

# 1915 EVENTS, NEW ISSUES AND RECONCILIATION WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF PERSISTENCE OF CONFLICT AND THE CONCEPT OF INTRACTABLE CONFLICT\*

(ÇATIŞMA SÜREKLİLİĞİ VE ÇÖZÜLEMİYEN/İNATÇI ÇATIŞMA KAVRAMI ÇERÇEVESİNDE 1915 OLAYLARI, YENİ SORUNLAR VE UZLAŞMA)

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**Abstract:** *There are some concrete problems, with roots in the past, that have remained unsolved between Turkish and Armenian societies. These problems have become deeper through the years and have negatively affected the relationship between the two societies, and by now have been transformed into a chronic conflict. Nevertheless, this type of conflict does not involve physical violence today, yet it has been transformed into intractable conflict with its all defining features. This study attempts to investigate the relationship between the two societies around the concept of intractable conflict and the socio-psychological foundations of it. The socio-psychological foundation of the Turkish-Armenian conflict has generated a completely new bundle of problems. For both societies to follow a positive line of relationship, a due attention should be paid not only to the concrete problems, but also to the socio-psychological repertoire of intractable conflicts and find solutions accordingly. This article will apply Daniel Bar-Tal's method of analysis when using the concept of intractable conflict that analyzes the said socio-psychological repertoire.*

**Keywords:** *conflict, intractable conflict, 1915 events, reconciliation*

**Öz:** *Türk ve Ermeni toplumları arasında geçmişten gelen ve çözüme kavuşturulamayan somut sorunlar mevcuttur. Bu sorunlar yıllar içerisinde*

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*derinleşmiş ve iki toplum arasındaki ilişkileri olumsuz etkileyerek süreklilik arz eden bir çatışmaya dönüştürmüştür. Bu çatışma türü günümüzde fiziksel şiddet içermemektedir fakat “çözümeyen/inatçı çatışmalar” (intractable conflicts) türüne dönüşmüş ve bu çatışmaların niteliklerini taşır hale gelmiştir. Çalışmada iki toplum arasındaki ilişkiler bu çatışma türünün nitelikleri çerçevesinde incelenecektir. Ayrıca bu çatışma türünde var olan sosyo-psikolojik altyapıya da yer verilecektir. Mevcut sosyo-psikolojik altyapı, var olan somut sorunlara ek yeni bir sorunlar kümesi oluşturmuştur. Bu nedenle var olan çatışma türünü diğer çatışma türlerinden ayırarak, çözümlemeyen/inatçı çatışma şeklinde incelemek, sorunu anlayabilmek ve çözümler üretebilmek için önem arz etmektedir. İki toplum arasındaki ilişkilerin olumlu seyri için sadece bilinen sorunlara değil, çözümlemeyen/inatçı çatışma türündeki çatışmaların sosyo-psikolojik altyapısına da odaklanmak ve çözümler üretmek gerektiği anlatılmaya çalışılmaktadır. Sosyo-psikolojik altyapının incelendiği çözümlemeyen/inatçı çatışmalar kavramı kullanılırken Daniel Bar-Tal’ın inceleme yöntemi uygulanacaktır.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** çatışma, çözümlemeyen/inatçı çatışma, 1915 olayları, uzlaşma

## INTRODUCTION

The events that occurred in 1915 still impact the two neighboring countries of Turkey and Armenia, and continue to remain as a legacy that prevents friendly relations from developing between the two countries. In the relations between the Turkish and Armenian communities, which includes the two countries and the diaspora, hot conflict and physical violence are currently not present. However, even if there is no active fighting, the incidents and issues between the two communities have taken their place in world history as an unsolvable, irreconcilable, and continuous type of conflict. The two communities that shared a common history have become communities that have become completely separated by the 1915 events and World War One. Nowadays, as two different states, communication between them continues to be almost non-existent. The relations, especially with the Diaspora keeping the 1915 events on the agenda, continue on a negative course. Even if it is a period where there are different state boundaries with no active fighting, the negative relationship and conflict (which includes the possibility of the outbreak of active fighting) continues.

*Turkish and Armenian communities have achieved neither resolution nor reconciliation of the main problems.*

First, this study will explain intractable conflicts that also have similar examples. Following this, the Turkish-Armenian relations<sup>1</sup> transformation into an intractable conflict will be emphasized. In addition to the aspects that are considered problematic between the two communities, the presence of issues that are new and more difficult to see (and which lead to the continuation of the conflict and prevent the resolution<sup>2</sup>/reconciliation<sup>3</sup> processes) will be explained. It will be expressed that for the relations between the two communities to come to a resolution, and then enter a reconciliation process, the points that are aimed to be emphasized in this article should be considered together with concrete issues.

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1 The words “Turkish” and “Armenian” are used with emphasis on supra-identity. There is no tendency to refer to both communities having homogeneous views. An evaluation will be made in the framework of the dominant views that the parties are internally stating in a mostly like-minded manner. For this reason, despite the communities internally possessing heterogeneous traits, this paper will use the said words by paying heed to properties that can be used to analyze the communities as a whole.

2 The word “resolution” is used with an emphasis that involves concrete political and economic resolutions.

3 The word “reconciliation” is used with an emphasis on the socio-psychological precautions that involve the societal recovery processes after the political and economic resolution stages of conflicts, and which ensure that the resolutions and peace are permanent.

Turkish and Armenian communities have achieved neither resolution nor reconciliation of the main problems. When considering the partially similar examples in different geographies, the potential recommendations for solving the problems are obvious. What is aimed to be highlighted in this article is not the problems between the two communities or resolution suggestions for them. What is explained here is that resolution proposals cannot even be made, and that even if resolution processes are initiated, they will not be permanent, and that reconciliation processes cannot be initiated. It is underlined that the reason for this is that the conflict has become intractable and that the socio-psychological repertoire of this conflict type possesses a set of problems that prevent the resolution and reconciliation.

### **Intractable Conflicts**

The word conflict, by its connotation, brings to mind physical and armed struggle and also includes the problematic relations between groups that have been in armed conflict and currently have many unsolved issues. When thinking this way, it is possible to find many examples in the Middle East, the Caucasus, and Africa. It is difficult to present resolution suggestions to these kinds of conflicts. This is because concrete issues regarding land and natural resources and religious and/or ethnic strife are present in the regions where resolutions to conflicts are needed. Due to many problems being harbored together at the same time, it is quite difficult to explain the reasons for the outbreak and continuity of conflicts and solve them. But for a resolution proposal, it is necessary to make an analysis on the reasons for the conflicts as well as the conflicts' continuity.

We see that many authors are using different terms to define long-term, unresolved conflicts. For example, John Burton, who has been studying on conflict resolutions, while examining regions and countries like the Arab-Israel issue, Sri Lanka, Kashmir, Cyprus, Ireland, has described the existing conflicts as “deep-rooted conflicts”.<sup>4</sup> When forming conflict resolutions, the general approach towards these event examinations is developed through the deep-rooted conflict term.

According to Burton, deep-rooted conflicts consist of conflict with the government, conflicts amongst governments, and conflicts between the people and groups in the society or community. These conflicts demand a change and

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4 John W. Burton, *Resolving Deep-Rooted Conflict: A Handbook* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America: 1987); John W. Burton (ed.), *Conflict: Human Needs Theory* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: The Macmillan Press, 1990).

a state of conformity in the individuals' behaviors which are unacceptable and beyond a person's tolerance and skills.<sup>5</sup> Concrete problems are present in these kinds of conflicts, but the said conflicts have gone way beyond the present problems and a perception of insolubility has been set. These kinds of conflicts occur over fundamental needs that cannot be reconciled. The conflicts can occur in any situation where there is inequality, and where rights over identity and participation are restrained. It is seen that the most brutal conflicts can arise in situations where cultural values are attempted to be preserved.<sup>6</sup>

Another term that has been developed regarding unresolved conflicts is "protracted conflicts". This term, which has been associated with Edward Azar, and even if it mostly deals with intra-state and inter-communal conflicts, can involve many kinds of conflicts. Refusal of basic human needs, attacks related to identity, and social injustice can be mentioned together with these conflicts. According to Azar, protracted conflicts are those that are long lasting, frequently involve violence, and are maintained between social groups for basic needs like security, recognition, acceptance, and access to political institutions and economic participation.<sup>7</sup> In his studies up until the 1970's and the late 1980's, Edward Azar has used the examples of Lebanon, Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Northern Ireland, Ethiopia, Israel, Sudan, Cyprus, Iran, Nigeria, and South Africa. It is necessary to highlight that, whether violent or not, protracted conflicts continue in these regions in our present time.

One of the subjects that Edward Azar emphasizes the most when using the term protracted conflict is identity and the role of the identity issue in conflicts. Azar has not clearly stated that he has taken the identity issue as a basic unit of analysis. However, Ronald J. Fisher states that the basic unit of analysis in Azar's studies is the identity group.<sup>8</sup> The identity groups stated here are described as ethnic, racial, religious, and linguistic. This allows for the expression of socially and politically obligatory human needs.<sup>9</sup> Group identity is directly connected to the provision of basic needs such as security, recognition, and justice. For example, if identity groups perceive pressure or unjust treatment in the form of the rejection of the basic needs of security,

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5 John W. Burton, *Conflict: Resolution and Prevention* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 15.

6 Burton, *Conflict: Resolution and Prevention*, 15.

7 Edward E. Azar, "The Analysis and Management of Protracted Social Conflict," Vamik D. Volkan, Joseph V. Montville, Demetrios A. Julius (eds.), in *The Psychodynamics of International Relationships: Unofficial Diplomacy at Work II* (Lexington M.A.: Lexington Publishing, 1991), 93.

8 Ronald J. Fisher, *Interactive Conflict Resolution* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1997), 5.

9 Fisher, *Interactive Conflict Resolution*, 5.

recognition, fairness, and political participation, it becomes easier for conflicts to arise.<sup>10</sup>

According to Edward Azar, there are four main reasons for protracted conflicts:<sup>11</sup> The first is communal content. What is aimed to be explained by communal content is that there are groups in the community that have ethnic, religious, linguistic, or cultural differences and that these groups have become politicized.<sup>12</sup> The second reason is human needs. Identity groups not being able to reach their basic needs is an important reason for conflict.<sup>13</sup> Azar states that concrete needs do not directly lead to conflicts.<sup>14</sup> If some identity groups do not have access to social economic institutions that provide the allocation of basic needs, thus the society's top structures, the odds of conflicts occurring increase. The hindering of the fair distribution of resources or preventing attendance to institutions that provide the allocation of these resources can lead to conflicts.<sup>15</sup>

The third reason is the role of governments and the state. Azar emphasizes that the state and government play a critical role in the determining of the individuals' and groups' needs or in the prevention of reaching these needs.<sup>16</sup> It is stated that in communities where there are protracted conflicts, the characteristic of the states are mostly those that do not meet the needs of the individual, and which are insufficient, limited, fragile, and run by authoritarian governments.<sup>17</sup> In addition to this situation, a rapid population increase, limited resources, and the state's political capacity have also been listed as important factors.<sup>18</sup> The fourth and final reason is international connections. Azar explains international connections in two separate contexts; economic connection with the international system and a military connection with great states.<sup>19</sup> According to Azar, protracted conflicts have different meanings from conflicts in previous periods. In this conflict type, the separation between internal and external resources and internal and external actors has become blurred. Many

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10 Fisher, *Interactive Conflict Resolution*, 5.

11 Edward E. Azar, *The Management of Protracted Social Conflict* (Vermont: Dartmouth Publishing Company, 1990), 7-12.

12 Azar, ... *Protracted Social Conflict*, 7.

13 Azar, ... *Protracted Social Conflict*, 7-10.

14 Azar, ... *Protracted Social Conflict*, 9.

15 Azar, ... *Protracted Social Conflict*, 9.

16 Azar, ... *Protracted Social Conflict*, 10-11.

17 Azar, ... *Protracted Social Conflict*, 10.

18 Azar, ... *Protracted Social Conflict*, 11.

19 Azar, ... *Protracted Social Conflict*, 11, 12.

reasons and conflict dynamics, and varying objectives are reflected to the actors and aims. Moreover, the starting and finishing points in these conflicts are uncertain.<sup>20</sup>

The common point between the terms John Burton and Edward Azar use for conflicts is that both thinkers make a connection between conflicts and human needs. Both thinkers have emphasized that individuals and groups have the rights of identity, dignity, security, equity, and the right to participate in decision-making processes. The prevention of access to these rights or the refusal these rights make up the main reasons for conflicts.

Another thinker who dwells on the term conflict, Louis Kriesberg, prefers the term “intractable conflicts”. Kriesberg states that there are four important properties bound together in these conflict types and that they cannot be solved due to this reason.<sup>21</sup> The first is that the conflict is protracted. The conflict has to be long-lasting and at least one generation must have been brought up with the reality of conflict and to have developed feelings of hostility due to living under stressful situations.<sup>22</sup> Secondly, in the past or in the present, it was/it is expected that the conflict would have included/will include physical violence in a fluctuating manner. It needs to be clear that the physical violence has affected the whole community and is aimed towards that community.<sup>23</sup> Another property regarding the conflict is that the perception that this conflict type cannot be solved has taken root. Because there is no winner amongst the conflicting sides, the sides continuing the conflict or not cooperating for a resolution and even taking future precautions thinking that it will continue in the future are consequently encountered.<sup>24</sup> The last conflict trait that Kriesberg expresses is that the conflict, whether it occurs in a period containing violence or not, requires a large scale material or moral investment. What is meant by “material” is military, technological, and financial spending and investments. What is meant by “moral” is the whole community being influenced psychologically and the community dealing with feelings of hatred and stress.<sup>25</sup>

According to Kriesberg, the duration of the conflict and whether people are beginning to ask whether foreign intervention is needed are significant issues

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20 Azar, ... *Protracted Social Conflict*, 6.

21 Louis Kriesberg, “Intractable Conflicts,” E. Weiner (ed.), *The Handbook of Interethnic Coexistence* (New York: The Continuum Publishing, 1998), 332-342.

22 Kriesberg, “Intractable Conflicts.”

23 Kriesberg, “Intractable Conflicts.”

24 Kriesberg, “Intractable Conflicts.”

25 Kriesberg, “Intractable Conflicts.”

in determining the types of the conflicts.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, when intractable conflicts are the case, none of the parties consider changing or reconciling with their own (fundamental) values.<sup>27</sup> This attitude is actually directly connected to the issue of identity. In these types of conflicts, the perception that the individual's own or collective identity is directly threatened is present.<sup>28</sup> Another trait is that the parties invest in these conflicts and this situation becomes a way of life for activists.<sup>29</sup> This is because the parties' fundamental interests are under threat.<sup>30</sup>

Among the prominent academics that use the “intractable conflicts” term, Daniel Bar-Tal completely accepts the four basic conflict traits that Kriesberg lists. However, he has broadened and deepened the term by adding three more items to these traits. According to Bar-Tal, in addition to the four traits in these types of conflicts, one of the important traits is that the conflict constitutes an all-out struggle (akin to a total war) for the community. The conflict is perceived as “an inseparable part” of the fundamental aims, needs, and values that create the community and allow it to survive.<sup>31</sup> Generally, it can consist of multifaceted and fundamental subjects like culture, religion, land disputes, becoming a state, and the economy. Another trait of the conflicts is that every event and development in the conflict is perceived as a “zero-sum” game. In this case, one side's absolute gain is the other side's absolute loss.<sup>32</sup> Lastly, Bar-Tal states that these kinds of conflicts have a central place in the lives of the individuals. When the individuals of the community in conflict make decisions for themselves or the community, they are always compelled to consider the conflict.<sup>33</sup>

As it can be seen, when a conflict is present, different terms and conflict traits can stand out. All the different terms are developed to explain the unresolved conflict types and find a resolution by explaining the conflict reasons. Explaining why any given conflict cannot in any way be resolved is the most important step to be taken on the path to a resolution. Generally, conflicts

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26 Louis Kriesberg, “Conclusion: Research and Policy Implications,” Louis Kriesberg, Terrell A. Northrup, Stuart J. Thorson (eds.), *Intractable Conflicts and Their Transformation* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1989), 214.

27 Kriesberg, “... Research and Policy Implications,” 214-215.

28 Kriesberg, “... Research and Policy Implications,” 215.

29 Kriesberg, “... Research and Policy Implications,” 215.

30 Kriesberg, “... Research and Policy Implications,” 216.

31 Daniel Bar-Tal, “Societal Beliefs in Times of Intractable Conflicts: The Israeli Case,” *International Journal of Conflict Management*, Issue 9 (1998), 22-50.

32 Bar-Tal, “Societal Beliefs...”

33 Bar-Tal, “Societal Beliefs...”

involve unsolved concrete reasons, but it is observed that there is always something more than the concrete reasons in the social perception.

One of the most important points that can be stated regarding intractable conflicts is that the conflict's socio-psychological repertoire manages the conflicts to take another shape. Many problems that are concrete and difficult to solve already exist in such conflicts. When these problems continue unsolved for a long time, the socio-psychological repertoire turns in to a new reason of the conflict and makes the resolution and reconciliation even more difficult. Daniel Bar-Tal mentions that, when intractable conflicts are the case, there is a socio-psychological repertoire apart from the existing concrete conflict reasons. According to Bar-Tal, this socio-psychological repertoire consists of three main elements: collective memory, ethos of conflict, and collective emotional orientation.<sup>34</sup> These three main elements create a new, very important situation for intractable conflicts and a new problems set. The socio-psychological repertoire formed in these kinds of conflicts becomes a reason for why resolution and reconciliation processes are not developed for the conflict. When listing the concrete reasons for conflicts, this socio-psychological repertoire should be added as an item. Moreover, this item causes the other problems to either not be discussed, or resolution proposals to not be made, or for the resolution process to not be maintained even if it was initiated.

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The first trait in the socio-psychological repertoire of intractable conflicts is collective memory. Social beliefs regarding collective memory develop with time, and after a while, even what has happened in the past may no longer have any significance. This is because what has occurred in the past is being used today in a functional sense. Collective memory is formed through channels of official institutions, official history, or social institutions and establishments. The reasons for the occurrence of conflicts and violent events can be

34 Daniel Bar-Tal, "Sociopsychological Foundations of Intractable Conflicts," *American Behavioral Scientist*, Issue 50 (2007), 1435.

legitimized in collective memory.<sup>35</sup> In general, there is a positive perception for one's own side, and a negative perception for the other side.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, there is a strong conviction that the other side's actions lack legitimacy and all sides are of the thought that they are the victim.<sup>37</sup>

An important trait in the collective memories of groups in conflict is that the opposing groups selectively remember the information regarding the past. During this selective remembering, it is seen that the sides take what they want from the information regarding the same event and concrete situations, and exclude other information.<sup>38</sup> Selective collective memory can lead to sides remembering and passing on the same event in an utterly different fashion. At the same time, with selective collective memory, events are perceived in an easy, quick, and black and white manner, and the current continuity of the memory is given meaning.<sup>39</sup>

According to Bar-Tal, the second trait of the socio-psychological repertoire regarding conflict is the ethos of conflict.<sup>40</sup> In one sense, the ethos of conflict is a narrative that society has created for the present.<sup>41</sup> The perception of continuous conflicts at the present time occurs through the ethos of conflict. According to Bar-Tal, the ethos of conflict signals the social consciousness and makes connections between group members. Moreover, it can give meaning to social life by making a connection between the aims of the present and the future.<sup>42</sup> Bar-Tal states that when intractable conflicts are the case, the parties develop a certain type of ethos and this is named as the ethos of conflict. The ethos of conflict provides a clear picture regarding the conflict, the aims and necessities of the conflict, and the group's own and the opposing group's image.<sup>43</sup> The ethos of conflict does not only occur during the violent periods of the conflict, but can continue to occur in a period of peace as well and is supported with the narratives in the collective memory.<sup>44</sup>

35 Bar-Tal, "Sociopsychological Foundations...", 1436.

36 Bar-Tal, "Sociopsychological Foundations...", 1436-1438.

37 Bar-Tal, "Sociopsychological Foundations...", 1438.

38 Gavriel Salomon, "A Narrative-Based View of Coexistence Education," *Journal of Social Issues*, Volume 60, Issue 2 (2004), 275-276.

39 Bar-Tal, "Sociopsychological Foundations...", 1436.

40 The meaning of "ethos" is: "the set of beliefs, ideas, etc. about the social behaviour and relationships of a person or group." The word also points to a system of values and cultural traits. See: "Ethos," *Cambridge Dictionary*, accessed February 8, 2018, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/tr/s/%C3%B6zl%C3%BCK/ingilizce/ethos>

41 Bar-Tal, "Sociopsychological Foundations...", 1438.

42 Bar-Tal, "Sociopsychological Foundations...", 1438.

43 Bar-Tal, "Sociopsychological Foundations...", 1438.

44 Bar-Tal, "Sociopsychological Foundations...", 1438.

Bar-Tal states that intractable conflicts lead to eight basic social views that form the ethos of conflict.<sup>45</sup> It is possible to list the social opinions in the following way: the opinion that the group's own aims are justified, the social opinions about security, a positive collective consciousness of individuality, the opinion that one's own group is a victim, the social opinions that decrease the opposing group's legitimacy, the social opinion regarding nationalism/patriotism, the social opinion that it is necessary to be unified against external threats, and the social opinion that the group's ultimate wish is peace.

Bar-Tal has states that the third trait of socio-psychological repertoire is collective emotional orientation. According to the author, in communities that have intractable conflicts, some collective emotional orientations form and become dominant.<sup>46</sup> The most important of the emotion orientations are the feelings of fear, hate, anger, guilt, and pride. Conflicts involving violence is a major factor in the formation of these feelings.

The socio-psychological repertoire is as important as the other concrete social and political problems. It leads to the continuity of the conflicts and can cause cognitive closure against all processes that can occur between communities such as meetings, resolution, and reconciliation. The socio-psychological repertoire has a functional side that supports the perpetuation of the problems caused by conflicts. There are situations when the said repertoire helps in fulfilling needs, dealing with stress, and dealing with the enemy.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, it can lead to a stage in which unethical behaviors (including resorting to physical violence) become legitimized.<sup>48</sup> It is possible to see a similar socio-psychological repertoire in the Turkish-Armenian relations. In the next section, the intractable conflict traits and the socio-psychological repertoire of conflicts will be implemented onto the Turkish-Armenian relations.

### **Turkish-Armenian<sup>49</sup> Relations and the Intractable Conflict**

The term "intractable conflicts" can be applied both quantitatively and qualitatively to many conflicts around the world. Many traits of this conflict type is observed in the Turkish-Armenian relations and in throughout the

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45 Daniel Bar-Tal, *Shared Beliefs in a Society: Social Psychological Analysis* (Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2000), chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8; Bar-Tal, "Societal Beliefs..."

46 Bar-Tal, "Sociopsychological Foundations..." 1439.

47 Bar-Tal, "Sociopsychological Foundations..." 1440.

48 Bar-Tal, "Sociopsychological Foundations..." 1441.

49 See footnote 2.

Armenian Question. The Armenian Question, due to it causing a freeze in the relations between the two communities for over hundred years and causing it to increasingly go on a negative course, demonstrates that it should be evaluated as an intractable conflict. The addition of intractable conflict traits to the current issues between the Turkish and Armenian communities can also mean the occurrence of a new issue in the relations between the two communities. Almost all of the traits of intractable conflicts have taken root in the Turkish-Armenian controversy. The related web of relations prevents a resolution process from taking place. Thus, this makes the resolution initiatives, the permanence of these processes, and finally, a real reconciliation impossible.

Determining the type of the problems and conflict is a crucial process for initiating communication and attempts regarding resolution. This is so because shifting the relations to a positive course cannot be done through historical findings alone. Like in all the other intractable conflict types, searching for a total resolution and accordingly developing a strategy will be needed. For this reason, determining the type of conflict also has importance. In the rest of the study, the intractable conflicts term developed by Louis Kriesberg and Daniel Bar-Tal will be applied especially onto the Armenian question.

The first trait of the intractable conflicts is that they are protracted. According to Kriesberg, for the conflict to be considered as protracted, it has to last long and at least one generation has to have been raised with the reality of conflict. Moreover, it is also expected that feelings of animosity have developed due to stressful conditions.<sup>50</sup> In terms of the Armenian question, the relations of the two communities having been cut off for more than a hundred years. The tense nature of the relations and the passing of a few generations since the onset of the troubles indicates a sufficiently long time. Additionally, despite the passing of a long period of time, the 1915 events (on which an agreement cannot be reached) are being kept alive as if they had occurred recently. Especially in the diaspora Armenians, the 1915 events are being transferred from generation to generation. The said events function like a common identity in all the diaspora Armenians and constitute the most important piece of their identity. By means of this common identity's potent transfer, new generations take over a historical identity laden with stress as if the events had occurred very recently.

In an important study conducted in the Armenian diaspora by Donald E. Miller and Lorna Tourian Miller, it has been revealed that depressive personality

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50 Kriesberg, "Intractable Conflicts."

traits connected to the 1915 events were very commonly seen among the members of the Armenian diaspora.<sup>51</sup> As it can be seen, the Armenian Question has the necessary conditions for it to be considered as a protracted conflict; it has been a long-lasting conflict, a few generations have been aware of the presence of this conflict, and there is the presence of stress causing conditions.

A second trait of intractable conflicts is the presence of violent events.<sup>52</sup> There have been two important periods involving violence between the two communities. The first of these were the 1915 events in which there were a high number of casualties. After this date, the activities of the terrorist organizations such as ASALA (Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia) were witnessed between 1975 and 1985. Forty six people have lost their lives and close to three hundred people have been wounded as a result of ASALA's acts of terrorism. The influence of the attacks have been large due to the fact that those who had been attacked were Turkish officials and the fact that civilians in public places were exposed to the attacks as well. An intensive violent event has not occurred between the two communities after these dates. However, as the violence of the past leaves deep impacts, the impacts and echoes of individual attacks are considerable, as it has been the case in Hrant Dink's death. Specifically speaking, the 1915 events continue to have an insoluble and relation-freezing characteristic. There is no condition that the intractable conflict types have to have the presence of continuing violent events. What is important is the presence of a history of violence among the communities and that the impact of this history continues to be felt considerably today. This situation corresponds to the second trait of intractable conflicts.

The third trait in these conflicts is the general opinion and perception that the conflict is insoluble.<sup>53</sup> No meetings have even started among the parties and there is a settled perception that this situation will continue in the coming years. Moreover, with the perception of the conflict's continuity, instead of developing proposals for resolution, the parties ponder over the strategies for the coming years within a context of insolubility. More particularly, the Diaspora working on acts or texts of condemnation for next years is the best example of this situation.

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51 Donald E. Miller and Lorna Touryan Miller, "Memory and Identity across the Generations: A Case Study of Armenian Survivors and Their Progeny," *Qualitative Sociology*, Volume 14, Issue 1 (1991), 13-38.

52 Kriesberg, "Intractable Conflicts."

53 Kriesberg, "Intractable Conflicts."

The fourth trait of intractable conflicts is that they require large-scale investments for a resolution.<sup>54</sup> The failure experienced with starting any kind meeting in the Turkish-Armenian relations is actually a sign that it is tacitly known how minor initiatives will not be sufficient and that large-scale investments are needed. Something that is frequently stated when the subject is the Armenian issue is that the said issue should be left to the historians. However, historical studies regarding the conflict would only be one part of the resolution and reconciliation process. In these kinds of conflicts, a great number of social sciences such as international law, sociology, psychology, and political science should be utilized together. Furthermore, the possible resolution processes would require political, military, psychological, economic, and media-related support as much as they would require an academic platform. By looking at how fast the political dialogue between Turkey and Armenia<sup>55</sup> started and ended, it is possible to understand that political initiatives alone are insufficient in bringing resolution to intractable conflicts.

The fifth trait of intractable conflicts is the perception that the conflict is all-encompassing (akin to total war).<sup>56</sup> It is difficult to mention the presence of this perception for the Turkish side. For the Armenian side and especially the diaspora, however, the total war-like perception can clearly be seen. According to this perception, the conflict is an inseparable part of the community's existence and survival and its ability to sustain its existence. The said conflict is at the center of the basic social values and identity. The Armenian community keeping the 1915 events (the starting point of the conflict) alive, sustaining it as an inseparable part of its identity, and transferring it from generation to another is the evidence that the conflict is considered necessary for the community's continued existence.<sup>57</sup>

The sixth trait of intractable conflicts is that the conflict subjects are considered to be "zero sum" in their nature.<sup>58</sup> Both sides winning at the same time is not considered possible and one side winning means the other side losing. In any case, reconciliation is not considered possible with this kind of a perception. This is so because, the smallest concession made by one side will be considered

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54 Kriesberg, "Intractable Conflicts."

55 Regarding Turkey's opening policy during this period, see: Mitat Çelikpala, "Türkiye ve Kafkasya: Reaksiyoner Dış Politikadan Proaktif Ritmik Diplomasiye Geçiş," *Uluslararası İlişkiler*, Cilt 7, Sayı 25 (Bahar 2010).

56 Bar-Tal, "Societal Beliefs..."

57 For an article written on this subject, see: Ebru Çoban-Öztürk, "Tarih, Travma ve Kimlik: Ermeni Diasporada Kimlik ve Kimliğin Yeni Nesillere Aktarımı," *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, Sayı 52 (2015), 141-167.

58 Bar-Tal, "Societal Beliefs..."

as a major gain for the other side, and thus neither side draws near to make mutual concessions on various subjects in the name of reconciliation.

The last trait of intractable conflicts is that the conflict commands a central position for the individuals of the community.<sup>59</sup> Again, it is not possible to mention this for the Turkish side. But for the Armenians and especially the Diaspora, the 1915 events, as the main axis of the conflict, constitutes a central place in the lives of all individuals. This is so because the recognition of the 1915 events as a genocide and announcing it to the whole world is an inseparable part of the identities of all Armenians. In fact, for the diaspora Armenians, who are a very heterogeneous community, the 1915 events function as a glue that binds the community together.<sup>60</sup> This identity holds an important place in the individuals' daily decisions such as where to live, who to form friendships with, and who to marry.

*As it can be seen, the nature and the socio-psychological repertoire of the intractable conflict are met in the Turkish-Armenian relations.*

As it can be seen, the nature and the socio-psychological repertoire of the intractable conflict are met in the Turkish-Armenian relations. In addition, it is necessary to highlight the presence of the nature of the intractable conflict. When Daniel Bar-Tal examines intractable conflicts, he bases his examinations on the Arab-Israel conflict and shapes his studies in the name of the resolution of the conflict.<sup>61</sup> What is interesting is that Bar-Tal's categorization and explanations can be applied to almost all intractable conflicts around the world. Regarding the Armenian Question, the state of conflict lacking physical violence can have a place in these practices as well. In this conflict type, as stated earlier, Bar-Tal divides the socio-psychological repertoire into three main titles, which are: collective memory, ethos of conflict, and collective emotional orientation.<sup>62</sup>

Firstly, we see that in the socio-psychological repertoire, collective memory plays an important role for the Armenians and especially the Diaspora. Even if collective memory has an important place for the Turkish side as well, the tendency for constantly keeping this memory up-to-date is not high as it is in

59 Bar-Tal, "Societal Beliefs..."

60 Bar-Tal, "Societal Beliefs...", 22 ; Razmik Panossian, *The Armenians: From Kings and Priests to Merchants and Commissars* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 242.

61 For an example of these studies, see: Eran Halperin and Daniel Bar-Tal, "Sociopsychological Barriers to Peace Making: An Empirical Examination within the Israeli Jewish Society," *Journal of Peace Research*, Volume 48, Issue 5 (September 2011), 637-651.

62 Bar-Tal, "Sociopsychological Foundations...", 1435-1440.

the Diaspora. For the Armenians, collective memory and -especially- keeping the 1915 events up-to-date have great functional meaning. Because, for the highly heterogeneous Diaspora with a history of conflicts,<sup>63</sup> this issue is seen as a turning point that forms a common identity.<sup>64</sup> In the Armenian diaspora, political, religious, linguistic, and regional differences have been present since the day they left their homeland. The Armenian diaspora members have carried the disputes in the places they had lived to the places they have moved to. For this reason, the 1915 events and their common demand regarding the 1915 events being recognized as a genocide serves as a unifying factor. The violent aspects of the 1915 events are of course filled with negative meanings and events in both the context of the Armenians and universal values. However, it should be accepted that the Armenians evaluating a country and its society with no remaining connection to the said events with the same perception of the past is a worrying approach. As Bar-Tal asserts, positive perceptions regarding one's own side and completely negative perceptions regarding the other side are present on both sides and it is clear that this stance has an influence in the continuity of the conflict. This is so because it is one of the important obstacles blocking communication between the two sides.

Furthermore, the parties remembering the same event in the conflict in different ways and presenting different data regarding the conflict is also a commonly seen situation in collective memory.<sup>65</sup> In this situation, which is referred as selective collective memory, events are presented in completely different ways for the parties and in ways that will support their own perceptions. For example, regarding the number of those who have lost their lives in the 1915 events, there are critical differences between the two parties. While the authors who look at the events from the Armenians' side present the number of people who lost their lives in varying numbers between eight hundred thousand and two million,<sup>66</sup> the Turkish side refers to these numbers as three hundred thousand

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63 S. P. Pattie, "Armenians in Diaspora," E. Herzig, M. Kurkchian (eds.), *The Armenians Past and Present in the Making of National Identity* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), 131.

64 Panossian, *The Armenians...* ; Çoban-Öztürk, "Tarih, Travma ve Kimlik..."

65 Salomon, "A Narrative-Based View..."

66 Some of the authors who state that the number of those who have lost their lives is between 800,000 and 1,500,000: Rebecca Joyce Frey, *Genocide and International Justice* (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2009), 80 ;

Donald E. Miller and Lorna Touryan Miller, *Survivors: An Oral History of the Armenian Genocide* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 44.

Some of the authors who state that the number of those who have lost their lives is one million: Donald Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide: Imperialism, Nationalism and the Destruction of Ottoman Armenians* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 1 ; Richard L. Rubenstein, "Jihad and Genocide: The Case of the Armenians," S. L. Jacobs, (ed.), in *Confronting Genocide: Judaism, Christianity, Islam* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2009), 132 ; Simon Payaslian, "The United States Response to the

at the most.<sup>67</sup> Some academics who are working on the subject and show different numbers from both sides state that this number varies between six hundred thousand and eight hundred thousand.<sup>68</sup>

Secondly, the ethos of conflict is present in the socio-psychological repertoire of the conflict. The narratives of past events being valid today forms the ethos of conflict. The ethos of conflict is the way a transpired conflict is perceived today. Like collective memory, in the ethos of conflict, how an event is

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Armenian Genocide,” Richard G. Hovannisian (ed.), in *Looking Backward, Moving Forward: Confronting the Armenian Genocide* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2006), 62 ; Eric D. Weitz, *A Century of Genocide: Utopias of Race and Nation* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003), 5 ; Robert Melson, “Provocation or Nationalism: A Critical Inquiry into the Armenian Genocide of 1915,” Richard G. Hovannisian (ed.), in *The Armenian Genocide in Perspective* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1986), 61-84. The International Association of Genocide Scholars stated in a manifesto they published that the number of people who have lost their lives is higher than one million. Yair Auron, *The Banality of Denial: Israel and the Armenian Genocide* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2003), Appendix B, 301.

Alvarez states that the number of those who have lost their lives is between 600,000 and 2,000,000. Alex Alvarez, *Governments, Citizens, and Genocide: A Comparative and Interdisciplinary Approach* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2001), 11.

Taner Akçam, stating that he took into account Ottoman documents, claims that the total number is around 800,000. Taner Akçam, *İnsan Hakları ve Ermeni Sorunu: İtihat ve Terakki'den Kurtuluş Savaşı'na* (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 2002), 333 and Taner Akçam, *From Empire to Republic: Turkish Nationalism and the Armenian Genocide* (London: Zed Books, 2004), 199.

Kevorkian claims that at the end of 1915, approximately 600,000 Armenians had lost their lives, and that by 1918, this number had increased due to forced religious conversion, children being taken for payment or not into homes of Turkish and Kurdish communities, and the deaths in the immigration areas. Raymond Kevorkian, *The Armenian Genocide: A Complete History* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2011), 693.

The American ambassador who served in Istanbul between 1913 and 1916, H. Morgenthau, states that the number of those who had lost their lives was 600,000. However, he claimed afterwards that “maybe it [was] close to one million”. Henry Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1918), 322.

67 Some of the authors who state that the number of those who have lost their lives is 300,000 at the most (generally between 200,000-300,000): Yusuf Halaçoğlu, *Sürgünden Soykırma Ermeni İddiaları*, 9. Baskı (İstanbul: Babiali Kültür Yayıncılığı, 2010), 75 ; Yavuz Ercan, *Toplu Eserler I: Ermenilerle İlgili Araştırmalar* (Ankara: Turhan Kitabevi, 2006), 170 ; Kemal Çiçek, *Ermenilerin Zorunlu Göçü 1915-1917* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 2012), 271 ; Hikmet Özdemir, Kemal Çiçek, Ömer Turan, Ramazan Çalık ve Yusuf Halaçoğlu, *Ermeniler: Sürgün ve Göç*, 4. Baskı (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 2010), 98-99.

68 Zürcher states that the number of those who have lost their lives cannot be provided in a clear manner, but, when those who had immigrated and who lived in the Ottoman lands before the war are considered, the closest number that comes to mind is a figure between 600,000 and 800,000. Erik J. Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2004), 115.

Meanwhile, some of the authors who state that the number of those who have lost their lives is between 600,000 and 650,000 are as follows: James Bryce ve Arnold Toynbee, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Ermenilere Yönelik Muamele, 1915-1916*, Cilt 2, Çevirenler: Atilla Tuygan ve Jülide Değirmenciler (İstanbul: Pencere Yayınları, 2006), 496 ; Michael M. Gunter, *Armenian History and the Question of Genocide* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 17 ; Guenter Lewy, *1915 Osmanlı Ermenilerine Ne Oldu? Çarpıtılan-Değiştirilen Tarih*, Çeviren: Ceren Elitez (İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2011), 372 ; Justin McCarthy, *Muslims and Minorities: The Population of Ottoman Anatolia and the End of the Empire* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1983), 130.

perceived today is more important than what has occurred in the past. The ethos of conflict expresses events by transcribing them to the present and gives information about the image of both groups. According to Bar-Tal, the ethos of conflict in intractable conflicts leads to social beliefs that are drawn with sharp lines.<sup>69</sup> It is evident that in the Turkish-Armenian relations, the ethos of conflict leads to social beliefs that seem to be unchangeable in both of communities. Both sides appear to be confident that they are right regarding the 1915 events. Moreover, it seems very difficult for the sides to come together in a common belief. Both sides are making opposite claims regarding those who have lost their lives in the events, whether the events were a genocide or not, and whether it was forced migration or relocation and resettlement. Additionally, the sides accept that their own actions were carried out due to security reasons. For example, for the Ottoman Empire, the relocation and resettlement were carried out due to the rebellions<sup>70</sup> and massacres<sup>71</sup> carried out by the Armenians. Meanwhile, many Armenian authors argue that the rebellions carried out against the Ottomans were a reprisal carried out for the sake of their own security.<sup>72</sup> Differing from both of the views, Guenter Lewy has states that, for example, mutual massacres were carried out in the Van uprising.<sup>73</sup> It is evident that the 1915 events, or the war in general, was full of losses and bad memories for both sides. However, as it is the case in every intractable conflict, it is seen that the sides possess a positive perception of themselves and only emphasize the negative aspects of the other group or groups. Thus, it should be stated that the sides focus on only their own sense of victimhood.

The presence of collective emotional orientation, which is the third trait of the socio-psychological repertoire, is clearly present in the Turkish-Armenian relations. According to Bar-Tal, there are dominant collective emotions in intractable conflicts.<sup>74</sup> Even if it is not easy to generalize about the Turkish and Armenian communities, mutual anger and, from time to time, feelings of hatred can be seen. It is naturally easier to observe hate speech in the Diaspora. This is because the Diaspora is formed of the second or third generation relatives of those who directly lived through the 1915 events. The mutual presence of these feelings has been one of the important factors that has transformed a past relation of violence to a present intractable conflict.

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69 Daniel Bar-Tal, ... *Social Psychological Analysis* and Bar-Tal, "Societal Beliefs..."

70 Halaçoğlu, *Sürgünden Soykırıma...*, 20 ; Lewy, *1915 Osmanlı Ermenilerine Ne Oldu?*, 157.

71 Özdemir ve diğerleri, *Ermeniler: Sürgün ve Göç*, 58.

72 Vahakn N. Dadrian, *Ermeni Soykırımı Tarihi: Balkanlardan Anadolu ve Kafkasya'ya Etnik Çatışma*, Çeviren: Ali Çakıroğlu (İstanbul: Belge Yayınları, 2008), 601-608.

73 Lewy, *1915 Osmanlı Ermenilerine Ne Oldu?*, 156-164, 189-192.

74 Bar-Tal, "Sociopsychological Foundations..." 1439.

Intractable conflicts influence and shape social identity. As the violence of the conflict or the duration increases, the feelings of social belonging, security, and solidarity consolidate with the perception of unification in social identity. When meanings regarding the ethos of conflict and collective memory take place in social identity in a powerful way, the social identity reaches a level in which it supports the continuity of the conflict.

The socio-psychological repertoire in intractable conflicts deepens further as the social communion increases. Similar productions and works in the media or institutions and organizations causes the issue to turn into a set of unquestioned presuppositions. Both communities' official histories reflect this socio-psychological repertoire in the Turkish-Armenian relations. In the Armenian diaspora, even if an official history is not the case, the Diaspora repeatedly transfers this socio-psychological repertoire through think tanks, non-governmental organizations, schools, and churches. The family is especially very much on the foreground of identity transfer. Due to this transfer, the conflict's socio-psychological repertoire continues as if the past events of the conflict are continuing as well. The fact that the people who write and speak on the subject of conflict feel the need to apply censorship to themselves shows just how ingrained this socio-psychological repertoire is.

*Turkish-Armenian relations have been eroded to a point where a resolution cannot be developed in the short term. The factual problems and the dissidence between the approaches are difficult to overcome. Together with the nature of the intractable conflict, communication and developing peaceful bilateral relations are highly difficult to achieve.*

## Conclusion

This study has aimed to highlight how the problems of the past can lead to conflict continuity between two communities in the present day. It has been highlighted that, even if a conflict does not contain a physical violence dimension, it can continue and become an intractable conflict. Together with problems turning into this conflict type, a new type of problem is added between the two communities, which is the socio-psychological repertoire that forms the conflict.

In intractable conflicts, the social basis that develops in time has a functional role in people dealing with the conflict. But as time passes, this socio-

psychological repertoire becomes a prism that influences the gathering of information, the forming of bilateral relations, and the making of decisions. This can result in all decisions to become differentiated and influenced as they pass through this prism, and lead to the occurrence of cognitive closure.<sup>75</sup> Thus, this socio-psychological repertoire that is formed during and after the conflict becomes one of the main factors that causes the conflict to gain continuity and leads to the inability to create resolutions.

Turkish-Armenian relations have been eroded to a point where a resolution cannot be developed in the short term. The factual problems and the dissidence between the approaches are difficult to overcome. Together with the nature of the intractable conflict, communication and developing peaceful bilateral relations are highly difficult to achieve. It is clear that developing a resolution or entering a reconciliation process is harder in these types of conflicts. To develop positive relations between the two communities while considering the Diaspora, and to create peaceful resolutions, people need to consider the intractable conflict traits and to focus on resolutions from this perspective.

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75 Bar-Tal, "Sociopsychological Foundations..." 1446-1147.

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