Working Paper 27

The Israeli Ethos of Conflict 1967-2006

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Visiting Scholar
2009

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Institute for Conflict
Analysis and Resolution

CONTENTS

Web address for this working paper: http://icar.gmu.edu/wp_27_oren.pdf

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Dr. Oren also held a research position at JDC- Brookdale Institute in Jerusalem for 6 years. The results of her research have been presented at numerous international conferences in Europe and the US such as the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association and the annual meeting of the International Society for Political Psychology. Her publications include chapters in books such as *The Psychology of Ethnic and Cultural Conflict* (2004) and *Why They Die: Civilian Devastation in Violent Conflict* (in press). She has written numerous scholarly articles that were accepted by international journals such as *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *Journal of Peace Research*, and *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*. Her research interests are: conflict resolution, political psychology, political communication, public opinion, and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

FOREWORD

This working paper makes three important contributions to scholarship. First, it adds considerably to what we know about societal ethos—the central beliefs, attitudes, and values that are embraced by most members of a society and shape its policies and decisions. The author portrays ethos as a dynamic entity, constantly changing in a variety of ways. Some elements may strengthen while others weaken, new elements may be added and old ones dropped, and "ethos as an aggregate may strengthen or weaken." Change often derives from the impact of new events. But it may also result from a society's efforts to resolve contradictions between elements of its ethos. In discussing the latter, the author draws imaginatively on social psychological theory about reactions to cognitive imbalance.

The paper's second contribution is to conflict theory. Much attention is paid to the ethos of conflict that develops when a society is engaged in intractable conflict with another society. This subset of the total ethos both derives from the conflict and contributes to its conduct.

The third contribution involves a description and analysis of the Israeli ethos of conflict over the past 40 years. The author divides this sweep of history into five time periods, demarcated by the most critical events in the conflict. Elements of the ethos that waxed and waned across these periods include Zionists goals, faith in Israeli military might, perceptions of dangers associated with a Palestinian state, willingness to sacrifice for the nation, and the desire for peace.

Among the most interesting findings reported in this paper is that the Oslo agreement that temporarily settled the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was preceded by five years of conciliatory changes in the Israeli ethos. Belief in Israeli military supremacy declined, perceived threat from more distant enemies increased, fear of a Palestinian state declined, and there was an increase in the desire for peace. This finding suggests that changes in ethos can predict future policy changes.

In summary, this paper presents a perceptive and highly stimulating blend of theory and research, which should be of great interest to students in three fields: societal change, conflict dynamics, and the history of Israel.

Dean G. Pruitt, Series Editor
July, 2009

ABSTRACT

This study focuses on a major component of the psychological repertoire that evolves during an intractable conflict – the ethos of conflict and the changes in this ethos over time. The study presents a theoretical framework that can be used to analyze and explain changes in ethos of intractable conflict, and also refers to the relationship between changes in the ethos and policy preferences in the realm of conflict resolution.

The study then uses the Arab-Israeli conflict and related ethos as a case study for the application of this framework. Analysis of Israeli opinion polls, cultural products and political platforms revealed that during the years 1977 until 2000 some of the beliefs that comprised the Israeli ethos of conflict lost their status as widely held societal beliefs (for example beliefs rejecting the Palestinian claims to self-determination). Other beliefs retained their place in the conflict ethos but their support in the Israeli public diminished (beliefs extolling the prestige of the Israeli military). Still other beliefs, specifically about peace and about the nature of the existential threat to Israel, significantly changed their content. These changes in turn intensified the internal contradictions between the beliefs in the ethos. After an initial suppression and denial, the Israeli society started acknowledging the inconsistencies among its ethos values (for instance, maintaining a Jewish majority, democracy, and peace) and tried to solve them by changing the context that was activating the inconsistencies.

The end result of all of the changes described above was a reduced tendency to consider the conflict as a sum-zero game, an increase of motivation to end the conflict, and of optimism about finding a solution – the two main conditions producing ripeness for conflict resolution. However, the events of 2000 with the eruption of the *Second Intifada* and its violence reversed the trend and restrengthened some of the societal beliefs in the ethos of conflict, which caused the current decrease in Israeli optimism and motivation to end the conflict.

Introduction

Bitter and prolonged conflicts have dominated the life of many nations in our world. In this phase of their history, these nations comprise generations upon generations who have only known the experience of being in conflict with another society. The conflict dominates the national identity and controls the way the past and present are viewed by the individuals as well as their aspirations for the future. In these nations, the conflict often appears in school textbooks. It also leaves its marks on popular cultural products like literature, cinema, and theater. In addition, it dominates the discussion in the media and frequently frames the political discourse in the country. In other words, the conflict shapes the ethos of the society.

Israel is a typical example. The long Arab-Israeli conflict has played a crucial role in the history of the state of Israel. Hence, it is not surprising that this conflict has shaped many of Israel's societal beliefs (Bar-Tal, 1998a; Bar-Tal & Oren, 2000). Numerous books in recent years, which have provided an analysis of common beliefs about this conflict, include the following: Ben-Shaul (1997) studied siege beliefs in Israeli society. Podeh (2002) analyzed images of the Arabs; Ben-Amos and Bar-Tal (2004) studied Israeli patriotism; Ben-Eliezer (1998) and Bar-Tal, Jacobson, and Klieman (1998) did a comprehensive study of security beliefs; and Yadgar (2003) studied Israeli beliefs about peace.

Most of these studies concentrate on only a few specific beliefs such as the image of the Arabs, security beliefs, or siege beliefs. In other words, they don't provide a full picture of the Israeli ethos with its variety of societal beliefs and the relationships among them. The time frame of most of these studies, even those that look at a relatively broad set of Israeli beliefs, is narrow, focusing on only a few decades. One important contribution of the current study, then, is to provide a full picture of the Israeli ethos and how it has changed over a long period. Most important, the current study goes beyond an empirical description of the Israeli case and provides a basis for comparative analysis of ethos, the way ethos changes, and the relationship between this change and conflict resolution. Thus this work can be seen as contributing theoretical perspectives to the study of ethos and the study of conflict resolution.

A brief review of previous literature about ethos is offered below, followed by an introduction to my conception of ethos, changes in ethos, and the unique features of an ethos of conflict. After sections on general theory and methodology, the focus becomes empirical. The empirical section starts with a look at each of the central Israeli beliefs about the Arab-Israeli conflict and changes in these beliefs in the years between 1967 and 2006. Then the focus becomes broader, looking at the Israeli ethos of conflict as a whole in five time periods, at how the beliefs that compose that ethos relate to each other, and at policy preferences in the realm of conflict resolution. Finally, several conclusions are drawn about the ethos of conflict in general and in the Israeli case.

The Concept of Ethos

Existing Literature about Ethos

Numerous studies throughout the years have used the term ethos to describe the unique characteristics of a society that differentiate it from other societies. This term was first used by Weber (1958), who studied the Western capitalist ethos and the way it is shaped by the Protestant beliefs. Other researchers who used this term to characterize particular societies include: Sumner (1907), Bateson (1958), Ossowska (1973), Epstein (1978), McClosky and Zaller (1984) and Bar-Tal (2000). However, few of these researchers provide a clear definition of the term and none of them provide a framework that allows us to systematically analyze and compare ethos across societies and time.

Two important studies of ethos deserve a closer look as they offer an indispensable basis for further research on ethos. The first is McClosky and Zaller's study of the American ethos (McClosky & Zaller, 1984). Their work is mainly based on a series of surveys administered to national cross–sectional samples and to members of the political elite. This research provides a detailed picture of the American ethos and the complex relationship between the main values—capitalism and democracy—that comprise it. McClosky and Zaller did not develop a general theory of ethos that would apply to other societies. Nor did they provide criteria for what is included in a society's ethos or explain why they reduced the American ethos to only two compo-

nents. Nevertheless, their work can be used as a base for developing general theory.

The second important study of ethos is Bar-Tal's work (Bar-Tal, 2000), which can be seen as a first step to clearly defining the concept and developing a general theory about it. This work serves as the base line for the framework that will be presented in this paper. However, as will be shown later, there is still a need for further development in his definition of the term. Bar-Tal defines ethos as "a particular configuration of central societal beliefs" that are enduring and shared by most members of society and that focus on the society's present and future (Bar-Tal, 2000).

These beliefs can be prescriptive or descriptive. Prescriptive societal beliefs refer to values, norms, or goals that express the conditions desired by a society. For example, security, democracy, and peace are prescriptive societal beliefs in Israel. Descriptive societal beliefs refer to past experiences or present conditions. Examples for Israeli society include the belief that the whole world is hostile to our group (siege belief) and the belief that our society is under an existential threat. A special case of descriptive societal beliefs is collective memory, which presents the history of the society (Cairus & Roe, 2002; Wertsch, 2002). In his later work, Bar-Tal (2007) distinguishes between ethos and collective memory. Collective memory includes only descriptive societal beliefs about the past while ethos refers to the configuration of descriptive and prescriptive societal beliefs about the present and the future.

Bar-Tal perceives ethos in a broader way than McClosky and Zaller, who reduced the American ethos to only two beliefs. His concept of ethos of conflict, which I will discuss later, refers to eight central societal beliefs. However, he does not provide criteria for deciding which societal beliefs are central, and hence may be included in the core ethos, and which are not. The first theoretical contribution of the current study is to provide such criteria. In addition to being shared by the majority of the members of a society and being enduring, central societal beliefs (a) are invoked by the political and economic leadership to justify and explain their policies and decisions, (b) appear in many cultural products, and (c) are imparted to the younger generation and to new members of society.

According to Bar-Tal, ethos is more than the sum of the main societal beliefs in a society. He notes that although it is important to study societal beliefs separately, the study of their wholeness, the ethos, enables a more complete understanding of a society. The investigation of the configuration of dominant societal beliefs allows us to elucidate the structure of the ethos (Bar-Tal, 2000 p. 141).

However, Bar-Tal's work does not provide a systematic framework for discussing ethos as a whole. The structure of ethos (that is, how the beliefs that make up an ethos are related to each other) remains under-theorized in his work and the work of others. The current study also takes upon itself the task of further developing this neglected aspect of the concept.

A New Conception of Ethos

Elaborating on Bar-Tal's definition, I refer to ethos as a particular configuration of central societal beliefs, attitudes, and values. A belief is a cognitive element that makes up what individuals understand about an object or action. An attitude is a positive or negative feeling about some object, and a value represents the individual's understanding of how things should be (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). This distinction is important since, as I will show later, values tend to be more resistant to change and individuals react differently to contradictions among their beliefs/attitudes and contradiction among their values. From here on, unless otherwise specified, the term societal beliefs will refer to all three elements of an ethos: beliefs, attitudes, and values.

My views about how the components of an ethos relate to each other are based on empirical studies of national ethos (such as the study of McClosky and Zaller about the American ethos) and the vast psychological literature regarding cognitive structures (Festinger, 1957; Heider, 1958) and value systems (Rokeach & Ball-Rokeach, 1989; Tetlock, 1986). This literature suggests first, that the elements comprising an ethos are organized around a limited set of core themes. As noted above, McClosky and Zaller (1984) suggest that the American ethos is dominated by two major themes or values: democracy and capitalism. The tradition of democracy includes several societal beliefs, such as the belief that all people are equal and should enjoy equal opportunities as well as beliefs about respect for

freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly, and of worship. The tradition of capitalism rests on such beliefs as the desirability of private ownership of the means of production, competition among producers, market determination of production and distribution, personal achievement, and hard work.

Second, some societal beliefs may be more prominent in the ethos of a society than others. That means that more members of the society share these beliefs and there is less public dispute regarding them. In addition, more prominent beliefs are more frequently found in cultural products, such as school textbooks and media discourse. For example, McClosky and Zaller (1984) suggest that democratic beliefs are more deeply rooted than capitalistic beliefs in the American ethos. They found that economic debate in the United States ranges from support for laissez-faire to support for welfare capitalism, whereas the range of public debates over democracy is narrower. Few if any opinion leaders in the United States openly oppose such values as freedom or equality. McClosky and Zaller found further evidence for the dominance of democratic over capitalistic values in their analysis of surveys administered to members of the political elite. In addition, they note that democratic ideals were the primary inspiration for the nation's most cherished documents, such as the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights. Capitalism inspired no comparable manifestos.

Third, an understanding of the structure of ethos requires analysis of how the core themes relate to each other: they can coexist in harmony, clash, or be partly harmonious and partly clashing.[1] This component of the ethos relates to Tetlock's value pluralism model (1986), which differentiates between monistic ideologies with relatively no conflict among values and pluralistic ideologies with multiple value conflicts. In addition, some issues, events, or contexts may activate conflict among the values while others do not. For example, the two central themes in the American ethos, democracy

and capitalism, share many values such as individualism and personal freedom. Yet, ever since the end of the nineteenth century, conflict between capitalism and democracy has been a persistent feature of American life (McClosky & Zaller, 1984). In a capitalist economy, unless there is heavy governmental intervention, children from wealthier families get better schooling and increased opportunities for personal development and economic gain than those from poorer backgrounds. Hence, the equal opportunity value that underpins democracy can be undermined by strict adherence to the principles of capitalism.

It is important, then, to note the hierarchy of the societal beliefs in an ethos (which beliefs are more and which are less important) and the degree of conflict or inconsistency among these beliefs. Furthermore, it is important to identify the strategies employed by the society to address this conflict, when it exists. Of course, if the conflict among the competing beliefs/values is dormant, individuals may not be aware that it exists. However if there is awareness, studies of cognitive imbalance or dissonance suggest that it will be an unpleasant experience, motivating people to eliminate, or at least reduce, the inconsistency.

The psychological literature points to five main strategies for dealing with cognitive imbalance; people may deny the inconsistency by questioning the evidence of its existence, they may add new cognitions to bolster one of the clashing beliefs, they may engage in cognitive differentiation, they may change one of the beliefs, or they may decide that one of the beliefs is more important than the other(s), (Abelson, 1968; Festinger, 1957; Heider, 1958). In the Israeli context, an example of the first or denial strategy would be to try to refute information indicating that the Israeli army has engaged in intentional attacks against Arab civilians, since such attacks imply inconsistency between belief in the need for military security and belief in a moral self-image of Israel and the Israeli army. An example of the bolstering strategy would be to adopt a belief that Israel is engaged in a new type of war that requires rules of engagement that allow some degree of civilian casualties. An example of cognitive differentiation would be to say that only a few Israeli soldiers were involved in intentional attacks against Arab civilians and they do not represent the spirit of

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1. Note that clashes between themes can amount to either logical inconsistency or pscho-logical inconsistency (Abelson & Rosenberg, 1958). A psycho-logical inconsistency is perceived as departing from logic when there is no real departure. An example is the inconsistency between the belief that one own opponent is cruel and the belief that this opponent has some positive traits (sophisticated, modern, etc.).

the Israeli army. When the inconsistency is among beliefs or attitudes, the fourth strategy may be used, which involves a change in the content of that belief or attitude. On the other hand, values do not change so easily. Hence, when the inconsistency is among values (as in the civilian casualty example), people are more likely to use the fifth strategy of deciding which value is more important, for example deciding that on issues of state security, the Israeli army cannot always act in accordance with strict morality, as defined by international law. The Israeli example also reveals a sixth strategy, which involves changing the context within which the inconsistency arises. For example, as we shall see below, tension between the value of democracy and the value of ensuring a Jewish nature for the state would diminish if Israel were to give up control of the territories that were captured in 1967.

Abelson (1959) proposes that attempts to resolve inconsistency generally proceed in the following order: denial, bolstering, a second denial attempt, and differentiation. Following Abelson, I will predict that only if all of these strategies fail, will the last strategies be used: change of beliefs, ranking values by their importance, or changing the context that produces the inconsistency.

In sum, the current study provides a framework for examining ethos as a whole. According to this framework any study of ethos should detail the content of the central societal beliefs, clarify their relationship with each other, and describe the special strategies adopted by the society to resolve any inconsistencies among them. Societies differ from each other in the specific content of their central societal beliefs. Societies may also differ in the configuration of the societal beliefs within their ethos. For example, both the Israeli and the American ethos include a belief in democracy, but as we shall see later, the belief in democracy is far more central to the American ethos than to the Israeli one. In addition, while in the American ethos the value of democracy clashes mainly with the value of capitalism, in the Israeli ethos it clashes mainly with the value of the Jewish nature of the state. Finally, societies may choose different strategies to resolve inconsistencies among their central beliefs, ranging from total denial to changing their ethos.

Ethos, Ideology, Culture, and National Identity

Another problem in previous studies of ethos is that they do not provide a clear distinction between ethos and related concepts such as ideology, culture, and national identity. Indeed, Bar-Tal and McClosky and Zaller use the terms ethos, ideology, culture and national identity interchangeably. Hence, before proceeding, I want to clarify the relationships among these concepts and the advantage of using the concept of ethos compared to these rival concepts.

Ideology is often defined as an organized construct of beliefs and attitudes that is more or less institutionalized or shared by others (see Adorno, 1950; Tedin, 1987). According to Bar-Tal et al. (Bar-Tal, Raviv, Raviv, & Dgani-Hirsh, 2009), an ethos of conflict constitutes a type of ideology and like an ideology it impacts perceptual-cognitive processing of information. However, the ethos of a society may be seen as a meta-ideology: a framework that overrides the various separate ideologies in the society. For example, the main ideological debate between liberals and conservatives in American society is confined within the broad framework of the American ethos of democracy and capitalism (McClosky & Zaller, 1984).[2] It follows that changes in a society's ethos are more fundamental than are changes in any of its ideologies and, hence, may have a larger impact on that society's policies (for example, toward conflict resolution).

While the concept of ideology may be too narrow to explain changes in policy preferences, the concept of culture may be too broad. Inglehart defines culture as a coherent system of beliefs, values, attitudes, norms, and skills that are widely shared and deeply held within a given society (Inglehart, 1997, p.52, 54, 69). Both Bar-Tal and McClosky and Zaller claim that ethos is a part of cultural knowledge (Bar-Tal & Oren, 2000, p.7; McClosky & Zaller, 1984, p.16). However, the culture of a society may also include societal beliefs that are not central enough to be part of the ethos. These beliefs, though widely shared, do not help the political and economic leadership to justify and explain their policies and decisions, or do not appear in many

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2. In this context, Jost's (2006) distinction between core (stable) and peripheral aspects of ideological belief system may be relevant. As we saw above, ethos includes mostly central (e.g. core) beliefs of a society.

cultural products and/or are not imparted to the younger generation. For example, according to a survey conducted in 2001, which employed questions from Inglehart's World Values Survey, Israel was found to have a moderately postmaterialist culture (Yuchtman-Ya'ar, 2002). Democracy, tolerance, and multiculturalism are core postmaterial values and are associated with sensitivity to minority and female rights, and to the environment. Most of these cultural values are not part of the Israeli ethos. Indeed, postmaterialism in Israel is embraced by younger, more secular, higher income individuals who identify with the political Left. The influence of postmaterialism has been severely limited among religious Israeli Jews (Yuchtman-Ya'ar, 2002). It is also widely assumed that culture either experiences no change over time or changes very slowly in response to long-term trends. This means that, in contrast to ethos, the concept of culture is not dynamic enough to explain sudden changes in policy preferences.

National identity is a popular concept that, like ethos, was for years vaguely defined. Brubaker & Cooper (2000) even went so far as to suggest that the concept of national identity is too ambiguous to serve the needs of social analysis and hence should be abandoned or restricted. Lately, Abdelal et al. (Abdelal, Herrera, Johnston, & McDermott, 2006) have suggested a more rigorous and methodologically useful framework for studying collective identity, of which national identity is one manifestation. They define collective identity as an agreement within a group about social purposes, constitutive norms, relational comparisons with other groups, and cognitive models. National identity and ethos share much in common. For example, national security is part of Israeli ethos and its national identity—what is sometimes called 'securitization of identity' (Buzan & Weaver, 2003; Buzan, Weaver, & Wilde, 1998; Kuus, 2002). However national identity may include beliefs that are not part of ethos. For example, Israeli national identity includes historical narratives about Israel's past (Oren, in press) that are not part of the national ethos, which only focuses (as indicated above) on the present and the future. Israeli national identity also contains beliefs that are less central than those included in the Israeli ethos, such as the belief that Israel is a modern state.

In sum, the concept of ethos that is presented in the current study helps to clarify the distinction between ethos, ideology, culture, and national identity. Ethos is an ideology but it is broader then most specific ideologies in the society—a meta-ideology that frames most societal debate. The study of ethos may also contribute to the study of national culture and national identity since ethos is an important component of these entities. In addition, the current conceptualization of ethos can be more easily operationalized and changes in ethos can be more readily discerned, than is the case for the more general concepts of national culture and national identity.

Changes in Social Beliefs and Ethos

As noted before, the societal beliefs that construct an ethos are enduring beliefs. However, their durability does not imply that they are unchangeable. The current study also presents an original conception of changes in societal beliefs including those that make up an ethos. According to this framework, these changes take two major forms. The first form involves changes in the extent of confidence in a societal belief. That is, members of the society may lessen or increase their confidence in the belief—the belief may weaken or strengthen. According to McClosky and Zaller, for example, democratic values such as freedom of expression became more deeply rooted in the American ethos in the twentieth century than they were in the nineteenth century.

The second form is that societal beliefs may also change their content over the years. They may change from more specific to more universal or vice versa. For example, the value of equality in the American ethos has been broadened over the years, in that the population considered to be entitled to equal opportunity now includes women and minorities, groups that were previously denied this right (McClosky & Zaller, 1984).

Changes in central societal beliefs may lead to changes in the ethos as a whole. This change can take different forms as well. When the individuals in the society increase or decrease their confidence in the bulk of the beliefs in the ethos, the ethos as a whole will strengthen or weaken. In the case of the Israeli ethos of conflict, as we will see, most of the

component beliefs weakened over time resulting in a weaker ethos.

Another type of change may be manifested in shifts in the composition of the ethos. This may happen when beliefs are dropped or added. A societal belief may be dropped from the ethos if it is no longer widely shared, does not serve the political and economic leadership in justifying and explaining policies and decisions, no longer appears regularly in cultural products, or is not imparted to the younger generation and new members of society.

The internal balance in the ethos may also be disrupted if changes in the content of certain societal beliefs create new contradictions with other beliefs. Such is the case with the change in the content of beliefs about equality in the American ethos. When more people were thought to be entitled to this right, it increased the conflict between belief in the equality of opportunity and belief in capitalism as minimal governmental intervention.

Finally, a society can develop new strategies to deal with contradictions in the ethos, from suppression and denial to acknowledging the inconsistencies and choosing between the conflicting beliefs.

The Ethos of Conflict

So far our discussion has referred to ethos in general. The current study, however, will focus on a special type of ethos – the ethos of conflict. A society that has prolonged exposure to conflict with other societies is likely to develop societal beliefs about that conflict. In other words, that conflict becomes the object of many central societal beliefs. Together, these beliefs constitute an ethos of conflict. It is important to note that in such societies, ethos of conflict is usually only part of the overall ethos. Other parts may emerge earlier and not be related to the conflict, such as the belief in democracy that is part of the Israeli ethos.

Much of Bar-Tal's work is dedicated to the ethos of conflict, and here he provides a detailed framework. According to Bar-Tal, an ethos that evolves during an intractable conflict includes the following societal beliefs: beliefs about the goals in the conflict, about security, own victimization, the opponent's lack of legitimacy, positive self-images, national unity,

patriotism, and peace (Bar-Tal, 1998a; Bar-Tal, 2000; Bar-Tal & Oren, 2000). These central beliefs are strongly linked to *circumstantial beliefs* about conflict (Bar-Tal & Halperin, in press). The latter are more specific, more policy oriented, and less stable than the former. They can refer to a specific security doctrine, the desirability of the current status quo, or details of a potential peace plan. Israeli examples of such beliefs are: we should focus on military buildup in order to achieve security, we should support the two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, or we should maintain the current status quo in our relationship with the Arab world.

The Ethos of Conflict, Ripeness and Conflict Resolution

According to Bar-Tal, the ethos of conflict is a major component of the psychological repertoire that allows a society to cope effectively with the stressful conditions produced by a conflict. At the same time, these beliefs usually present a one-sided, simplistic, black-and-white picture of the situation and, as such, serve as explicit barriers to the peace process by providing an epistemic basis for continuation of the conflict (Bar-Tal, 2007). In other words, they may help a society to pursue a conflict more or less successful-ly—to win it, or at least not lose it—but may prevent the society from solving that conflict. For the latter to happen, the society would have to change its ethos of conflict.

Here arises a question: How can changes in the ethos of a conflict contribute to resolution of that conflict?

Resolution of a conflict usually results from a long process of searching for a formula that will satisfy both parties' aspirations (Pruitt & Kim, 2004). Several conditions may encourage such a process. According to ripeness theory, for example, "If the (two) parties to a conflict (a) perceive themselves to be in a hurting stalemate and (b) perceive the possibility of a negotiated solution (a way out), the conflict is ripe for resolution" (Zartman, 2000 p.228-229). Put differently, the first condition produces motivation to escape the conflict and the second condition refers to optimism about finding a solution (Pruitt, 2005).

The ethos of conflict can produce circumstantial beliefs that relate to these conditions for ripeness,

for example, perceptions that the status quo in our conflict is unacceptable or that there is a chance for peace, or that there is a possible formula that may serve as a solution. In addition, changes in beliefs about the opponent or about our own side's power and perceived level of threat may strengthen optimism and motivation to escape the conflict, thereb increasing readiness to solve the conflict. Changes in goals regarding the conflict may help develop the kind of formula that is acceptable as a solution to the conflict. In addition, awareness of conflicting values in the ethos and creation of a value hierarchy that favors peace may also contribute to ripeness (Kanavou, 2006).

Methodology

Before we turn to the empirical part of this study, I want to add a brief note about its methodology. As indicated above, the beliefs that make up a societal ethos are shared by the majority of the society over a long period of time (we count a belief as being part of the ethos if it is endorsed by 75 percent or more of the population), serve the political and economic leadership in justifying and explaining policies, appear in various cultural products, and are imparted to the younger generation and to new members of society. Accordingly, three types of sources were employed to analyze the societal beliefs. The main tool used to determine the level of consent about beliefs among the members of Israeli society, was statistical analysis of an extensive database of Israeli public opinion polls. The changes in responses to time series surveys from 1967 to 2006 provided valuable insight into the corresponding trends in public opinion preferences. The changes over time in the areas of focus and question wording in the polls were also used as indicators of changes in the content of societal beliefs. Past studies that examined the appearance of these societal beliefs in Israeli cinema and school textbooks were used to determine the frequency of appearance of these beliefs in cultural products and material to be read by the younger generation. Lastly, content analysis of election platforms of the two major Israeli parties (*Labor* and *Likud*) was used to indicate the function of these beliefs as guidance to the political leadership.

In earlier work, I used these methods to study the eight societal beliefs of conflict mentioned by Bar-Tal

(beliefs about the goals in the conflict, about security, own victimization, delegitimizing the opponent, positive self- images, national unity, patriotism, and peace), as they appeared in Israeli society (for a full report of this study see Oren, 2005). The purpose of the analysis was first to indicate whether these societal beliefs were indeed central for Israeli society—whether they were shared by the majority of the society over a period of time, whether they served the political and economic leadership to justify and explain their policies, and whether they appeared in various cultural products and were imparted to the younger generation and to new members of society. Another purpose was to examine the changes in these societal beliefs over time.

The 2005 study indicates that one of the societal beliefs about conflict mentioned by Bar-Tal—the belief in national unity—was not part of the Israeli ethos. Although this belief was shared by many Israelis (for example, more than 75 percent of the Israeli Jewish respondents in a survey that was conducted during the years 1986-1996 thought that it is vital to support the government in time of war), it appeared infrequently in school textbooks, movies and party platforms. The other seven societal beliefs mentioned by Bar-Tal indeed served as central societal beliefs and therefore, as part of the ethos. In what follows, I will present each of these beliefs and how it changed over time. Then, I will address the changes in the Israeli ethos as whole during those years.

The Israeli Ethos of Conflict: Its Constituent Beliefs

Beliefs About the Legitimacy of Israeli Goals and the Illegitimacy of Palestinian Goals

The belief in Zionist ideology and the specific goal that derives from it—the goal of establishing a Jewish state in the ancient homeland of Eretz Israel—was transferred to the younger generation through school textbooks. For example, Firer (1985) and Bezalel (1989) found that Israeli history textbooks until the 1980s present the Zionist justifications for Jewish claims on the land. The same textbooks denied Arab rights to the land and refused to recognize the existence of a national Palestinian entity. These beliefs also appeared in various cultural products from this period. For example, Hebrew films, especially from 1911 to the

1970s, were dominated by Zionist ideology and denial of Arab nationality (Shohat, 1989 p. 369). Analysis of political platforms indicate that the belief in Zionism dominates the political discourse. In addition, for decades the platforms of the two major parties (including the main dovish party—*Labor*) denied the existence of a separate Palestinian entity (Oren, in press). Lastly, public polls indicate that Zionism was an enduring and widely shared belief (see the dark blue line in Figure 1). In addition, the light blue line in Figure 1 indicates that until the 1980s most respondents thought of the Palestinian Arab nation as an artificial concept.

It is important to note that Israeli goals with regard to territory have become a central controversy in Israeli society. Bar-Gal (1993) found that Israeli geography textbooks since the 1960s have presented an unclear map of the borders of Israel and there is a subtle avoidance of any discussion of this question. The controversy regarding the borders of Israel also appeared in public polls and party platforms. *Likud* platforms in the years 1969-1996 stated the goal of renewed Jewish political sovereignty over the Land of Israel within its historical borders (Greater Israel), including the territories captured in the 1967 war. This demand never appeared in *Labor* platforms. Since 1973, *Labor* platforms have explicitly opposed *Likud's* policy of keeping all territories under Israeli control and called for a territorial compromise in which Israel would give up its control over territories in the West Bank and Gaza, which are densely populated by Palestinians. Public polls indicate that beyond the first years after the 1967 War, the respondents have been divided on the future of these territories (Shamir & Shamir, 2000). The value of Greater Israel, then, was not part of the Israeli ethos by the criterion of 75 percent endorsement for a long time.

While belief in the goal of establishing a Jewish state in Israel remained stable over the years, the belief that refutes Palestinian goals by claiming that Palestinians do not constitute a separate people but rather a part of the Arab nation—a belief that dominated Israeli thought for decades—ceased to be a societal belief in the 1980s. The percentage of Israeli respondents in public polls that agreed with the statement, "The 'Palestinian Arab nation' is an artificial concept that has only emerged in the last years due to developments in our area" dropped from 70 percent in the period between 1973 and 1977, to around 50 percent in 1979

and 1983—after the peace process with Egypt (see light blue line in Figure 1). A similar change appeared in Israeli cinema. Contrary to films from previous years, Israeli films from the '80s like *The Silver Platter* (1983), *A Very Narrow Bridge* (1985), *The Smile of the Lamb* (1986), *Green Fields* (1989), and *Street of Yesterday* (1989) identified the Palestinians as a national group with national inspirations (Shohat, 1989). As for school textbooks, Podeh (2002) indicates that during the 1990s a new generation of Israeli school textbooks was published that recognized the existence of a Palestinian nation and the role it plays in the Israel-Arab conflict. Lastly, since the 1996 elections, the political platforms of the two main parties (including the hawkish *Likud* Party) show more willingness to recognize Palestinian identity as a separate national group compare to earlier periods (Oren, in press).

Security Beliefs

Other enduring, widely shared beliefs that were dominant in Israeli school textbooks, films, literature, and political platforms for many years are security beliefs. David (2007), who studied Israeli readers from the 1950s until the 1970s, found that they presented Israel's wars as a fight for the existence of the state that was enforced on Israel. Kashti and Riomon-Or (1999) also found that the education system in Israel made enormous efforts to establish a national identity that was based on the threat of extinction. Israeli movies emphasized for years the belief that the state is under existential threat, presenting Israel as a small country surrounded by big neighboring states that aim to destroy it (Ben-Shaul, 1997). Public polls indicate that discussion about the threats to the state have consistently occupied Israeli minds over the years. However, public polls also indicate that most respondents have not placed a high probability on the possibility that Israel will be destroyed. Israelis have been worried over the years about war, terrorism, the Palestinian state, and unconventional weapons in the region, but they have not viewed the existence of the state as endangered (Oren, 2005). That could be a result of the positive image they held of the Israeli army and of Israel's military power.

Israeli security beliefs attribute great importance to security as a value. Israeli political platforms highly emphasized national security. In fact, most political platforms during the years 1967-2006, regardless of party, start with a section referring to national defense

and the need to achieve security. Numerous questions in the Israeli data base referred to the importance of security as a main value and its priority over other values. Several times, the respondents were asked to name their most important values and they always referred to national security as one of them. The uniqueness of this situation can be learned from comparative data involving other countries. The World Values survey that was conducted in over 80 countries from around the world included questions that ask the respondents to rank potential aims of the country. Israel was the only country in which the aim of maintaining strong defense forces was ranked first. In most countries, even those that were in prolonged conflict with other countries (like Taiwan), a high level of economic growth was most often the first choice.[3]

The main change in Israeli security beliefs occurred during the 1990s. In this period, the content of beliefs about the type of the perceived threat to Israel changed. The focus moved from conventional war and a Palestinian state to the threat of nonconventional weapons in the hands of powerful Muslim states. By 1992 nonconventional weapons were perceived as a significant threat by 70 percent of Israelis, while only 51 percent identified a Palestinian state as a threat to Israel (see red line in Figure 1) (Arian, 1995). A similar trend appeared in political platforms. Already In 1977 and 1981, *Labor* platforms mention the "new worrying signs of penetration of nuclear potential in the possession of Arab warlike states" (p. 10). This worry became stronger in 1992, when both parties' platforms highlighted more than before the threat that some Arab states would acquire nonconventional weapons. At the same time, the platforms omitted references from earlier years regarding the danger from a Palestinian state.

Image of the Arabs

The change in threat perception is related to changes in image of the Arabs. Negative stereotypes of Arabs were found in Israeli school textbooks from the 1920s until the 1970s. For example, according to Bar-Gal, Arabs have traditionally been presented in Israeli geography school books in terms of the following characteristics: "unenlightened, inferior, fatalistic, unproductive, apathetic, with the need of a strong paternalism . . . They are divided, tribal, exotic, people of the backward East, poor, sick, dirty, noisy, colored.

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3. See http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/

Arabs are not progressive; they multiply fast, are ungrateful, not part of us, non-Jews. They commit arson and murder, they destroy, are easily inflamed, and vengeful" (Bar-Gal, 1993 p.189. see also Firer, 1985; Podeh, 2002). Negative images of Arabs as primitive, uneducated, and violent also appeared frequently in Israeli films until the 1980s (Shohat, 1989; Bar-Tal & Teichman, 2004). From pre-state years until the late 1970s, Arabs usually did not appear in the films as individuals and were almost always filmed at a distance. Lastly, public polls and party platforms indicate that Arabs were commonly seen as having intentions to destroy Israel. For example, the *Labor/ Alignment* 1969 platform states that "Arab leaders, with their aggression toward Israel, keep rejecting any peace effort, and keep preparing for the next war" (p. 8). This platform also declares that Arab states, where the bases of Palestinian terror groups are located, are fully responsible for the terrorist actions of these groups (p .9). The *Likud/Herut* 1969 platform says on this matter that "the saboteur [Palestinian] groups are nothing but means in the enduring aggression of Arab states and their army forces" (p. 6). In addition, the main references to Arabs states in the 1969 platforms of the two main parties are as "Arab states" or as "the enemy," which indicates a perception that all Arabs are part of a single homogeneous hostile group (the "Arab World"). It is not surprising then, that this belief was widespread among the Israeli public; during the years 1967-2006 most Israeli Jewish responders in public polls believed that the true intention of the Arabs was to destroy the state of Israel (see yellow line in Figure 1).

However, changes appeared in these beliefs over the years. By the late 1970s, the delegitimizing of Arabs, noted earlier, had almost disappeared from the textbooks (Firer, 1985). Podeh (2002) noted that from the late 1970s, the history textbooks used less pejorative terminology in their description of the Arabs' violent resistance to Jewish immigration and settlement, and presented the history of the conflict in a more balanced way. Bar-Tal (1998b), who analyzed the content of school textbooks, used in all school grades (1 to 12) in history, geography, civic studies, and Hebrew (readers) that were approved by the Ministry of Education for use in schools in 1994–95 and which referred to Arabs, or the Arab-Jewish conflict, shows that there was sporadic and rare delegitimization of Arabs in these books. Yet, the great majority of the books still stereotyped Arabs negatively, and positive

stereotyping was rare. A change was also document-ed in Israeli cinema. During the 1980s Israeli movies began to portray individual Palestinians—either in the state of Israel or the occupied territories—as multidimensional human beings (Shohat, 1989).

Over all, the view of Arabs as a single monolith united in their enmity toward Israel was transformed into a more nuanced view that distinguished among different groups, each having a different kind of relationship with Israeli Jews, ranging from hostility to peace (Bar-Tal & Teichman, 2004). A content analysis of the platforms of the two main parties during the years 1967-2006 (see Oren, in press) reveals this trend. Until 1973, most *Labor* references to Arab states and groups were general (such as "the Arabs"). This tendency changed in 1977, shortly before Egyptian President Anwar Sadat visited Israel. Since then, *Labor* platforms mainly use specific names to refer to those states and groups. A similar trend, since 1984, is observed in *Likud* platforms. In addition, content analysis indicates a rise in the percentage of references to friendly initiatives by Arabs in the 1992, 1996 and 1999 *Labor* platforms and in the 1992 and 1996 *Likud* platforms. For example, in contrast to the quotation from the 1969 *Labor* platform mentioned above, the 1996 *Labor* platform referred to states such as Egypt, Jordan, and Morocco as "peace-seeking Arab states" (p. 8). The 1996 *Likud* platform mentions Morocco and its contribution to the peace process. Egypt is also mentioned as "the first Arab country to establish peace with Israel" and Jordan, as the second (p. 7). However, following the outbreak of violence in September 2000, (the *Second Intifada*) the platforms of both parties show a return to old perceptions. For example, the 2003 *Labor* platform states that "the [Israeli] hopes for ending the Palestinian-Israeli conflict were dashed as a result of the waves of hatred, incitement, extreme violence, and terror unleashed on Israel under the patronage of the Palestinian Authority…" (p. 4).

Public polls also indicate these changes in the societal beliefs about Arabs. The perception of Arabs as intending to destroy Israel lost strength, from 70 to 80 percent before Sadat's visit to 62 percent in 1979 (Stone, 1983). By 1992 only 54 percent of the Israeli Jews thought that the ultimate goal of the Arabs was to eradicate the state of Israel, though this number had risen to 64 percent by 2006 (see yellow line in Figure 1).

Self- image

Positive images of the Israelis stood in absolute contrast to the delegitimizing beliefs about Arabs. Israeli textbooks especially during the 1950s, '60s, and '70s presented the Jews as brave winners of all Arab-Israeli wars. These books also described the Jewish people as hard-working, courageous, modern, intelligent, and moral. More than that, Jewish culture, religion, and tradition were regarded as morally superior compared to Arabs and other nations. Jews were described as the Chosen People and as a "light unto the nations" (Firer, 1985). David (2007) shows how Israeli textbooks glorified the Israeli army; songs and stories in school readers praised the army and empha-sized the courage and high moral standards of its solders.

Israeli films from the '40s presented the reborn Israeli Jews as free, modern, active, productive, in control of their own destiny, and having turned the barren desert into a blossoming garden (Ne'eman, 1995). Israeli films from 1948 until the 1970s often depicted the Jews' heroic struggle against the hostile Arabs. The victorious 1967 War brought forth a series of films that were nearly all about the heroism of Israeli fighters who contained Arab violent intentions and aggressive behavior. Political platforms also stressed the moral superiority of the Jewish people and Israel. For example, *Likud*'s platform in 1977 and 1981 declared that Israel is the origin of western culture and that Israel is carrying the message of salvation to demo-cratic and civilized nations (p. 4). Over the years, both parties' platforms have stressed the strength of the Israeli army and the courage and morality of its soldiers (Oren, 2005).

Yet, public polls indicate that confidence in the military superiority of Israel over the Arabs was in decline in the late '90s. In 1985, 78 percent of Israeli Jews believed that Israel had the ability to wage war successfully against all the Arab states. This percent-age dropped to 58 percent in 1993 and to 48 percent in 2000 (still, 88 percent thought that Israel could wage a war successfully against Syria). However, the confidence in Israeli military superiority rose again in later years. In 2004, 67 percent of the respondents thought that Israel had the ability to wage war successfully against all the Arab states; and in 2005, 72 percent (see dark green line in Figure 1).

Victimization

While the Israeli ethos includes a self-image of Israel as a military superpower, it also includes a self-image of Israel as a victim. According to Firer (1985), history textbooks used between 1948 and 1967 presented Jewish history as an unbroken sequence of pogroms, special taxation, libel, and forced conversion, with the Holocaust forming the climax. While writing on the Arab-Israeli wars, Israelis were presented as the weak side that reacted to the violence of many stronger enemies. Bar-Tal (1998b) found that victimization of the Jews was a leading theme in the readers and history books in 1994 and 1995. Those books presented the continuity of this phenomenon throughout Jewish history, some going as far back as ancient Egypt. The victimization of the Jews was also presented in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict. It is always Arabs who initiate violence against Jews, who are then forced to defend themselves. Lately Zamir (2003) found that the victimhood theme was still dominant in Israeli middle school readers. Readers for secular schools mostly present the victimhood theme in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict, while readers for the religious schools focus on the Jewish people as eternal victims of the world in general.

Shohat (1989) and Ben-Shaul (1997) found many references to victimhood and siege in Israeli movies from the 1940s and '50s. This sense of victimhood, which emphasizes the isolation of Israel in the world, is also found in political platforms from the period of the peak of the conflict—1967 to1977 (Oren, 2005).

Yet, a reassessment of the world's hostility to Israel seemed to be taking place in the 1990s— shortly before the Oslo process. In public polls, the percentages of agreement with the statement "Israel is and continues to be 'a people dwelling alone'" dropped from 69 percent in 1990 to 54 percent in 1994 (Arian, 1995). This trend was even more profound in the parties' platforms. The platforms of the two parties in 1992, for example, mention that Israel was able to establish diplomatic relations with many countries, which had refused such relations for years. As a result, these platforms sharply contrast with the siege and isolationist notions included in platforms from previous years. In addition, the 1988 *Labor* platform indicated that the Palestinians are also victims of Israeli policy by declaring that "the outbreak in December 1987 of disturbances in the territories…was caused largely by the political paralysis imposed by the *Likud*" (article 1.2.7). The platform then points to mutual (Israeli and Palestinian) responsibly for the situation and to other causes of the violence than mere Arab aggression. This idea also appears in Israeli movies from that period. As indicated above, Israeli filmmakers from the 1980s began to acknowledge the Palestinians as victims of discrimination. However, as Shohat (1989) indicates, most of the Israeli films, including those that criticized Israeli militarism, still mainly focused on the Israeli individual as a victim of the demanding and stressful psychological situation produced by the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Patriotism

Studies by Bar Gal (1993), Dror (2004), and David (2007) that analyzed Israeli textbooks found that in the 1950s '60s and '70s, these books were dominated by an emphasis on patriotism, attempting to nourish love and loyalty for the country and encouraging the younger generation to sacrifice and fight for their homeland. Similar trends appeared in Israeli films from the 1940s, '50s, and '60s, which emphasized the idea of individual sacrifice for the national collective. The heroes in these movies were the pioneer, the kibbutz member, and the soldier who fights and often dies for the country (Ben-Shaul, 1997). Indeed, public opinion polls over the years have shown high level of patriotism in Israel. The World Values survey indicates that the percentage of Israelis who declared that they are proud to be Israelis and the percentage of Israeli respondents who say that they are ready to fight for their country was very high compared to other countries.

However, over the years there has been a decrease in Israeli patriotism. Dror (2004) notes that since the 1970s, the focus in Israeli textbooks has shifted from a didactic patriotic approach to an academic approach. He also points to two opposing trends in the 1990s: the first one concentrated on Jewish and holocaust studies (that may strengthen Israeli identity and patriotism) and the second one related to universalism and tolerance toward other nations and minorities. Ne'eman (1995) differentiates two types of Israeli films of the 1980s: "conflict films", and "nihilistic cinema". The later is mostly relevant to patriotism beliefs. It includes movies such as *Paratroopers* (1977), *The Vulture* (1981), *Night Soldier* (1984), *Fury and Glory* (1984), and *One of Us* (1989) that question the patriotic value of self-sacri-

fice and the justification for continuing the violent conflict with Arabs.

Decrease in Israeli patriotism also appeared in public polls. National surveys, for example, indicate that the belief in patriotism that calls for extreme sacrifices, as indicated by the level of agreement with the statement "it is good to die for our country," declined from 70 percent in 1991 to 62 percent in 1994 (Arian, 1995). In addition, the percentage of respondents who agree that there is a need for personal sacrifice for the state dropped from around 70 percent in 1985 to around 50 percent during the period 1987-1991 (see light green line in Figure 1).

Beliefs about Peace

Peace as a theme has often appeared in school textbooks over the years. David (2007) who studied Israeli readers from the 1950s to the 1970s found that they presented peace as one of the foundations of Zionist practice and expressed a wish for peace between Arabs and Jews. Nevertheless, peace appeared in the readers mostly as a dream, a hope, or a wish. Through the mid-1980s, following the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt, new educational programs to advance the coexistence between Jews and Arabs were implemented in the schools. In addition, the Ministry of Education declared coexistence between Jews and Arabs as a national theme for all the schools in the years 1985-1986; and in 1986, a new Unit for Education for Democracy and Coexistence was established in the Ministry, with the aim of implementing this policy. When a new Minister of Education entered office in 1990, he had new policies, which mainly emphasized Zionist and Jewish values (Bar-Tal, 2004). In 1994-1995, after the Oslo accord, the Ministry of Education declared "peace" as a national theme for all the schools (Dror, 2004). Yet, Bar-Tal (1998b) who studied Israeli school textbooks approved by the Ministry of Education for use in schools in 1994–95, found that peace was rarely presented and only a few history books note the 1979 peace agreement with Egypt.

The resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict also appeared also in films. Like textbooks, Israeli films usually present peace in a vague, de-nationalized way. Indeed until the 1990s not one Israeli film mentioned a Palestinian state as part of a solution to the conflict. Movies from the 1930s that addressed the Arab-Israeli conflict present the end of this conflict as a sudden

change in the attitude of the Palestinians from attacking the Jews to communal solidarity with them. At the same time, these movies portray this resolution of the conflict as utopian and imply that this solution is not necessary in the present. Films from the 1960s, like those from the 1930s, present the resolution to the conflict as a sudden change in the attitude of the Palestinians who accept the Jewish claims and culture. However, contrary to the films from the 1930s, those from the 1960s were more optimistic about the chances to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict and put more emphasis on the necessity for Israel to resolve that conflict. Despite the peace treaty with Egypt, films from the years 1977-1988 were pessimistic about the chances to resolve the conflict, mostly implying that the conflict is unsolvable (Ben-Shaul, 1997).

Political platforms over the years constantly refer to peace. Both parties declared repeatedly that their major aim and focus is peace. However, early platforms refer only to Israeli demands from the Arabs and do not mention Israeli concessions. The *Likud* 1977 platform, for example, says that a *Likud*-led coalition government will conduct a publicity campaign among the Arab people in order to make them realize that they do not need additional territories (p. 3). This publicity campaign, according to *Likud* platform, will convince the Arabs that peace with Israel "will bring prosperity and progress to the Arab people" (p. 3). Their vision of the nature of peace, then, is for the Arabs to give up all their goals in the conflict while Israel does not make any concessions. Ironically, this description was far from the actual peace agreement that was signed two years later by *Likud* leader and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Egyptian President Anwar Sadat. Since the 1981 elections (following the Israeli-Egyptian peace process), the nature of peace in the election platforms of both parties has been transformed from a comprehensive and abstract peace to a more concrete peace that describes political and territorial solutions with specific Arab nations and groups. Although the *Likud* expresses less willingness to compromise than does *Labor*, its platforms since 1981 refer to peace also as a compromise and not just as an Israeli dictate.

Public polls indicate a similar trend. Several questions in the Israeli data base referred to the importance of peace as a main value with priority over other values. Since the 1970s, when the respondents were asked to name their most important values, they referred to

peace as one of the most important. In a time serial survey that started in 1988, respondents were asked to rank four values (democracy, peace, Greater Israel, and a Jewish majority in Israel). As can be seen in the orange line in Figure 1, during the years 1988-2006, around 60 percent of the respondents ranked peace as "the most" or "second most important value." In addition, an analysis of the content of questions about peace in Israeli public polls reveals that until 1977, most questions in Israeli polls regarding peace, presented peace in general vague terms and avoided policy implications. After 1977, and especially after 1987, questions that present peace in terms of a set of policy options become dominant (Shamir, Ziskind & Blum-Kulka, 1999). The above analysis, then, indicates that since the 1980s, peace beliefs have become more central in the Israeli society and their content has changed from an abstract goal to a more concrete and policy oriented view of peace.

The Israeli Ethos of Conflict as a Whole

As we have seen, the Israeli ethos of conflict includes the following central societal beliefs about the Arab-Israeli conflict: beliefs in the goal of establishing a Jewish state in Israel (Zionism) and denying the Palestinian goal for self-definition, beliefs that Israel is under existential threat and that security is critically important, victimization beliefs, military and morally positive self-images, negative images of the Arabs, patriotism, and belief in the value of peace.

In addition, the overall Israeli ethos also includes a belief in the value of democracy, which is not directly related to the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Israeli Declaration of Independence states that Israel "will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants, irrespective of religion, race or sex", electoral platforms of both parties include statements such as "Israel is designated to be a Jewish, independent, and, democratic state" and refer to the importance of free elections, equality before the law, freedom of speech, press, assembly, worship, and women's rights (Oren, in press). These principals are also emphasized in civic textbooks. Lastly, public polls indicate that the belief in democracy is common in Israel. For example, in a 1988 survey, 82 percent said that it was important or very important that the

democratic character of the state be maintained (Shamir & Arian, 1994).

Thus far, the review of the beliefs in the Israeli ethos has focused on each belief separately. The current section takes a new tack focusing on the ethos as a whole. To do so, I will examine the primary relations between these beliefs: which beliefs are stronger within the ethos, and which are weaker. What the relationships are between the beliefs—whether harmonious or contradictory—and how contradictions, where they exist, have been solved. Then, I will discuss the implication of the ethos, in its specific form, for the society's capability and willingness to resolve the conflict. The latter discussion will look at how the ethos influences circumstantial beliefs about the conflict which contribute to or detract from conflict resolution.

The discussion will look at changes that have occurred in the overall Israeli ethos of conflict, dividing the years from 1967 to 2006 into five critical periods. The division into periods is based on the analysis in previous sections which revealed that the events having the most influence were the peace process with Egypt, the first Palestinian uprising (the *First Intifada*), the Oslo process, and the *Second Intifada*. Accordingly, the five periods are: 1967-1977 (the peak of the intractable conflict—of the 1967 War to the visit of Sadat), 1977-1987 (from the visit of Sadat to the eruption of the *First Intifada*), 1987-1993 (from the eruption of the *First Intifada* to the onset of the Oslo process), 1993-2000 (the Oslo process), and 2000-2006 (the period after the beginning of the *Second Intifada*). This division is shown in Figure 1, which contains part of the findings on which this section is based.

The Earliest Period: 1967-1977

If we consider the earliest period (1967-1977—the years at the peak of the intractable conflict), we can see that most of the beliefs that composed the Israeli ethos of conflict (beliefs about the goals in the conflict, about security, own victimization, the opponent's lack of legitimacy, positive self-images, national unity, patriotism, and peace) were strong (e.g. were held by 75 percent or more of the respondents). However, denial of the Palestinians' goal of self-definition, patriotism beliefs, and beliefs about peace were weaker than the others. There are no time serial polls regarding peace from that period, but this is the

impression from other sources, such as textbooks and party platforms.

Several studies have attempted to explore the relations between beliefs within an ethos through statistical analysis such as factor analysis. These studies indeed imply that there is a strong relationship between the various beliefs.[4] Since the pool of public opinion polls that provided a basis for the present research only included the gross distributions of the responses to each question and not the complete data base of each survey factor, analysis could not be used with those data. Therefore, as this section proceeds, I shall only discuss possible logical/psycho-logical relations among the beliefs in the Israeli ethos of conflict.

Many of the beliefs that comprised the Israeli ethos of conflict in this period are logically related to each other. Thus, for example, beliefs about existential threat (security beliefs) together with beliefs regarding the right of the Jews to the land (Zionism) are logically connected with beliefs that repudiate the Palestinian's goal for a state of their own. This is because the Palestinian state was viewed as a military threat and would include much of the land traditionally claimed under Zionism. In addition, beliefs about victimhood

4. Arian (1999), for example, conducted a factor analysis of a number of questions that had recurred in the public opinion polls during the '80s and '90s and might be indicators for certain ethos's beliefs in the Arab-Israeli conflict (threat, security, goals and patriotism). He found two factors which he named "go-it-alone" and "God-and-us." But he also discovered a considerable overlap between the two factors in that the correlation between them was rather high (p. 176). Azran (2003), who carried out a factor analysis of eight of the societal beliefs of conflict through surveys filled by Jewish Israeli students in 2000 also found a very strong correlation among the various beliefs. She found two factors: one reflecting a hawkish perception (perceptions of victimization, security, a positive self-image, a negative image of the opponent, and the righteousness of own goals), and another reflecting a dovish perception of the conflict (a relation between peace beliefs, the opponent's image and goals). Recently, Gopher, Bar-Tal, Raviv and Raviv (2004) have conducted a factor analysis of beliefs about the Arab-Israeli conflict based on questionnaires filled out by 100 Jewish Israelis aged 55-70 from all sectors of the Israeli society. The analysis pointed to three main factors: the first was named ethnocentrism or "blind patriotism" and included items relating to beliefs of unity, patriotism, security, and positive self-image. The second factor (basic beliefs of the ethos) consisted of items regarding negative image of the opponent, goals, victimization, and peace. The third factor was named "enlightened nationalism" and included items related to beliefs about peace, unity, security, and patriotism.

are based on beliefs about the justness of Israel's goals and Israel's positive self-image, while emphasizing the wickedness of the Arab's goals and characteristics (Bar-Tal, 2007). In fact, these three elements of the ethos of conflict: beliefs about victimhood, justness of own goals, and illegitimacy of the rival, form a triangular system that constitutes the core beliefs underlying the intractable conflict (Gopher, 2006). There is also a clear logical connection between security beliefs (e.g. high degree of threat and the centrality of the security value) and patriotism. The demand for self-sacrifice (patriotism) has often been portrayed as a response to the security situation of Israel. This connection surfaces also in the wording of survey questions. As part of the Project for National Security and Public Opinion, for example, the respondents were asked to note whether they agree with the following statement: "sacrifices must we made in the personal economic and social realm in order to preserve our power to the extent that is sufficient to the protection of our security." In addition, Gopher (2006) found a correlation between security beliefs and patriotism.

Despite the cognitive harmony that prevailed among many of the beliefs that made up the Israeli ethos of conflict in this period, this ethos held some potential contradictions as well. The first contradiction is between beliefs that emphasize the value of peace and the negative image of the opponent as uninterested in peace, which implies that peace is not possible. The resolution of this contradiction in this period of peak conflict lay in the fact that peace was suggested only as a dream and not as a practical solution, achievable in the foreseeable future. Another contradiction exists between the belief in the value of democracy and security beliefs that underlie the frequent violations of civil liberties and freedom of speech (such as security censorship). A tension also exists between the belief in the value of democracy and the belief that it is necessary to ensure a Jewish nature for the state. This contradiction becomes apparent in the context of Israeli control of the territories captured by Israel in 1967, which are densely populated by Palestinians. Keeping masses of Palestinians under Israeli occupation may strain democratic practices. On the other hand, adding masses of Palestinians as new citizens to the Jewish state threatens the goal of having a Jewish majority and a Jewish state. At the peak years of the intractable conflict, it appears that

these contradictions were resolved mainly by the denial of their existence (Arian, 1995).

What is the general worldview that arises from this ethos, particularly in relation to ripeness and conflict resolution? One element is that Israel should simply endure the protracted conflict, because (a) there is no urgent need to achieve peace since Israel is sufficiently strong to withstand the Arab threat—no hurting stalemate, no motivation to end the conflict—and (b) peace is not realizable in the foreseeable future, that is, there is no basis for optimism about finding a resolution since the basic Arab goal is seen as the destruction of Israel. Indeed, most survey respondents did not believe that peace between Israel and the Arab states was possible (Oren, 2005). In addition, in this period, around 85 percent of the respondents opposed the idea of a Palestinian state (see Figure 2).

The Second Period: 1977-1987

Sadat's visit and the peace agreement with Egypt brought substantial changes in the societal beliefs that composed the Israeli ethos of conflict in the second period of study (1977-1987). First, the belief that the Palestinians are not a nation became weaker to the point where it was no longer a societal belief (see light blue line in Figure 1). Substantial changes also occurred in the image of the opponent, with a reduction in the proclivity to treat the whole Arab world as a single entity. In addition, as was mentioned earlier, the content of the peace beliefs was altered and peace came to be regarded as a concrete political arrangement which included concessions to and compromise with the other side. Lastly, patriotism dwindled, and at the end of this period there was a decline in the view of the Palestinian state as a threat (see red line in Figure 1).

When the ethos of the years 1977-1987 is compared with the ethos during the earlier years at the peak of the conflict, one notes that the beliefs are mostly less robust, which implies a general weakening of the ethos of conflict as a unifying element for Israeli society and its various divisions.

The ethos that developed in this period included some new contradictions. First, a contradiction emerged between the belief that the goal of the Arabs is to eliminate Israel, which continued to be a part of the ethos, and the modified peace beliefs, that presented peace as a realistic and possible political arrangement

and not just a vision or aspiration. If the Arabs intended to exterminate Israel, how could one reach a practical peace agreement with them in the foreseeable future? That contradiction was resolved in several ways. One was to discriminate between various groups in the Arab world—between groups that were still interested in the elimination of Israel and groups that agreed to acknowledge its existence and with whom peace could be reached. As a result, the perception of peace changed from a comprehensive peace to a separate peace agreement with each country. This solution employed the strategy of cognitive differentiation. Another solution that also employed cognitive differentiation was to assume that the Arabs were willing to sign a peace treaty with Israel despite their wish to bring on its extermination because they had concluded that this goal was impossible due to Israel's superior force. Therefore, the Arabs' readiness to sign a peace agreement was not perceived as recognition of Israel and its right to exist but only as a reaction to Israeli policy and strength. This theme appeared in the 1981 *Likud* platform which presents the peace agreement between Israel and Egypt mostly as a result of *Likud*'s successful policy (p. 3).

Viewing the ethos as a whole, then, and not merely examining each belief separately, highlights the importance of the 1978 peace agreement with Egypt. Beyond the changes that occurred in a number of specific beliefs, mentioned earlier, the peace agreement with Egypt led to a weakening of the ethos of conflict as a whole and to some new contradictions between beliefs in that ethos (peace beliefs, beliefs about the opponents)—a situation that would continue to influence Israeli perception of the conflict. However, it seems that in this period, cognitive differentiation was the main mechanisms for coping with the contradictions mentioned above.

In terms of ripeness theory, the strong continuing belief in Israeli superiority suggests that there was no sense of a hurting stalemate in the conflict with the Palestinians and hence no motivation to resolve this conflict; and the continued belief in an Arab intention to destroy Israel suggests that there was not a lot of optimism about resolving the Israel-Palestinian conflict. Indeed, following the peace agreement with Egypt and before the *First Intifada*, many still supported the preservation of the status quo and opposed a

Palestinian state though the latter was somewhat weaker than before (see Figure 2).

The Third Period: 1987-1993

Significant changes are observed during the third period (1987-1993), which began with the eruption of the *First Intifada* as additional beliefs lost their strength. One was the belief that Israel holds military supremacy over the Arabs—unlike before, less than seventy five percent of the respondents thought that Israel would triumph in a full-scale war (see the dark green line in Figure 1). In addition, a decline can be observed in patriotism, that is, the need to sacrifice for the homeland (see the light green line in Figure 1). Beliefs concerning the nature of the threat to Israel began to emphasize the danger inherent in the possession of nonconventional weapons by countries such as Iran, while simultaneously, the fear of a Palestinian state decreased somewhat (as can be seen in 1992 elections platforms). At the end of this period, there was also a decline in the perceived intention of the Arabs to exterminate Israel (see yellow line in Figure 1) and in beliefs about victimhood. The third period, then, is characterized by a further decline in the strength of the ethos of conflict in Israeli society.[5]

 More importantly, in this period, Israelis became more conscious of the contradictions in their ethos. After the mid-1980s, questions in Israeli public polls asked the respondents to choose among competing values. This indicates increased public awareness of potential contradictions among the values and the need to choose among them. For example, in a time-serial survey that started in 1988, respondents were asked to rank four values (democracy, peace, Greater Israel, and a Jewish majority in Israel). Peace and keeping Israel as a Jewish state (with a Jewish majority) were dominant values and were ranked higher by a vast majority of the population than two other values: Greater Israel and democracy (Shamir and Arian, 1994). Additional surveys asked about trade-offs between security and other values such as the rule of law and civil rights. For example, as part of the National security and public opinion project of the Jaffee Center during the years 1987-2005, respondents were asked to express their

5. A detailed discussion of the reasons for these changes is beyond the scope of this paper. But it is possible that this change was a product of an incremental process that started following the peace process with Egypt. Intergenerational population replacement and the mass waves of immigrations to Israel during the '90s may also help to explain this change.

opinion regarding the dilemma between achieving security and observing the rule of law. Almost all surveys point to slight preference for security. Political platforms during this period also referred to potential contradictions between values, especially the *Labor* platforms that stressed the inconsistency of the beliefs in Israel as a democratic state and of peace on the one hand, and beliefs that refute Palestinian claims to self-definition on the other (Oren, 2005). *Labor* platforms clearly express a preference for the former beliefs over the latter. The 1984 *Labor* platform, for example, states that a democratic regime based on equal rights for all citizens cannot coexist with permanent forced Israeli control of the Palestinian inhabitants of Judea, Samaria, and Gaza (p. 12).

According to Shamir and Shamir (2000) the main change in Israeli public opinion following the *First Intifada* was that it became more attentive to the contradiction between valuing Greater Israel, on the one hand, and valuing democracy, peace and a Jewish majority, on the other, and decided to prefer the latter three values over the value of Greater Israel. This is probably the case among the groups in Israel that believed in Greater Israel (such as the *Likud* voters). However, as we saw above, the value of Greater Israel was not a part of the core Israeli ethos (see p. 8). Shamir and Shamir (2000) themselves admit that Greater Israel has been the lowest member of the value hierarchy since before the '90s, when it began to lose ground. When we look only at the values that are part of the Israeli ethos, we see that the main clash is among democracy, peace and maintaining a Jewish majority. The main strategy that was used to solve the contradiction among these three values was not to create a hierarchy among them but to change the context that was perceived as putting these values into conflict with each other. In other words, to advocate giving up the territories. Indeed, since the *First Intifada* we witness a trend toward greater willingness to return the West Bank as part of a peace agreement; for example, by 1994, only 35 percent of the responders wanted to keep the West Bank (Arian, 1995).

These changes influenced circumstantial beliefs that may have encouraged ripeness and efforts to find a peaceful resolution of the conflict. First, the continuation of the conflict was now perceived as more risky because a greater enemy had appeared (the threat of nonconventional weapons in the hands of some

Muslim states) and the decline of confidence in Israel's military superior. The conflict was also perceived as more costly because of the awareness of contradictions among components of the ethos. As a result, the status quo of continuing the conflict became less desirable. Indeed, surveys from the *First Intifada* period show a reduction in the rate of respondents who chose the alternative of "status quo" as the preferred solution of the conflict (Levinson & Katz, 1993; Shamir & Shamir, 2000). For example, support for the status quo as a permanent solution to the conflict, which had ranged from 11 percent to 47 percent in Israeli polls before the *First Intifada*, dropped to around 2 percent in one survey after the *First Intifada* (Goldberg, Barzilai et al., 1991; Shamir & Shamir, 2000). On the other hand, a decline in the belief that the Arabs wish to exterminate Israel (the yellow line in Figure 1) and in Israel's isolation in the world may have encouraged more optimism and hope for peace. Indeed, Israeli assessment of the chances of achieving peace increased from 57 percent in 1986 to 66 percent in 1990 and to 77 percent in 1991 (Levinson & Katz, 1993; Shamir & Shamir, 2000). In other words, the changes in the ethos of conflict and associated beliefs encouraged motivation to end the conflict and optimism about finding a way out. In addition, increased optimism about finding a way out may have been encouraged by growing acceptance of the two-state solution (Palestine and Israel as separate states) to the conflict. Indeed, unwillingness to accept the Palestinian goal of a Palestinian state had been eroding during the *First Intifada* (Dowty, 2006). While public polls showed opposition to Palestinian statehood at about 90 percent before the beginning of the *First Intifada*, this opposition dropped to 70 percent after the *First Intifada* started (see Figure 2). In summary, as a result of significant changes in the ethos of the Arab-Israeli conflict on the eve of the Oslo agreement, it was possible to find among the Jewish-Israeli society greater ripeness—a larger sentiment for solving the conflict and growing acceptance of the two-state solution.

The Fourth Period: 1993-2000

The fourth period in the Arab-Israeli conflict took place at the time of the Oslo process (1993-2000). In this period, many elements of the ethos of conflict had weakened bellow 75 percent. At the same time, the centrality of peace beliefs had increased (see orange line in Figure 1**)**. Looking at the ethos as a whole, then,

this is the period when the ethos of conflict was the weakest. Accordingly, this period is characterized by a high assessment of the chances of achieving peace (see Figure 3). This period is also characterized by a significant decrease in opposition to a Palestinian state. In fact, at the end of this period, most respondents (57 percent) accepted the idea of a Palestinian state (see Figure 2). The opposition to the two-state solution to the conflict relate to beliefs that refute the Palestinian goals as unjust (there is no Palestinian nation) and dangerous (a Palestinian state will threaten Israel). The weakening of these two beliefs at this period (see light blue line and red line in Figure 1) may increase the acceptation of the two-state solution to the conflict.

The Fifth Period (2000-2006)

In the fifth period (2000-2006), there was a strengthening of some of the societal beliefs that were consistent with conflict such as the belief that Arabs wish to destroy Israel, and the belief that Israel holds military supremacy over the Arabs. In addition, the value of peace diminished in importance (all three are shown in Figure 1). As might be expected, these changes were accompanied by changes in circumstantial beliefs that are related to the conflict. As some scholars have indicated (Pruitt, 1997; Dowty, 2006; Oren & Bar-Tal, 2007), Israeli public polls from this period present a sad paradox. On the one hand, there is increased support for far-reaching compromises with the Palestinians. For example, as shown in Figure 2, more than half of survey respondents express agreement with the establishment of a Palestinian state. At the same time, a majority of the respondents voice a deep mistrust and pessimism about the prospects for peace (see Figure 3).

The ethos of conflict may provide us with an explanation for this paradox. The pessimism may be related to the strengthening of negative beliefs about Arabs as having no interest in peace. Motivation to end the conflict may have diminished in this period, as suggested by strengthening of the belief that Israel holds military supremacy over the Arabs, which may have made the conflict again seem winnable. Yet, the awareness of inconsistency among the beliefs of the ethos of conflict still implies that the continuance of the conflict was perceived as costly. This idea was expressed several times by Olmert, Israel's deputy prime minister, in an interview that he gave to the

Israeli Newspaper, *Yedioth Ahronoth*, in 2006, just after he took office, and in September 2008, several hours after he announced his resignation. Thus, while there are some indications of return to earlier forms of the ethos, some changes in the ethos appear to be irreversible: the belief that the Palestinians have the right to a state and the awareness of inconsistency among the beliefs of the ethos and the adoption of the strategy of changing the context of conflict in order to deal with this inconsistency. In short, there was public support for a possible solution to the conflict but no hope that negotiation with the Palestinians would produce such a result. The consequence of these changes in perception appears to be a desire to unilaterally withdraw from the conflict. The 2003 *Labor* platform declared that in the absence of peace, Israel will unilaterally withdraw from territories in Gaza and the West Bank and will establish a one-sided separation from the Palestinians. The *Likud* adopted this proposal with regard to Gaza, and public polls indicate that it has widespread support among the Israelis. The idea of Arab-Israeli negotiation and mutual resolution of the conflict, then, has been replaced by the idea of a one-side separation, which is consistent with the current ethos of conflict in Israeli society.

Conclusion

The Arab-Israeli conflict has lasted over a hundred years. In this long period, there have been wars and confrontations between the parties as well as negotiations and attempts to solve the conflict. Previous studies provide numerous explanations for the changes in Israeli policy over the years. Most of them invoke changes in international politics, domestic politics and public opinion (Makovsky, 1996; Mor, 1997; Inbar, 1999; Auerbach & Greenbaum, 2000). Few of them refer to ripeness (Pruitt, 1997; Dowty, 2006). The current study suggests another important source of Israeli policies, the ethos of conflict, which connects long-term trends in societal beliefs with ripeness theory.

Analyzing the conflict from this perspective, we can point to several unique contributions of the current study. First, while previous studies of Israeli policy have focused on developments that occurred shortly before critical events in the conflict (such as the *First Intifada* and the Oslo accord), the current study looks

at gradual processes that started years before these critical events. Thus, it provides a much broader historical perspective then is usually offered. Second, the current study explains the changes in Israeli policy as resulting from changes in the society as a whole and not just a change of government or adoption of new views by the ruling party (see, for example Rynhold, 2007 for such an explanation). Thus, it points to more fundamental forces behind Israeli policy. Third, the current study focuses not only on specific societal beliefs regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict but also on the relationship between them. It especially highlights the inconsistency among societal beliefs that often serves as a driving force behind changes in policy preferences. It mentions several strategies that can be and are used for coping with such inconsistencies, moving beyond the work of Shamir and Shamir (2000), who only discuss the strategy of ranking inconsistent values in terms of their importance.

The framework presented here has merit beyond the Israeli case, applying to any society exposed to a prolonged intractable conflict. This includes the Palestinian side of the Arab-Israeli conflict; hence, focusing on the ethos of conflict on both sides would provide a more comprehensive understanding of that conflict than is given here. However, that task is beyond the scope of the present contribution.

According to the framework presented here, in a prolong conflict beliefs addressing goals, positive self image combined with negative image of opponent, the nature of the threat and the need to confront it, the need for sacrifice, and the value of peace coalesce into a commonly agreed upon ethos. This ethos must be viewed as a whole, in addition to looking at its component beliefs. Furthermore, ethos is not static but evolves over time. It can change in various ways. First, ethos as an aggregate can strengthen or weaken. That happens when its component beliefs become more widely or less widely shared among members of the society. In the case of the Israeli ethos of conflict, most of its component beliefs (security beliefs, victimhood, negative opponent image, positive self-image, patriotism) weakened over time, resulting in a weaker ethos. Another type of change involves shifts in the composition of the ethos. Some component beliefs may be dropped while others are added. For example, the early belief that the Palestinians are not a nation has been gradually abandoned. In addition, the internal balance among the different

beliefs in an ethos may change over time, as when some beliefs become more dominant while others become less dominant. In the Israeli case, we witnessed an increase in the importance of beliefs related to peace. The internal balance in the ethos may also be disrupted if changes in the content of certain constituent beliefs create new contradictions with other beliefs. Such is the case with the change in the Israeli peace beliefs, which evolved from an abstraction to a view of peace as a realistic prospect to be achieved by negotiations and compromise. This dramatic change conflicted with other prevailing beliefs in the ethos, such as those defining Israel's goals in the conflict and the negative image of Arabs. Finally, a society can develop new strategies for dealing with contradictions in the ethos. From suppression and denial, the Israeli society started acknowledging the inconsistencies among its values (for instance, maintaining a Jewish majority, democracy and peace) and tried to solve them by changing the context that was activating the inconsistencies. The current study demonstrates that a society's effort to deal with contradictions in its main values often involves a long, gradual process. As predicted by Abelson (1959), attempts to change the reality context of the conflict, as a strategy for reconciling inconsistent elements of the ethos, appeared only after other strategies—such as denial and cognitive differentiation—were used.

The end result of all of the changes described above was a reduced tendency to consider the conflict as a zero-sum game. More importantly, the current study links changes in ethos to changes in circumstantial beliefs about the conflict that relate to the two main conditions producing ripeness for conflict resolution: motivation to end the conflict, and optimism about finding a solution (see Pruitt, 2005; Zartman, 2003). The current study points to three ways that changes in ethos can trigger ripeness. First, changes in specific beliefs may directly impact motivation to end the conflict and optimism about finding a solution. In the Israeli case, the decline of confidence in Israel's military superiority may have made winning the conflict seem less likely thus, encouraging motivation to end the conflict. Likewise, weakening of the belief that the Arabs wish to exterminate Israel may have encouraged optimism about finding a solution. Second, awareness of the inconstancies among components of the ethos may have increased motivation to end the conflict, as the conflict was perceived as more costly in psycho-

logical terms. Third, changes in some of the beliefs that constitute the ethos may also contribute to the perception that there is a formula to end the conflict. In the Israeli case, decline in the belief that there is no Palestinian nation and the belief that a Palestinian state is a threat to Israel directly contribute to the acceptation of the two-state solution as a way out of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Thus, the framework that is suggested in this study also contributes to ripeness theory by highlighting some important and fundamental process that set the stage for ripeness.

Finally, it is important to note that the ethos of conflict is only one component (although a central and important component) of the psychological repertoire that creates major obstacles to beginning negotiation, achieving agreement, and later engaging in a process of reconciliation. Other components include collective memory of conflict, as well as collective emotions (hate, fear, the desire for revenge). In addition, other beliefs that are not directly related to the conflict but reflect general world views (such as religious beliefs) also fuel disagreements. Also, circumstantial beliefs that are not linked to the ethos of conflict, such as a belief that the leader of the rival group is weak and hence unable to implement the potential peace agreement, may serve as barriers to negotiation (Bar-Tal and Halperin, in press). Thus, the present work should be seen as part of a wider effort to study the barriers and obstacles to negotiation and the resolution of intractable conflicts.

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Figures
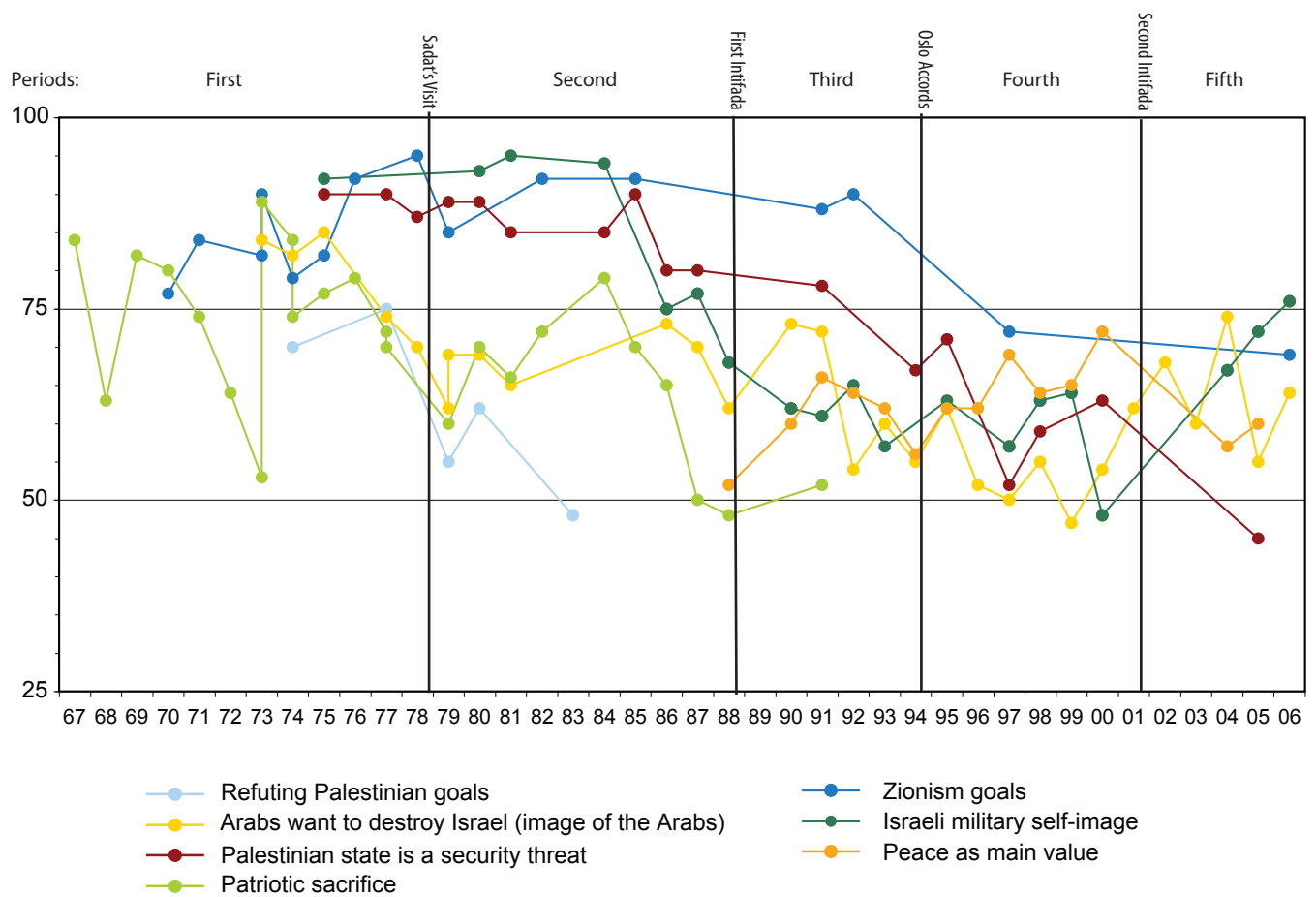
Figure 1. Percentage of endorsement of beliefs in the Israeli ethos as a function of year.

Sources: Zionism was measured by the question: "Are you a Zionist?" (Israel Institute of Applied Social Research). **Refuting Palestinian Goals** was measured by the question: "Do you agree with the statement "The 'Palestinian Arab Nation' is an artificial concept that has only emerged in the last years due to developments in our area" (Israel Institute of Applied Social Research). **Arabs Want to Destroy Israel** was measured by two questions in two surveys: "There are those who claim that the Arabs' aim against Israel is not return of occupied territories but the destruction of Israel. To what extent do you agree with this opinion?' (Israel Institute of Applied Social Research), that was conducted during the years 1973-1981, and "What do you think is the ultimate goal of the Arabs: 1. Recapture some of the territory lost in the Six Days War 2. Return of all territories lost in the Six Days War 3. Conquer the State of Israel 4. Conquer the State of Israel and kill most of the Jews living there" (Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies), that was conducted during the years 1986-2006. **Palestinian State is a Threat** was measured by two questions in two surveys: "Do you think a Palestinian state In Judea and Samaria will endanger the existence of the state of Israel?" (Israel Institute of Applied Social Research) that was conducted during the years 1975-1987, and "To what degree does an establish-ment of a Palestinian state pose a threat to Israel in your eyes?" (Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies), that was conducted during the years 1991-2006. **Sacrifice** (patriotism) was measured by the question: "There are those who claim that now we should ask people many sacrifices. Do you agree with that? (Israel Institute of Applied Social Research). **Military Self-Image** was measured by two questions in two surveys:" How much do you trust IDF's fighting ability and its capability to win in a case of another war?" (Israel Institute of Applied Social Research) that was conducted during the years 1975-1984, and 'Do you agree with the statement 'Israel could overcome a war against all Arab states'" (Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies), that was conducted during the years 1986-2006. **Peace as Main Value** was measured by the question:" In thinking about the various paths along which Israel can develop, there seem to be four important values which clash to some extent, and that are important to different degrees to various people: Israel with a Jewish majority, Greater Israel, a democratic state (with equal political rights to all) and peace (that is, a low probability of war). Among these four values, which is the most important to you?" (Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies).
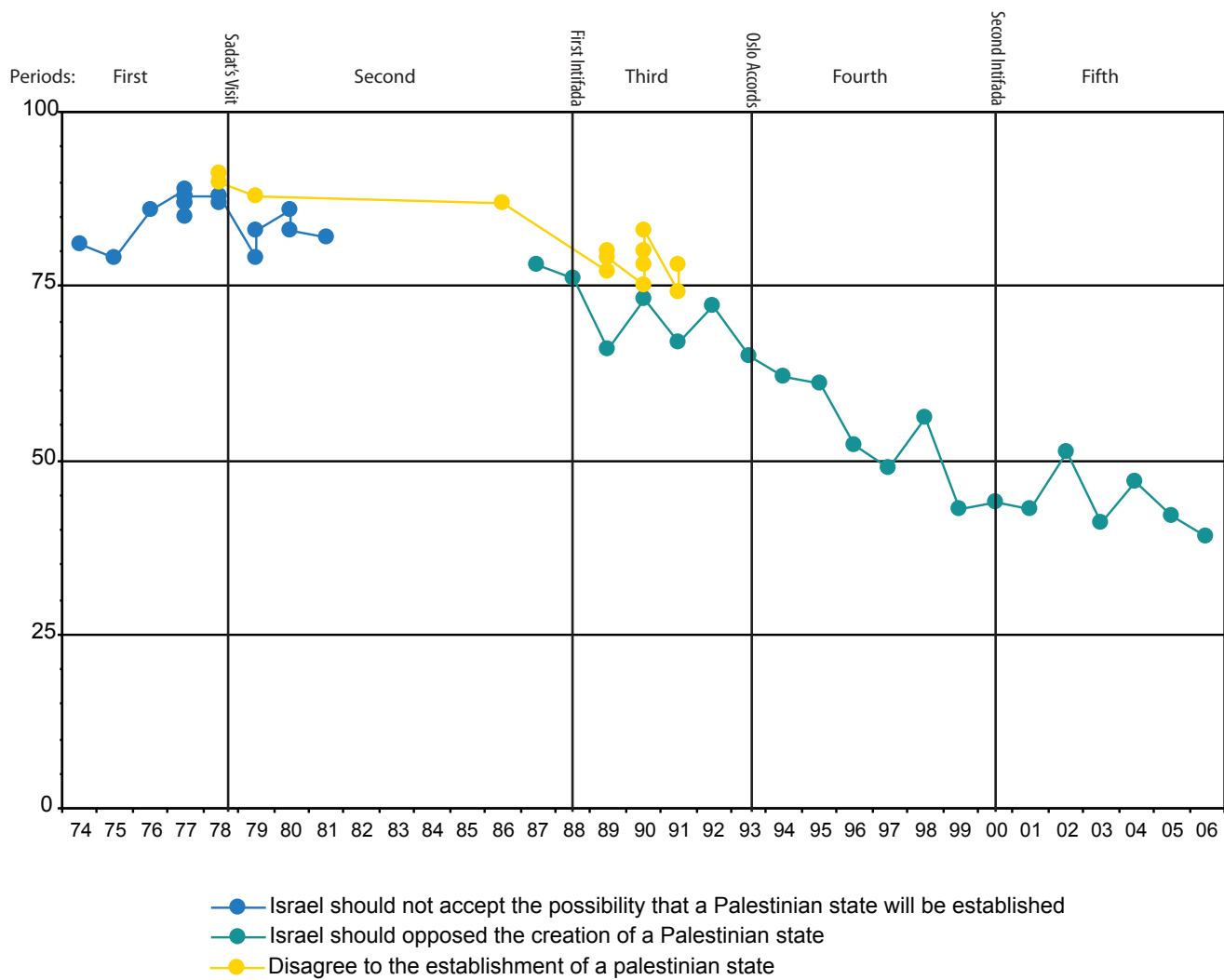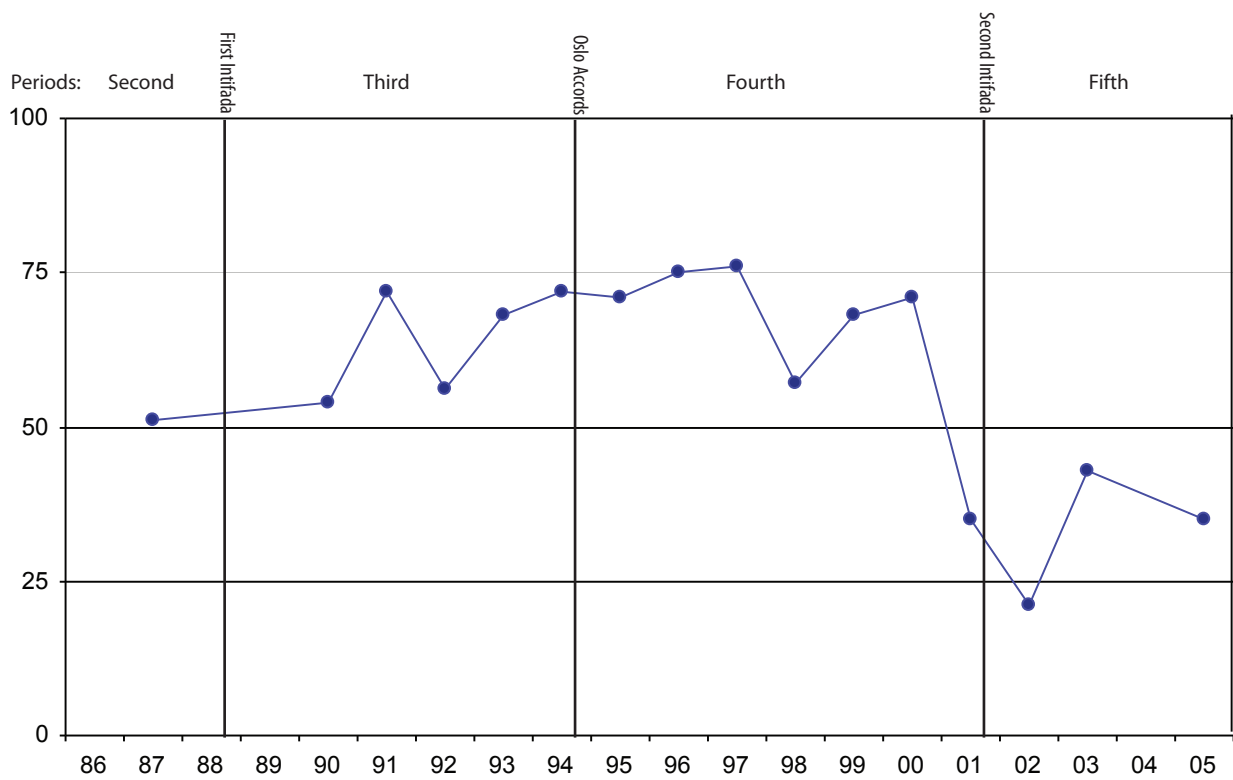
Figure 2. Percentage opposing creation of a Palestinian state as a function of year.

Figure 3. Percentage agreeing that there is a chance for peace as a function of year.

Sources: Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies.