Identity Change as a Pathway to Peace: Zionism and the Challenges of Relinquishing Righteousness

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ABSTRACT

If Zionist identity goes unchanged it cannot and will not allow just peace to exist between Israelis and Palestinians. The traditional progressive approaches to conflict transformation critiqued in this article work toward identity change during formal negotiations and peace processes. It is argued that for identity change to make a difference, however, it needs to occur on a broader scale prior to and independent from this stage of conflict resolution. Its occurrence, moreover, should not be contingent on the necessity for a punctual peace agreement, but out of a transformed perception of the "other" as a reflection of one's own humanity - a change which necessarily involves lifting the ideological fog of Zionist identity. The paper concludes by suggesting two future research directions connected to identity change. The first concerns how identity change occurs at the individual level in terms of triggers, difficulties, obstacles, and social influences; the second, how the process of identity change itself might inform transformational initiatives.

INTRODUCTION

The struggle to maintain core elements of current Zionist national identity intact can be interpreted as the Israeli government's struggle for existence. Israel will not necessarily cease to exist without Zionist identity, but it will cease to exist in its current form, inasmuch as many of its defining characteristics such as the Jewish character of the state, the occupation and settlement of the West Bank based on a security rationale, the prohibition of Palestinian refugees to return to their lands, and the dispute over Jerusalem are rooted in Zionism (Haasz, 2011, pp. 29-49). Israeli laws and policy are both imbued with Zionist foundations, including restriction to same-religion marriages, the law of return available exclusively to Jews and other differentiated rights for Jews only. Combined with the discriminatory legal treatment of Palestinians, such Israeli laws and policies have continuously contributed to the conflict, generating civil unrest by violating Palestinian human and civil rights, not allowing self-determination and limiting freedom of movement, expression, and the right to legal representation and due legal process (Haasz, 2011, pp. 29-49). Zionist culture is the deep culture out of which structural violence has emerged and given birth to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The legitimacy battleground has become central to this conflict, where internal social forces in Israel and within the Jewish Diaspora have been at work sparking an identity change process by pushing for detachment from core Zionist beliefs (Haasz, 2011, p. 135). Such critical stances have elicited a government response to contain dissent and reinforce Zionist identity amongst its population to prevent losing legitimacy, both domestically and internationally, as major think tanks which advise the government have indicated (Reut, 2010).
Approaches to conflict transformation that seek to go beyond mere crisis management and work toward sustainable solutions have suggested addressing the underlying causes of conflicts such as deep culture and structural violence, rather than just temporarily controlling their effects of direct violence and frequently facing their inevitable recurrence. Galtung's (2000) theory points to the weakness of negotiating deals such as the mid-90s Oslo peace accord. That agreement led to a temporary cessation of direct violence without addressing social injustices generated by the structural asymmetry in power, or what Galtung terms "structural violence." In addition, underpinning structural violence is deep culture, which Galtung (2000) defines as "a web of notions about what is true, good, right, beautiful, sacred" (p. 33). Without addressing the root causes of violence, direct violence was bound to return, as it did in 2000 with the second Intifada. Some approaches to conflict resolution and conflict transformation include strategies for inducing identity change, where the goal is to transform identity components built on beliefs that sustain conflict, as for example Kelman's (2004) approach stressing self-examination so as to allow each party to take responsibility for a given conflict.

Nevertheless, in the case of the Israel/Palestine conflict, such approaches do not seem to be the right strategy to generate identity change, since the approaches do not consider the timing in which such identity change is attempted. To do so during an official process of conflict transformation already underway, where both parties are aware of one another taking part in the process, does not account for the tendency to not want to show vulnerability that may undermine one's position during negotiations. Furthermore, certain aspects of Zionist identity are themselves antagonistic to the very idea of making peace with Palestinians, even more so due to the large asymmetry in power Israelis can count on. These aspects of Zionist identity originate in its historical narrative, which range from Biblical claims of being the chosen people and Jews' right to return to the land they were expelled from, to the present-day perception of Israel as a small peace-seeking Western democracy threatened by backward Muslim fundamentalists. If brought into a conflict resolution or transformation process unchanged, these aspects of Zionist identity will thwart peace efforts to begin with, since basic signifiers such as "human needs," which are critical to such progressive conflict transformation methods, will be decoded differently on both sides due to a dehumanized, often demonized perception of Palestinians, and common ground will not be established. This paper will discuss how two progressive conflict transformation proposals which suggest identity change as a strategy for dealing with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and place it within an ongoing bilateral process do not account for the lack of motivation for Israel to consent or even aspire to take part in such processes, as a result of Zionist identity and culture. It will further argue that the identity change process from within, brought forth by Diaspora and Israeli Jews before any bilateral process even begins with Palestinians, seems to present a threat to the state, a claim which will be supported by showing where the Israeli government and policy making actors have had to contain such occurrences.

PROGRESSIVE CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION APPROACHES

Two conflict transformation approaches will be analyzed in relation to the Israel/Palestine conflict. The first is "The Art of Conflict Transformation through Dialogue" approach created by Graf, Kramer and Nicolescou (2008), and the second is an identity-change approach by Harvard professor Herbert C. Kelman.

The Art of Conflict Transformation through Dialogue

This seven-step process, based on Galtung's (2000) TRANSCEND method, created by Graf, Kramer and Nicolescou (2008) seeks to bridge gaps (Lederach, 1999, as cited in Graf, Kramer, & Nicolescou, 2008) that exist in conflict transformation and peace-building approaches. The gaps appear in a few instances, such as the lack of cohesiveness amongst different levels on the same side in a conflict - that is, while traditional approaches would
pair for negotiation same-level partners on both sides (i.e., general with general, leaders
with leaders, grassroots with grassroots) these levels would not relate to each other in a
cohesive way within the same side. Another gap refers to many signed agreements that
do not address justice issues, and yet another refers to lack of flexibility in the order of
steps taken in a peace process, as well as the lack of understanding that a peace agreement
is merely the beginning of a much larger transformational process both on the structural
and the attitudinal levels. The last gap mentioned in the process refers to the importance
of solutions being developed from within, and not being imported or imposed.

Each of the phases created by Galtung were divided into steps by Graf, Kramer & Nicolescu
(2008). Phase one focuses on understanding the goals of the conflict parties, within which
step one is to understand the parties and their goals, and the contradiction between the
parties' goals, directing to a needs-based perception of motivations. Step two tries to answer
"How did the conflict occur?" - examining what happened, what failed to happen, and
other relevant issues. Phase two focuses on reframing illegitimate goals into legitimate
ones, based on fulfillment of the basic needs of all parties. Within this phase, step three
looks into the collective unconscious of the conflict formation and tries to answer the
question "What is the context of the conflict?" This is where deep culture is looked at.
Step four looks into the future asking the question "How will it continue, if nothing
changes?" The third phase is the elaboration of a sustainable formula that integrates the
legitimate goals, where step five, based on basic human needs of all parties asks the
question "What can be done?" In step six "What are the next steps?" is covered. The last
phase is the process of reconciliation (Graf, Kramer, & Nicolescu, 2008).

In effect, if parties were to answer with full sincerity these questions they would inevitably
face a deep incongruence between beliefs held by each of them and the factual reality. On
the Israeli side, to answer questions such as How did the conflict occur? What is the context
of the conflict? What are the real goals of Israel? would mean to clash with an entire belief
system nourished by Zionist identity, narratives, and deep culture. It would mean having
to seriously consider the New Israeli Historiography, a revisionist historiography that
undermines the dominant Zionist narrative. To a large extent, it removes most ethical
arguments in favor of the Zionist enterprise vis-à-vis Palestinian human and civil rights.
To sincerely come face to face with such incongruence would mean to go through an
identity crisis and an ensuing identity change.

Reconciliation as Identity Change: A Social-Psychological Perspective

Herbert C. Kelman (2004) considers the progression from conflict settlement to conflict
resolution, and then to reconciliation, to be a transition from a more external dimension
to an internalized one in terms of solutions to conflicts. As progress continues the quality
of change improves, reaching on the reconciliation end the highest level of agreement. It
is deeper, more durable and sustainable, and integrated into the political culture and societal
belief systems of conflicting societies.

Kelman (2004) describes the Israel/Palestine conflict as "an existential identity conflict"
and suggests identity change as key to the reconciliation process, based on the removal
of negation of the other as a central component of one's identity, and the acceptance of the
other's identity and narratives (p. 119). According to Kelman, identity change, which should
be based on a revision of narratives, would strengthen the core of one's identity as a result.
He presents five conditions that can help conflicting groups revise their identities: 1.
Acknowledgement of the other's nationhood and humanity, focusing on rolling back
dehumanized views that promote violence; 2. Development of a common moral basis for
peace focused on addressing justice; 3. Confrontation with history, focusing on deconstruction
of national myths and coming to terms with truths; 4. Acknowledgement of responsibility,
focusing on apologies, compensation, reparation, and restitution; 5. Establishment of
patterns and institutional mechanisms of cooperation, focusing on meeting societal needs
on a basis of principles of equality and reciprocity.
Discussion of Both Approaches

Both examples of approaches to conflict transformation possess strengths, such as not rushing to the negotiation table and confronting the parties, since much of the work is done with each of them simultaneously but separately, and by focusing on self-transformation, as these allow reflexive processes to occur, and thus reduce automatic patterns of thinking on both sides. Another strong feature is the review of historical myths and narratives, and reaching redemption through taking responsibility. On the other hand, both examples do not seem to address extreme asymmetry in power between conflicting parties. Israel has no real motivation to enter such a negotiation process, and is also less likely to relinquish any of its land expansion priorities and take into consideration Palestinian rights. The grounds for this lack of motivation seem to be the support of its constituency, Jews in Israel and the Diaspora, as well as in the US, but mainly the absence of a moral imperative that Israel senses it should do so, a problem rooted in Zionist rationale. This rationale is of an ideological nature, associated with a narrative that produces constructs that become unquestioned deep assumptions, or building blocks to Galtung's (2000) concept of "deep culture." These constructs are reproduced in a unified, monolithic way within the Israeli Jewish environment and in the Jewish Diaspora. In such constructs, nationalist myths are central. Historical narratives suggest Israel had always acted out of self-defense and been the weaker party in wars. Such a perception, paralleled with the myth of David and Goliath, has been critiqued and challenged by the New Israeli Historians, as have various historical distortions and confusion with collective memory (Bar On, 2004, p. 5).

The next section will discuss the relations of such constructs and identity, which in this case, is Zionism, Israel's national identity. Major components of this identity are Jewishness, security/militarism, and hegemonic Zionism (Ghazi-Bouillon, 2009, p. 158; Kimmerling, 2005, p. 1). Jewishness is the rationale for Israel being a Jewish state, built on a perception of Jews as an ancient people with group rights to the land that its centuries-old inhabitants, the Palestinians, do not have. This appeal to ancient origins is typical in most modern European nationalisms, as Anderson (2006, p. 111) notes. Anderson (2006) also writes: "The significance of the emergence of Zionism and the birth of Israel is that the former marks the reimagining of an ancient religious community as a nation" (p. 153). The security/militarism rationale is that Israel is under constant threat, necessitating a large security apparatus and a highly militarized society. Yiftachel (2008) refers to it as a "discourse developed in reaction to the Arab-Jewish conflict, … elevating exigencies of national security onto a level of unquestioned gospel" (p. 130). It is rooted in a sense of victimhood and perception of threat. Ophir (2008) adds: "[U]nlike becoming a victim, which may be a result of contingent, ephemeral forces, being a victim means taking, holding to, or being stuck in a victim's position" (Ophir, 2008, p. 87). Ophir examines how state apparatuses use victimhood as "aggressive victimhood" (Ghazi-bouillon, 2009, p. 7). Hegemonic Zionism refers to an ideological paradigm established by the founding fathers of Zionism that defines the limits within which meaningful reasoning and debate on Zionism can take place, as well as what can be thought, imagined or said about it. Social dominance of European cultural elements inherited from that leadership result from its ascendency over other Jewish groups subsumed under its hegemonic structure. The orientalist view towards Palestinians (as well as Jews from Arab countries) is derived from this aspect of Zionism (Ghazi-Bouillon, 2009, p. 158).

ZOONIST IDENTITY CHANGE: THREAT OR DOORWAY TO PEACE?

It is quite common to think of Zionism as an ideology as well an identity. If examined closely, however, many of its current characteristics resemble various definitions of culture. In an article about the relationship that exists between core beliefs on an individual level and worldviews on a collective level, Eidelson (2003) says that "in contrast to core beliefs an individual holds about his or her personal world, collective core beliefs or group worldviews are the template through which group and group members interpret their shared
experience. Such beliefs are an essential component of group culture." He points out that a group's essence can be defined by shared beliefs among group members. These beliefs stem from similar experiences and elaborate socialization processes, and they are viewed as basic truths and held with great conviction (Bar-Tal, 1990, 2000 in Eidelson, 2003, p. 183). Triandis (1996) states: "An examination of a range of definitions of culture indicates that almost all researchers agree that culture is reflected in shared cognitions, standard operating procedures, and unexamined assumptions" (p. 407). Eidelson (2003) brings in psycho-cultural and psychoanalytical perspectives, emphasizing that "collective templates for understanding the world emerge from culturally determined common experience and shared frames of reference, with dynamics often operating at levels beneath full consciousness." The analysis of beliefs that have gained hegemonic status in a group in Lustick (1993)'s work indicate they stop being evaluated since they are inferred as truth.

The collective template through which a group interprets its experience and shared beliefs, derived from socialization processes and not scrutinized, accurately reflects the results of Zionist historical narratives and the construction of the collective worldviews of constituents. The worldviews of Zionist culture in turn conflict with the international community and, "unless dramatically challenged, data and feedback discrepant with a core belief," such as the call for Israel to abide by international law and dismantle illegal settlements in occupied East Jerusalem, or the Goldstone Report's findings of war crimes committed by Israel against the Palestinian civilian population, will "typically either escape notice all together or undergo reframing to be consistent with preconceptions" (Eidelson, 2003, p. 182). Israel explains these two cases by claiming a right to Jerusalem as its capital and a right to defend itself against Hamas's rockets attacks from Gaza.

Therefore, unless deeper assumptions or constructs, which are the operational building blocks of collective worldviews, are addressed in one way or another, it is hard to have true communication over what should be a common denominator for a resolution. Besides power asymmetries and this solid national identity/ideology/culture not being addressed, the fact that both these proposals are not "local" and based on public engagement when it comes to Israel could also represent a problem. Lederach (2005) refers to an "Authenticity Gap," a feeling of being "hijacked by a view that peace is primarily within the purview and parameters of a small number of economically and militarily powerful people." Unless there is authentic ownership of the process on a large scale, any peace accord can be seen as foreign and imposed. No political leader can survive if their constituency abandons them. Therefore, both Jewish Israelis and Diaspora Jews should promote identity change from within the population, so it is less likely to be seen as external manipulation with an agenda that is not in the best interest of Jews. It should also not be elite driven, but be a widespread grassroots transformation. The cohesiveness and pervasiveness of Zionist ideology among Jews in Israel and the Diaspora, and how initiatives which seem to come from an external source with an intention of changing, transforming, or reviewing the situation - even if the declared goal is peace - will be seen as an attack on Zionist identity and ultimately the existence of Israel. In order to address whether identity change initiatives may succeed, an examination of how the Israeli government and one of its main think tanks fear a change in Zionist identity and strive to keep it intact must be conducted. This requires analyzing how the Israeli government justifies its policies to its constituency to maintain political legitimacy.

Amidst the international crisis Israel has faced since its May 2010 violent raid on the Mavi Marmara, one of the "Free Gaza" Flotilla ships bringing aid to the Gaza Strip, Daniel Levy (Interview with Aljazeera English, June 1, 2010), a former Israeli negotiator in the peace process, has claimed that Israel's choices in managing Palestinian civil disobedience have led to a growing gap between Israel's self-perception of its identity and the way the world perceives it. The Gaza Strip, which has been under Israeli military siege for the last three years, is home to over 1.5 million Palestinians, of which around 80 percent are under the poverty line (OCHA, 2009) due to the conflict. Israel is no stranger to international public relations problems. Only a few months before the crisis, the assassination of a Palestinian
leader in Dubai, carried out by Israeli secret service operatives, caused the UK ("Britain expels Israeli," March, 2010) and Australia ("Australia expels Israeli," May, 2010) to expel Israeli diplomats over the use of forged British and Australian passports for their personnel. In the aftermath of the War on Gaza of 2008/2009 and the Goldstone Report, Israel found itself increasingly isolated from a diplomatic standpoint, which according to the New York Times (Feb. 17, 2010) prompted the Israeli government to start "a campaign ... to turn every Israeli - and ultimately every Jew - into a traveling public relations agent." The Mashirim Israel ("Explaining Israel") campaign relies on an official website put up by the Ministry of Public Diplomacy and Diaspora Affairs. The website contains instructions in Hebrew for Israelis on how to respond to criticisms from the international community regarding Israeli policies towards Palestinians. It also contains three videos claiming that Israel is misunderstood abroad due to misrepresentations by the international media (Ministry of Public Diplomacy and Diaspora Affairs, 2010).

Nevertheless, the Israeli government would get better results by communicating directly with the campaign's supposed target audience, the international community. The newspaper Haaretz ("A government without hope," 2010) suggests the official campaign simply represents "how the government wants its citizens to understand their country and represent it to the world." It would seem that the main goal of the campaign is to reinforce Zionist identity and provide simple answers to the public. The newspaper comments further that "Explaining Israel' reveals the worldview of Benjamin Netanyahu's government: limitless self-righteousness, eternal hostility toward the Arab and Muslim worlds, a view of Palestinians as invaders and inciters, and commitment to developing the West Bank settlements" ("A government without hope," 2010). Although critical of Netanyahu's self-righteousness, the article fails to mention that this same righteousness is in itself the unquestioned truth mentioned by Bar-tal (1990), Lustick (1993), Galtung (2000), Kelman (2004) and Silberstein (2008).

Besides facing external criticism, Israel has been encountering mounting internal criticism. Reut Institute, a leading conservative Israeli think tank, concludes in a recent report that neither policy changes nor improving public relations will counter such domestic disaffection, since "delegitimization stems from a rejection of Israel's existence" (Reut, 2010). The report oversimplifies the situation, representing delegitimizers as radicals seeking Israel's demise and not policy modifications. Reut's official recommendation is for the government to dismantle the "delegitimization network" attacking its policies. The institute is supported by the Information and Diaspora Affairs Ministry and its public relations campaign, which also assume that Israel's policies are not illegitimate. The two bodies differ only in terms of their interpretation of delegitimizers: The ministry claims their views are due to ignorance or miscommunication, while Reut claims they are a cover for promoting Israel's demise and a form of anti-Semitism (Ministry of Public Diplomacy and Diaspora Affairs, 2010; Reut Institute, 2010). In either case, a tone of defensiveness indicates a fear of losing legitimacy, sense of righteousness and a desire for support among the Jewish constituency seeking identity change and rejecting key Zionist precepts. Shayshon (2010), a representative for Reut Institute, affirms:

[It] is wrong to think that solely by "explaining" Israel as it is to the world, delegitimization will go away. A rich understanding of the structural roots of the problem and direct response through deployment of the several principles ... may help stem the tide against what is increasingly becoming a strategic threat against the state.

These efforts undertaken by the Israeli government and the apparatuses that dictate policy are a reaction to potential identity changes within Jewish circles in Israel and elsewhere. They show the vulnerability of the discursive structure. According to Silberstein (2008), "what keeps the dominant forms of knowledge in place are regimes of truths and relations of power" (p. 10). This should be taken into consideration when thinking of an approach to the Israel/Palestine conflict as it is a form of structural violence present but rarely discussed since it is directed primarily at Israelis and only indirectly at Palestinians.

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emanates from Zionist deep culture and shapes the thoughts, attitudes and actions of Israeli Jews and Jews elsewhere into an oppressive, ethnocentric mindset. This by no means relieves Jews of responsibility in the matter, but suggests a possible lack of awareness within the group regarding the moral implications of its stances.

**TOWARDS A CRITICAL APPROACH TO IDENTITY CHANGE**

Processes of identity change should occur on a much earlier stage than negotiations with opposing sides. If identity change occurs at a deep level, there might not be much left to negotiate. To believe that a deconstruction of Israeli narratives, myths, beliefs and other elements of deep culture during a conflict transformation process will have an effect on the level of national mentality and identity might be hoping for too much. It may affect the actors involved personally in the process, but as to what extent it can go beyond them, even if they are heads of state, is debatable. The level of acceptance of a “transformed” political leader in the eyes of his/her constituency, which has remained without any identity change, might prove disastrous. It should be noted that Yitzhak Rabin did not reach a radical point of identity change, and nevertheless, unhappy constituents assassinated him. The identity change process should thus be conceived on a large scale as opposed to involving only small numbers of people.

In order to address this issue, a deeper look into constructs and how they affect collective thinking in Israel must be undertaken. Each construct is recognized automatically by an "other" within Zionist circles, used in producing meaning in communication and in reasoning in Israel's defense as it has become a cultural phenomenon. Use of these constructs by the government in its public relations campaign and other instances, in the media, education system, and in day-to-day communications in any given community is a discursive practice through which Zionist deep culture is constantly reproduced, amplified and perpetuated. It becomes the reality people perceive and reproduce unwittingly, and thus by seeming to be the only reality, it exerts power over both Israeli and Diaspora Jews.

This relationship between discourse and power, on which Foucault has written extensively, is central to the works of post-Zionist scholars. Silberstein (2010) uses Foucault to explain post-Zionism as an intellectual critique "of the discourses, practices, and institutions produced by Zionism," offering a challenging discourse to the Zionist one, which is "imbuing with meaning the daily realities of Israeli life, society, and culture. In the process it reveals the contingency of the prevailing Zionist definitions of Israeli national identity, territory, history, and law. It thus helps us to see that things can be otherwise" (p. 10). Nevertheless Silberstein (2010) suggests that post-Zionist scholars' "primary concerns are by no means theoretical. They regard theory to be significant only insofar as it can help to reveal social and cultural inequities and injustices" (p. 13). Such an approach reveals an understanding of the deep reach of Zionist discourse and the pragmatic motivations behind post-Zionist scholarly critiques. Once again, the government's as well as other Zionist institutions' response to post-Zionist scholarship are indicators of the perception of genuine threats, such as the case of the deportation and 10-year-ban of Jewish American scholar Norman G. Finkelstein, explained by authorities as due to "security concerns" (Senyor, 2008); the denial of entry to Noam Chomsky (Hass, 2010); and the call for the resignation of Haifa University Professor Ilan Pappe by the president of the university (Traubman, 2005). These perceptions of Zionist institutions can be interpreted as indications of potential identity threats that are met with attempts to silence dissenting voices, arguably due to the impossibility of Zionist discourse to accept scrutiny.

Returning to the approaches for conflict transformation mentioned in this article, although they offer processes through which identity change might happen, they do not account for the artificial setting they suggest and how that relates little to the reality of the larger Zionist group. A process of collective identity change needs to be contingent on a search for an ethical existence, a way to be Israeli or Jewish that would not imply an infringing of
Palestinians' or anyone else's fundamental rights. It should occur in a phase prior to that of negotiations to encourage a smoother peace process. Kelman (2004) says that identity change should occur out of a recognition that the new identity is closer to one's own moral values than the old one, thereby strengthening the core identity rather than weakening it as it might initially seem to be doing. Identity change implies accepting responsibility in a conflict in accordance with one's own moral values, admitting to being wrong, and relinquishing certain aspects of a contributing identity. The admission of flaws promotes trust and must first take place within the group itself as an independent and internal process.

Recent Jewish/Israeli initiatives confronting established Zionist identity, ideology and culture stress local, sustainable, deep, and durable processes like those mentioned earlier by Lederach (2005) and Kelman (2004). A new identity is emerging through a complex and diverse network of people and organizations acting in various ways to express their dissent from Israeli government and often from Zionism, although some people have attempted to create an "ethical Zionism" so as not to completely dispense with a concept with which they have strong emotional affinities (Haasz, 2011, p. 155). Any identity changes in any case need to be managed by Jewish Israelis and Jews from the Diaspora. Furthermore, those leading the way forward need to develop means, techniques and resources for deconstructing Zionist discourse in a humane way, taking into consideration the emotional difficulties entailed in this process. As Halper (2009) notes: "[T]he approach to the conflict has to be extricated from its mythical dimension of 'Clash of Civilizations' into a framework based on human rights language, where emotionalism of the Israelis and any others who identify with the Israeli narrative of the conflict is taken into account in order to soften their resistance, and thus engage in a more universal, moral, reasoned way of framing the conflict."

CONCLUSION

If Zionist identity remains unchanged peace cannot exist between Israelis and Palestinians. The conventional progressive approaches to conflict transformation examined in this article do promote identity change within formal processes of conflict transformation, but it is exactly this insertion in the process that makes them less effective, since in order for identity change to succeed it needs to occur on a deeper and larger scale. Its occurrence should not be contingent on a punctual peace agreement, but out of an awareness of the "other" as a reflection of one's own humanity and a lifting of the ideological fog of Zionist identity. There is no apparent motivation for Israel to choose such a path while it maintains its Zionist ideology, thus making identity change contingent on initiatives from among Israeli and Diaspora Jews aware of the gap between their traditional values and Zionist rationale. In sum, identity change should be worked on before formal negotiations and peace processes and through internal initiatives. The more internalized an identity change is, the more the group will remain true to the new identity and the more positive will be the results. In the case of Israel/Palestine, provided that deep internalized identity change occurs within the Zionist constituency, profound change will ensue regarding relationships with Palestinians, since the unjust treatment they have suffered for so long stems directly from Zionist deep culture. There are two research directions that should be explored in the future that are connected to the question of identity change. The first concerns how the process of identity change occurs at the individual level in terms of triggers, difficulties, obstacles, and social influences; the second, if people manage to know more about the process of identity change itself, how that could in turn inform conflict transformation initiatives.

REFERENCES


