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Daniel Bar-Tal and Yona Teichman  
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## **Stereotypes and Prejudice in Conflict**

*Representations of Arabs in Israeli Jewish Society*

In the past two decades, the study of social stereotypes and prejudice has become one of the central issues in social sciences in general and in social psychology in particular. One reflection of this growing interest is the focus on shared stereotypes and prejudices, which are considered as sociocultural products. The primary reason for this development is the recognition that both stereotypes and prejudice play a determinative role in shaping inter-group relations. In situations of conflict, they simultaneously are outcomes of the accumulated animosity between the involved groups and feed on the continuation of the conflict by furnishing the cognitive-affective basis for the mistrust and hostility between the parties. In spite of this recognition, no systematic analysis of the stereotypes and prejudice was carried out in real conflict situations. The present book tries to fill this void by applying a general and universal conceptual framework to the study of the acquisition and development of stereotypes and prejudice in a society involved in an intractable conflict. It presents a systematic, comprehensive, and coherent analysis of evolvment, institutionalization, maintenance, functions, and consequences of stereotypes and prejudice in a society involved in intractable conflict.

These types of conflict are of special significance as they not only have destructive influence over the life of the involved societies but also threaten the well-being of the international community. Conflicts such as those in Northern Ireland, Bosnia, Chechnya, Sri Lanka, Rwanda, Kashmir, and the Middle East indicate their persisting existence in the modern world. On the basis of knowledge accumulated in social, developmental, and political psychology, sociology, political science, cultural, and communication studies, the book first presents an integrative conceptualization that deals with questions such as: How and why do stereotypes, prejudice, and emotions about the adversary emerge? What are their contents? What functions do they fulfill? How are they transmitted by societal-political channels of communication and by political, social, cultural, and educational institutions? How are they acquired by the younger generation? How do they develop with years, and what are their consequences? This innovative and comprehensive conception is presented through the analysis of the Israeli case.

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**DANIEL BAR-TAL**

*Tel Aviv University*

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*To our spouses and children  
Svetlana, Shai, Daphne, Tanya, and Galya  
Meir, Vered, Dalit, and Doron  
for their support and love*

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## Preface

We both live in a country ridden by an intractable conflict. We remember times when the conflict peaked, when no hope was on the horizon. We also lived through periods when the hope for peace appeared as a real possibility. Nowadays we experience a deep disappointment, witnessing a reescalation of the conflict and observing with horror how peace is slipping away.

Unfortunately, the state of Israel is exposed to a conflict dating from well before its formal establishment – for more than 100 years. As such, it serves as a real-life laboratory for learning about the psychological foundations, facets, and dynamics of a conflict. Whereas the interest in reactions to stress formed in conflict, such as trauma, has prompted much theoretical, empirical, and practical attention, the acquisition, development, and nature of mental representations in conflict have attracted relatively little interest. Believing that psychology has much to contribute to the prevention of intergroup conflicts and their resolutions, we decided to expand the study of the influences of conflict to consider issues faced by every normal child, adolescent, and adult in a society engulfed by conflict – that is, to investigate the various aspects of self-definition and the definition of one's opponents, as well as the accompanying attitudes, emotions, and behavioral intentions. In Israel, it became possible to accomplish what many social scientists urged should be done, namely, to explore the nature and development of social representations in real life rather than in a laboratory or in artificial field conditions.

Indeed, the first author, Daniel Bar-Tal, has spent the past 20 years studying the psychological processes of the intractable conflict as a participant-observer of the dynamics of the Arab-Israeli struggle. Through this observation he came to believe that a few themes play a crucial role in the psyche of the societies' members involved in an intractable conflict. Eight themes, which together have been proposed to constitute ethos of conflict, were identified. They include societal beliefs of justness in own

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goals, security, delegitimization of the opponent, self-collective positive view, self-victimhood, patriotism, unity, and peace. Within this framework, special effort was made to present the general concept of the ethos of conflict and to elucidate and elaborate on its particular themes as they appear in Israeli Jewish society. In this endeavor, themes of security and patriotism in Israel were systematically analyzed in two edited books (Bar-Tal, Jacobson, & Klieman, 1998; Ben Amos & Bar-Tal, 2004). This book now adds a third theme: the development of shared psychological intergroup repertoire and particularly its manifestation in the delegitimization of the Israeli opponent, the Arabs.

For a long time, Bar-Tal has studied the phenomenon of delegitimization, assuming that it constitutes one of the crucial foundations for the fueling and continuation of the conflict and the major obstacle to the peace-making process. Delegitimization of the opponent provides probably the most important epistemic basis that justifies harm, destruction, killings, atrocities, and even genocide. The conflict between Arabs and Jews is not an exception, and in this case both sides resorted to intensive mutual delegitimization as part of the psychological dynamics that accompanied it. It was therefore natural to focus on investigating the negative stereotyping, prejudice, emotions, and intentions of behavior referred to as the shared psychological intergroup repertoire that emerged during the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The second author, Yona Teichman, studied social affiliation in different stress situations as well as influences of stress and reactions to it. In the past 10 years she has concentrated on tracing the acquisition and development of social representations through the developmental trajectory. She has devoted special attention to the development and application of an implicit, free-response measure of social representations that is based on the systematic analysis of human figure drawings.

In the early 1990s we began a joint project with the ambitious goal of studying the acquisition and development of the mental representation of the ingroup (Jews and Israelis) and the outgroup (Arabs) among children and adolescents. During this time we have performed about 20 specific studies, which eventually formed a mosaic, revealing a comprehensive picture of how a new generation acquires the psychological repertoire about its rival and how the repertoire changes over the years. Our results encouraged us to present a systematic analysis of opponent representation in a society involved in intractable conflict.

The questions that are raised about studying one's own society, especially when portrayed in what may be defined as a negative light, certainly apply to our case, but we believe that it is only natural to study the society to which one belongs – in which one speaks the language and knows the culture. More importantly, we assume that conflicts have common features and things learned in Israel could have meaning for other societies

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engulfed in conflict. This defines our work as a general contribution to the understanding of the psychological dynamics underlying intractable conflicts. In the subject of our study, the implication is that the Arab representation in Israeli society is a mirror image of the Israeli representation in Arab societies. There is considerable evidence to support this belief, indicating that representations of the opponent are drawn from common conditions and experiences. Finally, we suggest that when two societies engage in vicious cycles of violence, it is important to look inside. Too often politicians, journalists, and researchers prefer to focus on the opponent, neglecting to look at their own society. They prefer to attribute the responsibility for the outbreak of the conflict and for its continuation to the rival. Through our approach we think that we can contribute to any peace process by assisting each side to look inside and analyze critically its own society and the processes that prevent resolution of the conflict. Such parallel or simultaneous analyses may encourage empathy for the other side, introduce new perspectives, and eventually break the vicious cycles that feed the conflict.

The process of selecting and preparing the material for this book and writing it was a long one, and we would like to express our indebtedness to numerous undergraduate and graduate students who were involved in many different ways in the research project that began in the early 1990s. Without their enthusiasm and contributions we would not have been able to carry out this elaborate project. In addition, we thank many friends and colleagues who read portions of the book in accordance to their expertise and provided helpful comments. We thank Yehudit Aurbach, Ehud Ben Ezer, Nitzan Ben-Shaul, Richard Bourhis, Marilyn Brewer, Ruth Firer, Nurit Gertz, Yosi Gorny, Elie Podeh, Anita Shapira, Charles Stangor, Walter Stephan, Asher Susser, Dan Urian, and Gadi Wolfsfeld. Their comments assisted us in revising the original manuscript, but the responsibility for the final version remains fully ours.

The Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities and Social Sciences selected the first author to be a Fellow and provided ideal conditions for the academic year 2000–2001 to write parts of the book. There, Petry Kievit-Tyson edited several chapters of the book, and we thank her for the help. Later, the School of Education at Tel Aviv University was generous in helping us to complete our work. Mirjam Hadar edited additional chapters; Alice Zilcha helped to type the corrections, tables, and figures and prepared the book for the publishing process; and Ilan Feldhamer helped to write the Israeli narrative in Chapter 3. We are grateful for their assistance. Yasmin Alkaly, Gaby Lieberman, and Avital Sasson also deserve thanks for helping with some of the statistical analyses and technical work. We are grateful for their assistance. Also we thank Philip Laughlin, our editor at Cambridge University Press, who despite endless delays never lost trust in our determination

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to conclude the book and was very encouraging from the first contact we established.

Last, but not least, we would like to express our deepest appreciation and gratitude to our spouses, Svetlana and Meir, who were the “victims” of the long process of writing this book. Their patience and support sustained our work all the time.

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