

Beliefs Predicting Peace, Beliefs Predicting War:
Jewish Americans and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Abstract

Jewish Americans' beliefs about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can serve either to inhibit or to facilitate the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians. Attitudes toward conflict resolution and beliefs about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its origins were assessed among a sample of 177 Jewish Americans. Endorsement of a monolithic view of the conflict represented the strongest predictor of non-compromising attitudes toward the Palestinians. Endorsement of dehumanizing and delegitimizing statements about the Palestinians predicted non-compromising attitudes to a much lesser extent. A zero-sum view of the conflict and beliefs about collective victimhood did not predict non-compromising attitudes toward conflict resolution. Findings are discussed in terms of their challenge to theories of collective victimhood in conflict settings and their support for the centrality of narrative in conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

Keywords: core beliefs, diaspora community, narrative, Israeli-Palestinian conflict

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In a rapidly globalizing world, the resolution of conflicts does not depend only on the opinions of the local population, but also on the opinions of members of diaspora communities (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2006; Shain, 2002; Shain & Barth, 2003). A politically important example of a diaspora group is Jewish Americans, whose attachment to Israel is central to their group identity (Hartman & Hartman, 2000). According to Cohen (2002), after the 1967 Six Day War, “Israel moved to the fore as the most compelling cause in American Jewish life and became the centerpiece of fund-raising and of political activism” (p. 133). Jewish Americans’ views of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict influence both the United States government’s policies toward the conflict and the actions of the Israeli government (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2006; Shain & Barth, 2003). Consequently, the public opinion of the Jewish American community can serve either to inhibit or to push forward the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians (Benhorin, 2011; Chomsky, 1999; Cohen, 2002).

Research suggests that groups living under the conditions of intractable conflict tend to develop a repertoire of shared beliefs that justifies the continuation of conflict (Bar-Tal, 2000; Eidelson, 2009; Hammack, Pilecki, Caspi & Strauss, 2011; Maoz & McCauley, 2005). Since those beliefs justify conflict, they contribute to its intractability by creating the cognitive rationale for members of the collective to refuse concessions to the other side (Bar-Tal, 2007). Researchers suggest different beliefs to be instrumental to the rejection of concessions towards the enemy side. Among the beliefs proposed are: a sense of collective victimhood (Bar-Tal, Chernyak-Hai, Schori, & Gunder, 2009; Nadler, 2002; Nadler & Saguy, 2004; Vollhardt, 2009), dehumanization of the out group (Bar-Tal & Teichman, 2005; Hammack et al, 2011; Kelman,

2001; Rouhana & Bar-Tal, 1998), a zero-sum perspective on the conflict (Kelman, 1997), and a monolithic narrative about the conflict (Bar-On, 2002; Bar-On & Canin, 2008; Bar-On & Kassem, 2004; Hammack, 2008; Rouhana & Bar-Tal, 1998). It has been suggested that when individuals endorse some or all of these beliefs, they will be disposed to refuse peaceful solutions to conflict.

The beliefs that contribute to the intractability of ethno-national conflict are traditionally studied among members of the local population. Nevertheless, as its name suggests, ethno-national conflict implicates members of an ethnic group who share the same ethnic identity regardless of geographical boundaries. In this study, we used social and cultural psychological frameworks to explore Jewish Americans' framing of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We explored the prevalence of beliefs common to groups living in an intractable conflict among members of the Jewish American diaspora community. Additionally, we tested which beliefs best predict Jewish Americans' rejection of concessions to Palestinians.

This study represents a novel attempt to test psychological theories about intractable conflict with members of diaspora group, thus providing a better understanding of the dissemination of group beliefs among members of an identity group dispersed across different geographical locations. In addition, this study contributes to current understandings of intractable conflict by empirically testing which hypothesized beliefs are associated with the endorsement of compromising versus non-compromising attitudes toward conflict resolution. Hence, this study aims to clarify which beliefs best predict the refusal of concessions to the other side. On a more applied level, by providing a clearer understanding of how Jewish Americans differ from each other in their framing of the conflict, and how different framings are associated

with individuals' dispositions to different solutions, this study will help create a more constructive dialogue among members of the Jewish and Arab populations in the United States.

Beliefs associated with the perpetuation of conflict

Social psychologists have long argued that individual dispositions toward concessions to the enemy are not based solely on a rational cost-benefit analysis, but also on collective beliefs (Allport, 1954; Tajfel, 1982). According to Bar-Tal (2000), societies living under the conditions of intractable conflict create an infrastructure of beliefs that frame how members of the collective understand themselves, the other (enemy) side, and the nature of the conflict. Since those beliefs play a crucial role in helping members of societies face the stress of conflict, maintain a positive group identity, and withstand their rival, they are assumed to be present to some extent in all societies involved in intractable conflict regardless of cultural particularity (Bar-Tal, 2007; Bar-Tal, Halpern & Oren, 2010). Among the beliefs proposed to serve the needs of members of societies living in intractable conflict are a sense of collective victimhood, a zero-sum view on the conflict, and dehumanization and delegitimization of the other side. Theorists have proposed that while these beliefs are central to strengthening a society's capacity to endure prolonged violent conflict, they also work to justify the conflict and thus contribute to its perpetuation (Maoz & McCauley, 2005; Rouhana & Bar-Tal, 1998; Zembylas & Bekerman, 2008).

Diverging from a need-based and universalist approach to intractable conflict is a narrative-based view of conflict. Grounded in a cultural psychological tradition that focuses on the culturally particular ways in which individuals come to view themselves and the world around them (Bruner, 1990; Geertz, 1975; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Shweder, 1990), a narrative approach to conflict proposes that members of societies living in conflict share a culturally specific narrative that justifies the continuation of the conflict and contradicts the

narrative of the other side (Hammack, 2008, 2011). According to this approach, holding a one-sided view on the conflict in terms of a monolithic narrative that recognizes the historical account and causes of the conflict as framed *solely* by one side's point of view leads to the perpetuation of conflict, since concessions to the other side become incomprehensible. Only when individuals complement their own culturally specific narrative with an understanding of the narrative of the other side will they be more disposed to support peaceful solutions to conflict (Bar-On, 2002; Bar-On & Canin, 2008; Bar-On & Kassem, 2004; Salomon, 2004).

Social Psychological approach to intractable conflict

Collective victimhood

Among the beliefs posited to be common in societies enmeshed in a prolonged intractable conflict is a sense of collective victimhood. A sense of collective victimhood has been hypothesized to play a central role in the perpetuation of intractable conflict in general and in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in particular (Bar-Tal, 2005; Bar-Tal et al., 2009; Nadler, 2002; Nadler & Saguy, 2004; Rouhana & Bar-Tal, 1998; Vollhardt, 2009). Individuals' senses of collective victimization do not necessarily depend on their own personal experiences with the conflict, but rather on shared collective discourses that construe the collective as helpless against unjust harm (Bar-Tal, 2005; Bar-Tal et al., 2009; Nadler, 2002). According to Bar-Tal et al. (2009), three main features define a sense of victimhood: the notion that harm has been done to the collective; that this harm was unjust; and that the collective was helpless in defending itself against this harm.

A collective sense of victimhood is associated with the perpetuation of conflict in several different ways. First, when members of the collective feel that unjust and undeserved harm has been done to them, they tend to support acts of revenge that lead to the perpetuation of the

conflict (Nadler, 2002; Nadler & Saguy, 2004). Second, the belief that the collective has been unjustly treated may lead to a sense of self-righteousness, in which it is believed that the victim can do no wrong (Bar-Tal, 2000). Finally, when the two sides share a sense of victimhood, competitive victimhood may arise in which the sides compete over who suffers more (Noor, Brown, & Prentice, 2008).

Empirical studies examining the relationship between a collective sense of victimhood and conflict reconciliation have found some support for the role of perceived collective victimization and the perpetuation of conflict. Noor et al. (2008) found that between pro-Pinochet and anti-Pinochet groups in Chile, as well as between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland, competitive victimhood mediated individual support for forgiveness of the other side. Eidelson (2009) found that Americans' endorsement of a collective sense of helplessness and injustices after the 9/11 attacks predicted individuals' support for the "war on terror." An experimental study conducted in Canada suggests that Jewish Canadians who were reminded of the Holocaust felt less collective guilt for harmful actions toward the Palestinians than Jewish Canadians not reminded of the Holocaust (Wohl & Branscombe, 2008).

A zero sum view on the conflict

Another common explanation for the perpetuation of intergroup conflict is grounded in realistic group conflict theory (Sherif, 1966). According to realistic group conflict theory, when groups compete over scarce resources such as land or water, intergroup antagonism will emerge (Sherif, 1966). The incompatibility of group goals leads to a zero-sum approach in which every concession on one side's part is understood as a win for the other side (Kelman, 2007).

Some historians have argued that since the arrival of the Jewish settlers in Israel (then Palestine), both sides have framed the conflict as a competition over land (Doron & Kook, 2001).

Since each side understands the land as its own, any gain of land to one side is perceived as a loss to the other (Doron & Kook, 2001). Since no peaceful solution is possible from a zero-sum viewpoint, any sort of “breakthrough” can *only* be accomplished through a change in the existing balance of power. A zero-sum view of conflict leads individuals to refuse concessions to the other side and to support the investment of societal resources in the strengthening of militaristic institutions (Doron & Kook, 2001).

The growing consensus among Jewish Israelis and Jewish Americans who endorse a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict calls into question the prevalence of a zero-sum view on the conflict, in which any concession to the other side is a loss to one’s own (Bar-Tal et al, 2010; Bienstock, 2010, Caspit, 2011). Nevertheless, since Maoz and McCauley’s (2005) survey study of a national sample of Jewish Israelis shows that zero-sum beliefs about the conflict predict opposition to concessions, it is possible that zero-sum beliefs are important components of the worldviews of individuals who oppose peaceful solutions.

Delegitimizing and dehumanizing of the other side

According to social identity theory, in order to satisfy individuals’ need for positive self-esteem, when individuals are categorized into a group they will come to see their group as superior to an out-group (Tajfel, 1982). To support individuals’ sense of in-group superiority, stereotypes and prejudices toward the out-group will emerge (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). The higher the tension between the ingroup and the outgroup, the more likely the prejudice and stereotypes toward the outgroup will dehumanize and delegitimize the other (Bar-Tal, 2000, Bar-Tal & Teichman, 2005).

Within the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the delegitimization and dehumanization of members of the other side has been postulated to be one of the central causes for the perpetuation

of the conflict. According to Bar-Tal and Teichman (2005), both Palestinians and Israelis tend to see one other as having inhuman traits, uncivilized morality, or as holding values that are intolerable. For example, each side tends to see the other as primitive or as very aggressive and essentially violent. In addition, immorality and disloyalty are attributed to members of both sides (Oren & Bar-Tal, 2006). Empirical studies conducted in Israel show that, although beliefs that dehumanize the Palestinians are not held by a majority of the respondents, there is a clear correlation between the delegitimization and dehumanization of the Palestinians and support for non-compromising solutions to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Hammack, et al., 2011; Maoz & McCauley, 2008).

Cultural Psychological approach to intractable conflict

A monolithic view of the conflict

A cultural psychological approach to conflict proposes that individuals from different cultures use different cognitive schemas and narratives to make sense of themselves and the world around them (Bruner, 1990; Hammack, 2008; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Shewder, 1990). Those culturally situated narratives are a product of different traditions that have evolved through time due to each group's particular history (Liu & Hilton, 2005). Consequently, the cultural psychological approach focuses on identifying the culturally particular narratives that shape how people view the world, rather than assuming universal explanations based on individual or group needs (Bruner, 1990; Geertz, 1973).

From a cultural psychological perspective, Jewish-Israeli and Palestinian cultures have developed two different narrative understandings of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Hammack, 2008, 2011). These narratives serve as important cognitive schemas shared by individuals from each cultural group leading them to interpret the conflict in diverging ways (Bar-On, 2000; Bar-

On & Kassem 2004; Rouhana & Bar-Tal, 1998; Salomon, 2004). Since the Jewish-Israeli and Palestinian narratives negate one another (Kelman, 1999), individuals from each side can neither understand, trust, nor empathize with the narrative and the demands of the other (Bar-On 2002; Hammack, 2006, 2008; Salomon, 2004).

The understanding of identity and national conflict in terms of competing narratives has been explored in several qualitative studies (Ayalon & Sagy; 2011; Ben-Hagai, Hammack, Pilecki, 2011; Hammack, 2006, 2008, 2011). For example, a discourse analysis of conversations among Israeli and Palestinian adolescents suggests that Jewish-Israeli adolescents tend to base their understandings of the conflict on a narrative schema in which Jews have good intentions to live in peace but because of Arab attacks they must continually defend themselves (Ben Hagai et al., 2012). Palestinian adolescents, on the other hand, tend to base their utterances on a narrative schema in which they belong to and own the land but due to Jewish occupation they are humiliated and made to suffer (Ben Hagai et al., 2012). A monolithic narrative approach to the conflict predicts that the more individuals endorse the Jewish narrative about the conflict, the less they will endorse the Palestinian narrative. As a consequence, a high endorsement of the Jewish narrative and a low endorsement of the Palestinian narrative will be associated with a rejection of compromising solutions (solutions that are accepted by the Palestinian leadership) to the conflict.

Summary and Hypotheses

The main aim of this study was to identify which beliefs best predict the rejection of compromising solutions to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict among a sample of Jewish Americans. Beliefs from two analytical frameworks are examined. The first is grounded in social psychological research that aims to find universal beliefs that serve to perpetuate conflict across

different regions of the globe. Beliefs proposed by social psychologists to be universally common in societies living in conflict are a sense of collective victimhood, a zero-sum view of the conflict, and dehumanization and delegitimization of the other side. Based on this approach, the first hypothesis of this study is that endorsement of these beliefs among Jewish Americans will be associated with endorsement of non-compromising solutions to the conflict.

Hypothesis 1: A sense of collective victimhood, a zero-sum view on the conflict, and dehumanization and delegitimization of the other side *will serve as the strongest predictors* for Jewish Americans' rejection of compromising solutions to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The second analytical tradition based in cultural psychology argues that culturally specific narratives are used by individuals to interpret the conflict. Since culturally specific narratives contradict the narratives of the other side, they are associated with a refusal to make concessions. Derived from a cultural psychological perspective, the second hypothesis of the study is that high endorsement of the Jewish narrative and low endorsement of the Palestinian narrative will be the strongest predictor of Jewish Americans' rejection of concessions to the other side.

Hypothesis 2: A monolithic view on the conflict, based on a high endorsement of the Jewish narrative and a low endorsement of the Palestinian narrative on the conflict *will serve as the strongest predictor* of Jewish Americans' rejection of compromising solutions to the conflict.

Method

Participants

Respondents to the survey were recruited through several Jewish American listservs primarily based in California and through announcements on social networking sites. In the announcement, Jewish respondents were invited to participate in a survey exploring Jewish Americans' framing of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. To participate in the study respondents followed a link to the Survey Monkey website where they completed the survey online.

The data analysis presented here includes only completed surveys. One-hundred seventy-seven participants completed all parts of the survey, which represented approximately 60% of all the surveys started online. Participants included 71 men and 106 women. Sixty-nine percent of respondents were between the ages of 18 and 29; 17% were between the ages of 30 and 49; and 14 % were between the ages of 50 and 64. In the sample, 7% identified as Republicans, 66% identified as Democrats, 19% identified as independent, and 8% did not know or did not answer. Overall, the sample overrepresented women, was on average younger than the general Jewish population in the United States, and represented slightly more Democrats compared to a national sample of Jewish Americans (Annual Survey of Jewish Opinions, 2007).

To assess participants' attachment to Israel compared to a national sample of Jewish Americans, we included a question from the Jewish American National Survey in which respondents are asked to indicate their level of agreement with the following statement: "Caring about Israel is a very important part of my Jewish Identity." Seventy-four percent of respondents agreed with the statement, 15% disagreed, and 10.9% neither agreed nor disagreed. Attachment to Israel was somewhat stronger in this sample compared to a national sample of Jewish Americans, where 69% agreed, 28% disagreed and 3% did not know (Annual Survey of American Jewish Opinion, 2007).

Measures

Criterion Variable

Attitudes toward conflict resolution. Individuals' endorsement of different solutions to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was assessed by presenting four solutions depicted in Table I. Solutions 1 and 2 are based on formulas that have been accepted by the Palestinian leadership (Benvenisti, 2010; Kelman, 2011). Solutions 3 and 4 are contested by the Palestinian leadership (Kelman, 2011; Maoz & Eidelson, 2007, Maoz & McCauley, 2005). Each solution was briefly described and respondents were asked to rate their agreement with each solution on a 7-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree).

To create a composite score that served as the criterion variable, individuals' ratings of solutions endorsed by the Palestinian leadership were subtracted from their ratings of solutions rejected by the Palestinian leadership. The range of the criterion variable was between +12 and -12, where a positive score on the criterion variable indicated a disposition toward solutions and a negative score indicated a rejection of concessions to the Palestinian side.

Predictor Variables

Victimhood in the Diaspora. To assess respondents' sense of collective victimhood in the Diaspora, an original 3-item measure was constructed based on Bar-Tal's et al (2009) definition of victimhood. The items included in the scale were: "In the past while living in the Diaspora, Jews suffered extensive anti-Semitism, discrimination and violence"; "The anti-Semitism and discrimination Jews experienced was undeserved and unjust"; and "In general, while living in the Diaspora, most of the Jews were helpless against anti-Semitism and discrimination." Responses were made on a scale that ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The Cronbach's alpha for the three items measuring a sense of victimhood in the Diaspora was .84.

Victimhood in the conflict. To assess respondents' sense of collective victimhood in the conflict with the Palestinians, the three items that were used to measure victimhood in the Diaspora were adjusted to reference victimhood in the conflict. The three items included in the scale were: "In the present in Israel, Arab and Palestinian attacks cause the Jewish population harm and suffering"; "The Arab and Palestinian attacks on the Jewish population are unjust and undeserved"; and "The state of Israel does not have the power and resources to protect itself against Palestinian and Arab attacks." The last item was reverse coded. The Cronbach's alpha for the three items measuring a sense of victimhood in the conflict was .55 (see further discussion in the Discussion section).

Zero-sum view. To measure the extent to which respondents endorsed a zero-sum view of the conflict, we included an item from Maoz and McCauley's (2005) study of the Jewish-Israeli population: "In the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, there is no place for compromise: either the Jews win or the Palestinians win".

Dehumanizing and delegitimizing beliefs. To measure the extent to which respondents dehumanized and delegitimized the Palestinians, three statements adopted from several different survey studies on dehumanization and delegitimization were presented (Hammack et al., 2011; Maoz & McCauley, 2008; Oren & Bar-Tal, 2006; Smooha, 1987). These statements included both orientalist and essentializing forms of dehumanization and delegitimization. A statement of orientalist delegitimization was "The Palestinians have a culture that has still not reached levels common in the West." A statement of essentializing delegitimization was "The Palestinians are by nature violent" (Hammack, et al, 2011; Smooha, 1987). An item related to dehumanization was "The Palestinians are primitive people" (Smooha, 1987). Responses were provided on a

scale that ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Cronbach's alpha for the three items assessing dehumanization and delegitimization was .80

Monolithic narrative of conflict. To assess participants' endorsement of a monolithic narrative on the conflict, participants were asked to rate on a 7-point Likert scale their level of agreement with seven statements representing the Jewish narrative and seven statements representing the Palestinian narrative.

Jewish-Israeli Narrative: To measure level of identification with the Jewish narrative, two types of statement were presented. The first was based on Jews' positive intentions to live in peace in Israel ("The Jewish Halutzim—early Jewish immigrants to Eretz Israel or Palestine—did not intend to harm the indigenous population living in the area"), and the second was based on Jewish-Israelis' need to protect themselves from Arab and Palestinian attacks ("Since coming to Eretz Israel in the 19th century, Jews have had to consistently defend themselves against Arab attacks"; "The Israeli government implementation of checkpoints and the separation fence are motivated by its need to defend Israel from Palestinian aggression"). Items based on the Jewish narrative were framed on three different collective levels: in terms of the Israeli government, the Israeli army, and the Israeli public. All items were presented on a 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) Likert scale, except two items. These two items asked for estimation of population portion, for example, "What portion of the Israeli population wants to live in peace with the Palestinians?", questions about population portion were based on 5-point Likert scale and were subsequently adjusted to carry the same weight. The Cronbach's alpha for the Jewish narrative items was .85.

Palestinian Narrative: To measure levels of identification with the Palestinian narrative, two types of statements were presented. The first was based on the Palestinians' presence and

sense of belonging to the land prior to the declaration of the Israeli state (e.g., “Early Jewish aspiration to settle in Israel ignored the presence and the rights of the Palestinians to the land”), and the second postulated that the Palestinians are suffering and are discriminated against as a result of the Jewish-Israeli occupation (e.g., “The Israeli occupation oppresses and causes suffering to the Palestinian population”). All responses were made on a scale that ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Cronbach’s Alpha for the Palestinian narrative scale was .91.

To create a composite score for the monolithic narrative scale, participants’ average scores on the Palestinian narrative scale were subtracted from their average score on the Jewish narrative scale. This score ranged from -6 to +6, where a *negative score* indicated a preference for the Jewish narrative on the conflict over that of the Palestinians.

Results

Means, standard deviations, and inter-correlations among the predictor variables and the criterion variable are presented in Table II. Overall, non-compromising solutions to the conflict were slightly favored over compromising solutions to the conflict. On average, respondents tended to *agree* with a sense of victimhood in the Diaspora and *somewhat agree* with a sense of victimhood in the conflict. Respondents on average *disagreed* with a zero-sum view on the conflict. In addition, respondents tended to *disagree* with statements that dehumanized and delegitimized the Palestinians. Respondents on average *somewhat agreed* with the Jewish narrative on the conflict and *somewhat disagreed* with the Palestinian narrative (See Table II).

The second step of the analysis was to check if indeed the different subscales of beliefs functioned as separate and independent factors. Since the zero-sum scale was based on one item,

it was not included in the Factor Analysis. Exploratory PCA with Varimax rotation was applied to the 23 items that appear in Table III. A structure of four components was found that accounted for 63.45% of the variance. The first component accounted for 35.64% of the variance (Eigenvalue = 8.19); the second component accounted for 12.52% (Eigenvalue=2.88); the third component accounted for 8.6% (Eigen value=1.98); and the fourth component accounted for 6.69% (Eigen value=1.54). For the first component, all the loading items were items from the Jewish Narrative and Palestinian Narrative subscales. For the second component all the items were part of the Diaspora Victimhood scale. For the third component all the items were based on the Dehumanization and Delegitimization scale. The fourth component was based on the Victimhood in the Conflict subscale. Thus it appears that the different scales centered around four different factors: (1) a Monolithic view of the conflict, (2) Victimhood in the Diaspora, (3) Victimhood in the Conflict and (4) Dehumanization and Delegitimization.

The main purpose of the study was to test the predictive power of different theories concerning the perpetuation of the conflict and the acceptance of compromise solutions. In addition, no previous study has juxtaposed the full set of beliefs included in the present study. Therefore, we used a simultaneous regression analysis in which all the variables are entered at once and their unique contribution in predicting the criterion variable is assessed.

The results of the regression analysis indicated that the six predictors explained 47.97% of the variance $R^2 = 47.9$ [$F(6, 171) = 30.62, p < .001$]. Disagreement with a monolithic narrative on the conflict most strongly predicted ($\beta = .49, p < .001$) endorsement of concessions to the Palestinian side. Dehumanization of the Palestinians was the only other significant predictor, but to a lesser extent ($\beta = -.28, p < .001$). This predictor was negatively correlated with compromising solutions to the conflict (see Table IV).

The results of the regression analysis supports the second hypothesis of the study that a cultural psychological measure based on a monolithic view on the conflict will better predict individual support for compromising solutions to the conflict than universalistic measures such as a sense of collective victimhood, dehumanization/delegitimization, and a zero-sum view on the conflict.

To better understand the relationship between individuals' support of compromising solutions to the conflict and their endorsement of the Jewish compared to the Palestinian narrative, we conducted an additional regression in which the two narrative scales were entered separately together with the rest of predictor scales.

A collinearity diagnostics test indicated acceptable levels of tolerance. The result of the regression indicated that the six predictors explained 49.4% of the variance $R^2 = .494$ [$F(6, 171) = 27.39, p < .001$]. Agreement with the Palestinian narrative on the conflict most strongly predicted endorsement of compromising solutions to the conflict ($\beta = .50, p < .001$). The second significant predictor was dehumanization and delegitimization of the Palestinians ($\beta = -.27, p < .001$), which negatively predicted support for compromising solutions to the conflict. Also significant in this regression analysis was level of endorsement of a zero-sum view on the conflict ($\beta = -.13, p < .05$).

Discussion

The aim of this study was to explore the prevalence of beliefs associated with intractable conflict and to test which beliefs best predicted rejection of compromising solutions to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict among a sample of Jewish Americans. We found that the Jewish Americans who responded to this survey tended to endorse a sense of Jewish victimhood both in terms of past collective experiences in the Diaspora and in terms of Jewish-Israeli experiences in

the conflict. Nevertheless, it is important to note that respondents' sense of Jewish collective victimhood in the Diaspora was qualitatively different than a sense of collective victimhood in the current conflict. The difference between a sense of victimhood in the Diaspora and a sense of victimhood was based on the average response to the item representing collective helplessness. While our survey respondents tended to agree that unjust harm was and is caused to the Jewish population both in the Diaspora and in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, respondents tended to disagree that the Jewish population in Israel does not have the power to protect itself against this unjust harm. Thus, while a sense of victimhood includes a sense of helplessness in relationship to past Jewish life in the Diaspora, it does not include a sense of helplessness in relationship to the conflict. This finding is consistent with a study of a representative sample of Jewish Israelis that tended to disagree on average with statements that portray them as helpless (Maoz & Eidelson, 2007).

In addition, respondents in the sample were slightly less likely to endorse a statement that frames the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in terms of a zero-sum game compared to a representative sample of Jewish Israelis (Maoz & McCauley, 2005). Similar to studies conducted with Jewish Israelis, Jewish Americans participating in this study tended to disagree with statements that dehumanize and delegitimize the Palestinians (Hammack et al., 2011; Maoz & McCauley, 2008). Finally, members of the sample on average endorsed the Jewish narrative of the conflict, while rejecting the Palestinian narrative.

It is important to emphasize that the sample used in this study is not a representative sample of Jewish Americans. Hence the prevalence of those beliefs should not be understood as representing the Jewish-American population. However, knowing the prevalence of these beliefs within the sample helps to contextualize the correlational findings.

The second aim of this study was to test which beliefs best predict endorsement of non-compromising solutions to the conflict. Beliefs rooted in two different analytical traditions were tested. The first set of beliefs is rooted in the social psychological tradition and postulates that certain beliefs are universally associated with the intractability of conflict. Among those beliefs are a sense of collective victimhood, dehumanization and delegitimization of the outgroup, and a zero-sum view of the conflict. The second analytical tradition rooted in cultural psychology asserts that identification with one's own cultural narrative about the conflict and rejection of the other side's cultural narrative is associated with the rejection of compromising solutions to the conflict. Thus two hypotheses were tested. The first hypothesis was that either a sense of collective victimhood, a zero-sum view of the conflict, and/or dehumanization and delegitimization of the outgroup would serve as the strongest predictors for rejection of compromising solutions to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The second was that a high endorsement of the Jewish narrative and a low endorsement of the Palestinian narrative on the conflict would serve as the strongest predictors for rejection of compromising solutions to the conflict.

The results support the second hypothesis that a high endorsement of the Jewish narrative and a low endorsement of the Palestinian narrative serves as the strongest predictor of rejection of concessions to the other side. The results of this study indicate the importance of accounting for the culturally particular ways in which collectives immersed in conflict come to interpret the conflict. Accounting for the culturally specific narratives collectives use to frame the causes and realities of conflict affords a more solid understanding of individuals' rejection of concessions to the other side.

To a much lesser extent, yet in line with studies on intractable conflict from across the world, we found that an endorsement of the dehumanizing and delegitimizing beliefs about Palestinians and a zero-sum view of the conflict were associated with rejection of concessions to the other side (Bar-Tal 1998; Bar-Tal, Oren & Bar-Tal, 2006; Hammack et al., 2011; Maoz & McCauley, 2008;). These findings provide some support for social psychological theories that assert that intergroup conflict is associated with stereotypes and prejudices that dehumanize and delegitimize members of the other side (e.g., Bar-Tal & Teichman, 2005). Nevertheless, the growing number of studies that show that Jewish Israelis as well as Jewish Americans do not on average support statements that delegitimize and dehumanize the Palestinian population should bring to a change in the model of beliefs proposed to be prevalent among societies living in an intractable conflict (Rouhana & Bar-Tal, 1998).

Interestingly, neither a sense of victimhood in the Diaspora nor a sense of victimhood in the conflict was a significant predictor for support of non-compromising solutions to the conflict. In fact, most of the respondents acknowledged a sense of Jewish victimhood regardless of their political position. It seems then that a sense of victimhood can be interpreted as affording individuals with different interpretations of the conflict. Victimhood can foster a sense of vulnerability and injustice, resulting in the rejection of concessions to the other side. However, victimhood can also promote willingness to concede to the other side's demands based on a shared sense of suffering (Vollhardt, 2009).

This study is limited in several different ways. The sample used in this study was recruited through announcements in social networking sites as well as through Jewish organizations' listservs, many of which were based in California. A selection bias of younger individuals highly involved in the Jewish community is apparent from inspection of the

demographics of the survey participants. A second limitation of this study is that the survey questions were mostly theoretically-driven, based on beliefs suggested by scholars to be associated with the perpetuation of conflict among members of societies enmeshed in intractable conflict. It can be argued that this framework is not suitable to understanding the opinion of members of a diaspora community, who do not see themselves as living under existential threat. As a result, the framework used in the survey is somewhat superficial and cannot fully account for the way Diaspora Jews think about the conflict. Nevertheless, since Jewish-Israeli authorities, including political leaders, producers of culture (such as films and books), and the news media are central to how events in the conflict are presented to the Jewish American public, the frameworks for understanding the conflict are likely somewhat similar cross-culturally.

This study suggests that endorsement of compromising solutions to intractable conflict is less associated with prejudice reduction and a belief that peace is possible and more strongly associated with a shift away from a monolithic view of the conflict. The results suggest that educational programs aimed at promoting reconciliation between Jews and Palestinians both in the Diaspora and in Israel should focus on familiarizing participants with the different narratives about the conflict (Bar-On, 2002; Salomon, 2004).

Future research is needed to examine the mechanisms that are at play in leading certain individuals to be informed not only by the perspective of their own side, but also by the perspective of the other. In addition, future research should explore if indeed the same result can be replicated in Israel among members of the Jewish-Israeli population. Finally, a key question that still needs to be examined is why some Jewish Americans seem to believe that the Palestinians suffer and are discriminated against under Jewish occupation, while others disagree.

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Table I

Solutions to Conflict revealing Attitudes toward Compromise

Solution	Description
1	A one-state solution in which Jews and Palestinians hold equal rights as part of a bi-national state
2	A two-state solution in which Israel withdraws to the 1967 armistice lines and a Palestinian state is established in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip with East Jerusalem as its capital
3	A two-state solution in which Israel keeps large settlements and a united Jerusalem serves as the state capital
4	A transfer in which the Palestinian population is transferred to neighboring Arab countries

Table II

*Descriptive Statistics and Correlations among Variables**(n=177)*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Victim Confl	--							
2. Victim Diasp	.15	--						
3. Zero-Sum	.00	.17*	--					
4. Dehuman	-.01	.10	.34**	--				
5. Jewish Nar	.07	.30*	.39**	.32**	--			
6. Palest Nar	-.02	-.12	-.31**	-.35**	-.80**	--		
7. Mono Nar	-.04	.21*	.36**	.36**	.93**	-.97**	--	
8. Solutions	.05	-.11	-.37*	-.49**	-.53**	.64**	-.61*	--
M	^a 5.21	^a 6.45	^a 2.16	^a 2.4	^a 4.99	^a 3.68	-1.3	^b -.073
SD	1.28	.9	1.49	1.38	1.00	1.52	2.40	5.01

Note, Victim Conflict=Victimhood in the Conflict; Victim Diasp=Victimhood in the Diaspora; Dehuman=Dehumanization and Deligitimization; Jewish Nar= Jewish Narrative on the conflict; Pales Nar=Palestinian narrative on the conflict, Mono Nar=Monolithic Narrative on the conflict

^aMean scores are based on a 7 point scale, 1=Strongly Disagree, 7 Strongly Agree. ^bThe Mean solution score represents a composite score in which the range was between 12 to -12, where negative signs represent opposition to compromising solutions. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table III

Factor Loading for Principle Component Analysis with Varimax Rotation of Belief Items

Item	Monolithic View	Victim-hood Diaspora	Dehumanization	Victimhood Conflict
In the present, the Israeli army often uses excessive amounts of force when dealing with the Palestinians.	-.85	-.04	-.13	.06
In the past, the state of Israel acted to push the Palestinians out of the land of Israel.	-.84	-.06	-.07	-.03
In the past, early Jewish aspiration to settle in Israel ignored the presence and the rights of the Palestinians to the Fill in the rest of the item here	-.81	.02	-.10	-.00
The Israeli government's implementation of checkpoints and the separation fence are motivated by its need to defend Israel from Palestinian aggression.	.79	.12	.16	.07
In the present, the Israeli government acts to push most of the Palestinian population out of the land of Israel.	-.79	-.07	-.07	-.06
In the present, the Israeli occupation oppresses and causes suffering to the Palestinian population.	-.79	.07	-.22	-.00
The current Israeli political leadership has tried its best to achieve peace with the Palestinians	.76	.09	.13	-.05
What portions of the actions taken by the IDF (the Israeli Defense Force) are solely defensive measures against Palestinians' and Arabs' aggression?	.73	.18	.22	.01
In the past, the indigenous Arab population had little power to protect itself against the organized Zionist movement.	-.68	-.07	.04	.08
In the present, Arab Israelis experience discrimination in Israel.	-.68	.22	-.27	.04
I think that Jewish attempts to establish a Jewish state in Israel are justified because they intended to create a just and peaceful society.	.66	.11	.13	.10
Since coming to Eretz Israel in the 19th century, Jews have had to consistently defend themselves against Arab attacks.	.62	.34	.11	.03
To the best of my knowledge, the Jewish halutzim (early Jewish immigrants to Eretz Yisrael or Palestine) did not intend to harm the indigenous	.56	.34	.02	.07

population living in the area.

In your opinion, what portion of the Israeli-Jewish population genuinely wants to live in peace with the Palestinian?	.5	.19	-.24	.14
In the past in the diaspora the anti-Semitism and discrimination Jews experienced was undeserved and unjust.	.09	.9	.01	.13
In the past in the diaspora Jews suffered extensive anti-Semitism, discrimination and violence.	.17	.86	-.03	.10
In the past in the diaspora, in general, most of the Jews were helpless against anti-Semitism and discrimination.	.07	.77	.10	.03
The Palestinians are primitive people.	.14	.02	.87	.05
The Palestinians have a culture that has still not reached levels common in the West.	.22	.02	.82	-.02
The Palestinians are by nature violent people.	.19	.08	.79	-.02
Arab and Palestinian attacks cause the Jewish population harm and suffering.	-.06	.31	-.04	.84
The Arab and Palestinian attacks on the Jewish population are unjust and undeserved.	.07	.25	.09	.79
The state of Israel does not have the power and resources to protect itself against Palestinian and Arab attacks	.04	-.35	-.05	.60

Note. Factor loadings >.40 are in boldface.

Table IV

*A Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis of Beliefs Predicting Concessions to the Other
(N=177)*

Variable	B	SE(B)	β	T	Sig. (p)
Victimhood Conflict	.26	.22	.07	1.22	.22
Victimhood Diaspora	.15	.32	.03	.47	.64
Zero-Sum View	-.35	.21	-.10	-1.68	.09
Dehumanization & Delegitimization	-1.02	.22	-.28	-4.61	.00
Monolithic Narrative	1.02	.13	.49	7.87	.00

R²=.48.