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# THE ROLE OF EMOTIONS IN INTRACTABLE CONFLICTS AND RESOLUTIONS: A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE TO TRANSFORM CONFLICTS AND ESTABLISH LASTING PEACE

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## **ABSTRACT**

This research wants to demonstrate the relevance of emotions in in-group dynamics, intergroup conflicts and the resolution process. In the last decades, social scientists have recognized the power of emotions, and how these influences beliefs, ideas, attitudes and reactions to aggressiveness in society. The main assumption is that collective emotions have a crucial role in shaping the social context, which can be responsible to maintain a conflictual situation. My research focuses on intractable conflicts, which has the characteristic to expand from its origins, to be based on the identity of the enemy and in the rejection to find a resolution. It is important to deal with collective traumatic emotions which are a result of intractable conflicts; the inability to do so has resulted in the reoccurrence of violence. The target of the current academic debate is to develop methods and strategies to reduce the magnitude of destructive emotions and increase feelings like hope and empathy which lead the parties to seek for resolution. This research is based on pre-existing emotions regulation approaches and proposes a new theoretical framework thereby giving direction for future research. My theory is built on the model of transitional justice, which proposes the active participation of civil society in the conflict-resolution process. By exploring (1) the current

debate on theoretical methods to re-elaborate emotions and (2) grassroots movements to deal with traumatic experiences in the post-armed conflict situation, I propose a strategy to deal with negative emotions to transform intractable conflicts.

Keywords: emotions, intractable conflicts, transitional justice, grassroots movements

## **INTRODUCTION**

In this article I'm going to refine the definition of peace education and how it does contribute to the transformation of intractable conflicts for the establishment of lasting peace. First, I will use literature review as a research method. I report the already existing debate on what is meant by emotions in the context of group dynamics and intractable conflicts. I argue that a series of emotions and moods regarding external events and situations in the group / society, from the individual level, shape an emotional tendency that becomes proper to that group. These moods include particularly negative emotions when the external stimulus results in a conflict that cannot be resolved. Anthropologist Clifford Geertz affirmed that man is an animal suspended in the networks of meaning that he himself woven (Geertz 1987). In this perspective,

it can be said that man and culture shape each other and this work of continuous negotiation does not leave out the emotions, proper to each society and the result of historical and social dynamics. The emotions experienced on a social level are the product of culture and context. Culture characterizes the individuals who belong to it and the individuals who belong to it characterize the culture. In accordance with the appraisal theory of emotions, I will demonstrate how emotional tendency conveys the reaction to a specific event. According to Arnold (1960), the action that results from an emotion given by an external stimulus is called emotional goal. By adopting this psychological theory to the context of intractable conflicts, depending on the mood elicited by the out-group action, the emotional goal can be constructive or destructive. I will explain how some scholars have developed strategies consisting of emotion regulation, which consists in reducing the impact of destructive emotions and increasing the level of positive and constructive emotions. By affirming in theory the relevance of emotions in the context of intractable conflicts, I will move forward to possible concrete applications on the transformation of negative emotions that are responsible for keeping the conflict alive, even if the armed conflict has ceased. In my research I argue that we cannot talk about ending and resolving a conflict since a series of injuries in society have not been treated. By exploring possible strategies to transform conflicts and establish lasting peace, I give a wide definition of peace education and how grassroots movements can lead to the transformation of a conflict: from intractable to tractable. As a case study I present the international organization 'Peace Jam', and how its activism and the projects that proposes can progressively turn the outcomes of intractable conflicts.

Lately, social scientists have recognized the emotional component as a relevant element in intergroup dynamics and conflicts. Its influence has been progressively considered an object of research in political science and conflict studies; there is a common support to the fact that emotions influence beliefs, attitudes and reactions of society (Halperin, Bar-Tal, De Rivera 2007). The main assumption is that collective emotions have a crucial role in the group's reactions to conflicts, and matters in shaping the social context, which is responsible to maintain a conflictual situation. I sustain a non-scientific approach for the process of conflict resolution, which includes the affirmation of the noblest side of the human. Is not based on rationality, but on the use of creativity and innate compassion. Therefore, it is important to explore and deal with collective emotions not only because that influence the social context (Halperin, Russell, Dweck, Gross 2011), but mostly because the winning card to transform a conflictual situation is to canalize negative emotions toward a creative process which I identify it as peace education. Among many theories of emotions, social scientists bring in the debate the appraisal theory: for each stimulus or emotion aroused, corresponds a reaction and consequent behavior in political choices.

This theory has been systematized in the '60ies by Arnold, pioneer of the study of emotions as a scientific element that determine humans thought and actions. Her studies collect a more philosophical tradition: this has been reviewed in the end of the 1800 by Charles Darwin, where he approaches emotions with scientific mind and to support his theory that the human species comes from the animal realm: the question he wants to answer is if the activity of man's facial muscles (the 'mimicry'), which makes the emotions visible, is acquired by learning or,

regardless of the cultural sphere of the individuals, is uniform and therefore presumably innate. In the same period, William James delves into the same topic from a philosophical perspective, where he explored how emotions interact with perception, reappraisal and action. In short, he affirms that we don't feel emotions as a consequence of external/internal stimuli, but that pass through the perception of the stimuli and the bodily reaction that those provoke. The revival of those ideas gave birth to a theory which includes multiple levels which can



(Source: Google Images, “Appraisal Theory of Emotions – Arnold”)

This theory permits to embrace different reactions in the same situation, and by taking into account different culture, social context and individual/collective goals, allow to understand the variety of variables when an event occurs. For instance, Japanese and American people are different in the agency of emotional process when something negative happens: the first are more likely to blame themselves and to experience shame, while the second more probably would blame others and experience anger. The appraisal theory wants to prove that in a situation the reaction to the emotion depends on the appraisal (Moors, Ellsworth, Scherer, Frijda 2013).

Now the thing is: how do we configure a psychological theory with a concrete problem, such as intractable conflicts? The

be seen as components: emotions shouldn't be seen as an 'emotional episode', but rather a process that includes the evaluation of the environment according to individual/collective experience, the physiological response, the individual or in-group motivational objects and the action tendencies. All those elements are subjects of mutual influence, indeed the appraisal “determines the intensity and quality of action tendencies, physiological responses, behavior, and feelings (Moors et al. 2013, p. 120).

existing knowledge in psychological field can't simply be implanted 'raw' as it is, but the research in conflict resolutions has recently recognized that emotions in human beings are powerful, because determine the behaviors and actions, and changeable, which means that the source where the important decisions come from, is not static either rigid. Scholars propose this theory to understand better where actions - in this case, reactions that follows a negative event comes from. Later I will explain in what consists this specific category of conflict, but for now let's focus on how social scientists want to find a way to understand and solve conflicts starting from emotions and using the appraisal theory. I would say that this is an alternative approach because it is focused on the causes of the conflict: As the image above shows in the sequence of darts, rational decisions are influenced by certain predominant emotions, and for each of these correspond an emotional goal, and the action taken is an answer to the stimulus or emotion, elicited by life events.

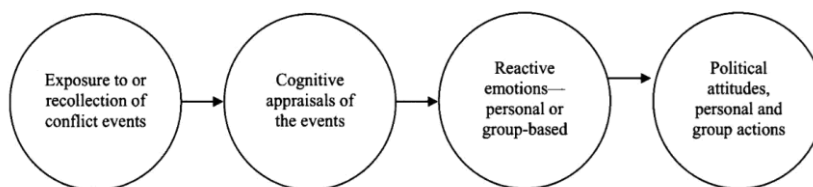


Figure 1. The process model of reactive emotions and their influence in the context of intractable conflict.

(Source: Halperin and Pliskin 2015, p. 122)

There are several elements that can cause reactions to individual stimuli, and those reactions overall form a pattern of social behavior (Halperin, Pliskin 2015). The appraisal theories of emotions in large scale, means not solely considering the individual, and going beyond the psychological field. It is possible to observe how emotions interact with decisions and reactions of groups dynamics during a conflictual situation, considering the group-based political attitudes.

→ **ANGER:** the external stimuli can elicit a feeling that lead to an aggressive behavior. The action becomes aggression in order to correct the perceived wrongdoing of the out-group members (Halperin, Russell, Dweck, Gross 2011). The action elicited by anger will be permeated by the rejection to find a resolution is a barrier to peace because of the belief that the other is in the wrong side. In the process of this emotion lead to the support for aggressive policies.

→ **FEAR:** the external stimuli comport a sense of threat for the own security. The perceived danger lead to a defensive behavior characterized by the lack of trust, which is generally canalized in a scapegoat. Especially in the state of fear, the action elicited is the idealization of an enemy, which is continuously blamed, and all the possible problems experienced in a group are conducted to the behavior of the construction of the other. If we look closer, fear is a 'healthy' respond which consents to adjust in a

situation of danger and seek for stability but can also be considered the root of nationalism and ethnocentrism. The action connected to this emotion is more likely to seek protection from the danger and enforce the securities policies, but paradoxically is a barrier to peace exactly because generates insecurity.

→ **HATRED:** among all the emotions, hatred is the most serious impediment to find a resolution in conflicts. It comports the lack of belief that the enemy, or the situation, can change. The behavior as a response to this emotion is the desire to eradicate the out-group members because are too evil. As long as the other exists, there is no chance to achieve peace (Halperin, Pliskin 2015). The action elicited will likely consists in the choice of radical policies and behavior toward the enemy. What impede the reconciliation, rather than a specific event or something that one of the parties committed, is the existence of the other, its identity and the fundamental lack of hope in a future in which there can be pacific coexistence. It is the principal responsible for every form of discrimination, the action that satisfies its emotional goal might include extreme political means and decisions. Some researches focus on the possibility to manipulate emotions in order to intervene on the deep of the issue and facilitate the resolution to achieve lasting peace (Halperin, Gutentag, Porat, Bigman, Tamir 2016). The emotion regulation supports the transformation of

conflict by decreasing negative emotions and work to increase the positive ones.

→ **EMPATHY:** lead to discover new motivation to find solutions. Empathy, although doesn't constitute a monolithic feeling, is based on the idea that it is necessary to step in others' shoes, therefore, drop the presumption to be on the right side and understand others' needs and point of view. This can bring to offer humanitarian help because there is understanding of the others' sufferance, and the desire to put an end.

→ **HOPE:** the emotional goal is to strive for positive changes, because the core belief consists in the desire to forgive the enemy and find something in common to cooperate toward constructive objectives. The positive vision of the future and the collective aspiration of peace stimulates creativity and the willingness to make constructive actions.

In some difficult situations in society, the hostilities are that harsh, and the emotions involved that dark, that seems impossible to overcome with a peaceful resolution. This category of conflict is called intractable, which for definition, the parties involved refuse to consider the possibility to change the situation. When the two or more parties radically refuse to reach an agreement to end the hostilities, according to the appraisal theory of emotions, there is a high level of hatred. Those conflicts are mainly characterized by a considerable length; indeed, it can last for generations. It has the tendency to expand from its original causes is not always due to vicissitudes, but because of more fundamental incompatibilities (Fiol, Pratt, O'Connor 2009). Especially when it is based on identity, the conflict is not anymore about external events such as humiliations and economic deprivations, but on the lack of recognition to a certain social or ethnic group (Halperin, Bar-Tal 2011). It is not only about recognition but also for the creation of enemy's features.

As we have seen, negative emotions in conflicts can become the impediment to find a resolution, the cost to get out appears higher to the costs to stay in. Some scholars propose that emotion regulation can increase or decrease the length and density of the emotions elicited in the conflict. This statement is based on the assumption that, if emotions are responsible to maintain a conflictual situation, by working on the transformation, it is possible to influence the outcomes and facilitate the process of resolution. Among all negative emotions, it is relevant to consider the characteristics of anger, because it is very current in every conflict and it's extremely powerful. Individuals that feel angry for the out-group's behavior, will appraise the situation as unjust, and develop the emotional goal to correct their wrongdoing. Therefore, the state of anger doesn't necessarily denote a set of negative characteristics for who feels it, the target is to change what is seen as wrong but anger itself doesn't determine the means for the change. The action that follows the reappraisal can be constructive or destructive. It becomes destructive when there is a scarce believe that the enemy can change and, therefore, the action becomes aggression. There is an escalation of violence when the group that received the offence reacts with equal aggression and grown this feeling too. The action, or emotional goal, can become constructive and potentially contribute to peace when there is a belief that out-group members are capable to change (Halperin, Russell, Dweck, Gross 2011). Researchers affirm that anger can be supportive to find compromises, negotiation and other pacific solutions such as education.

It varies according to the level of hatred in it. This emotion can be expressed according to the magnitude of the long-term hatred elicited by the enemy. If there is a high-level hatred, this anger will be directed towards destruction, because the

basic idea is that the enemy is unable to change and 'behave better'. If there is less hatred, this anger could be directed to a non-violent action and in favour of change, because it is believed that the enemy can change, and finally that the situation can be transformed (Halperin, Weimann-Saks, Koriat 2019). All these emotions can be a barrier to the conflict resolution process or the catalyst to change (Halperin, Russell, Dweck, Gross 2011). In absence of hatred, or the belief that the enemy is wrong as a whole, it is possible that anger can lead to act with the goal to reach positive changes in the society. For this reason, some scholars debate on the possibility of transformation and emotional regulation. The focus of this strategy lies on increasing the hope through the belief to control the own emotions in the context of conflicts (Halperin, Weimann-Saks, Koriat 2019). The entity theory supports the assumption that the humankind has a fundamental immutable nature, the beliefs on a deeper level can't be transformed and emotions can't be controlled. On the contrary, the incremental theory supports the idea that human nature is flexible, and some beliefs are malleable and modifiable, just as emotions can be evaluated and then transformed. The belief in the malleability of human nature has an important effect in the very transformation of emotions, it increases hope and decreases hatred. Different beliefs about people's ability to change can lead to different reactions to negative social behavior (Halperin, Gutentag, Porat, Bigman, Tamir 2016). The cognitive reappraisal can have a long-term effect in minimize the destructive emotions.

Individuals' emotions shape the society's emotions and vice versa, there is a mutual influence: the single members of a society are more sensitive and prone to feel some emotions as a reaction to external stimuli, as a result, the whole society develop and adopt an implicit code

of understanding and express emotions. But at the same time, the single members are more prone to feel some emotions as a result of the membership of that particular group. Bar-Tal talks about emotional orientation, De Rivera makes a distinction between emotional atmosphere, emotional culture and emotional climate, which are categories to describe the formation of collective group-based emotions (Halperin, Bar-Tal, De Rivera 2007). They notice that there is a "characterizing tendency of a society to express a particular emotion. [...] The emotion and the beliefs that evoke a particular emotion are widely shared by society members and appear frequently in the society's public discourse, cultural products, and educational materials" (Halperin, Bar-Tal, De Rivera 2007, p. 443).

There is evidence that emotions matter for political aspects, but also for generic social issues. De Rivera explains that collective emotions depends on the cultural context, which is constructed and shaped by people. He makes a distinction between transitional and lasting contexts: the first one is determined by conditions of a social, political, economic nature and due to the creation of institutions, an important channel of transmission by those who control the group or the society, it has a temporal nature and the impact lasts for not more than one generation. It can be better understood by three elements – perception, procession and regulatory modes – which constitute the social identity. A society is made by rules, and the (1) appraisal of individuals, which is the personal evaluations, change according to the social context. Those evaluations are influenced and at the same time influence the group and the (2) collective experience of facts and events. The context also matters because it determines (3) how to react to individual events, for example, if they are supposed to be expressed or repressed. Then, there is the lasting context, which is given by

culture and therefore by the very entity of society. People in a society acquire ways to express and which emotions are expressed. There is a culturally approved emotional orientation transmitted through the history, the definition of social boundaries and elements like descent, ethnicity and immutable symbols in the verbal and physical communication (Halperin, Bar-Tal, De Rivera 2007). This discourse proves that emotions are not separated from the culture of a population and its context, therefore are malleable rather than established and immutable. Those play an important role in fields where one would expect that emotions are not involved because are considered an obstacle for understanding the truth. Cognitive reappraisal refers to modifying how one thinks about an emotion-eliciting event, as a result it will be possible to alter its emotional impact. Therefore, the technique is this reevaluation that takes place at the cognitive level: the more one believes in the possibility to control emotions, the more changing the behavior is possible. The cognitive appraisal is an effective method to support the emotional regulation, indeed the outcome depends on its belief (Halperin et al. 2016).

Sometimes the sole belief of a single individual in the possibility to control the own emotions is not enough and it doesn't last in time when a society has been strongly weakened from heavy conflicts. Some scholars sustain for more long-term strategies, which are all sub-categories of the development of a culture of peace. Make the community involved in the reconstruction of the society and actively participate in the transformation of collective grief through the creation of justice rituals/trials. The creation of a culture of peace depends very much in the establishment of a 'positive-emotion context', which can flourish from the effort to extinguish the negative context. A positive climate wants elements in the public sphere such as policies of

integration, commissions that promote the reconciliation through grassroots movements, fair and sincere public trials with the aim to assure restorative justice and future cooperation. The encouragement of collective self-healing can become the foundation of a new catalyst for social participation to solve a conflict defined as intractable. One can think that intractable conflicts are called as such because there is nothing to do if not wait that politicians or whoever has interests behind change their mind. But here I sustain that a culture of peace doesn't depend on who has the power is solely in the hands of people who in the hardest time can bring out and develop the capacity of resilience. Overall, the resolution of intractable conflicts is not determined by the end of armed conflict: even if the resolution is achieved through negotiation, the conflict goes in a state of latency, which means that it can break out in every moment. The state of latency which I talk about, refers to negative emotions that haven't been subject of any kind of negotiation, therefore those kind of inner and invisible conflicts in people that have experienced war are both the consequence and the cause of keeping the conflict intractable. Deal with emotions is a process that requires to listen to the victims of severe violence and abuses. From those studies about the role of emotions in conflict, I move to how works in the resolution process and if through dealing with emotions we can build a better and just society. Some researches affirm that to listen can heal the pain of victims. This model is known as transitional justice, which deals with people's traumatic events and emotions elicited by those stimuli, bringing into the public and legal sphere the personal experience, "countervailable" only by listening and provide this support from the institutions. Transitional justice looks at reconciliation, and this kind of justice is not retributive but reparative – healing



wants to be 'therapeutic', insisting on forgiveness in exchange of truth from the perpetrators. This discourse supports reconciliation starting to care with the single individual, 'simply' by healing (Castillejo-Cuellar 2013). An interesting case can be found in the creation of a liminal space between the state's institutions in South African post-apartheid regime, where a court guaranteed a certain freedom on sharing the numerous episodes of violence during the years of segregation. The mix of law, politics and religion in listening and healing became a powerful channel to throw negative emotions and forgive for the sake of reconciliation. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, headed by the archbishop Desmond Tutu, proposed to create "a new culture of human rights", by promoting national reconciliation through the forgiveness. There were already about fifteen Commissions in the world, but the one in South Africa worked more than anywhere else. The structure of the Commission divided the work in three committees: The Human Rights Violations Committee, the Reparations and Rehabilitation Committee, and finally the Amnesty Committee. A hypothesis is that it worked because the court was willing to give amnesty to the perpetrators, which should fit in some specific qualities, one of those was to share as much as possible about the crime (Wilson, 2000).

The strategies that Tutu has been using to deal with emotions are (1) equalizing and collectivizing sufferance, by saying that whatever happen to one person, the same happened to someone else. Everyone suffered and went through traumatic events such as loss and violence. The recognition that people suffered was coming from a commission and a big audience, and the creation of this group in which victims can identify themselves was with the intent to facilitate the closure. This collectivization of pain leads to the repetitive use of (2) the allegory of

liberation: this sufferance of each person is extremely valuable and noble, since it is for the sake of a bigger and common cause such as the national liberation from the oppression. During the process of hearing and healing, it was repeated many times that people that died didn't in vain. Part of the liberation regards also the individual level, which can be achieved through (3) forsaking of revenge, from which was possible to attain the redemption. What the commission was doing was to heal the wounds by leading the people to desire to forgive and to not keep resentments. According to the researches, the act to forgive was highly applauded and considered a virtue, while the expressions of anger toward the perpetrators would seem 'out of place' (Wilson, 2000).

Some scholars propose methods based on dialogues: an interesting example is the 'collaborative change approach' proposed by Clarke (2009), which wants to analyze the effects of polarization of emotions and see how to 'depolarize' those in the reconciliation process. As the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, this method proposes to bring together people by sharing their experiences, which can concern frustration, anxiety, a past which is difficult to deal, and by guiding all the process, let people articulate their respective identities, needs and values. The dialogue should start with questions meant to seek the root of conflict and 'let it come out'. The narrative of a conflict is powerful and can be led through a transformation of feelings by open dialogue and the effort to find solutions with the support of a community. Bandes (2009) talks about 'emotional closure' of a case of violence through the emotional regulation. She supports the idea that emotions need to be comprehended in the legal realm. This closure can happen from the moment that victims and survivors have the chance to give space in the public setting to their sufferance and injustices that one has lived. Formally, a juridical

process can never end, the culprits are not found, the victim doesn't get the fair retribution, many questions can remain open (Castillejo-Cuellar 2013). But if someone takes the responsibility to bring the collective pain in the public sphere, one can move forward by finding a sense of peace and relief thanks to restorative justice. The research of the role of emotions is not confined to the field of psychology and neuroscience, it has been also explored in anthropology, sociology and juridical studies (Bandes 2009). That is how we can see that emotions are processed, interpreted and communicated in whatever social context, it influences behaviors, actions and the perception of the world, that is why it is a powerful method to control can support the transformation of a conflict. But at the same time, as we have seen, the context in which is expected to feel a determined set of emotions is specified by cultural norms (Halperin, Bar-Tal, De Rivera 2007).

If the resolution doesn't depend only on the government's decisions, how can people participate to the construction of a peaceful society when they are the first to have experienced the worse consequences of intractable conflicts? The sociopsychological barriers in a conflictual situation can be particularly rigid. Indeed, there is a repertoire of beliefs that create a set of negative emotions to which the society unconditionally adhere and maintain the conflict intractable, although there's no fire. Moreover, this can be enforced through cultural, educational and governmental channels. I have given a theoretical framework of the existing literature on the possibilities to apply the emotional regulation, which the goal is to decrease the level of negative emotions and increase the intensity of positive ones. A possible solution that now I propose to 'unfreeze' the rigidity due to the negative emotional climate, relies on the promotion of peace education as a long-term strategy

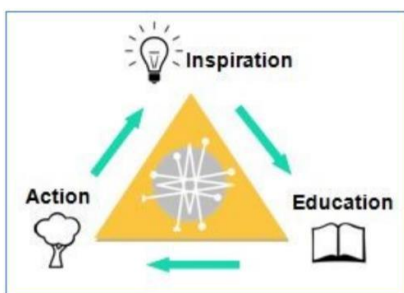
to disclose the creative potential to deal with intractable conflicts. This doesn't want to be a universal solution to every problem in a society, rather I propose peace education to make a shift at the emotional level: from intractable to tractable.

Bar-Tal and Rosen (2009) affirm that the negative climate is a consequence of a part or current conflict and the young people that grow and live in this kind of context is likely to reproduce the same schemes because of the acculturation and transmission of violence. This spiral can end if, as we have seen before, negative and powerful emotions such as anger are canalized in constructive behaviors and a new acculturation based on peace. This innovative perspective will make easier to overcome sociopsychological barriers because wants to reform patterns of behavior, values, beliefs, social skills and emotions. The scholars propose two approaches to peace education. The first is oriented in the spread of 'socialization for peace' in schools. This method includes the encouragement to diversity for example in the same class, international exchange to break stereotypes and promote the appreciation for different cultures and more stimuli to study and get informed by global issues. Schools are the cradles of acculturation: until the age of eighteen is the major channel to learn and that contributes to the formation of the character. There young people don't learn only through traditional study and accumulation of knowledge but create friendship and learn how to behave in the society. Socialization for peace as the foundation of the learning process should aspire to diminish the pressure for competition with each other and put the emphasis on mutual respect and unity to achieve common goals. In this perspective, to learn means to challenge the own limits and discover the own potential, rather than do better than the others. It is also necessary training the new

generations to the beautiful potential of diverse culture, traditions, ideas and ethnicity. This first approach has several limits: first and foremost, institutions as well are imbued with culture, therefore are not easy to change, the greatest challenge would be the natural resistance to keep the status quo. Then, in many cases public education doesn't receive enough funds; the lack of valorization of the structures, the possibilities to offer, the training and adequate salary for the professor, inevitably impact the curricula and the transmission of new values. The second approach includes a broader concept of education and goes beyond the academic form. Is the promotion of socialization in the whole society and which aspire to involve all categories and ages which support the peace process. Here education means persuasion through information, expositions, exhibitions, sensibilization and activities to achieve a new awareness. The main assumption is that the effort to build a society founded in friendly relations have unprecedented benefits, because without peace is impossible to feel safe and develop material prosperity. This kind of socialization is based on the empowerment of ordinary people who become active agents for the transformation of a negative context. In their research, Bar-Tal and Rosen suggest that the absence of specific conditions in

which peace education can flourish is a sign of lack of ripeness of the society. A significant limit of this model is that some features of peace education can find very unfavorable conditions where democracy and basic human rights, as the freedom of expression, are not guaranteed. Overall, the scholars affirm that “peace education (whether direct or indirect) can flourish under any condition – including violence – because its themes fundamentally support humanism and democracy, core values shared by many societies” (Bar-Tal and Rosen 2009, p. 569).

Based on my research, I affirm that sustainable and lasting peace is not something to achieve as we are talking about an arrival, but is patiently created thank to the capacity in society to develop resilience and motivation for collective participation. If the concept of peace education, other than the formal learning process, also embraces a form of socialization based on tolerance and the appreciation for diversity, its application can be found in grassroots movements. I believe that the promotion of peace starts on the international scale and ends with small communities. I have found the emblem of peace education in action in the international organization called ‘Peace Jam’.



(Source: Peace Jam Official Website)

The main objective is to foster new leaders for the future which are committed to bring positive change in their lives and community, inspired the life and struggles by fourteen Nobel Peace Prize winners: (the 14th) Dalai Lama, Desmond Tutu, Rigoberta Menchù Tum, Oscar Arias, Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, Mairead Corrigan Maguire, Betty Williams, José Ramos-Horta, Tawakkol Karman, Joseph Rotblat, Jody Williams, Shirin Ebadi, Kailash Satyarthi and Leymah Gbowee. The initiative has been launched in 1996 by the social activists Dawn Engle and Ivan Suvanjiedd in the United States. Nowadays the association is present in thirteen states and it interacts with organizations, institutions and communities all around the world. More than 1.2 million young people worldwide have participated in Peace Jam programs, their curriculum has been implemented in over 20.000 schools in 39 countries and hundreds of conferences focused on youth leadership have been held, connecting activists with Nobel Peace Laureates.

Peace Jam is well present and rooted in the reality of the society in which it lives and promotes initiatives according to the context in which it operates. This association has created thousands of new leaders and volunteer opportunities for young and adults in their local community. The core principles are the same all over the world: to create a peaceful society, free from race and gender discrimination, in which collaboration between people allows the elimination of poverty and promotes a culture based on human rights. The involvement of young people in building an ideal society would enrich the community in order to be able to solve the challenges of the 21st century in a creative way. Furthermore, it would reduce many of the problems that young people face in a global but increasingly chaotic and competitive society. The first of these is the lack of purpose in life. The lack of ideals according to which to live and

dreams to chase cause annihilation and contributes to maintaining a negative emotional climate. A stimulated youth with an active role in society will become the driving force to transform intractable conflicts into a possibility of dialogue and encounter with the different who can interrupt the spiral of violence. I should divide the action-making of peace education in three macro categories: scholastic curriculum design, publications and multimedia, and finally networking initiatives.

The launch of school programs is simply made by the design of ideal learning material divided for themes and ages. It is possible to make stand-alone the programs as a curricular unit or as a complement to existing one. The Peace Jam Juniors curriculum is taught for the age from 5 to 11 years old. "Is a literacy-based curriculum that explores the childhood stories of fourteen Nobel Peace Prize winners and the strategies they used to overcome problems in their communities [...]. Students gain academic skills in the areas of history, civics, geography, reading and writing. They also gain personal and social skills including problem-solving, civic responsibility and leadership." (Quoted from Peace Jam Official website – curriculum sample). Then, there is a curriculum for young from the age of 11 to 14, named Peace Jam Leaders. The purpose is to create an "interactive [environment], hands-on format that fosters 21st century and leadership skills, identity development, conflict resolution, service-learning, citizenship and celebration of diversity". (Ibidem). The curriculums 'Compassion in Action' and 'Peace Jam Ambassadors' are designed for youth from the age of 12/14 to the age of 18. Here again the program aspires to sensitize teenagers to global issues and gives practical and analytical skills to be active citizens in reshape the culture of violence in culture of peace. The last two scholastic programs

'Peace Jam Juvenile Justice' and 'Peace Jam Scholars', addressed mostly to university students, like the others teaches how to develop a positive identity and aspire to create international and academic connections. Those curricula also have the characteristic to have more practice and want to stimulate youth to bring their skills to the service of the community.

Publications and multimedia from the association want to be informative and a source of inspiration for an audience from 5 to 99 years old. Peace Jam collaborates with directors that have been produced movies on the life of the Dalai Lama ("Scientist"), Betty Williams ("Contagious Courage"), Desmond Tutu ("Children of the Light") and others. Moreover, the collaboration with the writer Arthur Zajonc has produced the biographical work "We Speak as One: Twelve Nobel Laureates Share Their Vision for Peace". This is a collection of the Peace Nobel Laureates' lives and struggles, my university (Soka University of Japan, Tokyo), adopts it as academic textbooks. The intent of Peace Jam in promoting the life experience of those personalities is to inspire the audience to take position in global issues and strive for the creation of a better society. The networking initiatives are an important element for the socialization for peace. Peace Jam organizes conferences with the Peace Nobel Laureates, international meetings and exchanges, annual summits, public lectures and events to create friendship and get new inspiration. Other initiatives include online networking, one of the most remarkable is "Billion Act", a campaign defined as "a global call for action". Is a web platform in which everyone can register and upload pictures and the story on how he or she made an action in favor of peace in the own community. For example, an interreligious dialogue, or a morning in the beach with friends to collect garbage. This is a powerful tool in which everyone can be

shared the concrete proof of peace education and unite with a global movement oriented to peace. Grassroots movements again is the protagonist for a positive social change, because the aspiration is to start the transformation of negative emotions from the local community.

## CONCLUSION

Overall, negative emotions are one of the causes of maintaining the conflict intractable, but those can be as well the fuel for grassroots movements and creative solutions. Peace education doesn't have the pretension to heal every issue in the society. Rather, it proposes a new wave of empowered and aware people who base the socialization in mutual respect and the radical rejection of violence. Although this is an idealistic solution which in practice find several limits, I have shown how the adherence and the support of organizations such as Peace Jam (is one among many) contribute to build a society based on values that care and respect the dignity of life. Peace education transforms the conflict from intractable to tractable, this kind of model deal with people's negative emotions by giving to them the power of agencies in reshape culture.

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