Form and Content: Institutional Preferences and Public Opinion in a Crisis Inquiry

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Abstract

Crisis inquiries are intended to serve as instruments for restoring legitimacy. This intended goal has led to particular legitimacy-enhancing institutional choices in the design of these ad hoc institutions. This research utilizes a national panel study to test the effect of institutional attributes of a crisis inquiry and the content of its report on its legitimacy, and the effects of the inquiry findings on public opinion regarding the inquired issue. Our results show that only some institutional attributes predicted the legitimacy of the inquiry findings, whereas the content of the report was strongly and consistently associated with report legitimacy.

Keywords

crisis, inquiry, legitimacy, institutional attributes, credibility

Introduction

A central political element in the aftermath of national disasters, policy fiascoes, or scandals in many countries is the establishment of ad hoc bodies of

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investigation. A few memorable examples are the Warren Commission into
the Kennedy assassination (1963), the Widgery and Saville inquiries into the
Bloody Sunday incident in the United Kingdom (1972), the Netherlands
Institute of War Documentation (NIOD) inquiry into the Srebrenica massacre
(1995), and the 9/11 Commission in the United States. The arguments under-
lying the appointment of these ad hoc institutions contend that their formal
independence endows them with the unique capacity to provide impartial
assessment, thereby providing an instrument of accountability and policy
learning (Boin, McConnell, & ‘t Hart, 2008; Burgess, 2011; Clarke 2000;
Elliott & McGuinness, 2002; Howe, 1999; Polidano, 2001; Sulitzeanu-
Kenan, 2010). More specifically, it is assumed that an inquiry’s institutional
attributes of independence increase its public credibility, consequently
increasing the responsiveness of public opinion to the findings of the inquiry
regarding the investigated affair (Burgess, 2011; Clarke, 2000; Elliot &
McGuinness, 2001; Howe, 1999; Parker & Dekker, 2008; Polidano, 1999;
Salmon Commission on Tribunals of Inquiry, 1966; Segal, 1984).

However, although there is a general agreement in the literature regarding
this role of the institutional attributes of inquiries, we know rather little about
its empirical validity. Moreover, recent experimental findings using a hypo-
thetical case suggest that the content of inquiry findings plays a more signifi-
cant role in determining its legitimacy (Sulitzeanu-Kenan, 2006). Thus, the
questions examined in this study are whether the institutional attributes of an
inquiry predict the legitimacy allotted to its findings? Does the content of the
inquiry report play a role in determining its legitimacy? And does it influ-
ence public opinion regarding the inquired issue?

This study provides evidence regarding these questions by offering an
analysis of an actual case—the 2006 Lebanon War between Israel and the
Hezbollah paramilitary, and the consequent commission of inquiry appointed
to inquire into this war. The analysis relies on a national two-stage panel
study. The first stage was fielded immediately following the war—September
2006—and the second after the inquiry report was published 8 months later,
in May 2007.

Public preferences for two institutional attributes were measured in the
first stage of the study; respondents’ interpretations of the inquiry report and
their rating of its credibility were recorded in the second stage. These data
allow us to test whether institutional preferences predict consequent legiti-
macy of the inquiry findings and the association between report content and
legitimacy. Furthermore, the two-stage panel study enables us to assess the
influence of the inquiry report on public opinion. Our findings provide only
partial support for the hypothesis that the institutional attributes of inquiries
predict the legitimacy of their findings. However, the content of the report was found to be consistently and strongly associated with report legitimacy. Finally, we found neither support for any effect of the content of the inquiry report on public opinion nor any moderation effect of report credibility on these associations, suggesting that in the case of crisis inquiries, legitimacy does not appear to foster public opinion updating.

This article proceeds as follows. The section “Inquiries, Legitimacy, and Institutional Preferences” reviews the literature on crisis inquiries and the relationship between their institutional attributes and legitimacy, and provides initial evidence for the existence of public preferences regarding the institutional attributes of inquiries. The section “Procedural Justice and Conditional Credibility” reviews the procedural justice theory and the conditional credibility finding, and presents the research hypotheses. The section “The 2006 Lebanon War and the Winograd Inquiry” reviews the 2006 Lebanon War and its political consequences. The section “Research Design: Institutional Attributes, Report Content, and Inquiry Legitimacy” formally elaborates the three hypotheses and the empirical expectations they entail. The section “Empirical Evidence” presents the empirical procedures and results. Finally, the section “Discussion” provides a concluding discussion of the findings and their theoretical implications.

Inquiries, Legitimacy, and Institutional Preferences

One of the defining characteristics of crises is that they involve legitimacy shortfalls (Boin, ‘t Hart, McConnell, & Preston, 2010)—instances of “breakdown of familiar symbolic frameworks legitimating the pre-existing socio-political order” (‘t Hart, 1993, p. 39). Inquiries are among the processes through which legitimacy crises are sought to be repaired (Brown, 2004; Burton & Carlen, 1979; Habermas, 1973). An inquiry in this context is defined as “an ad hoc institution, formally external to the executive, established by the government or a minister, for the purpose of investigating past events in a public way” (Sulitzeanu-Kenan, 2006, p. 624). Public confidence in the body politic, it is argued, can be effectively restored only by investigation that establishes the truth in a public manner (Clarke, 2000; Salmon Commission on Tribunals of Inquiry, 1966). The relative advantage attributed to inquiries for this purpose is twofold. First, they are typically credited with possessing the expertise in deducing thorough accounts of complex affairs (Polidano, 1999) for the purpose of drawing lessons, which will prevent or reduce the risk of a similar event (Burgess, 2011; Elliot &
McGuinness, 2001; Howe, 1999; Parker & Dekker, 2008; Sulitzeanu-Kenan, 2010). Second, inquiries’ political independence increases the legitimacy of these institutions, in the sense that it allots their findings greater credibility and acceptance by the public (Polidano, 2001; Segal, 1984).

Legitimacy has been defined in terms of acceptability or acceptance (Brown, 1997; Deephouse & Carter, 2005; Knoke, 1985; J. W. Meyer & Rowan, 1977), reasonableness, appropriateness and congruence (Brown, 1998; Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975; J. W. Meyer & Rowan, 1977), and credibility (Mondak, 1994). Suchman (1995) defines legitimacy as “a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions” (p. 574; see also Brown, 2004). The typology of legitimacy suggested by Suchman offers a theoretical framework conducive to analyzing the social function of crisis inquiries. Structural moral legitimacy suggests that an institution is deemed worthy of support because its structural characteristics set it within a morally favored category, which indicates its socially constructed capacity to perform specific types of work (Suchman, 1995, p. 581). Dowding (1991, 1996), who identifies legitimacy as one of the five resources of power, importantly notes that people may follow the lead, suggestions or orders of legitimate agents for content-independent reasons (Dowding, 2008). Indeed, the scholarly literature on crisis inquiries stresses their institutional legitimacy, as a resource for qualifying their findings. This type of legitimacy is particularly relevant to the period of inquiry, when audiences can only evaluate structural, rather than consequential, attributes of the inquiry. However, once the inquiry presents its findings, another type of legitimacy becomes relevant—consequential legitimacy (Suchman, 1995)—when outputs (the inquiry report) are judged against socially defined criteria and expectations. This study empirically assesses the role of both of these sources of legitimacy in determining the legitimacy of an inquiry report.

Institutional legitimacy is claimed to rely on the degree to which the inquiry (a) is external to the executive or legislative, (b) conducts its proceedings in a public manner, (c) is chaired by a member of the judiciary, and (d) has a panel member appointment procedure that is politically independent. The first two features are elements of the definition of inquiries (Clarke, 2000; Wade & Forsyth, 1994). The third feature of independence refers to the practice of appointing judges as inquiry chairpersons. Judges are considered politically independent and neutral (Drewry, 1975, 1996; Elliott & McGuinness, 2002; Flinders, 2001; Thompson, 1997; Woodhouse, 1995;
Woolf, 2004). The fourth institutional attribute pertains to the appointment procedure of inquiry members (including the chairperson).

These institutional attributes are presumed to alter the degree of political independence and neutrality of the various types of inquiries, thereby enhancing the institutional legitimacy of the investigative body, which reflects on the public’s willingness to accept the findings of the inquiry in these contested situations as legitimate. An implicit assumption underlying this argument is that members of the public harbor institutional preferences regarding commissions of inquiry and that these preferences indeed favor independence-enhancing procedures. Indeed, evidence for such preferences can be found in cases in which calls for a particular type of inquiry are expressed after a different one has been appointed (or has been reported to be appointed) by governments. Such cases indicate a clear preference for a particular type of inquiry, over the one set up by the government. In the British context, these preferences were expressed in cases where members of the public called for the appointment of a public inquiry following appointments of nonpublic inquiries, in the cases of Nurse Beverley Allitt, Dr. Shipman’s murders, the foot-and-mouth epidemic, and the Dr. Ayling and Dr. Neale affair, and for the appointment of judicial inquiry in the more recent “phone-hacking” scandal (“Britain’s Phone-Hacking Scandal: Streets of Shame,” 2011). In the Israeli context, these include the 1997 legal appeal to the High Court of Justice (HCJ) to order the government to appoint an independent inquiry into a failed Mossad operation in Amman, instead of the internal inquiry (HCJ 6001/97); the public pressure from Arab communities, which caused the government to change its initial decision to appoint a governmental inquiry and to appoint a national inquiry into the October 2000 riots; and the (less successful) public protest against the government’s decision to appoint a governmental inquiry into the 2006 Lebanon War (Ish-Shalom, 2011).

These active expressions of preference for particular types of inquiries provide initial support for the claim that members of the public hold institutional preferences regarding inquiries and that these preferences appear to favor the more politically independent investigative procedures. However, even if members of the public hold such institutional preference (a matter to be directly assessed in this study), the question remains whether these preferences together with the actual institutional attributes of inquiries predict the legitimacy of inquiries and acceptance of their findings. Two conflicting theories provide possible insights into this question and will inform our hypotheses and analyses: the procedural justice theory and the conditional credibility of inquiries.
Procedural Justice and Conditional Credibility

Theories on the sources of legitimacy can be divided between instrumental and procedural perspectives. Instrumental models suggest that people’s willingness to accept and cooperate with authorities is associated with their evaluations of the authority’s performance. The procedural justice model, however, focuses on peoples’ impressions of how authorities treat them, as antecedents of their views on these authorities’ legitimacy, rather than seeing legitimacy as solely the product of effectiveness or outcomes (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003; for review, see Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Blader, 2000). More specifically, procedural justice theory suggests that two types of lay citizens’ evaluations are important for the level of authority legitimacy. First is the quality of decision making—judged by the application of objective criteria, granting voice to involved parties, and neutrality. This procedural information is important due to its functional value for evaluating outcomes (Brockner, 2002; Gilliland, 1994; Schroth & Shah, 2000) and thus indicates whether those outcomes are deserved (Blader & Tyler, 2003). The second type of evaluation refers to the quality of treatment people experience as a party to an interaction, dispute, and so forth (Blader & Tyler, 2003).

This literature suggests that institutional attributes of inquiries such as its objectivity and neutrality may indeed have an effect on inquiries’ legitimacy. It should, however, be noted that “quality of treatment” evaluations are less applicable to commissions of inquiry, as they only rarely directly interact with members of the public. In addition, although the procedural justice literature adds to the instrumental perspective of legitimacy, it does not replace the impact of outcome evaluations. Thus, in line with much of the literature on public inquiries and procedural justice theory, Hypothesis 1 posits that institutional preferences predict report legitimacy.

In an experiment conducted in the United Kingdom, Sulitzeanu-Kenan (2006) has shown that although the content of a hypothetical inquiry report had an effect on peoples’ evaluations of the issue inquired into, this effect was no different from the effect of a political speech with identical content. This finding is clearly at odds with procedural justice theory. Moreover, the credibility of inquiry reports was higher than that of a political speech only if their content was critical of the government, suggesting that the outcome of the inquiry (rather than its procedure) plays a greater role in shaping its public credibility. This latter finding is referred to as conditional credibility. Based on this study, inquiry reports are judged against preexisting public sentiments, and thus do not have a unique impact on public opinion. Moreover, the credibility of inquiry reports appears to be dependent on their content being...
critical. It thus appears that the legitimacy of inquiries may be shaped by the interplay of both instrumental (outcome-based) and procedural justice models. Relaying on the conditional credibility thesis, *Hypothesis 2 in this study suggests that the content of inquiry report influences inquiry legitimacy.*

The current study contributes to this literature by providing an analysis of an actual (rather than hypothetical) case, relying on a national representative sample, measured both immediately following the event and after the inquiry report was published. It uses public preferences for two institutional attributes—judicial chairpersonship and the method of inquiry members’ appointment—to test their consequences for inquiry legitimacy. Last, by following the changes in public opinion over the course of the crisis and inquiry, we are able to test a third hypothesis regarding the role of legitimacy in such a context. *Hypothesis 3 thus suggests that inquiry legitimacy moderates public opinion updating based on inquiry findings.*

Israel provides a unique opportunity to study the impact of institutional attributes of inquiries on public opinion, as it is the only country to offer a formal procedure of inquiry members’ appointment that does not involve the executive or the legislative branches. The variance in inquiry member selection procedure and the professional identity of the inquiry chair enables us to test the implications of these institutional attributes on the public legitimacy of inquiry findings. Israeli law provides two types of independent inquiries: a governmental inquiry and a national inquiry. A governmental inquiry is appointed at the discretion of a cabinet minister, can be headed by a judge (acting or retired) or a nonjudicial chairperson, and the government controls the process of inquiry member selection. A national inquiry, however, is set up by a government decision, yet the power to select the members of the inquiry panel is granted to the president of the Supreme Court, and the chairperson must be a senior judge.

The following section briefly reviews the background to this case.

**The 2006 Lebanon War and the Winograd Inquiry**

The 2006 Israel–Hezbollah War (known in Israel as the Second Lebanon War) started on July 12, 2006, following a surprise assault by Hezbollah on an Israeli border patrol. Throughout the day, Hezbollah fired Katyusha rockets and mortar shells at Israel’s northern border communities and military posts. At a night meeting, the Israeli cabinet authorized a “severe and harsh” retaliation against Lebanon (Israel’s government, 2006; Nir & Knafo, 2009).
The war lasted 34 days until a UN cease fire resolution went into effect on August 14, 2006. A total of 39 Israeli civilians were killed, in addition to 117 soldiers. On the Lebanese side, it is estimated that 1,000 to 1,200 Lebanese were killed, among them 500 to 700 Hezbollah militants (Amidror, 2007). During the 34 days of intense fighting, about 4,000 rockets landed in Israel. Hundreds of thousands of Israeli and Lebanese civilians fled their homes. Vital Lebanese infrastructure was destroyed, and serious environmental damage occurred on both sides of the border. The war, which began with overwhelming public support for its aims in Israel, was ultimately considered by the Israeli public as a resounding failure of the political and military leadership. Although the Israeli Air Force devastated southern Lebanon and parts of Beirut, the main goals of the war were not achieved: The captured soldiers were not freed, the threat to Israeli civilian population from missile attacks was not removed, and Hezbollah remained in southern Lebanon.

In the aftermath of the warfare, the battle by the government to avoid or at least to mitigate blame begun (Hood, 2011), and as in many other cases (Boin, ‘t Hart, Stern, & Sundelius, 2005; Sulitzeanu-Kenan, 2010), the question of whether to appoint an inquiry into the war and its institutional form became a central element of this political conflict. In late August 2006, as public and media pressure mounted, Prime Minister Olmert agreed to an official investigation; however, instead of heeding public calls for a national commission of inquiry, the government chose to appoint a governmental inquiry, raising further public criticism. The appointed governmental inquiry included five members: a retired district court judge, Eliyahu Winograd, who headed the commission; two distinguished professors (of law and of public policy); and two former military generals.

The appointment of the Winograd Commission as a governmental inquiry was challenged in a petition to the Israeli HCJ by two civic movements and by a citizen. The petitioners argued that “only a national commission of inquiry will gain the public’s trust, due to it being an independent commission appointed by the President of the Supreme Court, and due to the legal procedures it follows” (HCJ 6728/06, p. 5). The petitioners added that “a situation in which the party to be investigated appoints the investigating body, creates the appearance that the objectivity of the investigator is in doubt, and gravely harms the public’s trust in the inquiry process and its outcomes” (HCJ 6728/06, p. 5). Despite the fact that all the justices accepted these claims in principle, the petition was rejected by a majority of four out of seven justices on the grounds that the decision to appoint a governmental inquiry in this case was within the government’s authority, and it was not found to be unreasonable.
On April 30, 2007, 8 months after its appointment, the Winograd Commission publicized its interim report, which addressed the decision to go to war, and the handling of the war effort in the first 6 days of the war. The inquiry report was critical of several political and military officeholders who were in charge of directing the security policy shortly before the outbreak of the war and in its early stages. These officials included Prime Minister Olmert, Defense Minister Peretz, and Military Chief of Staff Halutz (Ish-Shalom, 2011).

This case, therefore, addresses a significant national crisis, involving widespread public disappointment and frustration with the government’s handling of a paramount policy domain—national security. The essence of the crisis for most Israelis was the failure of the government and the military to achieve a quick and decisive victory against the Hezbollah militia, although the country sustained civilian and military casualties (Ish-Shalom, 2011). In this respect, the situation at the end of the war conforms with ‘t Hart’s (1993) definition of crisis as a “breakdown of familiar symbolic frameworks legitimating the pre-existing socio-political order” (p. 39). This situation left the public, the media, and the political opponents seeking “to know what went wrong, what was (not) done to prevent and contain the crisis, and who should be held responsible” (Boin et al., 2010, p. 707). This crisis and its consequent inquiry were therefore utilized in this study to conduct an empirical assessment of the claim that the institutional attributes of a crisis inquiry influence its legitimacy. The following section formally specifies the research design for testing our hypotheses.

**Research Design: Institutional Attributes, Report Content, and Inquiry Legitimacy**

Empirically testing the effect of institutional attributes and report content of inquiries on their legitimacy requires some explicit elaboration. First, it is not clear from the literature whether the claim regarding the effect of institutional attributes is made at the aggregate or individual level. At the aggregate level, this claim appears to suggest that aggregate legitimacy of inquiry $I$—$L_I$—is a function of the degree of inquiry independence $\lambda$ (institutionalized by the method of panel member appointment) and the identity of inquiry chair $\mu$. Adding the hypothetical effect of inquiry report content, $\pi$ results in the following general relationship:

$$L_I = f(\lambda, \mu, \pi).$$ (1)
The expected directions of the influence of these factors on report credibility suggest that $\lambda$ and $\mu$ take the value of 1 if the inquiry is a national inquiry and if the chairperson is a judge, respectively, and $-1$ otherwise:

$$
\lambda = \begin{cases} 
1 & \text{if national inquiry} \\
-1 & \text{if government inquiry}
\end{cases} \quad \mu = \begin{cases} 
1 & \text{if judicial inquiry} \\
-1 & \text{if nonjudicial inquiry}.
\end{cases}
$$

Following the conditional credibility thesis, report content is associated with inquiry legitimacy. As noted earlier, the empirical prediction that aggregate trust in the inquiry report will be associated with these institutional attributes assumes an aggregate institutional preference in favor of such attributes in the general population. Assuming such a public preference, an ideal experiment for testing these hypotheses would be to randomly assign different institutional attributes and report content to identical cases, and observe the effects on the level of inquiry legitimacy in the different experimental groups. Yet in real cases, institutional attributes and report content are not randomly assigned; moreover, availability of data on public attitudes toward inquiries is very limited.

This study thus takes a different approach to assess these hypotheses on an actual case, by utilizing the variance in institutional preference and in report content interpretations at the individual level (see also Blais et al., 2009). These variances enable us to statistically estimate the relationships between individual institutional preferences, (perceived) report content, and report credibility—for testing our hypotheses. Such an approach avoids the pitfall of inferring a relationship (or lack thereof) merely on the basis of a temporal sequencing of aggregate events in one case. Using individual-level panel data allows us to statistically estimate whether ex-ante ($T_0$) individual-level institutional preferences are associated with ex-post ($T_1$) individual-level credibility evaluations of the inquiry report (see Finkel & Muller, 1998).

This approach requires an individual-level model of the relationships in question. Such a model suggests that the interaction of individual-level institutional preferences and actual institutional attributes at time $t - 1$, and the perceived report criticism at time $t$ determine individual assessments of inquiry legitimacy at time $t$:

$$
L_{it} = \alpha + \beta_1 \lambda + \beta_2 \mu + \beta_3 P_{it-1}^\lambda + \beta_4 P_{it-1}^\mu + \beta_5 P_{it-1}^{\lambda \mu} + \beta_6 P_{it-1}^{\lambda \mu} + \beta_7 R_{it}^\nu + \sum_{k=8}^{k=8} \beta_k Controls_i + \varepsilon,
$$

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where $L^I_{it}$ is the level of legitimacy attributed by individual $i$ at time $t$ to inquiry $I$; $P^{\lambda}_{it-1}$ and $P^{\mu}_{it-1}$ represent individual preferences at time $t-1$ regarding the process of inquiry member selection and identity of inquiry chair, respectively; $R^i_{it}$ is the interpretation of individual $i$ at time $t$ of the level of criticism in the inquiry report; $Controls_{it}$ is a vector of individual characteristic; and $\varepsilon$ is a random error term. Hypothesis 1 predicts that the coefficients of the interactions among institutional preferences with actual inquiry institutional attributes—$P^{\lambda}_{it-1}\lambda$ and $P^{\mu}_{it-1}\mu$, respectively—are expected to predict individual assessments of inquiry legitimacy. Hypothesis 2 predicts that the coefficient of perceived report criticism $R^i_{it}$ determines inquiry legitimacy.

When drawing on a single inquiry, actual institutional attributes do not vary. In this case, the only theoretically relevant sources of variation are institutional preferences. In our case, in which the inquiry is a government inquiry, that is, inquiry members were appointed by the government, $\lambda = -1$, and the inquiry chair was a senior judge, $\mu = 1$, Equation (2) can be simplified to

\[ L^I_{it} = \alpha - \beta_1 P^{\lambda}_{it-1} + \beta_2 P^{\mu}_{it-1} + \beta_3 R^i_{it} + \sum_{k=3}^{k} Controls_{it} + \varepsilon, \]  

suggesting that (given a governmental inquiry with a senior judge as chair) preference in favor of a more independent method of panel member appointment is expected to be negatively associated, and preferences for a senior judge as inquiry chair positively associated with consequent inquiry legitimacy. These theoretical expectations can be intuitively explained: If institutional attributes are important to people, then individuals who care about the independent method of panel members’ selection, but received an inquiry whose members were appointed by the government ($\lambda = -1$), are expected to attribute less legitimacy to the inquiry ($-\beta_1 P^{\lambda}_{it-1}$) compared with individuals who preferred an appointment by the government; individuals who care that the inquiry chair is a senior judge, and indeed received such an inquiry ($\mu = 1$), are likely to be more willing to see the inquiry as legitimate ($+\beta_2 P^{\mu}_{it-1}$) compared with individuals who preferred a nonjudicial chairperson. Finally, the more critical an individual interprets the inquiry report to be, the more likely he or she is to find it credible ($+\beta_3 R^i_{it}$) compared with an individual who found the report to be mild.

The empirical analyses that follow provide a test for the hypotheses, and therefore assess the validity of the ubiquitous claim in the literature regarding
the implications of institutional attributes of inquiries for their consequent public legitimacy.

**Empirical Evidence**

The empirical evidence is based on a panel study that includes two nationally representative surveys. The first stage was fielded in September 2006, 1 month after the end of the war \((n = 1,000)\), and the second in May 2007, 1 week after the publication of the first commission report—and included half of the original respondents \((n = 500)\). A joint analysis of the two stages enables to reveal what the changes were (if any) in public opinion following the publication of the report, and what level of credibility was attributed to the report. Table 1 presents the characteristics of the two samples in comparison with those of the general population, based on the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics data for 2006.

**Institutional Preferences**

The main institutional difference between a governmental inquiry and a national inquiry is manifested in the panel members’ appointment procedure. Two questions were used to create a measure of the respondents’ preference...
regarding the method of nomination: The first asked about the level of support in a process of nomination by the government and the second asked about the level of support in a nomination by the president of the Supreme Court. Both responses were based on a choice among 10 levels of a Likert-type scale. The measure of institutional preference regarding the method of panel members nomination is based on the difference between the two responses (subtracting the value of the first response from that of the second), resulting in a 19-level scale, ranging between $-9$ (maximum preference for a nomination of panel members by the government) and $+9$ (maximum preference for a nomination of panel members by the president of the Supreme Court), whereas $0$ represents indifference regarding this institutional feature.

Another distinction between the two types of inquiries is the statutory requirement to appoint a senior judge as chair in the case of a national inquiry, leaving this as an option in governmental inquiries. The relative support for the appointment of a senior judge as chair was compared with three other alternatives: a law professor, an international relations professor, and a former general. All four responses were based on a choice among 10 levels of a Likert-type scale. The measure of institutional preference regarding the professional qualifications of the inquiry chair is based on the difference between the level of support for the appointment of a senior judge as inquiry chair and the aggregate support for the other possibilities. Specifically, the value of support for the appointment of a senior judge was multiplied by 3, and the sum of the three other responses was subtracted from that value. Based on this method, indifference regarding the qualifications of the inquiry chair results in a value of $0$, maximum preference for the appointment of a senior judge results in a value of $27$ ($10 	imes 3 - 3 	imes 1$), and a minimal such preference results in a value of $-27$ ($1 	imes 3 - 3 	imes 10$).

**Report Criticism**

Two questions were used to measure the report’s (perceived) criticism: (a) How critical was the inquiry report about the decision to go to war? (b) How critical was the inquiry report regarding the handling of the war effort? These two questions were used, separately or jointly, as a measure of the general criticism of the report ($r = .44$, $p < .001$, $\alpha = .61$). When a general measure of report criticism was required (e.g., in analyzing its relationship to report credibility), the two questions were used jointly, and when the context was more selective, for example in analyzing attitudes regarding either the decision to go to war or the handling of the war effort, each of the questions was separately used, respectively.
Report Legitimacy Measures—Source Credibility

Drawing on cognitive literature, institutional legitimacy can be operationalized as “source credibility” (Mondak, 1994, p. 677). Accordingly, in the second stage of the panel study, the measure of inquiry credibility was based on the application of Meyer’s (1988) index of source credibility by McComas and Trumbo (2001). This measure consists of five questions, in which respondents were asked to evaluate the inquiry report according to (a) the extent to which it could be trusted, (b) how accurate it was, (c) the degree to which it was fair, (d) the degree to which it told the whole story, and (e) the degree to which it was unbiased. This measurement scale was found to be internally consistent (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .784$).

Public Opinion Regarding the War

To test Hypothesis 3, the study included a variety of questions regarding the war and its consequences. Five specific attitudes were used, pertaining to (a) the government’s decision to go to war, (b) the government’s handling of the war effort, (c) the war results, (d) the threat of renewed fighting around the Israel–Lebanon border, and (e) responsibility attribution to political and military leaders. Six questions were used to measure responsibility attribution. In three questions, respondents were asked to rank the responsibility of Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, Defense Minister Amir Peretz, and General Dan Halutz, military chief of staff, for the results of the war, and three other questions asked about the level of the respondents’ support for the resignation of the three men as a result of the war. Responses to these six questions were strongly correlated, and they were joined into one measure of “leaders’ responsibility” (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .779$). The panel design allows us to identify individual-level changes in these public evaluations between the first and second stages, and estimate the relationship between these changes and the content of the inquiry report (as perceived by the respondents). The following section details the empirical results.

Results

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics for the main variables. These results support the impression that the war was perceived as unsuccessful. On a 1 to 10 scale (10 being most favorable), the mean ranking of the government’s handling of the war effort was 3.22 ($SD = 2.27$), and the war results was 3.81 ($SD = 2.40$). The mean ranking of the decision to go to war was 6.21 ($SD = 3.48$), and the
The likelihood of renewed fighting was 6.38 (SD = 3.09). It is also evident that respondents, on average, changed their opinions regarding the war in four out of five issue evaluations, between September 2006 and May 2007. All of these shifts in opinion are in the negative valence.

The measures of institutional preferences suggest that a majority of the public prefers the procedure by which the nomination of inquiry members is carried out by the president of the Supreme Court. The mean value of this preference is 3.337 (SD = 4.423), therefore higher than 0, which represents indifference regarding the choice of nomination procedure. Indifference was the modal preference, but the second most common preference was maximum support for inquiry members’ nomination by the president of the Supreme Court. Given the irregular distribution of this preference, a three-level ordinal scale of preference for nomination by the government (−9 to −1), indifference (0), and preference for nomination by the president of the Supreme Court (1 to 9) was used for the analyses.

The second measure of institutional preference, regarding the appointment of a senior judge as chair of the inquiry, is represented by the difference between the level of support for this option and the aggregate support for a set of feasible alternatives. The mean value 2.801 (SD = 8.039), therefore, is higher than 0, representing an average preference for the appointment of a senior judge as chair.

### Table 2. Descriptive Statistics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public attitudes regarding the 2006 war</th>
<th>September 2006</th>
<th>May 2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating the decision to go to war</td>
<td>6.208 (3.478)</td>
<td>5.420 (3.489)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating the handling of the war effort</td>
<td>3.228 (2.273)</td>
<td>2.612 (2.062)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating the war results</td>
<td>3.815 (2.400)</td>
<td>3.518 (2.329)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating the chance of renewed fighting</td>
<td>6.378 (3.088)</td>
<td>6.654 (3.034)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaders’ responsibility attribution</td>
<td>6.215 (2.136)</td>
<td>6.809 (2.561)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Institutional preferences

| Inquiry member nomination preference | 3.337 (4.424)  |
| Preference for senior judge as chair | 2.801 (8.041)  |

Public perceptions of the inquiry report

| Report credibility | 2.989 (0.842)  |
| Report criticism | 2.777 (1.137)  |
| Report criticism (decision to go to war) | 2.577 (1.355)  |
| Report criticism (handling war effort) | 2.962 (1.259)  |

*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.
The measure of report credibility ranges between 0 and 4. The mean value is 2.989 ($SD = 0.842$), and the median is 3.2, suggesting relatively high levels of report credibility. This attitude appears to be positively skewed (skewness = $-0.955$); therefore, the analyses utilize a dichotomous transformation of report credibility—a dummy variable with the value of 0 for credibility ratings of less than the median (3.2) and 1 for credibility ratings equal to or higher than the median. The measure of report criticism ranges between 0 and 4. The mean value of criticism is 2.777; yet a closer look reveals that criticism of the handling of the war effort ($M = 2.962$) is higher than the level of criticism regarding the decision to go to war ($M = 2.577$). These results suggest that the interpretations of the report by respondents in our sample are consistent with the general public impression as reported by the media and by social scientists (Ish-Shalom, 2011), as noted in the section “The 2006 Lebanon War and the Winograd Inquiry.”

To test whether the public’s institutional preferences at the time the inquiry was appointed (September 2006) predicted inquiry report credibility after its publication (May 2007), a set of logit regressions were estimated, and is reported in Table 3. We begin with a bare-bones specification in Model 1, which estimates the relationships between the two institutional preferences and report credibility, following Hypothesis 1. This model indicates a positive association only between the institutional preferences for a senior judge as inquiry chair and report credibility. These findings provide only partial support for Hypothesis 1. As the Winograd Commission was appointed by a senior judge, our theoretical expectation was for a positive association between this institutional preference and report credibility. However, no association was found for the second institutional preference—the method of inquiry members’ appointment. It is also evident that institutional preference accounts for only 2% of the variance in report credibility. Model 2 adds a set of individual control variables. Although this specification appears to improve overall model fit, the main findings remain substantively similar. To test Hypothesis 2, Model 3 adds a measure of report criticism to the analyses. This addition further increases overall fit and indicates a positive association between (perceived) report criticism and report credibility, in line with the “conditional credibility” thesis. The addition of “report criticism” increases the explained variance of report credibility to 13%. A 1 $SD$ change in report criticism is associated with an increase of 17.4% in the probability of high report credibility, whereas a 1 $SD$ change in the preference for a senior judge as inquiry chair resulted in an increase of 7%. These findings suggest that report content has a much stronger effect on report credibility compared with institutional preferences.
As noted earlier, our theoretical analysis assumes that members of the public harbor institutional preferences and use them together with information on actual institutions to decide how credible these institutions are. Although institutional preferences were explicitly reported, people’s knowledge regarding the Winograd Commission was so far merely assumed. However, we are interested in knowing to what extent knowledge of the inquiry’s institutional attributes may influence our findings. For this purpose, Models 4 and 5 test Hypotheses 1 and 2, respectively, on a subset (41.8%) of respondents who actually knew that the Winograd Commission was a governmental inquiry (based on a question that was included in the September 2006 survey). These analyses indicate no significant association between either of the two institutional preferences and report credibility, suggesting that for those who correctly knew the actual institutional attributes of the inquiry, the congruence or incongruence with their expressed institutional preferences did not have an effect on the credibility of the inquiry report. To summarize, the findings appear to partially support Hypothesis 1 and consistently support Hypothesis 2.

To test Hypothesis 3, we began our analyses by estimating the factors that affected the five measured public attitudes regarding the war. The first stage of this analysis was intended to gauge whether any changes have taken place.
in these public evaluations between September 2006 and May 2007. For this purpose, five multilevel linear regressions were estimated, and are reported in Table 4. The relevant variable in these analyses is *Time*, which allows us to estimate the changes in each public attitude over the 8-month period. Except for the evaluation of the chance of renewed fighting along the Israeli–Lebanese border that appears stable over time, all other public attitudes have changed between the time right after the end of the war (September 2006) and the publication of the inquiry report (May 2007). All the changes are in the negative valence: a decline in the support for the decision to go to war, the evaluation of the government’s handling of the war effort, the war results, and a rise in political leaders’ responsibility attribution. Social (gender, ethnicity, age) and political (political knowledge, coalition party voters/not) individual differences were found to be associated with the five attitudes regarding the war, and thus were accounted for in the following analyses.

The changes that were found in respondents’ attitudes between the first and second survey do not necessarily suggest that exposure to the inquiry report accounts for these differences. To assess whether the changes in public attitudes are related to the content of the inquiry report, two additional sets of analyses were conducted, and are reported in Table 5. The first set of regressions (upper part of the table) estimates the associations between report criticism (as perceived by each respondent) and 2007 attitudes, controlling for respective 2006 attitudes and individual controls. Inclusion of the 2006 attitude in each analysis entails that these specifications provide estimates for the association between report criticism and changes in attitudes. No statistically significant association was found between (perceived) report criticism and the changes in any of the attitudes analyzed. This result was consistent for all the five attitudes measured and indicates that although people changed their opinions between September 2006 and May 2007 (as evident in Table 4), we found no support for the claim that these changes can be attributed to the content of the report (as respondents themselves understood it).

Still, to test Hypothesis 3 directly, a final set of analyses was conducted for estimating the interaction between report credibility and report content (criticisms), as shown in the bottom part of Table 5. The variable of theoretical importance in these analyses is the interaction term Report criticism × Report credibility, which indicates whether the association between report criticism and changes in public attitudes was different across individuals who found the report to be credible and those who did not. The findings do not support the hypothesis that the content of the inquiry report had an effect on any of the five attitudes, and we have not found any indication of an effect that is conditional on report credibility. These findings provide no support for Hypothesis 3.
Table 4. Random Effect Linear Regressions Estimating Public Attitudes Regarding the 2006 War.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Support for the decision to go to war</th>
<th>Evaluation of the government's handling of the war effort</th>
<th>Evaluation of the war results</th>
<th>Evaluation of the threat of renewed fighting</th>
<th>Leaders’ responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time (May 2007 vs. September 2006)</td>
<td>-0.923 (.142)***</td>
<td>-0.573 (.106)***</td>
<td>-0.368 (.104)***</td>
<td>0.277 (.141)</td>
<td>0.562 (.119)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender (male)</td>
<td>0.749 (.185)***</td>
<td>0.025 (.134)</td>
<td>0.377 (.141)***</td>
<td>-0.352 (.174)*</td>
<td>-0.484 (.128)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity (Jew)</td>
<td>3.940 (.243)***</td>
<td>0.269 (.177)</td>
<td>0.729 (.186)***</td>
<td>2.113 (.229)***</td>
<td>-0.379 (.168)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age group</td>
<td>-0.180 (.061)***</td>
<td>0.118 (.045)***</td>
<td>0.213 (.047)***</td>
<td>-0.261 (.058)***</td>
<td>-0.112 (.042)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residence (north)</td>
<td>0.235 (.205)</td>
<td>0.131 (.149)</td>
<td>0.132 (.156)</td>
<td>0.323 (.192)</td>
<td>-0.231 (.141)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political knowledge</td>
<td>0.357 (.080)***</td>
<td>-0.090 (.059)</td>
<td>-0.046 (.062)</td>
<td>0.314 (.076)***</td>
<td>0.331 (.056)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kadima or labor voters</td>
<td>0.045 (.205)</td>
<td>0.191 (.150)</td>
<td>0.529 (.157)***</td>
<td>-0.468 (.193)*</td>
<td>-0.508 (.141)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>3.232 (.355)***</td>
<td>3.341 (.261)***</td>
<td>2.633 (.269)***</td>
<td>4.683 (.339)***</td>
<td>5.890 (.260)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sigma u</td>
<td>1.936 (.106)</td>
<td>1.356 (.088)</td>
<td>1.530 (.079)</td>
<td>1.702 (.115)</td>
<td>0.158 (.042)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood-ratio test of sigma u</td>
<td>88.26***</td>
<td>58.97***</td>
<td>96.98***</td>
<td>55.90***</td>
<td>13.86***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Log likelihood</td>
<td>-3,485.130</td>
<td>-3,027.794</td>
<td>-3,100.349</td>
<td>-3,399.792</td>
<td>-3,107.505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>936</td>
<td>928</td>
<td>936</td>
<td>934</td>
<td>937</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Standard errors in parentheses.
*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001.
Table 5. OLS Regressions Estimating the Association Between Inquiry Report Content and Public Attitudes Regarding the 2006 War.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Support the decision to go to war</th>
<th>Evaluation of the handling of the war effort</th>
<th>Evaluation of the war results</th>
<th>Evaluation of the threat of renewed fighting</th>
<th>Leaders’ responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Report criticism</td>
<td>.079 (.111)</td>
<td>.011 (.086)</td>
<td>.140 (.085)</td>
<td>.190 (.127)</td>
<td>−.002 (.110)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same evaluation at</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2006</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual controls</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$F$</td>
<td>41.99***</td>
<td>5.10***</td>
<td>18.82***</td>
<td>11.31***</td>
<td>4.17***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$N$</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>424</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>426</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                          | Report criticism × Report credibility |                                           |                               |                                               |                        |
| Report criticism         | −.056 (.106)                       | −.062 (.066)                               | −.122 (.088)                  | −.103 (.128)                                 | .114 (.110)            |
| Report credibility       |                                   |                                             |                               |                                               |                        |
| Same evaluation at       |                                   |                                             |                               |                                               |                        |
| September 2006           |                                   |                                             |                               |                                               |                        |
| Individual controls      | +                                 | +                                           | +                            | +                                            | +                      |
| $F$                      | 34.74***                         | 4.53***                                     | 15.64***                     | 9.20***                                      | 4.66***                |
| $R^2$                    | .36                               | .13                                         | .27                          | .21                                          | .11                    |
| $N$                      | 397                               | 409                                         | 423                          | 414                                          | 425                    |

Robust standard errors in parentheses; * - $p < .05$, ** - $p < .01$, *** - $p < .001$. 

Discussion

This study contributes to the literature on crisis inquiries by providing an analysis of an actual case, relying on a national representative sample, measured both immediately following the event and after the inquiry report was published. Our findings provide partial support for the hypothesis that the institutional attributes of inquiries predict the legitimacy of their findings, as only the preference for a senior judge as inquiry chair was associated with report credibility, although not consistently robust across all the analyses. However, the content of the report was found to be consistently and strongly associated with report credibility, providing support for Hypothesis 2. Finally, we found neither support for any effect of the content of the inquiry report on public opinion nor any moderation effect of report credibility on these associations, offering no support to the claim that legitimacy fosters public opinion updating in the context of crisis inquiries.

In line with previous studies (Gavriely-Nuri, 2008; Ish-Shalom, 2011), our findings indicate that the 2006 Lebanon War was perceived by the Israeli public as a grim failure of the government and military. Given the high level of legitimacy allotted to the Winograd Commission report after its publication in May 2007, it appears that the inquiry was indeed able to acquire public legitimacy in a situation of legitimacy crisis, as suggested by the literature on crisis inquiries (Brown, 2004; Burton & Carlen, 1979; Habermas, 1973). However, our more specific findings cast doubt on some of the theoretical claims that underlie the politics of inquiries and offer support to others.

The literature on commission of inquiry proposes that the particular institutional attributes of inquiries account for the unique legitimacy of these ad hoc institutions during crises. This argument entails an implicit assumption that members of the public harbor institutional preferences regarding inquiries that favor independence-enhancing procedures. Our findings provide support for this latter claim. We have found aggregate support for the two institutional attributes—a politically independent process of inquiry members’ appointment and a senior judge as inquiry chair. However, only the latter was found to predict the legitimacy of the inquiry report. These findings suggest that despite their public popularity, only some institutional attributes have implications for the consequent legitimacy of the inquiry findings. Drawing back on the literature, it appears that predictions based on procedural justice theory apply only to some procedures in the context of crisis inquiries.

The conditional credibility thesis (Sulitzeanu-Kenan, 2006) is supported by the strong and robust association between the content of the inquiry report and its credibility. Moreover, according to this thesis, inquiries are sought to
provide authoritative confirmation for preexisting public assessments, rather than objective assessments. From this perspective, public preferences that favor independence-enhancing procedures can be understood as intending to increase the likelihood of a critical verdict, in addition to enhancing objectivity. The former motivation may account for the public support for an independent procedure of inquiry members’ appointment, as it was not found to predict report credibility, whereas the preference for a judicial inquiry does appear to support the latter motivation. Finally, this aspect of the conditional credibility thesis also corresponds with the findings that the content of inquiry report was not found to have any effect on public opinion.

Given the importance of the legitimacy attributed to the outcome of crisis inquiries, this study has tested the effects of institutional attributes and report content on inquiry legitimacy in the second stage. However, although institutional attributes appear to have a limited effect on the legitimacy of an inquiry in this stage, it is possible that they might serve as important sources of legitimacy at the investigation stage, when their informative value need not compete with the content of any findings of the inquiry. At this stage, institutional attributes may act to increase peoples’ willingness to accept the assumption that the inquiry is indeed conducting an adequate investigation and will consequently produce a credible report. In contrast, once the inquiry reports its findings, institutional attributes become negligible, as people are able to evaluate the report itself, rather than relay on a proxy for its expected content. Thus, in the second stage, the findings of an inquiry provide the dominant basis for its legitimacy. The temporally bounded role of institutional attributes in forging legitimacy of crisis inquiries was not tested in this study, and to the best of our knowledge, not in any other research. We believe future research in this field should study the changing roles of the various sources of legitimacy over the process of crisis inquiries.

Several important limitations of this study should be noted. First, although the empirical analysis draws on findings that statistically represent a national population, it is however based on a single case, in a single country, and thus potentially restricted in its external validity. Second, as any panel study, our analysis is limited in its capacity to control for intervening factors that may have affected the consequent legitimacy of the inquiry report. However, as elaborated in the section “Research Design: Institutional Attributes, Report Content, and Inquiry Legitimacy,” unlike most case studies in this field, we base our findings on individual-level analyses, and thus our findings are much less sensitive to such aggregate unobserved factors. Macro-level intervening factors that may have affected the entire population in the 8-month time lag between the two stages have likely shifted the aggregate attitude, but
not the associations between early and late individual attitudes, on which we base our hypotheses testing.

To conclude, this study has found only partial support for the claim that institutional attributes of crisis inquiry predict the legitimacy of the investigative findings and strong support for the implication of inquiry report content for its legitimacy. No support was found for an effect of inquiry findings on public opinion. These findings suggest that procedural justice is only partially applicable to crisis inquiries and conform to the conditional credibility thesis, according to which public expectations from such inquiries are to provide authoritative confirmation of public evaluations, rather than an objective factual account.

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**Authors’ Note**

Both authors have equally contributed to the empirical study presented in this article.

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**Notes**

1. This definition excludes policy advice commissions (see Wheare, 1955; Howe, 1999).
2. However, these two criteria are often less strictly observed even when the term *public inquiry* is used in official documents and academic works, particularly when the issue inquired into is a major one in public life (Sulitzeanu-Kenan, 2007).
3. A nurse who was convicted in 1993 of killing four children and injuring nine others on the ward where she worked, at Grantham Hospital, Lincolnshire.
4. Shipman, a general practitioner, who killed about 250 patients from the 1970s to 1998 in Hyde, Greater Manchester. His victims were mainly elderly women who lived alone and were otherwise in good health. He was convicted on 15 sample charges in 2000 and sentenced to life imprisonment. Shipman committed suicide in 2004.

5. The outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in the spring and summer of 2001, which caused a crisis in British agriculture and tourism.


7. Studies have shown that procedural justice carries important consequences in hierarchical situations in which people are dealing with authorities, such as in mediation (Pruitt, Peirce, McGillicuddy, Welton, & Castrissano, 1993), work organizations (Tyler & Blader, 2000), courts (Casper, Tyler, & Fisher, 1988; Tyler & Lind, 1992), prisons (Sparks, Bottoms, & Hay, 1996), and the police (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003). Moreover, these evaluations retain their effect on legitimacy ratings even when controlling for outcome evaluations.

8. The experiment included two versions of inquiry report: one that presented the relevant government ministry as responsible for the unfortunate outcome and another that concluded that the ministry had acted adequately and had prevented even worse consequences, thanks to its actions. Respondents varied in the responsibility they attributed to the ministry among the two experimental groups.


10. The 1968 Commissions of Inquiry Law.

11. Sample design was constructed in the form of dividing the country geographically and sampling randomly in strata defined by ethnic sectors, based on current Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics records. Response rate (RR1; based on American Association for Public Opinion Research, 2004) was 25%.

12. The first survey was fielded between September 17 and 28, 2006. The commission of inquiry was appointed on the same day we began our survey. However, there is no indication that this 12-day period had any effect on the level of knowledge regarding either the war or the inquiry (no significant correlation existed between interview dates and these levels of information among respondents).

13. The first report was limited to the defense policy in the years that preceded the war and the first 6 days of the war (July 12-17, 2006).

14. These options are realistic possibilities for inquiry members based on the history of public inquiries in Israel. In fact, although these options were included in the questionnaire before the makeup of the Winograd Commission was announced, they almost exactly cover the professional background of the members of this inquiry: a senior judge as chair, a law professor, a public policy professor, and two former generals.
15. These evaluations refer to the first stage of the study—1 month after the end of the war (September 2006).
16. The analyses were also conducted with the raw 19-scale measure. No substantial differences were found.
17. Omitting the indifferent respondents, the mean preference increases to 3.415 ($SD = 8.758$).
18. As noted earlier, two questions were used to measure the report’s (perceived) criticism: criticism regarding the decision to go to war and criticism regarding the handling of the war effort. Responses to the first question were used in analyzing the changes in the attitude regarding the government’s decision to go to war, responses to the second question were used in analyzing the changes in the attitude regarding the government’s handling of the war effort, and the combination of both responses was used for the remaining three analyses.

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