

Resolving Intractable Conflicts: Is it about gender?

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Women and Peace Hypothesis Revisited

Women are more pacific than men

(Tessler & Warriner, 1997):

Have strong commitment to end violence (Aoláin 2009; Pankhurst, 2008)

Tend to support compromising views (Caprioli & Boyer, 2001; Holt & DeVore, 2005)

Less supportive of the use of military force (Eichenberg, 2016)

Endorse collaborative and constructive strategies (Brahnam et al., 2005; Davis et al., 2010)



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Gender and Attitudes toward Peace



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**Examining gap in attitudes –
Crucial aspects and stages in
conflict resolution:**

1. Opposing the use of force
2. Supporting peace negotiation
3. Supporting political agreements



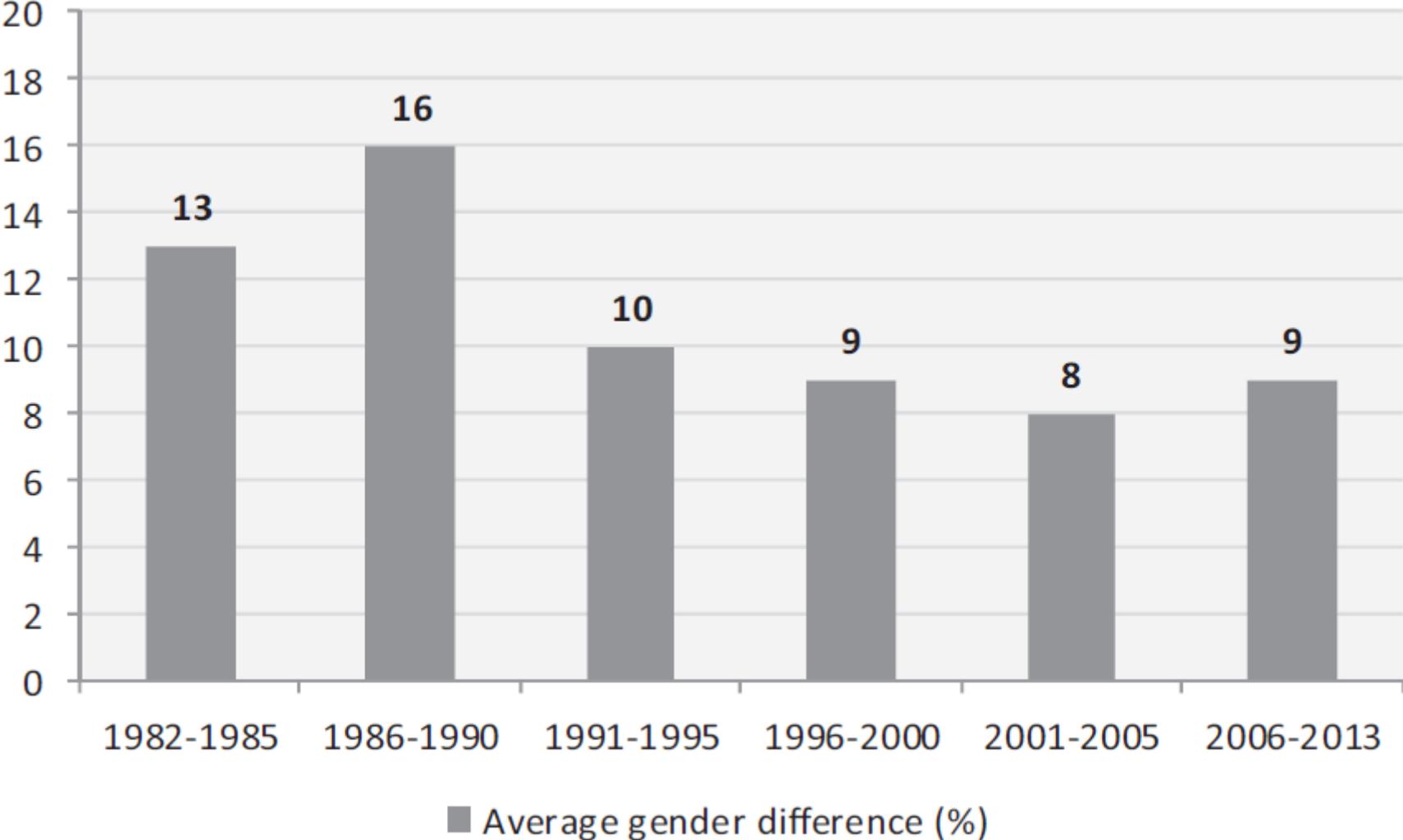
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Support among Americans for using force in militarized conflicts (Eichenberg, 2016)



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Gender and Attitudes toward Peace: Agreement

Agreement as a “feminine” construct

Women tend to hold interdependent self-construal and prefer harmonious human relations (Gilligan, 1982; Olekalns, 2014)

Women are expected to have communal social roles, and hence to accommodate, protect and preserve relationships (d’Estree & Babbitt, 1988; Wood & Eagly, 2015)

H1: Women will support political agreements aiming at peace more than men



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A Longitudinal Study: The Peace Index

Conducted by Ephraim Yuchtman-Ya'ar and Tamar Hermann, the Peace Index project was initiated in mid 1994, and since 2019 administered by the Evens Program in Mediation and Conflict Resolution at Tel-Aviv University and Midgam Institute

Includes a monthly poll among a representative sample of the adult Israeli population, approx. 600 Jewish and Arab participants



A Longitudinal Study: The Peace Index

**From June 1994 until February 2008
had a standard question regarding
support for the Oslo Agreement**

**Additional questions vary on a
monthly basis**



Peacemaking and Gender Method

144 monthly surveys, conducted between 1995 and 2007

Participants

Nationally representative sample of Jewish-Israeli adults (average $N = 360$)

Measures

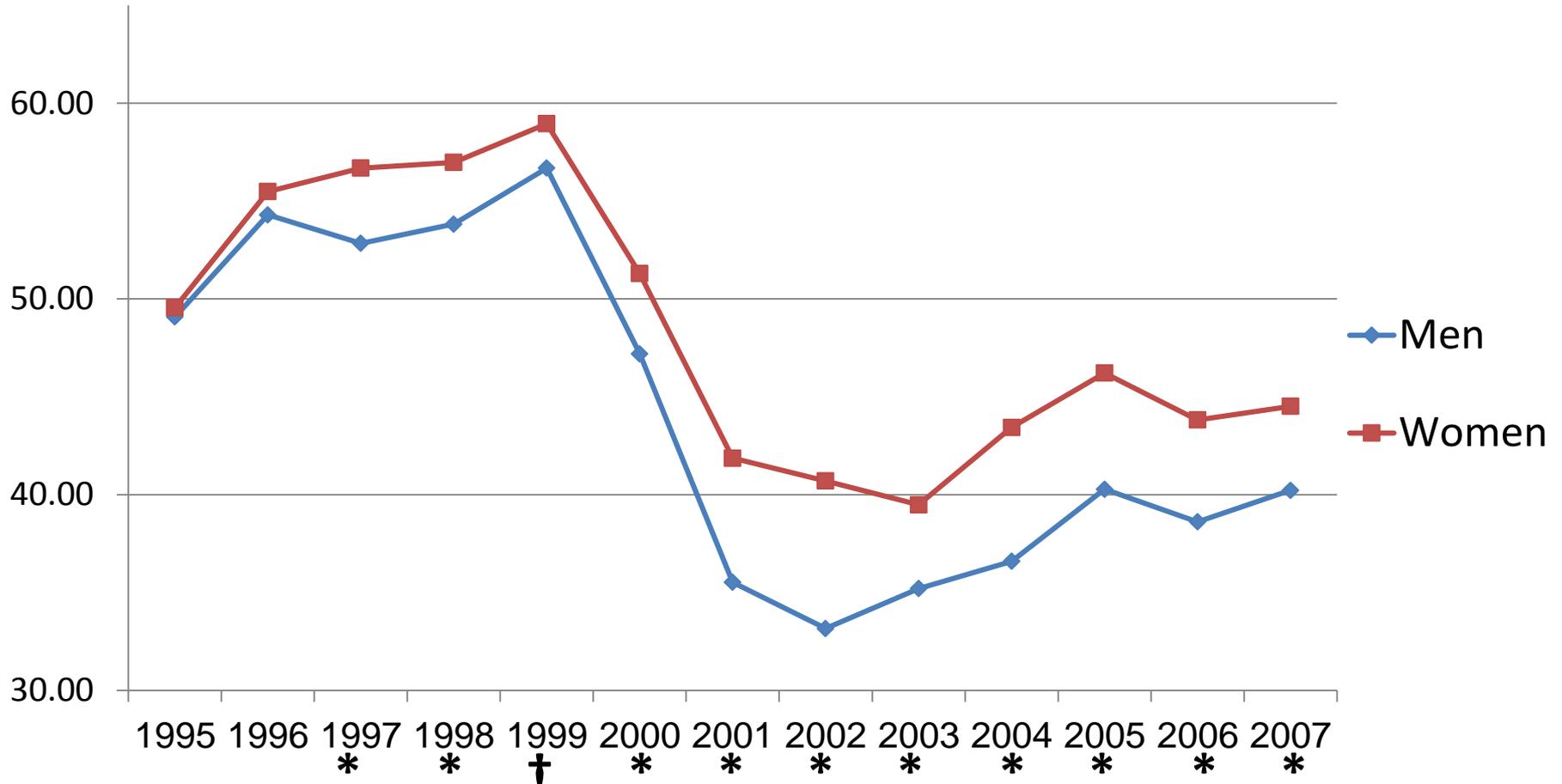
Support for the Oslo Agreement

Socio-demographic variables



Peacemaking and Gender Oslo Support: Yearly Means

(scores linearly transformed to 0-100 scale)



* $p < 0.004$

† $p = 0.008$

Peacemaking and Gender Oslo Support: Overall Regressions

Data from 144 polls
collapsed together
($N = 52,466$)

Predictors of
support for the Oslo
Agreement,
Standardized
coefficient values

	Model 1	Model 2
Gender	-.03***	-.04***
Voting	-	-.20***
Religiosity	-	.25***
Age	-	-.06***
Adjusted R ²	.05	.17

*** $p < .001$

Conflict Re-escalation and Gender Gendered Reactions

Israeli women used self-distracted through activity and avoided the media as coping mechanisms with terror during the Second Intifada significantly more than men (Solomon et al., 2005)

Therefore, they could have avoided more easily the major information delegitimizing the Oslo Accords

H2: Women's level of support for Oslo is less affected by re-escalation of violence in the conflict in comparison to men



Conflict Re-escalation and Gender Oslo Support: Overall Regression

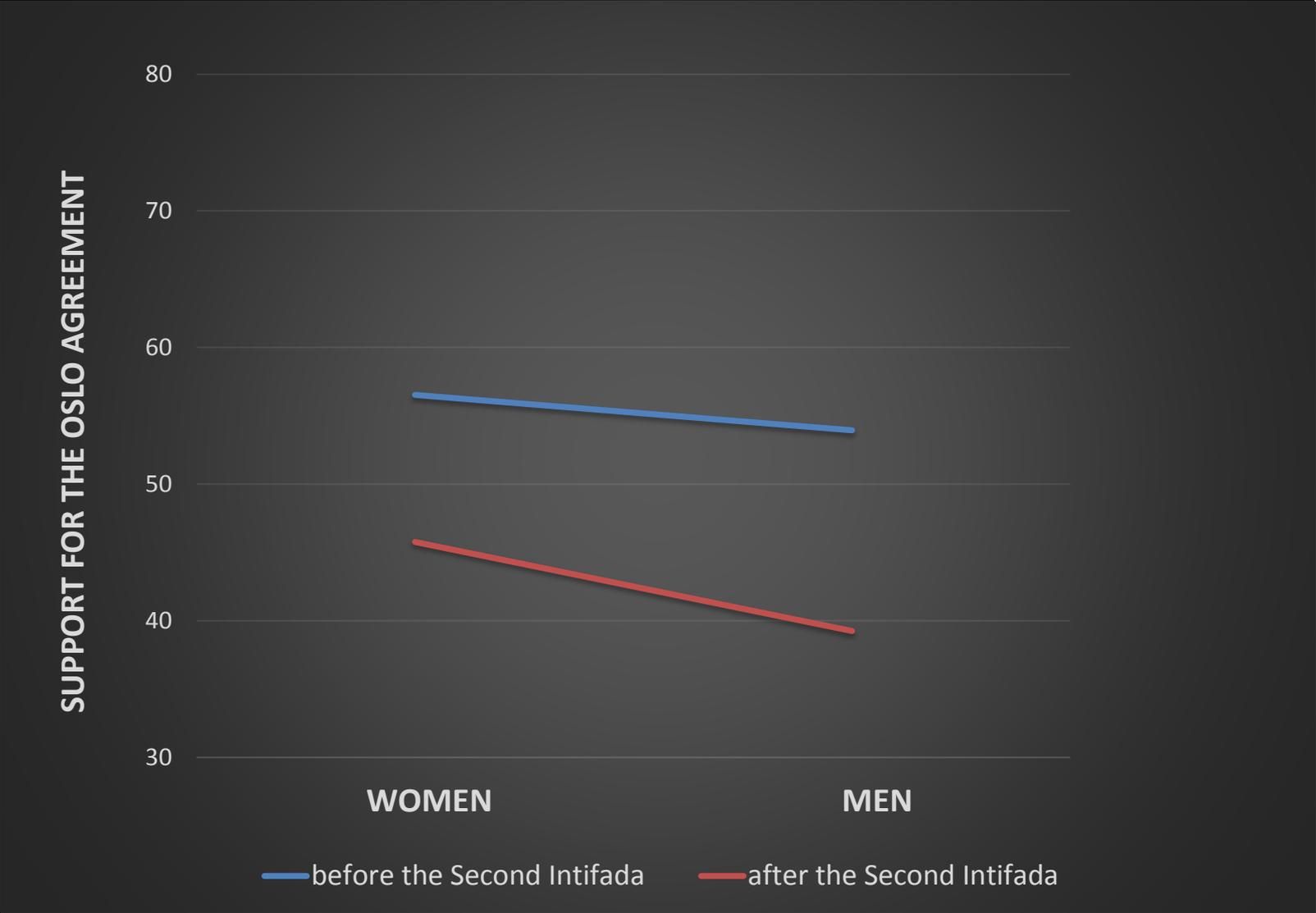
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Predictors of
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Second Intifada	-.18***	-.16***
Gender X Second Intifada	-.04***	-.04***
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Conflict Re-escalation and Gender Changes in Support for the Oslo Agreement





Gender and Attitudes toward Peace: Conclusions and Future Directions

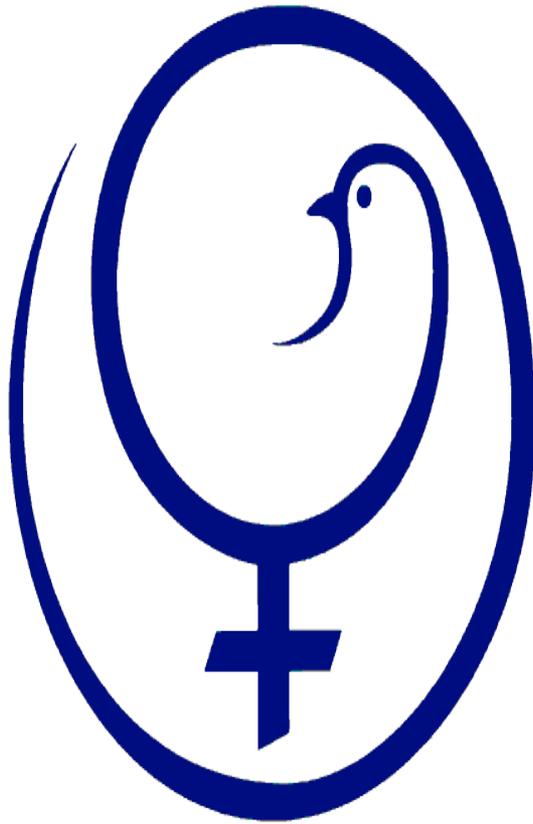
In an intractable conflict:

Women support peace agreements slightly yet consistently more than men

The context matters: gender takes a minor place compared to the prominent socio-demographic variables of political ideology and religiosity in explaining peaceful attitudes

Maybe it's perceptions about group-femininity that matters and not sex?

Gender-Empathic Constructions and Compromises



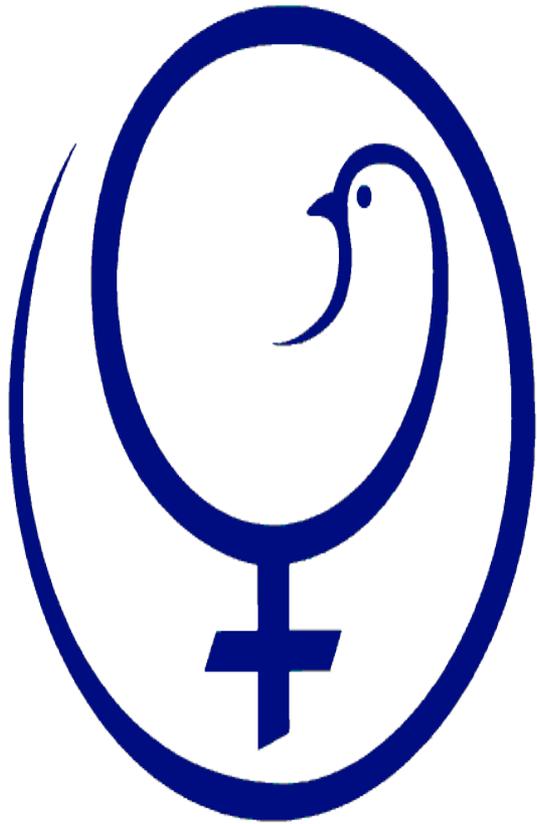
Gender relates to the socio-cultural expectations that follow from differences between women and men

Gender and gender-perceptions (femininity) affects political attitudes concerning conflicts (for e.g. David & Maoz, 2015; Eichenberg, 2003; Tessler & Warriner, 1997)

The social role of women as empathic and other-concerned is suggested as an explanation to gender-related difference with regards to conflict resolution (Olekalns, 2014; Pelligra, 2011)

The effect of (own) group-level gender constructions on support for compromise was never examined

Gender-Empathic Constructions and Compromises



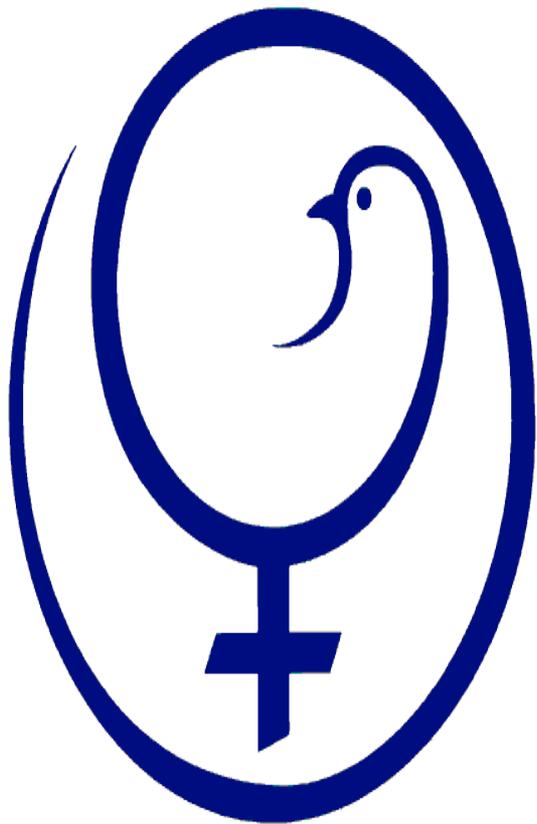
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Emotions and Conflict Resolution: Empathy

Emotions have significant effects on public opinion concerning conflict-relevant issues (e.g., Halperin, 2016; Maoz & McCauley, 2005, 2008; Rosler, Cohen-Chen & Halperin, in press)

Empathy provides the motivation for relieving the suffering of the other group caused by the conflict

H1: Empathy toward the out-group will be associated with support for political compromise



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Collective Feminine-Empathic Perceptions & Compromise

Collective feminine-
empathic perceptions



Compromising views
towards rival group



*H2: Perceiving one's
own group as having
feminine-empathic
traits (POFET) will be
associated with
decreased support for
political compromise*



Intractable conflicts
lead to dichotomous
views of in-group vs.
out-group (Bar-Tal, 2013;
Kelman, 1999)

Conflict situations
create exclusive in-
group empathic
concern reactions (Cikara
et al., 2011; Dovidio et al.,
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Oxytocin, associated
with feminine and
empathic behaviors was
found to motivate in-
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Gender-Empathic Constructions and Compromise in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Method

Participants

Nationally representative survey of 511 Jewish-Israeli adults

Measures

POFET Scale ($\alpha = .83$)

Support for Political Compromise Scale ($\alpha = .82$)

Empathy toward Palestinians Scale ($\alpha = .67$)

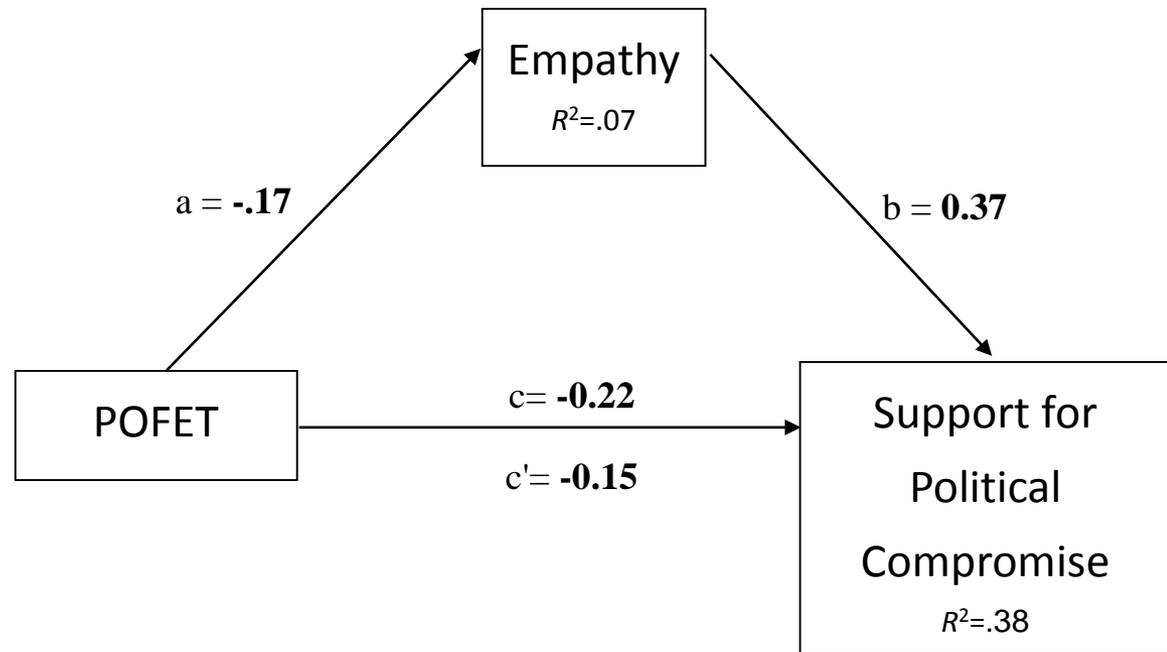
Socio-demographic variables



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Results

Mediation analysis using Hayes's (2013) PROCESS SPSS Macro



All coefficients are $p < .05$

Gender-Empathic Constructions and Compromise

The Empathy Paradox

Conclusions

The more we see our side as empathic, the less we see the other side in conflict as deserving empathic-concern

Why?

Cognitive consistency

Contextual motivation

Gender perspective

The persistence of dehumanizing and delegitimizing out groups in conflict

