

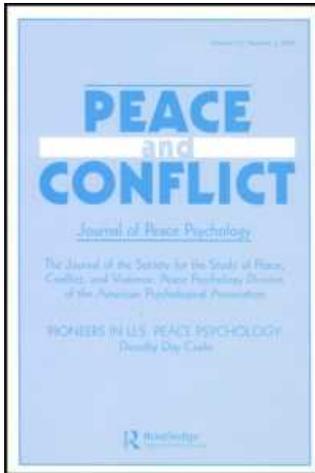
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Prevalence and Correlates of Delegitimization Among Jewish Israeli Adolescents

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ARTICLES

Prevalence and Correlates of Delegitimization Among Jewish Israeli Adolescents

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Intractable political conflicts are characterized by a *sociopsychological infrastructure* (Bar-Tal, 2007) in which individuals are subject to a cognitive and emotional repertoire that legitimizes the use of violence. This study examined the prevalence and correlates of delegitimization, one psychological component theorized as central to the maintenance and reproduction of intractable conflict. Jewish Israeli adolescents completed a survey assessing delegitimization (a process by which members of the outgroup are morally derogated and considered of less existential value than ingroup members), demographic variables, political violence exposure and participation, and attitudes toward policies related to conflict resolution with the Palestinians. Higher levels of delegitimization were associated with being male and with higher reported levels of religiosity, political violence participation, and endorsement of non-compromising attitudes associated with conflict resolution. Analyses supported a conceptual model of delegitimization as a mediator of the relation among a number of demographic predictors and both political violence participation and attitudes toward conflict resolution policies. Implications for conceptual models of delegitimization as a key component of the sociopsychological infrastructure of conflict are discussed.

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Across the globe, children and adolescents inhabit settings of intractable political conflict in which their social ecologies of development are characterized by a particular *sociopsychological infrastructure* (Bar-Tal, 2007). This infrastructure, which contains sets of collective beliefs and emotions that maintain and exacerbate conflict, justifies the use of violence against an outgroup. A key set of beliefs that comprise this infrastructure focus on *delegitimization* of the outgroup—a process by which members of the outgroup are morally derogated and considered of less existential value than ingroup members (Bar-Tal, 1989, 1990a).

In this article, we suggest that this sociopsychological infrastructure is best conceived as providing cognitive and affective mediators of the relation between the material conditions of conflict, including direct experience with conflict-related events, and behavioral and attitudinal outcomes. These outcomes, such as political violence participation and non-compromising attitudes toward conflict resolution policies, reveal the way in which conflicts are reproduced through collective and individual psychological processes.

The purpose of this study was to empirically examine this conceptual model within the context of a “living laboratory” (Bar-Tal, 2004b) of intractable conflict. We conducted a survey among Jewish Israeli adolescents assessing key demographic, cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral factors associated with this sociopsychological infrastructure, with a particular interest in the mediating role of delegitimization between hypothesized predictors and outcomes associated with the endorsement of delegitimizing beliefs about Palestinians. The setting of our study was the second Palestinian uprising (*intifada*) in Israel, an uprising that began in 2000 and has gone through several periods of escalation and calm. Our focus on adolescents was motivated by the growing recognition of the need to understand the psychological consequences of conflict for human development, beyond the common focus on trauma and psychopathology (see Barber, 2009; Barber & Schluterman, 2009).

THE ISRAELI–PALESTINIAN CONFLICT: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

The conflict between Israelis and Palestinian is typically traced to the late 19th century, when the rise of European anti-Semitism motivated mass migration of Jews to Ottoman-controlled Palestine with the explicit intent to establish a national homeland (for a review, see Laqueur & Rubin, 2008; Smith, 2001; Tessler, 1994). With the concurrent decline of the Ottoman Empire and its defeat in World War I, tensions rose in the region as Jewish immigrants and indigenous Arabs vied for political and territorial control (Morris, 2001). The dissolution of the Ottoman Empire saw the

emergence of pan-Arab nationalism, as the Arab Middle East transitioned from a colonial era to one of gradual independence (Antonius, 1938/1946). During British rule of Palestine following World War I, Jews and Arabs competed for the legitimacy of their developing rival national movements (Morris, 2001). Khalidi (1997) argued that a distinct Palestinian national identity emerged during this era and was crystallized with the loss of the wars of 1948 and 1967 on the part of united Arab armies.

Of utmost relevance to this study is the way in which this history of intergroup relations has created a context for clashing narratives of identity—what Kelman (1999b) described as a state of *negative interdependence*, such that acknowledgment of one group's history would seem to command negation of the other. A prime example consists of the clash of narratives about the 1948 war, which Jewish Israelis celebrate as the marker of their “Independence,” whereas Palestinians commemorate it as *al-Nakba* (the “Catastrophe”; see Bar-Tal & Salomon, 2006; Hammack, 2008; Jawad, 2006; Sa'di & Abu-Lughod, 2007). In other words, intergroup relations between Jews and Arabs have been framed by a zero-sum notion of the conflict in which outgroup legitimization would challenge the foundational content of the ingroup narrative of history and collective memory (Bar-Tal, 2004b).

One of our key assumptions in this study is that this history of competition for recognition and political and territorial control is maintained through sociopsychological factors—a central aspect of which consists of political and cultural institutions that promulgate a delegitimizing account of the outgroup. That is, we suggest that the history of intergroup relations between Israelis and Palestinians has produced contrasting narratives that are transmitted in institutional practices and cultural materials, such as school textbooks (Bar-Tal, 1998). The contents of these materials seek to reproduce the cultural and political basis of the conflict through inculcating a cognitive and affective repertoire that provides ingroup members with a much-needed sense of security and identity (Bar-Tal, 2007; Pettigrew, 2003). This study directly interrogates the extent to which this repertoire is internalized among contemporary Jewish Israeli youth by identifying the prevalence and correlates of *delegitimization*—a key cognitive component of the sociopsychological infrastructure of conflict (Bar-Tal, 1990a, 1990b, 2007; Oren & Bar-Tal, 2007).

DELEGITIMIZATION AMONG JEWISH ISRAELIS

Bar-Tal (1990a) defined delegitimization as “the process of categorizing groups into extremely negative social categories and excluding them from acceptability” (p. 65). As a social psychological process, delegitimization

thus involves the *moral derogation* of a group (see also Opatow, 1990; Staub, 1990). Through discourse (Tileaga, 2007), the outgroup is cast in ethnocentric terms as “lesser” on the hierarchy of human groups. As Oren and Bar-Tal (2007) also suggested, delegitimization involves the *narrative devaluation* of a group—that is, the outgroup is not only viewed in highly ethnocentric terms, its master narrative of collective history and identity is considered invalid (see also Hammack, 2009b, 2010).

In the case of Jewish Israelis, delegitimization of the Palestinians has been increasingly examined. Studies of official Israeli textbooks have revealed the extent to which the Palestinians were historically constructed in delegitimizing terms. Bar-Gal’s (1994) study of textbooks used in Jewish schools during the British Mandate period (1917–1948) revealed that the native Arab inhabitants of Palestine were presented as lazy, savage, and exotic. They were also presented as diffuse in their identity—that is, they were constructed as homogeneous with the surrounding Arab countries and not possessing a distinct status as a cultural identity. As one textbook read, “Their common language does not create a single nation of them, for the inhabitants of the Orient can be divided not by their language but by their religion” (Brawer, 1936, p. 73, as cited in Bar-Gal, 1994, p. 226).

Although Israeli textbooks have undergone numerous revisions and demonstrated in the 1990s significantly less delegitimization than ever before (Bar-Tal, 1998), a discourse of delegitimization continues to proliferate in Jewish Israeli society (Oren & Bar-Tal, 2007). Even as the peace process was progressing in the 1990s and the Oslo Accords created a new discourse of mutual acknowledgment between Israelis and Palestinians, studies revealed that Jewish Israeli children develop negative stereotypes about Arabs by age three or four (Bar-Tal, 1996; Bar-Tal & Teichman, 2005), that Palestinians are judged most negatively relative to other Arabs (Bar-Tal & Labin, 2001), and that children express a desire to inflict violence on Arabs at very young ages (Bar-Tal, 1996).

For Jewish Israelis, the tendency to express ingroup favoritism and outgroup delegitimization appears to emerge as early as preschool and then to diminish in middle childhood, only to return quite strongly in early adolescence (Teichman, 2001; Teichman & Bar-Tal, 2007). Such negative stereotypes are accentuated during specific major conflict-related events, such as a Palestinian attack inside Israel (Bar-Tal & Labin, 2001). Jewish Israelis who are particularly affected by the ethos of conflict demonstrate information processing characterized by stereotypes of Palestinians as extremely aggressive (Bar-Tal, Raviv, Raviv, & Dgani-Hirsh, 2009). These studies reveal the extent to which the Arab, in general, and the Palestinian, in particular, is constructed as an antagonist in the master narrative of Israeli identity and internalized at a very young age.

Although research on stereotypes of Arabs among Jewish Israelis reveals implications for the study of delegitimization, it is important to note that few studies have explicitly examined delegitimizing beliefs among Jewish Israelis—that is, representations of Arabs constitute the focus of studies of stereotypes, whereas this study focuses directly on the cognitive consequences of those representations in the form of *beliefs* (see Bar-Tal, 2000). As Oren and Bar-Tal (2007) suggested, delegitimization represents an extreme form of negative stereotyping in which representations are manifested in beliefs that derogate an outgroup and legitimize violence against its members.

Studies that directly assess delegitimization among young Jewish Israelis suggest considerable variability in the endorsement of beliefs, with demographic and political socialization factors assuming a close relation with levels of delegitimization (Hammack, 2009b; Sagy, Adwan, & Kaplan, 2002). In addition, delegitimization is associated with both individual and collective emotions of fear and hope (Halperin, Bar-Tal, Nets-Zehngut, & Drori, 2008). Specifically, higher levels of delegitimization among Jewish Israelis are associated with higher levels of personal and collective fear and lower levels of personal and collective hope (Halperin et al., 2008).

Research directly examining delegitimization among young Jewish Israelis has been limited either by small and nonrepresentative samples (Hammack, 2009b) or by reliance on data collected prior to the second Palestinian intifada (Halperin et al., 2008; Sagy et al., 2002). Bar-Tal and Teichman's (2005) extensive review of research on prejudice in Jewish Israeli society revealed the predominance of studies on stereotypes rather than delegitimizing beliefs. Thus, the study of delegitimization among Jewish Israelis warrants further and more systematic study.

Although delegitimization has not been extensively examined among Jewish Israeli adolescents, research on the political socialization and ideological identifications of adolescents offer some insight into the appropriation of delegitimizing beliefs. In Israeli society, political ideology is typically discussed in relation to a “dove–hawk” dimension (e.g., Maoz, 2003). “Hawks” are considered politically conservative, focused on strict security measures, and disapproving of compromises with the Palestinians. “Doves,” by contrast, are considered politically liberal advocates of compromise and negotiation with the Palestinians, favoring reconciliation.

Research on political ideology among Jewish Israeli adolescents suggests that both socialization factors and individual psychological factors assume a role in the identification with a particular ideological perspective. Adolescents who identify with a more “hawkish,” right-wing ideology are likely to have parents who are hawks (Liebes, Katz, & Ribak, 1991) and to rely

on military leaders or political authority figures for information related to the conflict (Bar-Tal, Raviv, & Freund, 1994). Demographic factors related to political socialization, such as proximity of geographic locale to the nexus of political violence, appear to assume a role in the ideological development of adolescents. Solomon and Lavi (2005) found that adolescents from areas characterized by less political violence endorsed more favorable attitudes toward peace and reconciliation with the Palestinians, in contrast with those from areas more directly affected by the conflict.

Religiosity also appears to assume a role in factors likely to be associated with delegitimization among Jewish Israelis, such as authoritarianism (e.g., Rubinstein, 1997; Tibon & Blumberg, 1999), a hawkish political ideology (e.g., Rynhold, 2005), support for political violence (e.g., Zaidise, Canetti-Nisim, & Pedahzur, 2007), and a general opposition to the peace process (Tibon & Blumberg, 1999). Moore and Aweiss (2002) discovered that Jewish Israeli adolescents who identified as “secular” endorsed more policies associated with peace and lower levels of “hatred” of the Palestinians, compared with adolescents who identified as “religious.” According to a model developed by Moore and colleagues (see Moore, 2000; Moore & Aweiss, 2002), outgroup hatred is associated with religiosity, national and civic identity salience, perception of security, and political ideology among Jewish Israeli adolescents.

In sum, despite the rich body of theory and conceptualization of delegitimization, there is a paucity of empirical work directly assessing delegitimizing beliefs in settings of intractable conflict. Studies reviewed here suggest that delegitimization has been a central component of the institutional context of the state in Israel (e.g., Bar-Gal, 1994; Bar-Tal, 1998) and that young Jewish Israelis appear to internalize this cognitive repertoire at young ages (e.g., Bar-Tal & Teichman, 2005). Few studies, however, have directly assessed the prevalence and correlates of delegitimization among young Jewish Israelis. Research that has directly assessed delegitimization has been limited by the use of small samples or the collection of data prior to the second Palestinian uprising (e.g., Halperin et al., 2008). This study seeks to address this gap in the literature.

THIS STUDY

The purpose of this study was to preliminarily assess the prevalence and correlates of delegitimization among contemporary Jewish Israeli adolescents. We were particularly interested in testing a conceptual model of delegitimization as a mediator of the relation between hypothesized predictors and behavioral and attitudinal outcomes. The connection of delegitimization

to intergroup conflict and justification for political and cultural violence (Galtung, 1990; Oren & Bar-Tal, 2007) makes it particularly important for empirical study. Our focus on adolescents was meant to provide a window into the course of the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians by revealing the extent to which this particular generation have been psychologically impacted by the ethos of conflict (see Bar-Tal et al., 2009).

Based on theory and previous literature, we devised a conceptual model of the relations among variables assessed in the study (see Figure 1). We conceived of demographic and experiential factors as *antecedents* of cognitive mechanisms that facilitate political violence participation and non-compromising attitudes toward conflict resolution. Thus, delegitimization was conceptualized as a *mediator* of the relation between demographic or experiential factors and attitudinal and behavioral outcomes associated with conflict reproduction. The following specific hypotheses guided our analyses.

Demographic Factors

Based on previous literature, we hypothesized that particular demographic factors would be associated with delegitimization and its hypothesized behavioral and attitudinal outcomes. In terms of demography, kibbutz–moshav communities have historically been more supportive of compromises for peace (for a review of these types of communities, see Avgar, Bronfenbrenner, & Henderson, 1977; Sofer & Applebaum, 2006), and some research suggests that youth from these communities possess fewer delegitimizing beliefs about Palestinians relative to adolescents from other areas in Israel (e.g., Hammack, 2009b). We hypothesized that adolescents from the kibbutz–moshav site of survey administration would report lower levels of delegitimization, less political violence participation, and more

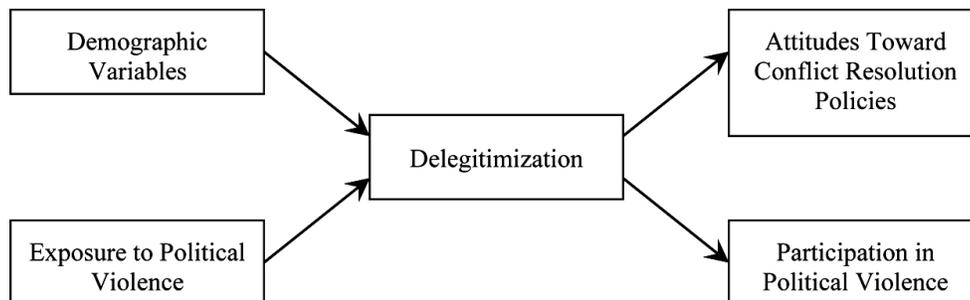


FIGURE 1 Conceptual model proposing mediation effect of delegitimization in the relation between antecedent (demographic variables and exposure to political violence) and outcome variables (participation in political violence and attitudes toward conflict resolution policies).

compromising attitudes toward conflict resolution policies. Based on the literature on religiosity and outgroup attitudes among Jewish Israeli adolescents (e.g., Moore & Aweiss, 2002), we hypothesized that self-reported religiosity would be associated with higher levels of delegitimization, non-compromising attitudes toward conflict resolution policies, and higher levels of political violence participation. Given the lack of studies directly examining differences based on sex or socioeconomic status in delegitimization, we did not develop specific hypotheses about the relation between these demographic factors and delegitimization. We were, however, interested in exploring the potential role of both sex and income, given some literature that suggests potentially unique processes in conflict settings based on these factors (e.g., Fishman, Grinstein-Weiss, & Mesch, 2000; Rubinstein, 1995).

Experiential Factors

Based on research that suggests a relation between exposure to political violence and negative stereotypes about Palestinians and Arabs (Bar-Tal & Labin, 2001), we hypothesized that greater exposure to political violence (i.e., witnessing) would be associated with higher levels of delegitimization, more non-compromising attitudes toward conflict resolution policies, and greater participation in political violence. Because research on the impact of participation in “coexistence” programs is inconclusive and suggests differential outcomes (e.g., Abu-Nimer, 2004; Bar-Tal, 2004a; Hammack, 2006, 2009a; Maoz, 2004a, 2011), we did not formulate any specific hypotheses about the relation between prior coexistence program participation and the mediator and outcome variables. We nevertheless wanted to include this variable in our analyses to explore its possible relation with delegitimization, attitudes toward conflict resolution policies, and political violence participation.

Mediation Model

We hypothesized a significant relation between delegitimization and both outcome variables—political violence participation and attitudes toward conflict resolution policies. Specifically, we hypothesized that higher reports of delegitimization would be associated with greater endorsement of non-compromising attitudes toward conflict resolution policies and higher levels of political violence participation. Further, we hypothesized that delegitimization would mediate the relation between demographic and experiential predictors and behavioral and attitudinal outcomes associated with conflict reproduction.

METHOD

Participants and Procedures

Surveys were distributed to 395 youth in Grades 10 (57%) and 11 in three secondary schools in Israel. Two schools were located in major urban centers, whereas one was located in a rural setting designed to serve youth who reside in kibbutzim or moshavim. The selection of this site allowed us to address our hypothesis about demographic variability in delegitimization and its correlates. Schools represented institutions at which Phillip L. Hammack had established a relationship for previous research (Hammack, 2006).

Data from 2 participants were omitted because of erratic responses. Data from 42 participants were omitted because of missing demographic data. Thus, survey responses from 351 participants were retained for analysis. Of this number, 175 identified as male and 176 as female. The median age was 16 years. Other demographic information is provided in Table 1.

Surveys were translated into Hebrew and then translated back into English by a second translator who had not seen the original English version. This procedure was undertaken to ensure the accuracy of the translation and to uncover any conceptual problems with the survey. Permission was obtained by school officials to conduct the study. Written parental consent and youth assent were obtained prior to administration.

TABLE 1
Participant Responses on Demographic Variables

<i>Variable</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Religiosity		
Not religious	226	64.40
Somewhat religious	119	33.90
Very religious	6	1.70
Family income		
Low	15	4.30
Middle	188	53.60
High	135	38.50
Very high	13	3.70
Community type		
Rural (kibbutz or moshav)	32	9.10
Urban	319	90.88
Participation in a coexistence program		
No	237	67.50
Yes	114	32.50

Note. $N = 351$.

Measures

Demographic variables. Respondents provided demographic information on sex, age, family income, and religiosity. Family income was indicated on a 4-point scale ranging from 0 (*low*) to 3 (*very high*), and religiosity was indicated on a 3-point scale ranging from 0 (*not religious*) to 2 (*very religious*). A dummy-coded variable based on the area in which the survey was administered was used for community type (0 = *rural* [kibbutz or moshav], 1 = *urban*).

Experiential variables. Respondents indicated on a dichotomous item whether they had ever participated in a coexistence program with Arabs (0 = *no*). Exposure to political violence was assessed by response to a single item (“I have personally witnessed violence related to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict”) in which participants rated their level of exposure on a 5-point scale ranging from 0 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*).

Delegitimization. Nine items reflecting delegitimization were generated that assessed internalization of delegitimizing societal beliefs about Palestinians (e.g., “Palestinians do not belong to a ‘nation’ in the same way as Jews do”). Responses to all items were recorded along a 5-point scale ranging from 0 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*). A confirmatory factor analysis using varimax rotation was conducted to distinguish items assessing delegitimization from those assessing attitudes toward conflict resolution policies. A factor loading of at least .40 was used as the criterion for item retention. This criterion, as opposed to the more widely used .60, was chosen to maintain scale reliability, as well as to ensure the retention of items that we felt reflected either delegitimization or attitudes toward conflict resolution policies (see Garson, 2010). As shown in Table 2, seven delegitimization items loaded onto the first factor. Items that did not meet the retention criterion on either factor were omitted from further analysis. Delegitimization scale scores were constructed by calculating the mean response across the seven items assessing this construct ($\alpha = .87$).

Attitudes toward conflict resolution policies. Five items reflecting attitudes toward conflict resolution policies were generated that assessed endorsement of specific policy issues related to the conflict (e.g., “I do not support the withdrawal from all settlements of West Bank and Gaza”; see Table 2 for a complete list of items). Higher scores on these items reflected greater support for policies intended to resolve the conflict (i.e., attitudes demonstrating greater willingness to compromise). Scale scores were

TABLE 2
Factor Loadings of Retained Items Assessing Delegitimization and Attitudes Toward
Conflict Resolution Policies

Variable	Factor loadings	
	Delegitimization	Policy attitudes
1. Arabs are by nature a violent people.	(-.78)	-.11
2. Palestinians are backwards and savage people.	(-.78)	-.11
3. Arabs are an inferior group to Israelis, Europeans, and Americans.	(-.77)	-.08
4. Most Palestinians hate Jewish people and want them driven into the sea.	(-.68)	-.30
5. I would not like to have friends who are Arab.	(-.65)	-.22
6. Most Palestinians support terrorism.	(-.62)	-.34
7. Palestinians don't belong to a "nation" the same way Jews do.	(-.54)	-.20
8. I think there will have to be a lot of withdrawal from the settlements for peace.	-.03	(-.83)
9. I support the development of settlements in the West Bank and Gaza.	.08	(-.77)
10. I think Israel must recognize Palestine as a nation for peace.	-.35	(-.69)
11. I do not support the withdrawal from all settlements of the West Bank and Gaza.	-.01	(-.63)
12. Palestinians should have a separate state.	-.33	(-.48)

Note. Parentheses indicate retention of item on factor.

constructed by calculating the mean response across the five items assessing this construct ($\alpha = .78$).

Political violence participation. Participation in political violence was assessed by response to a single item ("I have been involved in acts of violence against Palestinians or Israeli Arabs") on a 5-point scale ranging from 0 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*), with higher scores reflecting higher levels of participation.

RESULTS

Results are organized in three sections. First, we examine the prevalence of delegitimization and the behavioral and attitudinal factors conceptualized as outcome variables (i.e., political violence participation and attitudes toward conflict resolution policies). Our intent here is to provide a window into the

beliefs, attitudes, and actions of contemporary Jewish Israeli adolescents, as well as to give the reader a clear sense of the nature of our sample. Second, we present bivariate correlations among variables assessed in the study to examine our hypotheses about bivariate relations. Finally, we present the results of a mediation analysis to more precisely delineate the nature of relations among hypothesized predictors and outcomes of delegitimization.

Prevalence of Delegitimization, Attitudes toward Conflict Resolution Policies, and Political Violence Participation

To assess the basic prevalence of delegitimization among our sample, we examined responses to four key items on the delegitimization measure. In response to the item, "Palestinians don't belong to a 'nation' the same way as Jews do," 32% of youth agreed, whereas 31% were unsure and 33% disagreed. Fifty-three percent of youth disagreed with the statement, "Arabs are by nature a violent people," whereas 20% agreed and 21% were unsure. Thirty-one percent of youth agreed with the statement, "Palestinians are backwards and savage people," whereas 50% disagreed and 18% were unsure. Finally, in response to the statement, "Arabs are an inferior group to Israelis, Europeans, and Americans," 17% of youth agreed, whereas 13% were unsure and 63% disagreed.

Examination of responses to items on the scale assessing attitudes toward conflict resolution policies revealed considerable variability among youth in our study. Respondents revealed ambivalence about the need for withdrawal from settlements to achieve peace, with 40% supporting withdrawal, 25% opposing withdrawal, and 29% unsure. However, only a minority of youth (13%) explicitly supported the development of settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, with 53% not supporting settlement construction and 27% unsure. Respondents also revealed ambivalence about the need for Israel to recognize Palestine as a nation to achieve peace, with 42% agreeing with the need for recognition, 22% disagreeing, and 31% being unsure.

The majority of the 351 adolescents in the study reported low levels of participation in political violence ($n = 239$). Slightly over 10% of youth reported participation in direct acts of political violence ($n = 38$), whereas about 15% ($n = 54$) reported a moderate level of participation in political violence. Twenty youth did not respond to this item on the questionnaire.

Correlations

Table 3 presents descriptive statistics and correlations among all variables. Among demographic variables, older respondents reported higher levels of religiosity ($r = .15$, $p < .01$), and participants from urban communities

TABLE 3
Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Among Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Age ^a	—									
2. Sex ^b	.00	—								
3. Family income ^c	-.12*	-.14*	—							
4. Religiosity ^d	.15**	-.03	-.03	—						
5. Community type ^e	.11*	-.04	.18**	.03	—					
6. Coexistence program participation ^f	.08	.08	-.09	-.05	-.31***	—				
7. Political violence exposure ^g	-.04	-.13*	.13*	.10	-.06	.09	—			
8. Delegitimization ^h	.03	-.14**	-.08	.29***	.10	-.08	.06	—		
9. Political violence participation ^g	.15**	-.11*	.03	.10	.07	-.02	.16**	.26***	—	
10. Conflict resolution attitudes ^h	.04	.16**	.07	-.30***	-.13*	.10	-.13*	-.69***	-.19**	—
<i>M</i>	15.79	0.50	1.42	0.38	3.64	0.33	1.36	1.87	0.94	1.99
<i>SD</i>	0.78	0.50	0.64	0.55	0.92	0.47	1.37	0.81	1.12	0.64

Note. *N* = 351.

^a0 = 14–15 years, 1 = 16–18 years.

^b0 = male, 1 = female.

^c0 = low, 1 = middle, 2 = high, 3 = very high.

^d0 = not religious, 1 = somewhat religious, 2 = very religious.

^e0 = “rural” (kibbutz or moshav), 1 = “urban.”

^f0 = no, 1 = yes.

^g0 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree.

^hHigher scores indicate greater endorsement of policies emphasizing compromise.

p* < .05. *p* < .01. ****p* < .001.

reported higher family income than those from the rural kibbutz–moshav site of survey administration ($r = .18, p < .01$). Males ($r = -.12, p < .05$) and participants reporting higher family incomes ($r = .13, p < .05$) were more likely to report exposure to political violence. Finally, respondents from rural kibbutz–moshav communities were more likely to have participated in a coexistence program with Arabs ($r = -.31, p < .001$).

Consistent with our hypotheses about the relation between demographic factors and delegitimization and outcome variables, adolescents from the kibbutz–moshav site were more likely to endorse compromising attitudes toward conflict resolution policies than their urban peers ($r = -.13, p < .05$). Contrary to our hypotheses, however, there was no significant bivariate relation between community type and delegitimization or political violence participation. Being male was associated with higher levels of delegitimization ($r = -.14, p < .01$).

Consistent with our hypotheses about the relation between religiosity and other variables, adolescents who reported higher levels of religiosity also reported higher levels of delegitimization ($r = .29, p < .001$) and more non-compromising attitudes toward conflict resolution policies ($r = -.30, p < .001$). There was no relation between self-reported religiosity and political violence participation.

In terms of our hypotheses about the relation between experiential factors and delegitimization and outcome variables, adolescents who reported greater exposure to political violence also reported greater participation in political violence ($r = .16, p < .01$) and more non-compromising attitudes toward conflict resolution policies ($r = -.12, p < .05$). There was no relation between exposure to political violence and delegitimization. There was no relation between participation in a coexistence program with Arabs and any of the other variables assessed in this study, with the exception of community type (as noted earlier).

As hypothesized, delegitimization was significantly associated with participation in political violence and attitudes toward conflict resolution policies. Specifically, higher levels of delegitimization were associated with endorsement of non-compromising attitudes toward conflict resolution policies ($r = -.69, p < .001$) and increased participation in political violence ($r = .26, p < .001$).

Assessment of Mediation Model

In our proposed model (see Figure 1), delegitimization mediates the relation between demographic and experiential predictors and our proposed outcome variables (attitudes toward conflict resolution policies and political violence participation). Mediation analysis was conducted via a series of

path analyses (e.g., Gigeure & Lalonde, 2010; Grabe & Hyde, 2009) using EQS 6.1 (Bentler, 2006) software. EQS 6.1 missing data analysis regression imputations were used to handle missing data. Criteria for determining satisfactory fit were an insignificant chi-square or a normed chi-square value of ≤ 2.0 ; non-normed fit index, Bollen's fit index, and comparative fit index values $> .95$; and root mean square error of approximation values $< .06$ (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

According to Baron and Kenny (1986), four conditions must be met to establish mediation. First, antecedent variables must significantly predict the mediating variable. Second, the mediating variable must significantly predict the outcome variables. Third, the antecedent variables must significantly predict the outcome variables. Fourth, the effect of the antecedent variable on the outcome variable must be significantly reduced once the mediating variable is entered into the model.

Given the frequency of significant correlations among antecedent variables, it was possible that nonsignificant, zero-order correlations between antecedent variables and delegitimization revealed during bivariate analysis (see Table 2) may have been due to the effect of another variable (Garson, 2009). Therefore, prior to mediation analyses, we conducted a preliminary analysis of our theoretical model to determine which antecedent variables significantly predicted delegitimization once the effect of other variables was controlled. Although fit indexes (see Theoretical Model, Table 4) approached, but did not meet, the criteria established earlier, it was revealed that four antecedent variables significantly predicted delegitimization within the model: sex ($\beta = -.14, p < .05$), family income ($\beta = -.12, p < .05$), religiosity ($\beta = .28, p < .05$), and community type ($\beta = .11, p < .05$). Because age ($\beta = -.03, p > .05$), coexistence program participation ($\beta = .04, p > .05$), and exposure to political violence ($\beta = .04, p > .05$) did not emerge as significant predictors of delegitimization and, thus, did not satisfy the first condition outlined by Baron and Kenny (1986), they were not retained for further analysis.

TABLE 4
 Goodness-of-Fit Statistics for Theoretical, Mediation, and Direct Effects Models

<i>Model</i>	χ^2	df	$\chi^2/2$	<i>NNFI</i>	<i>IFI</i>	<i>CFI</i>	<i>RMSEA</i>
Theoretical	62.01	28	2.21	.86	.92	.92	.06
Mediation	18.93	13	1.46	.97	.98	.98	.04
Direct effects	10.00	5	2.00	.80	.94	.93	.05

Note. CFI = comparative fit index; IFI = Bollen's fit index; NNFI = non-normed fit index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation.

To test the first and second conditions outlined by Baron and Kenny (1986), a structural equation model was constructed in which sex, family income, religiosity, and community type predicted delegitimization, which, in turn, predicted participation in political violence and attitudes toward conflict resolution policies. Results (see Figure 2; see Mediation Model, Table 4 for fit indexes) indicated that the model fit the data. All antecedent variables significantly predicted delegitimization, whereas delegitimization significantly predicted attitudes toward conflict resolution policies and participation in political violence. Thus, both the first and second conditions needed to demonstrate mediation were satisfied. Specifically, being male, reporting lower family income, being more religious, and being from an urban area significantly predicted higher delegitimization scores. Higher delegitimization significantly predicted greater participation in political violence and less support for policies that emphasize compromise with the Palestinians.

To test the third condition—namely, that antecedent variables directly predict outcome variables—we tested a model in which sex, family income, religiosity, and community type predicted participation in political violence and attitudes toward conflict resolution policies. Results (see Figure 3; see Direct Effects Model, Table 4 for fit indexes) indicated that the model adequately fit the data. The only antecedent variable that significantly predicted participation in political violence was sex. Being male predicted higher levels of political violence participation. In terms of attitudes toward conflict resolution policies, being female, having higher family income,

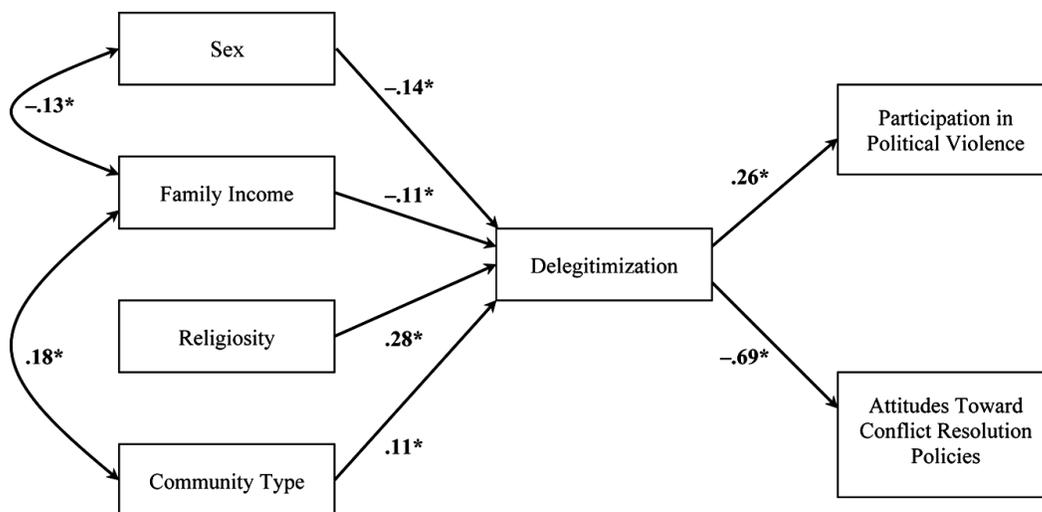


FIGURE 2 Mediation model with standardized beta coefficients. *Note.* Only antecedent variables that significantly predicted delegitimization were retained in this model. * $p < .05$.

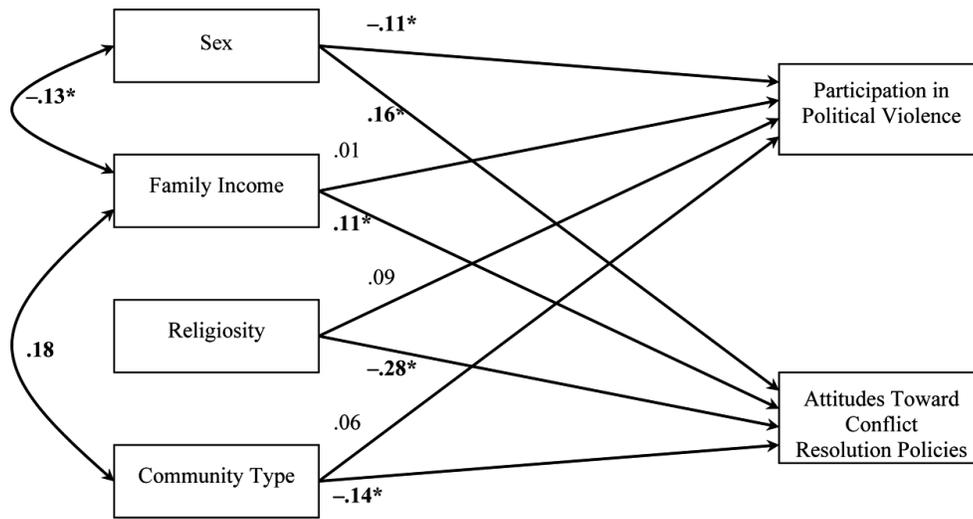


FIGURE 3 Direct effects model with standardized beta coefficients. * $p < .05$.

lower levels of religiosity, and being from the kibbutz–moshav site predicted greater endorsement of policies that emphasize compromise with Palestinians.

To test the fourth condition—namely, that the effect of an antecedent variable on the outcome variables is significantly reduced once the mediator is entered into the model—a series of Sobel (1982) tests were performed. Only variables that met the first three conditions outlined by Baron and Kenny (1986) were analyzed. Results (see Table 5) revealed that delegitimization significantly mediated the relation between sex and participation in political violence. Moreover, delegitimization significantly mediated the relation between sex, family income, religiosity and community type, and attitudes toward conflict resolution polices.

TABLE 5
Sobel Test of Indirect Effects Between Antecedent and Outcome Variables

<i>Indirect Effects</i>	t_a	t_b	<i>Sobel</i>
Sex → Delegitimization → Political violence participation	-2.82	5.11	2.47*
Sex → Delegitimization → Conflict resolution attitudes	-2.82	-17.90	2.78**
Family income → Delegitimization → Conflict resolution attitudes	-2.19	-17.90	2.17*
Religiosity → Delegitimization → Conflict resolution attitudes	-5.47	-17.90	5.24***
Community type → Delegitimization → Conflict resolution attitudes	2.11	-17.90	2.10*

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

DISCUSSION

When faced with the challenges posed by intractable conflict, societies develop a sociopsychological infrastructure comprised of a repertoire of widely disseminated beliefs and collective emotion orientations (Bar-Tal, 2007). Within this ecology of intractable conflict, delegitimization represents a fundamental social psychological process (Bar-Tal, 2000). Because it involves both moral derogation and narrative devaluation of an outgroup (Oren & Bar-Tal, 2007), delegitimization contributes to the maintenance and reproduction of intergroup antagonism. Because it positions groups in a moral and existential hierarchy, delegitimization is likely a central process implicated in intergroup conflict and the justification of collective violence, such as genocide (Bar-Tal & Hammack, in press; Oren & Bar-Tal, 2007). Despite its intuitive relation to conflict and to the existence of theoretical perspectives on conflict that integrate delegitimization (e.g., Bar-Tal, 1990a, 2007), there has been virtually no empirical study of delegitimization, especially among adolescents. The little empirical work that has been conducted is limited by the use of small, nonrepresentative samples or by data collection in earlier periods of the conflict (e.g., Halperin et al., 2008; Hammack, 2009b).

The purpose of this study was to address this oversight in the empirical literature through a preliminary assessment of the prevalence and correlates of delegitimization among Jewish Israeli adolescents during the second Palestinian intifada—a time of particularly heightened antagonism in the history of Israeli–Palestinian relations. We conceived of delegitimization as a cognitive mediator that facilitates attitudes and behavior associated with the reproduction of conflict. Hence, we sought to explore relations among variables conceptualized as both *antecedents* (e.g., religiosity) and *outcomes* (e.g., non-compromising attitudes toward conflict resolution policies) of this process. Our data are particularly important because of the relative lack of empirical study of delegitimization in conflict settings, despite the vast and sophisticated theoretical literature (e.g., Bar-Tal, 1990b, 2007) and the likely centrality of this process in maintaining and justifying political violence (Bar-Tal & Hammack, in press)—a devastating social phenomenon that plagues many regions of the globe.

In terms of prevalence, youth endorsed delegitimizing beliefs about the Palestinians in sizeable numbers. For example, only one-third of respondents endorsed the belief that the Palestinians belong to their own distinct “nation” in the same way Jews do. This fundamental belief represents the core of the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians—a conflict rooted in a battle of nationalist movements (Morris, 2001). The fact that, even after the 1993 Oslo Accords in which the two sides essentially recognized the

mutual legitimacy of each other's national aspirations, two-thirds of youth do not definitively view the Palestinians as a distinct national entity reveals a high degree of delegitimization.

However, a sizeable number of youth appeared to challenge some of the most problematic delegitimizing beliefs, such as the belief that Arabs are "violent by nature" (53% disagreed), that Palestinians are "backward and savage" (50% disagreed), and that Arabs are inferior to Israelis, Europeans, and Americans (63% disagreed). This response pattern reveals ambivalence on the part of young Jewish Israelis. On the one hand, these results are encouraging in that they suggest that, although delegitimization is certainly prevalent, its levels demonstrate enough variability to maintain hope for the possibility of peace and conflict resolution. On the other hand, that anywhere from one-half to two-thirds of respondents endorse some level of direct delegitimization of the Palestinians reveals the extent to which contemporary adolescents have inherited the sociopsychological conditions of the conflict and will, thus, participate in its reproduction through internalizing a cognitive repertoire.

Our interpretation of this pattern of results is that contemporary Jewish Israeli adolescents display considerable *ambivalence* about the legitimacy of the Palestinians. In particular, most do not recognize the Palestinians as a distinct national group on par with Israelis. However, many will not go so far as to endorse delegitimizing beliefs about the inherent character of Palestinians as violent or inferior to other groups. In our view, this pattern of ambivalence is intimately connected to the transitional nature of the Oslo Accords and reveals the close link between policy discourse and social cognition.

The connection between public policy and social cognition is a growing area of inquiry in social psychology and innovatively links individual processes to larger policy contexts (e.g., Cohen, 2003; Davies, Steele, & Markus, 2008; Haley & Sidanius, 2006; Hegarty & Chrysochoou, 2005; Sibley, Liu, & Kirkwood, 2006). This line of research is particularly important because it provides direct evidence of the likely consequences of large-scale policy changes on individual cognition and, subsequently, intergroup relations. Studies have revealed that the nature of political beliefs is closely linked with perceptions of group security and identity (e.g., Davies et al., 2008) and the media framing of policy issues (e.g., Sibley et al., 2006). Given that the historical setting in which our study was conducted was one of heightened existential insecurity for Jewish Israelis (Pettigrew, 2003), coupled with a policy context of only quasi-recognition of Palestinian national aspirations and the media framing of Palestinians as a collective threat to Jewish Israelis (Dor, 2003), the ambivalence of adolescents about legitimization of the Palestinians is understandable.

The 1993 Oslo Accords represented an interim agreement between Israelis and Palestinians in which the leaders of both groups formally recognized their mutual legitimate political rights and existences. This agreement did not represent a resolution to the conflict but rather a “transitional” agreement about political and economic control of the occupied Palestinian territories, with limited self-government granted to the Palestinians under a newly formed Palestinian Authority (see Kittrie, 2003; for a critical review and analysis, see Roy, 2002). Although the Oslo agreement was historic and appeared to be a critical step on the way to mutual legitimization and recognition, it continues to be the operating policy document framing Israeli–Palestinian relations and Palestinian government, which was not its intent. Hence, this policy has locked Israelis into a “liminal” view of the Palestinians—a kind of “quasi-legitimization” that suggests an ambivalent stance toward willingness to legitimize and recognize their political rights (see Hammack, 2011). The participants in our study were born around 1990 and, thus, grew up within the social and political context of this agreement. It stands to reason, then, that, although delegitimization clearly forms a part of their cognitive repertoire, there is also considerable ambivalence and variability about the nature of the Palestinians and their right to self-determination.

The response pattern of youth on attitudes related to conflict resolution policies also revealed considerable ambivalence, with less than half endorsing the strong compromises that most who advocate a two-state solution to the conflict identify (Kelman, 1999a). These compromises include the dismantling of settlements in the occupied territories, which over 50% of youth in this study did not support (i.e., over 50% opposed the dismantling of existing settlements). The majority of youth (53%) did, however, oppose the construction of new settlements in the occupied territories. The prevalence of these attitudes about conflict resolution reveals the ambivalence that many contemporary Jewish Israeli adolescents appear to have about the level of concession needed to achieve peace with the Palestinians. Moreover, our data likely reflect the ambivalence Israeli society experienced as a whole toward the resolution of the conflict in the post-Oslo period (see Kelman, 2007).

We were not surprised to find that only 10% of youth reported direct participation in acts of political violence against Arabs. Given that the Israeli life course mandates military service after secondary school, our respondents were too young to have been active participants in violence in any formal capacity. Nevertheless, the fact that 10% of respondents reported a high degree of political violence participation is concerning because this violence would have occurred outside the scope of military service. Future studies of delegitimization might focus on a rich qualitative

analysis of this subsample of adolescents who report particularly high levels of political violence participation because a study of this group would provide greater insight into the facilitating role of cognitive factors like delegitimization in violence. Given that delegitimization is theorized as a key facilitating factor in extreme forms of intergroup violence, including genocide (Bar-Tal & Hammack, in press; Oren & Bar-Tal, 2007), it is essential to intensively study individuals who report the highest levels of willingness to engage in violence.

Correlation analyses revealed a close association between delegitimization and variables we conceptualized as behavioral and attitudinal outcomes (i.e., political violence participation and attitudes toward conflict resolution policies). As hypothesized, adolescents who reported higher levels of delegitimization also reported higher levels of political violence participation and endorsed fewer compromising attitudes toward conflict resolution policies. The strength of relations among these variables provides empirical support for conceptual models of delegitimization as a likely *cognitive facilitator* of intergroup aggression, although the correlational design of our study prevents us from making causal claims about the relation among these variables. Future research might utilize longitudinal or experimental designs to better isolate the precise relations among these variables.

As mechanisms that facilitate individual participation in intergroup aggression, factors like delegitimization are best conceptualized as *mediators* of the relation among variables associated with conflict reproduction. In this study, we tested such a conceptual model, discovering support for delegitimization as a mediator of the relation between key demographic variables and outcomes associated with conflict reproduction. Respondents who were male, lower income, more religious, and *not* from the kibbutz-moshav site reported fewer compromising attitudes toward conflict resolution policies. Males also reported higher levels of political violence participation. The results of our analyses revealed strong support for the role of delegitimizing beliefs as a mediator in this pattern of relations, suggesting its role as a cognitive mechanism through which these demographic predictors appear to operate.

It is important to note that, although support for a mediation model was strong, correlations of hypothesized antecedent variables with delegitimization and the outcome variables were statistically significant but low in magnitude. This pattern of findings suggests that, although the demographic and experiential factors we measured may be related to delegitimization and the outcome variables, they may not represent the strongest predictors. Further research is needed in which a more extensive battery of hypothesized antecedent variables is administered so as to identify the strongest predictors of these social psychological factors.

Future studies might assess a broader range of predictors and mediators, including other components of the sociopsychological infrastructure of conflict that have also been theorized as central to conflict reproduction (Bar-Tal, 2007). Future studies might also go beyond cognitive mediators to include assessment of emotional factors implicated in conflict. A very promising line of research on emotion in conflict settings has emerged (e.g., Bar-Tal, Halperin, & de Rivera, 2007; Halperin, 2008; Halperin et al., 2008; Halperin, Canetti-Nisim, & Hirsch-Hoefler, 2009), and future studies ought to further examine relations among cognitive, affective, and behavioral factors associated with conflict.

It is noteworthy that witnessing political violence was not associated with delegitimization, although it was significantly associated with both political violence participation and non-compromising attitudes toward conflict resolution policies. This pattern of relations suggests that a cognitive facilitator like delegitimization may be unnecessary in the link from the trauma of violence exposure to violence participation and polarized attitudes. Future studies ought to use more extensive measures of violence exposure and participation to further examine the nature of these processes in settings of intractable conflict. This study did not assess trauma, and future research might employ qualitative designs to focus assessment on youth with particularly high levels of violence exposure. Although such studies have been conducted to some extent in conflict settings (for a review, see Barber & Schluterman, 2009), the focus is frequently on the mental health outcomes and general adjustment of adolescents, rather than the social and cognitive consequences of violence exposure, particularly with regard to processes like delegitimization.

It is also noteworthy that participation in a coexistence program with Arabs had no relation with delegitimization or the outcome variables. This finding challenges the idea that intergroup contact might have a significant effect on outgroup attitudes and beliefs (Pettigrew, 1998) in settings of ongoing intractable conflict because adolescents who participated in contact with Arabs were no less likely to endorse delegitimizing beliefs about Arabs than other respondents in this study. This finding is consistent with other studies (e.g., Halperin et al., 2008) and with the literature on Israeli–Palestinian coexistence programs, which reveals the challenges and limitations of such efforts to effect significant cognitive or ideological change (e.g., Hammack, 2006, 2009a, 2011). Future research ought to more systematically evaluate the nature of intergroup contact experiences among Jewish Israeli adolescents, given the increasing number of such efforts and the considerable diversity in their design and implementation (Maoz, 2011). Such efforts became particularly abundant after the Oslo Accords,

when a peace education industry began to flourish on the assumption that formal conflict resolution was close at hand (Abu-Nimer, 1999, 2004; Maoz, 2004a, 2004b). Yet, many have argued that coexistence education and intergroup contact are extremely challenging in instances of ongoing intractable conflict (Bar-Tal, 2004a; Bekerman, 2007, 2009; Bekerman & Maoz, 2005). There is a need for more systematic studies of the sociopsychological processes and consequences of such efforts in settings of intractable conflict.

This study was limited by its cross-sectional survey design in which important social psychological processes, such as delegitimization and attitudes toward conflict resolution policies, were rendered static through the demands of the survey method. We view these processes as intrinsically dynamic and evolving within individuals and groups and, thus, suggest that future research utilize ethnographic, experimental, and longitudinal designs to better capture the experience and evolution of these processes. The study was also limited by its use of a convenience sample obtained through three high schools with which Phillip L. Hammack already had a research relationship. Future research ought to utilize a random sampling strategy to rule out possibilities of selection bias in terms of particular schools or community institutions that are willing to support research. Despite these limitations, we believe that this study offers a valuable contribution to the literature on intractable political conflict. By beginning to specify the relations among factors associated with delegitimization, this study contributes to the refinement of existing conceptual models and offers fertile insights for future empirical work.

The study of delegitimization—a key social psychological process in the context of intractable conflict—provides valuable insights into the reproduction of conflict through psychological factors. The intent of this study was to begin to link theory with empirical data in the context of an active intractable conflict and, in the process, to explore the relations among factors conceptualized as key to conflict reproduction. Identifying patterns of relations among delegitimization and other factors might contribute to the formulation of more effective interventions for adolescents in conflict settings—interventions designed to thwart the inevitability of conflict reproduction. As peace psychologists have increasingly recognized, however, such sociopsychological interventions rely on the political and structural change that can reframe the nature of intergroup relations from competition and antagonism to cooperation and coexistence. By linking the discourse of a particular ethos of conflict with the psychology of its inhabitants, we might better advocate for the policy and structural changes required to ensure a lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

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