

## **The Role of Acceptance and Empowerment in Promoting Reconciliation from the Perspective of the Needs-Based Model**

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*We propose that following a victimization episode, victims experience an enhanced need for power, whereas perpetrators experience an enhanced need for social acceptance. We present the needs-based model of reconciliation, according to which the reciprocal satisfaction of these needs may lead to improved relations between victims and perpetrators. We then use the model as an organizing framework for reviewing theories and empirical findings within the field of victim/perpetrator dynamics in general and reconciliation in particular. We also examine its applicability to various contexts including interpersonal and intergroup conflicts and conflicts between majority and minority groups within the same society. Finally, we conclude by discussing policy implications drawn from the model.*

In 1981, Roger Fisher and William Ury published the bestseller *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In*. The book, which coined phrases such as “win-win” versus “win-lose” solutions and has shaped how many of us think about

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conflicts, analyzed ways in which parties can examine their underlying interests and bridge across them. The emotions of conflict (e.g., revenge, humiliation, and guilt) play a relatively minor role in this analysis. In 2005, Roger Fisher and Daniel Shapiro authored another bestseller on the same topic titled *Beyond Reason: Using Emotions as You Negotiate*. The difference between the two titles over a 25-year period reflects the change in the scientific and sociocultural zeitgeist regarding the role of emotions in conflict resolution. Global events such as the ethnic wars in the Balkans (e.g., Ignatieff, 1998) and more hopeful changes such as the end of apartheid and the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa may have played a part in catalyzing this change.

In particular, there has been a growing understanding in recent years that agreements that aim to end conflicts between adversaries should address emotional issues such as mutual respect, acceptance, compassion, and justice. Failing to do so will leave these agreements particularly fragile. The collapse of the 1993 Oslo Accords aimed at ending the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians and the outbreak of the al-Aqsa Intifada in 2000 may serve as tragic examples of this dynamic. The understanding that emotional aspects of conflicts should not be ignored has brought policymakers (such as leaders and politicians) and field workers (such as social workers or workers within the legal and educational systems) to pay more attention to the necessity of addressing the emotional aspects of conflicts.

This awareness is reflected in two recent social phenomena: First, there has been a growing institutionalization of conciliatory approaches that focus on addressing the emotional needs of adversaries rather than on merely punishing perpetrators. These range from international peacemaking tribunals such as the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to innovations within the criminal justice system, schools, social services, and communities (Boyes-Watson, 2008). Second, apologies have become more frequent in the public sphere. For example, in 1998 both UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and former U.S. president Bill Clinton apologized for failing to prevent the Rwandan genocide; in 2000, Pope John Paul II apologized to the victims of two millennia of persecution by the Catholic Church, and Argentinean President Fernando de la Rúa apologized for Argentina's tolerance of Nazi immigrants; in 2005, Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi apologized for Japan's aggression during World War II; and recently, in June 2008, Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper apologized to Canadian indigenous peoples for their historical forced assimilation at residential schools. We believe that both phenomena reflect the understanding that in order to heal wounded relations between adversaries (i.e., victims and perpetrators) their conflict-related emotions and emotional needs should be addressed.

This article focuses on two conflict-related emotional needs: The need for empowerment and the need for acceptance. We present the needs-based model of reconciliation (Nadler & Shnabel, 2008, Shnabel & Nadler, 2008), which proposes

that following episodes of victimization (a) victims experience a heightened need for empowerment (e.g., want to regain their sense of control and autonomy) whereas perpetrators experience a heightened need for acceptance (e.g., want assurance that their victims or other members of the moral community do not reject them), and (b) the satisfaction of these differential needs increases victims' and perpetrators' willingness to reconcile with each other. We provide empirical evidence for the model's validity in the context of interpersonal and intergroup conflicts and discuss its applicability to relations between unequal groups within the same society (i.e., majority and minority groups). We conclude by stressing that whether interventions are implemented at an individual level (e.g., when using restorative justice procedures between criminals and their victims), an intergroup level (e.g., in dialogue groups between majority and minority group members within educational settings), or an international level (e.g., public speeches expressing collective apology or forgiveness), they should take into account the involved parties' emotional needs for empowerment and acceptance.

### *Reconciliation and Conflict Resolution*

The concept of reconciliation has only recently entered the scientific discourse on processes for ending conflicts (Rouhana, 2004). Over the past half century the study of conflict in the social sciences in general, and in social psychology in particular, has been dominated by a realist approach to conflict and its resolution. According to this view, "disputes between persons and between groups are grounded in conflicts of material interests" (Scheff, 1994, p. 3). In international conflicts these interests may relate to scarce natural resources such as land, in intrasocietal conflicts these may be scarce budgets, and in conflicts between groups of children these may be pocket knives (Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood, & Sherif, 1961). The realist viewpoint has generated much interest and insight over past decades, for example, through the introduction of concepts and theorizing based on game theory into social psychology (Jones, 1998; Pruitt, 1998).

An alternative to the realist view, suggested by Burton, is the psychological needs approach to conflict (Burton, 1969). This approach suggests that during conflicts parties' basic psychological needs are threatened (e.g., the need for esteem or the need for justice), and that these threats lead to emotional states and subsequent behaviors that prolong and intensify conflict. Thus, for example, a threat to a party's basic need for positive esteem may lead to feelings of humiliation, which may then fuel acts of revenge against the adversary (Frijda, 1994). Similarly, when relations are marked by feelings of distrust, positive gestures by the adversary are likely to be discounted and may even deepen distrust by serving as "evidence" of the adversary's cunning (Lewicki & Wiethoff, 2000).

While recent discussions of processes of reconciliation focus on reducing or removing these emotional barriers (Bar-Siman-Tov, 2004; Bar-Tal, 2004;

Kriesberg, 2000; Nadler, Malloy, & Fisher, 2008), the definition of reconciliation itself remains somewhat elusive. Kelman (2008), whose work focuses on the context of peace-making processes, distinguishes between *conflict settlement*, *conflict resolution*, and *reconciliation*. Conflict settlement operates at the level of interests. Similar to the emphasis of the realist approach to conflict, the settlement of conflict here consists of finding an agreed-upon formula for the division of contested resources. In contrast, processes of conflict resolution and reconciliation are two aspects of a perspective that focuses on the psychological (i.e., cognitive and emotional) dimensions of conflicts (Burton, 1969). Conflict resolution involves the relationship between the adversarial parties. It aims to restore feelings of trust between the adversaries and build a pragmatic partnership in which each side is convinced that cooperation is in its own best interests. Finally, reconciliation is viewed by Kelman as a process that reflects the identity changes that each of the adversaries undergoes. Parties to conflict often compete over what constitutes a valid account of the conflict, each party viewing itself as the victim of the other party's aggression and blaming the other for initiating and escalating hostilities. Reconciliation consists of removing the negation of the other as an element of one's own identity and being able to acknowledge the other's narrative without having to fully agree with it. In a process of reconciliation each party is said to strengthen the core elements of its own identity while accommodating the other.

Other perspectives on reconciliation refer to two broad categories of "conflict-related barriers." Some emphasize the restoration of trustworthy relations as the essence of reconciliation. For example, Exline and Baumeister (2000) define reconciliation as "a willingness to come together to work, play, or live in an atmosphere of trust" (p. 136). Others emphasize internal identity changes in the sense of accepting rather than negating the adversary's identity. For example, Staub, Pearlman, Gubin, and Hagengimana (2005) define reconciliation as "a process that must include a changed psychological orientation toward the other" (p. 301) that eventually leads to mutual acceptance (see also Noor, Brown, & Prentice, 2008). The King Center, an institution dedicated to the advancement of the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, further emphasizes mutual acceptance as a core element of reconciliation by defining it as the "bringing together of adversaries in a spirit of community after a conflict has been resolved" (The King Center, n.d.). Both of these options are reflected in Kelman's distinction between ending intergroup conflict by affecting a change in the adversaries' relationship versus affecting an intragroup change in either of the adversaries' identities (i.e., "conflict resolution" and "reconciliation," respectively).

Based on this theorizing, we broadly define the process of reconciliation as *removing conflict-related emotional barriers that block the way to healing a discordant relationship* (Nadler & Shnabel, 2008) and distinguish between *instrumental reconciliation* and *socioemotional reconciliation* as two paths to removing conflict-related barriers (Nadler & Shnabel, 2008). Instrumental reconciliation is

the gradual process whereby parties learn to trust each other in the course of repeated cooperation toward common instrumental goals (e.g., a cleaner environment or better medical facilities for all; see Lederach, 1997, for a discussion of peace-building processes). Socioemotional reconciliation refers to processes by which the adversaries remove threats to their identity produced as a consequence of the pain and humiliation inflicted during the conflict. This process, which results in the restoration of perceptions of positive identity and sense of worth for each of the adversaries, is at the center of the needs-based model of reconciliation. For sake of clarity and simplicity of presentation, we shall employ the concept “reconciliation” to refer to this process of “socioemotional reconciliation.”

*The Role of Psychological Resources in Reconciliation:  
Empowerment and Acceptance*

Our view of the process of reconciliation centers on the restoration of two fundamental psychological resources that have been damaged during conflict and over which parties negotiate, often in a latent manner (Scheff, 1994). These two primary resources are *acceptance*—the sense of being an acceptable and moral social actor, deserving sympathy and understanding—and *empowerment*—the sense of being an autonomous and influential social actor, who is treated justly and whose rights are respected. An atypical case in which these psychological resources were put on the table can illustrate the distinction between the two: Prior to the 2005 Sharem conference between leaders of Israel, Palestine, Egypt, and Jordan, a group of leading Israeli intellectuals called for the Israeli government “to begin negotiations by approaching the Palestinian people, *expressing recognition of its suffering*, and *acknowledging the fact that Israel is partially responsible for this suffering*.”

We suggest that the expression of empathy and recognition of suffering is related to the negotiation over *acceptance*, whereas the acknowledgment of responsibility for causing injustice is related to the negotiation over *empowerment*: Expressions of empathy toward an individual or a group, in the sense of validating their suffering and distress and being able to see things from their perspective, convey the message that the individual or group is not alone. In contrast, in cases where the rights of an individual or a group have been violated, acknowledging responsibility for the injustice entails admitting that perpetrators owe a “moral debt” to their victims (Minow, 1998) and may therefore elicit a commitment to rectify the situation (Dovidio, Gaertner, & Saguy, 2007). This recognition acts to restore victims’ sense of control and autonomy and is therefore said to be empowering (Nadler & Shnabel, 2008; Shnabel & Nadler, 2008).

Admittedly, acceptance and empowerment are highly related and are often hard to distinguish. For example, it is often the case that acknowledging the violation of another individual’s or group’s rights (an act of empowerment) evokes

feelings of sympathy and compassion toward them (which engenders acceptance). Yet, it is possible to feel sympathy toward another individual's or group's suffering without acknowledging that they have been treated unjustly (e.g., by attributing their misfortune to bad luck or their own choices). Thus, in this article we make the claim that empowerment and acceptance are psychologically distinct constructs, and provide empirical evidence as to their differential effects on attitudes and willingness to reconcile with adversaries.

*The Needs-Based Model: Satisfying the Emotional Needs for Acceptance and Empowerment as a Key to Promoting Reconciliation*

The needs-based model of reconciliation is a theoretical model that seeks to explain why certain social roles are more strongly associated with an enhanced need for acceptance whereas other social roles are associated with an enhanced need for empowerment. It also illuminates how the satisfaction of these needs may promote reconciliation. The main tenet of the model is that following an episode in which one side has victimized another, both the victim and the perpetrator are deprived of certain unique psychological resources. This deprivation brings about different emotional needs in victims and perpetrators, and until these needs are satisfied, they serve as barriers to reconciliation. Reciprocal gestures that satisfy the differential needs of victims and perpetrators will facilitate the recovery of the parties' impaired psychological resources, and thus promote their willingness to reconcile. In this manner, reconciliation can be framed as a social exchange interaction through which victims and perpetrators receive needed emotional "commodities" from their adversary.

The impairment of the psychological resources of victims and perpetrators is asymmetrical. Victims feel inferior with respect to their power (Foster & Rusbult, 1999), honor (Cohen, Nisbett, Bodwell, & Schwarz, 1996; Scheff, 1994), self-esteem (Scobie & Scobie, 1998), and perceived control (Baumeister, Stillwell & Heatherton, 1994), and are likely to experience feelings of frustration or anger (McCullough et al., 1998). In contrast, perpetrators suffer from a sense of moral inferiority (i.e., their moral image is impaired; Exline & Baumeister, 2000; Zechmeister & Romero, 2002) and may feel guilt (Baumeister et al., 1994), shame (Exline & Baumeister, 2000), or repentance (North, 1998). This array of emotional states reflects perpetrators' "anxiety over social exclusion" (Baumeister et al., 1994, p. 246), because they face the threat of being rejected from the moral community to which they belong. The sanction of social exclusion is imposed by moral communities upon those who violate common moral standards or deviate from the community's norms (Tavuchis, 1991).

Using the terminology of resources theory, which classifies the resources that are exchanged in social interactions into six categories (love, status, services, goods, information, and money; Foa & Foa, 1980), we suggest that the resources

most threatened for victims fall under the category of “status” (e.g., relative power, control, autonomy, sense of competence, and respect), whereas the resources most threatened for perpetrators are subsumed under the category of “love” (e.g., social acceptance, belongingness, and relatedness). These two human needs, the need for *love and belonging* on one hand and *power and status* on the other, constitute the core of interpersonal experience (Bennis & Shepard, 1956). In this article, we will use the terms “acceptance” and “empowerment” to relate to these respective resources.

Deprivation of these resources corresponds with a motivational state in which the individual or group experiences their deficit as a need that should be fulfilled. For victims, this emerges as an enhanced need to restore their sense of power and through heightened power-seeking behavior (Foster & Rusbult, 1999). One strategy that perpetrators may employ to restore victims’ power is to acknowledge responsibility for causing the victims’ injustice. Such acknowledgment constitutes an admission of a moral debt that only the victim can cancel (Minow, 1998); this returns control to the hands of the victim. Other practices through which perpetrators may empower their victims include pointing out the victims’ achievements and capabilities (competence is one of the components of empowerment; Brookings & Bolton, 2000; Menon & Hartmann, 2002; Vardi, 2000; Yiannakis & Melnick, 2001), or, in the case of a victimized group, by appealing to national pride or expressing respect for the group’s culture and values. A recent illustration is Hillary Clinton’s statement on the occasion of Hispanic Heritage Month:

I join you in celebrating the achievements and contributions that Hispanics make every day to shape our great nation. . . While the [Latino] community is diverse, it is united by strong values: Faith, family, patriotism, and the belief that if you work hard and play by the rules, you can build a better future for your children. (public address, September 14, 2007)

Perpetrators, compared to victims, exercise power and control during the victimization episode. Nevertheless, when perpetrators are accused of violating conventional moral standards or deviating from group norms, they may fear exclusion from the “designated moral community” to which they belong (Tavuchis, 1991). The anxiety over social exclusion increases perpetrators’ motivations to perceive themselves as acceptable people (Baumeister, Stillwell, & Wotman, 1990) and restore their moral image. One of the chief strategies by which victims may restore perpetrators’ moral image is expressing understanding for the circumstances that compelled their actions and sympathy for their emotional distress. In line with this reasoning, Nadler and Liviatan (2004) suggested that perpetrators experience an enhanced need for empathy and are therefore likely to interpret expressions of empathy and understanding from their victims as particularly positive (compared to other constructive messages). Sympathy and understanding for the perpetrators’ perspective, which may culminate in explicit forgiveness, are a kind of “gift” that victims may proffer to those who have offended them (Enright, Freedman, &

Rique, 1998). Such “gifts” mitigate the moral inferiority engendered by the perpetrator role (Exline & Baumeister, 2000), and provide reassurance that perpetrators belong to the moral community from which they feel potentially excluded.

Victims can also satisfy perpetrators’ need for social acceptance by expressing willingness to form friendships with them (in the case of interpersonal relations) or to engage in economic or cultural cooperation (in the case of intergroup relations). For example, the growing willingness of many Israeli Jews to visit Germany or buy German-made products may be interpreted as an expression of social acceptance, following an era in which traveling to Germany or buying German-made products were considered taboo (Köhler, 2005).

The needs-based model contends that when a successful social exchange takes place between victims and perpetrators, both victims and perpetrators satisfy their emotional needs and cease to feel powerless or morally inferior. A primary social mechanism through which such exchange interactions can be carried out is the “apology-forgiveness cycle” (Tavuchis, 1991): The perpetrators’ apology, which includes an acknowledgment of responsibility for past wrongdoing, satisfies the victims’ need for power, and the victims’ expression of forgiveness satisfies the perpetrators’ need for acceptance. In this process, the roles of “victim” and “perpetrator” are symbolically erased, placing the involved parties on a more equal footing (North, 1998) and thus increasing their willingness to reconcile with one another (Nadler & Shnabel, 2008; Shnabel & Nadler, 2008).

The process described by the needs-based model is summarized in Figure 1.

### *Using the Needs-Based Model of Reconciliation as an Organizing Framework for Studies in Our Field*

We believe that several theories and empirical findings in our field are consistent with the needs-based model’s main hypotheses and thus may indirectly support these hypotheses. In the following sections, we will use the model as an organizing framework for discussing and interpreting research within the field of victim–perpetrator interaction in general and reconciliation in particular. Although we believe that victim–perpetrator dynamics and processes are similar at the interpersonal and intergroup levels, for the sake of readability and conceptual clarity, we will devote separate sections to the literatures at either conceptual level.

*Interpersonal conflicts.* Literature on conflict and reconciliation among individuals describes the motivations of victims and perpetrators in a manner that is highly consistent with the needs-based model. Regarding the victims’ side, McCullough et al. (1998) provided evidence for a two-component motivational system that governs victims’ responses to offences, motivating them to seek *avoidance* and *revenge*. These two components may be interpreted as means for

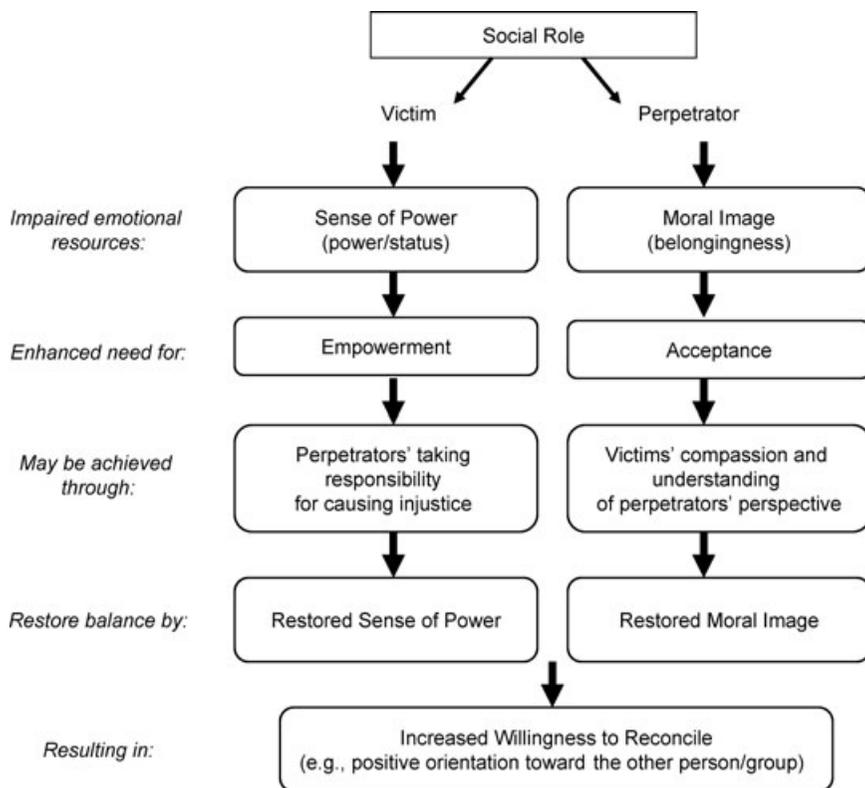


Fig. 1. The needs-based model of reconciliation.

regaining power: By taking revenge, victims reverse the power asymmetry between themselves and their perpetrators (Akhtar, 2002; Frijda, 1994), transforming perpetrators into the passive recipients of the vengeful act. Avoidance of perpetrators is another strategy by which victims may punish perpetrators, because the imposition of this social sanction deprives perpetrators of the particular psychological resource, acceptance, that they most need. The duality of avoidance and revenge is particularly salient in the context of close relationships in which these strategies may be viewed as indistinguishable (Worthington & Wade, 1999).

Research on perpetrators suggests that these tend to seek moral justification, engage in palliative comparisons, and use euphemistic labeling (Bandura, 1990), as well as to deny the painful consequences of their actions or their responsibility for having caused them (e.g., by attributing their harmful actions to external constraints) (Schönbach, 1990). Tavuchis (1991) proposed that perpetrators employ three strategies to deny or mitigate their responsibility for causing injustice to their

victims: Excuses (admitting the harm caused but denying actual moral responsibility; Lyman & Scott, 1970), justifications (admitting moral responsibility for the act but denying that it was harmful or immoral; Lyman & Scott, 1970), or refusals (refuting the evidence or contesting the authority of the claimant; Schönbach, 1990). These strategies may be interpreted as means for reducing the perpetrator's guilt and eliminating the threat to their moral image.

Although the above strategies may satisfy victims' need to restore power and perpetrators' need to remove the threat to their moral image, their unilateral nature makes them problematic. When victims use the strategies of revenge or avoidance, their sense of power is restored by weakening the perpetrators; similarly, when perpetrators use justifications, excuses, or refusals, they restore their moral image at the expense of their victims. These strategies are therefore unlikely to contribute to the end of conflict, but rather may contribute to its further escalation. In contrast, satisfying victims' and perpetrators' needs in a reciprocal manner (i.e., through mutual gestures of empowerment and acceptance) is likely to improve their relations.

Research on interpersonal relationships shows that apart from extremely dysfunctional cases (such as those of spousal abuse; Fincham, 2009), forgiveness promotes effective conflict resolution, whereas the absence of forgiveness may increase couples' risk of developing the negative interaction cycle that characterizes relationships in distress (Fincham, Beach, & Davila, 2004). In families, forgiveness is associated with positive individual traits (e.g., higher levels of emotional stability) and has a beneficial impact on relationship closeness and general family environment (e.g., experienced positivity; Maio, Thomas, Fincham, & Carnelley, 2008).

Although the studies cited above focused on forgiveness, rather than on the apology–forgiveness cycle per se, evidence suggests that apologies or expressions of remorse by perpetrators facilitate forgiveness (Fincham, 2009; McCullough et al., 1998) and that individuals who express these sentiments following a transgression are more likely to be forgiven by their victims (Hoyt, Fincham, McCullough, Maio, & Davila, 2005). Accordingly, these findings may be taken to provide indirect support for the benefits associated with the use of the apology–forgiveness cycle.

Recent research on forgiveness in families and close relationships is important in that it examines the broader context in which the forgiveness is embedded. While prior research has tended to adopt a one-sided approach, for example by focusing only on the victim's perspective and ignoring the perpetrator's (Hoyt et al., 2005), or by focusing on factors that are situated at the intraindividual level (Maio et al., 2008), such as one's general style of responding to anger (Tangney, Wagner, Hill-Barlow, Marschall, & Gramzow, 1996), more recent research has prioritized factors that operate at the relational level (e.g., importance of the relationship and happiness in it Hoyt et al., 2005). In addition, the antecedents and consequences of

forgiveness have been found to vary significantly across different types of family relationships (i.e., mother, father, or child; Maio et al., 2008). These findings lead Hoyt et al. to “encourage clinicians as well as researchers to conceptualize conflict reactions as embedded in relational contexts, and support efforts to address family patterns of conflict systemically, rather than focusing exclusively on the individual level” (p. 392). The needs-based model, which integrates the interpersonal level (i.e., messages exchanged through an interaction between victims and perpetrators) and the intrapersonal level (i.e., the resultant effect on the restoration of impaired dimensions within victims’ and perpetrators’ self-identity), is consistent with this approach. In addition, it may be particularly useful as an organizing framework for future research of the processes and outcomes of communication between partners about transgressions, a topic that has been largely understudied (Fincham, 2009).

*Intergroup conflicts.* Despite the inarguable differences between interpersonal and intergroup relations (Insko, Kirchner, Pinter, Efaw, & Wildschut, 2005), some of the dynamic processes that take place between victimized and perpetrating groups are similar to the processes found at the interpersonal level. Like individuals, victimized groups are motivated to restore their sense of power and honor (Scheff, 1994) by taking revenge on their perpetrators or bringing them to justice (Minow, 1998). Perpetrating groups, on the other hand, may use “exonerating cognitions” to legitimize their acts (e.g., blaming the victims for the harm they experienced by asserting that they “brought it on themselves”; Wohl, Branscombe, & Klar, 2006) or emotionally distance themselves from their victims (e.g., by dehumanizing them; Nadler & Shnabel, 2008). These strategies allow perpetrators to minimize the threat to their moral image.

Besides these unilateral strategies, reciprocal strategies for satisfying the emotional needs of victims and perpetrators may operate at the intergroup level as they do at the interpersonal level. In fact, literature on intergroup reconciliation is highly consistent with the needs-based model’s tenet that reciprocal satisfaction of perpetrators’ need for acceptance and victims’ need for empowerment may promote their willingness to reconcile. Specifically, the idea that empathy, a manifestation of social acceptance, may symbolically remove the threat of social exclusion for perpetrators and thus increase their willingness to reconcile is reflected in the work of Staub et al. (2005), who conducted an intervention intended to promote reconciliation in Rwanda. They suggested that making the participants (mainly Tutsis and Hutus) see genocide as the outcome, although a horrible one, of human processes rather than of incomprehensible evil, and understanding the influences leading perpetrators to their actions, helped members of the perpetrating group (i.e., Hutus) feel “rehumanized,” eased their burden of shame and guilt and opened them to reconciliation. Such an understanding by the victim for the circumstances that led the perpetrator to commit wrongdoing underscores the parties’ common identity as frail human beings whose behavior is often determined by extreme

external circumstances. This draws a circle of common humanity around victims and perpetrators and averts the social exclusion of perpetrators from the moral community to which both belong.

From the victims' side, the idea that perpetrators' admission of wrongdoing may symbolically empower them and thus increase their willingness to reconcile is echoed in Gobodo-Madikizela's (2008) analysis of the psychological consequences of the TRC hearings in South Africa. In these hearings, perpetrators of human rights abuses were granted amnesty on the condition that they give full disclosure of acts that they committed, while victims of these crimes had a chance to speak publicly about the abuses they suffered in the past as well as to grant forgiveness to their perpetrators. Interestingly, and in line with our model, Gobodo-Madikizela argues that:

When perpetrators express remorse, when they finally acknowledge that they can see what they earlier could not see, or did not want to, they are revalidating the victim's pain. . . . Empowered and revalidated, many victims at this point find it natural to extend and deepen the healing process by going a step further: turning around and conferring forgiveness on their torturer. The motivation to do this does not stem only from altruism or a high sense of morality. . . . Reciprocating with empathy and forgiveness in the face of a perpetrator's remorse restores to many victims the sense that they are once again capable of effecting a deep difference in the moral community. (p. 69)

Thus, the decision to forgive can paradoxically elevate victimized group members to a position of strength as the ones who have the key to the perpetrators' wish.

#### *Direct Empirical Evidence Supporting the Needs-Based Model of Reconciliation*

We conducted a series of five studies that provide direct empirical support for the model's validity on the interpersonal level (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008), and another two studies that provide direct support for the model's validity at the intergroup level (Shnabel, Nadler, Ullrich, & Dovidio, 2008).

*Interpersonal reconciliation.* The first study tested the hypotheses that individual victims and perpetrators suffer from impairment to different psychological resources, and that this evokes different emotional needs. The study used an experimental situation in which half of the participants were randomly assigned to the role of victim and the other half to the role of perpetrator. We compared the reactions of participants in the victim–perpetrator dyad with those of participants in a control dyad in which participants experienced unequal power relations in terms of status, influence, and success, but where no actual victimization episode took place.

The findings supported the hypothesis that following a victimization episode, victims suffer from a decrease in their sense of power and perpetrators suffer from a decrease in their moral image. In addition, the decrease in perpetrators' moral

image was associated with a parallel increase in need for social acceptance, which found expression in a greater desire that victims understand their perspective and express empathy toward them. Victims, on the other hand, expressed a greater need for empowerment, which found expression in a greater desire for control over the situation and for obtaining justice (i.e., that perpetrators acknowledge that victims had been unduly wronged).

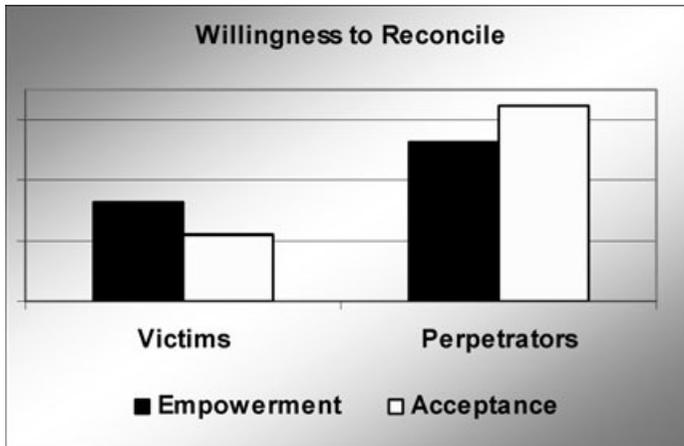
In a second experiment designed to test the same hypotheses in a naturalistic setting, we had participants recall a personal episode in which they had either hurt or been hurt by a significant other. As predicted, participants who had thought about themselves as victims had lower ratings of power and expressed a greater need for empowerment than those who had thought about themselves as perpetrators. In contrast, those who had thought about themselves as perpetrators had lower ratings of moral image (i.e., they scored lower when asked how they thought others viewed them morally) and expressed a greater need for acceptance than those who had been induced to think about themselves as victims. Despite the wide range of victimization episodes elicited by participants in terms of the severity, intentionality, and type of harm caused (e.g., abuse of a classmate, turning down a romantic interest, or failing to consider a partner's opinion) the results replicated the findings of the first study. This suggests that similar psychological processes underlie a wide variety of victimization contexts.

We then turned to test the assertion that victims' readiness to reconcile with their adversaries is enhanced by the satisfaction of their need for empowerment, while perpetrators' readiness to reconcile is enhanced by the satisfaction of their need for acceptance. In the first experimental test of this hypothesis, we again randomly assigned participants to the role of victim or perpetrator. Participants then received a message from their counterpart that included elements of either empowerment (e.g., justification of the participant's behavior) or social acceptance (e.g., expressions of empathy toward the participant). The findings supported the model's predictions: A message of empowerment restored victims' sense of power and increased their willingness to reconcile, while a message of acceptance did not affect participants' sense of power and only slightly affected willingness to reconcile. A message of acceptance restored perpetrators' moral image and increased their willingness to reconcile, while a message of empowerment did not affect participants' moral image and, again, only slightly affected willingness to reconcile. In a subsequent study, we had participants respond to a vignette that described a victimization episode in a work-related environment in which a supervisor declined a seemingly legitimate request by an employee. The findings were replicated.

In a final study in this research program, we sought to examine the full range of the model's predictions by measuring individuals' sense of power, moral image, and willingness to reconcile both *before* and *after* receiving a message of empowerment or acceptance from an adversary. Participants were asked to read a

vignette that described an event in which an employee discovered that his or her attractive position in an organization had been taken over by a fellow worker. Half of the participants were asked to assume the role of the perpetrator (i.e., the person who had taken the job) and the other half were asked to assume the role of the victim (i.e., the worker who had lost his job). Consistent with earlier findings, we found that perpetrators felt a greater threat to their moral image and had a stronger need for social acceptance than did victims, who experienced a greater threat to their sense of power and expressed a stronger need for empowerment. Later on, participants received the second part of the vignette, in which they learned that the antagonist in the story made a verbal statement to the protagonist that expressed either empowerment or acceptance. In line with the model's predictions, the increase in victims' sense of power was higher in the empowerment condition than in the acceptance condition; accordingly, their willingness to reconcile was also higher in the empowerment than in the acceptance condition. For perpetrators, on the other hand, the increase in their moral image and willingness to reconcile was higher in the acceptance than in the empowerment condition. Figure 2 presents victims' and perpetrators' mean willingness to reconcile following each type of message.

*Intergroup reconciliation.* In light of the consistent support for the needs-based model at the interpersonal level, we turned to test its implications for conflicts between social groups. Arguably, interpersonal conflicts (e.g., violent crimes between two individuals) and intergroup conflicts (e.g., civil or international wars)



**Fig. 2.** Victims' and perpetrators' willingness to reconcile following messages of empowerment and acceptance from their adversaries.

can be fundamentally different in terms of the degree of suffering and the complexity of the processes involved. Indeed, evidence on interindividual–intergroup discontinuity suggests that group processes might be fundamentally different from processes operating at the interpersonal level, because relations between groups tend to be more competitive and less cooperative than relations between individuals (Insko et al., 2005).

Nevertheless, Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and Self-Categorization Theory (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987) contend that the psychology of individuals is influenced to a large extent by salient group memberships. According to these theories, when a given in-group–out-group distinction is salient, people define themselves less in terms of their unique characteristics as individuals and more in terms of prototypical attributes of the in-group. Thus, people can experience entirely group-based emotions such as feeling guilty for what one’s group (rather than oneself) has done to another group (Smith, Seger, & Mackie, 2007). As the elation and anguish of sport fans show, actual group membership is not a strict precondition for the emergence of emotions based on a group’s fate. We take this literature to imply that the psychological needs addressed by the needs-based model might also be activated in the course of intergroup rather than interpersonal conflicts.

We explored this issue by studying an intergroup context with clear and consensual roles of victim and perpetrator: the case of German–Jewish relations. We hypothesized that Jewish and German participants, even if they had not been personally victimized or implicated in the events of the Holocaust, would view themselves as victims and perpetrators in the context of German–Jewish relations and would therefore exhibit enhanced needs for empowerment and acceptance, respectively. In line with our model, we expected Jewish participants to express a greater willingness to reconcile following an empowering message conveyed by a German representative than following an accepting message. The opposite pattern was predicted for German participants, who were hypothesized to have a higher willingness to reconcile following an accepting message from a Jewish representative than following an empowering message.

To test these hypotheses, we exposed Jewish and German participants to two speeches allegedly made by the out-group’s representative. The central message conveyed in the speeches was either the acceptance or empowerment of the participants’ in-group. We then measured participants’ willingness to reconcile with the out-group. The results supported our hypotheses: While Jews were more willing to reconcile following the message of empowerment than following the message of acceptance, Germans were more willing to reconcile following the message of acceptance than following the message of empowerment.

Although the pattern of results provides empirical support for the needs-based model, the fact that participants were not randomly assigned to the roles of victims and perpetrators gives rise to an alternative explanation—that the difference in the

effects of the different types of messages is attributable to cultural differences between the two groups. To rule out this possibility, we replicated this experiment in the context of relations between Israeli Jews and Israeli Arabs. Because both Jews and Arabs often perceive themselves as the real victims of the Jewish–Arab conflict (Nadler, 2002), we focused on a historical event for which there is a consensus among Jewish and Arab Israelis as to the victimization of Arabs by the Jewish side: the Kfar Kassem massacre. In this event, which took place in October 1956, 43 unarmed Arab civilians were killed by the Jewish–Israeli border patrol for violating a curfew that had recently been imposed. Using the same experimental design as the one used in the German–Jewish study, we exposed Israeli Arabs and Jews to speeches conveying messages of empowerment or acceptance ostensibly made by representatives of the out-group on the 50th anniversary of the massacre. The results provided further support for the needs-based model: While Arab participants were more willing to reconcile following a message of empowerment, Jewish participants were more willing to reconcile following a message of acceptance.

Taken together, the findings of the above two studies suggest that it is the *social role* in a specific context, rather than general cultural values or a specific group identity, that influences the responsiveness of group members to different types of messages. Specifically, in the context of relations between Germans and Jewish Israelis in which Jews identify with the social role of the victim, a message of empowerment was found to be more conciliatory, whereas in the context of relations between Jewish and Arab Israelis in which Jews were placed in the social role of the perpetrator of wrongdoing, it was the message of acceptance that had a more conciliatory effect.

To summarize, the three main consecutive tenets of the model—that (a) victimization episodes impair victims’ sense of power and perpetrators’ moral image, (b) consequently, victims experience an enhanced need for empowerment and perpetrators experience an enhanced need for acceptance, and (c) restoring these impaired emotional resources via an appropriate message from the adversary promotes victims’ and perpetrators’ willingness to reconcile—were validated at both the interpersonal and intergroup levels.

#### *Applying the Needs-Based Model to Conflicts Between Minority and Majority Groups Within the Same Society*

In some intergroup relationships, such as those between Germans and Jews or between Blacks and Whites in South Africa, the victim and perpetrator roles are distinct. Other intergroup relations, in particular those that involve groups in intractable conflict (Bar-Tal, 2007), are characterized by “double victimhood,” where both sides claim to be the “real” victims of the conflict (e.g., Israelis and Palestinians; Nadler, 2002; Nadler & Shnabel, 2008). Yet another type of

intergroup relationship is that which exists between minority and majority groups within the same society, in which there might not necessarily be any specific victimization episode but rather a general social structure (i.e., a *status quo*) of disparities and inequality between the groups.

Seyranian, Atuel, and Crano (2008) distinguish between “moral majority” and “elites” on one hand, and “powerless populace” and “subjugated” groups on the other. Moral majorities (e.g., European Americans in the United States) and elites (e.g., the Apartheid rulers of South Africa) are, respectively, large or small groups within a society that are dominant, powerful, and that serve as a source rather than a target of treatment for other groups. Powerless populaces (e.g., women) and subjugated groups (e.g., homosexuals) are, respectively, large or small groups that have little power, are the target of treatment by others (e.g., expulsion, subjugation, or discrimination), and may be characterized as distinctive or counter normative. Based on this typology, we suggest that majorities are those privileged groups that by virtue of their position in society are able to exert power and influence their own and others’ fates, whereas minorities are those disadvantaged groups that do not enjoy this privilege. Thus, majority groups may also be termed “advantaged,” “privileged,” or “higher status” groups, whereas minority groups may be termed “disadvantaged,” “underprivileged,” or “lower status” groups.

We propose that the needs-based model is highly relevant to relations between minority and majority groups, even in the absence of particular victimization episodes, and that the emotional needs of victims and perpetrators correspond to those of minority and majority group members. There are several reasons for this assertion. First, in many instances minority groups are the historical victims of higher-status majority groups (e.g., Blacks or Native Americans vs. Whites in the United States). Second, theorizing on status suggests that the advantage enjoyed by a particular group inherently depends on the disadvantage inflicted on another; therefore, inequality between social groups does not necessarily reflect a “natural” order but rather the historical expropriation of one group’s resources by another (Jackman, 1994). Finally, the two psychological needs that are at the heart of the needs-based model—the need for social acceptance on one hand and empowerment (i.e., status, control, and respect) on the other—are both highly relevant to the context of minority–majority relations. Supporting this claim is the finding that most stereotypes are captured by two dimensions—warmth and competence—which reflect feelings of (dis)like and (dis)respect toward out-groups (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002). These dimensions correspond to acceptance and empowerment in the needs-based model, respectively. Empirical findings suggest that while minority groups are often perceived as low on the competence dimension (Fiske et al., 2002) and may be metaphorically likened to animals (Loughanan & Haslam, 2007), majority groups are often perceived as low on the warmth dimension (Fiske et al., 2002) and may be metaphorically likened to machines (i.e., automata; Loughanan & Haslam, 2007).

Indeed, research findings within the field of majority–minority relations provide indirect evidence for the needs-based model’s hypotheses. First, evidence suggests that when interacting with each other, minority group members have the goal of being respected, whereas majority group members have the goal of being liked (Shelton, Richeson, & Vorauer, 2006). These findings are highly consistent with the hypotheses of the needs-based model: Minorities’ wish to gain respect may be said to reflect their need for empowerment, whereas majorities’ wish to be liked may reflect their need for acceptance.

Second, Saguy, Dovidio, and Pratto (2008) found that in intergroup interactions minority group members prefer to speak about the power inequalities between the groups, whereas majority group members prefer to discuss the commonalities between them. Again, minority group members’ preference to speak about inequalities may reflect their belief that such discourse will increase the likelihood that majority group members will acknowledge the injustice of the existing unequal social hierarchy. Such an acknowledgment, in turn, would empower the minority group and thus satisfy its members’ emotional needs. In contrast, the preference of majority group members to speak about commonalities may reflect their belief that such discourse will blur the boundaries between the groups and thus satisfy their need for moral validation and acceptance by the minority group.

Finally, a meta-analysis of the effectiveness of interventions based on the “contact hypothesis” (Allport, 1954) indicates that compared to majority group members, minority group members tend to be less satisfied following intergroup contact (Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005). These findings may reflect the fact that such interventions tend to focus on increasing intergroup mutual acceptance (e.g., by encouraging personalized contact aimed at friendship formation or the cooperation of adversarial groups on a common goal; Dixon, Durrheim, & Tredoux, 2005), thus satisfying the needs of majority groups, but leaving the minorities’ needs unsatisfied. In line with this interpretation, the needs-based model would further suggest that enduring inequalities between African and European Americans are in part due to the failure to fulfill African Americans’ need for power. The more subtle forms of postcivil rights racism that come in the guise of a color-blind ideology (e.g., Forman, 2004) suggest that fulfillment of minority groups’ needs may even be actively denied.

Concluding this section, we would like to clarify two issues related to the application of the needs-based model to the context of majority–minority relations. First, it should be noted that although minorities need power whereas majorities need acceptance, these needs are not mutually exclusive. Particularly, we do not claim that minorities do not need acceptance *at all*. Rather, we argue that while issues of acceptance constitute a central concern for majorities, dealing with them exclusively may not be sufficient for minorities, for whom issues of empowerment constitute a main concern. The ambivalent responses in 2006 to Prime Minister Blair’s expression of “deep sorrow” for Britain’s role in the transatlantic slave

trade may illustrate our claim: While some members of the Black community in England praised Blair for “breaking decades of official silence to acknowledge the grievance of the harm caused by the British Empire” (Smith, 2006), others perceived his failure to express a full apology and to relate to the enduring legacy of slavery in terms of racism and global injustice as a further insult. Thus, although a majority’s expression of empathy may be well-intentioned, it is nevertheless insufficient to fully satisfy the minorities’ needs.

A similar idea was conveyed by Reverend Al Sharpton after the incident of police shooting 50 shots at an unarmed Black man in Queens, New York. Following the incident, Mayor Michael Bloomberg convened a meeting of black religious leaders and elected officials at City Hall calling the circumstances “inexplicable” and “unacceptable.” As he left the City Hall, Reverend Sharpton announced: “We prefer talking than not talking, but the object is not a conversation. The object is fairness and justice. Because we’re not just interested in being treated politely, we’re interested in being treated fairly and rightly” (Cardwell & Chan, 2006).<sup>1</sup> In terms of the needs-based model, “talking”—that is, maintaining intergroup dialogue—is related to issues of mutual acceptance, whereas “fairness and justice” is related to issues relevant to the empowerment of minorities. Thus, Sharpton’s announcement reflects the idea that although issues of mutual intergroup acceptance are important for minorities, they nevertheless constitute a background concern compared to the issue of respecting their rights.

Another illustration of this point may be found in the lyrics of the song *Equal Rights*, written by Peter Tosh, a Rastafarian musician and activist: “Everyone is crying out for peace . . . None is crying out for justice. I don’t want no peace, I need equal rights and justice.” We do not believe these lyrics to convey the message that peace is perceived as a negative outcome; rather, they mean that while “peace” may be the main concern of the majority (“everybody”), it is not so for the minority, whose main concern is obtaining “equal rights and justice” (i.e., empowerment in terms of the needs-based model).

Furthermore, talking about “peace” or “mutual acceptance” may serve as a rhetorical tool used by the majority to avoid the real problem of changing an existing, illegitimate social structure of inequality. Studies of interpersonal apologies suggest that to be perceived as sincere and authentic as well as effective in improving relations between the involved parties, an apology should include an admission of guilt (Darby & Schlenker, 1982). Otherwise, it may be perceived as a false apology, lacking real remorse and articulated for instrumental purposes alone (Baumeister, Exline, & Sommer, 1998). In a similar fashion, talking about peace, mutual acceptance, and reconciliation without empowering minorities (e.g., by addressing issues of historical responsibility; Rouhana, 2004; or striving toward

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<sup>1</sup> We would like to thank Hillary B. Bergsieker of Princeton University for bringing this case to our knowledge.

equality) may not be perceived, especially by minorities, as leading to genuine reconciliation. It is therefore unlikely to have the desired positive effects.

Our second comment relates to the asymmetry between satisfying groups' needs for acceptance versus empowerment and the consequent difficulties associated with the process of empowering minority groups. Accepting the majority requires minority group members to direct essentially positive emotions (e.g., empathy, compassion, and liking) toward that out-group. In contrast, empowering the minority involves the majority's admission of wrongdoing, thus requiring the majority to criticize itself and admit its moral inferiority (e.g., by acknowledging racism or discrimination). In other words, the process of empowering the minority requires majority group members not only to give up instrumental power and privilege, but also to recognize the negative aspects of their in-group's identity. As group members are inclined to maintain positive identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) this demand is likely to evoke strong reactions of resistance that may increase conflict. For example, Branscombe, Schmitt, and Schiffhauer (2007) found that racism increased among highly identified White Americans when confronted with the illegitimate benefits they obtain at the expense of African Americans.

The desire to avoid the conflict escalation that may accompany minorities' empowerment may lead majorities to adopt policies based on the denial of differences (e.g., "color blind" policies; Schofield, 1986). Yet, we believe that such policies, which focus on mutual intergroup acceptance but ignore and deny issues of conflict, may lead to artificial and unstable intergroup "harmony," satisfying only the majority's psychological needs. Genuine and stable positive intergroup relations cannot be achieved without satisfying minority groups' need for empowerment. In the long term, thus, it is essential to satisfy the emotional needs of *both* majorities and minorities even if this leads to a temporary increase of conflict. This idea is reflected in Martin Luther King Jr.'s "letter from a Birmingham jail" (1963):

The present tension in the South is a necessary phase of the transition from an obnoxious negative peace, in which the Negro passively accepted his unjust plight, to a substantive and positive peace, in which all men will respect the dignity and worth of human personality. . . [I]njustice must be exposed, with all the tension its exposure creates, to the light of human conscience and the air of national opinion before it can be cured.

### *Social Issues and Policy Implications*

Hitherto, we outlined the perspective of the needs-based model on the role of acceptance and empowerment in promoting reconciliation. Informed by data and theory, we suggest that three basic strategies can be derived from our perspective to guide social policies:

First, *victims' (or minorities') need for power should be acknowledged*. Due to their social role, victims and minorities experience an enhanced need for power,

which can be manifested in several ways, such as respect, pride, status, or admission of the injustice caused to them. Yet, perpetrators or majority group members too often patronizingly dismiss this need, perceiving victims or minority group members as too sensitive to issues of status, respect, or past injustice. Baumeister (1996) used the term “magnitude gap” to designate the common tendency of perpetrators to underestimate the severity of offenses and the damage caused to the victims compared to victims themselves, who are therefore perceived by the perpetrators as exaggerating in their response.

In other instances, implemented policies fail to attend to the particular needs of victims or minorities in a way that truly empowers them. For example, after pressing charges victims of criminal acts are not taken into consideration in the legal process (i.e., it is the state rather than the victims that prosecutes the defendant). Victims may experience this course of events as weakening. However, victims can be empowered by developing restorative justice practices (i.e., practices that focus on rectifying relationships and personal connections damaged by the victimization episode, rather than on punishing the perpetrators; Wachtel & McCold, 2001) that may include, for example, an organized encounter between the victim and the perpetrator and the involvement of the victim in determining, or at least influencing, the appropriate punishment. This kind of process would reflect the empowering potential of the use of restorative justice procedures as was exemplified by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2008).

Another example of policies that fail to empower victims or minorities are ones that advance long-term, indiscriminate assistance regardless of a disadvantaged group member’s particular ability or need. According to research in the field of prosocial behavior, victims or minorities are often offered types of assistance that actually increase their dependency rather than promote their autonomy (Halabi, Dovidio, & Nadler, in press; Jackson & Esses, 2000; Nadler, 2002; Nadler & Halabi, 2006), thus failing to truly satisfy their need for empowerment. In contrast, policies aimed at creating social change in a way that advances the status of victims or minority groups—such as compensating victims for their suffering, establishing offices responsible for promoting diversity, or empowering minorities through mentoring—are likely to be more effective in achieving this goal.

Second, *perpetrators’ (or majorities’) need for acceptance should be acknowledged*. The common view of relations between victims and perpetrators is that because victims have suffered while the perpetrators have inflicted suffering, it is the victims’ needs that must be addressed and rectified before social harmony is restored. Perpetrators must make things right for the victims by attending to their needs and acting to ameliorate them. In a similar fashion, the greater power and privilege enjoyed by majority group members may lead to the perception that the majority should take care of the minority’s needs without expecting any reciprocity. Due to these perceptions, victims or minority group members are

often reluctant to express acceptance and empathy toward members of perpetrators or majority groups, even when they experience emotional distress (Cottrell & Neuberg, 2005; Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2007). Indeed, previous research has underappreciated majorities' need for acceptance and empathy, which might be due to the fact that "it is hard to imagine that empathizing with privilege and power would lead to beneficial outcomes" (Stephan & Finlay, 1999, p. 740).

Nevertheless, the stronger parties (i.e., perpetrators or majorities) do have emotional needs and these needs should not be ignored or neglected. In particular, it should be remembered that acknowledging the dark side of one's identity (i.e., admitting an immoral behavior) is likely to evoke high levels of threat among perpetrators (Wohl et al., 2006) or majority group members (Riek, Mania, & Gaertner, 2006). It is therefore important that when issues of past or present injustice are raised, perpetrators or majority group members will not feel rejected but rather liked and morally validated. In other words, if victims or minorities are interested in promoting reconciliation they should let perpetrators or majorities feel that they are viewed as their partners rather than their enemies. The TRT (To Reflect and Trust) intervention, which seeks to advance reconciliation between groups of former victims and perpetrators (e.g., Jews and Germans) through group dialogues in which participants share their personal life stories, may exemplify this principle through its emphasis on developing mutual empathy (Maoz & Bar-On, 2002). The intervention implemented by Staub et al. (2005) in Rwanda and the TRC in South Africa, both discussed above, as well as other restorative justice practices may serve as further examples of a successful implementation of this principle.

Third, *the fact that victims and perpetrators, or minorities and majorities, are likely to have different emotional needs and motivations and consequently differential perspectives on the conflict between them should be acknowledged.* The experience of these gaps between individuals or group members is often overwhelming. As suggested by Baumeister (1996), victims tend to perceive the injustice and harm caused to them as much more severe than perpetrators. In addition, because each side consistently projects its own needs and views on the other (Pearson et al., 2008), they both fail to realize that the other's needs and views may be fundamentally different from their own.

Due to these divergent perspectives, interventions that are based on creating an authentic dialogue between adversaries—victims and perpetrators or minority and majority group members—are often associated with increased strain (Halabi, 2004). This process is somewhat paradoxical, as the goal of such interventions is to decrease intergroup tension. Yet, it is not possible to bridge between adversaries without making them first fully aware of the perspective of the other side, and acquiring this awareness requires a fundamental, and often distressing, change of one's worldview. For example, in the Jewish–Palestinian context this means that the parties must acknowledge that the same day that Jewish Israelis celebrate

as *yom ha'atzmaut* (Israel Independence Day) serves as Palestinians' *yawm al-Naqba* (Day of the Catastrophe) in which Palestinians commemorate their defeat and displacement.

Undergoing a fundamental change of worldview, whether at the individual or the intergroup level, is psychologically painful and is therefore likely to evoke resistance and difficulty. Planners of interventions should anticipate this and be prepared to manage a situation in which a dialogue between the adversaries does not lead to relief but rather to an escalation, albeit a transitional one, of the conflict. While such an escalation is not the purpose of a dialogue, it is its unavoidable byproduct, because a significant intervention leading to real change requires a painful transformation in the adversaries' worldview.

Understanding the divergent perspectives, emotional needs, and motivations of victims–perpetrators or majority–minority groups may reduce uncertainty, miscommunication, and misperception. It may thus decrease some of the anxiety that is aroused in the course of promoting genuine attempts to understand the other's perspective. Institutionalized forums in which agents of different social roles can openly express their differences may provide a valuable medium for discussing these gaps.

### Conclusion

We began this article by claiming that acceptance and empowerment are the psychological resources at the heart of the emotional discourse between adversaries and that they correspond to the fundamental human needs for power, status, respect, and justice on one hand and relatedness, belongingness, and empathy on the other. We then introduced the needs-based model according to which victims feel an enhanced need for power whereas perpetrators feel an enhanced need for acceptance. We presented empirical evidence, from both interpersonal and intergroup contexts, showing that satisfying the emotional needs of victims and perpetrators through an appropriate message or gesture from the adversary may promote their willingness to reconcile. We suggested that the model may also be applied to the context of relations between unequal groups within a society, proposing that the emotional needs of minorities and majorities correspond to those of victims and perpetrators, and pointing to the difficulties associated with the process of empowering the minorities.

In conclusion, we hope that the distinction between empowerment and acceptance and their role in reconciliation processes will provide policymakers and field workers with insights that may assist them in dealing with different kinds of conflicts. Identifying the emotional needs of the involved parties may help to remove the emotional barriers that block the path to genuine and long-lasting reconciliation.

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