Passive reconciliation in the context of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

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Protracted conflicts are a worldwide phenomenon (Coleman, 2000; Kriesberg, 2000) that inflict wide-scale and severe damage (physical, economic and psychological) on the parties involved (Coleman, 2000; Lira, 2001; Staub and Bar-Tal, 2003). A major psychological aspect of these conflicts is the formation of a psychological repertoire among the parties to a conflict, composed of three elements: a collective memory of the conflict, an ethos of the conflict and an emotional orientation toward the conflict – all of which are expressions of negative and antagonistic attitudes to the rival (Bar-Siman-Tov, 2004; Bar-Tal and Teichman, 2005). Protracted conflicts at times reach a resolution phase, whereby a peace agreement is signed by the parties. But research suggests that signing a peace agreement does not ensure peace and is often the starting point of reconciliation rather than its successful conclusion.

Reconciliation requires that the psychological repertoire of the conflict be addressed and transformed in the post-conflict phase, so that its elements (i.e., memories, attitudes and emotions) will become less negative (and hopefully at least partly positive) towards the rival. Such a change can ensure proper implementation of the peace agreement and stable peace between the parties (Bar-Siman-Tov, 2004; Lederach, 2000; Montville, 1993; Staub, 1998). Without a transformation of the psychological repertoire, its antagonistic elements can cause the parties to reactivate the conflicts and jolt the social climate in the national and the international arenas (Bar-Tal and Bennink, 2004; Kriesberg, 2000).

Scholars of conflict resolution pay great attention to an active reconciliation process which includes aspects such as engaging with the history of the conflict, an apology and reparations offered by the perpetrating party (Hayner, 1999; Montville, 1993). However, reconciliation can also be the result of another process, termed here “passive reconciliation,”
whose impact can be significant. In this latter process, the desired transformation of the psychological repertoire occurs due to the healing effect of time and cooperation between the parties on “practical” matters. This process is termed passive reconciliation because reconciliation is reached without a conscious and active effort of the parties. The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the passive reconciliation process and then to examine its role in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict: first, whether such reconciliation did take place; and if so, what were its characteristics and outcome?

This chapter starts with a short review of the literature dealing with the aftermath of conflicts and the active reconciliation process, followed by a theoretical construction of the passive reconciliation process. Finally, it examines whether a passive reconciliation process has been taking place between the Israelis and the Palestinians since the signing of the 1993 Oslo Agreement until the end of 2004.

Active and passive reconciliation

Protracted conflicts are long, extremely violent and related to issues of major importance to the involved parties (Bar-Tal, 1998; Kriesberg, 2000). In order to cope with the difficult reality, the parties to the conflicts develop a “psychological repertoire of the conflict.” This repertoire includes three elements: (1) A collective memory of the conflict, which is composed of an account of the events of the conflict provided to the members of a society (Cairns and Roe, 2003; Connerton, 1989). This account is usually biased, where the rival is portrayed in a very negative manner and the injustice, harm, evil and atrocities allegedly conducted by him are highlighted (Bar-Tal, 2003). (2) An ethos of the conflict: a configuration of shared central societal beliefs that provide a particular dominant orientation to a society at present and for the future. These beliefs justify the group’s objectives, provide self-esteem, foster patriotism and de-legitimize the enemy’s goals and beliefs (Bar-Tal, 1998, 2000). (3) A collective emotional orientation: emotions evoked by the conflict, shared by society members and affecting them strongly – most notably fear, hatred and anger (Bar-Tal, 2001; Volkan, 1988).

Reconciliation is often regarded as the solution for protracted conflicts, causing the psychological repertoire of the society members to be less negative towards the rival. It consists of mutual recognition and acceptance, invested interests and goals in developing peaceful relations, mutual trust, positive attitudes as well as sensitivity and consideration of the other party’s needs and interests (Bar-Tal and Bennink, 2004).
A number of required phases for a successful (active) reconciliation process have been suggested in the literature: (1) Truth – Determining the truth about past events of the conflict (Jamal, 2001; Shriver, 1995; Staub, 1998); (2) Responsibility – The perpetrating party should take responsibility for its unjust practices (Jamal, 2001; Staub, 1998); (3) Apology – The perpetrating party should apologize for its wrong-doing to the victimized party (Shriver, 1995); (4) Reparations – Reparations should be paid by the perpetrating party to the victimized party (Jamal, 2001; Staub, 1998); (5) Forgiveness – The victimized party should forgive the perpetrating party (Bar-Tal and Bennink, 2004; Jamal, 2001).

Active reconciliation was and is practiced between the parties to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. For example, the events of the conflict were negotiated in the Shared History project in order to produce shared or two separate, but at least legitimized, versions of these events (Adwan and Bar-On, 2003). Meetings of dialog groups of both parties organized by the Adam Institute in order to inform the other party about one’s own emotional responses towards itself and the conflict and to learn about the parallel responses of the other party (Adam, 2007). Teachers among both parties are trained by MECA (Middle East Children Association) in order to educate their pupils for a culture of peace (Shapiro, 2004).

A passive reconciliation process is defined as a process in which parties to a protracted conflict passively form or restore genuine peace relations. This means that reconciliation is advanced without activities aimed at reconstructing positive relations, but stems from the mere fact that time is passing and from instrumental acts that are carried out for utilitarian purposes without any goals for advancing positive relations. In other words, while active reconciliation involves acts that are planned to actively promote the transformation of the society members’ psychological repertoire that evolved during the protracted conflict, passive reconciliation does not involve any of these acts. Unlike active reconciliation, the transformation of the psychological repertoire is a by-product and not an object of the process. Thus, for example, when parties cooperate economically for financial profit, the people from both parties to the conflict who take part in this cooperation get to know each other, and slowly they transform and ameliorate their mutual psychological repertoire.

The passive reconciliation process is composed of two major components: time and cooperation. Time can passively advance reconciliation in the post-conflict phase (after a peace agreement has been signed by the parties). Among the older generation who were directly harmed by the conflict, time can have a healing effect – at least partially – with
regard to the psychological wounds caused by the conflict. This healing process usually comprises four major phases: shock – associated with denial; yearning and protest – as realization of the loss develops; despair – accompanied by somatic and emotional upset; and gradual recovery – marked by increased well-being and acceptance of the loss (Stroebe et al., 1998). This process requires time, and the length of time required for healing depends, among other things, on the type of personal and collective offenses (i.e., the more severe they are, the more time for healing is needed; Ross, 2003). Thus, the passing of time may encourage the healing process of the older generation and the amelioration of their psychological repertoire towards the rival party.

Time is also “responsible” for the emergence of a younger generation not directly harmed by the conflict, in contrast with the older generations who experienced it directly. Usually, the further the generation is from the direct experience of the traumas of the conflict, the less it is harmed by them (Bar-On, 1996; Bar-On and Gilad, 1994; Sigel, 1989). Thus, as time passes, the parties to the conflict include less people who sustain deep wounds caused by the conflict, or the intensity of these people’s wounds is weakening. Such a situation is a manifestation of reconciliation; it also facilitates cooperation activities that will be discussed below. Having said all this, the influence of time is slow and limited in its scope and is relevant mostly in the post-conflict period. Thus the element of time by no means excludes the need for the ensuing cooperating component of the passive process.

In some cases, countries’ leaders, as well as economic or other entrepreneurs, may decide that the conflicting past should be laid aside in favor of strategic present and future interests (i.e., particular interests – of the elites; or universal ones). In such cases cooperation takes place in various areas (e.g., trade, industry, culture, tourism, environment, health, diplomacy and security) in the form of joint institutions and organizations, cooperative ventures and coordinating activities. Cooperation can cause the psychological repertoire of the conflict to be transformed and become less negative towards the rival, as it provides opportunities for establishing common goals and encounters in which past opponents can form personal relations. It allows members of both parties to get acquainted with various “un-related-to-the-conflict” neutral or positive aspects of the rivals, humanize, personalize and legitimize them and learn to trust them (Barnea and Abdeen, 2002; Bar-Siman-Tov, 2004; Bar-Tal and Bennink, 2004; Chada, 1995; Kelman, 1999; Kriesberg, 2000). Cooperation, even if limited in scope, can demonstrate to the parties the benefits of peace and cooperation. The parties
can realize that it is best for their own interests and benefits to continue and even widen their cooperation (Bar-Siman-Tov, 2004; Bar-Tal and Bennink, 2004; Kriesberg, 2004). The desire to maintain or enlarge the benefits of cooperation creates motivation for the parties to support peace and reconciliation.

To summarize this part: (1) When passively reconciling the parties is discussed, it does not necessarily mean that a full reconciliation between the parties will be achieved. Partial promotion of reconciliation is also possible, and it is important. (2) Passive reconciliation will usually occur and be more effective in the post-conflict phase. Signing a peace agreement resolves the actual disagreements between the parties, stops the violent confrontations and removes technical and security obstacles that might inhibit the initiation and continuation of the passive reconciliation process. (3) The cooperation component of the passive reconciliation process is usually evidence of some reconciliation that already exists between the parties (e.g., if tourists visit the rival country, then probably some of their psychological repertoire towards this rival is not so negative). This component is usually also a facilitator of reconciliation between the parties (e.g., visiting the rival country facilitates the psychological repertoire of the tourists becoming less negative). (4) The classification of the activities performed by the parties – whether they are part of active or passive reconciliation processes – is not always clear-cut. The activities are situated on a continuum ranging from active reconciliation to passive reconciliation – and some combine both.

Passive reconciliation in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict

The Israeli–Palestinian conflict has been characterized as a protracted conflict (Bar-Tal, 1998; Sharvit and Bar-Tal, 2005), consequently, a negative psychological repertoire was established between the parties (Nets and Bar-Tal, 2007; Nets, 2007). This includes a negative collective memory of the conflict (Bar-Tal and Salomon, 2005; Firer and Adwan, 2004), a negative ethos of the conflict (Bar-Tal and Salomon, 2005; Rouhana and Bar-Tal, 1998; Sharvit and Bar-Tal, 2005), and a negative collective emotional orientation of the conflict (Bar-Tal, 2001).

This work deals with the 1993–2004 period of the relations of the parties because of the importance of the period to the relations between the sides, and because after 1994 (the establishment of the Palestinian Authority) cooperation between the parties can be discussed. The Oslo Agreements were only the starting point of negotiations that postponed central issues to a later stage and encountered significant obstacles
between the signing of the agreements and 2004, relations between the Israelis and the Palestinians underwent three general phases: the “still partly violent” period (September 1993 to end of 1996), followed by the “relatively quiet” period (end of 1996 to September 2000), until the mostly violent “second Intifada” period (September 2000 to end of 2004) (Bar-Siman-Tov et al., 2005).

The only component of the passive reconciliation process described above that could take place in the Israeli–Palestinian peace process was cooperation, as the relatively short period was insufficient for the time component. Moreover, the continued violence implied that neither had a new generation unharmed directly by the conflict been created; nor had there been a real opportunity for the older generation to be healed from the aftermath of the conflict. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile noting that time had some partial healing effect on wounds caused to the older Palestinian generation: the wounds suffered by the Palestinian refugees during the “Al-Nacba” (what the Israelis refer to as the 1948 War of Independence). The influence of time was one of the reasons that the refugees, partly in the 1970s but mostly since the 1990, were able to confront their trauma and relate their memories of this hard event. This was done in the framework of seminars, books, articles in journals, recorded testimony, parades, etc. (Khader, 2004; Tamari, 2004).

Cooperation evolved between Israelis and Palestinians during that period in various arenas, and its overall impact needs to be assessed. In terms of trade, Israel and the Palestinian Authority have great interest as neighboring entities in conducting close trade relations (Alyazji, 2005; Awartani, 2005; Bar, 2005; Hazboun, 2005; Huleileh, 2005; Zaif, 2005). For both parties the proximity reduces transportation costs and time (e.g., the closest country where Israel can buy cheap gas as a source of energy is the Palestinian Authority; Field, 2005) and opens up an export market. Israelis consider the Palestinian Authority as a potential gateway for Israeli exports to the Arab world, while the Palestinian have an interest in importing Israeli goods, exporting to Israel and using the sea and air ports of Israel for exporting their products to other countries.

The above discussion explains why the signing of the Oslo Agreements in 1993 raised high expectations among the Palestinians and the Israelis – businessmen as well as small-scale industrialists, service providers, farmers, etc. – with regard to the possibility of future economic prosperity and even a “New Middle East” (Alyazji, 2005; Awartani, 2005; Ben-Porat, 2005). The basis for the economic relations between the Israelis and the Palestinians was determined mainly in the Paris
Agreement signed in 1994. At that time economic prosperity seemed to be at the threshold: the Arab countries had begun to lift their boycotts, the Erez industrial zone was opened, mutual projects were discussed – of joint manufacturing, of the Palestinian Authority serving as a gateway for Israeli goods to the Arab world, of greater mutual trade relations between the two parties (and for the Israelis, with the other Arab countries and the Far East), etc. The motive for these mutual interactions was clear: expectations for gaining the economic “dividends of peace.”

The deterioration of the peace process due to the eruption of the second Intifada in September 2000 struck these high expectations a severe blow. The measures Israel implemented in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in response to the second Intifada, including closures, restrictions on the movements of goods and people in these areas and from them to Israel, and later the closure of the Erez industrial zone – among others – proved that such intensive cooperation is not possible at the present time (Awartani, 2005).

In practice, despite the difficulties, a cooperative attitude was prevalent during most of the three periods in various relevant Israeli government ministries (e.g., agriculture, trade and industry, finance, justice and foreign affairs) and parallel Palestinian ministries. This attitude also continued during the third period, although then it was more cautious due to security constraints. This mutual attitude of the ministries of both parties enabled the mutual trade conducted by the private sectors of the parties, which maintained some trade cooperation even during the second Intifada. About 75 per cent of the Palestinians’ exports and imports during the three periods were to and from Israel (Huleileh, 2005). Israelis exported to the Palestinian Authority goods valued at NIS 6.3 billion and imported from it (mostly goods) in the value of NIS 1.3 billion (GBS, 2004). In addition, even in the midst of such a difficult political situation as the second Intifada, Palestinian businessmen were even willing to increase the level of their cooperation with their Israeli counterparts (Alyazji, 2005; Awartani, 2005; Hazboun, 2005; Huleileh, 2005; Jabar, 2005). As described earlier, they mention different reasons for this willingness – the quality of the Israeli products, reduced transportation costs and expectations of good prices for their products in the “wealthy Israeli market.” A similar business-minded attitude, if to a lesser degree, was found among Israeli businessmen (Lautman, 2005). While this economic cooperation was by no means on an equal footing, as the Palestinians have little choice because of their dependence on Israel, the practices yielded some (passive) reconciliation as the trade fostered trust (Alyazji, 2005) and many good friendships (Jabar, 2005).
During the relatively calm second period, economic cooperation extended beyond the elite levels with the emergence of “border markets” (Arieli, 2003). These were un-organized markets set up by Palestinians along main roads in the West Bank where various products were sold (e.g., food, furniture, building materials, clothing, footwear, car spare parts, garden plants and toys), and many service suppliers operated (e.g., garages, film developing shops, restaurants and dental clinics). These markets attracted a large number of Israelis (e.g., in the biggest market, Bidia market near Kesem Junction, about 70,000 Israelis arrived only on Saturdays, while many came also on the other weekdays). It was estimated that the annual scope of trade in all these markets was more than NIS 1.3 billion (Arieli, 2003). These markets stopped operating at the beginning of the third period. The Israeli consumers reported that they enjoyed visiting those markets due to the unique oriental shopping experience, the cheap prices, the conversations with the Palestinian salesmen which were more personal than the formal conversations with Israeli salesmen, the bargaining, the prices, the pleasant market atmosphere and the fact that they were open on Saturdays and thus enabled family entertainment combined with shopping (Arieli, 2003, 2005).

Tourism is another realm where cooperation has developed. In both the Israel and the Palestinian Authority there exist many sites of great religious importance, among others, to Christians. This kind of religious or pilgrimage tourism plays an important part in the tourism of both parties; for example, 76 per cent of tourists to the Palestinian Authority are pilgrims (Hazboun, 2005). Tourist pilgrim packages to the “Holy Land” include sites in Israel and the Palestinian Authority and therefore require the cooperation of both parties. That is why at least until the end of the second period (information about the consequent period was not found), there was intensive cooperation between the private sectors that deal with tourism in both parties (Abu-Dayyeh, 2000). As one senior Palestinian figure in such cooperation explained: “I can assure you that neither side could provide a package of the holy land – ‘a religious program’ – without working with the other side. …The Holy Land – Israel/Palestine, Palestine/Israel – is one package … a joint package … You can’t get away from it … if we do, both sides will lose” (Abu-Dayyeh, 2000, pp. 47, 50).

Employment is another form of cooperation, if unequal. Palestinians worked in businesses owned by Israelis located in the Erez Industrial Zone – about 100 Israeli-owned factories or service suppliers operated there employing a few thousand Palestinian workers (Bar, 2005). The activity in that zone continued throughout the three periods, till it was
terminated due to security constraints in April 2004. Israeli employers reported that the atmosphere was good and that they had good (some describe it even as positively unique) working relations and even friendships, with many instances of reciprocal aid, between them and their Palestinian workers (Arieli, 2003; Arzi, 2005). Half of the businesses in the Erez Zone (about 100) were owned by Palestinians. Relating briefly to the relations between the business owners from both parties, it was reported by the Israeli owners that they were good, similar to the relations described above with their Palestinian workers (Arieli, 2003). A similar positive description of the mutual relations was also given by Palestinian business owners describing them as “special friendships” and even some of their Israeli friends as “their brothers” (Arieli, 2003; Zalah, 2005).

Before the third period, about 150,000 Palestinian workers worked in Israel; when the violence escalated (and foreign workers were imported to Israel) their number declined substantially, but still today about 50,000 of them continue to work in Israel (Shamir, 2005). Employment of these workers in Israel contributed significantly to the Palestinian economy (supplying work and income) as well as to the Israelis (by the supply of cheap labor). Research conducted at the end of the 1970s found an amelioration of the attitudes among both Israelis and Palestinians, due to the work of the Palestinians in Israel, though to a higher extent among the Israelis (Amir et al., 1980). Though this research was not conducted in the period discussed (1993–2004), it nevertheless seems reasonable to assume that at least some (if not all) of this phenomenon of amelioration of the attitudes also occurred in later stages.

Israel supplies the Palestinian Authority with most of its water and all its electricity; thus infrastructure provided another venue of professional cooperation (Arlozerov, 2005; A-Sharif, 2005; Ben-Arie, 2005). Professional cooperation in water management was claimed to create “true and sincere friendships” (A-Sharif, 2005, p. 64); and in electricity “valuable…mutual trust” (Ben-Arie, 2005, p. 71). As neighboring entities, the Israelis’ and the Palestinians’ environment are interlinked in their ecological systems, including air, sea, drinking water, streams, flora and fauna (Kleot, 2003). This situation enforces both parties to cooperate on environmental issues (Al-Hmaidi, 1998; Sarid, 1998; Smith and Abu-Diab, 1998). Awareness of the need for such cooperation was manifest in the various agreements signed between the Israelis and the Palestinians addressing various environmental issues. This awareness led to the establishment in 1995 of the Joint Environmental Experts Committee (that never convened because of
the political situation) and the founding of the Israeli–Palestinian Joint Water Committee that convened many times, addressing issues such as water drilling, cleaning of streams, pollution of water, etc. (Kleot, 2003). Cooperation was also exercised concerning severe garbage hazards and in the event of spilling dangerous materials. Environmental cooperation also involved many NGOs and even in August 2001, 13 Palestinian environmental NGOs (established for environmental protection purposes) were still cooperating with Israeli environmental NGOs, and four bi-national NGOs have continued to operate (Obeidi, 2001; Zwirn, 2001). In addition, various municipalities cooperate even today, in protecting their mutual water resources (e.g., Zur Hadassa in Israel and the village Vadi Fookin in the West Bank, the youth village Eshel Hanasi in Israel and the Habsan village in the Gaza Strip); or in protecting their streams (e.g., the regional municipality Emek Hefer in Israel and the Tul Karem municipality in the West Bank – with regard to the Alexander stream) (Rinat, 2005).

The proximity of Israel and the Palestinian Authority forces them to cooperate in health issues, due to the possible mutual influences in the risk of epidemics on public health (e.g., polio, SARS, West Niles Virus, HIV). A vivid description of this situation can be found in the title of a book dealing with such Israeli–Palestinian cooperation, “The Virus Does Not Stop at the Checkpoint” (Barnea and Husseini, 2002). Accordingly, several agreements between the Israelis and the Palestinians that directed toward mutual health cooperation have been signed. Health cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians at the governmental level existed mainly through five joint committees dealing with: food supervision, epidemiology, medicines, ambulatory treatment and professional training (Barnea and Husseini, 2002). While in the first two periods these committees functioned intensively, in the third period, due to the deterioration of the peace process, cooperation came to an end (Barnea, 2004).

Extensive cooperation in this domain, mainly in the first two periods, took place also between NGOs. Between 1994 and 1998, 56 NGOs and 11 government institutions conducted 148 health projects involving about 4000 participants (Barnea and Abdeen, 2002), but in the third period only about 25 projects were conducted (Barnea, 2004). The main reasons attendees mentioned for their participation in these projects were improvement of professional knowledge (Palestinians – 52 per cent, Israelis – 18 per cent) and ending the conflict (Palestinians – 41 per cent, Israelis – 53 per cent; Barnea and Abdeen, 2002). A survey conducted
to study the impact of these projects found that participants of both parties reported that the projects enabled them to learn about the other party and to replace stereotypes and myths with a direct and realistic impression. They were also positively surprised by the high quality of the knowledge and work of their colleagues, their good will and enthusiasm and the easiness that developed in their mutual personal relations and professional dialogue (Barnea and Abdeen, 2002).

Media correspondents of both the Israeli and the Palestinian parties who cover the conflict are a valuable source of assistance to one another. Thus, in the context of the conflict, for example, Palestinian correspondents transferred information about events that occurred in the Palestinian Authority to their Israeli colleagues, or helped them to reach dangerous locations there; while Israeli correspondents helped their Palestinian colleagues by transferring relevant information or by helping them to cope with the closure the Israeli army imposed in various areas of the Palestinian Authority (Halabi, 2003).

Several aspects regarding the passive reconciliation process described above should be highlighted:

(1) **Difficult circumstances** – The circumstances for the initiation, progress and success of a passive reconciliation process in the context of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict in the 1993–2004 period have been very difficult, bearing in mind the three points mentioned earlier: the Oslo Agreements not being the final agreements (i.e., this is not the post-conflict phase); the wide scope of domestic resentment towards these agreements; and the partly violent first period and the most violent third period.

(2) **The continuation of the process and its scope** – Despite such difficult circumstances, a considerable passive reconciliation process took place between the parties during most of the period under discussion. The process took part in both the government-public sector and civic society (private sector and NGOs), in many and diverse domains (e.g., trade, retailer marketing, third-party tourism, banking, Palestinian employment, infrastructure, environment, health and media), and involved a very large number of people from both parties (e.g., Israeli consumers, Palestinian workers, professionals from both parties), the elites (e.g., wealthy businessmen, high-ranking officials) and the public at large.

(3) **Phases in the process** – The process was initiated mainly in the first “partly violent” period (September 1993 to end of 1996), relatively flourished in the second “relatively quiet” period (end of 1996 to
September 2000), and parts of it declined significantly in scope since the beginning of the third “second Intifada” period (September 2000 to end of 2004) (Kriesberg, 2004; Nadler and Saguy, 2004). Nevertheless, even in the midst of the difficult third period the process still continued, though, as mentioned, to a much lesser extent.

(4) *The uniqueness of the Israeli–Palestinian passive reconciliation process* – The literature usually relates to an *active* reconciliation process conducted in the post-conflict phase, after a final peace agreement is signed by the parties (and, of course, no violence prevails). A *passive* reconciliation between the Israelis and the Palestinians took place *before* a final agreement was signed. The Oslo Agreements enabled the operation of the above described passive reconciliation process already in the first and second periods (Kriesberg, 2002; Nadler and Saguy, 2004).

(5) *Evaluating the success of the process* – Bearing in mind that we are concentrating on the psychological aspect of the relations between the parties, the success of the process can be determined by the extent to which the process caused a transformation and amelioration of the psychological repertoire of the conflict. In our case, the process enabled a relatively large number of people to meet each other, cooperate and learn about various neutral or positive aspects of the other party by means of a direct impression. These encounters were by and large pleasant experiences for the parties, in which some negative attitudes towards the other party were replaced with positive ones, and personal friendships, some of them solid ones, were formed.

This process thus had a partially positive influence in ameliorating the psychological repertoire of some of the parties, thus partially *promoting* peace and reconciliation between the parties. We stress “promoting” and not “reaching” reconciliation since indeed reconciliation between the parties was only partly promoted and not reached. Nevertheless, even the partial amelioration of the psychological repertoire that did occur is of importance.

(6) *The passive nature of the process* – The reconciliation process took place mainly through activities not directly connected to the conflict and geared towards “practical” matters. As Samir Huleileh, secretary of the Palestinian Government and a senior member of the Palestinian business community, explained, the Palestinian businesspeople operate not according to political or ideological motivations, but according to “…pure economic considerations of the profitability of their investments” (Huleileh, 2005, p. 40). Thus, Palestinian and Israeli
businesspeople, consumers and professionals cooperated on practical everyday matters, not directly aiming at reconciliation.

Conclusion

Parties to protracted conflicts develop a psychological repertoire of the conflict composed of negative memories, attitudes and emotions towards their rivals. Such a psychological repertoire is a major obstacle for the parties in resolving the conflict, in a proper implementation of peace agreements and in reconciling. Thus, transforming the psychological repertoire into a more positive one towards the rival is a major aim for parties to conflicts. This chapter proposes a new process for transforming the psychological repertoire – the passive reconciliation process. Thus, in this chapter the components of this process were first introduced theoretically, and then the validity of this process was examined using the Israeli–Palestinian conflict as a case study.

Relatively wide-scale and diverse cooperation took place in this conflict, mainly in the 1993–2000 period, but also, though to a lesser extent, in the 2000–4 period. A full reconciliation would require the resolution of the conflict and the end of violence (Kriesberg, 2000; Nadler and Saguy, 2004) and would take a long time, even a few decades, or more (Bar-Tal and Bennink, 2004). However, the continuation of cooperation since Oslo may indicate that some amelioration of the psychological repertoire has occurred, in spite of the escalation of violence and the difficult circumstances especially since 2000. This process of passive reconciliation can contribute, if only partly, to reaching a peace agreement between the parties, implementing it properly and, in the long run, reconciling – not only in the discussed Israeli–Palestinian conflict, but also in other conflicts around the world.

References


