

PEACEBUILDING CONFLICT RESOLUTION ON IDENTITY CONFLICT, FORGIVENESS, AND RECONCILIATION: AN APPROACH FROM SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY TO RESOLVING VIOLENT IDENTITY CONFLICT AND GROUP CONFLICT

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ABSTRACT

This work explores the intricate dynamics of identity conflict through the prism of social psychology, emphasizing the significance of forgiveness and reconciliation as essential instruments for resolving violent group conflicts. Identity disputes, which are often brought on by deeply rooted cultural, ethnic, or religious divisions, can lead to protracted hostilities and violence. We propose that understanding the psychological underpinnings of these conflicts can enhance the peacebuilding process. Using well-established social psychology concepts, the study argues that forgiveness is a collective effort that can break cycles of retaliation and hostility rather than just an individual act. Additionally, reconciliation is portrayed as a complicated process that involves acknowledging past wrongs, empathy for the adversary, and a shared commitment to peaceful coexistence. We demonstrate how psychological interventions centered on identity awareness, emotional regulation, and group dynamics can promote transformative conversations between disputing parties using case studies and empirical data. We offer practitioners engaged in peacebuilding initiatives a comprehensive approach by creating spaces that encourage communication and psychological healing, ultimately helping to resolve identity conflicts in a sustainable manner. According to our research, incorporating social psychology techniques into peacebuilding programs can greatly increase the likelihood that conflicts will be resolved successfully, fostering harmony in a variety of societies.

Keywords: Conflict Resolution, Forgiveness, Reconciliation, Identity Conflict, Group Conflict

1. INTRODUCTION

The importance of peacebuilding in addressing identity conflict has grown in today's diverse communities [Aitken \(2007\)](#), Phan et al., [Simonsen \(2005\)](#). Identity conflicts, often rooted in ethnic, religious, or cultural affinities, can escalate into violent conflicts that lead to fatalities and significant social unrest [Haynes and Politics \(2009\)](#), [Parker \(2015\)](#). Understanding and resolving these conflicts requires a careful analysis of their underlying causes in addition to the use of effective resolution and reconciliation strategies [Rasheed and Munoz \(2016\)](#), [Ross and](#)

[Studies \(2000\)](#). Reconciliation and forgiveness are key concepts in the transformative process of peacebuilding [Boehle \(2021\)](#), [Kalayjian and Paloutzian \(2009\)](#). These elements contribute to the healing of divided societies by enabling individuals and groups to set aside past grievances [Kalayjian and Paloutzian \(2009\)](#). Social psychology offers useful insights into human behavior, group dynamics, and the impact of identity on conflict by offering frameworks that may facilitate understanding and resolution [Tint, \(2009\)](#), [Worthington Jr and Aten, \(2010\)](#). One of the most catastrophic periods in Cambodia's history is still the Khmer Rouge regime, which ruled from 1975 to 1979 and was characterized by severe violence, widespread atrocities, and significant social unrest [Cunha et al. \(2015\)](#), [Kiernan \(2021\)](#). An estimated 1.7 million people perished as a result of executions, forced labor, and starvation during the regime's attempt to turn Cambodia into a classless agrarian society under Pol Pot's leadership [Kiernan \(2025\)](#), [Pina et al., \(2011\)](#), [Roth \(2016\)](#). In addition to wreaking havoc on the populace, this genocide left behind severe psychological wounds that still influence Cambodian society today [Nou \(2024\)](#), [Van Schaack et al., 2011\)](#). Many communities were terrified and distrustful of the Khmer Rouge because of their extreme policies, which were intended to destroy traditional social structures and eradicate alleged enemies [Atkinson \(2013\)](#), [Ayres \(1999\)](#), [Delano and Knottnerus \(2018\)](#). The regime's violent methods, which included focusing on professionals, intellectuals, and members of ethnic minorities, created a culture of violence and repression that has had a long-lasting effect on intergroup relations and national identity [Delano and Knottnerus \(2018\)](#), [Tyner \(2017\)](#). The lingering difficulties in resolving historical grievances and promoting reconciliation in a society still dealing with the fallout from its past are clear indications of the trauma's legacy [Moon, \(2009\)](#), [Rigby and reader, \(2012\)](#). The difficult task of bringing Cambodia's history together while promoting social cohesion among its diverse populace has been faced since the fall of the regime [Diepart and Dupuis \(2014\)](#). A larger dedication to justice and reconciliation is reflected in initiatives to address the past, such as the creation of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) to try Khmer Rouge leaders [Hirsch and Scurrah \(2015\)](#), [Hirsch \(2016\)](#). However, the discourse surrounding forgiveness and reconciliation is still shaped by the intricacies of collective memory and identity, underscoring the necessity of a sophisticated comprehension of the psychological processes at work in post-conflict societies [Kidron \(2021\)](#), [Willis \(2014\)](#). Forgiveness, reconciliation, and conflict resolution are complicated by Cambodia's long history of violent identity and group conflict, especially after the Khmer Rouge regime [Kidron \(2021\)](#), [Pham et al. \(2019\)](#). A sophisticated grasp of the processes that can promote healing and social cohesion is necessary because the psychological wounds caused by this turbulent time have influenced collective identities and intergroup relations [Jeffery \(2015\)](#), [McGrew \(2011\)](#). Social psychology provides important insights into these processes by highlighting how identity, memory, and interpersonal dynamics shape conflict and how it is resolved [Hein \(2015\)](#), [Manning et al. \(2019\)](#). Research suggests that how groups view one another and negotiate their pasts is significantly influenced by collective memory [Hirsch \(2019\)](#), [Verovšek and Identities \(2016\)](#). The trauma of the Khmer Rouge era in Cambodia still affects social interactions and group identities today, frequently sustaining cycles of hostility and distrust [Lee \(2022\)](#), [Tyner \(2017\)](#). Intergroup contact theory [Lytle \(2018\)](#), [Pettigrew et al. \(2011\)](#), [Phan et al. \(2025\)](#), [Turner and Tajfel \(1996\)](#) contends that encouraging constructive interactions between opposing groups can lessen prejudice and advance understanding, while social identity theory [Knippenberg and Ellemers \(1990\)](#) explains how group affiliations can intensify

conflicts [Turner and Oakes \(1986\)](#), [Turner and Tajfel \(1996\)](#). The potential of forgiveness as a transformative process that can end the cycle of violence and promote reconciliation has been emphasized in recent studies [Gaertner \(2011\)](#), [Phan et al. \(2025\)](#). Initiatives to encourage communication and empathy between erstwhile enemies have demonstrated promise in the Cambodian context in resolving historical grievances and creating a common future vision [Hinton et al. \(2011\)](#), [Phan et al. \(2025\)](#). In order to examine successful methods for resolving disputes, forgiving others, and fostering reconciliation in Cambodia [Dicklitch and Malik \(2010\)](#), this review article attempts to compile the most recent social psychology research findings [McGrew \(2011\)](#), [Pham et al. \(2019\)](#). This work aims to advance our understanding of how to deal with the intricacies of identity and group conflict in a post-conflict society by analyzing the interaction between psychological mechanisms and sociocultural factors [Čorkalo Biruški \(2017\)](#), [Smith \(2013\)](#). This approach acknowledges the complexities of human emotions and the deep-rooted fears that often accompany identity issues [Pain \(2014\)](#). We can more effectively navigate the path to lasting peace if we consider forgiveness as a psychological process and reconciliation as a societal objective [Floro \(2025\)](#), [Kalayjian and Paloutzian \(2009\)](#). Examining how these elements interact can help identify strategies that not only address the immediate issues but also encourage lasting harmony and cooperation between opposing groups [Green \(2009\)](#), [Tint \(2009\)](#). This study will address the psychological foundations of identity-related conflicts, the role of forgiveness in lowering animosity, and the importance of individual and community-based reconciliation initiatives [Green \(2009\)](#), [Massey \(2009\)](#). By using this lens, we hope to shed light on ways to build a peaceful society in the face of violent identity conflicts [Kohen \(2009\)](#), [Massey \(2009\)](#).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Particularly in post-conflict societies like Cambodia [Gellman \(2010\)](#), the literature on conflict resolution, forgiveness, and reconciliation [Kalayjian and Paloutzian \(2009\)](#) has come to acknowledge the significance of social psychological frameworks in comprehending and resolving violent identity and group conflicts [Worthington et al. \(2015\)](#). Historical grievances and collective memories continue to influence intergroup relations and societal dynamics in the complex landscape left by the Khmer Rouge regime [Bernath \(2016\)](#), [Hinton and Lesley \(2025\)](#).

2.1. IDENTITY

In identity conflict, identity refers to the complex and ever-changing self-concepts that people and groups have [Lim \(2016\)](#), [Sharma \(2013\)](#), which are influenced by social, historical, and cultural elements [Meijers \(1998\)](#), [Ulver and Östberg \(2014\)](#). The Khmer Rouge's legacy, which aimed to overthrow established social structures and impose a radical vision of a classless society [Ayres \(1999\)](#), [Goldstein and Hiebert \(2016\)](#), has a significant impact on identity in Cambodia [Rakower \(2004\)](#). Ethnic, national, and social affiliations are among the many identities that have developed as a result of this historical trauma; these can serve as sources of social division as well as personal meaning [Hartmann et al. \(2019\)](#), [Hinton et al. \(2011\)](#).

Identity conflicts in Cambodia following the Khmer Rouge often take the form of tensions between urban and rural populations [Lim \(2016\)](#), [Singh \(2017\)](#), as well as between various ethnic groups, such as the Khmer majority and minority groups like the Cham and Vietnamese [Kiernan \(2021\)](#), [Thun and Keo \(2021\)](#). According to

Bar-Tal (2009), these conflicts are made worse by shared memories of oppression and violence, which can increase in-group solidarity and out-group animosity Frewer (2014), Ngoun (2016). As individuals and groups attempt to resolve their past grievances while promoting social cohesion, the fight for acceptance and validation of diverse identities is a crucial part of the reconciliation process Al-Dajani and Leiner (2022), Verdeja (2017).

Developing successful conflict resolution techniques requires an understanding of identity in the Cambodian context Gellman (2010), Haynes (2009). In order to reduce tensions and promote reconciliation Haynes (2009), it emphasizes the necessity of addressing the psychological and social aspects of identity conflicts and encouraging communication and understanding between opposing groups Haynes (2009), Lee (2021). Stakeholders can endeavor to create a more inclusive and peaceful society by recognizing the intricacies of identity and the effects of past trauma Amer (1999), Takei and Politics (1998).

2.2. GROUP IDENTITY

The collective self-perception and sense of belonging that people get from belonging to a specific social, ethnic Abrams and Hogg (2001), or cultural group is known as group identity Abrams and Hogg (2001), AhnAllen et al. (2006). Because it affects attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions of both in-group and out-group members AhnAllen et al. (2006), group identity becomes a crucial factor affecting intergroup relations in the context of identity conflict Tajfel and Turner (2004). The Khmer Rouge regime's legacy in Cambodia has had a significant impact on group identities, which has increased tensions between different ethnic and social groups, such as the Vietnamese minority, the Cham Muslims, and the Khmer majority Thun and Keo (2021), Williams (2023).

The Khmer Rouge's historical trauma has created a complex terrain of group identities where social dynamics are still influenced by collective memories of oppression and violence Becker et al. (2000), Nou (2024). For example, the Khmer Rouge's efforts to destroy traditional social structures have left lasting damage Nou (2024), encouraging in-group solidarity among Khmers while also sustaining distrust and hostility toward those who are perceived to be outside their group Evrard and Destrooper (2025). In Cambodian society, where historical grievances frequently fuel identity conflicts, this phenomenon is demonstrated by the ongoing struggles for recognition and validation of diverse identities McCravy (2017), Taylor et al. (2023).

Addressing the psychological and social aspects of identity conflict requires an understanding of group identity in the Cambodian context Choi et al. (2008), Hsu et al. (2004). It draws attention to the necessity of tactics that foster understanding and communication between groups, enabling social cohesion and reconciliation between opposing factions Havemann and Pridmore (2005), Tobias et al. (2011). Stakeholders can endeavor to create a more inclusive society that celebrates its variety of identities by recognizing the intricacies of group identity and the effects of past trauma Joma and Lekan (2024), Nafari and Ruebottom (2025).

2.3. SENSE OF BELONGING

The emotional experience of being accepted and valued within a specific group is known as "sense of belonging," and it has a big impact on both group dynamics and individual identity Mahar et al. (2013), McClure and Brown (2008). Strong

feelings of belonging can strengthen group identity in the face of identity conflict [McClure and Brown \(2008\)](#), strengthening group divisions while also encouraging solidarity among members [Allen et al. \(2021\)](#), [Wilczyńska et al. \(2015\)](#). The Khmer Rouge regime's legacy has had a significant impact on people's sense of belonging in Cambodia, influencing how different social and ethnic groups view one another and themselves [Allen et al. \(2021\)](#), [Waller \(2021\)](#).

Due to the Khmer Rouge's efforts to establish a homogeneous society, several ethnic groups including the Vietnamese and Cham were marginalized, which has caused a fractured sense of belonging in Cambodian society [Cook et al. \(2009\)](#), [Kane et al. \(2024\)](#). Many Cambodians have strong ties to their ethnic and cultural heritage, and the trauma of previous violence has made them even more desperate to fit in [Kogure and Takasaki \(2024\)](#), [Sinanan \(2011\)](#). This phenomenon can result in increased in-group loyalty, where people tend to prioritize their group affiliations over out-group relationships in order to feel secure and secure [Pina e Cunha et al. \(2010\)](#), [Shapiro-Phim \(2008\)](#).

Furthermore, the difficulty in gaining acceptance and validation for a variety of identities in Cambodia emphasizes how crucial it is to promote a sense of community that cuts across social and ethnic boundaries [Bennett \(2018\)](#), [McLaughlin \(2012\)](#). A more inclusive sense of belonging that supports social cohesion and reconciliation can be facilitated by initiatives that foster intergroup communication and understanding [DeYoung et al. \(2020\)](#), [McLaughlin \(2012\)](#). Stakeholders can endeavor to mend historical wounds and create a more peaceful society by addressing the psychological and social aspects of belonging [DeYoung et al. \(2020\)](#), [Hoefinger \(2014\)](#).

2.4. PERSONAL IDENTITY

The term "personal identity" describes the distinctive traits, life experiences, and convictions that set a person apart from others [Drummond \(2021\)](#), [Schechtman \(2005\)](#). Its many facets, such as individual choices, life experiences, and personal values, all work together to influence how a person views themselves and their role in the world [Čapek et al. \(2021\)](#), [Swann Jr et al. \(2012\)](#). Personal identity can have a big impact on how people handle their relationships with others when they are experiencing identity conflict [Swann Jr et al. \(2012\)](#), especially in societies where social divisions and historical trauma are prevalent [Crowell \(2021\)](#), [Hilhorst and Philosophy \(2005\)](#).

The Khmer Rouge regime's legacy has had a significant influence on people's identities in Cambodia as they struggle with the memories of oppression, loss, and violence [Pham et al. \(2019\)](#), [Sirik \(2020\)](#). Many Cambodians have a complex sense of self that is entwined with their collective history and cultural heritage as a result of the trauma they endured during this time [Gray \(2014\)](#), [Lee \(2022\)](#). Family stories about survival, resiliency, and the fight for acceptance in a culture still recovering from the past, for example, can influence a person's sense of self [Saltzman et al. \(2013\)](#), [Walsh \(2003\)](#).

In the Cambodian context, where people frequently find themselves juggling multiple identities at once, the interaction between personal and group identities is especially pertinent [Hoefinger \(2011\)](#), [Su Kim and Education \(2003\)](#). People may feel divided between their own personal convictions and the expectations of their social or ethnic groups, which can result in internal conflicts [Aloyo et al. \(2023\)](#). Addressing the psychological aspects of identity conflict requires an understanding of personal identity in this context, which emphasizes the necessity for people to

make sense of their own experiences in relation to the larger narratives of their communities [Aloyo et al. \(2023\)](#). Healing and reconciliation can be facilitated by fostering a sense of self that recognizes both individual experiences and collective histories [Miller \(2008\)](#). Programs that promote dialogue, storytelling, and introspection can enable people to express who they are in ways that promote empathy and understanding across social boundaries [Lasky \(2005\)](#), [Wohl et al. \(2014\)](#). Stakeholders can strive to create inclusive spaces that respect a range of experiences and promote social cohesion in post-conflict societies by acknowledging the complexity of personal identity (See [Figure 1](#))

Figure 1

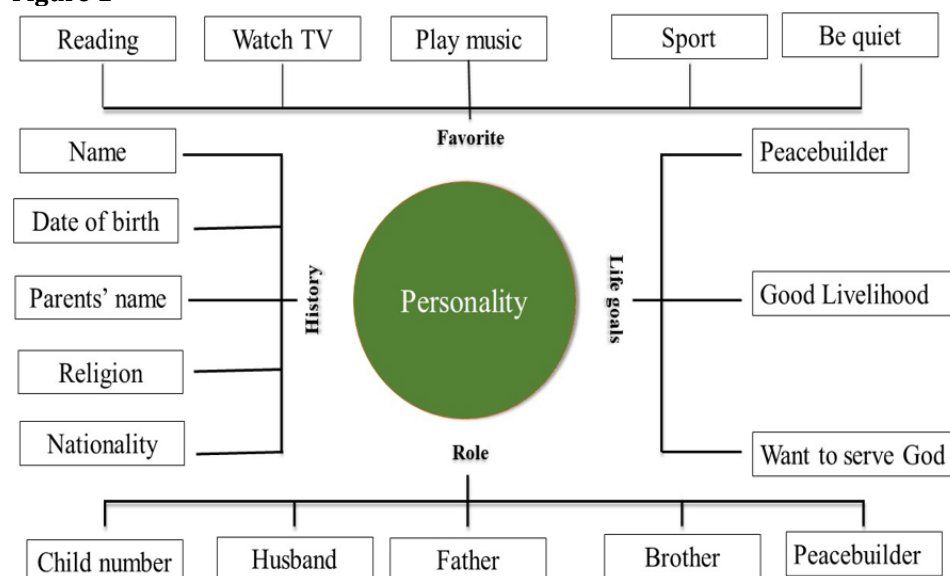


Figure 1 Personal Identity Created by Personal Favorite, Personal Life Goals, Personal Role and Personal History

A person who struggles with competing goals and interests that influence who I am. Writing is a favorite of mine since it allows me to express my creativity and individuality [McLaughlin et al. \(2010\)](#). However, one frequently finds oneself torn between following their passion for writing and the expectations of society to pursue a more traditional career path, which can leave them feeling uncertain and frustrated [Galinsky et al. \(2005\)](#), [McLaughlin et al. \(2010\)](#).

In terms of my own life objectives, I want to use social advocacy to significantly influence my community [Jason et al. \(2015\)](#). However, I have trouble striking a balance between this goal and the demands of a traditional career and financial security [Brown et al. \(2015\)](#). I experience internal conflict as I balance the conflicting demands of my goals and life's realities because of this tension [Nilsson et al. \(2011\)](#). As I work to encourage others and look for recognition for my own efforts, my personal role frequently alternates between that of a leader and a supporter [Bowler et al. \(2010\)](#). This dichotomy can cause conflict because I occasionally struggle to decide whether to put my needs or those of others first, which makes me feel inadequate and guilty [Walumbwa et al. \(2008\)](#).

Experiences with cultural diversity and familial expectations have influenced my personal history and molded my perspective on conflict and identity [Giguere et al. \(2010\)](#). Being raised in a multicultural setting has frequently made me feel under pressure to fit in with various cultural norms, which has caused me to struggle with

issues of identity and belonging [Johansen and Varvin \(2020\)](#). My desire to resolve these tensions and discover a unified sense of self is fueled by the profound awareness of the complexities of personal conflict that these experiences have given me [Ting-Toomey et al. \(2000\)](#).

3. IDENTITY CONFLICT

The Khmer Rouge regime's historical trauma, which aimed to overthrow established social structures and impose a radical vision of a homogenous society, is a major contributing factor to identity conflict in Cambodia [Bourdier \(2023\)](#), [Putra et al. \(2024\)](#). About 1.7 million people died during this genocide, which has left deep psychological scars on the nation and continues to influence the identities of people and groups there [Caspar \(2024\)](#), [Williams \(2020\)](#), [Williams and Jessee \(2024\)](#).

Due to the Khmer Rouge's legacy, there is a complex interplay of identities, and social, cultural, and ethnic ties frequently turn into points of contention [Williams and Jessee \(2024\)](#). For example, minority groups like the Vietnamese and Cham Muslims, who have historically experienced marginalization and discrimination, are often compared to the Khmer majority in terms of their sense of identity [Münyas \(2008\)](#). As people negotiate their individual and societal identities in a society still dealing with the fallout from its violent past, this dynamic foster identity conflicts [Bennett \(2024\)](#).

Furthermore, the fight for acceptance and validation of various identities in Cambodia emphasizes how critical it is to resolve past grievances and promote intergroup communication [Haynes \(2009\)](#). Collective memories of violence and oppression can increase in-group solidarity and out-group hostility, exacerbating the ongoing difficulties of social cohesion and reconciliation [Nicholson and Howarth \(2018\)](#), [Schori-Eyal et al. \(2014\)](#).

A comprehensive approach that takes into account the psychological and social aspects of identity conflicts is necessary to comprehend them in the Cambodian context [Nicholson and Howarth \(2018\)](#). Stakeholders can attempt to mend the scars of the past and create a more accepting society that values its many identities by encouraging empathy, understanding, and communication between opposing groups [McLaughlin and van der Marel \(2005\)](#).

4. GROUP CONFLICT

The history of the Khmer Rouge regime, which aimed to eradicate alleged enemies and impose a radical vision of a homogeneous society, has a significant impact on group conflict in Cambodia [Kiernan \(2002\)](#), [Kubota \(2013\)](#). Approximately 1.7 million people died during this genocide, which left lasting psychological scars and rifts between different ethnic and social groups [Kiernan \(2002\)](#), [Kissi \(2004\)](#).

Significant group conflicts have resulted from the Khmer Rouge's legacy, especially between the Khmer majority and minority groups like the Vietnamese and Cham Muslims [Bruckmayr \(2015\)](#), [Thun and Keo \(2021\)](#). These conflicts can increase tensions and create a climate of mistrust because they are frequently based on historical grievances, cultural differences, and competition for resources [Caswell \(2012\)](#). Social disintegration and the marginalization of people who do not fit the prevailing narrative result from the frequent comparison of minority groups' identities with that of the Khmer majority [Hossain \(2024\)](#).

Furthermore, the difficulty in gaining acceptance and validation for various identities in Cambodia emphasizes how critical it is to resolve these intergroup disputes via communication and peacemaking [Ross \(2000\)](#). Intergroup relationships are still shaped by the collective memories of oppression and violence, which frequently lead to increased in-group solidarity and out-group animosity [Ron and Maoz \(2013\)](#).

Promoting empathy and understanding between opposing groups is crucial to resolving group conflict in Cambodia [Fisher \(1993\)](#), [Kelman \(1998\)](#). A more inclusive society that values its many identities can be achieved through programs that promote intergroup communication and cooperation. These efforts can aid in bridging gaps and promoting social cohesiveness [Fisher \(1993\)](#). Stakeholders can attempt to mend the scars of the past and create a more peaceful future by recognizing the complexity of group conflict and the historical background that influences it [Ellis \(2006\)](#), [Nagda \(2006\)](#).

5. IDENTITY CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Resolving identity conflicts is a crucial task in Cambodia, especially in the wake of the Khmer Rouge regime [Ellis \(2006\)](#), which caused permanent divisions among different ethnic and social groups and left severe psychological scars on the country [Ellis \(2006\)](#), [Stephan \(2008\)](#). Significant identity conflicts have arisen as a result of this era, especially between the Khmer majority and historically marginalized and discriminated-against minority groups like the Vietnamese and Cham Muslims [Farouk \(2015\)](#).

Adopting tactics that encourage communication, comprehension, and peacemaking between opposing groups is crucial to resolving these identity conflicts [Ross \(2000\)](#), [Rothman and Olson \(2001\)](#). One strategy is to encourage contact between groups, which has been demonstrated to improve empathy and lessen prejudice [Berger et al. \(2018\)](#), [Murrar et al. \(2017\)](#). Collaborative projects and community-building exercises are examples of initiatives that promote shared experiences and can aid in bridging gaps and fostering a feeling of unity among disparate groups [Brenick et al. \(2019\)](#), [Murrar et al. \(2017\)](#).

In addition, resolving historical grievances is essential to Cambodian conflict resolution [Adler et al. \(2006\)](#), [Singh \(1999\)](#). A more inclusive narrative that values the contributions and rights of all groups can be fostered and healing can be facilitated by acknowledging the past and offering forums for discussion of historical injustices [Hughes \(2001\)](#). An essential step in this direction is the creation of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) [Scheffer \(2008\)](#), which aims to promote national healing while bringing justice for the crimes committed during the Khmer Rouge era [Meisenberg and Stegmiller \(2016\)](#), [Scheffer \(2008\)](#).

Resolving identity conflicts also heavily relies on education [Bekerman and Maoz \(2005\)](#). Future generations will be more prepared to handle the challenges of identity in a multicultural society if lessons about diversity [Bekerman and Maoz \(2005\)](#), tolerance, and the value of comprehending various viewpoints are incorporated into the curriculum [Schachter and Rich \(2011\)](#), [Shapiro \(2010\)](#).

In conclusion, resolving identity conflicts in Cambodia necessitates a multipronged strategy that prioritizes communication [Enyedy et al. \(2006\)](#), [Shapiro \(2010\)](#), respect for past wrongs, and education [Enyedy et al. \(2006\)](#). Through cultivating empathy and understanding between opposing groups, stakeholders can

endeavor to create a society that is more inclusive and cohesive and celebrates its variety of identities [Enyedy et al. \(2006\)](#).

6. FORGIVENESS

6.1. COGNITIVE THEORY OF FORGIVENESS

According to the cognitive theory of forgiveness, changing one's thoughts [Cioni and Health \(2007\)](#), beliefs, and attitudes toward the offender is the main mental process involved in forgiving someone [Carone Jr and Barone \(2001\)](#), [Cioni and Health \(2007\)](#), [Phan et al. \(2025\)](#). This theory highlights the function of cognitive restructuring [Navidian and Bahari \(2014\)](#), in which people reevaluate how they view the offense and the perpetrator, which eventually results in a decrease in negative emotions like resentment and anger [McCullough et al. \(2013\)](#), [Navidian and Bahari \(2014\)](#). According to this viewpoint, forgiveness is a conscious decision that entails comprehending the circumstances and motivations of the offender [McCullough et al. \(2013\)](#), [Phan et al. \(2025\)](#), which can promote healing and reconciliation, rather than just an emotional reaction [Fehr et al. \(2010\)](#), [McCullough et al. \(2013\)](#).

Given the historical trauma connected to the Khmer Rouge regime [Fehr et al. \(2010\)](#), the cognitive theory of forgiveness is especially applicable in the context of Cambodia [Fehr et al. \(2010\)](#), [Menahem and Love \(2013\)](#). Individuals and communities impacted by the atrocities have found it extremely difficult to forgive because of the collective memory of violence and loss [Fehr et al. \(2010\)](#). Because cognitive restructuring encourages people to reframe their understanding of the past and the people involved, it can be extremely helpful in Cambodians processing their experiences and moving toward forgiveness [Baskin et al. \(2004\)](#), [Menahem and Love \(2013\)](#).

7. FORGIVENESS

Forgiveness in Cambodia is intricately linked to the country's collective trauma from the Khmer Rouge era [Hinton \(1997\)](#), [Pham et al. \(2019\)](#). Forgiveness is difficult for many people because they experience anger and betrayal (See [Figure 2](#)). On the other hand, healing may be facilitated by adopting the cognitive theory of forgiveness [McCullough \(2001\)](#), [North \(1987\)](#). People can start to change their viewpoints by actively attempting to comprehend the reasons behind the Khmer Rouge's actions and acknowledging the larger background of fear and ideology that supported the regime [Enright and Fitzgibbons \(2000\)](#), [Sells and Hargrave \(1998\)](#).

Figure 2

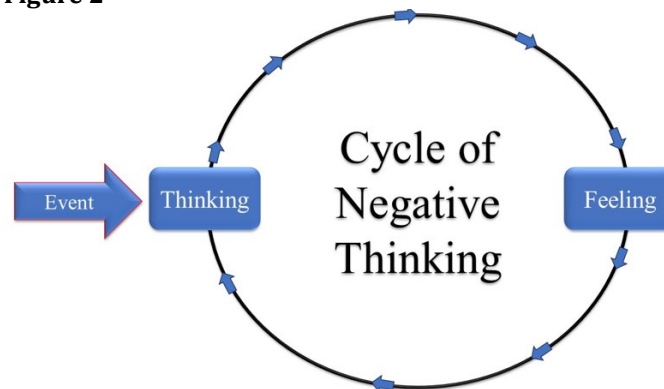


Figure 2

Figure 2 A self-reinforcing loop between thoughts and emotions is produced by the negative thought cycle. It starts with a pessimistic thought, like "I'm not good enough," which sets off a corresponding emotion, usually anxiety or sadness. The original idea is then strengthened by these feelings, which give it a more genuine and legitimate feel.

These negative thoughts can become more and more prevalent as the person ruminates on them, which can lower motivation and self-esteem [Kolubinski et al. \(2016\)](#). Basically, the more negative thoughts one thinks, the stronger the emotional reaction gets, which feeds the cycle even more and makes it harder to escape [Phillips and Hine \(2016\)](#).

In order to break this cycle, deliberate effort and interventions like cognitive-behavioral techniques are needed to confront negative thoughts and encourage more balanced thinking [Borton et al. \(2005\)](#). People can develop healthier emotional reactions and eventually change their thought patterns by breaking this cycle [Lyubomirsky and Nolen-Hoeksema \(1995\)](#).

In this context, forgiveness means making a deliberate choice to let go of grudges and work toward a more harmonious coexistence [Enright and Fitzgibbons \(2000\)](#), not forgetting or accepting the past [Enright and Fitzgibbons \(2000\)](#), [McCullough and Witvliet \(2002\)](#). This cognitive restructuring can be facilitated by programs that encourage communication and understanding between various groups [McCullough and Witvliet \(2002\)](#), giving people a safe space to share their experiences and stories [Clark \(2013\)](#), [Hope et al. \(2010\)](#). Cambodians can strive toward a communal healing process that pays tribute to the departed while clearing the path for a more inclusive and peaceful future by cultivating empathy and compassion [Deblinger et al. \(2016\)](#).

7.1. THE EFFECT OF NON-FORGIVENESS ON PERSONAL IDENTITY

A person's sense of self can be greatly impacted by unforgiveness, which can have a variety of psychological and emotional repercussions [Akhtar et al. \(2017\)](#), [Wohl et al. \(2008\)](#). I've listed the main effects and their relationship to personal identity below, along with a straightforward diagram that shows the relationships [Fisher and Exline \(2010\)](#).

Key Effects of Non-Forgiveness

1) **Resentment and Anger:**

Keeping grudges can result in persistent anger and resentment, which can influence a person's personality and social interactions [Tangney et al. \(1996\)](#).

2) **Stagnation in Personal Growth:**

Mental blocks brought on by unforgiveness can impede one's ability to grow as a person and advance in life [Ricciardi et al. \(2013\)](#).

3) **Altered Relationships:**

One's social identity may be shaped by relationships being impacted by an inability to forgive, which may result in conflict or isolation from others [Woodyatt and Wenzel \(2013\)](#).

4) **Self-Identity Crisis:**

Confusion about one's values and beliefs can result from a persistent battle with forgiveness, leading to a crisis in one's sense of self [Smart Richman and Leary \(2009\)](#).

5) Negative Self-Perception:

The emotional strain of unresolved problems can cause people to develop a negative self-image, which can impact how they view themselves in relation to other people [Khayyer et al. \(2019\)](#).

Non-forgiveness has consequences that go beyond fleeting emotions; it radically changes a person's identity and how they engage with the outside world [Khayyer et al. \(2019\)](#), [Rabinovich and Morton \(2016\)](#). An important first step toward recovery and personal growth may be acknowledging this influence [Rabinovich and Morton \(2016\)](#). This graphic illustrates how personal identity is impacted by unforgiveness [Figure 3](#).

Figure 3

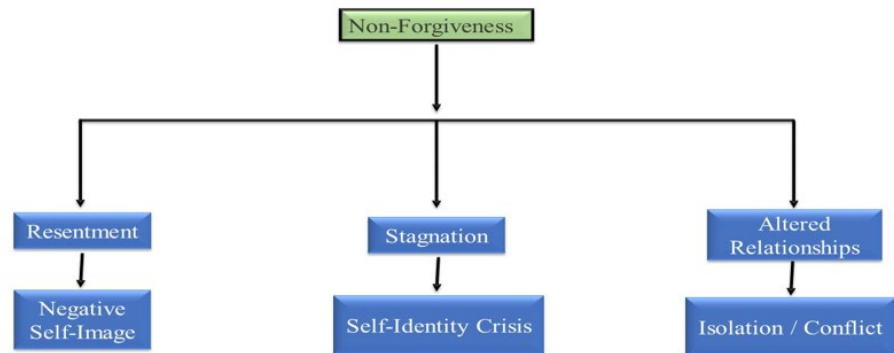


Figure 3

[Figure 3](#) Inability to forgive frequently results in long-standing resentment, which can skew one's perception of oneself and produce a negative self-image. People's perceptions of themselves might be shaped by their complaints, which could impede their personal development and ultimately result in an identity crisis. Relationships can be changed by this internal conflict, which can lead to miscommunications and a decrease in emotional intimacy.

Isolation can happen when resentment persists, leading people to distance themselves from support networks and cultivate confrontations in social situations [Creasy \(2025\)](#), [Meltzer and Musolf \(2002\)](#). In addition to perpetuating self-defeating ideas, this cycle makes it difficult to build positive relationships with other people [Baumeister and Scher \(1988\)](#), [Slusher and Anderson \(1989\)](#). Restoring relationships and self-identity while promoting a sense of peace and belonging requires addressing non-forgiveness [Paloutzian and Sagir \(2019\)](#), [Vandeveldt \(2013\)](#).

8. IMPACT OF ON HUMAN SECURITY

The psychological, social, political, and economic aspects of human security are all seriously threatened by unforgiveness [Akhtar et al. \(2017\)](#), [Amstutz \(2005\)](#). Psychologically, people who are dealing with unresolved grievances may suffer from increased anxiety, persistent stress, and even symptoms of PTSD, which can negatively impact their mental health in the long run [Everett \(2015\)](#), [Lewis et al.](#)

(2017). Non-forgiveness can cause social discord by severing ties within the community, undermining trust, and igniting disputes O'Shaughnessy (1967).

In terms of the economy, communities that suffer from a lack of forgiveness typically have fewer chances for cooperation and development, which exacerbates poverty and economic disparities Beech et al. (2021), Smith et al. (2022). Politically speaking, a lack of forgiveness can weaken justice, destabilize government, and incite violent conflicts, creating an atmosphere that is conducive to conflict and human insecurity Akintayo (2025), Van Laar et al. (2019). As a result, the consequences of not forgiving go well beyond personal experiences and seriously compromise the fundamental principles of human security Karremans and Van Lange (2008), Mihalache (2012).

Figure 4

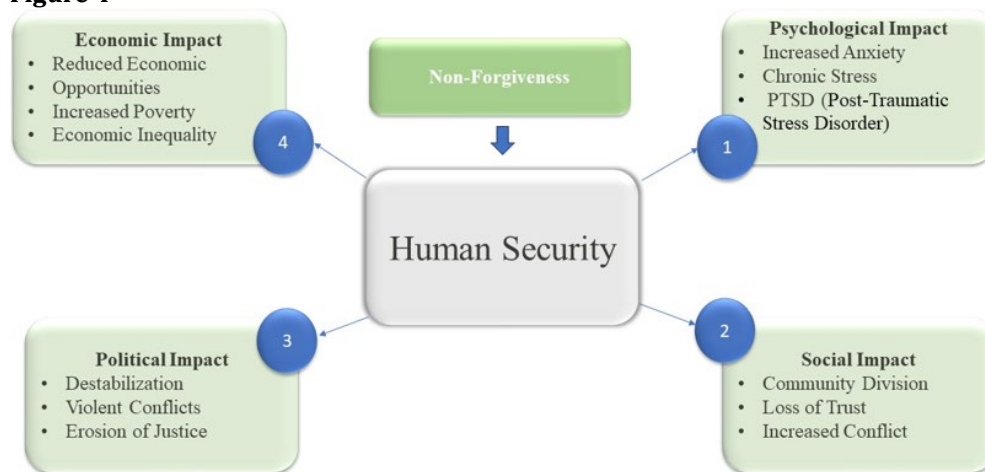


Figure 4 Diagram of Non-Forgiveness Impact on Human Security

Figure 4: This framework shows how a cycle of instability and underdevelopment in multiple domains can result from a lack of forgiveness, which has a profound impact on human security.

Because it prolongs psychological suffering, social unrest, economic instability, and political conflict, unforgiveness seriously compromises human security Leaning and Arie (2000), Poku et al. (2007). People who are unable or unwilling to forgive frequently suffer from increased anxiety and ongoing stress, which can result in mental health conditions like PTSD Minow (1998), Poku et al. (2007). In addition to having an impact on individuals, this psychological load also splits communities, undermining trust and creating a hostile atmosphere Abu-Ras et al. (2024), Ide et al. (2021).

Economically, areas characterized by a lack of forgiveness typically experience less cooperation and greater poverty because unresolved grievances obstruct social advancement and worsen inequality Versey (2023). Politically, a lack of forgiveness can cause violent conflicts and undermine governance systems, undermining justice and endangering human security Roelofs (2020). As a result, the consequences of not forgiving go well beyond interpersonal interactions and have an impact on the core structure of society Figure 5

Figure 5

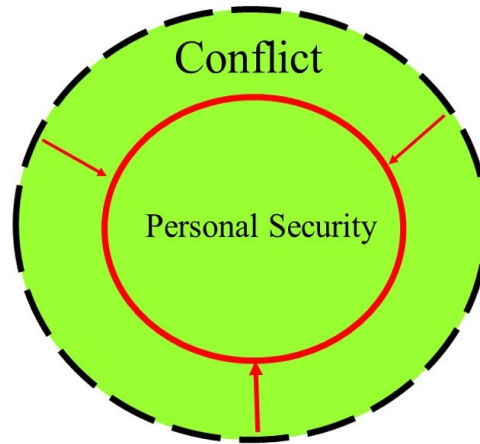


Figure 5 Human Security

Figure 5: Personal security is significantly impacted by conflict, which frequently leads to social, emotional, and physical vulnerabilities. It interferes with day-to-day activities and jeopardizes people's safety and wellbeing, which has a number of negative effects.

8.1. PHYSICAL SUSCEPTIBILITY

Direct physical harm, including injury or death, can result from conflicts [Duckworth and Iezzi \(2010\)](#), [Husky et al. \(2020\)](#). Violence is common in conflict areas, which leads to mass displacement and a sharp rise in death rates as people leave their homes in quest of safety [Cordell and Wolff \(2011\)](#), [DiPietro \(2019\)](#).

8.2. PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL EFFECTS

Conflict can have serious psychological effects [Emmons and King \(1988\)](#), [King and Emmons \(1990\)](#). People who are exposed to violence frequently suffer from mental health conditions like post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, and depression, which negatively impacts their general sense of security and mental health [Davies and Cummings \(1994\)](#), [Emmons and King \(1988\)](#), [King and Emmons \(1991\)](#). Living in a conflict zone can cause trauma that can affect a person's personal safety and the stability of society for a long time [Cummings and Davies \(2002\)](#), [Halperin and Pliskin \(2015\)](#).

8.3. DISRUPTION IN SOCIETY

Conflicts cause people to become isolated and distrustful of one another by upsetting social structures and community ties [Krause \(1991\)](#), [Vallacher et al. \(2013\)](#). In addition to impeding collective security measures, this disintegration of community ties can increase people's susceptibility to exploitation and violence [Somasundaram and Sivayokan \(2013\)](#), [Welch et al. \(2005\)](#).

8.4. ECONOMIC REPERCUSSIONS

Personal security is further threatened by the economic effects of conflict [Lohrmann \(2000\)](#), [Raleigh \(2011\)](#). Increased poverty, unemployment, and limited

access to essential services are all consequences of war and violence, and these factors make people more vulnerable to different security risks [Ajodo-Adebanjoko \(2019\)](#), [Fritsche et al. \(2011\)](#).

In conclusion, physical harm, psychological trauma, social disintegration, and unstable economies are all ways that conflict seriously compromises personal security [Coleman \(2003\)](#), [Pedersen \(2002\)](#). Conflict has a multifaceted impact that necessitates all-encompassing strategies to lessen its effects and give people their security back [Pérez de las Heras, B. \(2020\)](#).

9. FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION

The foundation for long-term viability and advancement in conflict resolution is forgiveness [Boehle \(2021\)](#), [Fincham et al. \(2004\)](#), [Lahiri and Padmakumari \(2025\)](#), [Phan et al. \(2025\)](#). It helps people and groups to put aside past grievances, which promotes healing and restores trust two things that are necessary for enduring peace [Figure 6](#).

Figure 6

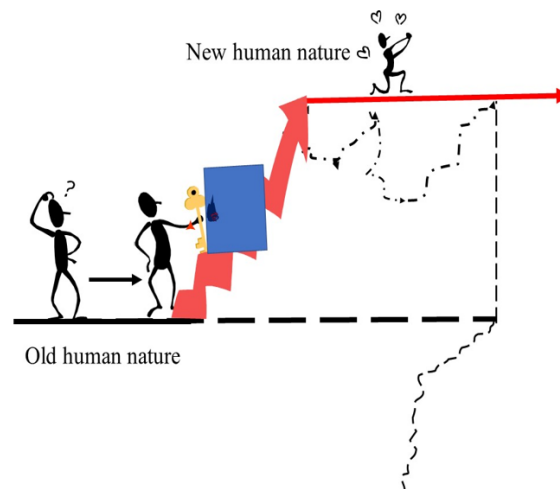


Figure 6

Figure 6 The foundation of any meaningful reconciliation is forgiveness. Healing is made possible when people decide to forgive, letting go of the weight of bitterness and rage. The goal of this act is to release oneself from the emotional burden that impedes personal development, not to justify past behavior.

Forgiveness is the cornerstone of long-term reconciliation because it heals and rebuilds trust between communities and individuals affected by conflict [Bigabo et al. \(2025\)](#), [Fehr and Gelfand \(2012\)](#). By allowing people to let go of their resentment and anger, forgiveness fosters emotional healing and makes it possible for people to understand and have meaningful conversations [Menahem and Love \(2013\)](#), [Murphy and mercy \(1988\)](#). This process is necessary to rebuild relationships and create a cooperative environment [Doz \(1996\)](#), [Li et al. \(2025\)](#).

Furthermore, forgiveness fosters a culture of compassion and empathy, both of which are essential for halting the spread of conflict and violence [Child et al. \(2019\)](#), [Sanders et al. \(2025\)](#). Communities grow stronger as trust is restored, becoming better able to handle problems together and cooperate to achieve shared objectives [Siegel \(2001\)](#), [Tjosvold \(1998\)](#). Essentially, forgiveness supports the social

cohesiveness required for enduring peace and stability in addition to aiding in individual healing [Robina-Ramírez et al. \(2022\)](#), [Siegel \(2001\)](#).

9.1. RECONCILIATION AND ESTABLISHING TRUST

By letting go of grudges and anger, forgiveness makes room for emotional recovery [Candelarie \(2023\)](#), [Kyprianides and Taylor \(2024\)](#). In conflict situations, where trauma frequently impedes attempts at reconciliation, this procedure is essential [Candelarie \(2023\)](#), [Clark \(2012\)](#). Rebuilding interpersonal relationships and community cohesion is facilitated by environments that foster forgiveness, according to studies [Thompson et al. \(2017\)](#), [Webb et al. \(2013\)](#).

9.2. AVOIDING CONFLICT RECURRENCE

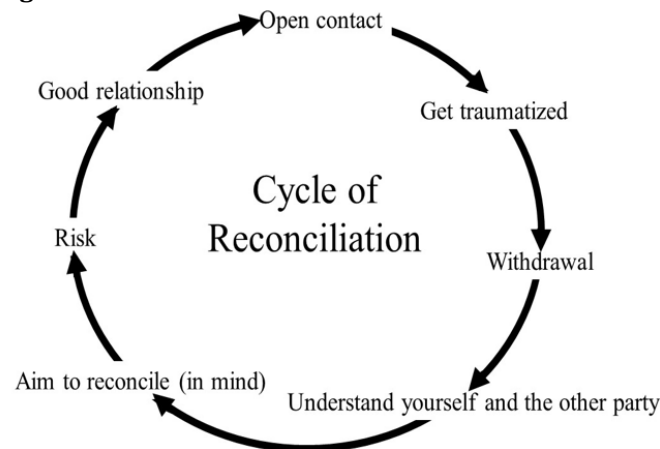
Societies can stop violence from happening again by addressing the underlying causes of disputes and encouraging forgiveness [Koyama \(2025\)](#), [Roy \(2018\)](#). In contrast to cycles of retaliation, forgiveness promotes communication and understanding, allowing disputing parties to participate in productive dialogue [Mross et al. \(2022\)](#), [Roy \(2018\)](#).

9.3. ENCOURAGING PEACE THAT IS SUSTAINABLE

Because it promotes a culture of empathy and compassion, forgiveness is associated with lasting peace [Bond \(2014\)](#), [Johnson et al. \(2012\)](#). It fosters cooperative problem-solving as opposed to confrontation and gives people the emotional fortitude they need to resist provocations [Bond \(2014\)](#), [Samuels \(2005\)](#). Communities can thus establish a more stable and peaceful atmosphere that supports growth and prosperity [Annan \(1998\)](#), [Bajaj and Chiu \(2009\)](#).

In conclusion, since forgiveness acts as a healing agent, deters future acts of violence, and promotes enduring peace, it is essential to the viability of conflict reconciliation initiatives [Annan \(1998\)](#), [De Coning \(2016\)](#).

Figure 7



Adapted from Mennonite Conciliation Service (2000) *Mediation and Facilitation Training Manual*, Pennsylvania, page 31-33

Figure 7

Figure 7: Reconciliation cycles frequently include a number of stages that aid in promoting mutual understanding and healing. A thorough explanation of this cycle

is provided below, including emotional phases and stressing the value of keeping lines of communication open at all times.

9.4. OPEN CONTACT

When resolving disputes, maintaining open communication is essential [Madalina \(2016\)](#), [McGrane et al. \(2005\)](#). It permits both sides to freely express their opinions, emotions, and life experiences [Mohr and Spekman \(1994\)](#). Effective communication provides a forum for expression and understanding, which is the cornerstone for resolving interpersonal conflicts [Schoeny and Warfield \(2000\)](#).

9.5. GET TRAUMATIZATION

Conflict-causing situations are frequently traumatic, which has an impact on mental health [Castro-Delgado et al. \(2025\)](#), [Lies et al. \(2019\)](#). People may feel more anxious, angry, or depressed during this stage [Spielberger and Reheiser \(2009\)](#). "People can manage their emotional reactions during conflicts if they understand the impact of trauma on relationships [Williamson et al. \(2020\)](#)."

9.6. WITHDRAWAL

People tend to isolate themselves in order to protect themselves after traumatic events [Bunce et al. \(1995\)](#), [Cruwys et al. \(2025\)](#). Avoidance and emotional detachment are hallmarks of this stage [Bonanno \(2004\)](#). "Withdrawal may serve as a temporary coping mechanism, but if prolonged, it can hinder the reconciliation process [Büttner et al., \(2024\)](#), [Williams et al. \(2017\)](#)."

9.7. UNDERSTAND YOURSELF AND OTHER PARTY

Reflecting on one's own emotions and responses is crucial [Dimaggio et al. \(2008\)](#), [Gerace et al. \(2017\)](#). People are able to understand their own feelings and recognize triggers thanks to this process [Ellis \(1991\)](#), [Lazarus \(2006\)](#). An emphasizes that "self-awareness is a pivotal step toward empathy, enabling individuals to recognize their feelings in relation to others [McNaughton \(2016\)](#), [Vago and Silbersweig \(2012\)](#)."

9.8. AIMING TO RECONCILE

Both parties can start working toward reconciliation as soon as a mutual understanding has been achieved ([Katona and Review, 2025](#); [Walter, 2024](#)). This stage entails addressing grievances, establishing healing intentions, and laying out a future strategy [Colbach et al. \(2018\)](#), [Kuchel \(2010\)](#). The goal of reconciliation shows commitment to restoring relationships, rather than simply resolving conflicts [Velez and Idrobo \(2024\)](#).

9.9. RISKING VULNERABILITY

Both sides must be prepared to take chances in order to accomplish true reconciliation [Jakimow \(2020\)](#). This entails showing vulnerability and possibly putting oneself in danger of more harm [Musto et al. \(2021\)](#). Risk-taking is essential to establishing trust in relationships because it enables sincere reconnection [Bandemer et al. \(2025\)](#).

9.10. BUILDING A GOOD RELATIONSHIP

Building a strong and wholesome relationship going forward is the ultimate aim of the reconciliation cycle [Madden \(2019\)](#). Mutual respect, shared experiences, and constant communication are required for this [Walsh \(2003\)](#). Healthy relationships are built on trust, respect, and a willingness to engage in continuous dialogue [Galway et al. \(2022\)](#).

10. METHODS AND MATERIALS

The strategies and resources employed in the review article are described in this section, with an emphasis on forgiveness, reconciliation, and conflict resolution, especially as seen through the prism of social psychology in relation to violent identity and group conflicts.

11. RESEARCH DESIGN

The review collects and examines literature from the fields of social psychology, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding using a methodical process. Peer-reviewed books, articles, and pertinent case studies are prioritized in order to guarantee a comprehensive analysis of current theories and practices.

12. RESULTS

The review article uses social psychology as a theoretical framework to highlight important findings about conflict resolution, forgiveness, and reconciliation processes in the Cambodian context [Kidron \(2021\)](#). The main findings from the examination of the body of current literature and case studies are listed below [Jeffery \(2015\)](#).

The Khmer Rouge regime's legacy from 1975 to 1979 continues to have a big impact on modern Cambodian culture [Caswell \(2010\)](#). The psychological wounds from this period still affect many Cambodians, making it difficult for them to participate in reconciliation efforts [Caswell \(2010\)](#), [Gottesman \(2003\)](#). Group identities have been molded by historical trauma, which has fueled cycles of mistrust and hostility between various social and ethnic groups [Cunha et al. \(2015\)](#), [Taum \(2005\)](#).

One of the most important aspects of the reconciliation process was forgiveness [Kalayjian and Paloutzian \(2009\)](#), [Tint \(2009\)](#). Even though many people say they want to forgive, trauma and resentment can make it difficult to do so [Kohen \(2009\)](#), [Strabbing \(2020\)](#). This emphasizes how important psychological support systems are to promoting both individual and group healing [Mullet et al. \(2021\)](#), [Palanski et al. \(2012\)](#).

Successful community-led projects show how effective localized approaches to reconciliation can be [Mwonzora, \(2025\)](#), [Schismenos et al. \(2022\)](#). Storytelling and personal experience-sharing programs have been shown to be effective in promoting empathy and removing barriers between opposing groups [Quinney \(2024\)](#). These programs, which encourage people to view themselves as belonging to a common community rather than being split by old grievances, frequently draw on the ideas of social identity theory [Hobson and Payne \(2022\)](#).

It has been demonstrated that having intergroup discussions helps to lessen prejudice and promote understanding among various ethnic groups [Stephan and](#)

Finlay (1999). In order to resolve identity-based conflicts, these programs give participants the opportunity to talk about their hopes, fears, and viewpoints Smith and Postmes (2011). The Contact Hypothesis is supported by empirical data, which indicates that constructive interactions between various groups reduce prejudices and foster a sense of belonging Brannon and Lin, (2021), Hussain and Jones (2021).

Positive results have been obtained from incorporating psychological interventions into peacebuilding initiatives Hertog (2024). Techniques like restorative justice procedures and trauma-informed care aid in addressing underlying psychological problems associated with previous violence Frasco et al. (2024). The chances of peace are greatly increased when practical reconciliation techniques are combined with emotional support Kelman (1998).

The results highlight the necessity of funding educational initiatives that foster mutual respect and understanding between various groups Schwoebel (2017). Furthermore, establishing safe forums for discussion and building community resilience are essential measures in the pursuit of enduring peace John (2021).

These findings show that a social psychology approach can offer important perspectives on Cambodian reconciliation, forgiveness, and conflict resolution Clancy and Hamber (2008). In order to foster cohesive identities and long-lasting peace, community-based approaches that prioritize the psychological and emotional aspects of healing must be implemented Opacin and Čehajić-Clancy (2025).

13. FINDINGS

The review article offers a number of important conclusions about the interrelated topics of forgiveness, reconciliation, and conflict resolution in Cambodia that are examined from the perspective of social psychology Kelman (1998), Levy (2014). Understanding and resolving the complexity of violent identity and group conflicts in the Cambodian context requires an awareness of these findings Gellman (2010), Levy (2014).

The Khmer Rouge regime's lasting effects are still evident in modern-day Cambodian society Croissant (2022), Szablewska (2022). Reconciliation efforts have been made more difficult by the widespread mistrust that this historical trauma has fostered among different ethnic groups Szablewska et al. (2019). Many people still struggle with unresolved loss and grief, which makes it difficult to forgive and make amends Szablewska et al. (2019).

It becomes clear that forgiveness is a complex process rather than a single objective Andrews (2000). The results show that although a lot of Cambodians want to forgive, this process is frequently hampered by emotional obstacles like betrayal and anger Hieronymi (2001). In order to move toward forgiveness, people must navigate these difficult emotions with the help of psychological interventions and community support Cavell, (2003), Satne (2016).

Reconciliation has been successfully promoted by neighborhood-based, community-driven projects Garbarino et al. (1998). Initiatives that use storytelling, group discussions, and reconciliation circles help people share their experiences and foster empathy and understanding Greenbaum (1982). These programs demonstrate how social identity theory can be effectively used to change group dynamics and advance a healing-focused collective identity Frehlich et al. (2023).

Prejudices and stereotypes between opposing groups are considerably diminished by structured intergroup interactions McCauley et al. (1980). Making

personal connections through conversation at casual get-togethers and neighborhood events is essential for changing attitudes and promoting reconciliation [Fedor and Sciences \(2014\)](#). Positive interactions can result in greater acceptance and harmony, according to the Contact Hypothesis, which is supported by the findings [Devine \(1989\)](#).

Reconciliation frameworks that incorporate trauma-informed psychological approaches address past emotional scars [Stroebe and Insko \(1989\)](#). Building resilience and advancing lasting peace require interventions that emphasize both individual and group healing [Brewer \(1999\)](#). This method acknowledges that in addition to structural reconciliation efforts, psychological needs must be met [Blum \(2004\)](#), [Filpisan et al. \(2011\)](#).

Reconciliation efforts have made progress, but resistance is still common [Tupper et al. \(2022\)](#). Open communication is hampered by elements like socioeconomic disparities, political manipulation, and deeply ingrained cultural stigmas [Williams and Jessee \(2024\)](#). The results show that these systemic problems need to be addressed alongside personal healing processes in order for reconciliation to be successful [Tupper et al. \(2022\)](#).

Reconciliation is greatly aided by educational initiatives that promote empathy and understanding [Robinson and Martin \(2016\)](#). According to the findings, incorporating peace education into curricula can support a culture of peace and counter historical narratives of division. Schools are crucial venues for instilling values of cooperation and tolerance [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada \(2015\)](#).

Finally, the results highlight the necessity of a multifaceted strategy that integrates political, psychological, and social tactics in peacebuilding [Strupinskiene \(2017\)](#). To achieve genuine and long-lasting reconciliation in Cambodia, it is imperative to concurrently address emotional, historical, and structural issues [Pankhurst \(1999\)](#).

The significance of social psychological frameworks in addressing violent identity conflicts is underscored by these findings, which outline the complex terrain of conflict resolution, forgiveness, and reconciliation in Cambodia [Wotherspoon and Milne \(2021\)](#). The revelations highlight the need for cooperative, neighborhood-based initiatives to support recovery and long-term peace in the area [Watkins and Shulman \(2015\)](#).

14. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

To ensure sensitivity, respect, and integrity throughout the research process, a number of ethical considerations were crucial when conducting the review article on conflict resolution, forgiveness, and reconciliation in the context of Cambodia. These moral considerations highlight a dedication to carrying out responsible, respectful research that respects the lived experiences of people impacted by conflict. The review seeks to positively impact Cambodia's conversation on conflict resolution, forgiveness, and reconciliation by emphasizing cultural sensitivity, consent, dignity, and confidentiality.

15. DISCUSSION

Cambodian society today is significantly shaped by the Khmer Rouge regime's lasting legacy [De Walque \(2006\)](#). The results demonstrate how the historical trauma that many people have endured makes the process of reconciliation more difficult

Brounéus (2009). This is consistent with theories of collective memory, which posit that cycles of violence and mistrust can be sustained by past atrocities Meral (2012). Creating successful interventions that address the structural as well as emotional aspects of conflict requires an understanding of this historical context Shapiro (2010).

The review emphasizes how forgiveness is a complicated, continuous process that is impacted by social, psychological, and emotional factors rather than just being a final goal Brady et al. (2023). This viewpoint is consistent with Brady et al. (2023), Enright et al. (2016) research, which contends that forgiveness entails a number of stages that people go through at their own pace Lahiri and Padmakumari (2025). Therefore, support networks, such as neighborhood initiatives and mental health services, can be extremely helpful in easing this process Molinero et al. (2024). To help people reconcile their feelings with their desire for peace, it is essential to recognize that forgiveness does not mean endorsing past behavior Fincham (2022).

Initiatives for reconciliation led by the community have become essential to promoting healing and restoring confidence Freedman (2018). Drawing on the Contact Hypothesis, the results show that organized intergroup communication fosters empathy, lessens discrimination, and builds a common identity McCullough et al. (2013). Localized strategies that emphasize storytelling and common experiences enable people to relate to one another personally, which is essential for overcoming long-standing differences McCullough et al. (2013). This method emphasizes the value of fostering a sense of collective identity, which is also consistent with social identity theory McCullough et al. (2013), Ordóñez-Carabaño and Prieto-Ursúa (2025).

Addressing trauma requires integrating psychological frameworks into peacebuilding tactics Wade and Tittler (2021). The results affirm that emotional healing is a necessary condition for long-lasting peace and support the inclusion of trauma-informed care in efforts at reconciliation Staub (2006). In order to promote long-term stability, psychological interventions should not only focus on healing individuals but also on empowering communities through resilience building Hewstone et al. (2014).

Significant obstacles still exist in spite of the encouraging results, such as socioeconomic inequality and political factors that keep dividing people Hewstone et al. (2014). This emphasizes the need for a comprehensive strategy that takes into account communities' sociopolitical and psychological components Swart et al. (2011). To remove obstacles to peace, it is essential to make sure that grassroots initiatives are backed by more significant structural adjustments Park (2012).

The conclusions drawn from this review have broad ramifications for practitioners and policymakers working on peacebuilding in Cambodia Stathi et al. (2017). It is crucial to implement strategies that put an emphasis on education, intergroup contact, and trauma recovery Pincus (2024). The path to genuine reconciliation can be paved by funding community-based initiatives that foster communication, comprehension, and group healing Nguyen and Kenemore (2022).

16. LIMITATIONS

The social psychology-based review article on conflict resolution, forgiveness, and reconciliation in Cambodia offers insightful information, but it also has inherent

drawbacks. In order to properly frame the results and direct future research, it is imperative to acknowledge these limitations.

Understanding these restrictions is crucial to placing the review's conclusions in the larger context of forgiveness, reconciliation, and conflict resolution. To fill these knowledge gaps and improve the efficacy of peacebuilding initiatives in Cambodia, future studies should incorporate a variety of approaches, local viewpoints, and changing cultural contexts.

17. CONCLUSION

The review paper on forgiveness, reconciliation, and conflict resolution in the Cambodian context emphasizes how social psychology, community dynamics, and historical trauma interact intricately to influence peacebuilding initiatives [Pham et al. \(2019\)](#). Drawing on a diverse body of literature, several key conclusions emerge that illuminate pathways toward sustainable reconciliation in a society deeply affected by its past [Dicklitch and Malik \(2010\)](#).

In Cambodia, social interactions and relationships are still influenced by the Khmer Rouge's legacy [De Walque \(2006\)](#). Developing successful reconciliation strategies requires an understanding of how this historical trauma affects current dynamics. This acknowledgement is in line with [Kaiser et al. \(2015\)](#) research, which highlights the importance of resolving past grievances in order to promote true forgiveness and healing [Tint \(2009\)](#), [Worthington and Aten \(2010\)](#).

It is emphasized that forgiveness is an essential step in reconciliation and that it takes time, emotional effort, and support from the community [Bar-Tal \(2009\)](#). The results confirm that forgiveness is a complicated, individual experience that calls for social and psychological support rather than a straightforward path [Enright and Fitzgibbons \(2015\)](#), [Staub \(2006\)](#). Fostering environments that promote forgiveness can greatly aid in both individual and group healing, as stated by [Enright and Fitzgibbons \(2015\)](#).

Initiatives led by the community are essential for fostering empathy and understanding between opposing groups [Stephan and Finlay \(1999\)](#). According to Leveraging the Contact Hypothesis, organized intergroup activities, like storytelling projects and dialogue sessions, can promote constructive relationships and change group identities [White et al. \(2015\)](#). Rebuilding trust and fostering social cohesion depend heavily on these neighborhood initiatives [LaTendresse \(2000\)](#).

Addressing the emotional and mental health needs of those impacted by conflict requires the integration of psychological frameworks into peacebuilding efforts [Hertog and Psychology \(2024\)](#). According to [Bloom \(2013\)](#), trauma-informed care and resilience-building techniques can support efforts at reconciliation, guaranteeing that emotional healing takes place concurrently with structural changes [Clancy and Hamber \(2008\)](#), [Frasco et al. \(2024\)](#). The results highlight the need for a multifaceted strategy that integrates political, social, and psychological tactics in peacebuilding [Hertog and Psychology \(2024\)](#). This review offers a thorough summary, but it also points out drawbacks, including the need for additional qualitative data and possible biases in the literature selection. Future studies that fill in these gaps will improve our knowledge of conflict resolution and offer a more profound understanding of people's real-life experiences in Cambodia.

In conclusion, the examination of forgiveness, reconciliation, and conflict resolution in the Cambodian context emphasizes the value of comprehending social and historical dynamics while encouraging psychological support and community involvement. In order to address the problems of violent identity conflicts in

Cambodia, stakeholders can endeavor to create a more harmonious and cohesive society by utilizing social psychology insights and concentrating on locally relevant strategies.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None.

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