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Psychological Correlates of Public Support for Reconciliation: The Israeli-Jordanian Case

Ifat Maoz

Hebrew University of Jerusalem, msifat@gmail.com

Jacob Shamir

Hebrew University of Jerusalem, jshamir@mscc.huji.ac.il

Gadi Wolfsfeld

Hebrew University of Jerusalem, msgadi@huji.ac.il

Shira Dvir

Hebrew University of Jerusalem

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Abstract

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Author Bio(s)

Ifat Maoz, Associate Professor in the Department of Communication, has been a visiting scholar at the Psychology Department, Stanford University and at the Solomon Asch Center for Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict, University of Pennsylvania. Her studies on cognitive-perceptual mechanisms in conflict and negotiation, media effects and media perception in conflict, psychological bases of political preferences, and communication processes in conflict resolution have been published in academic journals including Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics, Journal of Peace Research, Journal of Conflict Resolution, Negotiation Journal and the Journal of Social Issues. Email: msifat@mssc.huji.ac.il

Jacob Shamir is Associate Professor in the Department of Communication and Journalism and senior research fellow in the Harry S. Truman Institute for the Advancement of Peace at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Since July 2000 he has co-directed, together with Khalil Shikaki, the Joint Israeli-Palestinian Poll (JIPP). His research interests include public opinion, political communication, and conflict resolution. His research has been published in international journals such as Communication Research, Journal of Peace Research, Political Communication, Political Psychology, and Public Opinion Quarterly. His recent books are *The Anatomy of Public Opinion* (University of Michigan Press, 2000, with Michal Shamir) and *Palestinian and Israeli Public Opinion: The Public Imperative in the Second Intifada* (Indiana University Press, forthcoming, 2009, with Khalil Shikaki). Email: jshamir@mssc.huji.ac.il

Gadi Wolfsfeld holds the Danny Arnold Chair in Communication and has a joint appointment in Political Science and Communication at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. He has served as chair of the Political Communication section of the American Political Science Association and as chair of the Department of Communication at Hebrew University. His major research interests center on the role of the news media in political conflicts and in peace processes. Professor Wolfsfeld's most recent book was published by Cambridge University Press and is entitled *Media and the Path to Peace*. Email: msgadi@huji.ac.il

Shira Dvir is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Communication, Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Her main research interests are public opinion and the psychological effects of media usage. Email: sdvir@mssc.huji.ac.il

**PSYCHOLOGICAL CORRELATES OF PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR
RECONCILIATION: THE ISRAELI-JORDANIAN CASE**

Ifat Maoz, Jacob Shamir, Gadi Wolfsfeld and Shira Dvir

Abstract

This study examines psychological correlates of Jewish-Israeli support for post-conflict political reconciliation with Jordan. An analysis of data from a public opinion survey conducted with a representative sample of Israeli-Jews (n=1000) indicated that appraisal of outgroup collective threat, as well as hatred and (lack of) sympathy towards Jordanians, predicted Jewish-Israeli decreased support for peaceful reconciliation with Jordan. Our findings point to the crucial role of threat perceptions in hindering post-conflict reconciliation and to the importance of sympathy towards the other side in increasing support for such reconciliation.

Introduction

Recent work acknowledges the importance of public support for the ability of leaders to implement steps of post-conflict reconciliation (Bar-Tal, 2000). However, scarce attention is paid to systematic empirical investigation of the psychological bases of such support. This study redresses this omission by examining psychological factors that predict Jewish-Israeli public support for reconciliation with Jordan following the signing of a peace treaty between the two countries. Post-conflict situations are often characterized by the persistence of deeply-set attitudes of animosity towards the other side that can block support for peaceful reconciliation. In this study we focus on three indicators of such animosity. One is the extent to which citizens perceive their country/entity as being threatened by the other side; this will be referred to herein as appraisal of outgroup collective threat. The two other components relate to peoples' intergroup emotions, including the extent of hatred and of sympathy citizens feel towards the other side. In this study, based on analysis of data collected in a survey of Jewish-Israeli public opinion (n=1000), we examine whether attitudes of animosity still persist in the post-conflict situation between Israelis and Jordanians and the extent to which these attitudes function as psychological barriers to public support for peaceful reconciliation between the two countries.

Scientific Background

Resolving protracted conflicts is a complex, time-consuming challenge. Even when mutual agreements are signed, the resulting post-conflict situations still require a long and gradual reconciliation process in which the parties build cooperative relations and a stable

peace between them (Bar-On, 2008; Bar-Tal, 2001; Kelman, 1999; Lederach, 1998). The examples of peace making in Northern Ireland (Arthur, 1999) and the South African Truth and reconciliation process (Hamber, 1998) demonstrate that signing official agreements between leaders is not enough. These have to be accompanied by dynamics of social, psychological and structural change at the both at the level of policy-makers and the public on both sides so that stable peace can be reached (Bar-On, 1997; Bar-Siman-Tov, 2004). Unless the general public in each country support reconciliation, peace remains tentative and unstable (Bar-Siman-Tov, 2004).

Lederach (1998) has noted that the reconciliation process requires implementation of formal policies that forge relations between former rivals, create cooperative links and stabilize peaceful relationships. These steps towards political reconciliation include developing joint institutions and organizations, free and open trade, joint economic ventures, and free and open tourism, as well as exchanging cultural products and information in various areas. However, such policies often seem difficult to achieve in the aftermath of protracted ethnic conflict. The difficulties are not only related to the lack of agreement or cooperation between policymakers, but are also to the lack of public support on each side for embarking on a route of cooperation with the other side.

Threat appraisal has been identified as an important factor determining policy preferences in situations of conflict or increased intergroup tension and violence. Societies involved in intractable conflicts are dominated by an orientation towards threat (Bar-Tal, 2001). Whilst an orientation of threat may be functional for coping with the stressful, highly uncertain and demanding situation of warfare, when it is maintained in post-conflict situations, it serves as a barrier to progress in the peace process via reconciliation and cooperation with the other side (Kelman, 1999).

As in similar intractable conflicts to the ongoing Israeli-Arab conflict, orientations of outgroup threat are a dominant force in maintaining and escalating the conflict. In the Israeli-Palestinian context, Jewish-Israeli outgroup threat perception was found to be associated with less conciliatory and less compromising positions towards Palestinians (Bar-Tal, 2001). Nevertheless, intergroup emotions of hatred and sympathy have also been found to contribute (to a smaller but still independent degree) to the willingness of citizens to make compromises (Maoz and McCauley, 2005).

There are other studies that also emphasize the importance of dealing with emotions in attempts at conflict resolution. This literature describes how negative and widely shared emotions towards the other side that are usually dominant in societies involved in conflict (such as anger, fear and hatred) can also remain dominant in post-conflict situations and thus become a barrier to reconciliation and cooperation (Bar-On, 1997, 2008; Bar-Tal, 2001, 2007; Staub, 1990). On the other hand, equally crucial is the development of positive emotions in post-conflict situations, such as hope (Bar-Tal, 2001), caring, sensitivity and empathy to the members of the other group (Bar-On, 2008; Kelman, 1999). Positive emotional orientations towards the other side are described as necessary for achieving and maintaining reconciliation and cooperation between former enemies (Kelman, 1999).

In this study we intend to expand this line of research and look at how well these psychological variables empirically explain public attitudes towards reconciliation during the more advanced stages of a peace process. Understanding the psychological underpinnings of support for reconciliation may be even more important after a formal

agreement has been signed (Kelman, 1999). Once some of the more objective reasons for hostility have been removed, leaders need to place a greater emphasis on attitudinal barriers.

Jordan and Israel

The signing of the Israel-Jordan peace accord in 1994 represented a significant breakthrough in the ongoing Middle East conflict. Israelis have traditionally harbored considerably less hostility towards Jordan than towards the Palestinians. King Hussein was considered a relatively moderate Arab leader by most Israelis and the two countries often carried out clandestine forms of cooperation long before they were engaged in a formal peace process. Jordan's willingness to come to a formal agreement with Israel was directly related to the early stages of the Oslo peace process when it seemed that peace might also be achieved with the Palestinians.

There was a great deal of optimism in the air when the treaty itself was signed at a ceremony attended by Prime Minister Rabin, King Hussein, and President Clinton. It is interesting that the wording of the treaty refers specifically to the need to address the subjective sources of hostility among the two publics: "Bearing in mind the importance of maintaining and strengthening peace based on freedom, equality, justice and respect for fundamental human rights, thereby overcoming psychological barriers and promoting human dignity"; "Desiring to develop friendly relations and co-operation between them in accordance with the principles of international law governing international relations in time of peace" (Treaty of Peace between the State of Israel and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, October 26, 1994).

Unfortunately, the Oslo peace process ended in failure and this had a major impact on the relations between the two countries (Scham and Lucas, 1998; Wolfsfeld, 2002). After the eruption of the second Intifada, Jordan recalled its ambassador for several years and relations remain strained. Nevertheless, the leaders of both countries have since continued to attempt to maintain and even advance the peace and peace building practices between the sides.

Dynamics of Asymmetric Threat

Several studies have examined Jordanian attitudes towards Israel and towards normalization and reconciliation with it and have found, in most cases, that these attitudes are quite negative (Kornbluth, 2002; Scham and Lucas, 1998). It is important to point out, however, that the level of hostility in Israel towards Jordan was not perceived to be as acute as the degree of animosity felt in Jordan towards Israel. The Israeli elites and general publics have, some argue, been generally more supportive of "normalizing" relations between the two countries than their Jordanian counterparts (Scham and Lucas, 1998; Wolfsfeld, Alimi and Kaliani, 2008). A major reason for this difference is the asymmetrical strategic balance between the two countries: Jordan does not represent a serious security threat to Israel, but many (if not most) Jordanians consider Israel a serious threat to the

region. Once the peace treaty was signed and the Israeli need for recognition and security were addressed, Jordan was not considered a threat by most Israelis. This is not the case for Jordan, which has experienced severe economic and security issues since the signing of the peace treaty in 1994, especially following the collapse of the Oslo process and the reemergence of Israeli-Palestinian violence in September 2000 (Wolfsfeld *et al.*, 2008).

Little research attention has been dedicated, however, to studying, in this context of asymmetrical strategic relations, the attitudes of Israeli-Jews towards Jordan. The aim of our study is to fill this gap and to investigate Jewish-Israeli attitudes towards Jordanians and examine the effect of these attitudes on Jewish-Israeli support for post-conflict reconciliation with Jordan.

Intergroup Attitudes: Threat Appraisal and Emotions

The research will focus on two types of intergroup attitudes that are expected to predict a willingness for peaceful reconciliation, i.e. appraisal of outgroup collective threat and intergroup emotions. This distinction is important because the appraisal of outgroup collective threat can be seen, to some extent, as a more cognitive or analytical type of construct. It is a more “macro” construct that mostly refers to peoples’ assessments of how much their country/entity is under threat from the outgroup, both in terms of the outgroup’s perceived destructive intentions towards one’s own group and in terms of the outgroup’s perceived ability to cause serious damage. Intergroup emotions, on the other hand, focus more at the level of how people feel towards the outgroup, including both negative emotions (such as hate and anger) and positive ones (such as sympathy).

We are not suggesting, of course, that it is possible to completely separate an individual’s appraisal of collective outgroup threat from his/her personal feelings. Indeed, the level of hatred one feels towards the outgroup is very likely to be related to one’s appraisal of collective threat from the outgroup. It is nevertheless worthwhile to make this distinction because negative emotions towards a former enemy are likely to continue long after any serious outgroup threat has been removed. In addition, the path for reducing a sense of collective threat from the outgroup may run in a very different direction from the path towards reducing negative emotions (or increasing positive emotions) towards the other side.

We adopt in this research a relatively broad approach to the notion of appraisal of outgroup collective threat that relates specifically to Jordanian threat but also to the more general Israeli perception of threat from all Arab countries and entities. Our assumption was that, in addition to the appraisal of specific collective threat from Jordan, the general appraisal of Arab collective threat to Israel was likely to affect respondents’ overall willingness to support reconciliation with Jordan. Hence, we used in this study two measures of Jewish-Israeli appraisal of outgroup collective threat: (1) appraisal of Jordanian Collective Threat – relating to specific threat from Jordan, and (2) appraisal of Arab Collective Threat (relating to the more general perception of Arab countries and entities posing a threat to Israel and including items such as: “I am concerned that in the coming years, Arab terror against Israel will only further increase”).

Psychological Correlates of Public Support

This study also focuses on two categories of intergroup emotions: hatred and sympathy. Feeling of hatred towards former enemies is probably the easiest emotion to understand in a conflict context, not least because it is so basic and personal. The notion of sympathy, on the other hand, is somewhat more complex, for it refers to one's ability to understand the other side while being positively oriented towards it. This variable might be especially important to examine when looking at an asymmetrical set of relations such as those that exist between Israel and Jordan. In this context of post-conflict relations, it is important to determine the extent to which Israeli-Jews feel sympathy towards Jordanians.

Jewish-Israeli Post-Conflict Animosity toward Jordan

Appraisal of outgroup collective threat, hatred towards the outgroup and sympathy toward it all relate to the level of animosity people hold towards the other side. Appraisal of high collective threat from the outgroup, together with high hatred and low sympathy towards the outgroup, indicate a high level of animosity towards this outgroup. Appraisal of low collective threat from the outgroup, together with low hatred and high sympathy towards this outgroup, indicate a low level of animosity towards the outgroup. Between these two extremes there are several combinations that indicate intermediate animosity. While high animosity towards the outgroup clearly exists in conflict situations and has been shown to predict (decreased) readiness for conflict resolution, the extent and effect of animosity in post-conflict situations are less clear. Post-conflict situations often signify a change on the political and formal level, but not necessarily a transformation in the deeper societal-psychological level of deeply-set negative beliefs and emotions towards the other side (Kelman, 1999). The other side tends to still be seen as threatening to some extent, and is hated and not sympathized with, even after peace agreements have been reached. This may constitute a major barrier to people's readiness for reconciliation.

Given the history of the conflict between Israel and the Arab world and the past rivalry with Jordan we assumed that Israeli-Jews would still hold, to some extent, attitudes of animosity towards Jordan and expected that these attitudes would influence the readiness of Israeli-Jews for peaceful reconciliation with Jordan.

Predicting Support for Peaceful Reconciliation

Support for peaceful reconciliation requires a deep and significant actual psychological and societal change that includes not only normalization in different domains (such as economics, security, etc.), but also a deeper transformation of the former relations of conflict, hatred and distrust to becoming relations of cooperation and trust (Lederach, 1998). Support for such change may be strongly hindered by perceptions and feelings of animosity towards the other side that often still powerfully persist even after the phase of acute conflict has formally ended (Bar-Tal, 2001). Thus, it can be expected that the three components of animosity will each significantly contribute to explaining decreased Jewish-Israeli support for peaceful reconciliation in the post-conflict situation with Jordan.

Overview of Study

The aim of our study was to explore psychological correlates of public support for reconciliation focusing on Jewish-Israeli public opinion regarding Israeli-Jordanian relations. Thus the criterion measures for our study assessed Jewish-Israeli support for a number of specific policies of Israeli-Jordanian reconciliation. These included items about open borders between Israel and Jordan, the creation of joint economic institutions, and anti-incitement policies. As predictors of support for political reconciliation we included three measures of the extent of Jewish-Israeli attitudes of animosity towards Jordan: a measure of appraisal of Arab collective threat, a measure of appraisal of Jordanian collective threat, and measures of Jewish-Israeli hatred and sympathy towards Jordanians. We also included demographic measures.

Method

Telephone interviews ($n = 1000$) were conducted by the Machshov Research Institute with a representative sample of adult Israeli-Jews in May 2004. The survey included one set of items measuring the respondents' attitudes toward various reconciliation policies in Israeli-Jordanian relations and another set of items that assessed the respondents' feelings toward and beliefs about Jordanians and about Arabs. In addition, demographic information was obtained. The questionnaire was administered in Hebrew. The items analyzed in this study are described in more detail below.

Support for Reconciliation

Support for political reconciliation with Jordan was measured by a "Support for Reconciliation Scale". This scale was adapted to the Israeli-Jordanian context from a similar scale constructed by Shamir and Shikaki (2002) in the context of Israeli-Palestinian relations. Items in this scale describe a range of steps, often mentioned in reconciliation literature as prerequisites for successful reconciliation following protracted conflicts (Lederach, 1998). The steps include normalization measures such as open borders, economic cooperation, and political cooperation, and transformative steps intended to change the national ethos, such as fundamental modifications in the school curriculum (Shamir and Shikaki, 2002). The Reconciliation Scale used in our study concentrates on the policy level and thus includes an adaptation of the four items that measure attitudes towards formal policies of reconciliation from the Shamir and Shikaki (2002) scale. Specifically, the scale used in our study included the five following reconciliation measures items: "Open Borders between Israel and Jordan so there will be a free passage of people and merchandise", "Create joint economic institutions and joint economic ventures", "Create joint political institutions", "Introduce into the school curriculum the notion of giving up the aspirations to appropriate parts of the 'homeland' that are under Palestinian control", and "Take legal measures against those expressing incitement towards Jordan".

Psychological Correlates of Public Support

Respondents were asked to rate support of each item on a 4-point bipolar scale ranging from “strongly object” (1) to “strongly support” (4).

Psychological Predictors: Intergroup Attitudes of Animosity

Our indicators of the level of animosity towards Jordan included two measures of appraisal of out group collective threat (“Appraisal of Arab Collective Threat Scale” and “Appraisal of Jordanian Collective Threat Scale”) and two measures of emotions towards Jordanians (“Hatred towards Jordanians Scale” and “Sympathy towards Jordanians Scale”) that were derived from Maoz and McCauley (2005), and adapted to the Jordanian post-conflict context. Each of these measures was comprised of several items that were rated on a 5-point bi-polar scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). However, different labels appeared in the second item in the Appraisal of Jordanian Threat Scale (see below). Responses to these items were averaged for each respondent to form the scales, where higher scores mean higher agreement with the designated intergroup attitude. Below we describe the different measures in more detail.

Appraisal of Outgroup Collective Threat

Appraisal of outgroup collective threat appraisal was assessed by two measures: (1) the “Appraisal of Arab Collective Threat Scale” that included the items: “I am concerned that in the coming years, Arab terror against Israel will only further increase” “Arabs understand only the language of power” “Peace is important to Arabs as it is to Jews” (reversed); “and “Arabs hate Jews”. (2) The “Appraisal of Jordanian Collective Threat Scale” that included the items: “If a war will break out between Israel and the Arab states, Jordan will also join the war”; “To which direction, in your opinion, will Israeli-Jordanian relations proceed in the coming years?” (1= get much better, 2= get better, 3= stay as they are, 4= get worse, 5= get much worse).

Emotions towards Jordanians

Emotions towards Jordanians were assessed by two scales. The “Hatred Scale” (1) included the items: “I feel hate towards Jordanians” and “I feel anger toward Jordanians”. The “Sympathy Scale” (2) included the items: “I feel liking toward Jordanians”, and “I feel understanding toward Jordanians”. Table 2 (at end of article) presents the Cronbach alphas, means and standard deviations of each of the above scales as well as their inter-correlations.

Demographic Questions

In addition, respondents were also presented with demographic questions. These included questions about gender and age of the respondent, degree of religiosity, number of years of education and economic status (level of family monthly expenditures).

Results

Our results section includes three parts. First, we present the descriptive data regarding Jewish-Israeli support for reconciliation with Jordan. Second, we describe our findings regarding the extent of Jewish-Israeli post-conflict attitudes of animosity towards Jordan. Finally, we present the regression model predicting Jewish-Israeli support for peaceful reconciliation with Jordan.

Support for the Different Reconciliation Policies

Means and standard deviations of support for the reconciliation items appear in Table 1 (at end of article). The item that Israeli-Jews view as the most acceptable is “Joint Economic Institutions” ($M = 2.98$ and percentage of support: 77.4 %). The least acceptable items are “Joint Political Institutions” and “Curriculum Change” (M 's = 2.54 and 2.33 respectively, percentages of support: 54.4% and 44% respectively). In between these two poles we find the “Open Borders” and “Legal Measures against Incitement” items (M 's: 2.65 and 2.68 respectively, percentage of support: 61% and 60% respectively). It is interesting though not surprising to see that the two items that meet the highest resistance are the ones that require the most meaningful change. Joint political institutions require political cooperation that is probably considered as involving a more significant structural change than economic cooperation. Curriculum change requires a deep transformation of attitudes and aspirations that are a focal part of the Jewish-Israeli national ethos (Bar-Tal, 2000), regarding the right of Jews to the “Greater land of Israel” (Eretz Israel Hashlema).

The Support for Reconciliation Scale

A scale was created of these five items ($M = 2.64$; $SD = .68$, $Alpha\ Cronbach = .78$). The inter-correlations of these items ranged from .25 to .57 the median inter-item correlation being .43. Responses to these items were averaged for each respondent to form the Support for Reconciliation Scale, in which higher scores mean higher support for reconciliation (see Table 1, end of article).

Post-conflict Attitudes of Animosity

Means and standard deviations of ratings of animosity attitudes appear in Table 2. These data indicate that in the post-conflict situation Israeli-Jews hold mostly low attitudes of animosity towards Jordanians and thus appraise Jordanian collective threat as low ($M = 2.65$) and express very low hatred towards Jordanians ($M = 1.67$). However, Israeli-Jews

Psychological Correlates of Public Support

also indicated low sympathy towards Jordanians ($M = 2.38$). Jewish-Israeli general appraisal of “Arab threat” was found to be higher than their appraisal of Jordanian threat, but was still quite low ($M = 3.59$). How do these Jewish-Israeli attitudes of low appraisal of outgroup collective threat, low hatred but also low sympathy towards Jordanians influence support for political reconciliation with Jordan? The next section presents our findings regarding this question (see Table 2, end of article).

Predicting Support for Reconciliation

The regression model using the psychological measures of animosity attitudes to predict the Support for Reconciliation Scale produced a statistically significant $R^2 = .27$, $F(4, 995) = 92.9$, $p < .001$. Appraisal of Arab Collective Threat was the strongest predictor of Support for Reconciliation ($\beta = -.30$, $p = .001$). Thus, respondents with lower scores on this measure, showed a significantly increased support for reconciliation, $R^2 = .18$, $F(1, 998) = 218.9$, $p < .001$. The measures of feelings towards Jordanians each made an independent, added, lower but significant contribution to predicting support for reconciliation. Thus, respondents with lower scores on the Hatred Scale ($\beta = -.19$, $p < .001$), and higher scores on the Sympathy Scale ($\beta = .18$, $p < .001$) showed increased support for reconciliation with a significant R^2 change for the addition of the Hatred scale predictor over appraisal of Arab Collective Threat, R^2 change = .04, $F(1, 997) = 52.9$, $p < .001$, and a significant R^2 change for the addition of the Sympathy Scale over the Appraisal of Arab Collective Threat Scale and the Hatred Scale, R^2 change = .04, $F(1, 996) = 52.7$, $p < .001$. The weakest (but still significant) predictor was Appraisal of Jordanian Collective Threat. Respondents with lower scores on this measure, ($\beta = -.11$, $p < .001$) showed increased support for political reconciliation with a significant R^2 change for its addition over the three other measures, R^2 change = .01, $F(1, 995) = 15.9$, $p < .001$.

Thus, in line with our hypothesis the results indicate that attitudes of animosity towards the Jordanians: Appraisal of outgroup collective threat, hatred and (low) sympathy towards Jordanians significantly predict decreased Jewish-Israeli support for peaceful reconciliation with Jordan, with each of these measures providing an independent significant contribution to the prediction. Interestingly, the appraisal of specific threat from Jordan itself produced the lowest contribution to the prediction. Possible explanations for this finding will be presented in the discussion section.

Demographic Measures and Support for Political Reconciliation

The addition of demographic variables to our prediction model indicated that most of these measures (i.e. religiosity, ethnicity, gender and level of education), did not have any significant contribution to our prediction of support for peaceful reconciliation. The only significant demographic predictors found were age ($\beta = .09$, $p = .001$) and level of expenses ($\beta = .06$, $p = .03$) with higher figure on each associated with higher support for reconciliation.

Discussion

Recent research and theorizing in the domain of conflict and conflict resolution emphasizes that formal peace agreements between societies in protracted conflict are not enough for establishing stable and lasting peace (Lederach, 1998).

Formal conflict resolution sometimes involves only the leaders who negotiated the agreement or narrow strata around them. In these cases, the majority of society members may not accept the negotiated compromises, or even if they do, may still hold world views that have fueled the conflict. As a result, formal resolutions of conflicts may be unstable. They may collapse as in the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, or turn into cold peace as in the case of Israeli-Jordanian relations. In these cases past conflictive relations have not turned into peaceful relations of reconciliation and cooperation that involve, and are supported by, wide sectors of publics on both sides (Bar-Tal, 2000).

Though public support is recognized as crucial in reaching peaceful reconciliation, very few studies have tried to directly and systematically examine factors that influence such support. One such study done by Shamir and Shikaki (2002) focused on the role of expectations for lasting peace and democracy in Israeli and Palestinian public opinion in support of reconciliation and compromise. Another study by Maoz and McCauley (2005) examined psychological bases of Jewish-Israeli public opinion support for compromise with Palestinians. Here, we expand upon these studies by examining psychological predictors of post-conflict support for reconciliation. Specifically, we attempt to learn more about the extent to which intergroup attitudes of animosity (such as appraisal of outgroup collective threat as well as hatred and [low] sympathy towards the outgroup) predict decreased Jewish-Israeli support toward reconciliation and cooperation policies in Israeli-Jordanian post-conflict relations. But before discussing our prediction model and its findings, we will discuss two other essential questions that this study dealt with. One is the extent of Jewish-Israeli post-conflict public support for political reconciliation with Jordan and the other is the extent to which Jewish-Israeli attitudes of animosity towards Jordan still persist, even after the signing of the peace treaty between the two countries.

Jewish-Israeli Support for Reconciliation with Jordan

Our findings indicate that the majority of the Jewish-Israeli public support the implementation of reconciliation policy measures with Jordan (around 60% support for most of the measures examined). This is consistent with the results of public opinion surveys conducted on the Jewish-Israeli population directly after the signing of the peace accords on November and December 1994 (Steinmetz Center for Peace Research, 1994). These surveys also found high support for Israeli-Jordanian peace. Together these results may indicate that Israeli public attitudes towards peace with Jordan are stable and relatively positive. This contrasts with Jordanian attitudes towards peace and normalization with Israel, which some have found to be consistently more negative since the signing of the peace treaty (Kornbluth, 2002; Scham and Lucas, 1998).

Israeli Post-conflict Attitudes towards Jordan

Deeply-set hostile perceptions and emotions towards the other side have been described as persisting in post-conflict situations and as hindering the attainment of full and stable peace (Bar-On, 1997, 2008). Our study empirically demonstrates the sustenance of such attitudes among the Israeli-Jewish population in the post-conflict relations with Jordan. Though the specific appraisal of collective threat from Jordan was found as low, another important component of appraisal of outgroup collective threat – the appraisal of the more general Arab collective threat – remained higher (notably the change in the relations with Jordan did not include a change in the broader context of the Israeli-Arab conflict). As could be expected in the current phase of formal peace between the two countries, Jewish-Israeli hatred towards Jordanians was found to be very low. However, Israeli-Jordanian peace might be described as an extremely “cold” (almost frozen) peace, as the extent of Israeli sympathy towards Jordanians was found to be low despite the lack of perceived threat. Together, these findings paint a picture of slightly negative-leaning Israeli indifference towards Jordanians. Thus, Israeli Jews do not perceive Jordanians as highly threatening, nor are do they feel high hatred towards Jordanians, but neither do they feel much sympathy towards them.

This makeup of attitudes can be understood as characterizing the asymmetrical post-conflict relations of the stronger Israel with its past enemy Jordan, which holds a very low strategic threat potential. The low perceived specific threat from Jordan itself to Israel gives little reason to hate or feel anger towards Jordanians. However, as Jordanians are former enemies and also part of the Arab world (and thus also part of the still active Israeli-Arab conflict) positive attitudes towards them remain underdeveloped and generally weak.

How do these Jewish-Israeli attitudes of appraisal of low collective threat and low hatred but also low sympathy towards Jordan influence Jewish-Israeli willingness for transforming the relations between the two countries towards policies of normalization and reconciliation? Our findings in regard to this issue are discussed in the next section.

Appraisal of Outgroup Collective Threat, Hatred and Sympathy as Predictors of Support for Reconciliation

In line with our expectations, we found that attitudes of animosity towards Jordan – appraisal of outgroup collective, hatred and (low) sympathy – significantly predict decreased readiness for peaceful reconciliation with Jordan, with each measure having an independent contribution to this prediction. Appraisal of outgroup (Arab) collective threat was the strongest single predictor of for the extent of support for reconciliation, with the hatred and sympathy scales each adding a smaller significant contribution. Interestingly, our findings indicate that appraisal of Jordanian collective threat made the smallest (but still significant) contribution to the prediction of Jewish-Israeli attitudes towards reconciliation with Jordan. Demographic variables of age and level of expenses added a small contribution to this prediction.

Psychological Correlates of Public Support

Taken together, our findings emphasize the importance of psychological attitudes, and specifically the role of cognitive threat appraisal together with intergroup emotion variables, as major factors in explaining support for reconciliation. Importantly, our study demonstrates that feelings such as sympathy towards the other side have a significant role in predicting increased support for peaceful reconciliation in situations of post-conflict. Nevertheless, although feelings towards Jordanians do contribute to predicting support for reconciliation with Jordan, appraisal of outgroup collective threat (and in our case appraisal of Arab collective threat) was still found to be the strongest single predictor of the extent of such support.

Threat Appraisal and Support for Reconciliation

Post-conflict situations have been described as characterized by “a carry over” of perceptions of threat that were relevant during the conflict but nevertheless continue to have a decisive impact on public attitudes after peace agreements have been signed (Bar-Tal, 2000; Bar-On, 1997, 2008). Our study empirically demonstrates this “carry over” effect in which appraisal of collective threat from the outgroup – and more specifically, appraisal of Arab collective threat – continues to be a dominant factor in the post-conflict situation of Israeli-Jordanian relations, and importantly determines public support for peaceful reconciliation with Jordan.

Israeli-Jewish threat orientation towards Arabs has persisted for generations and plays a major role in policy preferences in conflict and peace processes. Teichman and Bar-Tal (2005) conducted an extensive analysis of Arabs’ representation in Israeli political, social, educational, cultural and media channels through 100 years of conflict. These authors found that portrayals of Arabs as threatening have become part of the Jewish-Israeli ethos of conflict and this leads to a continued threat orientation of the Israeli public. Wolfsfeld (2002, 2004) demonstrates, via the most extensive and systematic studies done on the Israeli news media in conflict and peace, how these media provide an ethnocentric presentation of the Israeli–Arab conflict in which Arab and Palestinian destructive intentions and threat towards Israel are highly emphasized.

Thus, it may be in the context of the asymmetric post-conflict relations between Israel and Jordan that, as Jordan is not perceived by Israelis as specifically or realistically threatening (Appraisal of Jordanian Collective Threat $M = 2.65$), Jordanian threat makes only a small contribution to predicting support for reconciliation with Jordan. However, Israeli-Jews perceive a much higher threat from Arabs (Appraisal of Arab Collective Threat $M = 3.59$). This appraisal of Arab collective threat is significantly associated with respondents’ lower support for peaceful reconciliation with Jordan (see also Wolfsfeld *et al.*, 2002 for similar observations about Israeli perception of low Jordanian threat in contrast to perception of higher threat from other Arab entities). Our findings may indicate that, despite the post-conflict situation, Jordan is still to an extent perceived by the Israeli public to be part of the hostile and threatening Arab world, and thus appraisal of Arab collective threat constitutes a major barrier to reconciliation with *Jordan*.

Conclusion

Our study empirically examined the psychological correlates of Jewish-Israeli attitudes toward peaceful reconciliation in the post-conflict Israeli-Jordanian relations. Public support for formal reconciliation policies with Jordan was found to be significantly predicted by our psychological measures of animosity towards Jordanians and negatively correlated with appraisal of outgroup collective threat, hatred and (low) sympathy towards Jordanians.

Generally, our findings indicate that appraisal of outgroup collective threat constitutes a major barrier to conflict resolution and peaceful reconciliation. This is consistent with findings of previous studies (Bar-On, 2008; Bar-Tal, 2001). However, the fact that appraisal of collective *Arab* threat (and not the appraisal of *Jordanian* collective threat) was found in our study to be a major barrier to reconciliation with Jordan clearly shows that the asymmetric post-conflict dynamics between Israel and Jordan cannot be detached from the wider context of the Israeli-Arab conflict (in which this asymmetry disappears or is even reversed). The more general appraisal of Arab collective threat to Israel still powerfully hinders Israeli readiness for peaceful reconciliation even in cases, such as with Jordan, where formal peace agreements have been reached.

Another interesting finding of this study concerns the role of sympathy in Israeli-Jordanian post-conflict relations. As perhaps could be expected, Israeli-Jews still feel some (but very low) hatred towards Jordanians and this constitutes a significant barrier to their support for reconciliation with this country. However, less expected in this context of formal peace is the low sympathy Israeli-Jews feel towards Jordanians. The importance of this result is even further emphasized when we consider that this feeling of low sympathy towards Jordanians is a barrier to Jewish-Israeli reconciliation support ($\beta = .15$) that is as strong as the feeling of hatred towards Jordanians ($\beta = -.15$). While sympathy towards others is usually seen as a “soft” variable, i.e. linked to dialogues and interpersonal emotions, our findings indicate that this variable also has an important role at the policy level as it significantly and independently predicts support for reconciliation.

The moral exclusion model, developed by the social psychologist Susan Opatow, describes a process in which people are placed “outside the boundary in which moral values, rules and considerations of fairness apply” (1990, p. 1). Causing or allowing harm to those outside of one’s moral community is justified and rationalized on the premise that they are expendable, undeserving, exploitable, and irrelevant (Opatow, 1990). Especially in asymmetric conflict, moral exclusion may lead to the use of aggression towards the weaker, morally excluded group (Staub, 1990). In the context of the asymmetric, post-conflict relations between Israel and Jordan, the Jewish-Israeli lack of sympathy towards Jordanians may reflect a deeper, underlying process of moral exclusion that constitutes a barrier to the willingness to reconcile with Jordan and may even facilitate, in certain cases, intergroup aggression.

Given the important moral and political implications of intergroup sympathy, it would be interesting to examine in further research the factors that influence the level of sympathy towards the other side in conflict and post-conflict situations.

In the specific context of Israeli-Jordanian relations, it seems that the cold peace between the two countries has turned into “frozen peace” that may also freeze advances

towards more meaningful measures of political reconciliation between the two countries. Thus, practical ways to cope with this very low sympathy and “warm up” the peace should be considered. One prevalent device for improving relations and increasing sympathy between groups is structured contacts and encounters (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998).

Contact interventions have been shown as effective in creating more positive mutual relations also in the specific context of Jewish-Arab relations (Salomon, 2006). In line with this, since the signing of the Oslo peace agreement between Israelis and Palestinians, several dozen interventions of organized contacts between members of these two groups are conducted each year, and are still being conducted now even after the breakup of the peace process and through different phases of increased violence between the sides. These include encounters, dialogues and cooperative projects between school and university students, teachers, university professors, religious leaders, medical doctors, journalists etc. (Maoz, 2004). Moreover, problem-solving workshops between Israelis and Palestinians have been conducted since the 1970s by Herbert Kelman and his colleagues and have shown to increase understanding and readiness for reconciliation in both sides (Kelman, 1999).

However, the signing of peace treaty between Israel and Jordan was not followed by such initiatives. As a result, there exist very few to nearly no organized contacts between Israelis and Jordanians (one rare exception is the “Crossing Borders” project that includes Israeli, Jordanian and Palestinian youth). Consistently with this, our survey data indicates that only a small percentage (23%) of Israeli-Jews has ever met a Jordanian, while the majority of respondents (77%) reported that they have never met one). This variable of “meeting a Jordanian” was also found to be significantly and positively correlated with the extent of sympathy towards Jordanians ($r = .23, p < .001$). Thus, it may be that the strategy of grassroots contacts and encounters, that is widely used in the context of the conflictual relations between Israeli-Jews and Palestinians should be also more extensively employed in the case of post-conflict relations between Israel and Jordan. Since contacts do have a role in creating sympathy (Bar-On, 2008), they may be even more required in such phases of “freezing peace” in order to enable further transition into political reconciliation. Given the fact that Israel has a much greater level of military and economic power, higher Israeli sympathy towards Jordanians can be a crucial factor in increasing support for further reconciliation between the two countries.

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Table 1. *Correlations, Means, Standard Deviations and Percentage of Support for Reconciliation Policy Items*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	Mean	SD	Support Percentage
1. Open Borders	1						2.65	.98	61.0%
2. Joint Economic Institutions	.53	1					2.98	.88	77.4%
3. Joint Political Institutions	.43	.54	1				2.54	.96	54.4%
4. Curriculum Change	.45	.42	.46	1			2.33	.99	44.0%
5. Legal Measures against Incitement	.27	.32	.23	.32	1		2.68	.92	60.0%
6. Support for Political Reconciliation Scale	.76	.77	.74	.74	.59	1	2.64	.68	58.2%

Note. N = 823- 935 for all statistics. All correlations are significant ($p < .01$ two-tailed) . Support percentage is percentage of those rated 3 or 4 (“Support” or “Strongly support”) on a bi-directional 1 to 4 scale ranging from “Strongly object” to “Strongly support”.

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Table 2. Means (Standard Deviations) of Scales of Animosity towards Jordanians

	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>Mean (SD)</i>
1. Appraisal of Arab Collective Threat (4)	<i>.63</i>					3.59 (.82)
2. Appraisal of Jordanian Collective Threat (2)	<i>.23***</i>	<i>.33</i>				2.65 (.81)
3. Hatred (2)	<i>.27***</i>	<i>.24***</i>	<i>.78</i>			1.67 (.98)
4. Sympathy (2)	<i>-.25***</i>	<i>-.22***</i>	<i>-.08**</i>	<i>.68</i>		2.39 (1.03)
5. Support for Political Reconciliation (5)	<i>-.43***</i>	<i>-.27***</i>	<i>-.31***</i>	<i>.31***</i>	<i>.78</i>	2.64 (.68)

Note. N = 979-1000. Number of scale items appears in parenthesis near scale title. . Correlations in italics on diagonal are Cronbach Alphas of the corresponding scales.

* $p \leq 0.05$ ** $p \leq 0.01$ *** $p \leq 0.001$