

# Reconciliation: Definitions and Processes

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# The Presentation

- (I) Reconciliation: The Concept
- (II) Our work: The Need Based Model
- (III) Dilemmas:
  - Radical Forgiveness
  - False Reconciliation

# (I) Definition: A Problem of Conceptual Stretching

- “... no one seems to know what it means...”  
(Gibson, 2006)
- “...no more than a fashionable buzzword...”  
(Hermann, 2004).
- “... it is easy to be overwhelmed by the heterogeneity of the concept...” (Meierhenrich, 2008).

# (I) Reconciliation: The history of the concept

- Early meaning: Restoring “union” with church
    - 1539: Restoration of sacred use of church property
    - 1625: A person’s union with the church
- But also an Interpersonal meaning:

Also: Reconcile in harmony after estrangement

*Common to all definitions: Mending broken relationships (with God, church or other people)*

# (I) Reconciliation: What is it?

- Early scientific research: Primate behavior (de Waal, 2000; Silk, 2002). Evolutionary function of reconciliation.
- In Intergroup Relations:
  - Post-conflict
  - Goes beyond settling conflicting interests
  - Emotional (e.g., feeling of trust in other, friendship, social closeness) and Identity-related (e.g., apology, forgiveness) processes.
  - Intends a different and sustainable harmonious future

# Emphases in Definitions of Intergroup Reconciliation

	Structural Emphasis	Relational Emphasis	Socio-Emotional (identity) Emphasis
WHY CONFLICT ?	Structural violence ( <u>unequal social structure</u> )	Distrust; Negative feelings/perception of <u>adversary</u>	Threats to psych identities of <u>each party</u>
BETWEEN?	<b><i>Advantaged and Disadvantaged</i></b>	<b><i>Adversaries</i></b>	<b><i>Victims and Perpetrators</i></b>
RECONCILIATION: Goal ?	Redistribution of Power, Equality	Trust; Better feelings and perceptions of <b>other</b>	Secure Identities- No threat
How ?	Political changes; Structural changes	Contact, dialogue	Apology- forgiveness

## II: The Need Based Model- A Socio-Emotional Emphasis

- Instrumental vs. Socio-Emotional (Nadler, 2002)
  - Long & Brecke (2003): Signaling vs. Forgiveness model
- The need based model: Socio-Emotional Reconciliation

### **Definition of Socio-Emotional Reconciliation:**

**The removal of emotional barriers that are associated with threats to victims' and perpetrators identity and which sustain conflict**

## (II) Key Assumptions

- Different threats to identity produce different needs:
  - Victims: To their identity as powerful and self-controlling actors. They experience need for power
  - Perpetrators: To their moral-image. Experience a need for acceptance and re-admission to the moral community;
- These needs can be met unilaterally or bi-laterally



## ( II) Unilateral Fulfillment of Needs: Maintains conflict

- Victim's need for empowerment:
  - Taking revenge
- Perpetrator's need for 'moral adequacy'
  - Psychological distancing
    - From the act: "It's nothing"
    - Responsibility for the act: "They brought it on themselves"
    - From the victim (lack of empathy): In extreme case dehumanization of the victim.

## (II) Satisfaction of Needs as a Social Exchange: The Apology-Forgiveness Cycle

- Bi-lateral Satisfaction of needs increases  
RECONCILIATION
  - Apology (assuming responsibility): Gives power to the victim
  - Forgiveness: Gives acceptance to the perpetrator  
“The victim becomes the gatekeeper to what the outcast desires: Readmission into the human community”  
(Gobodo-Madikizela, 2003).

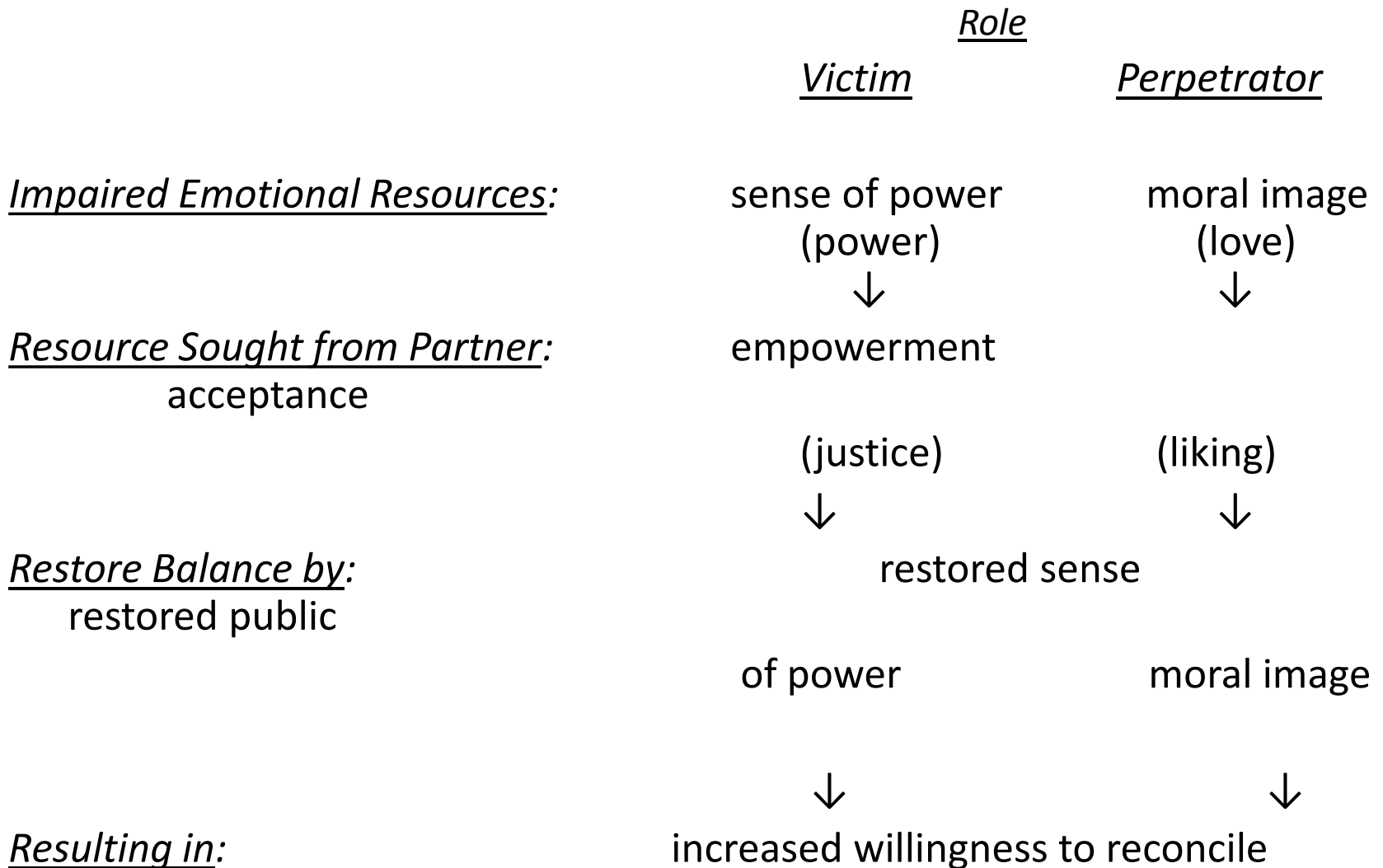


Figure 1: *The Needs-Based Model of Reconciliation (Nadler & Shnabel, 2008).*

# Empirical Evidence

Interpersonal level (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008):

- (a) Perpetrators = Need for Acceptance > Power
  - (b) Victims = Need for Power > Acceptance
  - (c) For perpetrators and victims messages of acceptance and empowerment increased willingness for reconciliation, respectively.
  - (d) Readiness to reconcile: Mediated by feelings of acceptance and empowerment.
- Intergroup level

Study 3: Willingness to reconcile as affected by messages of empowerment and acceptance (Shnabel & Nadler, JPSP, 2008).

- Participants in the victim/perpetrator condition received a message of empowerment/acceptance/control and their willingness to reconcile was then measured. (2 X 3 between participants experiment).

	VICTIM			PERPETRATOR		
	Empower	Accept	Control	Empower	Accept	Control
	4.63	4.23	3.9	4.8	5.3	4.3

# “Victimhood” and “Perpetration: Context and Psychological construal

- The malleability of victim/perpetrator: Context and Construal
  - Context: (Shnabel, Nadler, Ulrich & Dovidio, 2009):
    - Jews: Victims in context of German-Jewish
      - More willing to reconcile after empowerment
    - Jews: Perpetrators in Context of Arab-Jewish
      - More willing to reconcile after acceptance
- Psychological construal in Liberia: (Mazziotta, Gausel, Feuchte & Nadler, 2010)

# The Intergroup Level

(Shnabel, Nadler, Ulrich & Dovidio, PSPB, 2009)

## 1. Willingness to reconcile – Study 1 (A X B, $p < .01$ )

	Arabs (victims)	Jews (perpetrators)
Empowerment	3.59	3.17
Acceptance	3.31	3.63

- Study 2 : Relations between Germans and Jews (A X B,  $p < .01$ )

	Jews (victims)	Germans (perpetrators)
Empowerment	3.47	3.03
Acceptance	3.05	3.63



# Extension to Structural Violence (Nadler & Shnabel, in press).

- Advantaged need Acceptance - Disadvantaged Need Empowerment
- Depends of Perceived security of status relations:
  - With “real groups” and “minimal groups”: When status relations were viewed as illegitimate: Higher level of needs (Siem, von Oettingen & Nadler, 2010).
- Satisfaction of need increase reconciliation between advantaged and disadvantaged ?
  - Initial evidence: Yes.
  - Reconciliation means willingness of advantaged to **lose power**.

# False Reconciliation: *The Constructive Value of Resentment*

- Forgiveness/Reconciliation:  
Religious/Therapeutic.
- Jean Amery: Unwillingness to forgive- Neither pathological nor immoral
  - **Resentment an important tool against cheap reconciliation**
  - The pressure to forsake resentment: Experienced as indifference and humiliation
  - Resentment expresses the victim's feelings of worth and care for his/her human rights

# A condition for forgiveness: “Negative Possession of Identity”

- Genuine Reconciliation:
  - PAST WRONGDOINGS BECOME **NEGATIVE POSSESSIONS OF IDENTITY**
  - Examples: present German-Jewish relations;  
Possibility for reconciled Israeli-Jews/Israeli-Arabs

A possession of negative identity makes the “Separation of Self” between “Perpetrator self” and the “Genuine self” (Goffman) possible .

# Conclusions

- Reconciliation: A multifaceted concept
- Socio-emotional reconciliation predicated on addressing the psychological needs of both parties
- The value of resentment and importance of “negative possession of identity” to prevent false reconciliations.