

# Group Identities and Intergroup Conflict

Sonia Roccas

The Open University of Israel

Andrey Elster

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

# Group Identification Often Has a Negative Impact on Intergroup Relations

## People who are highly identified:

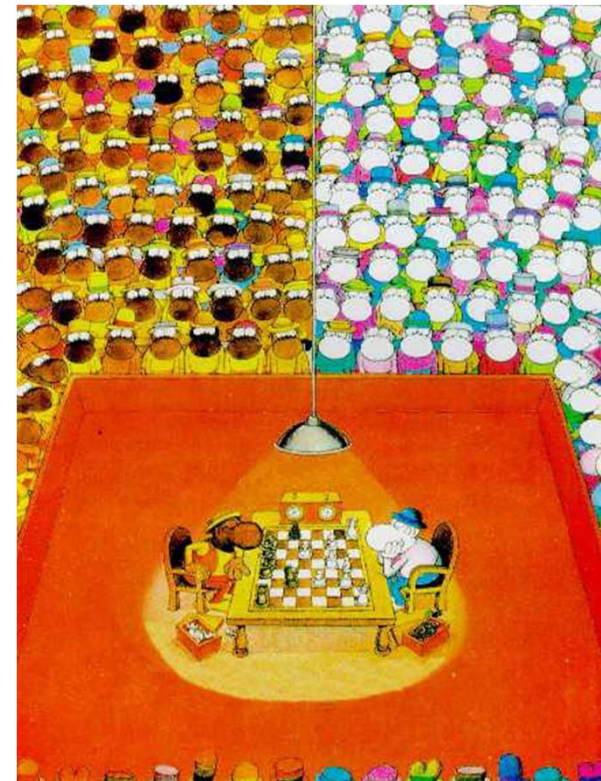
View group members as highly interchangeable

Feel strong emotions as a response to events that have occurred to other group members

Perceive, recall and interpret group related information in a group-serving manner

Hold more aggressive attitudes and support more aggressive actions toward outgroup members

Express more willingness to participate in illegal and violent actions in order to protect their group , more support for military actions and war in response to outgroup threat



# How can we mitigate the negative impact of identification on intergroup conflict?

## Multiple Modes of Identification

## Multiple Identities

## Multiple Contents

# Multiple Modes



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# Multiple Modes of National Identification

|                                |  |   |
|--------------------------------|--|---|
| Adorno et al.<br>(1950)        | <b>Genuine patriotism</b><br>Love of country                           | <b>Pseudo-patriotism</b><br>Uncritical conformity, rejection of other nations   |
| Kosterman & Feshbach<br>(1989) | <b>Patriotism</b><br>Attachment to one's nation                        | <b>Nationalism</b><br>One's nation is superior and should be dominant   |
| Staub (1997)                   | <b>Conventional patriotism</b><br>Affective attachment to one's nation | <b>Blind patriotism</b><br>Unquestioning positive evaluation, allegiance and intolerance of criticism<br><i>[the opposite of Constructive patriotism]</i> |

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# Attachment and Glorification

(Roccas, Klar, & Liviatan, 2006)

**Attachment (importance + commitment):** extending one's self-concept to include the nation, feeling emotionally attached to the nation and wanting to contribute to it.

e.g. **Being Israeli is an important part of my identity; I am strongly committed to my nation**

**Glorification (superiority + deference):** viewing the nation as superior to other nations, feeling respect for the central symbols of the nation such as its flag, rules, and leadership

- e.g. **We are better than other nations in all respects**

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# Multiple modes of National Identification and Group Based Guilt

People can experience feelings of guilt because of moral infractions committed by other ingroup members. They are "guilty by association" (Doosje, Branscombe, Spears, & Manstead, 1998).

Guilty by Association: When One's Group Has a Negative History

Bertjan Doosje  
University of Amsterdam

Nyla R. Branscombe  
University of Kansas

Russell Spears and Antony S. R. Manstead  
University of Amsterdam

The impact of the history of one's own group's treatment of another group on feelings of collective guilt and behavioral reactions to this guilt were examined in 2 studies. In a laboratory experiment, it was shown that it is possible to elicit feelings of group-based guilt and that those are distinct from feelings of personal guilt. In a 2nd study, a field experiment, low-identified group members acknowledged the negative aspects of their own nation's history and felt more guilt compared with high identifiers when both negative and positive aspects of their nation's history were made salient. Perceptions of intragroup variability and out-group compensation closely paralleled the interactive pattern on guilt. Links between social identity theory and the experience of specific emotions are discussed.

Journal of Personality and Social Psychology  
1998, Vol. 75, No. 4, 872-886

Does identification increase or decrease group based guilt?

Unidimensional conceptualizations of identification led to inconsistent findings

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# Identification and Group Based Guilt

People are motivated to think positively about the groups with which they identify

**Identification with the group should be negatively related to group based guilt**

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# Identification and Group Based Guilt

If a person does not identify with a group, why should she feel guilty for acts perpetrated by that group?

**Identification with the group should be positively related to collective guilt**

# Glorification, Attachment and Group-based Guilt

(Roccas, Klar, & Liviatan, 2006)

Inherent to *Glorification* is justification of the groups' acts and denial of any criticism of the group: **negative relations to group based guilt**

People who are strongly *Attached* to their ingroup feel morally responsible for group's members transgressions: **positive relations to group based guilt**

Those who are most attached to the group without glorifying it are most likely to experience group-based guilt.

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Participants reported their **Attachment** and **Glorification of Israel**.

They then read the description of three historical events in which Palestinian civilians were harmed, and reported exonerating cognitions and feelings of guilt

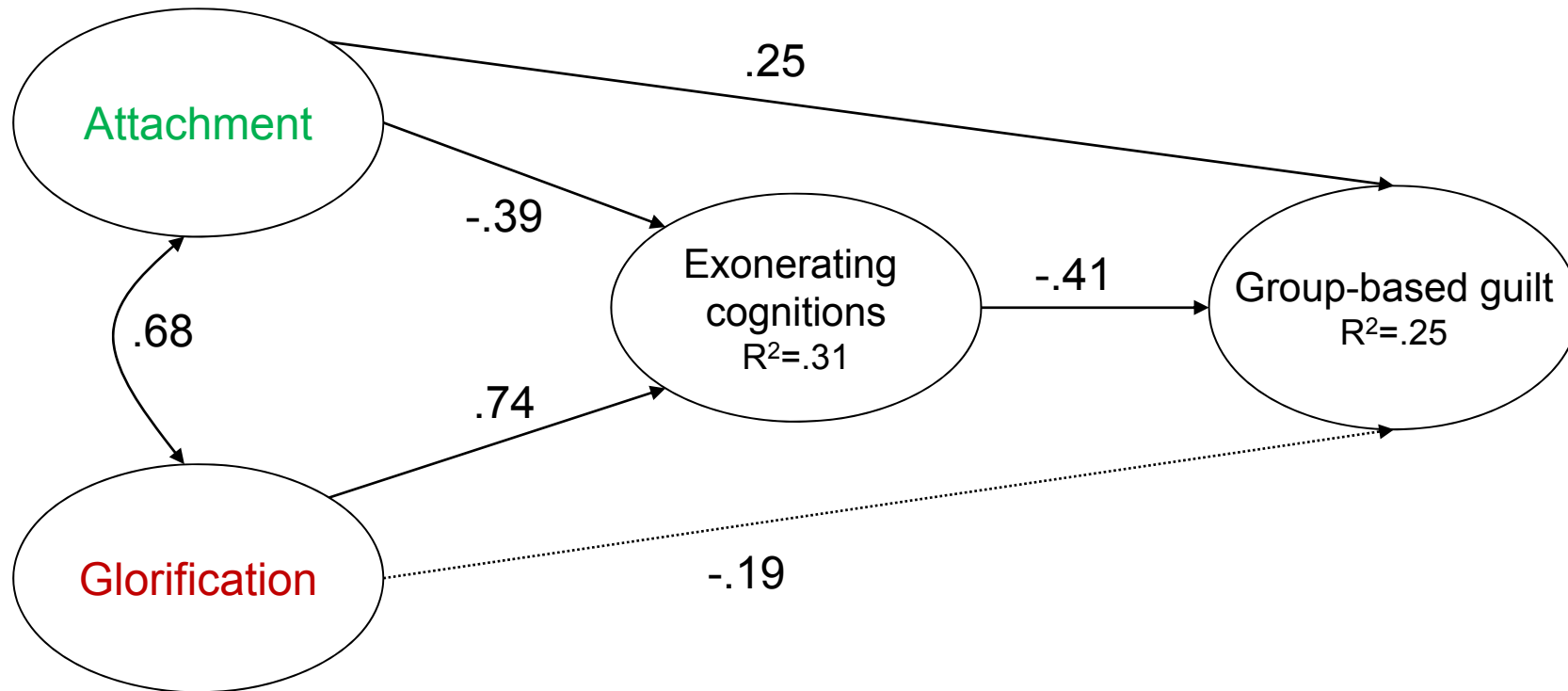
### **Exonerating Cognitions**

e.g. "I think that the description is too harsh with Israel"

### **Feelings of guilt**

e.g. "I feel guilty about the event", "I think that Israelis should compensate the victims of that event"

# Structural equations model of relations between group identification and group-based guilt



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**Attachment** and **Glorification** are positively related: usually people who are attached to the group also glorify it.

**Is it possible to lead people to be “critically attached” (i.e. attached to the group without glorifying it?)**

Such a mode of identification was named by Staub ***Constructive Patriotism.***

People have multiple representations of their personal self concept

Actual self  
Ideal self  
Ought self  
(Higgins)

We assumed that people have also multiple representations of their ingroup.

We used these multiple representations to encourage participants to express **critical attachment to Israel.**

We hypothesized that :

Raising the saliency of **attachment** to the nation and simultaneously focusing attention on the **ideal schema** of their nation will **raise sensitivity to moral transgressions**

We compared it to a simple attachment condition in which we raised the saliency of **attachment** to the nation simultaneously with a focus on the **current** schema participant have.

We measured **group-based guilt for discrimination against Arab Israeli Citizens**



Participants 130 Israeli college students.

**Critical attachment** condition:

"Please briefly describe the characteristics **you would like to see in Israel** in order to agree with the following sentence. **"I love Israel and viewing myself as Israeli is important to me"**.

**Simple attachment** condition:

"Please briefly describe **the characteristic of Israel** that lead you to agree with the following sentence: **"I love Israel and viewing myself as Israeli is important to me"**.

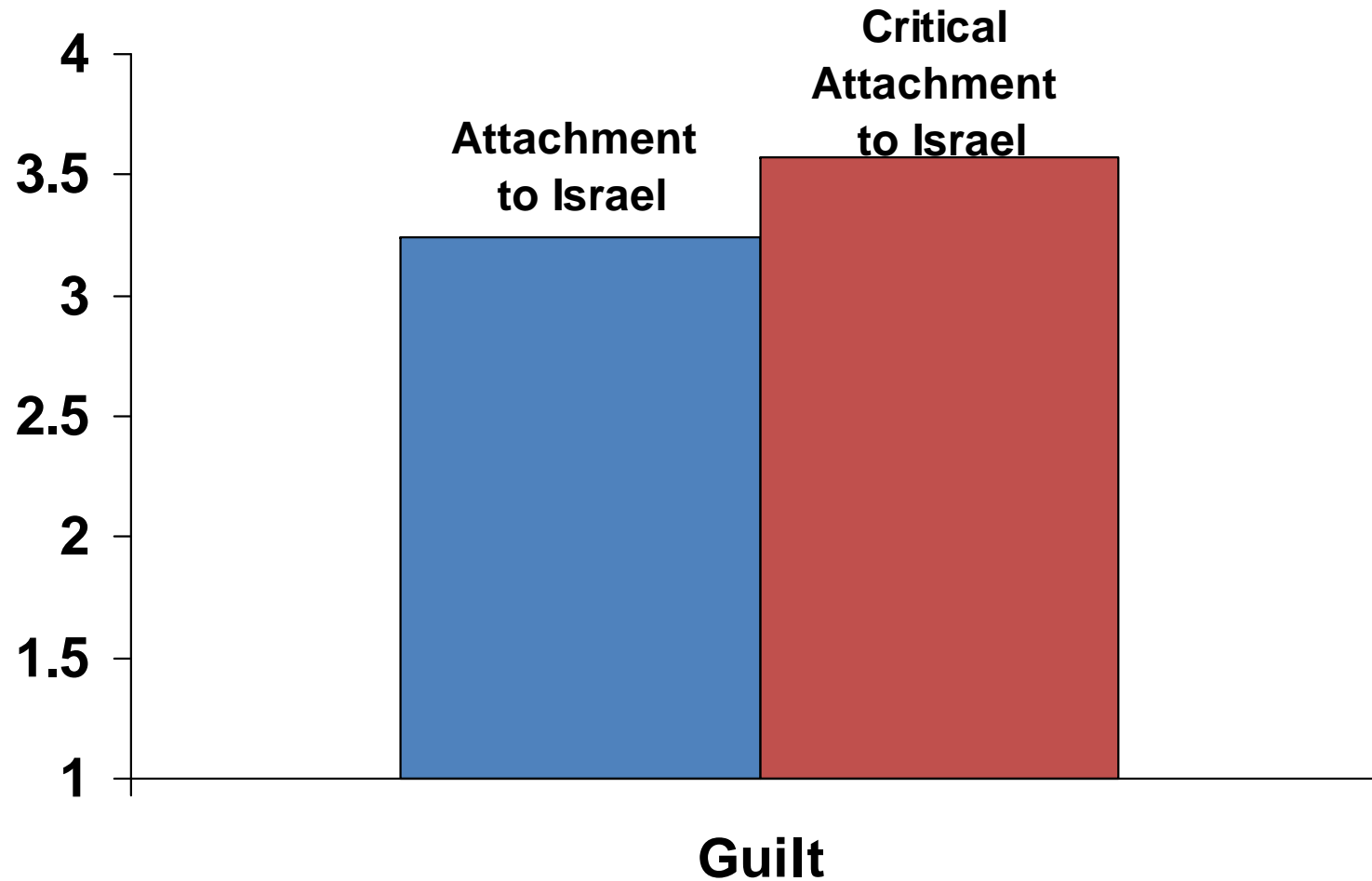
In both conditions participants wrote attributes of Israel

In the simple attachment condition they focused on what they like about Israel now.

In the critical attachment condition they focused on how they would like the country to be ideally. Thus implying that the current state is not ideal.

# Mean Guilt

(response scale 1-7)



# Conclusions

- There are multiple ways to identify with one's group
- Different aspects of identification have opposing relations to conflict related attitudes and emotions
- Critical attachment (attachment without glorification) can help mitigate conflicts

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# Multiple Identities

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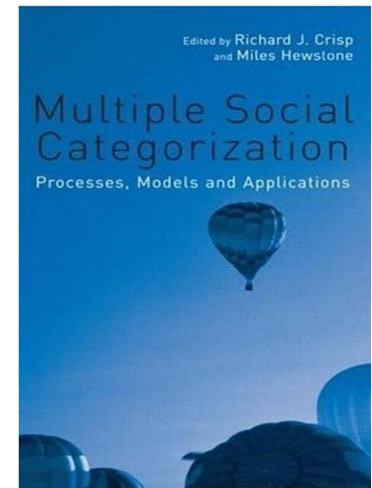
# Multiple identities and intergroup conflict

Multiple categorizations weaken the distinctiveness of the ingroup and increase intergroup similarity. Boundaries between the ingroup and the outgroups are blurred.

The common ingroup identity model (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000)

The crossed categorization model (Deschamps & Doise, 1978)

Social Identity Complexity (Roccas & Brewer, 2002)



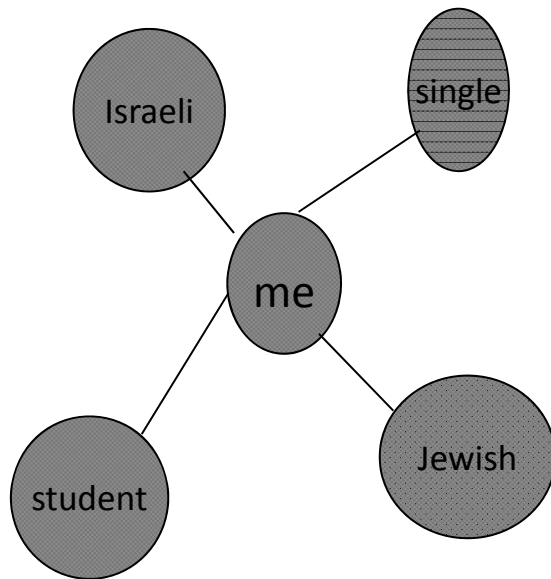
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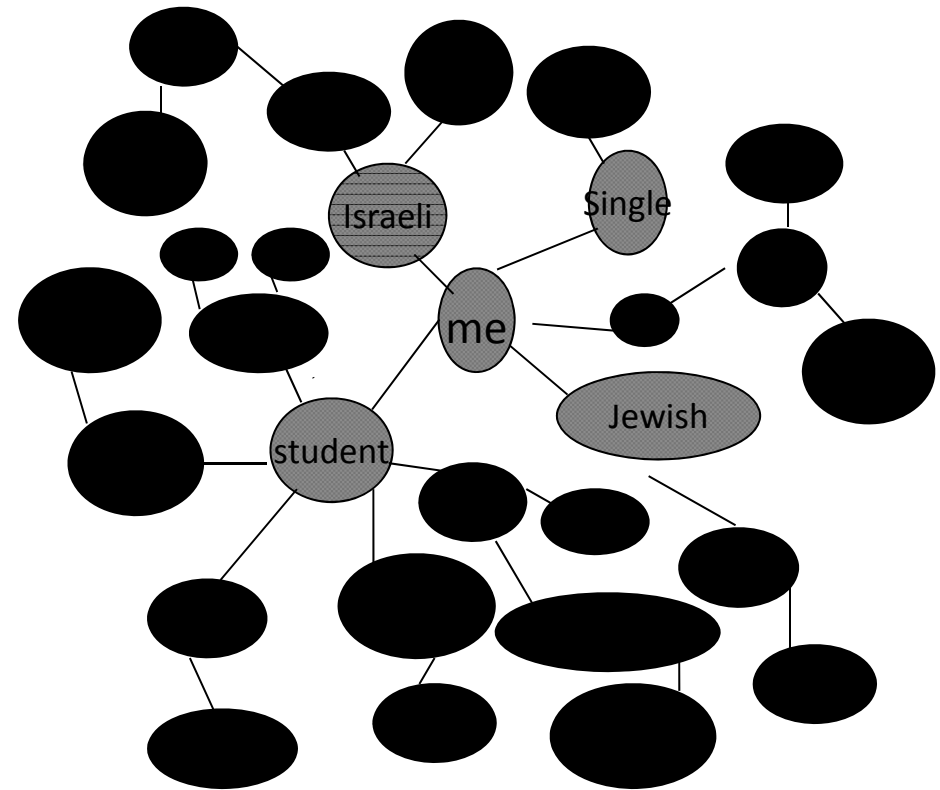
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# Complexity of the Self Concept Map

Gresky, Eyke, Lord & Mylntyre (2005)



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# Multiple Identities and Reactions to Ingroup Critics

In collaboration with Sagiv & Amit

During a conflict, ingroup critics may help the group avoid performing immoral acts

Ingroup critics are unpopular: “The domestic debate over the war emboldens our adversaries” (Vice president Richard Cheney, September 11, 2006)

Some critics are more tolerated than others: Reactions to people who criticize the ingroup are affected by the motivation we attribute them.

**Why would they say that?** (Hornsey, 2005)



## Multiple Identities, attributions and punitiveness towards critics

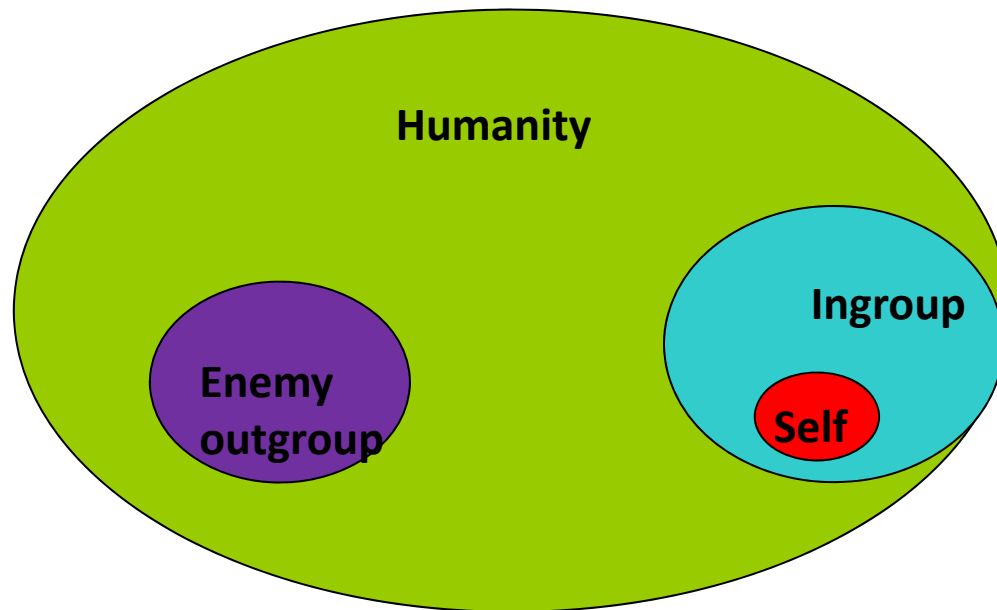


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# Determining what really motivates people who criticize the ingroup is difficult



**What motivates the critics?**

**They think only of themselves**

**They love the enemy more than they love Israel**

**They are motivated by their concern for Israel**

**They care about the suffering of all human beings**

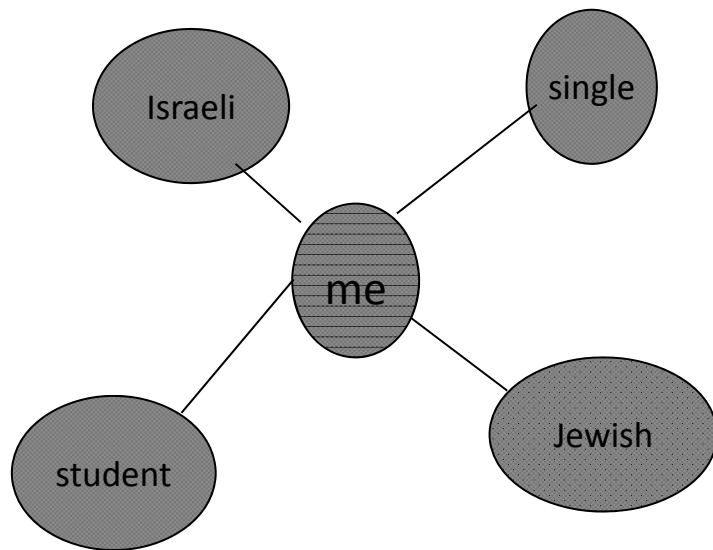
Based on Wit & Kerr, 2002;  
Bornstein, 2003

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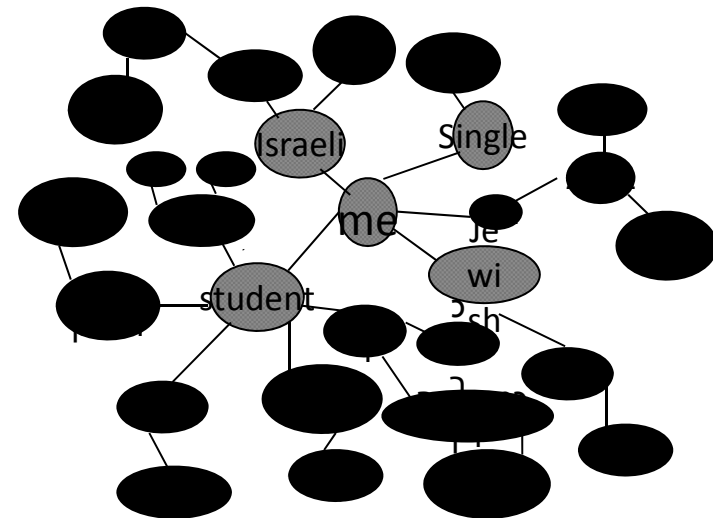
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We raised the saliency of participants' **multiple identities** and measured reactions to the actions of a nuclear technician who published military secrets



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# Effects of the Salience of Multiple Identities on Attributions and Punitiveness

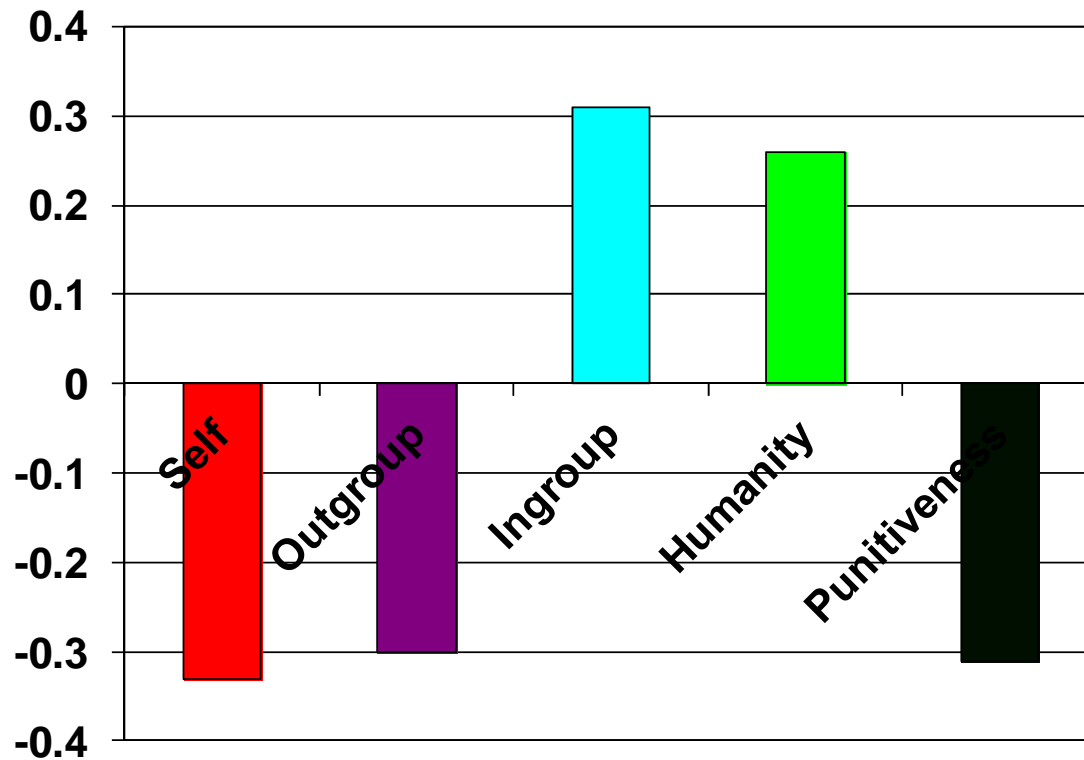
|                 | <b>Self</b> | <b>Out group</b> | <b>Ingroup</b> | <b>Humanity</b> | <b>Punitiveness</b> |
|-----------------|-------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| Few Identities  | <b>5.71</b> | <b>4.24</b>      | 1.67           | 2.46            | <b>5.57</b>         |
| Many Identities | 4.77        | 3.44             | <b>2.32</b>    | <b>3.42</b>     | <b>4.45</b>         |

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# Correlations between **complexity of the self concept map** (number of lines) and reactions to an ingroup critic



Correlations of complexity with punitiveness were mediated by the attributions

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# Conclusions

People's beliefs regarding the punishment of ingroup critics are highly related to the motivations they attribute to their actions

- Awareness of multiple identities is correlated with attributions for the motivations of a person who criticizes the ingroup
- It is possible to change these attributions by encouraging people to think about their multiple identities

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Identities are deeply embedded in the way in which group members conceptualize the history of the group

Events that happened in the past can shape the content of the group identity and affect reactions during a current conflict

# Effects of Collective Trauma

(Schori, Klar, & Roccas)

Does evil beget evil? Past trauma may lead to becoming defensive and aggressive, locked into the “victim-offender cycle”?

Does the memory of trauma prompt to be more sensitive and empathic to the suffering of others?

We suggest both paths are possible.



# PM Netanyahu's speech 2010

Have the lessons of the Holocaust been learned? I believe that there are three lessons: fortify your strength, teach good deeds and fight evil. The first lesson - fortify your strength - relates first and foremost to us, the people of Israel who were **abandoned and defenseless** when faced with waves of murderous hatred that rose against us time after time. **“In every generation there are those who stand against us.”** And in this generation we must fortify our strength and independence so that we will be able to prevent the **current enemy** from carrying out its plan.



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## Perpetual Ingroup Victimhood Orientation (PIVO)

Beliefs about the uniqueness of past trauma, the resulting need for distrust, and a sense of ongoing threat. Contemporary enemies are seen as the embodiment of past enemies.

e.g.

“No group or people have ever been harmed as we have”

“All our enemies throughout history share a common denominator – the will to annihilate us”

## A speech given by Aharon Barak, former president of the Israeli Supreme Court



- The lesson I take from the holocaust is not a lesson of hatred, nor a lesson of vengeance nor distrust of man. (My) lesson is the human being, the individual, human dignity, equality among men – the Jewish, German, Arab, criminal man, even one who commits very harsh actions against us, all have dignity. Each man is created in God's form and each man's dignity we must protect.

# Fear of Victimizing (FOV)

The fear that one's group may become immune to the suffering of others and thus a victimizer.

e.g. “We are in danger of treating others in the same way that we were treated by our worst enemies”

# Outcome Variables

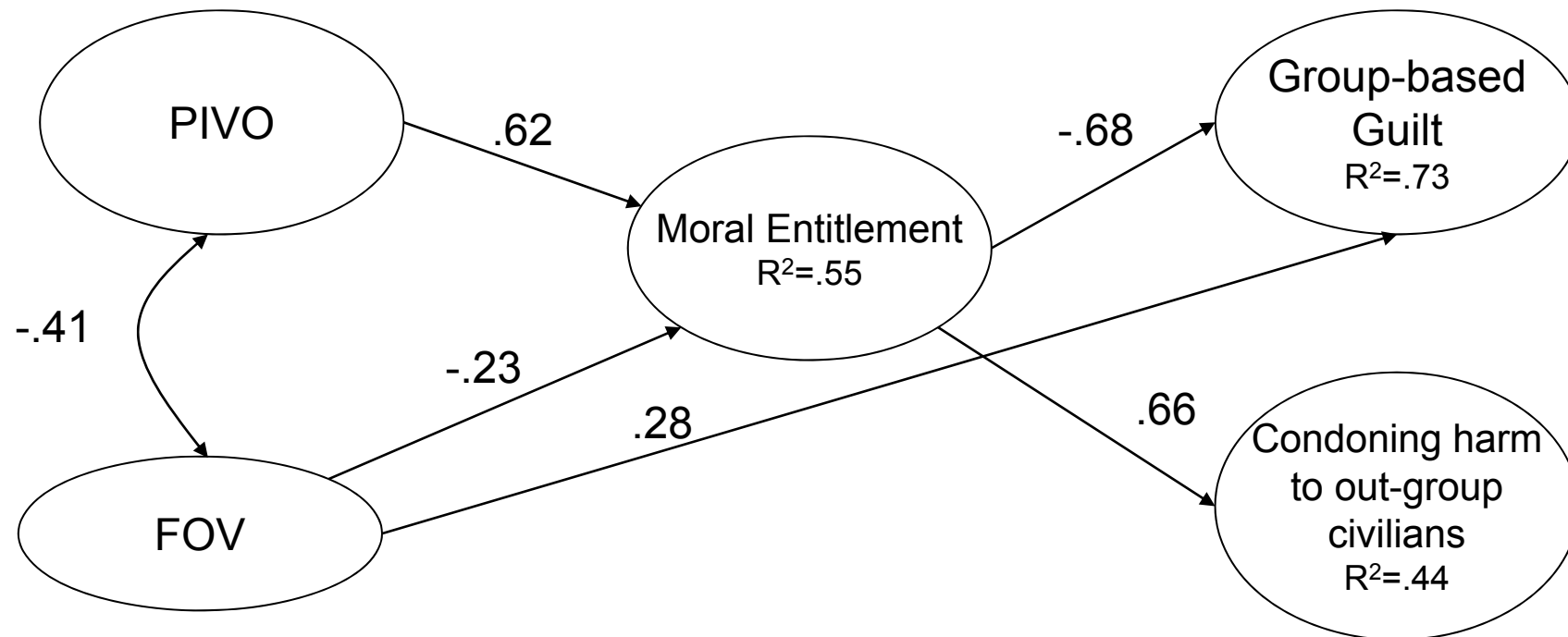
- **Moral entitlement: we have a moral license to do anything considered as required to ensure safety**
- Group-based guilt
- **Condoning harm to out-group civilians: tolerance to violations of civilian immunity during warfare.**

# Condoning harm to out-group civilians

|          | <i>Type of missile</i> | <i>Probability of killing Al-Dahduh</i> | <i>Estimated number of civilians hurt</i> |
|----------|------------------------|---|---|
| Option A | X1                     | 40%                                     | 0 people                                  |
| Option B | X2                     | 50%                                     | 1-2 people                                |
| Option C | X3                     | 70%                                     | Up to 5 people                            |
| Option D | X4                     | 90%                                     | Up to 10 people                           |
| Option E | X5                     | 100%                                    | Up to 20 people                           |

Please write down, in as much detail as possible, the considerations that guided you in making your choice.

# “Lessons” from the past and attitudes during a current conflict



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# Conclusion

Identity content derived from the past history of intergroup conflicts may lead to opposing consequences regarding a current conflict

Past events may lead to realizing what shouldn't be done in the future and thus construe identity contents that mitigate conflict.

Past events may serve as justifications of any future wrongdoings toward outgroup and thus construe identity content that leads to escalation in intergroup relationship.



Thank You