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Peace Education as a Coexistence and Reconciliation Tool: The Context of the Conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan

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Peace Education as a Coexistence and Reconciliation Tool: The Context of the Conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of M.Ed. in International Education

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Abstract

Peace Education as a Coexistence and Reconciliation Tool: The Context of the Conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan

Lasting peace requires more than signing a formal political agreement between adversaries. Genuine peace-building in the post-conflict settings must also include efforts aimed at reconciling opposing groups or nations.

Peace-building measures will necessarily involve formal and non-formal education and training programs aimed at changing negative attitudes and perceptions of the other side, as well as fostering peaceful coexistence and reconciliation between former belligerent parties. These activities fall under broader category of Peace education as a coexistence and reconciliation tool. Peace education programs should be implemented both within formal educational systems and at the society-level.

Peace education programs in the regions of intractable conflict should pay particular attention to the socio-psychological aspects of the conflict. Among the goals of peace education are gradual legitimization of the other side’s collective narrative, critical assessment of one’s group role in the conflict, developing empathy and trust toward other group in an effort to narrow psychological distance between opposing groups, and in this way creating grounds for inter-group dialogue and understanding.

The fact that peace education programs deal with deep-rooted beliefs and attitudes makes the implementation of such programs challenging, because of the underlying contextual and situational factors that stimulate inter-group conflict. Negative attitudes and perceptions on many occasions are ideologically sustained and used to support the political objectives of ruling elites. Artificial maintenance of negative perceptions of other groups is internalized by the in-group thus making any changes in perceptions and attitudes hard to achieve.

Peace education programs in the context of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan will are likely to produce only limited results if implemented amidst on-going conflict. The fact that the relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan in general and the current conflict are deeply embedded in the historical narratives can potentially hinder reconciliation efforts even after the formal end of the conflict.

Thus peace education programs in this region should concentrate among other things on fostering discussion and reconsideration at the intra-societal and inter-societal level of these underlying factors that reinforce negative perceptions and attitudes. Critical assessment of the costs and benefits of the linkage between historiography and present-day foreign policy agenda is necessary.

In the context of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan development of the peace education programs at the society level should precede or be implemented simultaneously with the work on changing and introducing new curriculum.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.................................................................................................................. ii  
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.................................................................................................. iii  
TABLE OF CONTENTS................................................................................................ iv  
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.......................................................................................... vi  
MAP OF THE REGION.................................................................................................. vii  

INTRODUCTION........................................................................................................ 1  
From Peacekeeping to Peace-building........................................................................ 1  
Sustainable peace through coexistence and reconciliation........................................... 4  
The role of education and training in fostering coexistence and reconciliation.............. 6  
The scope of the study and research questions............................................................ 8  

CHAPTER 1  
THE RATIONALE AND PRINCIPLES OF PEACE EDUCATION  
IN THE REGIONS OF INTRACTABLE CONFLICT.................................................... 11  
1.1. Evolution of the concept and meaning of peace................................................... 12  
1.2. Distinctions between various peace education programs..................................... 14  
1.3. Peace education programs in the regions of intractable conflict............................ 16  
1.4. Peace education programs as a tool for fostering coexistence  
and reconciliation between opposing groups......................................................... 22  
1.5. “Contact hypothesis” as a framework for peace-building programs....................... 28  

CHAPTER 2  
IDENTITY-BASED FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE PERSISTENCE  
OF THE INTER-GROUP CONFLICT.......................................................................... 36  
2.1. Uncovering conflict: is it all about perceptions, attitudes and prejudices?.............. 36  
2.2. Identity-based perspective on the conflict: “Good Us” vs. “Evil Them”................... 38
2.3. Collectively held narratives – unquestioned truths or constructed past and present? ..........42
2.4. Constructed “State Identity”: A source of persistence of groups’ polarization .................47

CHAPTER 3

A NARRATIVE-BASED OVERVIEW OF THE CONFLICT BETWEEN ARMENIA AND AZERBAIJAN

3.1. Contested borders in the Caucasus ................................................................. 57
3.2. Armenia’s narrative: Perception of ‘Relative deprivation’ ...................................... 59
3.3. Azerbaijan’s narrative: wake-up call ............................................................... 63
3.4. Escalation of conflict to full-scale undeclared war ............................................... 65
3.5. Positions of Armenia and Azerbaijan at the negotiation table .................................. 68
3.6. Perceived incompatibility of positions and interests ............................................. 71
3.7. External dimension of intractable conflict ....................................................... 74

CHAPTER 4

PARTICULAR ASPECTS OF PEACE EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN THE CONTEXT OF CONFLICT BETWEEN ARMENIA AND AZERBAIJAN

4.1. Peace education: conflict resolution or post-conflict reconciliation tool? ................. 78
4.2. Core belief systems: Is it possible to remove the stumbling blocks? ......................... 83
4.3. Coexistence and reconciliation programs at the community level .......................... 95

CONCLUSION ........................................................................................................ 105

REFERENCES ....................................................................................................... 108
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CoE: Council of Europe
ECRI: European Commission against Racism and Intolerance
EU: European Union
FSU: Former Soviet Union
IDP: Internally Displaced Persons
MFA: Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NKAO: Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast
OSCE: Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PACE: Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
TARC: Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Commission
TRC: Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UN: United Nations Organization
UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNIFICYP: United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.
INTRODUCTION

From Peacekeeping to Peace-building

The necessity to solve intractable conflicts in the South Caucasus region in general and between Armenia and Azerbaijan in particular (see Chapter 3) by peaceful means is underlined in almost every official document, resolution and recommendation released by such credible international organizations as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), United Nations (UN), Council of Europe (CoE), European Union (EU), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and others. The emphasis is usually put on interstate peace negotiations as a political means to find solution to these conflicts. Although the political, governmental level of conflict resolution is important, few would doubt that lasting peace takes more than a formal peace accord between the belligerent parties.

Political agreement can only transform conflict into what is called “negative peace”, i.e. absence of direct physical violence. If the lasting peace is to be achieved, additional efforts should be made to create effective post-conflict reconciliation mechanisms, which would foster mutual understanding and tolerance with the ultimate goal of eradicating the sense of animosity and hatred between the opposing nations and communities.

Intensification of the negotiation process between Armenia and Azerbaijan throughout 2005 brought the possibility of implementation of the peacekeeping operation in the region back to the agenda. Revitalization of the idea about possible deployment of peacekeeping forces in the region inevitably makes it necessary to reconsider the evolving role and ultimate goals of peacekeeping operations in general (Guehenno, 2002) and in the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan in particular (Vilén & Karie, 1995; Maresca, 1996).
Traditionally political agreement between belligerent parties is preceded or followed by the deployment of peacekeeping forces (usually under international mandate). The question is however, whether peacekeeping operations, which are usually prescribed and used on the ground fully contribute to and foster transformation of conflict into what is increasingly called “positive peace” (see below). Detailed account of peacekeeping in this region is beyond the scope of this study; extensive literature exists on this issue (Archer & Johnson, 1996; Lynch, 2000). However, for our analysis, it is essential to single out several important aspects of the peacekeeping operations, which are relevant for the present study.

The United Nations’ Peacekeeping operations carried out throughout the world up until the 1990s were based on the trinity of principles, which include 1) consent of parties to the conflict to the deployment of peacekeeping forces; 2) impartiality of the peacekeepers; and 3) minimum or non-use of force on behalf of peacekeeping forces (Ramsbotham & Woodhouse, 2005). The complexity of the post-Cold war era conflicts rendered this “traditional” peacekeeping inadequate in the new environment as was manifested by the inability of deployed peacekeepers to prevent ethnic cleansing in Rwanda and in the former Yugoslavia (Ramsbotham & Woodhouse, 2005).

The shift in the peacekeeping paradigm among other things resulted in reconsidering of the very goals of the peacekeeping operations (Donald, 2002; Bellamy & Williams, 2004). If before the primary goal of peacekeeping operations was essentially creation of the “Buffer Zones” between conflicting parties, confining the whole operation to preserving cease-fire, preventing former belligerent parties from resuming hostilities or separating opposing communities, since early 1990s there was growing understanding that in the longer term this tactics can lead to freezing of the status quo, thus sustaining the “negative peace” (Paris, 2002). This understanding was also reinforced by a number of peacekeeping operations such
as but not limited to UNFICYP, which did not contributed to the resolution of the conflict, but rather contributed to the stagnation of the situation.

In his report on the future of peacekeeping operations entitled “An Agenda for Peace” (1992), the then UN Secretary-General Boutros-Boutros Ghali, unveiling strategies to achieve stable and lasting peace, stressed that ultimately international peacekeeping should address the “deepest causes of conflict”, in order to “avoid a relapse into conflict” (Ghali, 1992).

This paradigm shift is also reflected in more clear-cut distinctions made between the meaning of the concepts “peacekeeping” and “peace-building”, which were blurred and intermingled before. Whereas peacekeeping usually refers to third party intervention to control and prevent violence, peace-building incorporates also variety of activities aimed at removing the root causes of the conflict (Last, 2005).

Thus, international peacekeeping operations in the conflict zone, albeit significant, should be only one part of the larger peace-building efforts. Genuine peace operations should include also other instruments of conflict transformation. In this respect, the “multidimensional” peacekeeping operations in the early 1990s in Namibia, El Salvador, Cambodia, and Mozambique are notable because they did not confine themselves to separating fighting parties but expanded their tasks to include disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of former combatants into civilian life, assistance in returning refugees and displaced persons to their pre-war homes of origins (Guehenno, 2002; Lise Morjé, 2002).

The Brahimi report (2000), which emerged out of a comprehensive review of the structures, management and the goals of United Nations peace operations, also emphasized the key role of peace-building in complex peace operations in the 21st century. It stressed that the peace-building efforts along with disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and other activities should also include conflict resolution and reconciliation techniques (UN, 2000,
In other words, rehabilitation, reconciliation and conflict management mechanisms should be introduced in order that a peacekeeping operation yields positive, and what is more important sustainable results.

**Sustainable peace through coexistence and reconciliation**

As a recognition of this, in its recent statement of June 2005 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan emphasized that “sustainable peace cannot be achieved without normalization of life and ensuring peaceful coexistence and cooperation of the Azerbaijani and Armenian communities of the Nagorno-Karabakh\(^1\) region of the Republic of Azerbaijan” (MFA Statement, June 2005, paragraph 5). In this respect, the Azerbaijani MFA reiterated its support for “setting up direct contacts between the communities and carrying out comprehensive confidence-building measures with a view to overcome hostility, achieving stability and mutual understanding” (MFA Statement, June 2005, paragraph 5).

In a similar way the Council of Europe’s Report (2005) prepared by David Atkinson\(^2\) stressed that “the confidence of everyone living in Armenia and Azerbaijan is essential for positive political progress in the future” and that “for Armenians and Azerbaijanis to live peacefully together, or at least side by side, requires a certain degree of reconciliation” (Atkinson, 2005).

In other words, final resolution of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan involves of more than signing a political agreement and the deployment of international peacekeeping forces. It also involves addressing civil aspects of conflict.

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1 The term “Nagorno-Karabakh” is Russian translation of the original Azerbaijani name of the region - Dağılıq Garabağ (Mountainous Karabakh). Due to the fact that the term “Nagorno-Karabakh” is widely used in the literature on this subject, I use it in this study to avoid confusion.

2 Rapporteur from Political Affairs Committee of the Council of Europe.
Whereas there is ample research on the different models of solving the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, little or no research has been carried out on the reconciliation and confidence-building tools and mechanisms, which almost certainly will be necessary in order to prevent recurrence of the conflict in the future. Broadly speaking efforts should be made to develop conflict management capacity in the region.

It should be noted that future confidence-building and reconciliation programs which can be relevant in the context of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan should be identified before the formal political agreement is reached between the Parties so as to be launched within short notice. As Mandell notes in his article on *Anatomy of a Confidence-Building Regime: Egyptian-Israeli Security Cooperation*, “confidence-building measures are especially crucial in the early stages of a peace settlement because they can forestall a resort to the use of force by the disputants, generate additional confidence-building measures beyond those initially implemented and … create additional incentives for collaboration” (as cited by Hampson, 1996, p. 12).

The focus of this study is the confidence-building components of the peace-building efforts applicable in the context of the intractable conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. I will also try to identify critical issues to be addressed by the would-be initiatives aimed at fostering coexistence and reconciliation between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

The questions I’m seeking to explore are: when such measures should be introduced, at what level, what are the underlying assumptions and processes of the confidence-building measures. European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) in its general policy Recommendation No. 1 on Combating Racism, Xenophobia, anti-Semitism and Intolerance (1996) called the countries-members to the Council of Europe to “Undertake research into the nature, causes and manifestations of racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance at
local, regional and national level” thus underlining the importance of uncovering and tackling the underlying causes of intolerance and persistent negative attitudes (Council of Europe, [CoE], 1996, p. 5). In this regard, in this research project particular attention will be given to analyzing the factors contributing to the maintenance of the negative attitudes and perceptions between Armenia and Azerbaijan, which in the post-conflict settings, unless tackled, can potentially hinder the process of genuine peace-building.

As confirmed in the above-mentioned statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan and recommendations prepared by international organizations, almost all confidence-building and reconciliation efforts are aimed at the grass-roots level, i.e. mediating between groups or communities in conflict, and developing conflict-resolution skills with the aim to find or re-establish grounds for peaceful co-existence.

The role of education and training in fostering coexistence and reconciliation

Peace-building and reconciliation measures in this way or another involve formal and non-formal education and training programs. The reasons for this are manifold. First, throughout the period of confrontation education is used as a tool in the “spiral of violence” when negative attitudes towards others are nourished and passed on through the curricula (history textbooks for example) to the next generations, thus creating vicious circle of violence (Gango, 2004). This is why Harris and Morrison came to the conclusion that “traditional education reproduces violent cultures” (Harris & Morrison, 2003, p. 31).

In this regard, in the regions of intractable conflict while introducing various confidence-building measures, an attempt should be made to undo the harm produced by the politicized school curriculum during the years of conflict. Therefore, school curriculum should
be one of the key targets to be addressed in order to eliminate the source of negative perceptions and attitudes (Castellana, 2004).

Secondly, education and training are perhaps the most effective means through which positive information about the former adversary can be disseminated widely. And thirdly and perhaps more importantly, after the decades and in some cases centuries-long animosities, it is not enough just to stop the hostilities and reverse the flow of negative information. Communities should be taught the values of an inclusive culture of peace and co-existence.

Thus, the United Nations General Assembly in its Resolution on the “Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace” adopted on October 6, 1999 among other things called to “ensure that children, from an early age, benefit from education on the values, attitudes, modes of behavior and ways of life to enable them to resolve any dispute peacefully and in a spirit of respect for human dignity and of tolerance and non-discrimination” (United Nations [UN] Res. A/RES/53/243, 1999).

As will be argued below, similar attitudes should be also developed in the society at large. This makes education and training for adults in non-formal settings an important component of confidence-building programs. In the regions of intractable conflict, the role of non-formal education and training for adults should be given particular attention.

Speaking of the role of education in eliminating violence, Harris notes that “education provides an important strategy to achieve peace, because it provides awareness about different peace strategies, including peacekeeping (or peace through strength), peacemaking (or peace through communication), and peace-building (or peace through a commitment to nonviolence)” (Harris, 2002, p. 18). In other words, reconciliation programs are aimed at changing attitudes and perceptions of opposing groups and communities, and most importantly changing their behavior.
Education and training programs that pursue the above-mentioned goals fall under the broad field of Peace Education. Because peace education programs aim to foster coexistence between opposing communities, these kinds of programs also referred to as education for coexistence programs (Abu-Nimer, 2004; Salomon, 2004; Bar-Tal, 2004).

The scope of the study and research questions

In this research project, I will try to analyze the concept of peace education as a conflict management and peace-building tool capable of contributing to conflict resolution, post-conflict reconciliation through promotion of tolerance and mutual trust.

There are divergent opinions on whether such conciliation mechanisms can be developed and introduced as a conflict resolution tool when the formal peace agreement is not yet signed and peace negotiation process has not yielded positive results or such tools are applicable and effective only in post-conflict settings when there is already formal political agreement in place.

It should be mentioned outright that the goal of this project is not design of particular content of the peace education programs. Hence, my research questions will focus on when and under what conditions peace education programs can yield positive results in reconciling opposing communities. The scope of this project does not allow conducting a comprehensive evaluation of the peace education programs implemented elsewhere. Rather, an attempt is being made to identify lessons learned from the actual programs carried out in various parts of the world, which can be generalized and serve as a theoretical basis for the prospective reconciliation and coexistence programs in the South Caucasus region. This may help to avoid or minimize shortcomings that were experienced in other peace programs.
As will be shown below, Peace education is a very broad field and includes all kinds of programs differing in goals, target groups and means of achievements. For the purpose of this study, I will narrow the broad concept and will focus primarily on the peace education programs in regions suffering from intractable conflicts. For this purpose I will review existing literature on the theory and practice of peace education. Since the majority of existing literature on this subject draws its conclusions and recommendations based on the peace education programs carried out in regions of intractable conflict (such as Cyprus, Israeli-Palestinian conflict, former Yugoslavia and Northern Ireland), review of the existing literature will allow me to identify factors and conditions that may potentially hinder implementation of these programs in real-life settings or secure achievement of positive results. I will look into what were or could be the reasons for failure? Is it a failure of the concept as evidenced by the unpreparedness of the target groups to accept such notions as “peace” and “tolerance” due to the atrocities still fresh in the collective memory? Or there are other factors that reinforce negative perceptions and attitudes between the opposing groups and hence may potentially diminish effects of the peace education programs?

I will identify the problems which should be addressed by the prospective Peace education programs in the regions of intractable conflicts. I will then dwell on the nature of inter-group violence, which makes conflicts intractable and poses a challenge to peace education initiatives. I will then try to consider some critical aspects of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan from the point of view of Peace Education programming.

The majority of Peace education programs is carried out in the form of workshops and is essentially based on the promotion and facilitation of dialogue between the conflicting groups. Based on the “contact hypothesis” formulated by Gordon Allport (1954), I will try to reveal strengths and weaknesses of facilitated dialogue as a conflict resolution tool. I will conclude by highlighting specific issues to be taken into account while designing prospective
peace education programs for the reconciliation between Armenian and Azerbaijani communities of the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan and between Armenia and Azerbaijan in general.

Although there is currently a number of conflicts in the South Caucasus, the scope of this project prevents me from considering all these conflicts. Since, there are visible similarities between these conflicts it is possible to assume that the findings about one particular case can be useful in analyzing the peace education programs as a coexistence and reconciliation tool throughout the South Caucasus region.
CHAPTER 1

THE RATIONALE AND PRINCIPLES OF PEACE EDUCATION
IN THE REGIONS OF INTRACTABLE CONFLICT

In this chapter I will discuss the main principles, underlying assumptions and overall rationale for using peace education programs in the regions of intractable conflict.

Given that, there may be confusion between the terms “Protracted conflict” and “Intractable conflict”, which are both used in the literature on the peace education, we first of all should be clear on terminology used in this study. Salomon in his research on the peace education uses the term “Protracted conflict” to describe volatile conflicts between Israelis and Palestinians, standoff in Northern Ireland, Cyprus to name a few (Salomon & Nevo, 2002; Salomon, 2004). The term “protracted social conflict” was used by Azar (1990) to describe the conflicts in the 1980s and 1990s. He argued that “the focus of these conflicts is religious, cultural or ethnic communal identity, which in turn is dependent upon the satisfaction of basic needs such as those for security, communal recognition and distributive justice” (p. 2).

Other authors use the term “Intractable conflict” to describe the conflicts having the same identity-based characteristics. Coleman (2000), for example, argues that “core issues in intractable conflicts also tend to proliferate, producing a complex web of interlocking issues and complaints that can be very difficult to analyze” (Coleman, 2000). He defines intractable conflicts as conflicts, which are intense, deadlocked, and resistant to de-escalation or resolution (Coleman, 2000). As we can see conflicts in the volatile regions where peace education programs were implemented can be both protracted and intractable in nature. For this study, I will use the term intractable conflict, emphasizing the deadlocked and persistent
character of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, where issues of realistic interest (over territory), identity, perceptions and attitudes are closely interconnected.

Development of peace education as a field was a result of the peace advocacy movements which gained popularity since the second half of the 20th century and pioneered studies of nonmilitary approaches to the resolutions of conflicts (Fitzduff, 2006). Existence of different names for Peace education, such as but not limited to conflict resolution, coexistence education, human rights education, civic education, and multicultural education indicates that the field of peace education embraces in itself various meanings and concepts. If so, we need to be clear and specific about the concept and meaning of peace education that would guide practice in the regions of intractable conflicts.

1.1. Evolution of the concept and meaning of Peace

Since peace education programs derive their assumptions from the different meanings of peace, it is useful to start our analysis by elaborating on existing concepts of peace. This will also help in identification of goals that have to be attained by peace education programs in general and in the conflict-torn regions in particular.

Over the course of the last fifty years, the concept of peace has evolved considerably. If before, peace was defined simply as absence of war (negative peace), contemporary peace theories tend to include multiple levels of analysis, in addition to the conventional, state level (Groff, 2001).

One of the concepts of peace deals with the social-structural dimensions of peace and focuses on the elimination of both physical and structural violence at the macro and micro levels. This approach, in addition to negative peace, introduced the concept of “Positive peace”, which initially meant absence of structural violence (inequalities in societies, which could potentially lead to violence). Later the concept of the structural violence expanded to
include personal-micro and macro-level structures that “harm or discriminate against particular individuals, ethnic communities, or groups” (Groff, 2001, 2nd paragraph).

More recent peace concepts view peace as a holistic complex system and are based on the premise that diversity is a strength. This “intercultural” approach to peace concept envisages establishing peaceful coexistence between different ethnic, racial, cultural, and religious groups. Thus, recent “multi-factored” theories focus not only on causes of violence and conflicts, but also view peace in more holistic positive terms, i.e. defining the conditions and factors, which are necessary in order to create a peaceful world (Groff, 2001, 1st paragraph).

Existence of different meanings of peace does not mean that peace programs should deal only with negative or positive peace. Johan Galtung argues that peace programs should define as their ultimate goals achievement of both negative and positive peace since they are interconnected in a sense that inequality and structural violence may lead to eruption of violence (Galtung, 1969).

Based on the above-mentioned definitions of peace Hiroe Terada (2003) identified three major goals of peace research outlined in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understanding of Peace</th>
<th>Negative Peace</th>
<th>Positive Peace</th>
<th>Negative and Positive Peace</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assumptions</td>
<td>The world will be a peaceful place when there is no personal violence.</td>
<td>The world will be a peaceful place when there is justice and there is no structural violence.</td>
<td>• There might be causal relationship between personal violence and structural violence. • Trying to have a double goal might advance us to achieve a more stable peaceful world where there is no personal violence and structural violence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.2. Distinctions between various peace education programs

The difference between the concepts of peace ultimately determine different levels of analysis for various peace education programs, degree and level of desired changes as well as available tools to achieve those changes. It is therefore essential to make distinctions between goals that various peace education programs pursue.

Salomon argues that peace education is not a single entity. Depending on the socio-political context of different countries and regions in which peace education programs are implemented, they are assigned different tasks. Salomon considers the socio-political context as the most important distinctive factor between various peace education programs (Salomon, 2002, p. 5). Thus, in some countries peace education is called to address consequences of intractable conflicts. In other regions the focus is on the issues of societal built-in inequalities and injustices, which can potentially lead to violence (structural violence). For others, peace education is a means of promoting human rights. In other countries peace education deals primarily with interethnic, racial tensions (Salomon & Nevo, 2002).

Based on these distinctions, Salomon offers three broad categories of peace education, which can be summarized in the following table:
Salomon notes, however, that such distinction is relative and is given for clarity and that “in real world, programs are not that well distinguished from each other” (Salomon, 2002, p. 6).

Similarly, UNESCO in its action plan envisaged the promotion of a culture of peace around the world through the “International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World” initiative launched in 2002. This included promotion of international peace and security along with advancing understanding, tolerance and solidarity, promotion of sustainable economic and social development, respect for all human rights and democratic participation.

This, however, does not necessarily mean that peace education initiatives in various parts of the world would not differ from each other. Staub argues, that although peace education programs around the world do have “universal elements” and are guided by the same principles, depending on the particular socio-political contexts, the goals and hence content of the peace education programs in a given conflict will be different (Staub, 2002, p. 74).

Underlying the importance of existing distinctions between various peace education programs Salomon notes that “peace education in regions of intractable conflict often entails

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Peace education programs</th>
<th>Peace Education in Regions of Intractable Conflicts</th>
<th>Peace Education in Regions of Interethnic Tension</th>
<th>Peace Education in Regions of Experienced Tranquility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>context</td>
<td>Violent conflicts</td>
<td>Interethnic or racial tension</td>
<td>Absence of inter-group violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>goals</td>
<td>Negative Peace</td>
<td>Negative Peace</td>
<td>Positive Peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cases in point</td>
<td>Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Cyprus problem</td>
<td>Belgium, USA</td>
<td>Norway</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

elements of antiracism, conflict resolution, multiculturalism, cross-cultural training and the cultivation of a generally peaceful outlook, but it can neither be equated with these nor reduced to them” (Salomon, 2002, p. 7). This implies that one needs to be careful when designing a peace education program for particular groups in conflict. Simply applying techniques and tools used in, say, conflict resolution programs and other forms of peace education designed and implemented in the regions of “tranquility” (like peer mediation in schools for example) while disregarding peculiarities of each particular conflict may be of little relevance in the regions of on-going conflict. Speaking about the difference between conflict resolution programs and peace education Salomon notes that “the acquisition of conflict resolution skills is not an important part of peace education while coming to acknowledge the humane side of one’s collective adversary is not a central part of conflict resolution” (Salomon, 2004a, p. 3).

1.3. Peace education programs in the regions of intractable conflict

The focus of this project is to analyze peace education initiatives specifically designed for the regions suffering from intractable conflicts. At first sight, it would seem obvious that peace education programs in the regions of intractable conflict should preoccupy primarily with the elimination and prevention of direct physical violence. Indeed, as we see from the evolution of the concept of peace, the absence of war still remains a necessary precondition for all peace definitions. However, there is ample evidence in the recent history suggesting that formal truce between belligerent parties or even signing of peace accords creates conditions for the negative peace, i.e. absence of direct physical violence. Yet, few would argue that absence of war is enough for building lasting peace.

Reconciliation, empathy and mutual trust, which are regarded as essential goals of peace education in the regions of intractable conflict would require concerted efforts to create
an environment of positive peace in its broader conceptualization, i.e., a condition which would maintain peaceful coexistence of different ethnic, religious groups as well as prevent occurrence of structural inequalities and injustices (Groff, 2001).

If so, what are the goals of peace education programs in the regions of intractable conflict? Salomon (2002) outlines the following four main outcomes expected out of the implementation of such peace education programs:

- Accepting as legitimate the "other's" narratives
- Willingness to critically examine one's own group's actions toward the "other"
- Willingness to experience and show empathy and trust toward the "other"
- Disposition to engage in non-violent activities


Several propositions can be derived from the Salomon's classification of the goals of the peace education programs. First of all, it is obvious that peace education in the region of intractable conflicts differ from other programs in terms of the area of focus. Whereas peace education initiatives focused on inter-personal conflict resolution and human rights are targeted at individuals (micro-level), peace education programs in the regions of intractable conflict are aimed at collectives as a whole, i.e., macro-level (Salomon, 2002, p.5). This is not to imply, however, that individuals are not the targets of these particular peace education programs. As argue Salomon and Kupermintz:

As individuals, members of groups involved in conflict, may not directly engage in actual conflict resolution. Indeed, there is no conflict to be skillfully resolved between an individual Hutu and individual Tutsy in Rwanda (Staub, 2002), or between Israelis and Palestinians as particular individuals. The focus of peace education in such conflicts is on the treatment of the collective conflict (Azar, 1990; Foster, 1999), rather than the
acquisition of particular skills for interpersonal conflict resolution (Kupermintz & Salomon, 2005, p. 294).

In other words, the complexities of these conflicts require approaching belligerent parties as groups (in-group vs. out-group) and not as isolated individuals.

As indicated in the first cell (from the left) of the above table, peace education in the regions of intractable conflict pays particular attention to the socio-psychological aspects of the conflict, i.e. “the role of groups’ sense of identity (the way it perceives itself), its history (the story it tells about itself) and its collective narrative (the way it portrays its role in the conflict and its views of the adversary) in the given conflict” (Salomon, 2004, p. 273). The necessity to address the collective narrative of conflicting groups rooted in their historical memories derives from the assumption that collective narratives play an important role in fueling and sustaining a conflict between the groups and conversely that they can be used to reverse the negative attitudes and promote coexistence between them (Salomon, 2004).

Bruner (1990) in *Acts of meaning* defines collective narrative as “social constructions that coherently interrelate a sequence of historical and current events; they are accounts of a community’s collective experiences, embodied in its belief system and represent the collective’s symbolically constructed shared identity” (as cited in Salomon, 2004, p. 274). In other words, it is group’s memory consisting of the shared beliefs, history, aspirations, explanations and legitimization of in-groups behavior and attitude toward out-groups transmitted from one generation to the other. Detailed accounts of the role of collective narratives in sustaining conflict will be provided in the third chapter. Here it suffices to mention that since history-based collective narratives play an important role in a group’s sense of identity and in the fostering negative attitude toward other groups, Salomon argues that “coming to know and acknowledge the painful memories of the other side may be a way to overcome conflicts” (Salomon, 2004, p. 276).
Salomon notes, however, that accepting the other group’s narrative does not necessarily mean liking it and/or abandoning one’s own narrative (Salomon, 2004). He points out that “legitimization of the other’s narrative does not necessarily require the adoption of a totally relativistic perspective. One would still be expected to adhere to his or her group’s collective narrative” (Salomon, 2002, p.9). The logic is that by trying to look at an adversarial group’s narrative from two possibly opposing perspectives, a first step is being made toward acceptance of the other side, which has been devalued and denied any legitimacy as a result of conflict. Therefore, one of the ultimate goals of peace education is gradual mutual legitimization of the other side’s collective narrative, appreciation and understanding, thus creating grounds for inter-group interactions (Salomon, 2004).

Acceptance of the other side’s collective narrative can be facilitated, for example, by programs aimed at fostering multicultural understanding, which are considered to be an important element of peace education. Multicultural understanding is promoted among other things through human rights education and cross-cultural training. The assumption here is that multicultural understanding would reduce stereotypes of “others” and contribute to the elimination of inter-group hostilities (Harris, 2004, p. 11).

As evidenced by the second cell in the above table, acceptance of the other side’s collective narrative is correlated with other changes such as a willingness to accept the other side’s story and critical assessment of one’s group wrongdoings towards the other group (Salomon, 2004). This is the most difficult part of peace education programs because the collective identity of the opposing groups, i.e. good “Us” vs. evil “Them”, justifies attitude and behavior toward out-group (see second chapter). Consequently, attempts to change such attitudes will require first changing the group’s sense of social identity which, as we will see below, is highly resistant to change (Salomon, 2004).
The third cell in the table underlines the need to develop empathy and trust toward other group. As will be discussed later in this chapter, the negative attitude toward other groups is maintained by prejudices. Prejudices create “psychological distance” between the two groups when neither is willing to try to understand the other side. It is narrowing this psychological distance that empathy is aimed at (Stephan & Finlay, 1999).

There are two basic types of empathy: cognitive empathy, which is taking the perspective of another person, and emotional empathy, which is referred to emotional responses to another person. Emotional empathy is called parallel empathy when such responses are similar to those the other person is experiencing and called reactive empathy when such responses are reactive to another person’s emotional experiences (Stephan & Finlay, 1999, p. 730). The study of empathy suggests that empathy has a potential to influence attitudes and behavior in a positive way, whereas lack of empathy may generate or maintain negative attitudes and behavior (Stephan & Finlay, 1999).

In other words, increasing empathy through a variety of different types of training programs may improve inter-group relations. The basic assumption behind using empathy in an attempt to improve inter-group relations is that, by encouraging people to feel empathy toward others and take roles of the representatives of the other group, it is possible to train people to see the conflict from the perspective of people in the out-group, which was previously de-legitimized (Stephan & Finlay, 1999; Salomon, 2002; Salomon, 2004).

It is believed that cognitive empathy reduces prejudice hence negative attitudes toward the other group because it allows members of the opposing groups to see that the perceived differences between the groups are not supported by evidence and that the threat that they thought was emanating from the other group is also exaggerated (Stephan & Finlay, 1999).
Stephan and Finlay (1999) argue that the empathy toward members of other groups, which may occur either through training or playing the role of others, may create dissonance between the previously held negative attitude and current empathy. In an attempt to reduce this dissonance, a person may change his negative attitude to a positive one (p. 735.)

It should be noted that cognitive empathy is useful in acquiring knowledge about the out-group as well as learning how it perceives the in-group. Cognitive empathy is useful when empathy training programs are designed for minority groups, since majority is suffering not from discrimination but from stereotypes and prejudices created and maintained by minorities (Stephan & Finlay, 1999).

Reactive empathy can lead either to positive change of attitudes toward out-group as a result of concern for the suffering of the out-group (empathic concern) or may result in negative feelings as a result of suffering of the other (personal distress). Parallel empathy may also lead to positive or negative emotional responses (Stephan & Finlay, 1999). Thus, Stephan and Finaly (1999) conclude that “emotional empathy may lead to both attitudinal and behavior changes, depending on which emotions are elicited and the intensity of these emotional reactions” (p. 737).

The fourth cell in the above table underlines the importance of understanding the inadmissibility of the use of violence as a means to achieve one’s goals, which is considered to be a precondition for coexistence and reconciliation (Bar-Tal, 2004). That is why there is broad understanding that Peace education programs in the regions of intractable conflict should also generate understanding of the origins and characteristics of violence and conflicts (Firer, 2002). Desivilya (2004) argues in this regard that “understanding the dynamics of conflict constitutes an important device for counteracting the adverse changes at the cognitive domain” (p.346). The assumption here is that if people learn about the consequences and
sufferings which violence and conflicts bring, they will try to avoid resorting to violent solutions to the problems (Harris & Morrison, 2003).

1.4. Peace education programs as a tool for fostering coexistence and reconciliation between opposing groups

Having reviewed the four key goals of peace education programs in the region of intractable conflict proposed by Salomon, it is becoming clear why peace education in the most recent literature is also referred to as “education for coexistence” (Salomon, 2004, Bar-Tal, 2004). Fostering coexistence between the belligerent groups is seen as a crucial step and even a precondition for the continuation of the process of improving of inter-group relations leading to reconciliation between the opposing groups (Bar-Tal, 2004).

In a sense peace education or education for coexistence programs in the regions of intractable conflicts are peace-building and reconciliation tools, which are aimed at transforming societies and making and keeping fragile peace between nations and/or communities.

Discussing the rationale and effectiveness of education for coexistence, Bar-Tal argues that coexistence “belongs to the category of minimal positive inter-group relations” and “refers to the conditions that serve as the fundamental prerequisites for the evolvement of advanced harmonious inter-group relations. It refers to the very recognition in the right of the other group to exist peacefully with its differences and to the acceptance of the other group as a legitimate and an equal partner with whom disagreements have to be resolved in nonviolent ways” (Bar-Tal, 2004, p. 256).

Bar-Tal views inter-group relations as a continuum at the one end of which is the lowest point of the negative inter-group relations characterized by total de-legitimization of the opposing group and on the other extreme end is “full harmony” which Bar-Tal understands
as full normalization of political, economic, and cultural relations “based on equality and justice, nonviolence, mutual trust, and positive attitudes and sensitivity to and consideration of the other party’s needs and interests” (Bar-Tal, 2004, p. 256).

Bar-Tal calls coexistence a minimal goal because, in his view, on the continuum of inter-group relations establishment of coexistence between the opposing groups starts at the lowest point of negative inter-group relations and therefore achievement of the coexistence after years of conflict, characterized by devaluation and mistrust, is a significant progress (Bar-Tal, 2004).

Similar to the goals identified by Salomon for peace education, Bar-Tal’s definition of coexistence implies that its key components are recognition of legitimate existence of other groups, personalization of members of other group, i.e. realizing that individuals may have legitimate needs, aspirations and goals, peaceful ways to achieve goals and resolve possible differences as well as equal status and treatment of the groups, i.e. abandoning superiority-inferiority dichotomy (Bar-Tal, 2004).

Having minimalist expectations from coexistence at the initial stage, Bar-Tal realizes that these conditions for coexistence are not exhaustive and do not include other important ingredients needed for full harmony such as but not limited to establishment of full economic or cultural cooperation, forgiveness or healing, change of past narratives. However, he believes that these components may be included gradually within the framework of coexistence at the later stage (Bar-Tal, 2004).

Bar-Tal underlines that the core of coexistence is a state of mind shared by the members of society. He argues that:

...coexistence is primarily a formative process of the psychological repertoire of society members. The accompanying acts of cooperation, integration, or exchanges are direct behavioral derivations of the coexistence. Sole acts which come as a result of orders or laws, without psychological change by the society members, do not indicate the state of coexistence (Bar-Tal, 2004, 257).
In a similar manner, Shapiro argues that the peaceful coexistence requires change in “psychological dispositions” of people, because it influences their cultural attitudes towards others, beliefs and behavior (Shapiro, 2002, p. 64). Thus, as evidenced from the Salomon’s classification of the goals of peace education programs in the region of intractable conflict as well as Bar-Tal’s definition of the role of coexistence, these programs are, in fact, an intervention with the goal of changing mindset of the conflicting groups of people with constructed and collectively held deep-rooted historical narratives about their own group and that of the others (Salomon & Nevo, 2002; Salomon, 2004; Bar-Tal, 2004).

Since in the intractable conflicts psychological dynamics play an important role (Bar-Tal, 2004), peace education programs which deal with inter-group attitudes and mutual perceptions often use analytical tools of the social and peace psychology disciplines (Pettigrew, 1998).

As will be argued below, the existence of deep-rooted societal beliefs internalized by the conflicting societies is highly resistant to change and is in fact a stumbling bloc in the process of achieving coexistence. Therefore as argued Bar-Tal and other researchers in the field, educational processes are required to propagate ideas of coexistence (Bar-Tal, 2004; Harris & Morrison, 2003). At the same time, the fact that peace education programs deal with deep-rooted beliefs and attitudes makes the implementation of such programs challenging, because there are contextual and situational factors that stimulate inter-group conflict to be discussed in the third chapter (Fitzduff, 2006).

Bar-Tal (2004) proposes to differentiate between two approaches to education for coexistence. A narrow approach presupposes promotion of values, motivations, beliefs, attitudes, emotions and behavior patterns, which would change attitudes and prepare young generation to live with new relation patterns in regard of their former adversaries through formal educational institutions such as schools and other educational institutions. The
advantage of using school settings for teaching the values and skills of coexistence is that education in schools is compulsory for youth and therefore it assures transmission of knowledge and ideas to young generations (Bar-Tal, 2004).

However, although most peace education programs are targeted at 15-25 year-old adolescents and youth, there is broad understanding that the dynamics of violence in regions of intractable conflict make it insufficient to design and implement peace education programs only in formal educational settings (Nevo & Brem, 2002; Bar-Tal, 2004). Revision of existing curriculum and introduction of new themes that promote a culture of peace and tolerance towards others can produce results in long-term perspective and maintain sustainability of acquired changes in the generations to come, but intractable conflicts require immediate intervention and solutions. In this regard, Harris and Morrison point out that a “major disadvantage of peace education is that it offers a long-term solution to immediate threats. For peace education to be effective, it must transform ways of thinking that have been developed over the millennia of human history” (Harris & Morrison, 2003, p. 28).

One of the limitations of peace education programs in formal educational institutions is that, as Burns argues, they have “limited effects … in reaching a wide audience outside certain chronological ages” (Burns, 1996, p. 124).

It is not a surprise that during the last decade there was a growing adult education movement in peace education called to involve into such programs all sectors and levels of society (Harris & Morrison, 2003). The need to affect all segments of societies is even more acute in peace education programs designed for the regions of intractable conflict. As Burns argues, “for reaching ‘grass roots’ groups, the practice of peace education in non-formal educational settings has certain advantages since they bypass the formal structures” (Burns, 1996, p. 124). This is not to imply, though, that such programs should not be carried out within formal education system. The point is that the process of designing and introducing
new curriculum in schools is time-consuming and it will take some time before this new curriculum will yield results. Moreover, the regions of intractable conflicts are characterized by damaged formal school infrastructure, existence of refugees and internally displaced persons (adults, youths and children), who probably in the first place have to be targeted by the peace education programs.

In this regard, for the purpose of this research project along the programs in formal educational institutions I'm particularly interested in the applicability of peace education concepts and tools in non-formal educational settings, which would target the broad public. There is a widely held belief that reconciliation efforts should also include other channels of communication such as but not limited to mass media, literature etc (Bar-Tal, 2004). As argues Daniel Bar-Tal (2002), “peace education in schools without a wider social campaign is fruitless and disconnected from social reality” (p.31). He identifies the following framework for the societal approach toward the education for coexistence:

1. Coexistence programs involve formal and planned processes (for example, in schools) as well as of informal processes (for example, via mass media);
2. Participation of the society’s political, social, cultural, religious, and educational leaders on the national and community levels to disseminate the ideas of coexistence;
3. Coexistence programs should be implemented at all levels and institutions of the society—political, social, cultural, educational, economic, and religious—such as schools, religious centers, or the army;
4. Coexistence programs have to be reflected in all the societal channels of communication from advertising or films to TV programs and school textbooks;
5. Coexistence programs should be accompanied by creation of supportive, new norms that will be informally enforced via social sanctions;
6. Coexistence programs should be framed by legislation against racism, discrimination, and exploitation in order to enforce new values of coexistence (Bar-Tal, 2004, p. 264).

The environment where a given peace education program is introduced is very important for the implementation of the initiative, since it influences the actual program design. In other words, depending on the political, economic and social conditions on the
ground, peace education programs will also determine what will be particular elements of a
given program and how it will be implemented (Bar-Tal, 2002, p. 30).

Since peace education is usually aimed at the transformation of a society as a whole
(especially in regions of intractable conflict), Daniel Bar-Tal (2002) underlines the importance
of “societal agreement” on the objectives, goals and content of the peace education programs.
Paradoxically, the need for such “legitimization” of the programs by society at large may
create obstacles at the implementation stage of these programs. The problem with the societal
approach is that in democratic countries, as argues Bar-Tal (2004), adoption and
implementation of policies fostering coexistence is also somewhat complicated because the
government has no centralized control over civil society organizations, such as NGOs,
independent research institutions and mass media (Bar-Tal, 2004).

Moreover, societies and communities are not homogeneous in a sense that they consist
of various interest groups, which may perceive peace education programs as a threat to their
power, status and privileges (Bar-Tal, 2002, p.30). Besides, such programs may face serious
obstacles if they are considered to constitute a threat to the “traditional cultural values or even
the order of the social system” (Bar-Tal, 2002, p.30).

Indeed, as will be discussed below, in some regions centuries-long animosity towards
other groups manifested in a persistent factor of “external threat” may turn into something
resembling “ideology” used by ruling elites for further power consolidation and pursuing their
self-interests. Under these circumstances, it may be extremely difficult to try to change such
attitudes, as they are reinforced and reproduced by the “fabric” of the government. This is yet
another argument towards developing country-specific peace education programs. As argues
Bar-Tal “each society develops a particular peace education that is responsive to its own
political dictats” (Bar-Tal, 2002, p.30). The potential existence of various groups within
societies opposing to the change in perceptions about others makes it even more necessary to design strategies at the societal level that would counterweigh those efforts.

1.5. "Contact hypothesis" as a theoretical framework for peace-building programs

As is evidenced from the review of the literature on the subject, peace education programs in general and in the regions of intractable conflicts in particular “attempt to create the conditions of optimal contact in which the context promotes inter-group acceptance and understanding” (Stephan et al., 2004, p. 246). Since peace education programs draw their theoretical basis essentially from the principles of the contact hypothesis, it is therefore useful to give brief outline of basic characteristics and assumptions of the contact theory.

Contact hypothesis was developed to tackle prejudices and stereotypes that are believed to maintain the sense of hostility between opposing groups. The essence of the theory first formulated by Gordon Allport (1954) in his classic book “The Nature of Prejudice” is that intervention through intergroup contact may change attitudes and perceptions toward opposing groups, eliminate prejudices and stereotypes between them and eventually diminish hostilities and improve intergroup relations (Allport, 1954).

Allport was cautious himself about the results expected out of such encounters and stressed that “the effect of contact will depend upon the kind of association that occurs, and upon the kinds of persons who are involved” (Allport, 1954, p. 262). His major contribution was outlining the factors which determine, in his view, the effects of the contact. Given the importance of these variables for intergroup encounters as well as for the programs which are based on contact theory it is necessary to mention all these factors:

- **Quantitative aspects of contact:**
  - frequency of contact
  - duration
  - number of persons involved
variety

- **Status aspects of contact:**
  Minority member has inferior status
  Minority member has equal status
  Minority member has inferior superior status
  Not only may the individuals encountered vary thus in status; but the group as a whole may have relatively high status or relatively low status.

- **Role aspects of contact:**
  Is the relationship one of competitive or cooperative activity?
  Is there a superordinate or subordinate role relation involved?

- **Social atmosphere surrounding the contact:**
  Is segregation prevalent, or is egalitarianism expected?
  Is the contact voluntary or involuntary?
  Is the contact “real” or “artificial”?
  Is the contact perceived in terms of intergoup relations or not perceived as such?
  Is the contact regarded as “typical” or as “exceptional”?
  Is the contact regarded as important and intimate, or as trivial and transient?

- **Personality of the individual experiencing the contact:**
  Is the initial prejudice level high, low, medium?
  Is the prejudice of a surface, conforming type, or is it deeply rooted in his character structure?
  Has he basic security in his own life, or is he fearful and suspicious?
  What is the previous experience with the group in question, and what is the strength of the present stereotypes?
  What are his age and general education level?
  Many other personality factors may influence the effect of contact.

- **Areas of contact:**
  Casual
  Residential
  Occupational
  Recreational
  Religious
  Civic and fraternal
  Political
  Goodwill intergoup activities (Allport, 1954, pp. 262-263)

Based on these variables, which can act both separately and in combination, Allport identified the following pre-conditions under which contact could produce positive results.

The first condition is the frequency of interaction, i.e. contact should be made regularly during
specified period of time. The second condition is environmental support, i.e. there should be societal demand for such interaction and wider social support at all levels should be secured. The third condition is equal status of participants during the interactions. Equality is supposed to help actually change attitudes and perceptions of participants towards each other, since, as will be discussed below, stereotypes and prejudices are based on the devaluations and exclusion of others. And the forth condition is cooperative environment during the encounters.

There is substantial evidence suggesting that a sense of competition during the contact may actually reverse the effects of the programs since participants will capitalize on the relative gains (zero-sum game). To avoid such situation Allport proposes to engage members of opposing groups in activities where they would have common objectives. He develops his argument saying that “only the type of contact that leads people to do things together is likely to result in changed attitudes” (Allport, 1954, p. 276).

Cook (1978) argues that along with above-mentioned conditions for the contact to yield positive results, the “characteristics of out-group members with whom contact takes place should disconfirm the prevailing out-group stereotype” (Hewstone & Brown, 1986, p. 4). Using interpersonal attraction theory Cook and Pettigrew argue that contact between members of the opposing groups will likely to allow individuals to discover that they have similar values and attitudes (Hewstone & Brown, 1986, p. 6).

It should be noted that there are divergent opinions on whether programs for improving inter-group relations should focus on similarities or differences between the groups. While the arguments favoring a focus on similarities are reasonable, it is also important that knowledge and understanding of differences, which may become salient during the contact, are also included in such programs (Hewstone & Brown, 1986).

Some scholars argue that by simply bringing belligerent parties together it is not possible to achieve positive results (Tal-Or, Bominger & Gleicher, 2002, p. 88). This can be
partially explained by the difficulty to achieve all conditions specified by Allport simultaneously in real-life settings. But, what is more important is the evidence suggesting that, along with mutual misperceptions and lack of knowledge, inter-group hostility may be also caused by other factors affecting the identity of the group members to be discussed in more details in the next chapter (Hewstone & Brown, 1986).

David Perkins notes that “peace education is effective when both parties want peace and perceive it as advantageous and productive. Peace Education makes little sense,” he continues to argue “when a strong aggressor is looming on your borders” (Perkins, 2002, p. 39). Indeed, if the sense of victimhood is not eliminated on either side then there are little chances that encounters will be fruitful.

As a solution to such inequalities, Dan Bar-On suggests that “conciliation may require a political and social-economic empowerment of the weaker side before a new social content of mutual respect can be formed” (Bar-On, 2002, p. 111). As will be argued later, this could be achieved, among other things, by removing the consequences of the conflict, such as but not limited to liberating occupied territories, returning of refugees.

Charles Kadushin and David Livert as well as Cook (1978), in addition to above-mentioned pre-conditions for successful encounters formulated by Allport, propose an additional condition, namely “acquaintance potential”. They argue that “contact between the groups should provide the participants with the opportunity to become friends” (Kadushin & Livert, 2002, p. 122). Given that in inter-group conflicts ethnicity usually is a powerful instrument of exclusion that complicates acceptance of the perspectives of the other side, they offered to capitalize on “cross-cutting social circles” i.e. contacts and friendships that are built and maintained by professional status of the participants rather than their ethnic origins. Kadushin and Livert realize though that the majority of the ethnic conflicts predominantly
involve rural populations where ethnicity rather than social status is playing major role (Kadushin & Livert, 2002, p. 124).

Another challenge to establishing friendships among representatives of opposing groups, according to Kadushin and Livert, is that personal relationships do not operate in a vacuum; rather they are part of broader “informal networks” influenced by formal institutional arrangements such as families, schools, work places, neighborhoods. People in such informal institutional frameworks establish common norms and opinions, which eventually transforms to the “social pressure” which group members find difficult to resist to (Kadushin & Livert, 2002, p. 119).

Another aspect complicating friendship among different groups is “homophily” – a tendency to establish close contacts with people they are somehow affiliated with (either through ethnicity, geographic proximity, i.e. neighborhoods or “focused activity” i.e. jobs). Kadushin and Livert stress that “homophily is a result not only of individual preference but also of social structures and pressures” mentioned above (Kadushin & Livert, 2002, p. 120). As a remedy for this natural segregation of ethnic groups in geographic zones, Kadushin and Livert offer “conscious manipulation of contact” i.e. designing incentives that would discourage people from forming and maintaining negative attitudes as a result of homophily.

Kupermintz and Salomon note that friendship relations and positive changes in perceptions of the other cannot be sustainable over time unless such encounters are consistent and repeated on a regular basis as was evidenced by the implementation of peace education programs in Israeli-Palestinian conflict, where such positive changes among participants after short workshops left no traces just after six months after encounter. Among the factors influencing outcomes of such workshops they mention time and adverse political events (Kupermintz & Salomon, 2005, p. 295).
The above-mentioned arguments allow us to conclude, that in order to reconcile opposing communities, it is not enough to bring representatives of these groups together (Hewstone & Brown, 1986). Dan Bar-On identifies “psychological reconciliation” which is a bottom-up complementary process to the top-down peace-building measures (such as preliminary political solution, elimination of the consequences of conflict, legal measures against perpetrators) (Bar-On, 2002, p. 110). He identifies several a priori assumptions needed for the bottom-up processes to gain momentum. Among them are new situations where former motives for maintaining conflict ceased to be relevant, previous trust between the two parties which could be reestablished, equality of the sides allowing them to be equal partners in reconciliatory effort as well as similar meanings of the reconciliation, conflict resolution, and forgiveness concepts in the cultures of the both parties. Dan Bar-On warns, however, that “these assumptions do not apply to the conflicts of a more violent and long-term nature” (Bar-On, 2002, p. 111).

Of particular importance is his observation that in complex conflicts lack of immediate manifestation of motives driving the conflict does not necessarily mean that they are non-existent. The conflicts and tensions between the countries and peoples in the South Caucasus and elsewhere indicate that under particular socio-political circumstances, motives that can and actually did contribute to the escalation of conflicts may be downplayed and become hidden. In this regard, Dan Bar-On argues that “it is these hidden aspects of conflicts that psycho-social workings through strategies have to address before one can expect successful peace-building” (Bar-On, 2002, p. 111).

Peace education programs aim at helping people to deal with their psychological trauma and emotions associated with this. Speaking about the role of emotional processes (such as but not limited to mutual hatred and mistrust), Arie Nadler notes that emotions form
powerful "emotional barriers" and unless tackled may threaten to jeopardize the political agreements and halt efforts aimed at fostering peaceful coexistence (Nadler, 2002, p. 128).

That is why Nadler divides the process of reconciliation into two parts: socio-emotional reconciliation and instrumental reconciliation. Socio-emotional reconciliation, according to Nadler, is an emotional process of healing psychological wounds through sharing a personal story (the storytelling process) and apology for past wrongdoings. The assumption here is that if left unaddressed, repressed painful experiences may negatively effect people's behavior and attitudes (Bar-On & Kassem, 2004). Thus, during the storytelling process victims and perpetrators are "working-through" suffered traumatic social experiences and learn how to live with these painful memories and make every effort to learn to listen to the pain of the opposite side (Bar-On & Kassem, 2004, p. 289). As a result of these encounters, for example, former victims are granted formal power to decide whether to forgive former perpetrators or withhold forgiveness. The assumption behind this strategy is that by working through the past grievances and pain victims acquire a sense of equality which may be restored between these groups and can consequently diminish anger and pain suffered in the past (Nadler, 2002).

A practical example of implementation of the storytelling approach in peace education programs is "To Reflect and Trust" (TRT), a dialogue group that in 1992 brought together descendants of Nazi perpetrators and Jewish descendants of Holocaust survivors (Bar-On & Kassem, 2004). Although implementation of this initiative revealed that each case has its particular features (in case of the TRT participants were descendants of the victims and perpetrators and did not participate in the tragic events themselves), it was widely accepted that such an approach can also be used in contemporary conflicts in which both victims and victimizers are actively involved in the conflict and experience personal sufferings (Bar-On &
One of the recent and most noticeable examples is Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in South Africa.

Instrumental reconciliation presupposes incremental changes in attitudes of both opposing groups as a result of participation in numerous projects.

According to Nadler’s model, the goal of reconciliation is two-fold. Under one circumstances (like in South Africa), the goal of reconciliation is social inclusion, which envisages integration of former adversarial groups in one society and living in one country. In this case integration of the two opposing groups will be fostered by the socio-emotional processes of reconciliation. Under different circumstances (like in Israeli-Palestinian conflict) the ultimate goal of reconciliation is mutually accepting coexistence between Israel and Palestinian state, which will be achieved through the process of instrumental reconciliation (Nadler, 2002, p. 131).

This approach has its own limitations though. As will be discussed in the last chapter of this study some conflicts are very complicated to rely only on one type of reconciliation designed by Nadler. Hence, they require a model of reconciliation that involves both social integration and coexistence.
CHAPTER 2

IDENTITY-BASED FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE PERSISTENCE OF THE INTER-GROUP CONFLICT

As was mentioned in the previous chapter, there seem to be underlying contextual and situational factors that stimulate inter-group conflict and constitute a major challenge to peace or coexistence education programs. Prospective peace education programs need to take those factors into account and address them if these programs are to produce positive results. It is therefore useful to proceed with a detailed account of the dynamics of the conflict. Using some tools of social and peace psychology, particular attention will be paid to the socio-psychological aspects of the intractable conflict. It is the premise of this section that negative attitudes and perceptions maintaining conflict are often sustained artificially and are used for political purposes.

2.1. Uncovering dynamics of conflict: is it all about perceptions, attitudes and prejudices?

Almost all existing definitions of conflict stress that the irreconcilable and conflicting interests over scarce resources, territory or some other aspirations are “perceived” by the members of the conflicting groups, implying that such perceptions of interests may be detached from reality. Thus, Wilmot and Hocker define conflict as “an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive (emphasis added) incompatible goals, scarce resources, and interference from others in achieving their goals” (Wilmot and Hocker, 2001, p. 21). Similarly, Holsti argues that conflict is “escalated natural competition of two or more parties who believe (emphasis added) they have incompatible goals and whose aim is to neutralize, injure, or gain advantage over the other party or parties” (Holsti, 1983).
More recently, authors argue that conflict “means perceived (emphasis added) divergence of interest, or a belief (emphasis added) that the parties’ current aspirations cannot be achieved simultaneously” (Rubin, Pruitt, and Kim, 1994).

As evidenced from these definitions of conflict, there is a widely accepted belief that attitudes and perceptions influence to a large extent the behaviors of the groups in conflict. Pruitt and Kim (2004) propose using a “structural change model” for analyzing the role of attitudes and perceptions (“psychological states” as they call them) in the escalation of conflict (p. 101). This model analyzes changes (or processes) that occur when the conflict escalates and describes how these processes contribute to further escalation of the conflict. The model is “structural” because, they argue, “changes in one or another feature of the situation affecting the parties’ choice of tactics” (p. 101). Pruitt and Kim argue that unlike emotions (such as but not limited to blame, anger, fear) which diminish and eventually disappear when conflict is over, hostile attitudes and perceptions are persistent, in a sense that they can last longer than the conflict itself and may lead to escalation of new conflict and/or generate perceptions of conflict where none exist (Pruitt & Kim, 2004, p. 105).

This is one of the reasons why programs aimed at conflict resolution in general and peace education programs in the regions of intractable conflict in particular see changing perceptions, stereotypes and prejudices pertaining to the entire conflicting groups as their ultimate goal (Salomon, 2002). In other words, peace education programs aim to address the issue of “changing psychological dispositions (such as attitudes, behaviors and belief systems) of the groups in conflict” (Shapiro, 2002, p. 64). Pruitt and Kim (2004) define attitude as “a positive or negative feeling toward or evaluation of some person or object”. A perception is defined as “a belief about, or way of viewing, some person or object” (p. 106).

Therefore before discussing the ways to address the above-mentioned factors fostering inter-group antagonism and conflict, it is important to discuss how negative attitudes,
perceptions, prejudices and stereotypes are formed, why they persist and how they are maintained among members of conflicting groups. The practical relevance of such analysis is that by revealing the causes of these “psychological states” that contribute to the conflict, it is possible to identify the issues which could potentially hinder the implementation of peace education programs and the whole reconciliation efforts.

Since peace education programs are addressing negative attitudes and behavior of entire groups they draw their assumptions about inter-group interaction during conflict from analytical tools of peace and social psychology which helps to understand the causes of inter-group violence (Christie, Wagner & Winter, 2001). We shall therefore view inter-group conflict from the perspective of these disciplines (Alexander & Levin, 1998).

2.2. Identity-based perspective on the conflict: “Good Us” vs. “Evil Them”

Why it is necessary to view Parties in conflict from the group perspective? In other words, why in dealing with conflicts Party’s behavior as a group is more important than individual behavior? In order to answer this question, we need first to make clear distinctions between interpersonal and inter-group behaviors. Sherif (1966), in his Group Conflict and Cooperation, argues that inter-group behavior occurs “whenever individuals belonging to one group interact, collectively or individually, with another group or its members in terms of their group identification” (As cited in Hewstone & Brown, 1986, p. 13). On the contrary, interpersonal behavior is the interaction of individuals which is determined by their personal characteristics and relationships (Hewstone & Brown, 1986).

This implies that in inter-group behavior individuals are guided not so much by their personal identities, but by their common identification as a group. Unlike personal identity which is based on the self-definition of the personal characteristics, this “social identity” as a group, as argue Hewstone and Brown (1986), “denotes definitions in terms of category
membership” (p. 14). In other words, individuals who perceive themselves to be members of a group see themselves as “interchangeable” with each other and form common attitudes towards other groups. In both interpersonal and inter-group behavior individuals remain principal actors. However, in interpersonal behavior individuals’ behavior, their personal attitudes towards other individuals or collectives is predetermined by their own personal characteristics, whereas in inter-group behavior individuals are “depersonalized” and their behavior is influenced by the factors influencing their group as a whole (Hewstone & Brown, 1986, p. 15).

Thus, the social or collective identity of groups is an important factor in the dynamics of the interaction of opposing groups (Fitzduff, 2006). Bar-Tal argues that negative inter-group relations can be generated either from ethnocentrism of interacting groups or from the realistic conflict of interests (Pruitt & Kim, 2004) between the different groups over territory, resources or values etc. Bar-Tal notes that these categories are not mutually exclusive and on a number of occasions they are complimentary (Bar-Tal, 2004). Realistic conflict-based negative relations will be discussed in greater detail later in this study. For my analysis in this section, I will dwell on the consequences of ethnocentrism for inter-group relations.

Ethnocentrism is one group’s belief in its superiority over other group or groups, which is embedded in group’s identity. The scope of this study prevents me from giving a detailed account of identity theories, so my present analysis of the identity formation will be confined to several aspects of this process important for the subject.

Thus, social identity theory states that identity “derives from people’s knowledge that they belong to a certain social group” (Cassidy & Trew, 1998, p. 726). According to this theoretical framework, identity is a result of a process of social categorization and comparison motivated by the individual’s need for self-esteem (Cassidy & Trew, 1998, p. 726). To maintain positive self-esteem, so the theory goes, “we engage in intergroup comparisons that
allow us to construe our group as both different from and superior to groups to which we do not belong” (Cassidy & Trew, 1998, p. 726).

Other scholars within the framework of social identity theory argue for shifting focus toward cognitive processes of categorization, which implies that identity is a product of “self-prototypicality”. According to this approach, individuals evaluate themselves to find the extent to which they match to the ingroup’s prototype (Cassidy & Trew, 1998, p. 727). Both these views of identity imply that there are perceived group characteristics and norms which form points of reference for the members of the group.

Summarizing the process of identity formation, I can agree with Ervin Staub’s comment that identity is the construct of discursive or cultural relations, e.g. self-assessment vis-à-vis someone else, who is usually seen in negative way (Staub, 2002). The question is why the other group a priori must be seen in negative way? In addressing this issue, Staub explains the formation of such negative attitudes by the very nature of individual’s identity, which is invested in a group (social identity) and, what is more important, protected as well as enhanced artificially by elevating one’s own group over the other groups. Such devaluation of the “out-group” gradually becomes part of a culture, constructing “Good Us” and “Evil Them” (Staub, 2002). In this regard Gigineishvili argues that “the very idea that ‘others’ could have something superior in their culture would have undermined the ideological thrust of a given community” (Gigineishvili, 2003).

That is why some scholars concluded that the way identity is formed makes the possibility of emergence of enemy images very likely, even when there is no realistic threat or hostility on behalf of other group (Fitzduff, 2006). Alexander and Levin (1998) conclude, in this regard, that there are seeds for conflict to occur not only when groups have conflicting (realistic) interests but also as a result of mere categorization of individuals into groups. Thus,
according to them, “social categorization can generate in-group bias, prejudices, stereotypes and discrimination” (Alexander & Levin, 1998, p. 630).

Allport (1954) also came to a similar conclusion earlier arguing that inter-group interactions are characterized by prejudices and stereotypes, which are not necessarily based on true information about other groups (Allport, 1954). It is important to mention here Allport’s emphasis of an “unwarranted judgment” of other groups, i.e. making conclusions about other people before due examination and consideration of the facts (Allport, 1954, p. 6). This explains partially, why the definitions of conflict, provided above, stress that conflict often starts as a result of misperception of or insufficient information about the other side and its real intentions.

Since the collective identities of groups play an important role in formation and sustaining of prejudices and stereotypes of different groups towards each other, for our analysis it is important to dwell a little bit more on the details of this process.

Allport (1954) defines prejudice as “an avertive or hostile attitude toward a person who belongs to a group, simply because he belongs to that group, and is therefore presumed to have the objectionable qualities ascribed to the group” (p. 7). There are two important aspects of group prejudice. One of them, mentioned earlier, is the formation of negative attitude towards other groups, and the second is the generalization of certain characteristics attributed to the whole group (Allport, 1954).

Devaluation of the out-group is sustained by prejudices and stereotype, which as argues Allport has “functional significance” for the group. One of such functional purposes could be the need for the ingroup’s cohesiveness, which can be achieved by perceiving that there is common threat out there (Allport, 1954, p. 12). Allport notes, however, that “hostility towards out-groups helps strengthen our sense of belonging, but it is not required”. He also
argues that in forming such hostilities “psychological emphasis must be placed primarily on the desire for security not on hostility itself” (Allport, 1954, p. 42).

On the other hand, explaining why members of the in-group easily adopt prejudices and stereotypes about the out-group, Allport calls this acceptance a “social entrance ticket” which is necessary to maintain cultural pattern established in the group, if members of the group do not want to be excluded from this group (Allport, 1954, p. 286).

The second aspect in the forming of prejudice is generalization of certain qualities of other groups. Allport defines ethnic prejudice as an antipathy “based upon faulty and inflexible generalization”, which can be felt both towards the group as a whole and towards members of a particular group (Allport, 1954, p.9). Explaining possible reasons behind making such generalizations, Allport notes that “without some generalized beliefs concerning a group as a whole, a hostile attitude could not long be sustained” (Allport, 1954, p. 13).

2.3. Collectively held narratives – unquestioned truths or constructed past?

Allport argues that members of groups adopt judgments about other groups “through the screen of tradition”, meaning that prejudices and stereotypes are passed over from one generation to another (Allport, 1954, p. 213). In other words, prejudices and stereotypes about other groups are built with time into the collectively held narratives of a given group. This is why collectively held narratives of groups are important components of the sense of animosity and hatred between opposing groups.

Given the paramount importance of the issue of narratives in inter-group conflict and the implications these narratives may have for the implementation of peace-building programs, it is useful to unfold the process of formation of narratives. I have already provided a definition of narrative in the second section of this study (see p. 18). Here it would be useful to remind that collective narratives constitute an important part of the collective identity since
they, in a sense, provide a point of reference for all members of the group, from where members of a group derive information about shared past experiences and learn about patterns of individual and collective behavior for the future. This is also a source of information about other groups, which, as we now know, may be based on “unwarranted information”.

Salomon argues that narrative’s “most important source is the group’s history, that is, the way the group constructs and construes its past” (Salomon, 2004, p. 275). History along with other “cognitive media” such as language, religion, poetry, works of art and architecture are, in a sense, constructing blocs for building collective ‘consciousnesses’ (Gigineishvili, 2003).

Underlying the importance of the role that narratives play in the group’s sense of collective identity, Salomon argues that “nations using ancient and recent historical events, construct new narratives and change old ones” (Salomon, 2004, p. 275). In this process, according to Salomon, “History not only provides the roots for a group’s collective narrative, but is reciprocally colored by the narrative: Historical events are “made to fit” the narrative, are added or, more often, are excluded from the narrative” (Salomon, 2004, p. 275). In other words, a group constructs a narrative that best suits its aspirations, interests and, if there is inter-group conflict, builds its “true” account of the history of the conflict by capitalizing on certain aspects of the conflict and forgetting or excluding other events that do not fit well into the overall picture of “Good Us” and “Evil Them”. Pruitt and Kim (2004) concluded in this regard that “in conflict, it appears reality is too often in the eye of the beholder” (p. 157).

Salomon also notes that:

By necessity, the collective narratives of groups in conflict contradict each other and mirror each other, providing interpretations of events that negate those of the other side. Thus, whereas a group’s collective narrative bolsters the group’s self-identity and justifies its role in the conflict, it, also, invalidates the other side’s collective narrative and its role in the conflict: If “we” are right, “they” are surely wrong, and if “we” are victims, “they” are obviously the perpetrators (Salomon, 2004, p. 275).
This phenomenon, known in theories on conflict as “mirror image” (Pruitt & Kim, 2004, p. 107), contributes to the escalation of conflict between groups, because negative attitudes and perceptions on the one side are reciprocated by the other side. Pruitt and Kim (2004) note that this “mirror image” often is not realized by the parties to the conflict. In other words, conflicting groups do not know that the other side holds the same level of animosity and distrust (p. 107).

Such “selective information processing”, as Pruitt and Kim (2004) call it, is used not only when narratives are created but also in contemporary events when information about the opposing party is carefully selected to support the negative views. Speaking about the role selective information processing plays in the escalation of the conflict, Pruitt and Kim note that “structural changes supported by selective information processing are self-reinforcing in a way that is quite independent of anything Other may say or do” (p. 156). In other words, even if the opposing party chooses to take conciliatory steps, there is great chance that this move will be interpreted at worse as a tactical move or at best as a weakness and will eventually reinforce the “rightness” of the behavior of the in-group (Pruitt & Kim, 2004).

Salomon notes that the “crux of the matter” is that “not only do the narratives and their underlying beliefs mirror each other; they also delegitimize each other’s goals, actions, history, humanity and sufferings” (Salomon, 2004, p. 277). Delegitimization in its turn leads to “dehumanization” of the opposing side, resulting in what Pruitt and Kim call “transformation” of specific issues that originally brought to conflict into general issues. The other group is increasingly perceived as “diabolical enemy”, to borrow the phrase of Pruitt and Kim (Pruitt & Kim, 2004, p. 106).

As a result of this transformation, conflict is gradually viewed as a zero-sum confrontation, when one side’s winning by definition means that the other side loses. Goals and interests of each side are viewed as diametrically opposed, and the groups themselves
become polarized (Pruitt & Kim, 2004). Pruitt and Kim argue that “hostile attitudes, perceptions and goals are accentuated by group discussion and tend to become group norms” (p. 113). They define norms as any “attitude, perception, goal or behavior pattern that is seen as “right thinking” by most members of the group” (p. 117).

This explains partially why under these circumstances it is extremely difficult to re-establish disrupted communication and empathy between the parties (Pruitt & Kim, 2004, p. 108). Parties in conflict enter the spiral of escalation of conflict and every move of the other side is accepted with suspicion and distrust. Pruitt and Kim argue that negative attitudes, perceptions, and zero-sum thinking with time “become group traditions rather than the property of separate individuals” (p. 117).

Since collective narratives fuel conflicts and complicate the efforts to reverse the trend, Gigineishvili underline that:

When treating conflicts, it is important first to distinguish and evaluate conflicting narratives on a theoretical level. Addressing concrete physical atrocities is quite a separate issue. The “crime” of narrative differs from the crime of violence.... In fact, war atrocities are contingent phenomena that can depend on momentary outburst of emotions, whereas ideologies and narratives are relatively, fixed. We can get lost in judging numerous cruel actions from either side of conflict, but we can with a greater objectivity evaluate the narratives of the conflicting sides (Gigineishvili, 2003).

Gigineishvili argues that unbiased evaluation of a conflict’s theoretical aspect is complicated by the fact that “conflicting parties can have different dimensions of discourse, different premises for self-justification” (Gigineishvili, 2003). If, for example, the cause of the conflict is a territorial dispute, then depending on who currently owns the territory and who claims the same territory, the Parties to the conflict will bring as arguments and counter arguments different periods of history to prove that the current status quo is justified or unjust respectively. The danger of the selective approach to the past, which is used to construct narratives to “suit interests of the present” (Pfannl, 2004), is that it can maintain existing
irredentist policies and cause a chain reaction inevitably creating grounds for persistence of old
and emergence of new conflicts.

The impact of selective approach to the historical events and overall narratives on the
degree of perception of incompatibility of goals and interests between the conflicting parties
is clearly shown by David C. Pugh (2001) from Norwegian Refugee Council in his seven
rules of nationalism. According to his model:

1. If an area was ours for 500 years and yours for 50 years, it should belong to us - you are merely occupiers.

2. If an area was yours for 500 years and ours for 50 years, it should belong to us - borders must not be changed.

3. If an area belonged to us 500 years ago but never since then, it should belong to us - it is the Cradle of our Nation.

4. If a majority of our people lives there, it must belong to us - they must enjoy the right of self-determination.

5. If a minority of our people lives there, it must belong to us - they must be protected against your oppression.

6. All the above rules apply to us but not to you.

7. Our dream of greatness is Historical Necessity, yours is Fascism (Pugh, 2001).

The good news is that, if narratives are constructed by group members, they can be
modified so as to diminish with time the sense of animosity toward other groups. This is not to
imply that history and particular events should be forgotten; rather, I agree with the point that
parties to the conflict should realize that “history and memories must not be distorted and
skewed or one-sided to such an extent that the truth cannot be made publicly available”
(Pfannl, 2004). Pfannl continues to argue that an attempt should be made to “finding a
collective [i.e. common] narrative and bringing together the history and memories of both
sides of a conflict” (Pfannl, 2004). Hence, this approach should be encouraged and fostered by
the leadership of the groups (countries) who enjoy the authority to sanction such shift in
policies. But the question is whether the Governments are willing to make such changes? In order to answer this question, we need to explore in the section that follows what are the capabilities and the role of Governments in maintaining negative perceptions between opposing groups.

2.4. Constructed “State Identity”: A source of persisting polarization of groups

It is appropriate to ask whether negative images, attitudes and feelings about the out-group can be considered sufficient reasons to resort to physical violence and conflict. Two points need to be made here in this regard. First, as evidenced from the reviewed literature on the subject, although identity formation per se may follow inevitable natural purposes such as the need to create separate ethnic identity needed for cultural distinctiveness (Bush & Saltarelly, 2000), and prejudices “have some automatic components that operate outside our conscious awareness” (Alexander & Levin, 1998, p. 630), in reality, on many occasions the group’s identity is ideologically sustained serving concrete political objectives of ruling elites. Similarly, negative attitudes and hostility towards other groups are sometimes deliberately emphasized and are used for political purposes.

Staub argues in this regard that once created, devaluation of a particular group and its negative image can and most often is maintained artificially (Staub, 2002, p. 75). Means of maintaining devaluation of a group can be literature, media and history taught in schools, just to name a few. In other words, the negative image of opposing group may be a product of a social construct, which can be easily manipulated.

Secondly, experts working in the field are inclined to believe that conflict arises more from perceived threat to the in-group, than from negative qualities attributed to the out-group (McCauley, 2002). Analysis of my case study (see below) allows me to conclude that the
perceptions of threat to in-group (fears of extermination and/or insecurity) can also be constructed and artificially maintained by ruling elites.

This is not to suggest that all threats are artificially created. It’s true that Governments have legitimate power to say the last word in the identification of the threats to the nation. This legitimate power derives from the task to protect its citizens attributed to the State by nationwide accepted constitution. My point is that in some countries, which lack full accountability of Governments to its people and good governance practices, ruling elites have carte blanche in identifying “threats” which are unquestionable and are free to formulate “security” policies to eliminate those threats in ways that serve their corporate and political interests.

In my view, the role of ruling elites in influencing and sustaining the perceptions of its people in regard to a particular country cannot be underestimated. As will be argued below, the fact that authorities are not responsive to the aspirations for peace and desires of its citizens complicates the resolution of conflicts and hinders reconciliation efforts. In fact, the policies of the authorities can be major obstacles to the desired changes in attitudes and behaviors of collectives envisaged and expected by peace education programs. This is why researchers argue that one task that peace education programs are expected to undertake is to break the monopoly of the State to define “security” policies of the country and promote active involvement of civil society in foreign policy making (Burns & Aspeslagh, 1996).

It should be mentioned that central Governments are not the only actors capable to influence and drive the group’s attitudes and perceptions in a negative direction. Negative perceptions and policies may be also influenced by various interest groups that operate both domestically and internationally (Diaspora for example). The emphasis is placed here on the role of Governments because they are considered by the members of the groups to be the legitimate source of policy-making.
Thus said, it is possible to argue that neither individual nor collective identity formation, as well as prejudices taken separately from context, can succeed in explaining why it is extremely difficult to solve intractable conflicts. In order to understand the link between the policies of ruling elites and attitudes and behaviors of the peoples and to grasp fully the forces that contribute to the intractability of the inter-group conflicts, in my view, it is necessary to introduce into our discourse the notion of “state identity” defined in terms of “national interest” of the countries in conflict (Weldes, 1996).

Hence, for my analysis I will move up from the inter-group level of interaction during conflict to inter-state level. For simplicity, State is defined here as a politically organized group of people under a single government residing within a confined territory. Contrary to the conventional theories of International Relations (neo-realism and neo-liberalism) some scholars do not take threats to the state as “real” and “national interests” (defined in terms of security) as something that goes without saying, arguing that they are constructed (Weldes, 1996). Weldes conceptualizes the notion of state identity, which is crucial for understanding how national interests are formed. Identity is a base for national interest (Chafetz; Spirtas; & Frankel, 1999). She argues that treatment of state as unitary actors without taking into account internal processes within the state is not enough to explain identity and thus interest formation. Inter-state interactions do effect the creation of inter-subjective meaning, which define identities and interests of states, but they don’t clear up how states generate their perceptions of the world (Weldes, 1996).

On the contrary, Weldes explains, identity and interests of state are shaped by identity and interests of decision-makers, e.g. ruling elites. Individuals develop their perceptions of the world through the representations of objects; they identify these objects (through the articulation of the meanings) and develop particular attitude towards these objects. National
interests, Weldes concludes are thus social constructions that emerge out of the process of representations, which in turn are constructed by state officials (Weldes, 1996, p. 282).

The question may arise why ruling elites would be interested in such social constructions? First of all, it should be noted that the constructed identity of the state does not cause action; rather it is used as a legitimization of a particular policy or action (Weldes, 1996). Politics is usually motivated by political, socio-economic or some other considerations. External identities attributed to an adversary country or groups can also be used as powerful ideological tools for the promotion of internal identities (they can foster internal cohesion, solidarity and/or can deviate public attention from existing socio-economic problems) (Kowert, 1999, p. 32).

Another important aspect of identity worth considering for this study is the historical narrative within which identities are situated. As Weldes (1996) notes, officials do not approach international politics with a “blank slate” (p. 280). Actor’s identities as well as their perceptions of other objects are shaped by the storyline of their origins, critical events in history. Historical events do not have an objective meaning but are made politically meaningful for the narrative that linked interpretation of the past and the image of the future (Barnett, 1999). In other words, narratives, perceptions and patterns of attitudes and behavior are reproduced by the every next generation of political elites, who automatically follow the path if they want to come and stay in power. The problem is that, as was indicated above, depending on the current political context or foreign policy agenda, policy-making elites are engaged in “selective information processing” i.e. selection, interpretation of information that confirms current policies and negative images of the other group(s). But more importantly, such self-reinforcing mechanisms lead to rationalization of behavior toward the “other” and self-fulfilling prophecy, i.e. when initial attitude and perception toward other group “make
Party behave in ways that elicit behavior from Other that reinforces these beliefs (Pruitt & Kim, 2004, pp. 154-156).

This analysis of internal and external identities allows me to conclude that they are interconnected. Thus, devaluation and negative image of a particular group is built into and linked to the constructed “national interest” of in-group, which is gradually transformed into indisputable and sacred “right cause”.

The last question to be discussed briefly in this section is how the Governments mobilize people to support their policies. We now know that “unless [“Good Us” and “Evil Them”] gradient is created in the minds of the people, they are not enticed into violence or convinced that wars are worth fighting” (Karam, 2004). For this purpose political elites usually manipulate with three psychological forces that drive human beings into wars. They are mythic wars, intolerance of challenge and victim rage (Karam, 2004).

According to LeShan, “human beings have a natural tendency to shift their perception of reality. Depending on the situation, they alter their perception of reality and modify their behavior accordingly” (As cited in Karam, 2004). In a situation of conflict, people shift their perceptions of reality to mythic mode, when relationships with opposite group are polarized and viewed in dichotomy – “Good Us” and “Evil Them”. Hence people are more inclined to support their Governments in Mythic wars which “are promoted extensively with patriotic songs, slogans of victory and flags of the nation” (Karam, 2004).

Thus said, it is possible to argue that people’s tendency to shift perceptions of reality becomes a factor contributing to conflict when Governments pursue policy directed toward the escalation of conflict. For this purpose, according to Karam, Governments are using its administrative resource (such as controlled media, public institutions) and depending on the country’s position in the conflict, use two powerful psychological forces victim rage and intolerance of challenge in order to mobilize their people to the conflict. Victim rage is
experienced by the weaker side in the conflict, as a result of perceived continued victimization by the stronger side. Intolerance of challenge is experienced by the stronger side, which does not expect the other side to defy its position and actions (Karam, 2004).

It should be mentioned, though, that often both parties to conflict portray themselves as victims of the conflict. This tactics of the governments is best explained by contender-defender model used by Pruitt and Kim (2004) to analyze the escalation of conflict. Under this model, a party to conflict argues that its actions are that of defender, as opposed to the contender tactics of the other side. In other words, the defender admits that it escalates conflict only in response to the prior escalation and aggression of the contender (pp. 93-96).

Karam argues that as a result of the interplay of the above-mentioned psychological forces people start to experiences a strong feeling in favor of engaging in “sacred war”. Based on the theories of mythic wars, intolerance of challenge and victim rage, Karam proposed a framework to assess how media and Governments encourage people to participate and/or support hostile attitude and behavior:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Creating Mythic Wars</th>
<th>Inflaming Victim Rage and Intolerance of Challenge</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The enemy is one monolithic group</td>
<td>• Pointing to the evil done by the enemy on Us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After war things will be better</td>
<td>• Arousing fear of the enemy harming us with impunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The enemy commits violent atrocities</td>
<td>• Creating a sense of grandeur where no one should be so arrogant or bold as to threaten or attack Us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Our victory is assured. Good is on our side</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The real violence we perpetrate does not exist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• We are inherently good They are inherently evil</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The Good (Us) must destroy Evil (Them)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Victory will make the world a profoundly better place, while loss will make it a profoundly worse place</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mythic terms such as pride, honor, victory, heroes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adopted from Karam, E. (2004). “The Psychological Weapon: Good versus Evil is Man’s Basic Wartime Need".
Such tactics contribute to further polarization of the opposing countries. The “runaway norms” created to reinforce negative attitude toward the other country are constantly propagated to the new members of the society and even those members of society who for some reason do not follow the rhetoric of the Government as a result of such social pressure have to abide by it, fearing being alienated from society (Pruitt & Kim, 2004).

Pruitt and Kim argue that, as a result of such changes taking place in societies, militant leaders take over the power. They explain it by the fact that “leaders gain their positions because they resonate with the dominant sentiments of group members” (Pruitt & Kim, 2004, p. 118). Paradoxically, leaders who became popular by following the decades and sometimes centuries-long collective narratives and voicing the sentiments raging in a society soon become entrapped by the same rhetoric, since their political future from now on is dependent solely on their ability to sustain these sentiments and act in a way that proves their commitments to the “right cause” of the nation and the promises they have made in this regard. Pruitt and Kim (2004) argue in this regard that “if the raison d’être for a group is the conduct of contentious conflict, there are vested interests in the persistence of such conflict” (p. 162). Hence, a powerful group within a society consisting of Government officials and their supporters, which has vested interest in persistence of the conflict, is being formed. This militant group is usually called “party of war”.

Speaking about the link between hostile attitudes and perceptions Pruitt and Kim (2004) noted that they “tend to endure once established because they support each other” (p. 153). They continue to argue that “negative beliefs validate negative feelings, and negative feelings make negative beliefs seem right” (p. 153).

Viewing dynamics of the conflict from the social and peace psychology perspective allows us concluding that inter-group conflicts often have invisible dimension which manifests itself in social identity and all the processes related to its formation and sustaining. But ethnic
identity needed for cultural distinctiveness on many occasions is ideologically sustained serving concrete political objectives of ruling elites.

Artificially reinforced negative attitudes and perceptions contribute to the intractability of the conflict and constitute an important stumbling bloc on the way of conflict resolution and genuine peace building. Unless tacked these perceptions may hinder any attempts to improve inter-group relations.

If so, then grass-roots level peace education programs should be accompanied by the commitments of the leadership of groups or Governments to change the perception that the needs of the opposing groups are irreconcilable. One of the ways to do so could be breaking the monopoly of the State on the definition of the “national interests” and “security policies” through genuine participation of civil society in reconsidering of the country’s real needs.
CHAPTER 3

A NARRATIVE-BASED OVERVIEW OF THE CONFLICT BETWEEN ARMENIA ANDazerbaijan

In this chapter I will provide assessment of the causes and dynamics of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The scope of this study prevents me from giving a comprehensive account of the conflict. An extensive literature exists on these issues (Cornell, 2001; Hunter, 1994; Bertsch, Craft, Jones & Beck, 2000; Ware, 1998). It should be mentioned outright that being from Azerbaijan put on me an additional burden to present account of key events in objective and unbiased way. Recognizing that at the end it is still going to be the perspective of a researcher from Azerbaijan, in the following sections I will refer mainly to the books and articles on the conflict written by non-regional, outside independent scholars and observers, which I think will contribute to a fair representation of the history of conflict. I will also use publications of both Armenian and Azerbaijani authors, when it comes to presenting the narratives and positions of each side.

In this chapter I will confine myself to touching upon key aspects of the conflict which I think are relevant for my analysis. The purpose of this chapter is far from solely defending the position of Azerbaijan and negating that of Armenia. Rather, I will try to uncover underlying factors, which make this conflict intractable for over a decade now. Particular attention will be given to the factors affecting the process of formation of each country’s narrative of the conflict, sources of perceptions of “incompatibility” of interests and needs of the two peoples living side by side. It is the premise of this study that persistence and continuing reinforcement of negative perceptions and zero-sum attitudes are contributing to the intractable conflict and unless tackled can be a major obstacle to would-be post-conflict reconciliation efforts.
In such land-locked region as the South Caucasus geography, history and culture of peoples are interconnected and played considerable role in formation of national identities of states. This is why scholars studying the region suggest that relations between regional countries are influenced to a large extent by the trends in whole region (Coppieters, 1996; Menon, Fedorov, and Nodia, 1999; Cornell, 2001). This is why, in order to understand the dynamics of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, a systemic level of analysis, i.e. regional processes should be also given proper consideration.

Relations between Armenians and Azerbaijanis have been historically tense. These relations were even further complicated by the rivalry of the neighboring powers - primarily the Russian, Persian and Ottoman Empires, which were in fierce competition for the sphere of influence over the strategically located Caucasus region. Internal divisions and historical fragmentation of the peoples of the Caucasus allowed the regional powers to get a foothold in the region and assert their influence by using chronic confrontational relations among the peoples of the Caucasus (Cornell, 2001). Thus, throughout history, especially from 18th until the first quarter of the 20th centuries the region was torn by continuous wars. As a result of these wars the regional borders were constantly contested and redrawn depending on who dominated the battlefield (Cornell, 2001; Coppieters, 1996; Halbach, 1997).

Although, in all the conflicts of the Caucasus, the element of ethnicity was an important factor, still these conflicts cannot be dismissed as purely interethnic. I have mentioned in the previous section that ethnicity can be used to fuel and cover hidden agendas of political elites within countries involved and/or other regional and non-regional actors. Analysis of the history of the South Caucasus during the last two centuries reveals that the region was and is a vivid example of a case where ethnicity is instrumentally manipulated (Hunter, 1994).
Even a brief look at the history of the conflicts in the Caucasus in general and between Armenia and Azerbaijan in particular allows concluding that at the core of the conflict using the terminology of Pruitt and Kim (2004) is “apparent divergence of interests” (in this case control over territory). The existence of both territorial and ethnic dimensions to the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan is also recognized by non-regional researchers (Hunter, 1994). If so, then in order to understand the root-causes of the conflict a brief excursion into the chronology of the delineation of the present day borders is necessary.

3.1. Contested borders in the Caucasus

The present day borders of the South Caucasian states were delineated by the Treaty of Kars in October 1921 signed between Turkey and the three South Caucasian republics (See map in appendix). This Treaty can be also viewed as “ratification” by the three South Caucasian republics of the preceding Treaty of Moscow signed between Soviet Russia and Turkey in March 1921, which also included provisions delineating regional borders (Cornell, 2001, p. 75).

When in 1920 Soviet Army marched into the Caucasus region and re-conquered three republics putting an end to their short-lived independence (1918-1920), Soviet Russia’s leadership inherited with the region numerous disputes. There was understanding in Moscow that if left unsolved, these disputes would prevent Russia from consolidating its grip and influence over this strategically located, oil-rich region. Russian leadership headed by Stalin had two-fold policy in the region: to accommodating interests of Armenia and Azerbaijan – newly created Soviet Republics and at the same time creating regional arrangements that would allow asserting Russia’s interests in the region and keeping new satellites in check.

As a result, a solution to the territorial disputes in Caucasus in general and between Armenia and Azerbaijan in particular resembled a “divide et impera” strategy used in the
region by the Russian Empire. Stalin resisted to Armenian pressure to incorporate Nagorno-Karabakh region into Armenia, leaving Nagorno-Karabakh within the jurisdiction of Azerbaijan. However, as a compromise the region was granted the status of autonomous oblast (region) (Hunter, 1994; Altstadt, 1996; Cornell, 2001). The Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO) was established by a special decree on July 7, 1923 and was officially proclaimed in November 1924.

It should be noted that the demographic situation of the region drastically changed over a century. If in 1823 the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh region constituted only 9 percent of the total inhabitants of the region, by the time the NKAO was created, Armenians constituted the majority (Cornell, 2001, p. 68). Armenian majority in NKAO was achieved as a result of Russian policy of manipulation of the demographic situation in the region by transfers of Armenian population from Persian and Ottoman empires (Cornell, 2001). Prior to 1924 Nagorno-Karabakh region was not a delimited territory (Altstadt, 1996) and when NKAO was created in 1923, its borders were carved out so that to include as many Armenian populated villages as possible (Altstadt, personal communication, March 28, 2006).

Apparently, in order to “soften” Armenia’s loss of independence Russian Communist leadership transferred Zangezur region to Armenia in December 1920 detaching mainland Azerbaijan from its Nakhchivan province. Some authors argue that Soviet leadership was also motivated by geopolitical considerations to cut land connection between Turkey and Azerbaijan thus blocking any possible advances of Turkey into the region (Altstadt, 1996, p. 229; Cornell, 2001).

Contrary to Armenians’ expectations, Stalin confirmed mainly Azerbaijani-populated Nakhchivan province as part of Azerbaijan. The status of Nakhchivan was subsequently stipulated in the Kars and Moscow Treaties signed between Turkey and Russia in 1921. Special provisions in these Treaties stipulated that the status of Nakhchivan could not be
altered without Turkey’s consent (Cornell, 2001, p. 75). Since the exclave lost its link with mainland Azerbaijan, in 1924 Nakhchivan’s status was upgraded to the status of the Autonomous Republic within Azerbaijani SSR, which it holds until present days.

The geographical arrangements made by Soviet leaders further alienated rather than consolidated Caucasian republics. Although, the “Sovetization” of both Armenia and Azerbaijan ended hostilities for a while, the regional status-quo left tensions to simmer throughout the Soviet period (Hunter, 1994). Obviously, territorial disputes were to remain an important factor determining inter-national relations in the region throughout 20th century and beyond.

3.2. Armenian narrative: perception of “relative deprivation”

During the last decades of the Soviet Union and after its dissolution, Armenia’s relations with neighboring countries were to a large extent determined by its identity that was shaped by geographic location, ethnic and religious characteristics as well as historical narratives (Hunter, 1994; Panossian, 2002).

Even during the Soviet period, the leadership of Armenia constantly kept the “Karabakh issue” on the agenda and on a number of occasions by bringing various arguments demanded transfer of the NKAO to Armenia. As argues Cornell (2001), “under Soviet rule, it became the persistent aim of Armenian elites to reverse the situation and persuade Moscow to turn Karabakh over to the Armenian SSR” (p. 76).

These efforts were accompanied by the publication of a body of literature by Armenian authors justifying Armenia’s claim to Karabakh. The scope of this study prevents me from giving a detailed account of all aspects of Armenian narrative. For the purpose of this study I will highlight some key aspects of the narrative used by Armenians to lay claims to Karabakh region of Azerbaijan and other territories in the region.
Armenians consider themselves to be descendants of Noah and believe that Armenian nation is more than twice as old as Christianity itself (Panossian, 2002). Since Armenians consider themselves a first nation to adopt Christianity, religious factor provides a basis for Armenian identity and hence its historical narrative. Armenian authors argue that Armenian narratives “either project the nation into ancient times or they take a specific date from the past and construct identity around it” (Panossian, 2002, p. 126).

Thus, Armenian narrative related to the territorial issues often start with the claims that under Tigrane the Great (fl. 95-55 C.C.E.) for a short period of time Armenia stretched from the Caspian to the Mediterranean seas. After that, so the story goes, throughout most of its history Armenia was conquered by Greeks, Romans, Persians, Byzantines, Mongols, Arabs, Ottoman Turks, and Russians. In Armenian narrative, the eastern parts of contemporary Turkey (referred by Armenians as Western Armenia), Karabakh and Nakhchivan regions of Azerbaijan and some other territories are considered to be a “cradle” of Armenian civilization. As argues Panossian “this view of Armenians being indigenous to the land, and being there for thousands of years, is taken for granted by nationalists – and often used to justify current politics” (Panossian, 2002, p. 131).

The events of 1915 in Ottoman Turkey are also linked to the territorial claims on neighboring countries and provide basis for Armenian contemporary foreign policy. This is also confirmed by the Armenian authors. Panossian (2002) argues, for example, that “the genocide...became the defining moment – the ‘founding symbol’ – of contemporary Armenian identity” (p. 136).

Armenian authors recognize that the issue of recognition of alleged genocide has also territorial dimension. Panossian notes for example that “post-genocide Armenian identity therefore came to be associated with a ‘lost homeland’ and the need to regain it – or at least to have free access to it” (Panossian, 2002, p. 137). The scope of this study prevents me from
getting into details of the issue. Here I am more interested in the impact of Armenian narrative related to the event of 1915 to Armenians’ attitude toward and perceptions about Azerbaijanis.

Thus, in 1984, the well-known Armenian writer Zori Balaian published a book which “was widely perceived in Azerbaijan as including defamatory language with respect to Turks in general and to Azerbaijani Turks in particular” (Cornell, 2001, p. 78). It was a moment when Azerbaijanis identity was linked with that of Turks. The logic behind emphasizing ethno-linguistic bonds of Azerbaijanis with Turks became clear later when tensions escalated into overt violence. As argues Hunter (2000), “Armenians often identify Azerbaijanis with Turks, thus creating an association between Azerbaijanis and the ‘Armenian Genocide’ ” (p. 30). Given the deep-rooted hatred among Armenians toward Turkey and Turks associated with the events of the 1915, and the role this perceived group trauma plays in Armenian identity, development of hostility towards other groups (in this case Azerbaijanis) was probably meant to mobilize Armenians around “Armenian cause” by expanding the sense of animosity, Armenians feel towards Turks, to include Azerbaijanis.

It is also possible to argue that since there is understanding among Armenians that “the chances of diaspora Armenians ever returning to their ancestral lands in present-day Turkey are next to nil” (Panossian, 2002, p. 138), Azerbaijanis were selected as “scapegoats” for the events, which happens, as argues Allport (1954) when “in-groups who perceive to be prejudiced and victimized develop prejudice and hostility to other groups” (p. 154).

Thus, artificial linkage of the events of 1915 to the conflict with Azerbaijan is a constant source of negative perceptions toward Azerbaijanis (Panossian, 2002; De Waal, 2003, p. 275). Historical linkages of contemporary events are also made with events that happened thousands years ago in different circumstances and more importantly, which do not have direct link to the present-day conflict. Panossian argues that:
The Gharabagh issue highlights very well another linkage between past events and their contemporary reinterpretation to suit national needs. Armenians commemorate the battle of Avarayr which took place in 451 AD. Armenians fought against the invading Persian army which was trying to impose Zoroastrianism on the newly Christianized Armenian population. Armenians lost the battle, but did maintain their religion. It is quite telling how this battle is now remembered. ... Nor Gyank (New Life), a mass-circulation Armenian newspaper in Los Angeles equated (in a 11 February 1999 editorial (pp. 1, 36)) the battle of Avarayr with the struggle in contemporary Armenia for Garabagh, while Azerbaijan and Turkey were equated with the attacking Persians of old (Panossian, 2002, note 62, p. 146).

The issue of international recognition of the alleged genocide in the Ottoman Empire is stated in the Declaration of Independence of the Republic of Armenia as a foreign policy task to be achieved (See the text of the Declaration of Independence of the Republic of Armenia). Referrals to the “Historical Armenia” and “Western Armenia” in the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence of Armenia are perceived by Turkey as territorial claims on its eastern provinces.

The efforts to convince Soviet leadership in “historical injustice” of the current status-quo and demands to transfer NKAO to Armenia became more vocal and received further impetus after Gorbachev proclaimed a shift to the new liberal policy of Perestroika and Glasnost in the late 1980s when taboo on freedom of expression was lifted (Cornell, 2001). Gradually the political elite and intelligentsia, as well as broad public of the Armenian SSR, had been dragged into the discourse on the necessity to transfer NKAO to Armenia.

In the period from 1987 to 1991, several key events happened that predetermined the drift of the events leading to the full-scale war. The theory of conflict group mobilization will be useful to analyze the factors that led to the development of conflict groups that were willing to challenge the status-quo (Pruitt & Kim, 2004). The conflict group mobilization was preceded by emergence of national leaders who constructed narratives to fit in the “right cause” by identifying the adversary, strengthening and consolidating Armenians’ group
identity around “Karabakh issue” and nourishing a sense of frustration – all important factors contributing to the group mobilization (Pruitt & Kim, 2004).

In 1987 Armenian Academy of Sciences prepared a petition to Moscow with hundreds of thousand signatures requesting the transfer of Nagorno-Karabakh and Nakhchivan to Armenian SSR. In the same year Gorbachev’s economic advisor of Armenian origin Abel Aganbekian in an interview to the French L’Umanite quite unequivocally told that soon Nagorno-Karabakh would be transferred to Armenian SSR (Cornell, 2001). This campaign was vigorously supported by “Karabakh Committee” – a key nationalistic organization providing ideological basis for the “Miatsum” (“unification” of Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia) (Hunter, 1994).

All these factors contributed to Armenians’ growing perception of “relative deprivation” – a situation defined in the conflict theory literature as a condition when Party feels itself deprived from what it perceives to be its legitimate aspirations (Pruitt & Kim, 2004, p. 19). One of the consequences of relative deprivation as argue Pruitt and Kim is that this situation “alerts Party to the existence of incompatible interests” (Pruitt & Kim, 2004, p. 20).

3.3. Azerbaijani narrative: wake-up call

Growing nationalistic sentiments in Armenia as well as activism of Armenian leadership resulted in local inter-ethnic clashes in NKAO in 1945, 1968 and 1977 (Hunter, 1994; Cornell, 2001; De Waal, 2005). However these sporadic events as well as the Armenian campaign in 1986-1987 were disregarded by Azerbaijani authorities and the broader public and caused only surprise and disbelief in Azerbaijan (Altstadt, 1996). Pruitt and Kim’s (2004) perceived feasibility perspective in analyzing groups’ response to conflicts can be used to analyze the initial behavior of Azerbaijan (p. 47). This perspective implies
that party will opt to the strategy of avoidance (i.e. which entails refraining from engaging in
the conflict, hoping that the issues will blow over) if it highly perceives risk of engaging in
conflict, which will inevitably further alienate the contender and start a conflict spiral (Pruitt

It seems that there was indeed a belief in Baku that central authorities in Moscow
would not allow the tensions to spill over and would settle the dispute peacefully. Article 78
of the Constitution of the USSR, which stipulated that “the territory of the Union Republic
may not be altered without its consent” also added to the confidence of the authorities in
Baku.

Indeed, in order to calm the situation the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR
held a special meeting on 18 July 1988, to discuss a request of the Council of the NKAO to
secede from Azerbaijan. Based on the Article 78 the Presidium ruled out the possibility of
such transfer deciding to leave NKAO within Azerbaijani SSR. However, Soviet Army’s
invasion of Baku in January 1990 and the drastic escalation of the conflict in the Karabakh
region in the following months forced Azerbaijani authorities to reconsider their behavior.

Moscow, concerned with the growing nationalistic movement in Azerbaijan, ordered
29,000 Soviet troops to roll into Baku on January 20, 1990 with a goal to prevent
Azerbaijani Popular Front from seizing the power in Azerbaijan. Overnight Soviet troops in
order to suppress the resistance crashed harshly on protesters leaving several hundreds of
civilians dead and arrested activists of Azerbaijan Popular Front. These events, also known
in Azerbaijani narrative as “Black January” played a major role in fostering popular uprising
and demands for independence. It also played a key role of a wake-up call for Azerbaijanis
to mobilize for the defense of territorial integrity of their country.

In Azerbaijani narrative, the conflict with Armenia over Karabakh was and is viewed
as a continuation of Armenia’s irredentist policy carried out during the end of 19th and
beginning of 20th centuries and aimed at creating the long-cherished idea of “Great Armenia” at the expense of Azerbaijani lands. For Azerbaijanis, Karabakh is a “cradle, nursery, or conservatoire, the birthplace of their musicians and poets” (De Waal, 2003, p. 3). Armenian settlers appeared in Karabakh only in 19-20 centuries when Russia initiated a policy of altering demographic situation in the region by transferring Armenian population from Persian and Ottoman Empires. As a proof to this, a monument erected by Armenians in 1978 in the city of Khankendi3 in Karabakh in commemoration of 150th anniversary of the first Armenian settlements in Karabakh, is usually mentioned. Interestingly, the monument was demolished by Armenians, probably because it contradicted the idea promoted by Armenian historians that Armenians were indigenous population of the region.

In Azerbaijani narrative, granting the mountainous part of Karabakh region the status of Autonomous Region in 1924 was unlawful. Transfer of Zangezur region to Armenia in 1920 as a “jest of revolutionary solidarity” and subsequent forceful deportations by Soviet leadership of hundreds of thousands of local Azerbaijani population from Armenian SSR in 1948-1953 - all were considered to be chain of events within consistent Armenian goal to expand its territory. Thus, in Azerbaijani narrative, the conflict with Armenia is viewed as yet another attempt to annex part of its territory.

3.4. Escalation of conflict to full-scale undeclared war

The group mobilization in Armenia around the “Karabakh cause” and Azerbaijanis’ reaction to these events produced two immediate outcomes. The first outcome was the development of a sense of what Pruitt and Kim call “fraternalisite deprivation” when “people see their group as deprived in comparison with other groups” (Pruitt & Kim, 2004, p. 30).

3 Khankendi – a major city in Karabakh region was renamed to Stepanakert after the region was granted the status of Autonomous region in 1924.
Armenians felt deprived from what they believed was their “historic lands” whereas Azerbaijanis associated these events with the renewed irredentist claims of Armenia and associated them with the events at the turn of the 20th century, which resulted in partition of the country.

The second consequence of the group mobilization was strong group identification of both in-group and out-group, i.e. “Good Us” vs. “Evil Them” which coupled with high group aspirations, generated potential for breaking out of conflict.

The beginning of 1988 was marked by a series of protests in the NKAO which resulted in adoption of a resolution on February 20, 1988 by the Soviet (Council) of the NKAO (local authorities) appealing to the Supreme Soviets of Armenia, Azerbaijan and the USSR to transfer NKAO from Azerbaijani jurisdiction to the Armenian one (Cornel, 2001, p. 80). This decision was followed by the protests and demonstrations in the capital of Armenia – Yerevan demanding transfer of NKAO to Armenia.

The last ingredient needed to transform negative perceptions of opposing groups into open violence was to be “trigger event”, which as will be shown below was not long to present itself.

The first clashes reportedly occurred near the village of Askeran in NKAO on February 22, 1988 between the Azerbaijani youths, who rallied against demands of Armenians in NKAO and Armenia to transfer Karabakh to Armenia, and Armenians. Some observers argue that it were these events resulting in the death of two Azerbaijani youths that provoked retaliatory violence and unrest in the city of Sumgait near Baku 27-29 February 1988. Others argue that events in Sumgait were not so much a result of ethnic hatred and frustration, but conspiracy of outside forces (Soviet KGB was most commonly suspected) willing to instigate inter-ethnic strife to deviate attention from and curb growing nationalistic sentiments in both
Armenian SSR and Azerbaijani SSR advocating for independence from the Soviet Union (Cornell, 2001).

Whatever were the real reasons behind the series of the tragic events the damage was done. The conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan gradually slipped out of Moscow’s control and followed the logic of escalation. On June 13, 1988 Azerbaijani Supreme Soviet rejected the 20 February vote in NKAO as unacceptable. On the contrary, Supreme Soviet of the Armenian SSR on June 15, 1988 passed a resolution supporting the request of the NKAO to secede from Azerbaijan. However, given that constitution of the Soviet Union did not provide Autonomous regions with legitimate power to secede (Mammadov, 2005) this “war of laws” had more declaratory than legally binding character.

These unilateral moves led to the wave of anti-secession protests in Azerbaijan. After these events the gap dividing Armenians and Azerbaijanis was drastically growing, and the interests of Armenia and Azerbaijan were perceived as incompatible as never before. The situation was complicated by mass exodus of hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijani population from Armenia and Armenians from Azerbaijan.

The “special government administration” (direct governance of the region from Moscow), which was imposed in January 1989 with the goal of restoring order, was abolished toward the end of the year in November 28, 1989, returning oversight of NKAO to Azerbaijani authorities. Unsatisfied with this decision, the Armenian Supreme Soviet on December 1, 1989 adopted a unilateral decision to incorporate NKAO into the Armenian SSR (Cornell, 2001).

Taking advantage of the overall chaos as a result of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, on September 2, 1991 “Karabakh National Council” proclaimed the independent “Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh”, which since then was never recognized not only by Azerbaijan and international community but also by Armenia. In response to this unilateral
move Milli Meclis (National Parliament) of the newly independent Republic of Azerbaijan on November 26, 1991 abolished the Autonomous status of the NKAO altogether. Trying to present its actions as legitimate on December 8, 1991 self-proclaimed “NKR” went further as to conduct referendum to confirm the secession, which was boycotted by the Azerbaijani population of the Karabakh (Cornell, 2001).

With the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Nagorno-Karabakh in the wake of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the hostilities between the two now independent countries Armenia and Azerbaijan soon transformed into full-scale war at the end of 1991 (Fuller, 1993). It should be noted that if during the Soviet Union the conflict was between two constituencies of the Soviet Union, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union the conflict became of international character as both Armenia and Azerbaijan by then were recognized by the international community as sovereign countries (Fuller, 1992).

As a result of war from May 1992 until May 1994, about twenty percents of Azerbaijani territories (seven districts of Azerbaijan outside of Karabakh region and the Nagorno-Karabakh itself) were occupied. Approximately one million refugees and IDPs fled from Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, and surrounding districts, about 20,000 were killed on both sides. A cease-fire agreement was signed in May 1994 and despite of some sporadic violations, it has been generally observed.

3.5. Positions of Armenia and Azerbaijan at the negotiating table

Since then, despite of the international mediation process on settlement of the conflict led by the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) (Maresca, 1996) no progress has been achieved in the settlement of the conflict.

The interests of the Armenia and Azerbaijan seem incompatible to the parties of the conflict. The main point of contention at the negotiations is the perceived incompatibility of
the two principles of international law: territorial integrity of states and self-determination of peoples.

Armenia argues that the Armenians of the Nagorno-Karabakh have the right to self-determination and therefore Azerbaijan must admit de-jure independence of the region. Position of the Republic of Armenia at the negotiation table as summarized by Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs is that “there cannot be a vertical link between Azerbaijan and Nagorny Karabakh, that it must have a geographic link with Armenia, and that the security of the people of Nagorny Karabakh must be assured” (Oskanian, 2005). In practice position of Armenia means creating grounds for secession of Nagorno-Karabakh from Azerbaijan, and annexation of Kelbadjar and Lachin districts of Azerbaijan, located beyond Nagorno-Karabakh region. This is argued to be a “natural” land corridor between Armenia and the Nagorno-Karabakh. This position is justified by the “historical” rights of Armenians to possess this region.

The position of the Republic of Azerbaijan is that the norms and principles of international law, first and foremost sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of international borders of the Republic of Azerbaijan, stipulated in the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 822, 853, 874 and 884 as well as in the documents and decisions of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) should be respected and unconditionally implemented. Azerbaijan demands immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Armenian armed forces from the territory of Azerbaijan as stipulated in the UN Resolutions, and return of refugees and internally displaced persons to their homes.

Armenia considers Armenians in Karabakh as “people” (nation) which has the right to self-determination. Azerbaijan argues that Armenians as nation have fulfilled their right to self-determination by creating the independent Republic of Armenia and considers the Armenian population in Karabakh as a minority along with other small ethnic groups living
in Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan guarantees protection of the rights and freedoms of national minorities and ethnic groups living in Azerbaijan in accordance with its constitution stipulating “equal rights and freedoms for the individuals that belong to minority groups” as well as international laws and Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

In Azerbaijan, given the history of the beginning of the conflict, it is believed that self-determination and secession of the Karabakh is a transitional phase towards the future incorporation of the region into Armenia. Moreover, Azerbaijan considers that the principle of self-determination is misinterpreted by Armenia, because the self-determination principle does not envisage unilateral secession. All international legal documents concerning the right to self-determination at the same time stipulate inviolability of borders and territorial integrity of sovereign states (Mammadov, 2005). For example the Helsinki Final Act of 1 August 1975 stipulates that:

The participating States will respect the equal rights of peoples and their right to self-determination, acting in all times in conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and with relevant norms of international law, including those relating to territorial integrity of States. (as cited in Mammadov, 2005).

Azerbaijan’s position on the right to self-determination is expressed clearly by Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan Mr. Mammadyarov as follows:

Our approach to the right of self-determination derives from its true value and envisages securing the peaceful coexistence and cooperation of the Azerbaijani and Armenian communities of the Nagorny Karabakh region and creating the necessary conditions for the effective realization of their right to participate in the conduct of public affairs, including through the formation of legitimate regional authorities at all levels (Mammadyarov, 2005).

In other words, Azerbaijan proposes to reintegrate the Armenian community into political, economic and social space of Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan proposes bi-communal model for the region insisting that Azerbaijani population of Nagorno-Karabakh fled from the region
should return to their homes and together with Armenian community equally participate in the
developing of the legal status of the region within Azerbaijan as well as fully participate in the
political, economic and social life of the region (Mammadyarov, 2005).

3.6. Perceived incompatibility of positions and interests

In the last section of this chapter I will dwell on the possible factors which contribute
to the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan making it intractable. The first factor is the
root-cause of the conflict. The analysis of the history of the conflict allows concluding that
this is first and foremost a territorial conflict. Although there are elements of ethnicity, power
dynamics between majority and separatist movement in Karabakh, this conflict is not based
on structural inequalities (unequal access to resources and opportunities embedded in social
structures) and cannot be characterized as “underdog” versus “top dog” standoff.

Although numerous Armenian publications claimed that Azerbaijani authorities
neglected altogether or did not give NKAO proper consideration in terms of economic
development, independent non-regional researchers conclude that the structural inequalities
were non-existent in the case of Karabakh conflict. Thomas de Waal (2005) argues for
example that:

Some have seen this breakdown in relations [between Armenians and Azerbaijanis] as being economically motivated – as being a quarrel over scarce resources – yet this analysis also does not stand up to scrutiny. The tensions within Karabakh pre-dated by decades the depressed Soviet economy of the 1980s and the province was not appreciably poorer than many other parts of the Soviet Union, having average economic indicators for Azerbaijan and being slightly poorer than Armenia (Thomas de Waal, 2005).

4 It should be noted that according to the population census of 1989, the population of the Nagorno-Karabakh region was 186,100, of which 138,600 were Armenians (73.5%) and 47,500 Azerbaijanis (25.3%). As of 2005 the Armenian population of the region (without Azerbaijani community) decreased to 137,743 (Day.az, 2006).
Besides, as argues Cornell (2001), “in Azerbaijan, the number of Armenians was noticeably higher and the community of a higher social status than that of the [Azerbaijanis] in Armenia, who lived mainly in rural areas” (p. 94). Disenfranchisement of the Armenian population was also not an issue, because evidences suggest that “Nagorno-Karabakh was the only autonomous region in the USSR represented in the Supreme Soviet of Azerbaijani SSR by deputy chairman. In general, Nagorno-Karabakh was represented in the Supreme Soviet of the Azerbaijani SSR by 10 MPs of the Armenian nationality” (Mammadov, 2005).

As shows the Israeli-Palestinian conflict when the root-cause of the conflict between the groups is the realistic conflict of interests over a peace of land, “relationship to land becomes central element of a national identity of each people and that relationship is viewed as exclusive in the national narrative through which each people’s identity is expressed” (Kelman, 2004, p. 588). Similar pattern of exclusiveness of narratives can be traced in the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Armenian narrative envisages that Karabakh region should be eventually incorporated to Armenia (The Declaration of Independence of the Republic of Armenia stipulates the fact of reunification of the Armenian SSR and the Mountainous Region of Karabakh). Azerbaijan’s position seems more inclusive in a sense that on the basis of restoring of its territorial integrity as well as return of refugees and IDPs to their homes in and around Karabakh region, it is ready to negotiate self-ruling arrangements for the entire population of the Karabakh.

The situation is also complicated by the fact that Armenian and Azerbaijani narratives have different levels of narratives: Armenians refer to ancient times and the right to self-determination to justify their claims whereas Azerbaijan places its position within international law (territorial integrity, inadmissibility to change internationally recognized borders by means of force) and dismisses Armenian claims as historical manipulation since
Armenians were transferred to the region by Russian rulers from Persian and Ottoman Empires only in 19-20th centuries.

Thus, zero-sum attitudes, conflicting narratives, and claim to the same land created what Kelman (2004) calls “negative interdependence” of identities, i.e. conviction that the other side wants to destruct one’s identity or assert its identity at the expense of the other’s (p. 588).

I have noted in the previous chapter that as a result of the interplay socio-psychological forces as well as conflict group mobilization process people start to experience willingness to engage in “Mythic war”. All these factors together with domestic struggle for power between various political groups that used instrumentally ethnic sentiments and animosities to carry out self-serving political agendas forced Armenian leadership to continue pursuing centuries-old irredentist policies.

One of the consequences of such policies is that soon political leadership becomes entrapped in its own rhetoric that resonates with the dominant sentiments of group members. As Coppieters (1996) argues, “it is not so easy to accept the compromise solution when the basic interests or even survival of the ethnic community or the state is declared to be at stake” (Coppieters, 1996). Under these circumstances, any unfavorable change of status quo in the conflict could undermine positions of the political elites. This was clearly illustrated by the ouster of the former Armenian president Levon Ter-Petrossian in February 1998, when he showed readiness to accept the compromise solution in the Karabakh conflict (Walker, 1998).

Some observers believed that subsequent killings in the Armenian Parliament on October 27, 1999 were connected with the ongoing Karabakh peace talks and were

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5 As a result of the terrorist attack by the five gunmen led by Nairi Hunanian Prime Minister Vazgen Sargsian, parliamentary speaker Karen Demirchian, one government minister and five other deputies were assassinated.
deliberately intended to destabilize the political situation in Armenia on the eve of the OSCE Summit in Istanbul held 18-19 November 1999 to thwart any kind of rapprochement in the positions of Armenia and Azerbaijan, which was strongly advocated by the then Clinton Administration (RFE/RL Caucasus Report, 1999).

3.7. External dimension of intractable conflict

I have noted in the beginning of this chapter that the processes taking place in each South Caucasian country and between them should be viewed from a regional perspective.

The concept of “security complex” introduced by Buzan (1991) in dealing with regional security problems will be useful in analysing regional dimension of the intractable conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Buzan defined security complex as “a group of states whose primary security concerns link together sufficiently closely that their national securities cannot realistically be considered apart from one another” (p. 187).

The view that the Caucasus should be studied as a clearly defined security complex gained popularity among scholars studying social, political and economic processes in this region (Coppieters, 1996; Criss, & Guner, 1999). Cornell (2001) proposes, for example, to study the South Caucasus within the framework of security interdependence of the so-called “inner triangle” of states namely Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia and “outer triangle” comprising of external regional powers (Russia, Turkey and Iran as well as non-regional actors such as the USA and EU) that are part of this security complex (Cornell, 2001, pp. 17-26).

The lack of regional institutional arrangements in the South Caucasus favoring “associative forms of security” led to attempts to address the security threats through balance of power policies. All regional actors have tried to revise the existing forms of distribution of
power through alliances with regional and non-regional powers (Coppieters, 1996; George, 1997-1998; Petersen, 1994; Bertch, Craft, Jones, and Beck, 2000).

Azerbaijan and Georgia, suffering from aggressive separatism and Russia’s unilateral policies in the region (especially in 1992-2000), were pursuing a policy of geopolitical pluralism by fostering external security ties with Turkey, the US and European countries and security organizations such as NATO (Howard, G. 1998). This “diversification” of security ties was sought to give space for political maneuvering needed to consolidate Azerbaijan’s and Georgia’s sovereignty and independence (Winrow, 1997; Kalicki, 1998; Allison, & Bluth, 1998). In order to gain and preserve military superiority over Azerbaijan, which was needed to control occupied Azerbaijani territories, Armenia was interested in increasing the Russian military presence and agreed to provide its soil for the Russian military base in Gumri. Constant exaggeration of the “Turkish threat” was used instrumentally to justify permanent Russian military presence (Fuller, 1993).

Thus, conflicting security interests of the South Caucasian countries eventually increased the possibility of emerging of informal alliances along North-South (Russia, Armenia and Iran) and East-West (Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey) axis that even further froze instability in the region (Chufrin, 2001).

The power vacuum created after the demise of the Soviet Union in the South Caucasus coupled with lucrative hydrocarbon deposits beneath the Caspian Sea and the trans-regional projects for their transportation to the Western markets revitalized “behind the scenes” rivalry for the sphere of influence in the Caspian region between regional powers like Russia, Turkey and Iran as well as non-regional actors like the USA and increasingly EU (Brzezinski, 1997; Criss & Guner, 1999; Jaffe, Manning, 1998-1999; Ruseckas, 2000; Wiberg-Jorgensen, 1999).

Analysts dealing with the region came to believe that a country that will gain and retain an initiative in the resolution of regional conflicts would gain control over emerging
transportation corridor and would have a decisive voice in influencing the overall shift of power balance not only in the South Caucasus but also in the whole central Eurasia (Brzezinski, 1997).

Since Azerbaijan was considered a “geopolitical pivot” of the Caspian region (Brzezinski, 1997, p. 127), the conflict with Armenia over Karabakh region drew additional importance and attention. Taking into consideration the geopolitical consequences, the resolution of this and other regional conflicts may have for the regional and non-regional actors, it is possible to argue that the lasting solution to these conflicts depends to a large extent on the interests and policies pursued by external triangle of regional powers (Fuller, 1994; Fuller, 1994a; Goltz, 1993; Nolyain, 1994; Maresca, 1996; Baev, 1997; Baev, 2001). The overall security environment in the South Caucasus is thus believed to be dependent on a number of conditions that include balance of power among states, political and economic order among them and various external influences (Menon, Fedorov & Nodia, 1999).

It should be mentioned that the Armenian Diaspora living in the United States, European countries and elsewhere is also named among factors that to a large extent influences Armenia’s foreign policy in general and increasingly has a say in domestic politics in Armenia. In regard of Armenia’s stance in the dispute with Azerbaijan, Diaspora also plays notable role by pushing the ruling elites in Armenia to hold to an uncompromising position at the negotiation table (Gregg, 2002; Carley, 1998).

The geopolitical considerations and external influences can partially explain why the conflicts in the South Caucasus became intractable. Invisible competition between non-regional actors promoted and contributed to the negative perceptions and zero-sum thinking between countries in the South Caucasus. As a result regional countries were more preoccupied with the relative gains rather than seeking mechanisms that would secure interests of all the nations of the region.
CHAPTER 4

PARTICULAR ASPECTS OF PEACE EDUCATION PROGRAMS
IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CONFLICT
BETWEEN ARMENIA AND AZERBAIJAN

So far, I have analyzed the basic assumptions and concepts of the peace education programs in general and in the regions of intractable conflict in particular. Existing literature on the peace education suggests that the socio-political context is an important factor, which needs to be taken into account while determining the overall goals as well as particular elements of content of the peace or coexistence education programs.

Analysis of the dynamics of inter-group conflict from the perspective of peace and social psychology disciplines revealed that there also seem to be underlying contextual and situational factors that stimulate inter-group conflict. It is the premise of this study that negative attitudes and perceptions maintaining conflict are often sustained artificially and are used for political purposes.

 Particularly, collectively held narratives, which as we now know are constructed to fit certain political goals and aspirations, may be invisible at first sight, but influence to a large extent the perceptions, attitudes and hence behavior of conflicting groups. History, which constitutes a basis for social narratives in many instances, is highly politicized and turned into a political instrument of exclusion. As shown in narrative-based review provided in third chapter, the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan is a case in point.

Thus, as a result of social constructs, deep-rooted societal beliefs internalized by the conflicting societies gradually become highly resistant to change and, unless taken into account, may constitute a major challenge in the process of achieving coexistence and reconciliation.
The findings from the previous sections of the study will be used here to guide us through discussion of particular aspects that the prospective peace or coexistence education programs in the context of intractable conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan will have to take into account.

4.1. Peace education programs: conflict resolution or post-conflict reconciliation tool?

Hence, we have approached the key questions of this study. It is now possible to discuss whether peace or coexistence education programs can really make a difference in light of the particular dynamics of the conflict and the impact of contextual and situational factors highlighted in the previous chapters. In particular, I will look into the stage of the conflict at which peace education programs should be introduced and implemented. In other words, when will these programs yield the most desirable changes in attitudes and behavior of conflicting groups? And finally, I will discuss the possible strategies to eliminate or circumvent the negative impact of the factors which are highly resistant to change and what needs to be done to make positive changes sustainable over time.

The answers to these questions will have repercussions not only for prospective peace education programs in the region. In the second chapter we have noted that peace education programming is essentially based on “contact hypothesis” and aims at generating empathy and understanding between conflicting groups through dialogue. Since tools and models used by peace or coexistence education programs are similar to those used in Track II or citizen diplomacy, i.e. conflict mediation efforts by unofficial people, humanitarian organizations or NGOs who work outside official negotiation, mediation processes (Chigas, 2003), the answers to the above questions may provide additional insights to the particular aspects of the intractable conflicts which need to be taken into account by the track two diplomacy efforts.
A particular feature of post-Cold war conflicts is that they are very complex and
dynamic, and therefore multi-faceted approach is required to remove the consequences of
these conflicts. Therefore, while searching for the ways to reconcile conflicting groups it is
difficult to choose only one single framework to fit in a particular case (Bar-Tal, 2004). This is
especially true in the case of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

The peace negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan since 1994 have not yet
yielded any results on resolution of the conflict. For this study I depart from the conclusion of
the “Atkinson report” of the Council of Europe⁶ – a credible Europe-wide political
organization with 46 member states (including both Armenia and Azerbaijan) – that “regional
autonomy [of the Nagorno-Karabakh region] with a high degree of self-government may be a
better solution than secession and independence” (CoE, 2004, DOC No. 10364).

Peace agreements should be immediately followed by peace-building and
reconciliation efforts if lasting peace is to be achieved. The prospective reconciliation
programs in the context of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan will have to
incorporate the two levels of reconciliation mentioned by Nadler (see p. 34). Thus, on the one
hand, reconciliation programs in our case will have to be designed to foster peaceful
coexistence between bordering Armenia and Azerbaijan as two separate states (instrumental
model of reconciliation). On the other hand, reconciliation programs will have to facilitate re-
integration of Armenian minority living in the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan into
Azerbaijani society (social inclusion through socio-emotional reconciliation) (Nadler, 2002).
In other words, along with inter-state reconciliation, peace education programs should be also
designed at the community level within Azerbaijan that would foster coexistence between

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⁶ The Council of Europe is the continent's oldest organization founded in 1949 and called to defend human rights,
parliamentary democracy and the rule of law, develop continent-wide agreements to standardize member
countries' social and legal practices, as well as promote awareness of a European identity based on shared values
and cutting across different cultures. For more information see www.coe.int
Armenian and Azerbaijani communities in the areas where they will live in the same neighborhood.

Although these two levels of reconciliation are interconnected and therefore reconciliation programs should start simultaneously at those two levels, it is obvious that failure or success at the inter-state level of reconciliation will have more potential to hinder or foster reconciliation at the inter-community level than vice-versa.

I mentioned in the second chapter that reconciliation between the groups starts at the lowest point of the negative inter-group relations and hence the immediate goal should be achieving minimal goal of willingness on behalf of the parties to coexist peacefully (Bar-Tal, 2004). Since reconciliation is a “bottom-up” process of fostering empathy, trust and forgiveness between individuals facilitated by the “sanctioning” of the government and the society at large (Hauss, 2003), peace education tools seem to be an important ingredient of reconciliation efforts. Hence, I will dwell on particular aspects of peace education programs at the inter-state level and then will discuss ways of fostering peaceful coexistence at the community level.

Clearly, prospective peace education programs in the context of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan will have to be designed both within formal schooling system and non-formal settings of each country (i.e. at the macro-level involving all levels of society) (Salomon, 2002). A similar conclusion is made by the Resolution (2004) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE). It calls on Armenia and Azerbaijan “to foster reconciliation, confidence-building and mutual understanding among their peoples through schools, universities and the media” (CoE Res.1416 (2005), paragraph 11).

However, based on the findings from the review of the existing theories in the field of peace education as well as socio-psychological dynamics of conflicts viewed from peace and social psychology perspective, it seems logical that development of the peace education
programs that would embrace the whole society in each country in question should precede or be implemented simultaneously with the work on changing and introducing new curriculum in the formal educational institutions. One of the reasons for this is that, revision of existing curriculum and introduction of new themes in schools promotes culture of pace and tolerance towards other nation in long-term perspective.

In other words, the formal education system may be helpful in breaking the circle of violence (when negative attitudes and hatred is reproduced and passed on to the next generations). However, if the conflict is on-going and subsequently when negative attitudes and perceptions are persistent and constantly reproduced in society, if media keeps using hate language, and more importantly, when negative attitudes and perceptions are used as a political tool by the ruling elites, positive gains achieved in school settings will be jeopardized (if the curriculum on tolerance is ever developed and introduced under these circumstances).

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is only one vivid example of this. Thus, in 1984 the new Israeli Minister of Education Yitzhak Navon enthusiastically ordered implementation of new educational policy initiative aimed at improving the relations between Israeli Jews and Arabs in Israel. In order to coordinate implementation of the policy, in 1986 the Ministry established a new Unit for Education for Democracy and Coexistence.

The new education program for coexistence, which was implemented under the auspices of the Van Leer Jerusalem Foundation, embraced all students from kindergarten to high school and was supposed to be integrated in as many subject matters as possible. The Ministry of Education declared Coexistence between Jews and Arabs as a national theme for all the schools in the 1985–1986 academic years.

School textbooks were re-examined to eliminate hatred language and negative stereotyping of Arabs. New textbooks on the coexistence between Jews and Arabs were written for different grades. In addition, teachers were involved in in-service training to learn
the principles of education for coexistence. The Ministry of Education also involved NGOs with experience in education for coexistence.

However, the Palestinian Intifada (Uprising) at the end of 1987 and subsequent violent clashes between Israelis and Palestinians reversed the trend and the efforts aimed at fostering coexistence gradually disappeared from the agenda of the Ministry of Education. A new Minister of Education who entered the office in 1990 designed different policies, as a result of which school curriculum was again propagating mostly Zionist and Jewish values (Bar-Tal, 2004).

As evidenced by this example peace education programs are vulnerable to current political atmosphere in a given country. Most scholars working in peace education field are noting that peace or coexistence education initiatives can produce only limited results, when the conflict and hostilities are on-going (Bar-Tal, 2004). As was indicated in the case of Israeli-Palestinian conflict major political, military events may add fuel to the existing strained relations between the groups and halt the modest attempts made by peace education initiatives to initiate dialogue and foster mutual understanding between the opposing groups (Bar-Tal, 2004). Bar-Tal argues in this regard that:

When the peace process is accompanied by violence and military confrontations, the rhetoric of conflict, and hostile acts, education for coexistence does not have the chance to succeed. These events validate the held ethos of conflict, including the collective memory that has been fueling the conflict through the years. These powerful factors influence the psyche of the group members maintaining fear, hatred, and animosity and at the same time jeopardizing any attempts to create a more positive climate for intergroup relations (Bar-Tal, 2004, p.267).

According to the ‘hourglass’ model developed by Ramsbotham and Woodhouse (2005), applicability of different conflict resolution models depends on the narrowing or widening of political space during the escalation and de-escalation of conflict. Thus, conflict transformation, which is achieved through “deeper levels of peacemaking” including