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Terror, Resource Gains and Exclusionist Political Attitudes among New Immigrants and Veteran Israelis

Eran Halperin, Daphna Canetti, Stevan E. Hobfoll and Robert J. Johnson

This study analyses the antecedents of exclusionist political attitudes towards Palestinian citizens of Israel among Israeli immigrants from the former Soviet Union in comparison to Old Jewish Israelis (OJI). A large-scale study of exclusionist political attitudes was conducted in the face of ongoing terrorism in Israel through telephone surveys carried out in September 2003 with 641 OJI and 131 immigrants. The main goal of the survey was to estimate the influence of perceived loss and gain of resources—as a consequence of terror—on attitudes towards Palestinian Israelis, while controlling for other relevant predictors of exclusionism—i.e. authoritarianism or threat perception. Findings obtained via interaction analyses and structural equation modelling show that a) immigrants display higher levels of exclusionist political attitudes towards Palestinian citizens of Israel than OJI; b) loss of resources, authoritarianism, and hawkish (rightist) worldviews predict exclusionist political attitudes among both immigrants and non-immigrants; c) failure to undergo post-traumatic growth (resource gain) in response to terrorism (e.g. finding meaning in life, becoming closer to others) is a significant predictor of exclusionist political attitudes only among immigrants.

Keywords: Ethnic Relations; Intolerance; Israel; Arabs; Immigration; Terror

Introduction

Terrorism has long been part of the socio-political landscape of Israeli society. Since the beginning of the *Al-Aqsa Intifada* in 2000, more than 998 civilians have been killed and 4,511 injured as a result of multiple acts of terrorist violence (National

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Security Studies Center Terrorism Database 2005). In this study we examine the impact of the loss and gain of resources in response to ongoing terror attacks and their relationship with increased exclusionist political attitudes towards minority groups. In particular, we explore the antecedents of exclusionist political attitudes toward Palestinian Israelis (PI) among Old Jewish Israelis (OJI) and New Jewish Israelis (NJI).

Terrorism is 'the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government, or civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives' (Federal Bureau of Investigation 1999). Terrorist activities are designed to *intimidate and induce worry and concern* disproportionate to the amount of physical damage they cause (Friedland and Merari 1985). Recent studies have demonstrated the negative psychological effects of terrorism (Bleich *et al.* 2003). One powerful and pervasive effect of such threatening collective situations is to promote hostility towards out-groups (Huddy *et al.* 2003, 2005). The growth of exclusionist political attitudes and the profusion of immigrant societies in the Western world, combined with a heightened threat of terrorism, call for further investigation of the antecedents of exclusionism, using psychological theories on reactions to terrorism.

Exclusionist political attitudes are among the most common and destructive examples of non-democratic practices (Semyonov *et al.* 2006). In its broader interpretation, ethnic exclusionism reflects a variety of social phenomena, all indicating that the majority in a certain society wishes to exclude minorities (Coenders and Scheepers 2003). In our study, we focus on the political aspects of ethnic exclusionism and mainly on the opposition to the granting of civil and political rights to resident and immigrant minority groups (Raijman and Semyonov 2004; Scheepers *et al.* 2002).

New immigrants may carry with them prejudices; furthermore, they may adopt prejudices in their new homelands. European immigrants who arrived on the shores of the American continent in the seventeenth century imported and amplified their 'good old' prejudices against non-whites, Jews and others in their newly established homeland. During times of social unrest, this process may be particularly pronounced; there is no time like wartime to put individuals' and societies' democratic values to the test.

Although studies on the negative attitudes of immigrants towards other ethnic minorities were carried out in North America (Goldenberg and Saxe 1996) and in Western Europe (Zick *et al.* 2001), their numbers, particularly in the context of war and conflict, are minuscule. Generally speaking, it appears that a pivotal part of the process of acculturating newcomers to a society is adoption of the host society's 'core' culture and values (Gordon 1964; Parker 2004), including intolerance towards different minority groups (Zick *et al.* 2001). As a part of an attempt to integrate, immigrants copy (un)democratic values of the majority and often present ostensibly higher levels of hostility towards those ethnic groups whom everybody loves to hate (Goldenberg and Saxe 1996).

Theoretical Framework

Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll 1988, 1998) offers a theoretical explanation of how a perception of loss or gain of resources in response to traumatic events potentially exacerbates exclusionist political attitudes (Hobfoll *et al.* 2006). COR theory is a model that has had success in predicting outcomes following terrorist attack, war and disaster (e.g. Freedy *et al.* 1992; Kaiser *et al.* 1996). The theory posits that the psychological impact of stress is primarily dependent on the threat and/or the actual loss of resources that people suffer, especially in major stress circumstances such as terrorism (Hobfoll 1988). Resources are defined as things that people directly value—self-esteem, shelter, intimacy with significant others—or secondary resources (e.g. money) that can ensure primary resources such as health and shelter. Many studies using the COR Evaluation show that resource loss is the single best predictor of psychological distress (Hobfoll 2001).

Trauma may also have positive implications. Post-traumatic growth is defined as 'positive psychological change experienced as a result of the struggle with highly challenging life circumstances' (Tedeschi and Calhoun 1995: 1). Using the terminology of COR theory, *resource gains are the psychological benefits of post-traumatic growth* (Hobfoll *et al.* 2006). COR theory originally posited that psychological resource gains act to offset the negative impact of resource losses (Hobfoll 1989, 1998); however, recent studies that have examined the impact of psychological gain of resources on long-term psychological reactions to terror have yielded mixed results (Hall *et al.* 2005).

In the framework of COR theory, exclusionist political attitudes are considered a psychological coping mechanism (Hobfoll *et al.* 2006). With this as our starting point, we examine how perceptions about resources resulting from terrorism relate to exclusionist political attitudes by serving as a defence mechanism—counter-aggression, for example, may be one coping response to stress (Miller *et al.* 2003). People utilise coping behaviours to limit psychological distress, yet some of these behaviours are counterproductive.

We suggest that coping strategies may be different among immigrants and non-immigrants. It is well established that those who lack personal and social resources are more likely to employ unproductive and even harmful coping behaviours such as hostility towards out-groups (Hobfoll *et al.* 2006). More specifically, research on the impact of 9/11 (Galea *et al.* 2003) and other disasters (Kaniasty and Norris 1995) showed that minority status is a risk factor for the negative psychological impact of traumatic events (see also Bleich *et al.* 2003). From the seminal work of the Chicago School of Sociology (Park *et al.* 1925) to more recent research (Hobfoll *et al.* 2003), studies have shown that those who are socially marginalised are much more psychologically vulnerable (for examples, see Lev-Weisel and Kaufman 2004; Zilber and Lerner 1996).

To estimate the effects of the loss and gain of resources on exclusionist political attitudes, the influence of several other psycho-social and socio-political predictors

should be taken into account. From a psycho-social perspective, *authoritarianism* and *perceived threat* are the most common and powerful predictors of intolerance (Sullivan et al. 1982). Authoritarianism is a worldview emphasising conventionalism, and authoritarian submission and aggression (Altemeyer 1996). Authoritarians in various societies have been found to be highly susceptible to having exclusionist political attitudes (Duckitt 1993; Hobfoll et al. 2003). Scholars have always argued that the role of authoritarianism in shaping people's attitudes becomes more central during periods of collective threat (Perrin 2005).

Many of the contemporary studies which examine the determinants of negative attitudes emphasise the role of perceived threat as a pivotal motivator of those attitudes (Scheepers et al. 2002; Stephan and Stephan 2001). Threat perceptions give expression to individuals' cognitive evaluation regarding the ways by which the out-group members interfere with their desire to achieve their groups' goals. In the wake of ongoing terror attacks on Western societies, scholars have inserted aspects of personal threat—especially threat that poses a physical danger—into the equation as one of the major predictors of negative attitudes towards minority groups (see Huddy et al. 2003).

From a socio-political perspective, many sociological and political works have emphasised the role played by low socio-economic status (Coenders and Scheepers 2003), rightist political ideology (Shamir and Sagiv-Schifter 2006) and strong religious faith (Canetti-Nisim 2004)¹ in shaping exclusionist political attitudes. However, resources such as education or income, which commonly assist people in producing an inner sense of control and comfort, will not always help immigrants. Birman et al. (2004) found that new immigrants who had prestigious jobs in their home countries suffered from psychological distress following their immigration to the US. It seems that, in some cases, immigrants with higher education and high positions prior to migration may be at greater risk of psychological difficulties in relocation (Lev-Weisel and Kaufman 2004). Their exclusionism can be attributed to symptoms of the status inconsistency—e.g. high education *vis-à-vis* low income—prevalent among immigrants (Warren 1970).²

The Context of the Study

Before laying out our hypotheses, however, we should look more closely at the groups under investigation. Palestinian Israelis (PIs)—about one fifth of the population and mostly Muslim—have always been the main target of bigotry within Israeli society (Pedahzur and Yishai 1999; Hobfoll et al. 2003). The profound schism between Jews and PIs in Israel is inevitably related to the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Arab world. As a consequence, Israeli Jews tend to perceive PIs as a 'hostile minority' and a 'security risk' (Smootha 1989). Since the outbreak of the second *intifada*, terrorist attacks have been launched by non-Israeli Palestinians residing in the West Bank and Gaza. In rare cases, Palestinian Israelis have also assisted terrorists. The number of PIs who have actually been involved in terrorism has grown significantly,

but the absolute numbers are minuscule (Shamir and Sagiv-Schifter 2006). Numbers aside, Jewish Israelis tend to associate Palestinian Israelis with terror attacks.

The contemporary history of Israel includes two waves of massive immigration from the former Soviet Union (FSU); the first occurred during the 1970s and the second during the 1990s. The theoretical question at the heart of this study deals with the exclusionist political attitudes of *new* immigrants; hence, we focused on the second wave. New immigrants from the former Soviet Union (NJIs) number just over 1 million and constitute about 17 per cent of the Jewish population in Israel (Central Bureau of Statistics 2005).

Despite the great variety among these immigrants, NJIs share some general characteristics. Generally speaking, they are highly educated, held reputable jobs in their countries of origin, and are mostly secular (Al-Haj 2004). As a result of these unique features and in contrast to many other immigrants forming communities around the world, they have been able to rapidly create a quite successful, though distinct and at times (voluntarily) segregated community (Leshem and Lisak 2000). However, like other immigrants, they may still experience symptoms of status inconsistency (Lev-Weisel and Kaufman 2004; Warren 1970).

Politically, the NJIs tend to espouse hawkish attitudes, support 'strong leaders', and vote for right-wing parties and candidates (Goldstein and Gitelman 2004; Horowitz 2003).³ Previous studies show that immigrants from the FSU exhibit exceptionally high levels of intolerance towards PIs (Al-Haj 2004; Ben-David and Biderman 1997; Weiss 1996). Today, most scholars attribute the roots of this hostility to their general distinctiveness and high self-esteem and/or to well-rooted negative Russian sentiments towards Islam (Gitelman 1995; Horowitz 2001). Although we accept those assumptions, this study suggests another, complementary perspective.

Hypotheses

We propose that terrorism inflicts a loss of economic and psycho-social resources and attempts to gain beneficial resources (Hobfoll 1988). We further suggest that both resource losses *and* gains will be related to exclusionist political attitudes. The model we test also takes into account the effects of authoritarianism, threat and demographic indicators. We hypothesise a *dissimilar* pattern of relationships for NJI and OJI, albeit with immigrants showing greater overall psychological distress.

Specifically, we test the following hypotheses:

- *H1*: new immigrants will exhibit higher levels of exclusionist political attitudes, as compared to OJI;
- *H2*: resource gain resulting from terror will reduce levels of exclusionist political attitudes;
- *H3*: resource loss will augment exclusionist political attitudes;

- *H4*: authoritarianism, perceived threat, lower socio-demographic indicators, hawkish (rightist) political ideology and religious faith increase exclusionist political attitudes;
- *H5*: immigrants tend to be more sensitive to resources, particularly in periods of terror; thus resources play a crucial role in any attempt to predict exclusionist political attitudes among immigrants.

Method

Sample

The survey was conducted via telephone with 1,012 adults aged 18 or older between early August and early September 2003, using a random sample of land lines to obtain a nationally representative sample of Israelis. The cooperation rate among eligible respondents was over 50 per cent. This compared favourably with studies in the US, especially since dialling methods in Israel—unlike in the US—include business phones which must then be treated as failed attempts (Schuster *et al.* 2001). Interviews were conducted by an experienced and computerised survey institute in Israel. Interviewers were trained in telephone survey methodology and conducted interviews in their native language.

This study focused on attitudes towards PIs; hence final analyses were based on 772 *non*-PI respondents (83 per cent OJI and 17 per cent NJI). The sample consisted of 360 men (46.6 per cent) and 412 women (53.4 per cent). Ages ranged from 18 to 83 years old with a mean age of 41.06 (SD = 15.41). The sample represented the distribution in the Israeli population for sex, age, place of residence and voting behaviour (Central Bureau of Statistics 2002).

A closer look at the characteristics of the sample lends support to our preliminary assumptions—NJIs feature many socio-demographic inconsistencies. They are highly educated yet have smaller incomes; they are more secular yet lean towards the

Table 1. Means, standard deviations, CVs and T-test for comparing NJI and OJI

	NJI (N = 131)		OJI (N = 641)		T
	M (SD)	CV	M (SD)	CV	
Economic resource loss	1.96 (.14)	.17	1.96 (.13)	.06	-.00
Psychological resource loss	2.21 (.65)	.29	2.08 (.63)	.30	-2.19*
Resource gain	2.14 (.70)	.32	2.02 (.82)	.40	-1.84†
Authoritarianism	3.72 (.72)	.19	3.70 (1.05)	.28	-.35
Personal perceived threat of terror	1.60 (.27)	.17	1.54 (.27)	.17	-2.47**
Income	2.20 (1.22)	.55	2.93 (1.26)	.43	6.02***
Education	3.97 (1.16)	.29	3.35 (1.35)	.40	-5.38Sn
Religiosity	1.19 (.49)	.41	2.06 (1.14)	.55	13.90***
Political ideology	2.26 (.72)	.32	2.60 (.88)	.34	3.98***
Exclusionist political attitudes	4.64 (1.44)	.31	4.04 (1.53)	.38	-4.17***

Note: † $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

political extreme right (see Table 1). More than 55 per cent of the NJIs reported some university-level education (*vis-à-vis* 40.4 per cent of OJIs) and 3.6 per cent had some post-high-school education (*vis-à-vis* 21.8 per cent of OJIs). As many as 63 per cent of the NJIs earn less than the average wage (compared to 37.8 per cent of OJIs). The absolute majority of NJIs (83.7 per cent) define themselves as secular (44.2 per cent of OJIs). Two-thirds (66.3 per cent) of the NJIs consider themselves to be moderate or extreme-rightist, whereas only 4.3 per cent describe their attitudes as left-wing (as against 53.3 and 18.5 per cent of OJIs, respectively).

Instruments

We used a structured questionnaire, completed by most participants in 20 minutes. It included measures of exclusionist political attitudes towards PIs, resource loss and gain, and authoritarianism. Socio-political information was obtained regarding participants' income, educational attainment, political stance and religiosity.

Exclusionist political attitudes towards PIs were assessed using a four-item scale adapted from Scheepers *et al.*'s (2002) scale, which was found to have broad, cross-cultural applicability across 15 countries (with a pool Cronbach's alpha of .70 for all tested countries). Respondents reacted to the following items on a scale from 1 (very strongly disagree) to 6 (very strongly agree): 'PIs shouldn't have the same social rights as Israeli citizens'; 'PIs shouldn't have the right to bring members of their immediate family to Israel'; 'PIs should all be sent back to their country of origin'; 'PIs who are disloyal to the state of Israel must be deprived of their citizenship'. Internal reliability was quite good for such a brief measure ($\alpha = .78$).

The two *COR variables* were measured as follows:

- *Loss of resources* was assessed using a 10-item scale based on COR theory (Hobfoll 1998), developed for research with respect to 9/11 and generalisable to other terrorist attacks (Norris 2001). The scale was the single instrument recommended by the National Institute of Mental Health for all 11 September-related research and renders our study comparable to others. Items were answered from 1 = not at all, to 4 = extremely: 'Compared to how you felt before the *Al-Aqsa Intifada*, you feel less able to control the forces that affect your life'; 'Have you suffered economically as a result of terrorism and war since the *Al-Aqsa Intifada* began?'; 'There is at least one person whom you know who you like less than you used to because of things that occurred between you since the *Al-Aqsa Intifada* began'. Two scores were calculated—one for *loss of economic/work resources* (α not calculated for two items) and one for *loss of psychosocial resources* (seven items, $\alpha = .63$).
- *Psycho-social resource gain* was assessed with seven items from the COR-Evaluation (Hobfoll 1998) rated from 1 = not at all, to 4 = extremely ($\alpha = .80$). Items were all prefaced with: 'Since the *Al-Aqsa Intifada* began, to what extent have you gained ... [hope; feeling that my life has purpose; intimacy with one or more

family members; intimacy with spouse/partner; intimacy with at least one friend] in a response to terrorism?’

Authoritarianism was assessed using a 10-item version of Altemeyer’s original scale (1996). Items were answered on a scale from 1 = strongly disagree, to 6 = strongly agree: for example, ‘Obedience and respect for authority are the most important virtues that children can learn’ ($\alpha = .73$).

Personal perceived threat of terror was assessed by asking participants whether they or anyone from their family had to take bus routes or go to places that they perceived to be potential, or had been actual, targets of attack since the start of the *Al-Aqsa Intifada* (No/Yes, scored 0–1, respectively). It should be noted that, in contrast to most studies on exclusionism and intolerance towards a specific group, in which perceived threat is conceptualised as perceived threat from that particular out-group, our scale focuses on a general threat from terror with no explicit reference to a particular group. As one kind of threat does not necessarily portend another type, internal reliability was not calculated for the three items.

Socio-political variables: self-evaluation of income compared to the average in Israel (1 = much below average; 5 = much above average); educational attainment (1 = elementary; 2 = high school; 3 = post-high school but non-university/college; 4 = university/college student; 5 = university/college degree); self-definition of political ideology (1 = extreme right/hawkish; 5 = extreme left/dovish); and self-definition regarding level of religiosity (1 = secular; 2 = traditional; 3 = religious; 4 = very religious).

Results: Exclusionist Political Attitudes of Immigrants *vis-à-vis* Non-Immigrants

Table 1 presents the results of t-tests conducted to uncover differences between respondents who were mostly born and raised in Israel and others who immigrated from the former Soviet Union in the last 20 years. NJIs were found to be less religious and to have lower incomes, higher levels of education, and leanings towards a more hawkish political ideology. They report significantly higher levels of personal perceived threat of terror, psychological resource loss, and resource gains as a result of the *Al-Aqsa Intifada*. More interestingly, further scrutiny of the resource gain questions shows that NJIs in particular (compared to OJIs) experienced higher levels of intimacy with family members as well as value to others.

Completely consistent with previous national studies (e.g. Al-Haj 2004) and with *H1*, NJIs showed higher levels of exclusionist political attitudes towards PIs. Further, we compared respondents’ support for each of the items indicating exclusionist political attitudes. Of particular interest was the result that NJIs score higher than OJIs on all questions regarding exclusionist political attitudes. The most notable differences were found regarding support for the statement that PIs should be sent back to their country of origin (37.6 per cent of OJIs and 61.6 per cent of NJIs) as well as supporting opposition to awarding equal social rights to PIs (41.8 and 59 per cent,

respectively). Likewise, NJIs showed higher levels of opposition to allowing PIs to bring members of their immediate family to Israel (72.3 per cent of OJIs and 80 per cent of NJIs). However, the idea of denying PIs citizenship when they are disloyal to the state—an issue of acute relevance since the outbreak of the *Al-Aqsa Intifada*—has gained overall support (86.9 per cent for OJIs and 87.5 per cent for NJIs).

Table 2 presents four-step linear regression analyses of the pooled data (OJI and NJI). Exclusionist political attitudes were regressed on the independent variables which were entered into the equations in four steps. In the first step, we entered personal perceived threat of terror—as it is known in the literature—as a powerful antecedent of ethnic exclusionism. Results show that the model is significant with a modest effect by this single indicator. Our basic postulation was that understanding exclusionism through the prism of valuable resources while controlling for threat would be essential. In light of that, in the second step we added the resource variables—economic resource loss, psychological resource loss and resource gain. Results for this step show that the model is significant, with its contribution of threat unchanged (compared to Step 1), and an identical modest contribution of resource gain. In the third step, we entered all the main effects—including the resources variables—along with other common predictors of exclusionist political attitudes (authoritarianism, personal perceived threat of terror, income, education, religiosity, political ideology and immigrant status). Results show that the model is highly significant, with 41 per cent explained variance of the dependent variable. Right-wing political ideology, authoritarian attitudes, being a new immigrant, and loss of psychological resources were all found to be significant predictors of exclusionist political attitudes.

Our basic argument was that understanding exclusionism through the prism of essential resources, while controlling for other viable predictors, would work differently for new immigrants and for non-immigrants. Namely, immigrants may have different motivations for espousing exclusionism towards out-groups, and particularly different perceptions towards psychological and other resources that they have gained as a result of terrorism. Accordingly, in the fourth step we entered the main effects along with nine potential interaction effects, while looking at immigration status as a moderator with the rest of the predictors. Results show that a hawkish political ideology and the interaction term of resource gain and immigrant status were clearly the most salient predictors of exclusionist political attitudes; other significant predictors were authoritarianism and loss of psychological resources. This means that hawkish ideology, authoritarianism and, to some extent, loss of psychological resources would increase exclusionist political attitudes whether people were immigrants or not. Resource gain, however, may serve as an 'exclusionist buffer' just for immigrants. The model as a whole showed 43 per cent explained variance. Although the insertion of the interaction effects did not dramatically increase the explanatory capability of the model, it allowed for the uncovering of the important psychological role played by perception of resource gains among NJIs *vis-à-vis* OJIs.

Table 2. Four-step regressions with interaction predicting exclusionist political attitudes

Variable Name	Exclusionist political attitudes							
	Step 1		Step 2		Step 3		Step 4	
	β	s.e.	β	s.e.	β	s.e.	β	s.e.
Personal perceived threat	.10**	.20	.10**	.20	.00	.18	.01	.19
Economic resource loss			-.04	.40	-.03	.34	-.02	.37
Psychological resource loss			.05	.09	.06†	.08	.07†	.09
Resource gain			.10**	.07	-.04	.07	.01	.07
Authoritarianism					.32***	.07	.29***	.07
Income					.02	.04	.03	.05
Education					-.05	.04	-.07†	.04
Religiosity					.05	.06	.06	.06
Political ideology					-.34***	.07	-.36***	.07
Immigrant status (new immigrant)					.12**	.15	.39	2.06
Immigrant status \times individual perceived threat							-.21	.52
Immigrant status \times economic resource loss							-.15	.84
Immigrant status \times psychological resource loss							-.06	.22
Immigrant status \times resource gain							-.35**	.20
Immigrant status \times authoritarianism							.23	.21
Immigrant status \times income							-.03	.11
Immigrant status \times education							.11	.12
Immigrant status \times religiosity							.05	.26
Immigrant status \times political ideology							.12	.19
R ² (adjusted)	.01 (.01)		.03 (.02)		.41 (.40)		.43 (.41)	
ΔR^2			.02		.38		.02	
F	7.61**		5.45***		40.69***		22.84***	

Note: † $p < 0.10$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Next, based on the regression analysis, we plotted an interaction graph while controlling for other predictors which were entered into the regression equation. As seen in Figure 1, NJIs experiencing little resource gain were substantially more exclusionist than OJIs who gained a similar level of resources. Nevertheless, as levels of gain increased, NJIs appeared to become less exclusionist. On the other hand, levels of exclusionism showed no differences between non-immigrants who experienced high resource gain and those who experienced low. This type of finding has applied merit, as levels of resource gain can be elevated by intervention of the various branches of a capable democratic government. Conversely, resource gain did not play a role in the inclination of non-immigrants to be intolerant towards PIs.⁴

Finally, multi-group structural equation modelling (MGSEM) analyses confirm the findings from the OLS regression analyses. The co-variance matrices for both non-immigrant Israelis and immigrants from the FSU are analysed using LISREL 8.5 (Joreskog and Sorbom 2001). The added value of this procedure, in comparison with

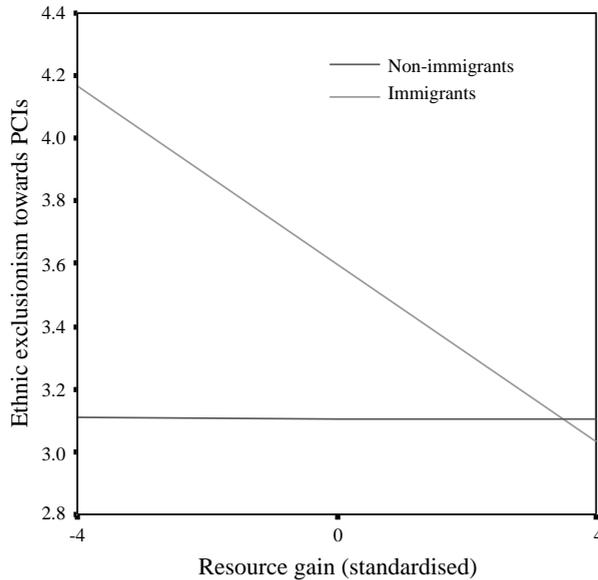


Figure 1. The effect of the interaction between immigrant status and gain of resources on exclusionist political attitudes

the regression analysis, is that it reveals the size of the coefficient in each group. The models examine the direct effects of all nine independent variables on the dependent variable. In the first model, the coefficients are specified as equal in both groups, yielding a model with chi-square value of 15.30 with 9 df attributable to the group of NJIs (the FSU immigrants). Relaxing the assumption that the coefficient for resource gain is equivalent in both groups provides fit value of chi-square equal to 4.35 with 8 df, a significant improvement over the fit of the model (chi-square = 10.95, 1 df). This shows further that the effect of resource gain among NJIs is significant ($\gamma = -.378$, $t = -3.584$, $p < .001$), and that this effect among OJIs (veteran Israelis) is not significant (and is, in fact, zero).

Concluding Discussion

Our study examines the determinants of exclusionist political attitudes towards Palestinian Israelis among immigrants and non-immigrants in Israel in the face of ongoing terrorism. A comparison of the two groups shows that, as predicted, immigrants are more exclusionist than non-immigrants. Generally speaking, the most meaningful predictors of exclusionist political attitudes among the respondents in the pooled sample are a hawkish political ideology, authoritarianism and immigrant status. These findings lend credence to previous studies that examined contributory factors to exclusionist political attitudes, bigotry or tolerance (Hobfoll *et al.* 2003).

Nevertheless, a closer look at exclusionism and its determinants in each of the groups studied shows that psychological resource gain has an effect mostly among new immigrants. This may be the assumption that, had new immigrants gained more resources as a result of terrorism, they would probably have been less intolerant toward Palestinian Israelis. Nevertheless, it should be emphasised that the absolute amount of gains for NJIs is not lower and is even slightly higher than that of OJIs. It is its effect on exclusionist political attitudes that varies between the two groups.

The novelty of this study lies mainly in its account of exclusionist political attitudes among NJIs—particularly regarding the impact of psychological resource gain on exclusionist political attitudes. Findings show that immigrants who fail to make expected resource gains are particularly likely to reject the threatening out-group. Post-traumatic growth thus acts as a psychological buffer against the uncertainty created by terrorism and immigration itself. People may employ exclusionist political attitudes to cope with the unpredictability of life (Hobfoll *et al.* 2006), yet immigrants who gain sufficient resources may refrain from turning to an intolerant ‘coping mechanism’.

These findings emphasise the amplified sensitivity of new immigrants to the personal and social implications of terrorism. Many decades ago, Park and his colleagues (1925) first suggested that being an immigrant is a risk factor. It is not surprising that there is a wide array of evidence showing that, in the face of terrorism, immigrants are much more vulnerable to psychological distress (Bleich *et al.* 2003). Psychological distress resulting from ongoing terrorism has been found to foster hostility towards minorities (Hobfoll *et al.* 2006). When immigrants are faced with two possible sources of trauma (i.e. immigration and exposure to terrorism), intolerance may be further heightened.

The results are not self-explanatory. Although the COR theory originally posited that resource gains would have a beneficial impact during the stress process (Hobfoll 1989, 1998), recent studies submit a new perspective on their role in shaping reaction to a traumatic event. For example, some scholars have found that perceived resource gains of meaning and intimacy following trauma—‘post-traumatic growth’ (for an overview see Tedeschi and Calhoun 1995)—are closely related to a *greater* burden of psychological distress (Tomich and Helgeson 2004). This suggests that such reports of traumatic growth may be an attempt at emotion-focused coping that may forestall active coping efforts. As noted earlier, these problematic coping attempts may easily lead to intolerance, particularly towards groups associated with terrorism (Hobfoll *et al.* 2006).

An important question should therefore be raised regarding the reasons for the relatively surprising negative correlation between resource gains and exclusionist political attitudes among NJI. A closer look at the items that make up the ‘resource gain’ scale, followed by an evaluation of immigrants’ needs, might help to provide some answers. The first two items on the scale deal with increased feelings of hope and purpose in life following terror, and the other two focus on the strengthening of intimate relations with family and friends. These four items represent some of the

most basic needs of immigrants arriving in a new country. When confronting the multiple challenges of immigration and terror, such needs become even more crucial, and immigrants are eager to satisfy these needs in any way they can.

Paradoxical as it may sound, for some immigrants the traumatic event itself may actually help in clarifying the purpose of life, lifting them above everyday troubles and enabling a broader perspective of purpose, goals and general motives. Furthermore, the natural process of congregating into small supportive familial communities in reaction to terror may produce a new and relatively convenient environment for immigrants—one they would not have necessarily found under different circumstances.

Yet there exists another alternative to fulfill these essential needs. According to Terror Management Theory (Greenberg *et al.* 1986), threats to mortality result in increased in-group/out-group distinctions, and discrimination, prejudice or intolerance toward relevant out-groups (Jost *et al.* 2003; Solomon *et al.* 2000). One form of defending oneself from threat and mortality salience is to artificially create intimacy with others on the basis of shared fears, nationalism and hatred of out-groups. In this way, exclusionist political attitudes towards PIs help those immigrants who have not succeeded in satisfying their basic personal and social needs in a constructive manner to find an inferior alternative. Hence, we argue that gain of resources is an important factor in predicting exclusionism among immigrants because it creates a differentiation within the immigrant group between those who gain 'real' social and personal resources as a result of terror, and those who do not, and who instead succumb to exclusionism.

The findings also suggest that resource loss, although a primary predictor of psychological distress when facing terrorism (Hobfoll *et al.* 2006), is only a secondary predictor of ethnic exclusionism. This is only to be expected, as ethnic exclusionism is largely a political viewpoint and only one way of addressing fear and anxiety. Those with more liberal viewpoints, for example, might see their anxiety lowered by moves toward peace and co-existence. Further research might examine these disparate pathways by integrating the study of psychological distress with the political processes taking place under conditions of social unrest and threat.

Yet caution is called for. First, being cross-sectional in its design, causality in this study cannot necessarily be inferred. Further studies utilising longitudinal or prospective designs are necessary in order to elaborate on the causal mechanisms relating to resources, and their relationships with exclusionist political attitudes. However, our study does demonstrate a close relationship between immigrant status and gain of resources, and the relation of these two factors to exclusionist political attitudes. As such, even without establishing causal order, the very associations we found shed a new psycho-social light on a great deal of literature that has been written on exclusionism and its root causes.

In addition, not including terrorism exposure variables in our analyses might be a source of concern. Given that virtually all of the subjects of our sample were highly and constantly exposed to terror—as they and their loved ones must use buses, attend

schools, eat in restaurants, and shop in markets, all of which are terror targets—essentially the whole of Israeli society is exposed to a ‘ground zero’ situation. Under these conditions, measuring exposure to terrorism is not useful. Furthermore, evidence suggests that the psychological effects of terrorism transcend distal and proximal physical exposure and instead affect individuals due to the pervasiveness and unpredictability of terrorism within the culture, or through other indirect pathways such as images of suicide bombings and other terrorist activities disseminated through the mass media (Galea and Resnick 2005; Schlenger *et al.* 2002; Schuster *et al.* 2001; Silver *et al.* 2002). Hence, in our case study, evaluating a variable like exposure to terrorism is less pivotal.

Notwithstanding these limitations, this study is novel and creative in more than one respect. It is unique because of the attempt to explain exclusionist political attitudes by means of COR theory; the rather rare attempt to study the attitudes of one minority towards another minority; and the combination of three explanatory perspectives—COR theory, authoritarianism and perceived threat. We believe it constitutes a genuine contribution to the social sciences and society. In contemporary society—where the threat of ongoing terror, together with the profusion of immigrant societies in the Western world is not an uncommon set of circumstances—the need for this type of multi-faceted research becomes all the more imperative.

Notes

- [1] In Israel the relation between religiosity and exclusionism towards PIs is amplified by the symbiotic connection between the nationalistic and the religious dimensions of Judaism (Liebman and Don-Yehiya 1983).
- [2] Status inconsistency frequently occurs following immigration when resources such as social or cultural skills, prior employment experiences and educational background do not translate into jobs commensurate with actual experience and training (Ong and Azores 1994). Due to discrimination, lack of language proficiency and different occupational licensing standards, many immigrants experience downward mobility when they emigrate, often manifested in either un- or underemployment, or even in social and cultural isolation (Warren 1970)
- [3] This argument is viable for four out of the six election campaigns in which NJIs took part. As for the other two elections (1992, 1999), the leftist candidate (Yitzhak Rabin and Ehud Barak respectively) was perceived as a ‘strong leader’ or army hero, and hence the voting pattern of NJI was more balanced (for a more elaborate analysis of NJI voting patterns see Horowitz 2003). Other explanations for the provisional support of large groups of immigrants for leftist candidates are based upon their major disappointment with the absorption policy of right-wing ministers (Gitelman 1995) and their espousal of social-democratic solutions for their socio-economic problems (Horowitz 2003).
- [4] Following the results of the 4-step multiple regressions, and given existing theories and findings from other studies, we have also tested for the possible intermediary role of either authoritarianism or political ideology, although they were not part of our hypotheses. The

results show that the effect of resource gain may be reduced when either factor is introduced as a possible mediator. A complete report of this analysis is available upon request.

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