

Chapter 4

Barriers to Peace: Protected Values in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict³⁴

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“No Jew is entitled to relinquish the Jewish nation’s right to exist in the Land of Israel... This right will not cease under any circumstances. Even if some at times declare that they relinquish this right, they have neither the power, nor the authority to deny this right to the next generations... Our right to this land, all of it, is forever valid and legitimate.”

David Ben-Gurion, Speech to the 21st Zionist Congress, Basel, 1937

“The Land of Israel is not annexed. She is liberated. She is returned to her rightful owner, the Jewish people... We dare not speak of the possibility that even one inch of our land...go to any foreign ruler.”

Menachem Begin, *Hayom*, 28 June 1967

“Peres will divide Jerusalem!”

Binyamin Netanyahu against Shimon Peres, 1996 elections campaign

“Realization of the right of return will bring about the end of Israel as the state of the Jewish people. It is morally wrong to rescind the Jewish people’s right of self-determination in its historic homeland.”

Prof. Asa Kasher, *Haaretz* interview, 12 May 2002

“Simply discussing the Temple Mount is ‘touching a nerve’ of the Jewish people. I have sat in focus groups, and this is one of the things that most unites the Jewish people and that they are unwilling to discuss.”

Yehiel Leiter, Director of “One Jerusalem” www.onejerusalem.org, 28 November 2007

³⁴ This chapter is part of a larger research project on “Just and Durable Peace by Piece,” funded by the EU’s 7th Framework Programme #217589. The described research was conducted with the generous support of The Hoffman Leadership and Responsibility Program, and the Paul Lewis Fellowship of Gilo Center for Citizenship, Democracy and Civic Education At the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one of the most researched conflicts of our time. It has produced mountains of documents, studies, and papers, many of them devoted to analyzing the core issues of the conflict and attempting to resolve them. Enormous effort and much money have been invested in the pursuit of a creative formula for neutralizing the three most intractable obstacles to resolving the conflict through agreement:

- ◆ The question of the permanent borders for the State of Israel (including the issue of the settlements);
- ◆ The status of Jerusalem;
- ◆ The issue of the Palestinian refugees from 1948.

Generally speaking, most of these attempts to find a solution to the core issues of the conflict were based on the prevailing and perhaps elementary assumption regarding negotiations: that both sides are motivated by an aspiration to maximize their interests and thus will be inclined to compromise on certain issues in dispute, in exchange for significant compensation on other issues. The inability to date to find a formula that is acceptable to both sides is evidence that the accepted compensatory approaches to conflict resolution do not offer appropriate means of resolution for the unique problems posed by these disputed issues.

This chapter will attempt to broaden the scope of the discourse on the core issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by presenting a new conceptual perspective for exploring the characteristics that distinguish the *resistance* to compromise on the core issues from the *difficulty* of compromising on other issues in dispute (i.e., how is the difficulty of solving the issues of water or security arrangements different from the difficulty of finding an acceptable agreement to the future status of Jerusalem?). This perspective is based on a term borrowed from socio-cognitive psychology – “protected value.”

The concept of “protected value” in psychological research serves to describe values perceived by a particular social group as so fundamental that they have been granted protected status against any compromise, concession, or tradeoff. In fact, protected values have the status of a taboo, the violation of which is considered a violation of the society’s fundamental rules of ethics (Tetlock, 1999, 2003). This chapter will explore the argument that the widespread opposition to compromise on the core issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict may be defined

as opposition to violation of protected values and, therefore, should be analyzed in terms of ideological commitment, which is not subject to utility-measurement or compensation. In other words, the logic on which the accepted tools for conflict resolution are based has no validity in problems of this sort.

The chapter will open with an overview of research on protected values to date. Then it will examine the relevance of this concept for explaining the opposition to compromise on core issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and, specifically, will present the argument that there are two discernable types of opposition to compromise on these issues: opposition based on interests and opposition based on perception of the core issues as protected values. The two types of opposition to compromise are distinguishable from each other in their origins, in their manner of reacting to peace agreements that include such compromise, and in the nature of the expectations that they yield with respect to resolution of the conflict. The final part of this chapter will address the key question: how can this theoretical conceptualization help in overcoming the barriers that make progress in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process so difficult?

Protected Values / Sacred Values

Sacred values (Fiske & Tetlock, 1997; Tetlock, 1999, 2003; Tetlock et al., 2000) or protected values (Baron & Spranca, 1997) are two of the names used in research for describing a phenomenon observed from various disciplinary perspectives, which found that a vast range of human societies – secular and religious, primitive and modern – have cultural values that members of the group see as so essential to defining their identity that they forbid any violation of them, whether by compromising, dividing, exchanging, or sharing.³⁵

Sacred values such as these are at times defined as abstract values (for example: human rights, justice, or even a person's concern for family members). At times they are embodied in a physical symbol (such as a holy site or an extinct

³⁵ Values are central and relatively stable beliefs that a person holds and that include abstract ideals regarding behavior or goals to which he should aspire or from which he should refrain (Rokeach, 1972, 1973). A person's set of values defines the standards for evaluating, judging, and taking a stance on specific issues including, for example, political problems (Feldman, 2003). Protected values are a special category of values because the social or cultural group ascribes them unlimited importance, above all other values.

animal species), and at times they are ascribed to a specific policy that reflects, in the eyes of society, the abstract values (such as a prohibition on abortion as an expression of the sanctity of life).

In an ideal world, an unlimited amount of resources would be devoted to protecting and cultivating the sacred subjects. In our world of limited resources, however, people have to deal with dilemmas that force them to answer the question, “how much is this truly worth to you?” or, “what is more important to you?” regarding values or assets that they cherish as absolute and priceless.

For example, every parent would agree to commit to a declaration committing to “anything for the sake of my children’s health,” but each and every family also has to determine what (necessarily limited) portion of its budget will be allotted to baby-safety equipment or family healthcare. Governments face a similar dilemma when they need to decide how much of their budget to allot to reducing road fatalities or subsidizing patients’ medication. In other situations it might be necessary to choose between two competing sacred values that cannot be realized simultaneously, for example, the dilemma of what price a state should pay for the release of a captured soldier. Decision making in such circumstances sometimes becomes an ethical, normative, ideological, or even heated political predicament.

(1) The psychological characteristics of responses to compromise on protected values

Psychological studies of protected values seek to describe how human beings respond to situations where they must resolve difficult dilemmas that require them to compromise on values sacred to them: What characterizes their emotional response to the dilemma? Which principles guide the decision-making process and resolution of such a dilemma? Which conditions will lead people to relax their absolute commitment to protecting the value in question? Indeed, people tend to declare that their commitment to protected values is absolute and unchangeable whatever the circumstances. In practice, however, it appears that reality poses challenges that in certain circumstances produce flexibility with respect to these values as well. These values are therefore sometimes termed “pseudo-sacred values” (Baron & Leshner, 2000; Bazerman, Tenbrunsel & Wade-Benzoni, 2008).

Studies of the psychological nature of protected values can shed light on the question of how the ideological commitment to protecting sacred values translates into unique processes of judgment and evaluation that shape individuals' political thinking and policy-makers' decisions.

Indeed, when psychological theories are applied to the study of political and policy phenomena, it is important to distinguish between their application for the purpose of understanding the factors that affect leaders' policy choices and their application for the purposes of analyzing psychological processes that shape the attitudes of the general public. This distinction is particularly important when researching judgment and decision-making processes. On the one hand, it may be assumed that, in principle, leaders and policymakers make decisions on dilemmas involving protected values through a process that is fundamentally similar to that of "average citizens." Thus, researching the psychological nature of the protected value can teach us about barriers that affect both decision makers and the public that they represent when negotiating a compromise. On the other hand, many studies have demonstrated the influence of accountability, which binds policymakers, on the way that they adopt decisions (Lerner & Tetlock, 1999, 2003). Specifically, because decision makers are obligated to deal with the variety of consequences resulting from the policy they choose to implement, their judgment and decision-making processes are characterized by greater complexity and deeper analysis and consideration of the alternatives (Fiske & Tetlock, 1997). This chapter will therefore focus on the manner in which individuals and groups in society evaluate and resolve dilemmas involving concession with respect to protected values. Because public opinion in democratic states is known to have a decisive influence on the choices of decision makers, this discussion has significant implications for the policies that a state adopts in practice as well. We will begin with a survey of existing research on this issue.

A. The Psychology of the Taboo. One of the most influential researchers who studied the psychological nature of protected values is Philip Tetlock, a social psychologist from the University of California, Berkeley. Tetlock focused on situations in which people confront dilemmas that include a "mix" of a protected value and materially mundane topics in a way that demands explicit comparison between them. An example is the dilemma of allowing trade

in human organs for the purpose of transplantation. He argued that every societal tradeoff that includes “pricing” a protected value – or even the act of raising the possibility – will be perceived as threatening the basic moral norms that define the identity of the individual or society and will, therefore, be defined as absolutely prohibited or a “taboo tradeoff” (Fiske & Tetlock, 1997). The individual who is exposed to such an exchange – even if only observing from the sidelines – will fear the challenge to his image as a moral person and will, therefore, be beset by a series of psychological reactions aimed at protecting his values and social identity from “contamination.” This experience has been termed “moral outrage” and is expressed through rage, anger, disgust, and repugnance regarding the proposed tradeoff and contempt towards those who propose it. The latter will be accused of violating a taboo and will be ascribed irrationality, immorality, and even evil. This moral outrage is usually accompanied by enthusiastic support for punishing the taboo violators and their supporters, with the aim of reinstating the moral status quo. A person who has undergone such an experience will usually seek to participate actively in activities that confirm and reinforce his commitment to the social value that has been violated (McGraw & Tetlock, 2005; Tetlock et al., 2000).

B. Homo Moralis. Another approach to protected values is based on the argument that because moral values are central elements in the self-definition of a person, human beings will aspire to reinforce their self-definition by adopting extreme and inflexible positions on specific issues that represent the values in which they believe. These issues are chosen selectively and are termed “moral mandates” (Skitka, 2002). Studies have shown that violation of a moral mandate, or even the threat of its violation, has led people to react with moral outrage (Mullen & Skitka, 2006), to become more actively politically engaged (Skitka & Bauman, 2008), to disengage, to display intolerance, or even to behave violently towards others whose positions differ from the moral mandate (Bauman & Skitka, 2009, Mullen & Nadler, 2009; Skitka & Mullen, 2002; Skitka, Bauman & Sargis, 2005; Wright, Cullum & Schwab, 2008).

The perception of a societal issue as representative of a moral mandate has significant implications for the legitimacy, propriety, and justice attributed

to political and judicial decisions on this issue. Specifically, the prevailing stance is that proper judicial and policy-making processes (for example, through courts or equal representation) increase the likelihood that people will submissively accept decisions that conflict with their preferences (because of what is termed “procedural justice”). In contrast to this approach, however, it has been found that if the judicial or political decision involves violation of a moral mandate, the propriety of the process does not affect the perception that the decision is unjust. Moreover, when a judicial or political decision has consequences that violate a moral mandate, it leads people to devalue the ruling system (Skitka, 2002; Skitka & Mullen, 2002; Bauman & Skitka, 2009). Experimental studies have even shown that when issues were perceived as moral mandates, people were not even able to reach an agreement as to the type of process that could be considered just for resolving the issue or the person with legitimate authority to lead such a process (Skitka et al., 2005).

C. The Ends Do Not Justify the Means: Protected values as a rule of thumb for guiding judgment and decision making. The reaction to violation of protected values is described, and not without cause, as a reaction to violation of moral principles. Many studies have found a recurrent link between perception of a value as protected against any compromise or tradeoff and its perception as a moral value, that is, a value with universal, objective validity that commits every individual, independent of personal preferences, and should even be imposed on every individual (in contrast, for example, to a social norm or convention) (Baron & Ritov, 2008; Baron & Spranca, 1997; Skitka, 2002).

Many theoreticians have explored how moral perception affects decision-making processes, relying on the assumption that moral principles are not subject to the cost-benefit assessments that are customary when deciding on other issues. One of the most salient arguments holds that people tend to resolve moral dilemmas on the basis of predetermined dichotomous rules regarding appropriate and inappropriate modes of behavior (“deontological rules”) and not on the basis of results (that is, whether the action led to the best or most moral possible outcome – what is termed “consequential rules”). In the context of protected values, it has

also been argued that because commitment to them is absolute, the judgment and resolution of dilemmas relating to them must be based on a rule of thumb that absolutely prohibits participating in activities that impinge on that value (such as “thou shalt not murder”) and cannot be based on considerations of outcomes (or utilities). The reason for this is practical: if the significance of commitment to a protected value is the commitment to achieve an “absolute” outcome – that is, to a “perfect” realization of the value in reality – then those who adhere to this value would be obligated to devote their entire lives to working for it, and even then, presumably, they would not succeed in achieving their goal (Baron & Ritov, 2008; Baron & Spranca, 1997).

It follows that adhering to a protected value means refusing to violate the prohibition on compromise under any circumstance, even if such compromise leads to a better result in terms of the protected value itself (and thus, “the ends do not justify the means”). Indeed, psychological studies have shown that those with protected values regarding various issues have tended to object more than others to activities that undermine the protected value, even if this means more impingement of the value itself as a result of not engaging in the activity (this phenomenon is termed “omission bias,” Ritov & Baron, 1990; Baron & Ritov, 1994). For example, when 20 species of fish would have become extinct as a result of changes in currents, people objected to the building of a dam if they were told that the dam would save those species upstream but would also cause the extinction of six other species downstream. This tendency was especially strong among those with protected values on ecological matters (Ritov & Baron, 1999; Baron & Ritov, 2008). Because the preference for non-action, as we saw above, could lead to a choice that does not bring about the best possible result (in this case, saving more species from extinction), it is defined as an irrational or biased choice.

According to rational theories, a person will tend to choose the option that will yield the greatest benefit for him, at the lowest cost, and with the highest degree of certainty of actualizing the tradeoff. If the decision involves principles linked to the absolute prohibition on violating a protected value, then these two “outcome-related” elements will have no relevance for the decision.

Because the prevalent approaches to conflict resolution and to negotiations are based on the assumption that the players are rational, the above-described

psychological aspects of reaction to compromise on protected values will have significant implications for the possibility of conducting negotiations using the generally accepted tools for such situations (Wade-Benzoni et al., 2002). In fact, one can anticipate an absolute veto on any compromise arrangement that would include concession with respect to a protected value, even if the concession is minimal and involves a substantial compensation. Thus, in disputes of this sort, the protected values themselves become a barrier to resolution of the conflict.

Protected Values and the Core Issues of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

It follows from the discussion above that protected values pose unique barriers to conflict resolution and require distinct approaches for dealing with them. When the protected values are at the crux of an inter-group conflict, there are three situations in which these values might have implications for the possibility of an agreed-upon resolution of the conflict:

- (A) When the various issues in dispute are perceived as protected only in the eyes of one of the parties to the conflict;
- (B) When the various issues in dispute are perceived as protected by both sides to the conflict, but the associated significance is not symmetric; and
- (C) When both sides see the issues in dispute as protected values and ascribe equal significance to them. This final possibility will be the most difficult to resolve because both sides will absolutely veto any compromise and present identical justifications for doing so. In this case it will be extremely difficult to find a creative formula for agreement that would address the demands and needs of both sides. Unfortunately, this situation is characteristic of the majority of intractable conflicts around the world (and is one of the reasons for their protracted nature).

When the concept of “protected value” is examined in terms of its relevance to understanding the barriers that prevent reaching an agreed-upon solution to the core issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, a number of questions surface:

1. Does one of the societies involved in the dispute, do both of them, or does a subgroup within them indeed perceive the core issues as protected values? If both societies do indeed perceive the core issues as protected values, do they ascribe similar significance to these values?
2. What distinguishes the reaction to compromise on protected values in the context of an international conflict, as compared to protected values in other ethical-social contexts?
3. If the core issues of the conflict are indeed perceived by both sides as protected values, how can existing knowledge in this field help to advance an agreed-upon solution to the dispute over these issues?

(1) Are the core issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict perceived by the involved parties as protected values?

In a press conference following the failure of the July 2000 Camp David Summit, then-Prime Minister Ehud Barak said, “We did everything to resolve the dispute. We touched the most sensitive nerves but, regrettably, had no results” (*Globes*, 25 July 2000).

The Camp David Summit was one of many attempts to implement one of the key principles agreed upon in the Oslo Accords of September 1993 – that the permanent arrangements, primarily the resolution of the sensitive and substantive core issues of the conflict, would be brought to the negotiating table “not later than the beginning of the third year of the interim period” (“Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements” Article 5). The decision to delay dealing with the core issues of the conflict to a later stage of the peace process – not to mention the failure to implement the decision or even start a discussion on the agreed-upon date – illustrates the strong opposition to engaging in compromise on these issues.

Indeed, even since the beginning of the Oslo process, and despite (or, as some would say, because of) the lack of clarity surrounding the arrangements expected to address the core issues of the conflict, the process generated vociferous political and public opposition within both societies, which saw the Oslo process as leading to an “intolerable” compromise; thus, what was known as the “struggle

over the home” (Meital, 2004) was initiated. The first issue on which the struggle centered was the territorial division of the land between the two nations. This was also the only of the core issues of the conflict that was discussed (partially) in practice in the intermediate phase of the process, when various areas within Judea and Samaria were partially or fully transferred to the rule of the newly formed Palestinian Authority. Groups opposed to the process on both sides (Palestinian resistance movements on the one hand and Jewish objectors to the Oslo process on the other) reacted angrily because of the same principle: relinquishing control over part of the land means relinquishing the historical-religious right of the national movement to control over its historic homeland (be it Israel or Palestine) (Meital, 2004: 64-74; Naor, 1999: 11-17). For instance, a letter written by reserve officers claimed that by signing the agreement with the PLO, the government was “abandoning Jewish identity and values...” (*Haaretz*, 20 July 1995, cited in Naor, 1999: 13). In an interview with the newspaper *Haaretz* approximately six months after the first signing of the Oslo Accords, Yitzhak Shamir said, “... removing Jews from their homeland is like murdering their mother or father, their history...” (*Haaretz*, 1 April 1994).

In contrast to the territorial issue, which was already on the negotiating table (at least as a matter for temporary resolution) from the beginning of the Oslo process, the issue of Jerusalem was taboo, and discussion of options for its resolution was forbidden even at the height of the process. Immediately upon signing the declaration of principles, then-Prime Minister Rabin stressed his commitment to the consensual position on this issue: “there are no differences of opinion in this home regarding Jerusalem as the eternal capital of Israel. A whole and united Jerusalem is not a matter for negotiation; it was and will always be the capital of the nation of Israel under Israeli sovereignty” (Knesset Record, 21-23 September 1993).

The holy sites in the heart of Jerusalem have made the city a symbol that inspires strong emotions among the three monotheistic religions. Over the course of the years, the distinction between the city’s holy and historical sites and its municipal territory has been blurred, as well as the distinction between the religious-historical myth and the national-political ethos of the two peoples claiming sovereignty over the city. Thus the entire area known as “Jerusalem” or “Al-Quds” became a territory with deep symbolic significance for both nations

(Lapidoth, 2007; Amirav, 2007). For Israelis, Jerusalem represents the historical link between the Jewish people and its homeland – the religious-cultural-historical basis of the legitimacy of the Zionist movement’s demand to establish a national home for the Jewish people in Zion. In the Palestinian view, the Temple Mount (and therefore the area surrounding it) is not just a holy site and a symbol of the justness of their claims for sovereignty, but also the most important asset that they expect to receive and that will define their status in the Muslim world generally and in the Arab world in particular (Amirav, 2007: 329-330).

Barak’s willingness to place the issue of compromise regarding Jerusalem on the negotiating table during the 2000 Camp David Summit demonstrated the shattering of the taboo regarding negotiations over Jerusalem. On the one hand, this reflected, at the very least, Israeli recognition of the need to negotiate the status of the city in the context of the peace process with the Palestinians. On the other hand, the blatant failure of the Summit, which marked the collapse of the Oslo process and set the stage for the second *Intifada*, demonstrates the absolute importance of this issue for both sides and the intractability of their positions on the matter, particularly with respect to the problem of the Temple Mount. Gilad Sher quotes Yasser Arafat providing guidance to his negotiators during the Summit: “Just do not budge on one thing: Al Haram is dearer to me than anything else” (Sher, 2008: 305). At the same time, Ehud Barak also made a point of publicly reinforcing his commitment to maintaining Israeli sovereignty over the Temple Mount: “The Temple Mount is the cradle of Jewish history and under no circumstances will I sign a document transferring sovereignty over the Mount to the Palestinians. For Israel, this would be betrayal of the holy of holies” (Letter from Barak to U.S. President Bush, Jr., quoted in *Haaretz*, 25 January 2001 and in Klein, 2001: 80).

The problem of the Palestinian refugees from 1948 presents at least as significant a barrier to the resolution of the conflict, and many see it as the core of the conflict. This issue, perhaps more than any other, symbolizes the claims of two peoples to national self-determination and to recognition of their legitimate right to sovereign existence on their land. Alongside this symmetric significance, the refugee problem carries with it distinct historical and political meanings for each party to the conflict.

In the Palestinian view, the traumatic events after which hundreds of thousands of Palestinians lost their homes, their property, and their traditional social framework are seen as a historical injustice, which has driven their collective struggle for the past 60 years. The phrase “right of return” embodies, first and foremost, the demand for justice at the personal level – the right of every refugee to return to his original home. Only after that does the phrase refer to the demand for historical justice at the collective level by remedying the injustice that led to the uprooting of Palestinian society as a collective. For the Palestinians, any compromise on the right of return means rendering decades of struggle meaningless (Friedman, 2004; Peled & Rouhana, 2004).

In contrast, if Israel is required to acknowledge its responsibility in creating the Palestinian refugee problem and their right of return, not only would this threaten the historical narrative on which the collective Israeli identity is based, but it would also subject it to a real existential threat: the fear of Israel being flooded by millions of Palestinians who would undermine its character as a Jewish state and threaten its very existence (Friedman, 2004; Zakay, Klar & Sharvit, 2002: 62).

It follows that the three core issues of the conflict are perceived as protected values by the two opposing sides. Both parties express fierce opposition to any compromise and even to placing the issues on the negotiating table.³⁶ Moreover, there is symmetry in the ideological significance that the two sides ascribe to the core issues: the opposition to compromise on the three issues rests on the perception of these issues as symbols that are essential for justifying the demand for national self-determination of both movements – Zionist and Palestinian – in their homeland. The holiness of the land is also symmetric across both sides. The issue of refugees is an exception, perceived as a protected value by both parties, but each side ascribes it a different meaning: Israel sees it as a threat to its very existence as a Jewish state, that is, a threat to the right of the Jewish people to self-determination in a state with a Jewish character and majority, while the Palestinians link it to the historical injustice that violated the human rights of the refugees as individuals and as a society.

³⁶ Some claim that the core issues have become protected values for one or both sides as a result of the conflict over them, or that they are defined as such for the tactical purpose of reinforcing the demands made of the other side (see, e.g., Naor, 2001; Luz, 2004; Lustick, 1993). This chapter will focus, however, on how these issues are perceived in the present and will not deal with the historical-cultural process that generated their corresponding narrative.

So far we have touched upon the roots of opposition to compromise on the core issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict within the two societies involved. This survey, however, has not revealed how prevalent the “protected” opposition to such a compromise is within the two societies, if at all. The basic characteristic defining a protected or sacred value is a declaration that it is an absolutely obligatory value. It follows that the way to examine whether the two sides to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict perceive the core issues as protected values is to test to what extent members of the society feel the issue is one to be preserved “under any and all circumstances.”³⁷

Protected values, like other values, might change over the course of time at the individual as well as the national level (for example, in light of significant events in the political or security environment). Thus, it is to be expected that the relative percentage of those who support a declaration expressing absolute and unconditional opposition to any compromise would vary over time (and as a function of the specific phrasing of the question). Nevertheless, it is possible to extrapolate data – from various surveys and studies – that create the general impression that absolute opposition to compromise on the core issues does possibly exist within Israeli and Palestinian societies. Below are a number of examples of such data from recent years.

A. Compromise on the Core Issues – Positions of Jewish Society within Israel: In a series of public opinion surveys conducted in Israel, the Institute for National Security Studies found that in 2007, 41% of the Jewish public in Israel opposed any removal of settlements under any circumstances (Ben Meir & Shaked, 2007: 59). In the context of a “peace index” survey conducted by the Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research, a representative sample of the Israeli public was asked in May 2009 whether Israel should agree to dismantle illegal outposts and isolated settlements only, if these were the sole obstacles

³⁷ Our purpose in this chapter is analysis of the resistance to compromise on the core issues of the conflict, and therefore the term “protected value” is explored and applied only in relation to those who resist compromise on these issues. Nevertheless, protected values might also form part of the base of support for compromise on core issues. For example, some of the Israeli supporters of compromise on core issues – such as Israeli withdrawal from territories beyond the Green Line – see such concessions as categorically necessary for the realization of absolute principles such as human rights. A future study might explore the significance of the concept of protected values by analyzing activism on behalf of compromise on the conflict’s core issues and by comparing protected values on both sides of the political and ideological divide.

to achieving a peace agreement. Of the Jews surveyed, 21.2% responded that “Israel definitely does not have to agree” (Yaar & Hermann, 2009). Also in the context of a “peace index” survey, a representative sample of the Israeli Jewish public was asked in July 2008 whether they would agree to transfer East Jerusalem to the Palestinians if achieving an agreement depended only on this. A total of 48.3% responded “definitely not” (Yaar & Hermann, 2008). In contrast, a survey conducted in November 2007 by the “One Jerusalem” movement among a representative sample of the Israeli Jewish public found that 86.1% of respondents do not think that Israel should transfer the Arab neighborhoods of Jerusalem, the Old City, or the Temple Mount to a Palestinian state in the context of a peace agreement (One Jerusalem, 2007). In a September 2007 “peace index” survey, 87.2% of Jews responded that Israel does not have to agree to the return of a single Palestinian refugee to within state borders (Yaar & Hermann, 2007).

B. Compromise on the Core Issues – Findings of a Joint Israeli-Palestinian Survey: Since the year 2000, the Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research in Ramallah have conducted a series of joint Israeli-Palestinian surveys (Joint Israeli-Palestinian Poll, JIPP), which take place in parallel among representative samples across both sides of the divide and the focus of which is the positions of the two publics regarding practical questions linked to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In such a joint survey conducted in August 2009 (Shamir & Shikaki, 2009), respondents from both societies were asked to rank their degree of support for various elements of an optional permanent agreement resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Regarding the territorial issue, the survey proposed a compromise according to which Israel would withdraw from most territories of the West Bank, excluding the large settlements (3% of the West Bank), which would be exchanged for territories of the same size in the Gaza Strip. Approximately 17.9% of the Jewish respondents said that they would “absolutely oppose” such an agreement (while an additional 29.1% said that they would oppose it), and among Palestinians, 14.5% of respondents “absolutely oppose” such a compromise (with 35.3% opposing it). In response to a question posed

only to the Jewish sample, 9.6% absolutely opposed dismantling of the illegal outposts in Judea and Samaria (20.7% opposed).

Regarding the issue of Jerusalem, the survey sought responses to a proposed compromise in which the Arab neighborhoods of Jerusalem, the Muslim Quarter, and the Temple Mount would be transferred to Palestinian state control in the context of dividing the city between the Palestinian state and Israel. Of the Jews surveyed, 37.2% stated that they would “absolutely oppose” dividing Jerusalem according to this formula (and 27.2% opposed it), while among Palestinians 22.4% expressed absolute opposition to such a compromise (and 45.3% opposed it). Regarding the proposal that the refugee issue be resolved through monetary compensation for refugees and their resettlement in various countries – with a small minority in the state of Israel – 25.8% of Jews responded with absolute opposition (32.9% opposed), and among Palestinians 19.9% expressed absolute opposition (and an additional 40.6% opposed). Similar results were found in an identical survey conducted by the two institutes approximately a year earlier, in December 2008 (Shamir & Shikaki, 2008).

- C. Compromise on the Core Issues – Palestinian Authority Positions:** The principal findings of public opinion surveys in Palestinian Authority territories present a picture similar to that described above regarding public positions on proposed solutions to the core issues of the conflict. Thus, for example, a survey conducted by the AWRAD Institute in November 2007 (just before the Annapolis Summit) revealed that 46.5% of Palestinians in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza opposed the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza that would involve exchange of territories and Israeli annexation of the large settlements blocs. An additional 6.6% expressed “some opposition” to the proposal (AWRAD, 2007:4), as opposed to 42% that objected to such a proposal in a survey conducted in the summer of 2009 by the International Peace Institute (IPI, 2009). The AWRAD survey found that 53.1% expressed opposition to the division of Jerusalem between the two states (7% expressed “some opposition”), while an International Peace Institute survey found that 52% of Palestinian respondents opposed such a solution. In an AWRAD survey, 17.9% of respondents objected to resolution of the refugee problem by repatriating most of them in territories of the Palestinian state and a

minority in Israeli territory (4% expressed “some opposition”), compared with 27% who oppose this proposal in a 2009 International Peace Institute survey. (These findings do not accord with the high percentage of those who oppose such a compromise regarding refugees’ right of return as found by the Joint Israeli-Palestinian Poll cited above, Shamir & Shikaki, 2009, JIPP).

In contrast to the above statistics, drawn from samples that represent the general Palestinian public, an academic study that entailed 719 interviews with Palestinian students in 14 universities in the West Bank and Gaza (in May 2006) found that over 50% of those interviewed absolutely opposed any compromise over the right of return of Palestinian refugees and Palestinian sovereignty over Jerusalem. In the course of this research, Palestinian refugees residing in Palestinian Authority refugee camps were also interviewed. Over 80% of interviewees in these camps expressed absolute opposition to any compromise regarding refugees’ right of return (Ginges, Atran, Medin & Shikaki, 2007).

From the data presented, we can see that a significant portion of the Jewish population in Israel and Palestinian Authority residents strongly opposes any compromise whatsoever regarding the core issues of the conflict (of course there are significant differences in the percentages of those opposed to compromise on the various core issues). Thus the public on both sides constitutes a pressure group that can greatly influence any attempt to advance a political process for resolution of the conflict. Nevertheless, the surveys cited do not constitute sufficient evidence of the existence of an absolute prohibition on compromise over the core issues according to the definition of a “protected value.” This is because of the customary method of measurement in surveys aimed at characterizing public positions on political issues – a method based on description of positions along a continuous scale reflecting degree of opposition to, or support for, compromise (with the ends of the scale representing the most extreme position supporting or opposing the stated policy). This measurement tool does not reflect the distinction at the center of this chapter, which posits that positions opposing compromise on core issues of the conflict are not distinguishable from one another only on the basis of the intensity of opposition – which is a continuous, quantitative distinction – but are substantively and qualitatively distinguishable from one another when divided into two types of opposition to compromise over core

issues of the conflict: absolute opposition to compromise and opposition that is not absolute.

(2) The types of opposition to compromise on the core issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

Most of the research undertaken to date regarding psychological barriers to conflict resolution has sought to describe the emotional, perceptual, and cognitive biases that are common to most members of the parties to the conflict and which lead to a one-sided and intransigent view of the conflict generally. Alternatively, the concept of a “protected value” offers a framework for analyzing public opposition to compromise on the core issues of the conflict that focuses on *the differences* among the psychological barriers to compromise that are characteristic of various social groups, as these relate to compromise on *specific issues*.

According to this approach, it is possible to divide opposition to compromise on the core issues of the conflict into two types: *absolute opposition to compromise, resulting from maintenance of protected values regarding the core issues of the conflict, and non-absolute opposition to compromise, which is driven by interest-based, utilitarian calculations*. The argument will later be made that substantive and multidimensional differences distinguish between opposition to compromise on the part of those people who have “protected values” regarding the core issues of the conflict – and thus reject any negotiation over them – and opposition to compromise on the part of people who see important interests in the core issues but are willing to consider compromise when it can lead to significant gain or prevent extreme harm.

While the prevalent variables used for researching public opinion on Israeli-Palestinian peace process issues relate to broad ideological perception of the conflict (particularly the distinction between doves and hawks), our proposed distinction allows us to focus on barriers that distinguish the issues perceived as protected values from other disputed issues. Moreover, because this analytical approach focuses on the meaning that a person ascribes to a certain issue, it does not require that someone who ascribes protected-value status to a specific core issue ascribe such status to the other core issues. For example, someone might perceive the issue of Palestinian refugees’ right of return as linked to a protected

value and therefore absolutely oppose compromise on this issue while at the same time supporting compromise on the issues of Jerusalem and borders.

In addition, classifying people's positions regarding the core issues into these two categories of opposition does not completely overlap with the other prevalent methods of classifying individuals' political and ideological positions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (left-right or secular-religious): although absolute opposition to compromise is more prevalent in the religious and hawkish sectors, it might also cut across political and demographic camps. For example, it was found that a sizable percentage of those who absolutely oppose compromise on the refugee issue were secular and identified with the political center or left (Landman, 2009). Thus the distinction between these two types of opposition to compromise provides added value in explaining and predicting responses to optional peace proposals, above and beyond the variables prevalent in analyzing political positions among the public.

It is perhaps appropriate at this stage to disclaim any pretenses that the rough division into two types of opposition is intended to represent the full complexity of reality, and it can even be expected that, in practice, there will be many overlapping elements between the two types of opposition in the perception of individuals and groups. Nonetheless, as an analytical framework this differentiation allows identification of various layers of opposition to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and definition of the unique psychological barriers to resolution of the conflict that are linked to every such layer.

(3) What is unique about the opposition to compromise on core issues that are perceived as protected values? Research findings among the Jewish population of Israel³⁸

Are the types of reaction to deals involving compromise on protected values, as described in the psychological literature, applicable to description of the reaction to potential peace agreements within the Israeli public?

³⁸ For reasons of data accessibility, this chapter focuses on describing the differences between types of opposition to compromise among the Jewish population of Israel, but it may be postulated (and confirmed by a future study) that similar results would be found within the Palestinian population.

In order to answer this question, a study was undertaken comparing the types of reactions of those whose opposition to compromise on the core issues of the conflict is *absolute* (and who agreed with the statement “not permissible under any circumstances” regarding compromise on one of the core issues) with the reactions of those whose opposition is *not absolute* (“permissible only in extreme cases where it would lead to sufficient gain or would prevent harm”) (Landman, 2009).

In order to explore the division into types of opposition to compromise among the general public, and in order to avoid ascribing the phenomenon only to extreme right-wing groups, the study was conducted among groups of varying demographic and political characteristics – primarily among students and instructors in various learning institutions: universities, high schools, and pre-military programs.

The study found that certain psychological characteristics of the reactions to compromise were common to all those who opposed it, while other characteristics, which accord with what the theoretical literature predicts, were unique to those who were absolutely opposed to compromise on the core issues of the conflict.³⁹ In addition, the percentage of respondents who adhere to a protected value did indeed vary from one core issue to another,⁴⁰ but the characteristics of the opposition distinguishing those who maintained protected values were identical across the three core issues explored, as detailed below.

A. Roots of Opposition to Compromise – Guiding Considerations in the Formulation of Peace Agreements: When asked about the political considerations to which they ascribe importance in evaluating proposals for

³⁹ The effect of respondents’ belonging to one of two types of opposition to compromise was isolated from the effect of their political position (right or left) and degree of religiosity on the characteristics of their reaction to compromise through statistical techniques. Thus, all the characteristics presented below describe the distinct value of the division into two types of opposition in predicting the nature of a person’s reaction to compromise, above and beyond the ability to predict reactions on the basis of political stance or degree of religiosity. Likewise, the findings described were consistent across the three core issues, independent of the content of the issue being examined.

⁴⁰ Within the sample studied in the research presented here, which was not a representative sample of the Israeli public, 12.6% were found to have a protected value regarding compromise on the permanent border of Israel, 42.0% forbade any compromise on the holy sites of Jerusalem, and 22.1% absolutely opposed any compromise on the return of any Palestinian refugee.

a peace agreement that includes compromise on the stated core issues, all of those opposed to compromise expressed complete agreement regarding the immense importance of the implications that compromise would have for the security of Israel and its residents. Strong agreement was also found regarding the importance of concern that concession on the issue would create a precedent for further demands from the other side as a critical consideration in the question of whether to support a particular peace agreement. (Theories regarding central strategic barriers to resolution of international conflicts also explore these considerations in depths; see, e.g., Toft, 2003.)

On the other hand, when debating whether to support a particular peace agreement, only those absolutely opposed to compromise ascribed great importance to the characterization of compromise on a specific core issue as a concession in relation to a national right or to a key symbol of their national identity. That is, it appears that all of those opposed to compromise on the core issues are concerned about the ability of the agreement to protect the main utilitarian interests of the group, but only those who absolutely oppose compromise see it as a symbolic injustice that violates their rights. Accordingly, it was found that those absolutely opposed to compromise – but not the others who opposed it – supported the statement that the compromise conflicts with essential fundamental values. They also claimed that everyone must work against such a compromise, independent of their personal stance. That is, they viewed opposition to compromise as an obligatory moral principle.

B. The Emotional Reaction to Compromise: Although feelings of concern, suspense, and fear regarding the signing of a compromise agreement were shared by objectors in both groups, only those absolutely opposed to compromise identified with strong emotional reactions of anger, rage, and sadness, in relation to both the compromise itself and the supporters of such compromise. Feelings of anger and even of contempt were expressed towards these supporters (in accordance with the pattern termed “moral outrage,” Tetlock et al., 2000). Psychological research indeed demonstrates that anger usually surfaces in situations perceived as unjust when the identity of those perpetuating the injustice is known, and the aspiration to remedy the injustice

also arises in such situations. In threatening situations when a person does not feel able to handle the threat factor, however, fear and suspense are the emotions that surface (Halperin, 2008; Huddy, Feldman & Cassese, 2007). These correlations are also reflected in the findings described above regarding the characteristics that differentiate between groups opposed to compromise.

C. Would an “Attractive Agreement” Result in Decreased Opposition to Compromise?

When those opposed to compromise on the core issues were requested to address *the criteria that guide them in evaluating proposals for compromise* in the peace process, significant differences were found between the two opposing groups: those not absolutely opposed claimed that their evaluation of the proposed compromise was influenced by the guarantees that would ensure realization of the agreement and that their opposition to agreement would decrease as the size of the required concession decreases. In contrast, those absolutely opposed to compromise regarded these criteria as less relevant to evaluation of proposals for compromise, and they expressed the same degree of opposition to any concession, whether small or large. Moreover, those absolutely opposed to compromise refused to support any concession on what they considered a protected issue, even if the opposition to agreement led to greater harm in terms of outcome (and thus they reflected a particularly strong bias toward inaction). For example, the absolute objectors rejected a proposal to dismantle outposts in Judea and Samaria, even in exchange for a much larger (territorial) expansion of “established” settlements. This finding is relevant for predicting expected opposition to agreements that might be considered between the government and leadership of the settlers.

D. Confrontation with Ideological and Political Rivals:

If people perceive their political stances and values as sacred, obligatory, and absolute, how do they then explain the existence of other perspectives among their political rivals? As noted, one of the characteristics found to be linked to adherence to a protected value is the tendency of its adherents to attribute negative qualities (such as irrationality or immorality), and to have strong negative feelings (such as rage or even contempt), in relation to “moral rivals” who are willing to endorse compromise on the protected value. Those ascribing

to the protected value even expressed preference for maintaining social and physical distance from their rivals (Skitka et al., 2005; Tetlock et al., 2000). Thus, it can be expected that those who hold absolute values will seek various means of delegitimizing competing ideological and political perspectives.

When protected values are at the heart of an international conflict, the moral rivalry has a double meaning: at one level there exists an internal rivalry between supporters of and objectors to compromise within each of the societies involved in the conflict, as in any other ideological conflict; at another level those adhering to the protected value must confront the existence of a national rival who poses parallel arguments claiming an absolute right to the same disputed issue. Because the ways in which those opposed to compromise deal with each of these political-ideological rivals are a key element of the ability of leaders to promote peace processes, their characterization – as well as a comparison between characterizations of reactions at both levels of rivalry – carries importance.

A study that focused on Israeli perspectives towards the issue of sovereignty over Jerusalem produced interesting findings with regard to the above comparison (Landman, 2009). In the study, Jewish Israeli respondents were asked to express their position regarding the legitimacy, morality, and justice of various stances on the issue of sovereignty over the city. The study found that all respondents, regardless of their political positions, attributed an equal degree of legitimacy, morality, and justice to the Palestinian claim over Jerusalem and the Temple Mount. This legitimacy was even relatively high (on a scale of 1 – meaning the stance is just/moral/legitimate – to 7 – meaning the scale is not just/moral/legitimate – the average of responses was at the center of the scale, approximately 3.5). On the other hand, when respondents were requested to assess the stances of Israeli political groups that support concessions on the issue of Jerusalem, those absolutely opposed to compromise expressly denied the legitimacy, morality, and justice of Israeli support for compromise (an average of approximately 6, when 7 indicates absolutely illegitimate/unjust/immoral); these results differ from those whose opposition is not absolute and who attributed high legitimacy and morality to other Israelis' willingness to support compromise (averaging around 3.5). That is, those absolutely opposed to compromise on Jerusalem were not distinguishable from Israeli Jews who held other positions regarding

the legitimacy, morality, and justice they attributed to Palestinian demands for sovereignty over Jerusalem, but they were distinguishable from other Israelis in the illegitimacy that they attributed to political groups of their own fellow countrymen who support compromise over the future of the city. Moreover, those Jewish-Israelis absolutely opposed to compromise on this issue attributed much higher legitimacy, justice, and morality to Palestinian claims of sovereignty over the city than to Israeli support for compromise on the future of Jerusalem!

This gap is perhaps the result of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict being a conflict over historical, religious, and cultural values that define the identity of a national group and are perceived as obligating mainly the members of the group (as opposed to other protected values perceived as universal, valid, and obligatory for everyone). It is therefore possible that adherents of protected values expect that a member of their group be a partner in the defense of symbols of their identity, and they perceive his willingness to compromise on a protected value as a betrayal of the group's values. In contrast, the position of the rival – who, as an outsider to the group, is *a priori* not expected to identify with or support the group's values and symbols – is perceived as less threatening to the identity of the adherent to the protected value and therefore also as more legitimate and moral.

A review of the findings indicates that the concept of protected value makes it possible to distinguish between two types of opposition to compromise on the core issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: those *not absolutely opposed* to compromise focused on evaluating and judging it on the basis of the costs and benefits involved and their concern about the utility of such agreement, i.e., instrumental calculations, while those *absolutely opposed* to compromise saw it as an illegitimate moral injustice with respect to national rights and symbols, giving rise to strong emotional reaction and not subject to utilitarian compensation, that is, a protected value. *These findings indicate that those absolutely opposed to compromise do not simply represent a marginal extreme of intense opposition to compromise on the core issues of the conflict but are characterized by a substantively distinct discourse in their reaction to compromise, a discourse that may be described as opposition to compromise on protected values.*

This leads us to the key question: whether and how this distinction can help promote resolution of the conflict.

(4) How can the concept of “protected value” assist in the formulation of strategies for reducing opposition to compromise on the core issues of the conflict?

Those who engage with reducing public opposition to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process usually focus – at least in the context of Israeli society – on drafting the “ideal” agreement: reducing the necessary concessions as much as possible, maximizing Israeli interests (personal and collective security being foremost), and ensuring guarantees for the realization of conditions set by the peace agreement. Several discussions have also dealt with the question of which process for ensuring a peace agreement could also contribute to its legitimacy. Would a popular referendum increase the public’s perception that signing a peace agreement is the correct approach, or would a proper parliamentary process of approval suffice? The arguments presented in this chapter indicate that a significant oppositional portion of the Israeli public is convinced that even realization of these criteria – in which much effort has been invested by public personalities within the societies involved in the conflict and by the international community – would not neutralize opposition to compromise.

The discourse on “moral opposition” to compromise on the core issues of the conflict is perceived both by Israeli institutions and by the world at large as a marginal and extremist discourse, insignificant in terms of its ability to block political processes. The findings presented here, however, indicate that at least with regard to the core issues of the conflict, this is a substantive discourse involving feelings, claims, and positions that must be taken into account in any process that seeks to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with as comprehensive and stable an agreement as possible. On the basis of the theoretical insights presented here, I will now propose a number of tools with the potential to help reduce the opposition to compromise on the part of those ascribing to protected values, in accordance with their distinct perception of the compromise.

(1) Legitimate exchanges of protected values? From “mixed” tradeoffs to “pure” tradeoffs

What types of tradeoffs and agreements could lead to relaxation of people’s opposition to compromise on an issue that they see as significant? The accepted answer in the theoretical and practical literature of negotiations is, as noted above, an increase in the compensation to be received in exchange for concession, in accordance with the importance of the issue being sacrificed. Would a particularly large proposed compensation indeed encourage agreement to compromise on the core issues of the conflict? A study that explored this question among the social groups involved in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict found that among Israeli Jews and among Palestinians who had *not* expressed a protected-value perspective regarding compromise, compensation (in the form of a large monetary grant to the state or directly to its citizens) did indeed greatly increase the percentage of supporters for a compromise agreement.

On the other hand, among Jews and Palestinians who expressed *absolute* opposition to compromise on the core issues of the conflict, the promise of a greater material compensation actually increased resistance to the agreement and inspired a greater willingness to support acts of violence against its realization (Ginges et al., 2007). That is, increasing the material and utilitarian incentive to compromise on a protected value had a backfire effect – the proposal only increased the rage of protected-value adherents, who saw it as an attempt to “buy their values.” Given that the strategy of monetary compensation is a commonly voiced alternative in discussions of issues such as the right of return of Palestinian refugees or dismantlement of settlements, these findings are significant for the formulation of an optional agreement.

As discussed above, the severe opposition to agreements based on monetary compensation can be explained in terms of protected values by defining them as “taboo tradeoffs” – deals (or agreements) in which a sacred value is sacrificed in exchange for a material reward (Fiske & Tetlock, 1997). The act of mixing sacred and profane – pricing a moral value in market terms – provokes a fierce reaction against the agreement. The theory posits that – in contrast to the taboo on “mixed deals” of this sort – “pure deals” will be perceived as legitimate tradeoffs. Specifically, two such types of pure tradeoffs are proposed. One type is “routine tradeoffs” in which a material or utilitarian asset is exchanged for another material

asset. These are tradeoffs of the sort that people carry out on a daily basis across a wide variety of spheres of life. A second type of pure tradeoffs is termed “tragic tradeoffs,” in which the decision maker must choose between two protected values that cannot be realized simultaneously. An example of a tragic tradeoff is the medical dilemma of whether to save the life of one patient or another when there is a shortage of organs for transplant, or a decision about releasing terrorists who have committed murder in exchange for the life of a captive, or even the rule that “saving a life overrides the Sabbath,” which reflects a clash between two protected values. The decision to pay with one protected value for the sake of “saving” another protected value, or enhancing such a protected value, has been found to generate less opposition and more empathy than tradeoffs in which the compensation for concession on a protected value is material. The greater legitimacy attributed to a “tragic tradeoff” can be explained by its being a “pure tradeoff” that does not cross the forbidden divide between sacred and profane, between values and interests (Tetlock, 2003; Tetlock et al., 2000).

It follows from the above that one of the possible keys to reducing opposition to compromise on protected values is the exchange of taboo tradeoffs for pure tradeoffs. As noted, there are two possible strategies towards this end: framing the agreement as a “tragic” tradeoff that proposes an exchange of protected values, or “translation” of the agreement to a routine tradeoff that proposes an exchange of utilitarian interests. The relevant exchanges for each of the strategies in the context of the core issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are detailed next, followed by a proposal for an intermediate phase to bridge between them.

A. “Tragic” tradeoffs in protected values: Two versions

“Tragic” tradeoff – first version: concession on a protected value in exchange for the rival conceding on a protected value of his own. As noted, a tragic tradeoff exchanges one protected value for another protected value. The first application of this principle to be proposed in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict involves the international framework for negotiation itself: a “tragic” tradeoff in these negotiations would be an Israeli-Palestinian agreement in which one side’s symbolic concession of a protected value is traded for the other side’s concession of one of its protected values. An example would be a peace agreement in which Israel relinquishes control over the Temple Mount in exchange for Palestinian

relinquishment of the demand to actualize the right of return. Such a tradeoff requires that the involved leader would emphasize the significant symmetric sacrifice that each side is making; that is, the difficult sacrifice the rival is also making for the sake of the agreement has to be stressed to ensure that the deal is portrayed as “tragic” in the eyes of the public. The psychological literature predicts that this type of agreement will lead to reduced public opposition to the concessions involved (although it is understood that reaching such an agreement requires additional preconditions, such as political and public readiness and a supportive international context).

“Tragic” tradeoff – second version: concession on a protected value in order to “save” another protected value – framing the compromise as a national moral dilemma. One of the qualities that characterize adherents to protected values is their tendency to deny the possibility of a conflict or contradiction between these values because of the difficulty of deciding between two issues perceived as infinitely and absolutely important (Tetlock, Peterson & Lerner, 1996). At the same time, however, studies that presented respondents with dilemmas emphasizing the clash between two values that they define as protected have shown that readiness to compromise increases when the value is presented in such a challenging context (Baron & Leshner, 2000).

The concept of “framing” is widespread in psychology and refers to the possibility of making prominent the different aspects of a situation or problem in a way that shapes understanding, evaluation, and interpretation of it on the part of the recipient of the information (Entmann, 1993: 52). If the key to reducing opposition to compromise on a protected value lies in defining the tradeoff as a dilemma juxtaposing two protected values, then framing the agreement as resolving a conflict between two protected values of the same group would also lead to reducing opposition to it.

This phenomenon was illustrated in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in a recent study that presented Israeli Jews with a short paragraph claiming that if the conflict is not resolved soon in the framework of two states for two peoples, then international pressure leading to implementation of one bi-national state – meaning the end of the Jewish character of Israel – is to be expected. Israelis who were exposed to this paragraph showed greater willingness to accept a compromise on the core issues of the conflict than Israelis who were

presented with a neutral paragraph outlining the history of the conflict. This framing of opposition to territorial compromise as an act that might lead to violation of a central value – the Jewish character of the state of Israel – caused even respondents with right-wing and hawkish positions to relax their opposition to compromise (Gayer, Landman, Halperin & Bar-Tal, 2009).

Is such an effect possible outside the bounds of a scientific survey as well? It is possible that the reversal of perspective that took place among clearly hawkish leaders – Ariel Sharon, Ehud Olmert, and Tzipi Livni – is a supportive example. All three explained their retreat, after many years, from absolute opposition to territorial compromise regarding the Land of Israel by pointing to the realization that such absolute opposition will lead to violation of another protected value shared by all three – maintaining a Jewish majority in the State of Israel. This clash of values also appears in the principal platform guidelines of the political party “Kadima” in the 2009 Knesset elections, as presented on the movement’s website (<http://politic.co.il/kadima/kadima-manifesto-.html>):

- ◆ The people of Israel have a national historical right to all of the Land of Israel.
- ◆ In order to realize the overriding goal – Jewish sovereignty in a democratic state that constitutes a secure national homeland for the Jewish people in the Land of Israel – it is necessary to maintain a Jewish majority in the State of Israel.
- ◆ The choice between the desire to allow every Jew to live anywhere in the Land of Israel and the existence of the State of Israel as a national Jewish home requires relinquishing part of the Land of Israel.
- ◆ Relinquishing part of the Land of Israel is not a relinquishment of ideology but the realization of an ideology that aims to ensure the existence of a Jewish and democratic state in the Land of Israel.

This framing of the policy of support for territorial compromise as a means to preserve the Jewish character of the State of Israel helped “Kadima” to become one of the largest parties in Israel in the last elections (2009). Thus, it appears that framing (in the media, in political speeches, and in party platforms) that emphasizes the conflict between an individual’s or a social group’s protected

values can help reduce resistance to compromise on these values, even among absolute objectors.

B. “Routine tradeoffs” in protected values – shattering the taboo on the protected issue

The definition of a physical property (such as territory or a historical site) as having protected status requires making a social-cultural link between the tangible asset and an abstract value of some sort, that is, creating a symbol (Albin, 1991; Azar, 1985; Hussner, 2003; Skitka, 2002). This is a lengthy socio-cultural process, which includes delineating the physical borders of the property defined as protected. It follows that a reverse socio-cultural process, which loosens the association between the protected value and the tangible symbol or redefines the borders of the protected tangible asset in a way that reduces its physical size, might make it possible to view the asset as negotiable and could open the door to creating alternatives for resolving the conflict. This process can be described as a transformation of a “value into an interest” (as important and costly an interest as can be, but still a negotiable one). It is a lengthy, complex, and sensitive process, and its success depends on the fulfillment of a variety of conditions; thus the strategies drafted below reflect only the general outlines for a very delicate and continual process. These strategies would be divided into two clusters: negative and positive.

The “negative cluster” – demystifying the physical issue. There are two principal means for removing the mystical shroud that covers the tangible issues in dispute. The first means is by *setting concrete precedents*: creating *de facto* realities that remove parts of the physical symbol from the space defined as protected, thus providing practical proof of the possibility of continued existence of the abstract value even without sovereignty over the tangible symbol (“actualizing the inconceivable,” for example: withdrawal from certain territories despite public opposition, such as the withdrawal from Sinai, which over the years neutralized the protected status that some Israelis had attributed to the peninsula and its settlement).

The second means for demystifying a tangible issue is the creation of a “*hypothetical precedent*” for compromise on the issue, that is, infusing ideas into

the public discourse regarding alternatives to compromise on the same value. Such ideas regarding possible compromises on protected values could enter the discourse through the publications of peace organizations, academic or security institutions, or even the media. This is a gradual and lengthy process, which is likely to encounter public condemnation initially, but in many cases the ideas will, over time, be internalized as part of the legitimate public discourse and will even be adopted by leaders, and as a result, would be even more readily embraced by public opinion (Bar-Tal, Landman, Magal & Rosler, 2009). An example of such a process is the trend of increased support for concessions on Jerusalem since Ehud Barak, as prime minister of Israel, proposed a far-reaching concession on the city at the Camp David Summit of 2000. This proposal was initially received like a bombshell and provoked many cries of resistance. Yet following the public debate that it inspired on an issue that until then had been considered absolutely taboo as a matter for negotiation, the details and scope of compromise on Jerusalem became a routine and legitimate topic within public discourse, and slowly the percentage of supporters for such compromise rose within Israeli public opinion surveys (Ben Meir & Shaked, 2007: 57; Klein, 2001: 56-57).

One goal of such a process is to reshape the contours of the physical asset perceived as a protected value. Again, Jerusalem is a good example of such a process: the political and media discourse regarding compromise on Jerusalem led to a shattering of the “holistic” perception of the municipality of Jerusalem as a single unit in the public discourse and to differentiation among different parts of the symbol, mainly between Arab neighborhoods in East Jerusalem and the sacred (or “historic”) basin as matters of differential importance in negotiations (Lapidot, 2007; Klein, 2001).

Separating an issue into its elements and prioritizing the elements according to their importance is a customary technique in negotiations and pre-negotiation preparations, and it has also been used in the context of the core issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by policy-research institutes, as well as by the negotiators themselves. For example, Gilad Sher describes a discussion that took place among members of the Israeli delegation at the 2000 Camp David Summit, where they were attempting to “peel the external layers of the ‘onion’ of Jerusalem” and define the true essence of “our Jerusalem, which we really do not want to divide” (Sher, 2008: 310-311). This is basically a discussion aimed at defining “the true red lines” of negotiation.

This analytical approach, however, is indeed widespread among policy-makers but is relatively rare among the agencies that work on preparing Israeli public opinion for a possible peace agreement. One exceptional example is the explanatory efforts of the organization “*Ir Amim*” (“city of nations”), which uses campaigns, tours, seminars, and other means to show the public the separation that exists in practice between East and West Jerusalem, thereby promoting the differentiation within public discourse among various aspects of negotiations over the future of the city. Activities of this sort are even rarer with respect to the other core issues, in particular with regard to the “right of return,” which is perceived by the public as an almost demonic threat (Zakay et al. 2002). A more specific debate on the meanings and implications of the different facets of this issue – including a refinement of the different implications of a symbolic recognition of the refugees’ sufferings, granting financial compensations to the refugees, or the specific demographic implications of granting some of them the right of return – might allow a more rational discourse on this issue.

The promotion of a discourse that differentiates among the various elements and aspects of a symbol is not intended to “break the taboo” but to reduce the area to which it applies and isolate the specific aspects over which utilitarian-rational negotiations are perceived as illegitimate. Thus this process is intended to expand the range of flexibility of the two sides during negotiations.

The “affirmative” cluster – cultivating alternative symbols to represent the protected value. An alternative strategy for loosening the connection between a tangible-physical issue in dispute and an abstract moral-cultural value is the use of “affirmative” means, that is, strengthening the association between the abstract value and alternative tangible symbols that are not the focus of an international dispute. For example, commitment to the value of the Jewish people’s self-determination in its homeland could be expressed through policies of the Israeli government and of international bodies involved in resolving the conflict that have been designed to strengthen other symbols that reflect this value, such as cultivation of ideological Zionist settlement of the Negev and the Galilee, or practical cultivation of heritage sites with symbolic national significance in West Jerusalem or central Israel. These could broaden the perceived contours of the symbol and allow society to express its commitment to the same value through

other means that do not require exclusive control over the matters in dispute. Like every social-cultural process, this process is gradual and slow, but in the long run, it is likely to reduce somewhat the exclusivity of the current focal points of the symbol (even without replacing the superior status of the sacred value), thereby allowing relaxation of the corresponding demands.

(2) Intermediate strategy – addressing the protected value separately from the protected issue

A fundamental principle of modern integrative theories of negotiations and conflict resolution holds that in order to resolve a conflict, it is necessary to distinguish between the positions of the parties on the matter in dispute and the basic interest, or the underlying need, that gives rise to their position. The basic assumption is that while the positions of the parties to the conflict are a “zero sum game” – that is, one side’s gain is necessarily the rival side’s loss – their underlying needs are subject to realization and actualization simultaneously, in a way that is not divisive or competitive (Fisher & Ury, 1991).

This chapter has focused on the argument that behind the absolute opposition to compromise on the core issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict – which are essentially material problems subject to physical partition – lies the perception of these issues as a necessary symbol of the collective self-definition of the rival nations and specifically of their right to national self-determination in their historic homeland. By relying on the analytical distinction between the position and the underlying need, it is possible to propose alternative ways of satisfying this value, independent of the position regarding the tangible issues that represent it. One of the important means available for satisfying the need for legitimization of national self-determination is its recognition by all the players involved: Israeli society, Palestinian rivals, Arab nations, and the international community.

In a conference that took place in the Knesset on 25 May 2009 under the title “Alternatives to the Two-State Approach,” the conference initiator, Knesset Member Tzipi Hotovely of the Likud, described its key message as follows: “We must return to the language of rights. Agents have shaped public consciousness so as to erase the discourse about our right to exist in Israel and in Jerusalem. If we rely on other arguments and do not respond to the Palestinians using the

language of rights, our moral right to the land, then we shall lose... The moral argument needs to be at the basis of our discourse. We need to speak in the name of the Jewish morality that is linked to our roots and our history... It is our turn to become part of the consensus.”

At the same conference, Moshe Ya’alon, Minister of Strategic Affairs in the Netanyahu government, reiterated the demand to return to the discourse of rights: “The Oslo process increased asymmetry in favor of the Palestinians and against Israel – the Palestinian claim of rights to the land, as opposed to the Israeli demand for security. The Palestinians claim a right to live anywhere, and the Israelis make no such parallel claim. This is a convention that must be broken.”

Moshe Arens also proposed at the same gathering, “a number of necessary axioms for a just future solution” and foremost among them: “the Jews have a right to settle in the Land of Israel. That is a given in this hall, but it is not a given to Obama or to others in this country. They propose as a precondition to any agreement that the area be “free of Jews” before establishing a Palestinian state. This is a demand that conflicts with human rights.”

These words express the sense among those who oppose division of the country that the fundamental values for which they are struggling are threatened not only in tangible terms – the possibility of a territorial compromise – but also in terms of the recognition of their justness, both at home and abroad. Their words present a demand for recognition of the ideological-moral basis of their claim as an initial condition for any type of discussion, internal or international, regarding a solution to the conflict, as Minister of Public Diplomacy Yuli Edelstein claimed at a later stage of the conference: “The fundamental premise is that the Land of Israel belongs to the nation of Israel – and on this basis I am willing to discuss how to compromise given the reality facing us. But we must begin with this fundamental premise as our starting point for talks.” This argument parallels the demand voiced by Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu in more formal venues on April 2009 as a condition for the renewal of negotiations with the Palestinians.

Similar conclusions can be drawn from a series of interviews conducted by Scott Atran and Robert Axelrod (2008) of political personalities who represent the Israeli and Palestinian hawkish right. Their conclusion is that both sides perceive the rival’s recognition of their own protected values as an initial and necessary condition for the opening of negotiations. Thus, for example, in an interview

with Binyamin Netanyahu in 2007, when he headed the Knesset opposition, he described Palestinian recognition of Israel as a Jewish state – alongside symbolic measures such as changing the content of history textbooks in the Palestinian Authority – as a necessary condition for the start of negotiations. Mousa Abu Marzook, the former head of Hamas, described an Israeli apology for the injustice perpetuated against Palestinians in 1948 as an initial condition for the start of peace negotiations from his point of view.

Finally, empirical support for this argument can be found in a study that showed that opposition to compromise on the core issues of the conflict, as well as the sense of insult and rage against compromise and support for violent acts to prevent it, decreased among those with protected values when the agreement included the rival's recognition of the sacrificed protected value, even if this recognition did not produce any utilitarian advantage for the protected value adherent (Ginges et al., 2007). For example, the study showed that Palestinian opposition to an agreement that includes dividing the land into two states, Israeli and Palestinian, decreased when the agreement included a declaration by Israel recognizing the rights of Palestinians to the West Bank, while the opposition to territorial compromise on the part of Israelis with protected values decreased when the agreement included Palestinian recognition of the historic right to a Jewish homeland in the Land of Israel.

Public recognition of a group's protected value is a means of intermediating between the two polar opposite strategies proposed above for dealing with the conflict: on the one hand, a strategy was presented in which the conflict is regarded as a struggle over purely tangible assets and its resolution is sought in these terms (translating the agreement into a "routine tradeoff"), while ignoring the value- and identity-related elements involved. The danger is that this strategy could be perceived as a grave injustice by those with protected values and could increase their opposition to the agreement. On the other hand, a strategy was proposed whereby the conflict would be regarded as a pure struggle over protected values and rights and its resolution would be sought in these terms (a "tragic tradeoff"). Such a definition of terms, however, would make resolution very difficult because it would place the most sensitive and charged issues on the negotiating table. Mutual recognition of the other's protected values is the intermediate path between these two strategies because it regards the physical assets in dispute

as instrumental issues subject to compromise and partition. At the same time, it does not neglect their value-laden nature because it guarantees the societies involved that tangible compromises embodied in the agreement do not entail a compromise with respect to the moral and identity-related values represented.

Conclusions

The aim of this chapter was to propose a new conceptual framework for analyzing public opposition to compromise on the core issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This framework proposed distinguishing between two types of opposition to compromise, each resulting from a different perception of the core issues of the conflict. The non-absolute opposition to compromise is an instrumental opposition: those who hold this position view the core issues of the conflict as central and essential interests for the existence of their national group, and willingness to compromise on these interests in the context of a peace agreement requires substantial compensation and guarantees that will ensure actualization of the benefits expected from the agreement. Today this type of opposition to compromise receives the most attention among the various agents dealing with promotion of the peace process.

A second type of opposition to compromise – which received marginal attention – is absolute opposition, based on protected values: those who hold this position view the core issues of the conflict as representing deep-rooted and essential values that serve to define their individual and collective identity, and therefore any compromise (or even the mere act of raising these issues for discussion) is perceived as a threat to the existential foundation of society and its self-perception, and as an injustice in terms of their basic rights, thus giving rise to strong emotional reactions. The chapter concludes that any peace process that seeks to gain public legitimacy will have to take into consideration the needs and perceptions of these absolute oppositions to compromise on the core issues on the part of both sides to the conflict. Three strategies were proposed in order to reduce this type of opposition to compromise:

1. Framing the conflict over the core issues as a conflict over protected values, and dealing with the dilemmas embodied in its resolution as moral-ideological dilemmas;

2. Framing the conflict over core issues as a utilitarian conflict of interests and promoting a policy aimed at loosening the link between the physical assets in dispute and the abstract values that they represent;
3. An intermediate approach based on public recognition of the rival's protected value as a means of differentiating between negotiations over the tangible asset and negotiations over the identity-defining moral-cultural value.

It is appropriate at this stage to note a few reservations: the function of a theory is to identify regularities that make explanation of complex phenomena possible. This chapter has attempted to explain a particularly complex phenomenon – the opposition to compromise on the core issues of the conflict – a phenomenon that combines psychological, sociological, historical, cultural, religious, and political foundations. Against this expansive backdrop, the explanation proposed in this chapter focuses on a very narrow angle for analyzing the phenomenon – the psychological angle – and further narrows the focus by isolating the opposition to compromise on the core issues from the analysis of the broad ideological perspective of the conflict. In addition, the proposed analytical framework is a dichotomous framework, which necessarily cannot accurately represent all aspects of reality. Finally, it may be argued that the phenomenon examined in this chapter is an “artificial” phenomenon: the absolute opposition to compromise on the issues in dispute might at times serve as a tactic for reinforcing the bargaining positions within negotiations (e.g., Goddard, 2006), and it is difficult to distinguish between such tactics and authentic adherence to a protected value regarding the issues in dispute as defined here.

Nevertheless, the proposed analytical framework makes it possible to fine-tune certain aspects of the social and political reality of the conflict, aspects that are often neglected by those who engage in this work. In attempting to deal with the complex barriers to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, the concept of “protected value,” at the very least, makes it possible to redefine a long-standing, stubborn problem using new terminology, which has the potential to inspire original thinking and thus moves us, if only one small step, closer towards identification of the formula for its resolution.

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