The Influence of Context and Political Identification on Israeli Jews’ Views of Palestinians

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This study followed changes among Israeli Jews in stereotypic perceptions, attitudes, and feelings toward Palestinians, as a function of political identification on the dove-hawk dimension. The study used the research paradigm of Gilbert (1951) and Karlins, Coffman, and Walters (1969), by administering the same questionnaire to compatible groups of students at 4 points in time between 1990 and 2000, a period in which critical events concerning Palestinian–Israeli relations occurred. Participants were 394 Israeli students enrolled at the School of Education at Tel Aviv University. The analyses showed that dovish participants tended to be more positive toward Palestinian people than the hawkish participants. Also, there was a general tendency for more positive perceptions and attitudes to develop over time. Finally, whereas dovish participants tended to exhibit a linear trend in becoming more positive toward the Palestinians over time, hawkish participants demonstrated a quadratic pattern, with 1995 and 2000 being less positive than 1990 and 1997. The results are discussed within the conceptual framework of transitional context and identification with a group.

Cultural stereotypes are not stable: They are subject to change as a result of the nature of intergroup relations, as well as to intragroup political, societal, and economic processes (Allport, 1954; Ashmore & Del Boca, 1981; D. Bar-Tal, 1997).
Classic studies by Katz and Braly (1933), Gilbert (1951), and Karlins et al. (1969) have demonstrated the change of stereotypes over time. Using the same measurement instruments for similar populations of individuals (undergraduate students at Princeton University) at three different points in time (1932, 1950, and 1967), the studies showed changes in the stereotypes of Americans, Germans, Chinese, English, Irish, Italians, Japanese, Jews, African Americans, and Turks. These changes were explained by the evolution of liberal attitudes (Karlins et al., 1969).

Our objective in this study, using the paradigm of the previously noted studies, was to investigate the effects of major events in Israeli–Palestinian relations on Israeli Jews’ perceptions, attitudes, and feelings toward Palestinians as a function of participants’ political identification. A major event is defined as an event of great importance to a society that (a) is experienced by society members either directly (by participation) or indirectly (by watching, hearing, or reading about the event), (b) causes wide resonance, (c) has relevance to the well-being of individual society members and society as a whole, (d) involves society members, (e) is central in public discussion and on the public agenda, and (f) implies information that forces society members to reconsider and often change their “psychological repertoire” (Oren, 2005). Such major events can pertain to the outbreak of war or terror attacks, as well as the beginning of peace negotiations or the signing of a peace agreement. All these events provide information that forces society members to examine their beliefs, attitudes, and feelings about the opponent in the conflict. Society members cannot ignore the information because of its great centrality and relevance (see D. Bar-Tal & Sharvit, in press).

Previous research on the influence of intergroup relations on a group’s psychological repertoire (i.e., stereotypic perceptions, attitudes, and feelings; D. Bar-Tal & Teichman, 2005) has focused mainly on the influence of intergroup conflict on the stereotypic perceptions of the groups involved. Realistic conflict theory, which underlies this line of research, suggests that stereotypes reflect intergroup conflict or competition over territory, resources, or values (D. Bar-Tal, 1990; Bobo, 1988; Campbell, 1965; Sherif, 1967). Experiments by Sherif (1966; Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood, & Sherif, 1961) and studies by Dudycha (1942), Seago (1947), and Sinha and Upadhyaya (1960) have validated the assumptions of realistic conflict theory. They all showed that major events related to conflict, such as wars, confrontations, or disputes, provide negative information about the opponent, and on its basis group members form and change their stereotypes. However, it seems logical that not only major events related to conflict may change stereotypes but also major events related to peace building. Such events as the cessation of violence, negotiations, or agreements, which indicate peaceful conflict resolution, provide critical information that may change stereotypes of the opponent to become more positive in content. In the experiments by Sherif et al., it was shown that conflict resolution decreased the negative stereotypes and prejudice of the groups involved.
What research investigating the effects of the nature of intergroup relations on stereotypes has not taken into account so far is the possibility that the information processed from the major events related to intergroup relations cannot be processed uniformly. Group members who differ in various characteristics may differentially understand the same events. The integrative model of the formation and change of ethnic and national stereotypes suggests that personal characteristics, such as personality traits, attitudes, values, cognitive skills, and shared norms and beliefs, all affect how information about outgroups is identified and interpreted (D. Bar-Tal, 1997).

Political orientation, a variable derived from identification with a particular political group and reflected in shared political attitudes or ideology, is one factor that may influence the processing of information about outgroups. On a conceptual level, self categorization theory proposes that creation of mutually perceived similarity between ingroup members leads to consensual views of the world, including values, beliefs, and attitudes (Turner, 1999; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987). On an empirical level, a study by Terry and Hogg (1996) showed that group identification plays a moderating effect on social judgment, whereas Price’s (1989) research suggested that individuals’ opinions depend on the social context surrounding public issues. According to Price, news reports focusing on intergroup conflict cue their recipients to think about the issue through their particular group perspective, leading to expressions of opinions consistent with group views. The results of his study were found to support this assumption, illustrating how media reports about a conflict play an important role in the formation of ingroup opinion.

From a cognitive perspective, the influence of political orientation on the processing of information, formation of attitudes, or evaluation of events has been well documented in numerous studies (see, e.g., reviews by Iyengar & Ottati, 1994; Kinder, 1998; Lau & Sears, 1986). They show that political orientation, based on particular knowledge, attitudes, affects, and values, serves as a prism through which new information is perceived and processed and inferences are then made. This prism is responsible for selective, even distorted perception and processing (Kinder, 1998). It can be assumed, therefore, that society members who have different political orientations may make different inferences from the same perceived major events and eventually form different stereotypes, attitudes, and feelings about the relevant outgroup. This cognitive–affective process usually takes place within a political context in which the events are framed by leaders who represent the group, provide a source of identification, and often serve as its epistemic authority (see Y. Bar-Tal, 1989; Raviv, Bar-Tal, Raviv, & Abin, 1993). This process can also be explained by the cognitive consistency theory, which suggests that people tend to view highly evaluated leaders and their messages in a consistent way (Abelson et al., 1968).
This study was performed in the context of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, which dictates the nature of relations between Israeli Jews and Palestinians and influences their mutual stereotypes. Here the conflict is described briefly to provide an explanatory basis for the rationale of the study.

The conflict between Jews and Palestinians in the Middle East has lasted for more than 100 years. These two nations claim the same territory as their homeland and through the years have engaged in a violent struggle to achieve their contradictory goals (Gerner, 1991; Tessler, 1994). Both societies experience immense threat to both their personal and collective existence. The conflict began as a communal conflict between Palestinians and immigrating Jews but soon evolved into a full-blown interstate conflict between Israel and the Arab states during the war of 1948–1949. Since the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in 1967, which brought more than 2 million Palestinians under Israeli rule, the conflict has been taking place on both interstate and communal levels (Sandler, 1988). In 1987 a Palestinian uprising (Intifada) led to a violent confrontation that lasted until 1991 when the Madrid conference convened to begin a round of negotiations between Israelis and Arabs (including Palestinians). The turning point in Israeli–Palestinian relations took place on September 13, 1993, in Washington, DC, when the Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin (leader of Labor party) and leader of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) Yasser Arafat signed an agreement negotiated in Oslo, which involved mutual recognition and assured peaceful resolution of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. However, Israel’s leading opposition party, the Likud, opposed the Oslo agreement, viewing it as a sell-out of Israeli interests to a terrorist organization—the PLO—and as a threat to the state of Israel.

The intense disagreement about the peace negotiation with the PLO reflected a schism in Israeli society between so-called doves (predominantly supporters of the Labor party) and hawks (mostly supporters of the Likud party) regarding the solutions of the Middle Eastern conflict. Whereas doves believe that the prerequisite for security is a peace to be achieved through withdrawal from the occupied territories, hawks believe that security must be guaranteed by holding onto these territories (Arian, 1995; D. Bar-Tal, Raviv, & Freund, 1994). In addition to these two political orientations, the Israeli political spectrum also includes a self-identified centrist group that falls between doves and hawks (Arian, 1995). These political groups not only differ with regard to opinions about the preferred solutions of the Israeli–Arab conflict but also with regard to views of Arabs in general and Palestinians in particular. Hawks tend to hold more negative stereotypes and prejudice toward Palestinians than do doves (see D. Bar-Tal & Teichman, 2005). In accordance with these positions, doves supported the peace process initiated in 1993, whereas hawks opposed it. The situation changed when, following the assassination of the Israeli Prime Minister, elections took place in May 1996 and the elected leader of the Likud party, Benjamin Netanyahu, accepted the Oslo agreement and, under pressure, continued negotia-
tions with the Palestinian representatives of the PLO. In 1999, Netanyahu lost the elections to Ehud Barak, the Labor party candidate, who promised to continue the peace process. In July 2000 a summit meeting that was supposed to solve the outstanding issues of the Palestinian–Israeli conflict failed. In the fall of that year the peace process collapsed and a second Palestinian uprising (the Al Aqsa Intifada) began, which turned into a violent confrontation between the two sides. This increased mutual perceptions of threat (see D. Bar-Tal & Sharvit, in press). In this major event, the hawkish camp objected to the peace proposal suggested by Prime Minister Ehud Barak and perceived the violence of the Palestinians as evidence of their intention to destroy Israel.

The Israeli–Palestinian conflict, and the extended Israeli–Arab conflict, led to negative stereotyping of Arabs (e.g., D. Bar-Tal, 1996; Teichman, 2001). Moreover, in the midst of the conflict both sides actively tried to delegitimize the other by using dehumanizing labels about the other group (e.g., see D. Bar-Tal, 1988; Kelman, 1999). During the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, when all the Arab nations stood against Israel, Israeli Jews primarily used the general category “Arabs” to refer to their opponents. Studies showed that “Arabs” were negatively stereotyped as being violent, cruel, primitive, dirty, or untrustworthy, and, even today, the category remains negatively evaluated (D. Bar-Tal & Teichman, 2005; Cohen, 1985; Mahameed & Guttman, 1983). At the same time, in the past two decades, as Israel’s relations with Arab nations have become differentiated, Israeli Jews also began to refine their earlier stereotype (D. Bar-Tal & Labin, 2001; Benyamini, 1980). The category of “Palestinians” appeared in the 1980s and was characterized by negative stereotyping and delegitimization, in view of the conflictive context in which it arose (D. Bar-Tal, 1988; Cohen, 1985; Kaminisky & Bar-Tal, 1996; Oren & Bar-Tal 2004). The beginning of the peace process in 1993 changed this stereotype, at least among the doves.

In this study, we tried to follow the changes in stereotypic perceptions, attitudes, and feelings (called “psychological intergroup repertoire”; see D. Bar-Tal & Teichman, 2005) of Israeli Jewish students toward Palestinians through the years in which major events related to their intergroup relations have taken place. Our objective is to show that the psychological intergroup repertoire is dependent on the one hand on the context of the relations between the groups and, on the other hand, on the prism formed as a result of shared group beliefs and attitudes within a particular subgroup (i.e., political orientation) through which the context is interpreted. Specifically, we attempted to tap changes in stereotypic perceptions, social distance (as reflection of an attitude), and feelings, all of which reflect the nature of intergroup relations (e.g., Dovidio, Brigham, Johnson, & Gaertner, 1996; Mackie, & Smith, 2002; Stephan & Stephan, 1996). We used the paradigm of Gilbert (1951) and Karlins et al. (1969) by administering the same questionnaire to compatible groups of students at different points in time. It should be noted though that the effects of the intergroup context were assumed and not manipulated, as all the
participants in the study live in Israel and experienced the major real-life events that affected all Israeli citizens.

The first administration of the questionnaire assessing Israeli students’ perceptions, feelings, and attitudes toward Palestinians took place in March 1990 in the midst of the first Palestinian uprising (Intifada), a violent confrontation between Israeli Jews and Palestinians. The second administration took place in March 1995, a year and a half after the beginning of the peace process but when the hawkish opposition leaders led an active campaign against it. The third administration took place in March 1997, almost a year after the election of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the leader of the hawkish Likud party. Following his election, he accepted the Palestinian–Israeli Oslo agreements and continued negotiations with the Palestinians. The last administration took place in December 2000, at the beginning of the second Palestinian uprising following the failure of the Israeli–Palestinian peace conference at Camp David with the participation of U.S. President Bill Clinton. This violent uprising, which has claimed many innocent lives on both sides, has served as a turning point in Israeli–Palestinian relations. In both societies basic trust collapsed with a mutual perception of threat that has led to a collective orientation of fear and hatred. All four of these major events affected Israeli society powerfully, leading to intensive discussions in public channels of communication and providing information that has forced the Israeli Jews to examine their beliefs about the Palestinians (Oren, 2005).

In this study, we examined the effects of the forgoing events on Israelis students’ stereotypic perceptions, attitudes, and feelings as a function of their political identification on the hawkish–dovish dimension, which is both relevant and of great significance for members of Israeli society (Arian, 1995). It was assumed that political identification and orientation serves as a prism through which Israelis collect and interpret information related to the Middle-Eastern conflict. This trend is especially salient when the opposing dovish and hawkish camps provide different frames for the understanding of the information. Thus, both variables (i.e., individuals’ political identification and their camp’s framing of events) determine how they interpret events and how their stereotypes are affected.

Our hypothesis was that whereas in general doves would report more positive relations toward Palestinians than hawks, we could expect, nevertheless, an interaction with the year of measurement. Specifically, during the Palestinian Intifada in 1990, we expected no difference between students of different political orientations, because of the violent nature of the relations between Israelis and Palestinians. However, we anticipated a different picture in 1995, following the onset of the peace process, with doves changing their stereotypic perceptions, attitudes, and feelings toward Palestinians in a more positive direction. At the same time, we expected that the hawks, who objected to the peace process, would remain negatively oriented toward the Palestinians, or even have more negative attitudes as a reflection of the views propagated by their leaders in response to the peace process.
Following the legitimization of the peace process by the leaders of the hawks in 1996, we believed that in 1997 the hawks would change their stereotypic perception, attitudes, and feelings toward Palestinians in a more positive direction. As the peace process collapsed in 2000 and the relations between Israeli Jews and the Palestinians deteriorated to the use of violence, we hypothesized that both hawks and doves would hold more negative views of the Palestinians than in 1997.

METHOD

Participants

Jewish Israeli sophomore students from the School of Education at Tel Aviv University taking the course “Introduction to Social Psychology” participated in the study. In 1990, 86 students, all female, participated; in 1995, 90 students (including 5 men) participated; in 1997, 120 students (including 9 men) participated; and in 2000, 107 students (including 8 men) participated in the study. Due to the low number of male participants, they were excluded from the analyses. The mean age of the four groups happened to be the same: 23.8 years.

Instrument

The same instrument was administered to the four groups of students to assess stereotypic perceptions, attitudes, and feelings toward Palestinians. It consisted of three parts assessing different aspects of the psychological intergroup repertoire.

Stereotypes. The first part of the instruments measured stereotypes and contained 60 characteristics in random order (see the Appendix), including 30 positive (e.g., honesty, warmth, or modesty) characteristics and 30 negative ones (e.g., dirtiness, inhumanity, or criminality). To tap their stereotypic perception, participants were given the following instruction: “This part consists of a list of characteristics that can be used to characterize human beings. You are asked to read the list and, as you read it, mark those characteristics that characterize Palestinians.” The number of positive characteristics selected served as an indicator of the positive stereotype; the same method was used to assess negative stereotyping.

This instrument was constructed on the basis of the method used by Katz and Braly (1933). In the pilot study, 60 students (28 men and 32 women) were asked to describe Palestinians through free association. No gender differences were found at his stage. Only 72 characteristics that were noted by at least 5 participants were used in the next phase of the selection pool. In this phase, four judges evaluated the adjectives as either positive or negative, and only those adjectives on which there
was a consensus were used to assess the stereotypes. The judges agreed on 30 positive and 30 negative characteristics, which were used in this study.

**Social distance.** A social distance scale, which assessed participants’ willingness to engage in various activities with the Palestinians, reflects attitudes toward this group. It consisted of the following eight items: readiness to host Palestinian people “in your house,” to have “personal relationships” with them, “to visit their home,” “to take part in their social events,” “to live with them in the same city,” “to study in the same institution,” “to live on the same street,” and “to live in the same house.” The answers were given on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*I am not ready*) to 5 (*I am ready*). The items were taken from previous studies that have investigated Israeli Jewish social distance toward Arabs (Hofman, 1972; Yuchtman-Yaar & Inbar, 1986). On the basis of factor analysis, two factors emerged that constituted two variables: readiness to have social contact, which includes readiness to host a Palestinian, to have personal friendships, to visit, and to take part in social events (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .93$); and readiness for geographical proximity, which includes readiness to live in the same city, same street, or same apartment building and to study at the same institution (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .94$).

**Feelings.** Participants were asked to express “the extent to which they experience each of the following feelings” toward Palestinians. There were five negative feelings and five positive feelings. The answers were given on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*to a very great extent*). On the basis of factor analysis, two factors emerged that constituted two variables: negative feelings, which included anger, disgust, contempt, fear, and rejection (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .80$); and positive feelings, which included empathy, guilt, pity, liking, and attraction (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .70$).

**Political orientation.** The independent variable of political orientation was constructed on the basis of self-evaluation on a 5-point scale ranging from being a dove to being a hawk. Three categories were constructed: doves—those who selected 1 and 2 ($n = 151$), centrists—those who selected 3 ($n = 172$), and hawks—those who selected 4 and 5 ($n = 58$).

**Procedure**

All four administrations took place in a sophomore class titled “Introduction to Social Psychology” at the School of Education of Tel Aviv University. In each of the administrations, the questionnaire was presented as a study of “How people perceive other social groups.” The instructions acknowledged that “We are aware that you are asked to evaluate other people on the basis of very limited information. However, all human beings in the world form impressions and evaluate others on such a limited basis. This is a universal human phenomenon.” The participants
were promised that the questionnaires would remain anonymous and that “there are no right or wrong answers.” When the participants finished their responses they were debriefed and taught about stereotyping.

RESULTS

Stereotypic Perception, Attitudes, and Feelings Toward Palestinians

Stereotypic perceptions, attitudes, and feelings toward Palestinians were compared in four different years (1990, 1995, 1997, and 2000) as a function of participants’ political orientation (hawks, centrists, and doves) with regard to the six dependent variables (positive and negative stereotypes, social distance and geographical proximity, and positive and negative feelings). A 4 (Year of Measurement) × 3 (Political Orientation) multivariate analysis of variance was used. The results show that all three effects were significant: year of measurement, $F(18, 1,024) = 4.36, p < .01$; political orientation, $F(12, 724) = 9.38, p < .01$; interaction, $F(36, 1592) = 1.59, p < .05$. Subsequently, to examine the effects on each dependent variable, six 4 × 3 × analyses of variance (ANOVA) were performed. Table 1 presents the means and standard deviations of the dependent variables, and Table 2 presents the results of the univariate ANOVA.

The results of ANOVAs presented in Table 2 indicate that in the cases of geographical proximity and social distance, the interaction effects were not significant. Because the main effects in the rest of the ANOVAs are constrained by the interactions, the main effects of these two dependent variables are discussed first. The examinations of the source of the main effects were performed using a posteriori Scheffé tests. The results show that in the case of the year of measurement, the pattern of results of both dependent measures is similar: The means in the years 1990 ($M = 2.36$ and 2.53, respectively) and 1995 ($M = 2.74$ and 2.97, respectively) are lower than at the two later points in time (1997 $M = 3.28$ and 3.46, respectively, and 2000 $M = 3.03$ and 3.57, respectively). There is no significant difference within each of the pairs of point in time. That is, there is no significant difference between 1990 and 1995 or between 1997 and 2000. Trend analyses on each of the dependent measures show that only the linear component is significant: $F(1, 376) = 40.59, p < .01$, for geographical proximity, and $F(1, 377) = 30.38, p < .01$ for social contact. Also, Table 1 shows that with regard to both dependent variables, doves ($M = 3.50$ and 3.78, respectively) are more positively oriented than the centrists ($M = 2.87$ and 2.91), and the latter are more positively oriented than hawks ($M = 2.05$ and 2.18, respectively). As in the case of the first independent variable, the trend analyses over time show that in both dependent variables only the linear component is significant: $F(1, 365) = 50.38, p < .01$, for geographical proximity, and $F(1, 366) = 67.16, p < .01$, for social contact.
To examine the source of the interaction terms obtained in the other four dependent measures (positive and negative stereotypes and positive and negative feelings), we examined the simple main effects using one-way ANOVAS and Scheffé a posteriori tests separately for each level of political orientation. Then, we performed trend analyses of the time points separately for each of the three levels of political orientation (see Table 3). Finally, we supplemented the examination of the source of the interaction effects by checking the simple main effects and Scheffé a posteriori tests of political orientation separately for each year.

**Negative stereotypes.** The examination of the time points reveals that in 1990 there was no significant effect of political orientation on negative stereo-

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**TABLE 1**

Means and Standard Deviations of Research Variables by Political Orientation and Year of Measurement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Doves</th>
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* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. † $p < .10$.
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*p < .05. **p < .01.
types, $F(2, 79) = .91, p = ns$. In 1995, $F(2, 78) = 9.44, p < .01$, hawks ($M = 16.60$) held significantly more negative stereotypes than centrists ($M = 11.10$) and doves ($M = 9.83$), who did not differ from each other. In 1997, $F(2, 107) = 9.75, p < .01$, hawks ($M = 13.64$) held significantly more negative stereotypes than doves ($M = 7.29$), and the centrists ($M = 10.40$) did not differ from either group. Finally, in 2000, $F(2, 90) = 16.33, p < .01$, doves ($M = 7.10$) were found to hold significantly less negative stereotype than either the centrists ($M = 11.77$) or the hawks ($M = 14.20$), with no significant difference between them.

The analyses of the negative stereotype for each group across time reveal that there was no significant effect for doves, $F(3, 142) = 2.39, p = ns$, or for centrists, $F(3, 161) = .62, p = ns$. Only the analyses for hawks, $F(3, 51) = 4.58, p < .01$, achieved significance for year of measurement. The Scheffé a posteriori tests show that this effect is due to the significantly higher rate of negative stereotype expressed toward Palestinians in 1995 ($M = 16.60$) than in 1990 ($M = 9.85$). The trend analysis shows although while there was a significant linear trend among the doves (a reduction in negative stereotypes with the passage of time), there were significant quadratic and cubic trends among the hawks. These trends represent relative peaks in 1995 and 2000 ($M = 14.20$) and lows in 1990 and 1997 ($M = 13.36$).

**Positive stereotypes.** The examination of the simple main effects of political orientation shows that, similar to the other dependent measures, in 1990 there was no significant effect, $F(2, 79) = .01, p = ns$. In 1995 the significant effect, $F(2, 78) = 7.24, p < .01$, is explained by the higher rate of positive stereotypes held by doves than by the centrists and hawks. In 1997 there was no significant effect, $F(2, 107) = 2.30, p = ns$. Finally in 2000, $F(2, 90) = 4.66, p = .01$, doves ($M = 5.13$) differed significantly from both centrists ($M = 2.59$) and hawks ($M = 2.17$).

Of the three one-way ANOVAs performed to examine changes across time that took place within each group, only the ANOVA of the doves yielded significant results, $F(3, 142) = 4.40, p < .01$, with $F(3, 161) = .14, p = ns$ for centrists and $F(3, 51) = .11, p = ns$ for hawks. The a posteriori tests performed on the doves indicated that only the group tested in 1990 ($M = 2.31$) showed significantly less positive stereotype than that in 2000 ($M = 5.13$). The trend analyses show that whereas for doves the linear and cubic trends are significant, there is no significant trend for the centrists and hawks.

**Negative feelings.** The examination of the effect of political orientation separately for each year reveals that in 1990 the political orientation groups did not differ from each other in negative feelings toward the Palestinians, $F(2, 80) = 2.31, p = ns$. In 1995 the significant effect of political orientation, $F(2, 79) = 14.06, p < .01$, stemmed from the significantly higher negative feelings of the hawks ($M = 4.00$) than the centrists ($M = 3.06$) or the doves ($M = 2.64$). In 1997 the significant effect of political orientation, $F(2, 107) = 6.98, p < .01$, is also explained by the sig-
significant difference between the hawks ($M = 3.58$) and the two other groups ($M = 2.91$ and 2.61, respectively). Finally, in 2000 there was also a significant effect of political orientation, $F(2, 91) = 13.12, p < .01$. The a posteriori tests show that all three groups differed from each other ($M = 3.83, 3.17, \text{and } 2.52$, respectively).

An examination of changes within each group with one-way ANOVAs shows that for doves and centrists there is a nonsignificant effect of year of measurement, $F(3, 142) = 1.07, p = ns$ and $F(3, 163) = 1.18, p = ns$, respectively. In contrast, for hawks there is a significant effect, $F(3, 52) = 3.40, p < .05$. The a posteriori tests show that this effect is due only to the significantly lower negative feelings in 1990 ($M = 3.22$) than in 1995 ($M = 4.00$). Table 3 further clarifies the source of the interaction, demonstrating a significant linear trend for doves (lower negative feelings with time) and a significant cubic trend for the hawks (negative feelings peak in 1995 and 2000).

**Positive feelings.** The examination of the patterns of the effect of political orientation at the four points in time reveals that in 1990 there was no significant effect, $F(2, 80) = 1.82, p = ns$, for positive feelings toward the Palestinians. In 1995, $F(2, 78) = 4.74, p < .05$, the hawks ($M = 1.86$) reported significantly lower positive feelings than the doves ($M = 2.37$), and the centrists ($M = 2.13$) did not differ from either group. Finally, in 1997, $F(2, 107) = 7.16, p < .01$, and 2000, $F(2, 91) = 19.39, p < .01$, the hawks ($M = 2.17$ and 1.77, respectively) and the centrists ($M = 2.11$ and 1.86, respectively) reported significantly lower positive feelings than did the doves ($M = 2.56$ and 2.67, respectively).

The one-way ANOVAs calculated to examine time differences for each group show a significant effect in the analysis of doves, $F(3, 142) = 4.86, p < .01$. The a posteriori tests show that this effect is explained by the fact that in 1990 positive feelings ($M = 2.14$) were significantly lower than in 2000 ($M = 2.78$). No other comparison reached significance. The analyses of centrists and hawks were not significant, $F(3, 162) = 2.29, p = ns$ and $F(3, 52) = 1.29, p = ns$, respectively. The trend analyses performed on this dependent variable showed significant linear trends for doves and centrists, whereas the strongest (although not significant) trend for hawks was cubic.

To conclude this part, the results show that whereas in 1990 the three political orientation groups did not differ significantly from one other, at a later stage the doves began to differ from the hawks. Finally, in 2000, the centrists, who in 1995 and 1997 did not differ from the doves, changed their perceptions and feelings to become more similar to those of the hawks. In addition, the results demonstrate that whereas doves tended to be consistent over time, with more positive and less negative stereotypes, as well as expressing more positive and less negative feelings toward Palestinians, hawks tended to hold the most negative stereotypes toward the Palestinians, both in 1995 and 2000.
DISCUSSION

This study focused on intergroup conflict. Its objective was to examine how major events that affect intergroup relations influence the psychological intergroup attitudinal repertoire as a function of people’s identification with a particular political orientation. The results clearly show that changes in the nature of intergroup relations have an effect on the psychological intergroup repertoire, that is, on people’s stereotypes, attitudes, and feelings. Changes of context are caused by major events that take place in the relations between groups. The major events can be positive or negative in nature. The former type of events, such as acts of conflict resolution, cooperation, or peace agreements, change the psychological repertoire of the society members involved in a more positive direction, whereas the latter kind of events, such as conflicts, war, disagreements, or terror, change the psychological repertoire in a negative direction. Such changes take place because the major events provide information that requires reexamination of beliefs and attitudes, which often results in their adjustment (see D. Bar-Tal & Sharvit, in press). We realize, however, that our study is quasi-experimental, as the effects of the major events were not manipulated by the researchers but rather occurred in real life. This is both the strength and the weakness of the study. Everyone who lives in the natural laboratory that Israel represents knows that the events have a tremendous effect on the participants in the conflict (D. Bar-Tal, 2004) and that identification with a particular political orientation has a profound effect on individuals’ interpretation of the events (Arian, 1995).

Specifically, this study focuses on the stereotypes, attitudes, and feelings of Israeli Jews toward the Palestinian people with whom they are in conflict during the decade of 1990–2000. In the course of this decade the conflict between the Israeli Jews and Palestinians went through some major transformations. In 1990, Palestinians were engaged in a violent confrontation with Israeli Jews as they initiated an uprising against the Israeli occupation in 1987. Later, in 1993, a recognition agreement was signed by the Israeli Prime Minister and PLO chairman, which was adopted later even by hawkish Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, elected in 1996. However, the peace process collapsed in 2000 and Palestinians and Israeli Jews returned to the use of violent confrontation. We found that these four major events influenced Israeli Jews’ view of the Palestinians.

However, the influence of the major events was not uniform. Rather, it was affected by participants’ political orientation, which serves as a kind of prism through which they process information deriving from major events. Therefore, we discussed the analysis of each element of the psychological intergroup repertoire as a function of the dovish, centrist, or hawkish political orientation of the participants in this study.

With regard to attitudes, main effects show that doves, centrists, and hawks differed in their readiness for social contact and geographical proximity. Doves ex-
pressed more readiness for social contact and geographical proximity than centrists, and centrists expressed more readiness than did hawks. All the groups increased their readiness for both types of contact between 1995 and 1997, whereas no difference was found between 1990 and 1995 or between 1997 and 2000. It is possible that this measure reflected a process whereby Palestinians underwent “personalization” in the experience of the Israeli public as a result of the peace process. Palestinians began to appear on television and on other news media with their personal stories (First, 2000; Wolfsfeld, 1997). This might have decreased the social distance between Palestinians and Israeli Jews, especially among hawks. The difference in the pattern of response between the social distance measures and the stereotypes and feelings toward Palestinians may be attributed to the different nature of the measures. Although the measures of social distance reflect more personal intentions of behavior, stereotype and feelings toward Palestinians may reflect more ideological measures of the ethos of conflict (D. Bar-Tal & Teichman, 2005).

With regard to other elements of the psychological intergroup repertoire, doves, centrists, and hawks in 1990 did not differ either in their negative or positive stereotypes, or in negative or positive feelings, or again in feelings of threat. This finding shows that in times of threat as a result of violent confrontation, society members respond with relatively uniform reactions. However, at the other three points in time (i.e., in 1995, 1997, and 2000), differences among the three groups did emerge. Doves became more accommodating over time, holding less negative stereotypes and feelings, as well as more positive stereotypes and positive feelings than did hawks. They changed their stereotypes and feelings as a result of the peace process—a major event—and were prompted to do so by the leader of the dovish camp. The second Intifada was found to have no effect on the doves, because during the administration of the questionnaire in December 2000, political attempts were still being made to calm the situation by Prime Minister Ehud Barak and negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians to reach a permanent solution of their conflict were still ongoing.

Hawks exhibited a different pattern. They reacted more negatively toward Palestinians in 1995 (specifically, negative stereotyping and negative feelings), as the whole hawkish block objected vehemently to the peace process led by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, seeing it as a danger to Israel. However, when the newly elected Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, leader of the hawkish block, led negotiations with the Palestinian authority and signed an agreement with Arafat in January 1997, hawks’ psychological intergroup repertoire toward Palestinians moved in a positive direction. The negotiations, Netanyahu’s handshake with Arafat, and the signed agreement legitimized the peace process. However, the subsequent collapse of the peace process and the outbreak of the second Intifada, again, negatively affected the hawks. Their leaders objected to proposals submitted to Palestinians by Prime Minister Ehud Barak and perceived the eruption of vi-
olence as a threat to the existence of Israel. Their negative reactions toward Palestinians were on the increase, as trend analyses of their responses showed. In general, the difference between the doves and hawks emerged because the former tended to decrease their negative stereotype and feelings and increase their positive stereotypes and feelings, whereas hawks tended to change their negative stereotypes and feelings without changing their positive stereotypes and feelings. In fact, the hawks had the most negative stereotypes and feelings in 1995, when the Palestinians constituted for them a serious threat because of the peace process, which they perceived as advantageous to the Palestinians in their struggle against Israel. These results show that hawks could reduce their negative evaluations and feelings toward the Palestinians but had great difficulty raising their positive evaluations and feelings, which remained very low throughout. Centrist stereotypes, attitudes, and feelings fell in between those of doves and hawks. Also, whereas in 1995 they were more similar to doves on the negative measures, by 2000 they had become similar to hawks. This finding is not surprising in view of the massive shift of public opinion in a hawkish direction in the fall of 2000 as a result of the renewal of violence (D. Bar-Tal & Sharvit, in press).

This study has two findings with conceptual implications. First, the results unequivocally show that the context of the conflict has an effect on the psychological intergroup repertoire of the societies involved. D. Bar-Tal and Sharvit (in press) have called this a “transitional context” and suggested that it consists of physical, social, political, economic, military, and psychological conditions that are of a temporary nature and that constitute the environment in which individuals and collectives function. These conditions can be either manmade (e.g., conflicts, revolution, or peace), or natural phenomena (e.g., storms or earthquakes); they may also develop as a result of both types of factors (e.g., recession and famine). This conceptualization emphasizes the fact that social contexts are dynamic and constantly changing, even if the broad structural characteristics of a society and its environment remain relatively stable, enduring for a long time or changing slowly at a barely noticeable pace. The transitional context, although referring to a societal phenomenon too, consists, by contrast, of temporary, observable, and well-defined societal conditions created as a result of major events, which provide important information that affects the behavior of society members on both the individual and the collective levels.

In this conceptualization, psychological conditions are part of the context. They emerge together with other conditions (physical, political) as a result of major events and information and become part of the environment. Thus, for example, in times of violent conflict, psychological conditions of threat and danger prevail, whereas in times of peacemaking, psychological conditions of security and calmness appear. These psychological conditions instigate changes in perceptions, thoughts and ideas, affects and emotions, which in turn lead to changes in behavior. In the contexts of conflict that we investigated, the psychological
conditions pertained to implied threat, which is the major variable influencing society members’ psychological repertoire, including stereotypes and prejudice. A study by D. Bar-Tal and Labin (2001) showed that even a relatively minor change in the context (a wave of terror attacks in the midst of the peace process) had a temporary influence on Israeli Jews’ stereotype, attitudes, and feelings toward Palestinians.

Second, the results show that these influences are not uniform (D. Bar-Tal, 2002) but are dependent on the psychological repertoire of the evaluating and judging persons (see Hochschild, 2001; Taber, Lodge, & Glatath, 2001). Their relevant beliefs, attitudes, and feelings mediate the processing of information. In our study, these relevant beliefs, attitudes, and feelings about Palestinians derived from people’s identification with a political orientation, which mediated their perceptions of the changes in Israeli–Palestinian relations throughout the 1990s. Thus, we saw that during the violent confrontation in 1990, when the Israeli public was on the whole united against the threat of the Intifada, doves, centrists, and hawks exhibited similar perceptions and attitudes toward Palestinians. However, with the peace process, initiated by the leader of the dovish camp, the doves and centrists began to change their views of Palestinians, and when the peace process was endorsed by the leader of the hawkish camp in 1997, the hawks too began to change their views of the Palestinians. However, in 2000, with the collapse of the peace process and the renewal of violence, the hawks and centrists changed their views of Palestinians once again. These results also show the fluidity of the centrist view: Whereas during the peace process they were more similar to the doves, after its collapse they became more similar to the hawks. It is clear that they were affected more by the context and responded to it in accordance to its real-world implications, whereas the other two groups might have responded more in terms of some elements of their ideology. These results show that identification with own group is an important factor that influences the way group members process information and evaluate major events.

Our results are in line with findings in experimental social psychological research that shows that identification with a group has various consequences. Group identification, for example, leads to a desire to enhance the welfare of (Turner, et al., 1987) and loyalty toward one’s own group (Zdaniuk & Levine, 2001). Guimond (2000) found that group identification influenced adaptation of intergroup beliefs and attitudes that are in line with the norm of the group. Loyalty to the group is especially pronounced in times of conflict (Brewer, 2001). We show that identification with political groups in times of conflict in Israel is positively related to adopting shared beliefs and attitudes about Palestinians, confirming the results of studies by Bourhis and Dayan (2001) and Dayan and Bourhis (2002), who found that Israeli Jews who identified with the rightist Likud party preferred more segregationist and exclusionist orientations toward Arab citizens of Israel than did Israeli Jews who identified with the Labor party.
In sum, the results of our research indicate that if we want to understand the psychological intergroup repertoire—that is the beliefs, attitudes, and feelings people have toward other groups that are a critical part of their environment—then we must analyze the psychological conditions that are generated by (a) the context of the relations between the groups and (b) normative beliefs and attitudes of the subgroups to which people belong. It is these subgroups that provide the prism through which people perceive and conceptualize the intergroup context in which they live.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We would like to thank Mirjam Hadar for helpful comments in the first draft of the article.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Yoram Bar-Tal is Associate Professor of Social Psychology at the School of Health Professions, Tel Aviv University. His research interests include antecedents and consequences of cognitive structuring, and their implications for health. Through the years he has published dozens of chapters and articles in major psychological journals.

Daniel Bar-Tal is Professor of Social Psychology at the School of Education, Tel Aviv University. His research interest is in political and social psychology studying psychological foundations of intractable conflicts and peace making. He has published over fifteen books and over one hundred and fifty articles and chapters in major social and political psychological journals and books.

Eynat Cohen-Hendeles did her masters degree in counseling at the School of Education of Tel Aviv University. Currently she is working as a school counselor in the Israeli school system.

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**APPENDIX**

**Characteristics Used to Measure Palestinian Stereotype**

Thirty positive characteristics were as follows: courage, creativity, delicacy, honesty, morality, wisdom, punctuality, modesty, maturity, generosity, stability, hospitality, independence, sensitivity, good heartedness, education, decisiveness, responsibility, warmth, indulgence, flexibility, trustworthiness, sociability, diligence, openness, loyalty, tolerance, originality, persistence, critical ability.

Thirty negative characteristics were as follows: ugliness, stinking, dullness, stubbornness, lustfulness, dirtiness, ignorance, stupidity, cowardice, distrust, laziness, insolence, slowness, lying, indifference, primitivism, terrorism, violence, inferiority, Nazism, brutality, cruelty, inhumanity, wildness, savagery, anti-Semitism, murder, riots, criminality, and theft.