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Applications and Extensions of Realistic Conflict Theory: Moral Development and Conflict Prevention

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The study of intergroup conflict is of central concern to social scientists. Conflict is an inevitable result of human interaction, and learning how to reduce or prevent destructive disputes is vitally important. Few theorists have contributed to the field to the extent of Muzafer Sherif, whose realistic conflict theory states that contradictory goals lead to group conflict and cooperation-requiring superordinate goals reduce it (Sherif, 1958). Blending psychological and sociological frameworks, his Robbers Cave experiment (which would form the basis of realistic conflict theory) remains influential to this day. Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood, and Sherif (1954/1988) postulated that intergroup conflict arises as a result of situational variables, personality characteristics, interindividual differences, and group psychology.

While we are aware that most readers will be familiar with the work, we will begin with a brief overview of Sherif's seminal Robbers Cave study and the theory that it grew. We will then delineate subsequent research that has built on Sherif's findings, and finally, turn to an extension of his work, incorporating research from multiple disciplines. Our proposed extension involves a moral education that utilizes concepts similar to those suggested by Sherif and by those that have built on his foundations. We argue that such a moral education offers a promising conflict resolution strategy by way of curtailing conflict before its initiation.

Robbers Cave Summary

Sherif's three-stage Robbers Cave experiment took place in 1954 in Southeastern Oklahoma. Stage one of the study involved the experimental formation of two distinct groups. Twenty-two boys approximately 11 years of age were carefully selected so as to preclude differences in socioeconomic, religious, or family backgrounds, as well as any psychological abnormality or maladjustment. None of the participants knew each other prior to the experiment. The boys were separated into two groups before ever meeting each other, and bussed to an isolated summer camp. For the first week, the groups were functionally isolated from one another, as the individuals coalesced into two groups with defined hierarchies and norms. More specifically, members faced a series of problems (such as cooking, improving a swimming hole, and playing sports), which they solved through coordinated action, resulting in the formation of two delineated in-groups. Leaders and followers became apparent within each group, norms such as "toughness" or "being a good sport" formed, and names (Eagles, Rattlers) and places (camping grounds, swimming holes) were claimed.

In stage two, the groups were placed in zero-sum competitive situations with one another so that victory for one meant defeat for the other. Competitions included baseball games, treasure hunts, and tugs-of-war. Relations quickly became antagonistic, with negative stereotypes prevalent, and arguing and fighting common. Intergroup relations were assessed through participant observation, sociometric indices, and a series of experimental interventions.

In the all-important final stage, intergroup hostility was reduced. Sherif et al. (1954/1988) first showed that contact alone (for example, watching a movie, eating a meal) did nothing to decrease the friction between the two groups. A further strategy was necessary in order to effectively reduce intergroup hostility. After considering several options, Sherif and colleagues elected to focus on the introduction of superordinate goals, or "goals of high appeal for both groups, which cannot be ignored by the groups in question, but whose attainment is beyond the resources and efforts of one group alone" (Sherif et al., 1954/1988, p. 204). The groups were forced to cooperate in order to overcome situations such as a broken truck and a blocked water pipe. Similar intergroup relations measures to those employed after stage 2 showed a reduction of negative stereotypes and an increase in liking between the groups.

Realistic Conflict Theory

The Robbers Cave study forms the basis of Sherif's realistic conflict theory, showing that intergroup conflict is produced by conflicting goals and reduced by superordinate goals achievable only through cooperation. Intergroup relations therefore cannot be reduced to within-group relations or personality characteristics; the wider social and environmental context is crucial in shaping the relationship. When goals become competitive, such that one's success results in another's loss, the out-group will become negatively stereotyped and social distance between groups will increase. Real-world factors may include threat to group security (real or imagined), military might, social status, economic considerations, or general competition for scarce resources (Jackson, 1993; Sherif et al., 1988).

Sherif also stressed the importance of in-group identification, arguing that an individual's identity and personal interests are heavily reliant on group membership (a proposition that forms the basis of social identity theory (SIT) [Tajfel & Turner, 1976]). Since the group is important to one's sense of self, negative normative intergroup attitudes become internalized, thus deepening and extending the conflict. Concurrently, the negative intergroup relations tend to strengthen intragroup solidarity, again boosting the unfavorable attitudes toward the out-group (Sherif, 1958).

Of course, there is far more intricate detail to report than space permits, for example, the effect of intergroup conflict on in-group hierarchies and the role of historical group interactions. And certain qualifications must be applied, for example, the limitations in ability to attribute causality in a non-laboratory study and the possibly dubious ethics of uninformed participation. In short though, Sherif thoroughly and convincingly showed that: conflict between groups arises at least in part from competition for limited resources or conflicting goals and conflict can be reduced by common striving toward a goal that requires cooperation. Realistic conflict theory has since received a great deal of support (Jackson, 1993).

Subsequent Support for Realistic Conflict Theory

Andreeva (1984) replicated the study in the Soviet Union, while Diab (1970) was forced to abandon his attempts in Lebanon due to dangerously high levels of intergroup hostility. Tyerman and Spencer (1983) recreated the investigation utilizing a Scout Troop who already knew one another, which they argue better reflects most real-life scenarios.

In this case, competition led to some out-group stereotyping, but did not result in outright hostility. Psychologists have similarly found that competition may lead to hostility in a variety of contexts. For example, Worchel, Axsom, Ferris, Samaha, and Schweitzer (1978) conducted a laboratory-based study in which two groups either competed or acted independently, wearing either similar or different uniforms. Intergroup attraction was lowest for groups that wore distinctive uniforms and competed with one another. Subsequent intergroup cooperation increased intergroup liking, particularly when the groups succeeded in their task, were not distinguished by dress, and had not previously competed.

Realistic conflict theory has also been tested in more real world settings. Blake and Mouton (1961) studied win–loss contests in an industrial conflict between management and a union, concluding that zero-sum competition should be replaced by an orientation stressing mutual problem solving. In an extended application, Bobo (1983) investigated the reasons behind opposition to busing during the civil rights movement. Although some have disagreed with his analysis of the data (see Kinder & Sears, 1981), Bobo extended Sherif's idea that competitive goals can lead to conflict, finding that perceived threat was by far the strongest predictor of Whites' opposition to busing. Other factors such as a general dislike for blacks or a strong belief in segregation proved insignificant. Simply the perception that Black Americans could be a competitor for scarce resources, or could challenge valued norms, was enough to incite opposition.

Studies within other disciplines have also provided support. Anthropologists Divale and Harris (1976) studied a number of smaller societies, finding that competition over limited resources, such as land, is a primary driver of intergroup conflict. Sociologists have stressed the divisive potential of unequal resource distribution, even when such resources are abundant (Cummings, 1980). This array of mixed-methods, interdisciplinary, and international support has convincingly validated the basic tenets of realistic conflict theory.

Many more recent psychological theories also draw from or build upon Sherif's realistic conflict theory. Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) is based on the premise that intergroup conflict need not arise from interpersonal variables. This theory shares the basic tenet of Sherif's theory: that conflict can arise simply due to the sheer existence of two groups, without the necessity of overt competition. Addressing the amelioration of conflict, the contact hypothesis

(Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1971; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006) also aligns with Sherif's belief that contact alone is not enough to eliminate conflict. The contact hypothesis argues that in addition to superordinate goals, additional factors such as equal status, egalitarian norms, and cooperative independence are necessary to change cognitive representations of out-groups and to reduce conflict. These positive forms of contact may result in what has become known as a common in-group identity.

Common In-Group Identity Model

The influential common in-group identity model (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000) is heavily indebted to realistic conflict theory, building from and expanding upon Sherif's ideas. This model shows that many factors—social and structural—may alter cognitive representations of group membership. Essentially, we may move from an exclusive "us" and "them" mentality to an inclusive "we," utilizing three basic mechanisms: mutual intergroup differentiation, decategorization, and recategorization (which do not necessarily occur in any specific order).

Mutual intergroup differentiation, rather than seeking to change the structure of the groups involved, involves an acknowledgement and appreciation of group differences. Problem solutions that are "win–win" rather than zero-sum are emphasized, and group goals and boundaries are respected. For example, during the course of an eight-day intervention, members of the Taibesi and Becora rival youth groups in East Timor were successfully encouraged to cooperatively work together without being asked to abandon their separate identities (Nasroen, 2011). Using semi-structured interviews and observation, researchers found that the success of mixed groups depended on trust, superordinate goals, and interactive problem solving.

Decategorization involves thinking of people as individuals, stressing the plurality of our identities. Often resulting from friendly one-on-one interactions, people may relate to each other in terms of personal interests rather than those that are important to each of the groups. Comparisons are made on an individual—rather than a group-level, and there is a general lack of uniformity in terms of attitude and treatment. For example, arguing in part against Huntington's (2011) Clash of Civilizations theory (a thesis which relies on the permanence of group differences), Amartya Sen (2006) states that he is "an Asian, an Indian citizen, a Bengali with Bangladeshi ancestry, an American or British resident, an economist, a dabbler in philosophy (or) an author"

(p. 19), and can relate to any "out-group" members according to any of those identities.

Recategorization involves the creation of an inclusive group membership encompassing previously separate groups. This can result in the use of "us" and "we," and common activities in which the groups come together as one (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000). For example, postgenocide Rwanda has attempted to eliminate the usage of "Hutu" and Tutsi," replacing the divisive terminology with simply "Rwandan."

The theory has received a great deal of support. A wide variety of studies—using both laboratory research and real-world groups—have shown the effectiveness of emphasizing a common group identity to ameliorate conflict. In addition to utilizing superordinate goals, the formation of a common group identity has been achieved by various other means, including: emphasizing more integrative identities, encouraging participants to reconceptualize two three-person groups into one six-person group (Gaertner, Mann, Murrell, & Dovidio, 1989), assigning specific seating arrangements, instructing previously separate groups to sit together (Gaertner & Dovidio, 1986), and ensuring similarity of dress by assigning identical uniforms to separate groups (Dovidio, Gaertner, Isen, & Lowrance, 1995). The creation of this superordinate identity has resulted in a more positive evaluation of previous out-group members and lower levels of bias. This appears to be a relatively enduring impact, facilitating prosocial behaviors such as helping or cooperating, encouraging self-perpetuating personalized interactions, and extending to include group members beyond the specific contact setting (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000).

Linking the Common In-group Identity Model to Robbers Cave

Researchers have directly linked each of the three mechanisms (mutual intergroup differentiation, decategorization, and recategorization) to realistic conflict theory, and specifically to the Robbers Cave study (Gaertner et al., 2000), unpacking and shedding further light upon Sherif's seminal ideas. For example, one of the superordinate goals involved the procurement of a film that all the boys wanted to watch. They were forced to decide how much money they could contribute to achieve this goal. After much discussion, they concluded that each group would pay $3.50. What is most interesting though is that since there were more Rattlers, each would pay 31 cents, while each Eagle would contribute 39 cents. This type of solution, which is seen as equitable by both sides while maintaining group boundaries,

may be seen as mutual intergroup differentiation (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000).

A second superordinate goal was the preparation of a meal. One boy, McGraw (an Eagle) was put in charge of cutting the meat, and another, Simpson (a Rattler) was tasked with making the Kool Aid. Although McGraw was successful (and congratulated by both groups) and Simpson was not (and commiserated with by both groups), what is noteworthy is that *they were treated as individuals*, not as members of the Eagles or Rattlers. They were congratulated or commiserated with on the basis of their success or failure, rather than along group lines. This may be thought of as an example of decategorization (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000).

And finally, as described above, Sherif et al. (1988) were relatively successful in the creation of a common group identity, or recategorization. The groups were forced to cooperate in order to start a stalled truck, pulling it with the very rope that had previously been used in a tug-of-war competition between them. "Let's get *our* tug-of-war rope and have a tug-of-war against the truck . . . 20 of *us* can pull it for sure" (Sherif et al., 1988 p. 172). The use of "our" and "us" signifies the conceptualization of the boys as one larger group. This impression was furthered by later seating arrangements in which the boys intermingled relatively freely, overcoming previous group demarcations (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000).

Conflict Prevention

Sherif's Robbers Cave experiment is crucial in pointing to competition for limited resources as an origin of intergroup conflict. This experiment, and subsequent support, also demonstrates that one effective means of conflict resolution is the recognition of a superordinate goal, which enables the transcendence of excessive concern with one's narrowly defined in-group. One of the more commonly cited post-Sherif frameworks, as outlined above, is Gaertner and Dovidio's common ingroup identity model (2000). Gaertner and Dovidio's conflict resolution strategies (mutual intergroup differentiation, decategorization, and recategorization) are primarily intervention-based. Thanks to Sherif and his successors, we now have a great deal of knowledge regarding the origin of intergroup conflict and various ways through which to resolve such conflict once it has arisen. An area in which there has been less research, however, is the circumvention of conflict, rather than the bandaging of preexisting disputes. Gaertner and Dovidio

have expressed concern about the long-lasting benefits of inducing a one-group representation. They write:

Whether a common superordinate identity can produce positive intergroup orientations for the long term or only temporarily also remains an important issue . . . we do not believe that recategorization as one group, *at least by itself*, would be capable of sustaining favorable intergroup relations over the long term (p. 162).

We posit that conflict prevention may be more effective than conflict resolution in implementing stable longer-term reductions in intergroup hostility. In order to truly effect long-term change in intergroup conflict, it is important to address the process of in-grouping and out-grouping prior to the eruption of conflict. In the sections that follow, we suggest that one way to approach conflict prevention is through moral education. Such an education would focus on fostering individuals (and ultimately, societies) in which destructive conflict is less intuitive, irrespective of situational variables. This education would involve systematic moral discourse regarding an expanded conception of one's in-group, a focus on members of the out-group as individuals with needs and desires, and awareness building about a variety of worldviews.

Effectively, we encourage processes such as decategorization, mutual intergroup differentiation, and recategorization *before* the outbreak of destructive conflict. We argue that such moral language should make a systematic appearance in early education, rather than when a particular crisis occurs. We will return to this conception at the end of our chapter, linking this suggestion to a set of moral dimensions that could be incorporated into educational curricula. Ultimately, we suggest that we as social scientists should turn our attention to appropriate moral socialization and education in order to effect more enduring conflict prevention. We now turn to a review of relevant literature on moral reasoning and development as it relates to conflict.

Conflict Resolution and Moral Development

Some research—albeit scant—has examined the relationship between conflict resolution and moral development. Stanley's (1978) study on the effects of family conflict resolution training on adolescent moral reasoning is a pioneer article of this sort. In this article, Stanley discusses the effects of a 10-week long democratic conflict resolution course with parents and their children on: the family's moral atmosphere and the moral development of the adolescents engaged in these sessions. Results showed that the intervention positively impacted

parents' attitudes about rules and family decision making as well as adolescents' moral reasoning scores (as measured by Kohlberg's Moral Judgment Interview).

Heydenberk, Heydenberk, and Bailey (2003), too, examined the link between conflict resolution and moral development. In this article, the authors discuss the effects of conflict resolution training on the moral reasoning of students in low-income schools. It was determined that conflict resolution training led to significant gains in students' moral reasoning as measured by Dispositions Toward Moral Reasoning (DMR) Scale. The 10 items that make up the DMR scale reflect Kohlberg's definition of moral reasoning, and all items were "designed to assess a sense of justice, respect, and reciprocity" (Heydenberk et al., 2003, p. 37). Sample items include: "I try to treat others as I would like them to treat me" and "I'm a fair person and people can always trust me." Like Stanley, Heydenberk and colleagues suggest that learning specific conflict resolution skills has positive effects on one's level of moral reasoning. While these findings are certainly promising, we posit a different directionality. That is, if moral training which focused on the cultivation of empathy and compassion were integrated into the education system, this could result in increased patience and compassion toward out-group members, ultimately engendering a more enduring form of conflict prevention.

Psychologists such as Lawrence Kohlberg have laid the groundwork for an examination of moral reasoning by way of charting a normative developmental trajectory. More recently, psychologists have investigated the key role of one's sociocultural milieu—that is, societal mores, religious tenets—on definitions of morality and manifestations of moral behavior (e.g., Haidt, Koller, & Dias, 1993; Hardy & Carlo, 2005; Jensen, 1998; McKenzie & Jensen, 2012; Shweder, Much, Mahapatra, & Park, 1997). This literature points out that, in addition to age, moral reasoning and thought are determined by one's environment and socialization. Hence, we argue that morality is—at least in part—learned.

When referring to morality, Darwin (1874) uses a specific vocabulary, such as "moral habits" and "moral sense." This language suggests that morality is something to be developed, which may lead to the conclusion that it also involves adequate exposure and training. Heydenberk and colleagues describe their study as "important in the current educational climate in which the cognitive domain (academic achievement) is ranked far above the affective domain of the learner" (p. 42). We argue that minimizing the affective domain is precisely the problem,

and that in order to effect real change in often-problematic intergroup relations, the educational climate should be revamped. In addition to encouraging critical thinking and reasoning, educators should aim to build affective skills and positive moral emotionality.

Heydenberk et al. (2003) draw a link between morality and conflict resolution, emphasizing moral reasoning *level*. The emphasis on level of moral reasoning is born from developmental psychologists such as Piaget (1965) and Kohlberg (1971) whose theories hold that one's moral reasoning abilities progress through a series of progressive stages. According to Kohlberg, moral reasoning is ultimately a justice-based endeavor revolving around concerns such as respect and reciprocity. While in some cases it may be helpful to examine morality from Kohlberg's levels of moral reasoning, the mere possession of finely tuned reasoning abilities does not ensure the prevention of conflict, the resolution of conflict, or empathic decision making.

Research has suggested, for example, that we often act on quick emotional reactions (e.g., sympathy, disgust) more so than on carefully reasoned moral decision-making processes (e.g., Frank, 1988; Haidt, 2001). In fact, it has been argued that our behaviors often do not involve careful reasoning processes at all (Haidt, 2001), but rather, instinctive and oftentimes indescribable intuitions. Moreover, Kohlberg's model, which posits that the highest stages of moral reasoning revolve around typically Western concerns of justice and equality, has been called into question for its relevance across diverse cultures (Dien, 1982; Huebner & Garrod, 1991; Jensen, 2008; Shweder et al., 1997). This cross-cultural limitation becomes particularly problematic when considering intergroup conflict's transnational impact.

We now turn to a discussion about the role of moral emotions and ethics as promising directions in conflict resolution and peace building, particularly as strategies that may facilitate the common in-group identity model.

Moral Emotions and Ethics

Various theorists have pointed to the link between moral emotions and moral behaviors. Over a century ago, Darwin (1874) suggested that sympathy is integral to the evolution of morality. Batson (1991) has since persuasively argued that empathy engenders altruistic behavior. We contend that this has direct implications for fostering conflict prevention. Given that, as described above, we often act on emotional reactions rather than carefully reasoned moral decision-making

processes, it may actually be more important to foster positive moral emotions than to build moral reasoning level. As Kohlberg's theory of moral development assumes that justice- and fairness-based concerns drive moral reasoning, emotions are generally absent from Kohlbergian research. Hence, a separate moral paradigm may be helpful. People seldom utilize their most sophisticated forms of moral reasoning in their day-to-day lives (Krebs & Denton, 2005), so one may profitably focus not on levels of moral reasoning, but on *ethics* used when coming to moral decisions.

According to the three ethics theory of moral reasoning (Shweder et al., 1997), justice and fairness is a small piece of the moral reasoning puzzle. Shweder and colleagues suggest that across a wide array of cultures, there are three overarching ethical concerns (see Table 1) upon which moral decisions are based. The Ethic of Autonomy focuses on the individual self and includes concepts such as individual rights, fairness, and responsibility for oneself; the Ethic of Community focuses on the social self and includes concepts such as group welfare and social harmony; the Ethic of Divinity focuses on the spiritual self and includes concepts such as spiritual purity and virtues of holiness. A great deal of research has shown the presence of these three ethics across diverse cultures such as India, Brazil, the Philippines, and the United States (e.g., Arnett, Ramos, & Jensen, 2001; Haidt et al., 1993; Jensen, 1995, 1998; Shweder et al., 1997; Vasquez, Keltner, Ebenbach, & Banaszynski, 2001), although the relative importance and the manner and frequency of use vary widely.

Table 1
The Three Ethics

Ethic	Focus	Moral Concepts
Ethic of Autonomy	Individual self	• Individual rights • Harm to individuals • Equality between individuals
Ethic of Community	Social self	• Group welfare, role obligations • Duties to others • Concern with group interests
Ethic of Divinity	Spiritual self	• Divine and natural law • Scriptural injunctions • Closeness to purity, holiness

The Three Ethics and Conflict Prevention

Any of these ethics can be applied to conflict prevention, linking with the strategies of the common in-group identity model. For example, incorporating Autonomy-based moral discourse in schools may involve stressing the needs and desires of individuals, and in turn, delegitimizing in-group/out-group differentiation. This suggestion speaks to Gaertner and Dovidio's concept of decategorization, which involves thinking of people as individuals. According to Gaertner and his colleagues (2000), decategorization involves a process of personalization in which "members focus on information about an outgroup member that is relevant to the self as an individual rather than self as a group member" (p. 101). They explain that over time, repeated efforts of personalization may decrease the value ascribed to the group category and help to ameliorate the ascription of stereotypes. We suggest that such a technique may serve as an effective conflict-prevention and conflict-resolution strategy. As such, Autonomy-based discourse should serve a key role in moral socialization early on, rather than simply in the face of conflict.

Community-based moral discourse may also engender conflict resolution and prevention. In their book on empathy development, Eisenberg and Strayer (1987) suggest a moral education that requires the consideration of a broader context when seeking to understand the plight of others. The authors argue that curricula should highlight the common humanity of all people and should work to cultivate empathic concern. While the focus of moral reasoning is typically applied to in-group members only, the moral education which Eisenberg and Strayer delineate is particularly useful when considering those not in our immediate group. Such a suggestion stresses the Ethic of Community, speaking to the importance of an expanded definition of community (broadening from one's immediate social group to include out-group members). Ideally, this strategy would lead to Gaertner and Dovidio's recategorization: the creation of an inclusive group membership through incorporating previously separate groups.

Similarly, Staub (2010) has pointed to the importance of socialization in order to prevent destructive conflict, particularly focusing on generating inclusive care and common identity. This suggestion speaks to our emphasis on Community-based moral reasoning, leading to recategorization. Staub highlights the value of developing societal values centered on community and connection as opposed to

competition and winning. In short, Staub encourages the creation of societies whose core value is that of interconnection. Such a societal level value transformation as a means to reduce violence would likely involve a large-scale moral socialization and education reformation, which requires more than adding a superordinate goal. Staub (2011) goes on to suggest that this may be approached through public education by way of seminars, workshops, courses in schools, radio and television programs, and newspaper and internet articles. Exposure to such messages may have long-term value, particularly when "the goal is to change deep-seated beliefs, attitudes, norms, and behaviors. As these change, slowly the culture changes, including the standards of acceptable conduct" (p. 378). We suggest that systematically incorporating community-based values into the educational sphere would serve a key role in conflict prevention.

Finally, the Ethic of Divinity (which is not necessarily God-directed in nature, but can also involve concerns about upholding virtues, the authority of natural law, interest in one's and others' soul) may also aid in conflict resolution, prevention, and peace building. While psychologists often turn a blind eye to religion (Staub, 2010), it not only plays a powerful role in many people's sense of morality (Huebner & Garrod, 1991; McKenzie & Jensen, 2012; Walker, Pitts, Hennig, & Matsuba, 1995), but it can also play a key role in conflict resolution and peace building (Abu-Nimer, 1996, 2001; Johnston & Sampson, 1994; Lederach, 1999; Staub, 2010).

In his article on conflict resolution, culture, and religion, Abu-Nimer (2001) suggests that because religion is central to the cultural identity of many people engaged in enduring conflict (e.g., Northern Ireland, the former Yugoslavia, the Middle East), it is crucial to consider religion as a motive for both fighting and reconciliation. As such, we suggest that turning a blind eye to the role of religion, or the Ethic of Divinity, in conflict resolution is myopic. Religion, according to Abu-Nimer, can be hugely influential in people's cognitions and behaviors, and may bring social, moral, and spiritual resources to the process of peace building. He persuasively argues that spirituality can foster engagement and commitment to peace building, and can inject an important dimension to conflict resolution models. In some cases then, emphasizing the Ethic of Divinity may effectively facilitate peace building and conflict resolution.

Based on workshops and interviews with participants from a wide range of religious backgrounds, Abu-Nimer found support

for interreligious peace building training, which was modeled after Bennett's (1986) multi-stage intercultural sensitivity model. This model charts a progression of various stages of openness to cultural difference, moving from "ethnocentric stages" of resistance (stages 1–3) to "ethnorelative stages" of openness (stages 4–6). The stages include:

1. Denial
2. Defense
3. Minimization
4. Acceptance
5. Adaptation
6. Integration

We focus on stages 3 and 4, the highest stages for which Abu-Nimer (2001) has found support, as they link directly to the common in-group identity model. *Minimization* involves the invocation of transcendent universalist conceptions, aiming to minimize religious differences. As this phase includes an emphasis on commonality, with language such as "we all pray" and "we are all children of God," *minimization* echoes concepts emphasized in Gaertner and Dovidio's recategorization. *Acceptance* involves the acknowledgement and respect of interreligious differences. As statements such as "we all see God through our different belief systems" typify this phase, *acceptance* echoes concepts utilized by mutual in-group differentiation. Of his participants who were exposed to multi-phase interreligious peace building training, Abu-Nimer found that many participants were able to refrain from judging the values, beliefs, and behaviors of others. Hence, Abu-Nimer's model, which integrates intercultural sensitivity and conflict resolution training techniques, also incorporates divinity discourse socialization and utilizes techniques similar to those suggested by Gaertner and Dovidio.

We also suggest that incorporating divinity-based discourse at the pre-conflict stage would likely serve as a preventative aid. That is, incorporating information about a range of religious perspectives into school curricula—rather than either covering only one religious perspective or wholly avoiding the topic of religiosity—is one way in which divinity dialog could be incorporated in order to assist conflict prevention. Moreover, incorporating elements of Abu-Nimer's interreligious peace building training (e.g., minimization and acceptance) may also aid in the pre-conflict phase. Working to cultivate an understanding of the religious practices of others will likely propel perspective taking and humanization of those who are very different from us. Ultimately, this

strategy could be employed with an eye toward conflict prevention as well as the previously stressed conflict resolution

This novel model brings together the expertise of social, developmental, and cultural psychologists to extend Sherif's theory about the source and solution of intergroup conflict. We ground the suggested conflict prevention strategy in the three ethics of morality (Autonomy, Community, and Divinity), suggesting a tripartite moral education that is initiated early in education. According to the Ethic of Autonomy, students should be encouraged to conceptualize people as individual selves rather than simply as members of a group. According to the Ethic of Community, students should be challenged to expand their perceptions of the in-group to include those outside of the immediate group(s). According to the Ethic of Divinity, students should receive an education about a range of religious perspectives and practices. We suggest that implementing a moral education that centers on fostering these core components will help reduce stereotypes and increase care and understanding, which we believe would contribute to preventing intractable conflict. As such, the model outlined above should be of interest to researchers, teachers, administrators, and education policy makers.

Conclusion

Our proposed three ethics-based conflict prevention strategy calls for the implementation of moral education in schools. With a focus on reshaping an aspect of one's social and environmental context (specifically schools), the proposed strategy builds on Sherif's point that the wider social and environmental context plays a key role in shaping intergroup relations. In this chapter, we have outlined Sherif's seminal theory about the origin and resolution of conflict, showing that intergroup conflict is produced by conflicting goals and reduced by superordinate goals achievable only through cooperation. We have shown how these ideas have advanced over time, birthing subsequent psychological theory, and we have proposed a conflict prevention strategy that builds from Sherif's central message.

Sherif's realistic conflict theory, and those ideas that have developed from it, offer effective interventions to ameliorate intergroup conflict. We propose emphasizing similar concepts (e.g., superordinate goals, recategorization) *before* the advent of destructive conflict. If we are to work toward fostering more peaceful societies, we must begin with basic socialization and education practices, emphasizing moral

emotions and ethics. In addition to short-term conflict resolution approaches such as the imposition or recognition of superordinate goals, we must work to build a sustainable plan regarding long-term conflict prevention, however daunting a task. Such a long-term conflict resolution strategy, we suggest, should include the work of social psychologists (Gaertner & Dovidio; Haidt; Sherif; Staub), developmental psychologists (Eisenberg; Jensen), cultural psychologists (Shweder et al.), biologists and evolutionary psychologists (Darwin; Krebs), peace building and conflict resolution specialists (Abu-Nimer; Lederach) and education specialists (Heydenberk et al., 2003). Sherif et al. (1954/1988) provide an invaluable base from which to think about destructive conflict and its amelioration; now we must aim to advance their theory, particularly as relating to conflict prevention.

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