjian and Paloutzian 2010; Rutayisire 2010; Tutu 1999)? The larger concern is whether processes of reconciliation can be extrapolated and successfully applied to other military conflicts or to nonmilitary existential threats.

Syrian refugee views on forgiveness, reconciliation and revenge[1]

Most war refugees do not want to reconcile with the enemies who killed, bombed or shot them or their loved ones. Even so, we gain knowledge and theorise to create strategies to foster peace. In particular, refugees may be uniquely able to provide insights into what should go into a successful process of reconciliation. Two forms of data from 100 Syrian refugees in Istanbul who had been in Turkey from 1 to 6 years provide insight into their feelings and opinions about those who had hurt them in Syria (Paloutzian and Sagir 2019).

Quantitative data

The participants answered several questions on a 6-point Likert scale with no neutral point: (1 = "not at all"; 6 = "a great deal"). Three questions are of direct concern here.

(1) To what degree would you feel capable of *forgiving* those who did harm to you or your loved ones?
(2) If the decision was left up to you, to what degree would you want to *reconcile* with those who did harm to you or your loved ones?
(3) To what degree would you like to see *revenge* taken against those who did harm to you or your loved ones?

The answers to all three questions were significantly non-uniform across the six answer options (χ^2, p < .001). For present purposes it is sufficient to split the response range at the theoretical neutral point, 3.5, such that the total frequency of responses below and above it reflects being more inclined to reject (1+2+3) versus favour (4+5+6), respectively, what the question asks.

In response to question #1 on *forgiving*, 81%[2] felt not capable of doing so (49% selected "not at all"); 19% felt capable (13% selected "a great deal"). In response to question #2 on *reconciling*, 75% said they would not want to do so (51% selected "not at all"); 25% said they would want to do so (7% selected "a great deal"). In response to #3 on *revenge*, 43% said they would not like to see it done (22% selected "not at all"); 57% said they would like to see it (37% selected "great deal"). These ratings of the refugees' inclinations toward the perpetrators make clear two important things: (1) One model of the "refugee mind" does not fit all, and (2) refugees' inclinations do not default to the positive side of neutral. For severely harmed people, the desire to reconcile is low.

Qualitative data

The participants also provided qualitative data by giving written answers to the following two open-ended stem questions:

1) Regardless of how you feel, what, if anything, might enable you to reconcile behaviourally with those who harmed you or your loved ones in the war in Syria?
2) Regardless of what you do, what, if anything, might make you feel forgiving toward those who harmed you or your loved ones in the war in Syria?

This kind of information adds "active voice" to the refugees to help us understand what they went through and what the issues they faced meant to them. At least 49 participants emphatically did not want to "reconcile behaviorally with those who harmed you or your loved ones." They said: "The wound is too deep," "No," "I won't ever," "Don't want to" and "No no, because of the blood." Seventeen percent said forgiveness was important, but they saw it as a wish or a hope. Many said too much damage was done, so that "nothing can fix it." As to forgiving perpetrators, 12 said "yes." Supernatural agency was invoked by many: "God will judge them," "God forgives everyone," "I will complain my situation to almighty God … ," "Forgiving … is hard, … they are criminals, and only almighty God can forgive them, if they confessed … ." Their need for justice was clear: "Only

if they are first brought to trial and brought to justice." Participants' responses were also coded and submitted to analysis by NVIVO11. Reconciling was disconfirmed by 57%, affirmed by 28%; 11% said something else (χ^2, $p < .001$). Forgiving was rejected by 60%, accepted by 22%; 13% said something else (χ^2, $p < .001$). Neither gender nor years as a refugee was related to the above pattern of responses.

Acculturation strategy

It is crucial to distinguish between the near- and long-term. This is because how a refugee responds to questions about forgiving and reconciling is related their strategy for how to acculturate to their new country. The important acculturation strategies for present purposes are assimilation and integration, which, like any manner of acculturating, can take a great many years. But because the refugees were not permanent citizens but temporary residents of Turkey, whether they felt "fully assimilated" could not be assessed. They were instead asked about their intention, or strategy, for relating to their original and host cultures.

Thus, if one intends to acculturate by assimilating, one aims to exchange the old culture for the new, adopting the new as one's own. If he or she adopts an integration approach, one keeps the old and holds the new cultures simultaneously (Berry 2006). Paloutzian and Sagir (2019) found that Syrian refugees who intended to assimilate into Turkish culture valued forgiveness significantly more than those who wanted to integrate the Syrian and Turkish cultures ($p < .03$). This difference suggests that assimilators are more able to leave the past behind and feel more free of their wounds, and forgive sooner and to a greater degree. In contrast, the integrators may hold on to the past – culture and wounds – and be less able to forgive.

Interestingly and in contrast to the above findings on forgiveness, assimilators and integrators valued reconciliation to about the same degree. This suggests that they distinguish these two values in their minds and do not necessarily see one leading to the other. As one participant said, "I can forgive but not reconcile." It remains to be understood what happens if two enemies are brought together.

Refugees and reconciling

The above snapshot of data paints a stark picture. The findings make it difficult to link knowledge of refugees to a model of processes toward reconciliation. But a small window remains open for some possibility to begin a process with perpetrators that could evolve, perhaps in small ways, to become reconciliatory. If carefully done, it might evolve to be a model of transactional "dialogue" between victim and perpetrator (Abu-Nimer 1999, 2020; Tint 2010).

The place to begin might be illustrated by the verbal, small group dialogues reported by Busse et al. (2010) between descendants of Holocaust survivors and descendants of Nazi perpetrators. Each verbal exchange signalled openness and trust in the other, who reciprocated, and it repeated again. Thus, the subset of

refugees more inclined to forgive or reconcile might, with adequate safety and guidance, take one positive step toward the adversary, openly stated as an intended peace-making gesture. Signals of trustworthiness would be essential. Such steps could eventually lead to reciprocal steps by the adversary, additional steps by refugees not initially so inclined and further gradual and reciprocated steps. In general, beginning with those few most inclined and capable, small initial steps could result in accomplishing a big vision for peacefulness. Importantly, and as argued below, this becomes more likely when the two sides want the same higher values and goals, and when they must collaborate to reach them (Kappmeier, Guenoun, & Campbell, 2019).

Refugees globally

Space constraints do not allow for a full picture of refugees worldwide. Suffice it to say that it is strikingly similar to that of the Syrian refugees in Turkey, multiplied. There are 70.8 million forcibly displaced people worldwide (UNHCR 2019; United Nations 2015). If they were one country, it would be the 24th largest on earth. The traumas they suffered parallel those faced by the Syrians: Forced displacement, torture, abduction, imprisonment, poverty, women raped, death of loved ones, loss of livelihood and property (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh et al. 2016). Their general well-being was affected accordingly, not only in circumstantial ways – unemployed, desperate, disoriented, acculturation stress, social isolation, language barriers – but also in psychological difficulties such as depression, anxiety, PTSD, painful levels of loneliness, somatic symptoms and suicidal thoughts (see Riley et al. 2017; Rintoul 2010; and Tay et al. 2019, for examples).

The refugee/IDP problem is not a local problem; it is a global problem. We the people, citizens of the world, are in this together – whether we want to be or know it or not. Local governments, schools, NGOs and individuals need to prepare, ready to respond and care for people who need it – analogous to preparing to respond to the onset of a deadly disease such as Covid-19.

Almost all refugee research focuses on their sufferings, traumas, treatment by host countries and health variables. A literature review found no study beyond Paloutzian and Sagir (2019) that specifically examined their inclinations toward forgiveness, reconciliation or revenge. Because of the direct similarity between the Syrian and global refugees on all circumstantial, mental health, host country and war experience variables, it seems reasonable to proceed on the basis that they are also similar in the degree to which they tend towards forgiving, reconciling with or revenge against those who harmed them. The suffering of all refugees seems unpleasantly similar.

Theory on processes of reconciliation

Two important sources may provide essential information for theoretical arguments to help make a strategy to facilitate reconciliation. These are (1) psychological research on the relative roles of forgiving and reconciling as instances of

attitude and behaviour change, integrated with research on the roles of superordinate goals and social identity in opponents collaborating, and (2) a lesson from history showing how direct adversaries cooperated to defeat a powerful common enemy. Arguments about reconciling typically have roots in context of conflicts, enemies and war. But at the time of writing, the whole world faces the COVID-19 virus, which no country alone can erase, but which may be overcome if all parties collaborate. The superordinate value? Life. The goal? Maximum control with minimum deaths at the earliest time.

Forgiveness, reconciliation and trust

Forgiveness is typically understood as an affect; reconciliation is a behaviour (see Kalayjian and Paloutzian, 2010, for illustrations). The difference matters greatly. The two concepts at the heart of this book – reconciliation and peacebuilding – refer not to what people feel or think, but what they do. Behaviour is the bottom line, the acid test of whether humans "get along," or fight. Let us unpack these concepts in order to facilitate reconciliation and help subdue the common existential threat, Covid-19.

A model of steps toward reconciling sufficiently realistic to be implemented in the midst or aftermath of real-world hostilities (Paloutzian and Sagir, 2019) listed the following essential elements:

(1) Both sides of a conflict must *want* hostilities to stop
(2) All parties must *display* truth, honesty and transparency
(3) The circumstances must be interpersonal, intergroup and safe
(4) *Behaviours* in the common interest must be *performed*, reinforced and reciprocated; interdependent trust and mutual forgiving between opposing parties may thereby be gradually built, increasing in small steps as reciprocal reconciliatory behaviours are performed and reinforced in an ever-widening circle.

Notice that in the above steps, neither forgiveness nor trust as affects are mentioned as prerequisites. They are in an incremental sequence of consequences that increases in stepwise fashion within each party to a conflict – having performed a reconciliatory behaviour. Thus, unlike much writing that assumes forgiving precedes reconciling (Rutayisire 2010; Satha-Anand, Chapter 5, this volume; Tutu 1999; see Kalayjian and Paloutzian, 2010, for further examples), we argue that the reverse sequence has greater success, and is more realistic in the short-run and more promising in the long-run.

It is well known that behaviour change can yield affect change (Albarracin et al. 2005). Therefore, the forgiveness affect is better understood to follow reconciliatory behaviour than to first develop independent of it (Paloutzian and Sagir 2019). Extending this argument and following the four steps outlined in the above model, behaving well towards an enemy, although counter-intuitive, may constitute a small signal of trust (Kappmeier 2016, 2020) which, if reciprocated, may in stepwise fashion continue in a healthy direction.

We are not suggesting that forgiveness and trust are not part of peacebuilding. Trust is essential (Alon and Bar-Tal, 2016; Kappmeier and Mercy 2019; Kelman 2005), and forgiveness is highly desirable. But we cannot expect the process to begin with them because, as the refugee data show, their default probability for victims is very low. They are better understood as consequences or desired byproducts of initial steps that signal trust (Kappmeier 2016, 2020). If such steps begin and these effects result, even to a small degree, they may trigger a sequence of back and forth steps that help enemies collaborate to mutual and individual benefit (Kappmeier et al., 2019).

Reconciling: Process of doing

Reconciliation is best understood not as an end state that opposing parties reach and "just stay there." We should understand it as a graded sequence of behaving a certain way interactively that can spiral upward. It is not about a goal as a fixed outcome, but about what we are doing when we are reconciling that differs from what we are doing when we are not reconciling (see Paloutzian 2010, for similar arguments about forgiving), thus best approached as a process, not a goal (Bar-Tal and Bennink 2004; Rafferty 2020).

This puts the emphasis on what people are doing instead of what they did – on violating people instead of violence as a category, trusting instead of trust as a do or don't binary and being transparent instead of transparency as a condition. Once begun, the sequence of steps in the process of reconciling can continue and increase via reinforced feedback loops so that opposing parties begin trusting (Kappmeier et al., Chapter 7 of this volume) in degrees that prompt either conscious awareness or unconscious recognition sufficient to remain in long-term memory, available for retrieval in re-evaluating and adjusting tendencies toward the adversary (Charbonneau and Parent 2012). If continued, they may help decrease systemic and episodic violence, and increase systemic and episodic peacebuilding (Christie and Montiel 2013; Christie et al. 2008).

What factors should be in place for initial steps to signal trust and prompt beneficial counter-responses from the adversary? Two social psychological principles are of great importance. The first documents how people define themselves as members of a group and its power to define their identity. The second makes clear how important superordinate values and goals are in reducing intergroup conflict. These two processes may need to fuse into one for humans to win a war, or win against Covid-19.

Social identity and group biases

The power of social identity in groups has been demonstrated in that belonging to a group, any group, including those formed randomly, by flip of a coin, fosters in-group bias. This phenomenon is the *minimal group effect* and has been replicated across cultures, ages, group tasks and gender (Tajfel 1981; Tajfel and Turner 1979). The present concern is that if merely being in a group (even a

randomly formed group) sets one up for identity with that group and in-group bias, it is no wonder that real world groups (ethnic, religious, sexual, countries) dominate people's minds and lives – especially separate from and compared to "the others" – while individuals imagine they are independent and freely choose what they value, think and work for. Social identity with one's group fosters in-group favouritism and out-group prejudice. Those biases should be replaced with *identification with all humanity* (McFarland et al. 2013; de Rivera 2018; de Rivera and Carson 2015; Paloutzian et al. 2014). How can humans become citizens of the world?

Superordinate values and a lesson from World War II

One of the most important concepts in social psychology relevant to reconciliation and peacebuilding concerns the role of superordinate values and goals in the reduction of intergroup conflict. Such values and goals often cannot be fulfilled by oneself. Reconciling and establishing peace are among them. For reconciling to begin and lead to peaceable engagements between opposing parties, both sides are required. They must collaborate, or reconciliatory behaviours will not occur and there will be no peace.

When combined with insights on social identity and in-group bias, foundational research on groups (Sherif 1966; Sherif et al. 1961) provides principles demonstrated in laboratory and field experiments to aid our understanding. In Sharif's *Robber's Cave* experiment, two groups of teenage boys at a summer camp were opponents but given a task that neither could do alone. Initially, group biases were manifest. But the assignment required the boys to work together. They did. The opponents became collaborators and did something neither could do alone. From 1941 to 1945, the world saw those principles in operation at the heart of the greatest military confrontation in history. We are fortunate that its residual effects helped save the world from annihilation for a generation. Let us now step out of our "ivory tower" of academic social psychology and grasp this lesson from the most compelling of all examples of the application of the above argument to the real world.

The most catastrophic war of all time was World War II. Fifty million people, military and civilian, died. Starting with Hitler's invasion of Poland in 1939, it expanded to involve most regions of the earth. As is well known, the chief combatants were, on one side, Hitler's military apparatus, and on the other, the Allies (the UK, Soviet Union and US). Our present focus is on the formation and collaboration of the Allies.

The Western democracies (UK and US) and the Soviet Union were bitter adversaries. They despised each other (Hamilton 2019). In addition, following Stalin's total surprise at Hitler's attack on Mother Russia in June 1941, Churchill wrote, "so far as strategy, policy, foresight, competence are arbiters, Stalin and his commissars showed themselves at this moment the most completely outwitted bunglers of the Second World War" (Churchill 1950). Nevertheless, upon the eve of Hitler's invasion of Russia, Churchill, when questioned on whether

he, "the arch anti-communist," in collaborating with Stalin and the Soviets, "was [not] bowing down in the House of Rimmon," replied: "Not at all. I have only one purpose, the destruction of Hitler, and my life is much simplified thereby. If Hitler invaded Hell I would make at least a favourable reference to the Devil in the House of Commons" (Churchill 1950: 370). Sometimes one's enemy's enemy is one's friend.

At the meetings between Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin in Tehran, 1943, the Roosevelt–Churchill duo and Stalin disagreed about particulars of strategy, but agreed fully on overriding concerns. Their singular purpose was to defeat Hitler. They well knew their differences, but deliberately set them aside for the common purpose. They cooperated, shared information and met their commitments to each other and the cause; the US even shipped equipment and weapons to Russia. During the Tehran meeting, Stalin remarked that the war was won by machines – that that the US built (Hamilton 2019). The collaboration of these adversaries is a model for us.

Their alliance set in motion a trend in global affairs that lasted for approximately 70 years. It was that the nations of the world unite and be so governed that it would no longer be possible for any nation to again attempt what Hitler's regime did – if not forever, then at least during the remainder of their lifetimes (Roosevelt 1943, noted in Hamilton 2019). So, even during the Cold War, during which the US and the Soviets were confrontational and "enemies," and each built thousands of nuclear weapons, they knew that neither side had the slightest intention of ever using them against the other.[3]

People, as well as governments, even though they differ, can collaborate so long as they share important "higher" values and want them bad enough to set the issues over which they differ aside in order to accomplish a higher purpose. We hope that now, a generation later with leaders unfamiliar with the intimacies of that past, all citizens, leaders and countries understand the important lessons from the past, and guard any pressures or tendencies that might repeat the errors that made cold conflicts become hot ones. One fears that governments are showing signs of decay – lack of awareness of, or care about, the lessons of the past, as if a new generation came along to disregard wisdom gained by blood. But the world now faces another common enemy – not a military dictator who invades other countries and kills its people. It is a strand of RNA (Cascella et al. 2020).

Modeling reconciliation and peace processes

These processes are complex and informed by many scientific disciplines. How might we render them more tractable? Computational modelling and simulation (CMS) offers a promising option. These methodologies are designed to study complex systems, and have been used in the psychological and social sciences in recent years (Alvarez 2016; Sun 2012). Given their explanatory and forecasting power, it is not surprising that scholars have already used CMS techniques to address questions related to conflict and cooperation (e.g., Axelrod 1997). While many earlier agent-based models had relatively simple

agent architectures, often presupposing rational choice theory, the field is rapidly developing more psychologically realistic agents in more realistic social networks. Here we briefly outline the next steps in the development of such a model that might help us discover some of the key conditions under which – and mechanisms by which – reconciliation and peace processes occur in diverse human populations.

The easiest procedure would be to adapt a model that has already been successfully calibrated and validated. One candidate would be the *mutually escalating religious violence* (MERV) model, whose causal architecture is informed by social psychological theories such as terror management theory, social identity theory and identity fusion theory (Shults et al. 2018a; cf. Shults et al. 2018b). MERV was validated at two levels: (1) At the micro-level (agent behaviours and interactions) in relation to data from social psychological experiments; (2) at the macro-level (emergent phenomena such as mutually escalating conflict between two groups) in relation to data from the Christchurch earthquake in New Zealand and the escalation of conflict in Northern Ireland during "The Troubles," where the dependent variable was the mutual escalation of anxiety and conflict.

In the current case, the concern is in the mutual escalation of reconciliatory behaviours that promote peaceful coexistence and cooperation between diverse groups, especially under threatening conditions such as those surrounding refugee crises. What would it take to adapt MERV so that we could provide a computational model that tests hypotheses proposed in, e.g., Paloutzian and Sagir (2019), briefly summarised above? The "virtual minds" of the simulated agents in the model would need to be informed by the insights from the social psychological literature described above, and the environment of the "artificial society" would need to designed with parameters whose alteration would be relevant for simulating the emergence of the sort of historical cooperation described above. In other words, it would require the construction of a model in which we could "grow" reconciliation and peace between two or more diverse groups from the micro-level behaviours and interactions of agents within those simulated societies.

Each of the four elements of the theoretical model outlined above would need to be carefully operationalised and implemented within the computational architecture. For example, a variable such as "wanting" hostilities to stop should be differentially distributed within the artificial population, as would variables related to "displaying" truth, honesty and transparency. The agents would also need to have the capacity to interact in ways that allowed the "performance" of reconciliatory behaviours at different levels of intensity. The element of the theoretical model dealing with "safety" could also be implemented as an agent-level variable, such that agents felt more or less safe depending on their interpersonal and intergroup interactions. Another option would be to implement this variable as an environment level parameter, which we might call "existential security" and validate it using datasets such as the Human Development Index (see Gore et al. 2018, for illustration of such an approach). In dialogue with the relevant subject-matter experts, we would identify ways of measuring each variable or find convincing proxies, such as questionnaire responses or answers in qualitative interviews.

In order to develop and run simulations that could test the hypotheses outlined above, we would need to incorporate at least two additional elements into the model: The "superordinate value" of life and the presence of various levels of threat in the environment such as Covid-19. The former could be implemented as a (potentially) shared norm, indicating the extent to which the simulated agents have the same or similar ranking of the valuation of human "life" in relation to other values, such as the protection or survival of a particular in-group. Our research teams have already used "shared norms" in other computational models designed to simulate interactions between immigrant and host populations (Shults et al. 2020). We could incorporate the threat of Covid-19 (or other pandemics) as an environmental parameter, whose intensity (perhaps operationalised as frequency of contact with potentially contagious persons) could be altered in simulation experiments in order to explore how various levels of threat, combined with other distributions of independent variables, such as number and size of "reconciliatory behaviours," affect the dependent variable. The good news is that the MERV causal architecture already includes contagion threats as part of its simulated environment. The next step would be working with subject-matter experts to adapt the model to adequately simulate the impact of a pandemic (construed as a common enemy) on the attitudes and behaviours of the agents within an artificial society.

Once appropriately validated, we could explore the parameter space of the model to discover the relations among the relevant variables and the distributions and conditions under which reconciliation and peace processes are likely to occur (or not). We emphasise that the use of CMS techniques is far more complicated than explained in this chapter section, and, like all research methods, it has limitations and should not be embraced as a panacea. However, one advantage of M&S techniques is that they require their creators to be explicit about the assumptions built into the architecture and purpose of the simulation experiments. In this way, the ethical dimensions and ramifications of the research are brought front and centre for ethical consideration, making it less likely that they will be used for malevolence or manipulation (Shults and Wildman 2019, 2020). Also, and importantly, there is a growing consensus among scholars working in this field that, given the availability of these tools for addressing societal challenges, in some cases it might be unethical *not* to use them – especially when those challenges are exceedingly complex and the implications of policy decisions are so serious (Gilbert et al. 2018).

Challenges

To refugees and empires

Our arguments identify specific steps people (e.g., a traumatised refugee or head of state) can take to confront an existential threat. Governments want to continue; so do people. Countries want to keep their land; refugees want to keep their homes. Any party can take a first step to trigger even slight trust by the "other."

Decisions

Know your values and decide what you genuinely want. Many individuals and governmental officials seem not to know. If it is to establish peace, proceed; if it is to get re-elected, resign. Ask for criticism. Have a dialogue with opponents who clearly articulate what they want, and with experts who supply accurate information, knowledge of relevant facts and wisdom to guide decisions. Know the processes at work, lessons from history and research-based evidence that must underpin good decisions.

Big vision, small steps

A conflict at any level matters. This is so whether it is between two individuals or between mighty nation-states. The latter is infinitely more complicated than the former, but known fundamental social psychological principles operate in both. This book has argued that behaviour, not attitudes or feelings or words, is the bottom line in all transactions. However, processes of trusting, forgiving and believing matter, because humans make attributions about these properties and respond accordingly. And problems between parties arise when there is inconsistency between what one says and what one does, when verbal behaviour and overt actions are discrepant. Thus trust, which is built when positive pronouncements are backed up with positive actions, is an essential mediating process. Nonviolence without it is mere compliance with rules or submission under pressure. Freedom requires mutual reciprocal trusting – built in graded fashion openly, transparently and behaviourally. Reconciling and building peace at multiple levels is a big vision. It can be accomplished by sustained, reciprocal small steps.

From war to virus

I (RFP) have been alive since 1945, while the Allies were still in World War II collaboration, up to today when Covid-19 is killing people worldwide. These are two global existential threats from which, when combined, the line of argument in this chapter extends. But the argument is research-based, not mere opinion. The hopes it leaves for mediating trust and reconciliatory actions are relevant to conflicts small and large, and to collaborating and trusting in order to subdue medical threats; for the highest value, subduing our common enemy.

Covid-19 as our common enemy

On 1 April 2020 António Guterres, the Secretary General of the United Nations, said,

> The COVID-19 pandemic is one of the most dangerous challenges this world has faced in our lifetime. … Now is the time for unity, for the international

community to work together in solidarity to stop this virus and its shattering consequences.

(United Nations 2020)

Although this virus is not an enemy in the sense of nations engaged in combat, defeating its "death value" reflects a superordinate value (human life in the broad sense) and goal (prevent its spread and subdue its disease properties) that requires the participation, collaboration and cooperation of all, everywhere. In doing so, enemies do not need to be friends. But each must do its part for any "side" to survive. Such is a shared existential threat. Trusting may develop in steps as parties do their part. As adversaries over other disagreements begin to collaborate, steps toward reconciling may be a byproduct. Call it reconciliation-by-force of a superordinate value that sets a common goal that if unmet, kills all as one.

Like climate change, Covid-19 could teach us that there may be no human life on earth if we insist on continuing to perceive each other as members of "other" groups, whether ethnic, country, skin colour, religious or gender. It could teach us that either we all live, or none do. Perhaps this disease affords us a survival test because it is an exceptionally powerful common "enemy." We see trusting as an integral modulating element in a graded stepwise process, and forgiving and reconciling over other issues as correlates and byproducts of adversaries collaborating to fulfil any common purpose, even if is not a military one. We hope it lays the foundation for collaboration worldwide.

Notes

1 Part of this section is adapted from Paloutzian and Sagir (2019).
2 In this study, because N = 100, the number of responses per answer option also equals the percentage (%).
3 Most subsequent leaders of the two sides understood this, although as time passed it seemed less so in a few cases.

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14 Conclusion

SungYong Lee and Kevin P. Clements

Residual grievances between different social groups and the experience of past violence offer significant obstacles to the consolidation of peace and sustainable development in the aftermath of dire violence. Hence, social reconciliation has become one of the most crucial issues in post-conflict peacebuilding. Peacebuilding has made a significant contribution, to the re-establishment of "order" in post-conflict environments; however, conventional peacebuilding has mostly been based on state-centric stabilising assumptions. In particular much attention was given to institutional support for three areas of activity: Truth-telling (e.g., truth and reconciliation commissions), trial and persecution (e.g., international tribunals) and compensation and reparation (e.g. government subsidies for reparation). In addition to these practices, peacebuilding actors also paid most attention to the roles of security, political, economic and governance structures in developing pre-conditions for reconciliation. Such approaches tend to develop elite-driven models of reconciliation programmes and to disregard the significance of less visible practices of peacebuilding that are carried out by local populations in their everyday life.

This volume has asked and explored a different central question, "How do people rebuild and define the relations with former harm-doers in their everyday lives?" by incorporating the perspectives and insights from social psychology and "everyday peace" discourse. Extensive academic analysis has clarified the complexity and multidimensionality of reconciliation and called for holistic, contextualised and systematic approaches to reconciliation. Reconciliation requires deep psychological, sociological, theological and philosophical insights and actions at multiple levels: National, societal and communal. However, there has been limited exploration of if and how such theories and knowledge can be applied in the post-war contexts. The chapters included in this volume present a good number of findings and lessons with regard to understanding the complex nature of the factors that affect the dynamics of social reconciliation at individual, group and state levels, problems of conceptual limitations and proposals for better practice for promoting reconciliation. This concluding chapter summarises the discussions presented in these chapters, by integrating them under four concurrent themes.

First, the dynamics of post-conflict reconciliation are primarily about the ways in which individuals, groups and nations deal with suffering, pain and trauma.