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Social Psychological Bulletin

Psychologia Społeczna

Irrational Critique of Israel and Palestine: New Clothes for Traditional Prejudice?

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Abstract

Among researchers of Antisemitism there is a relative consensus that at least some criticisms of Israel may indeed be a form of expressing Antisemitic prejudice in a more socially approved manner. However, the relations between Antisemitism and anti-Israelism are yet to be fully explained, especially since the issue is inextricably linked with the dynamic of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The two presented studies have two purposes: firstly, to measure Polish attitudes towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and, secondly, to establish the relationship between anti-Israelism and anti-Palestinism and more traditional types of prejudice, like Antisemitism and Islamophobia. In the first study (N = 301) we constructed a questionnaire of perception of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with three subscales: Rational approach to conflict, extreme pro-Israeli opinions and extreme pro-Palestinian opinions. In the second study (N = 190) we found that both Antisemitism and Islamophobia predict the way Poles perceive the conflict between Israel and Palestine and beliefs in Jewish conspiracy seem to play the biggest role here. There is also evidence anti–Israelism is expressed not by criticizing Israel, but rather by expressing full support for Palestine. The questionnaire presented in this article may be treated as an indirect measure of Antisemitic prejudice, expressed in a more socially approved manner. Our findings may shed a new light on anti–Israelism and anti-Palestinism.

Keywords

antisemitism; Islamophobia; prejudice; Israeli-Palestinian conflict; Pro-Palestinism, Pro-Israelism

In 2015 the annual Polish Independence Day march was organized under the slogan "Poland for Poles. Poles for Poland." The very strong nationalist accents present during the march were directly linked to the global refugee crisis that broke out several months earlier. According to the Amnesty International data, at least half of the population of Syria was forced to flee (Amnesty International, 2015), and the refugee crisis largely affected Western European countries, most notably Germany. Activists taking part in the march, being severely against the admission of the refugees to Poland, shared with the crowd such slogans as: "We want a repatriate, not an immigrant" or "Stop Islamization of Europe". During the anti-immigrant march in Wroclaw, one of the key moments happened when Piotr Rybak, a political activist and former political leader of Indignant Movement, burned down the Jewish puppet he had set up in the marketplace beforehand. The media describing this event ("Provocation with putting on fire the Jewish effigy during the manifestation in Wroclaw", 2015; "The Jewish effigy was put on fire by former colleague of Paweł Kukiz", 2015) wondered about the reason for the presence of a Jewish puppet at the anti-Islamist march – after all, it was the Muslims, not the Jews, who were the main target of the proclaimed slogans. And though the question posed by the journalists seems to be fully justified, this is not the only example of how, in the Polish public sphere, Antisemitic and Islamophobic attitudes are often intertwined. For instance, one might look at the behaviors at football stadiums. The slogans chanted by the fanatic fans of Śląsk Wrocław at times are an expression of negative attitudes towards Arabs ("Get the f.. out with the refugees. Scandalous behaviour of hooligans during the match between Śląsk and Jagiellonia", 2015), whereas at other times they express hateful attitudes towards Jews ("Racism and Antisemitism on the Śląsk stadium", 2011). This mix of Antisemitic and Anti-Muslim attitudes has yet another dimension when we consider the attitudes towards Israel and the conflict in the Middle East.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is often perceived as a conflict between the Jews and the Arabs, in which it is difficult to support one side without criticizing the other. It would seem, therefore, that criticizing Israel will be, at least to some degree, related to the manifestation of anti–Jewish sentiments, whereas the negation of the rights of Palestine will be related to anti-Muslim attitudes. Meanwhile, the cited examples show that the situation is neither easy nor unambiguous. It often happens that Antisemitic and Anti–Muslim attitudes are expressed by the members of the same social group – or even by the same individuals – depending on the situation they find themselves in. There is no reason to suspect that the situation will differ in the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Additionally, the situation in the Middle East is so complex that stating that anti–Israeli attitudes are a peculiar extension of Antisemitism is a terrible simplification. For instance, it may be that the negation of the rights of Israel will be related to attitudes towards Muslims. It is possible, therefore, that the attitudes towards Israel and Palestine are, in fact, a mixture of Antisemitic and Islamophobic prejudices and forming opinions about anti-Israelism and anti-Palestinism or pro-Israelism and pro-Palestinism requires all possible combinations to be taken into account.

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The Critique of Israel as a Camouflage for Antisemitic Attitudes

The state of Israel has been a source of controversies around the world from the day it was established. Attitudes towards this country range from extremely hostile to extremely supportive. The state of Israel is also one of the few countries sparking such lively discussion in the public sphere – and not only amongst the countries directly or indirectly linked to it. This fact was one of the reasons for which the researchers investigating Antisemitism started to wonder whether the critique of Israel is not, in fact, a way of expressing Antisemitic attitudes in a more socially approved manner.

Forster and Epstein (1974) were one of the first researchers to introduce the concept of new Antisemitism. According to their theory, every criticism of Israel is in fact an expression of Antisemitic prejudice. Unfortunately, this concept was quickly discredited. After all, the critique of Israel does not always equal Antisemitism – not every expression of disapproval of the state's policy can be treated as a manifestation of new Antisemitism. Similarly to other countries in the world, actions taken by Israeli citizens may be perceived by people living outside of their borders positively or negatively, and this assessment does not necessarily have anything to do with prejudice against Jews. Such an approach is additionally a problem of a political nature (Kempf, 2010). On the one hand, fear of accusation of Antisemitism can not only silence those who criticize Israel, but also depreciate the power of their arguments. Faced with this situation, even the Jews who openly disagree with some of Israel's actions are exposed to being called Antisemites. On the other hand, the accusation that Jewish institutions perceive every statement critical of Israel as Antisemitic is also a way to discredit these organizations. For this reason, the identification of every criticism of Israel as Antisemitic prejudice not only does not fully reflect the real state of affairs, but can also be detrimental to individuals and institutions opposed to Antisemitism.

Nonetheless, it is rather accepted that at least some critical attitudes towards the state of Israel may be seen as a camouflage for socially unacceptable Antisemitic prejudice (Cohen, Jussim, Harber, & Bhasin, 2009; Frindte, Wettig, & Wammetsberger, 2005; Kempf, 2009; Kempf, 2010). However, the questions of what exactly constitutes new Antisemitism, in what way is it related to other, more traditional types of anti-Jewish attitudes and in what situations can we understand the critique of Israel as Antisemitic remain unanswered.

Attitudes Toward Israel in Poland

It is also worth noting that new Antisemitism or anti–Israelism in Poland may differ from similar phenomena in countries such as Germany, mainly due to the fact that the social norms, according to which the expression of Antisemitic prejudice is frowned upon, do not seem to be as strong in Poland as they are in other western countries (Bilewicz, Winiewski, & Radzik, 2012). This might be one of the reasons as to why, in several studies conducted by Anti-Defamation League (ADL) in several European countries, Poland has one of the highest rates of Antisemitic attitudes (ADL, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2012). At the

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same time, attitudes toward Israel in Poland appear to be relatively positive, or at least not unequivocally negative. In ADL studies conducted in 2005 and 2007, respondents, who were asked about their attitudes towards Israel, more frequently responded that it was positive (23% in 2005, 25% in 2007) rather than negative (16% in 2005 and 2007) (ADL, 2005, 2007) and in a Polish Prejudice Survey, conducted by the Center for Research on Prejudice in 2013, more than half (50.7%) of the respondents who answered the question about their opinion about Israel declared that it was good or very good, whereas 49.3% presented negative attitudes towards this country (Bulska & Winiewski, 2014). However, when analyzing the data from nationwide studies we should draw our attention to another aspect of the presented results: the comparison of attitudes toward Israel and attitudes toward Palestine, or, more broadly, the whole Arab world. For example, in a study conducted by OBOP in 2002, where respondents were asked about their support for one or the other side of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as well as who, in their opinion, is responsible for the conflict in the Middle East, the majority of respondents did not support any of the participants of the conflict (39%), and declared that both sides are to blame (55%), but among those who did favor one side over the other, there was a tendency to sympathize with the Palestinians. While 20% of the participants expressed their support for the Palestinians, only 7% of the participants took the side of Israel. At the same time, 13% of those asked thought that Palestine is to blame for the conflict, whereas 16% declared that in their opinion Israel is responsible for the situation (OBOP, 2002). A similar picture emerges from the data presented by the Anti-Defamation League. Respondents from Poland, when asked about their feelings toward the parties taking part in the conflict, mostly declared that they do not sympathize with any of the parties (49% in 2005, 33% in 2007), but among those who did choose a side, once again there was a tendency to sympathize with the Palestinians (in 2005, 16% of the respondents expressed sympathy for Palestine at 9% for Israel and in 2007 the ratio was as follows: 22% for Palestine at 13% for Israel). It seems therefore that although attitudes toward Israel in Poland are rather positive, when we take into consideration the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the sympathy of the Poles lies rather with Palestine.

Characteristics of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

There are several reasons for this state of affairs, and Antisemitic attitudes, which in the context of this article may come to mind first, do not necessarily have to be the most important factor. First of all, it is important to note that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is perceived as asymmetrical in terms of strength (e.g., Rouhana, 2004; Rouhana & Bar-Tal, 1998). Relations between Israel and Palestine are usually characterized by perceived asymmetry of power – Israel being the stronger party – and this perception is shared by most Arabs and Jews (Rouhana & Fiske, 1995), despite the fact that if we consider the relation of strength between Israel and the whole Arab world, this asymmetry is not so straightforward (Rouhana & Bar-Tal, 1998). Nevertheless, this image is often supported by the media all over the world, including Poland (Winiewski, Haska, & Bulska, 2015). The image of

Israel emerging from the media is unequivocally negative, and the Palestinians are mainly depicted as victims (e.g., Deprez & Raeymaeckers, 2011). Considering that people from the earliest years of their lives tend to sympathize with victims (Vaish, Carpenter, & Tomasello, 2009), it is hardly surprising that in Poland the sympathy lies rather with Palestine. An interesting question emerges then: can this part of anti-Israeli attitudes that is not explained by Antisemitic prejudice be linked to the empathy felt for the theoretically weaker party involved in the conflict?

It should also be stressed that the conflict between Israel and Palestine is an example of a so-called intractable conflict, which, amongst other things, is characterized by being of a zero-sum nature (Bar-Tal, 2007). It would therefore seem that in the case of Israeli-Palestinian conflict, taking the side of one of the parties would automatically mean the denial of the rights of the other participant of the dispute. Meanwhile, it turns out that in Poland the situation is not so clear. For example, the Polish Prejudice Survey, conducted by the Center for Research on Prejudice, shows that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not perceived as one-dimensional by the Poles. In this nationwide study, participants were asked, among other things, about their attitudes towards Israel. Two of the questions were posed as extremely anti-Israeli and two other as extremely anti-Palestinian, considering that anti-Palestinian questions can be treated as a good reversed measure of anti-Israeli attitudes. However, the analysis of the positions showed that the four statements do not form a coherent scale – there was no statistically significant correlation between the two types of statements. More importantly, no significant correlation was found between the ways in which the respondents answered the questions – the expression of anti-Israeli attitudes was unrelated to the expression of anti-Palestinian attitudes. The emergence of anti-Palestinian attitudes, independent of the opinion about Israel, has therefore provoked the question: can it be that the radical anti-Palestinian statements are based on traditional prejudice against Muslims, as in the case of anti-Israelism and Antisemitism?

Anti-Palestinism and Islamophobia

Finding the answer to the question posed above may be particularly interesting given the fact that, according to the public opinion polls conducted by CBOS, attitudes of Poles toward Muslims are definitely negative (CBOS, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2010). Furthermore, the recent study of Poles' attitudes toward the followers of other religions and nonbelievers has shown that Muslims are the most disliked group among the eight groups rated – 44 percent of the respondents declared hostile attitudes toward Muslims (CBOS, 2015). It is therefore possible that the occurrence of anti-Palestinian opinions is linked to prejudice against Muslims, i.e., Islamophobia.

Islamophobia is an attitude that discriminates others because of their belief in Islam (Allen, 2007; Bunzl, 2005). According to the broadest definition of this construct, created by the British NGO Runnymede Trust, this attitude is related to the perception of Islam as a monolithic religion, detached from and inferior to Western cultures, being in fact a

hostile and manipulative political ideology. At the same time, the criticism of Western cultures is rejected, while discrimination against Muslims is justified, and Islamophobia is perceived as a natural phenomenon. This definition, however, is often criticized for its lack of distinction between prejudice against Islam and a critique of Islam based on universalist, secular and democratic convictions (Imhoff & Recker, 2012). For this reason, German researchers Roland Imhoff and Julia Recker proposed a different approach to the subject of anti-Muslim attitudes, suggesting that extreme anti-Islamic attitudes should be called Islamoprejudice, and the secular critique of Islam, not characterized by negative attitudes and, in fact, a critique of certain practices typical of this religion, should be distinguished from them (Imhoff & Recker, 2012).

Research conducted by the researchers using their Islamophobia scale (Imhoff & Recker, 2012) shows that both types of attitudes are slightly related, but their nature is quite different. While the results of the Islamoprejudice scale correlate positively with explicit and implicit prejudice, the results of the right-wing authoritarianism scale and the scale of social dominance orientation, the answers to the Secular Critique of Islam are unrelated to any form of prejudice and are negatively correlated with religiosity and authoritarianism (Imhoff & Recker, 2012). It seems, therefore, that if anti-Palestinian attitudes are a way of expressing anti-Islamic prejudice, they will be related more to Islamoprejudice and unrelated to the Secular Critique of Islam.

Summary

Despite the occurrence of many studies looking for answers regarding the nature of the relationship between the critique of Israel and Antisemitism, the phenomenon of new Antisemitism, also called anti-Israelism, has not been fully explained yet, especially when it comes to the Polish society. The literature does not pick up on the fact that the critique of Israel hardly ever refers to the tax system of this country or to the educational laws adopted by it, and is, in fact, always related to the political situation of that country – that is, it refers to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Therefore, measuring anti-Israeli attitudes without considering this fact and without considering anti-Palestinian attitudes seems to not be enough. Moreover, in previous studies, anti-Israeli attitudes were often treated as a "synonym" of pro-Palestinian attitudes and an "antonym" of anti-Palestinian attitudes – it was often assumed that those who criticize Israel almost automatically favor Palestine. Meanwhile, e.g., data from a nationwide survey of prejudice in Poland suggests that anti-Israelism and anti-Palestinism are, in fact, two relatively independent dimensions. Consequently, it is possible that extreme anti-Palestinian attitudes may be rooted in more traditional anti-Muslim prejudice, as it is in the case of anti-Israelism and Antisemitism. This idea, to the best of our knowledge, has not yet been discussed in previous studies.

Additionally, we need to remember that prejudice is not the only factor influencing the perception of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and attitudes toward Israel and Palestine. One might mention, for instance, the role the media has played in this process (more on this in:

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Winiewski et al., 2015). At the same time, as attitudes toward Israel and Palestine are almost always shaped in relation to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which is characterized by the perceived asymmetry of power – Israel being the stronger party (Rouhana & Bar-Tal, 1998) – it is possible that at least some of the critical opinions about Israel come from the empathy felt toward Palestine.

The purpose of this article is to find answers to the issues described above. Due to the lack of research tools that could be used during this process, in the first study we decided to construct a questionnaire measuring the perception of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Study 1

The purpose of the first study was to construct the questionnaire of the perception of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the maximization of the reliability of scales isolated by the exploratory factor analysis.

Method

In order to construct the research tool, an online correlation study on a relatively large sample was conducted.

Item Selection

The first step in the process of construction of the questionnaire of the perception of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was to adopt the criteria for distinction between the rational and irrational critique of Israel and Palestine. It has been acknowledged that these comments, which are very radical, general, unjust and which may be perceived as an irrational criticism of Israel, in fact can be perceived as a camouflage for socially unacceptable Antisemitic prejudice (e.g., Cohen et al., 2009; Kempf, 2010). In order to distinguish rational and irrational criticism of Israel we used the criteria called "3D", presented by the Israeli politician and writer Natan Sharansky, referring to the delegitimization of the state of Israel, the use of double standards when judging the actions of Israel and the demonization of the Israelis (Sharansky, 2004).

During the process of selection of the items for the questionnaire, we used previously conducted studies (Cohen et al., 2009; Kempf, 2010; Stahel & Cohrs, 2015). The statements used by the researchers were translated and assigned to the two scales expected to be obtained through the factor analysis – rational and irrational criticism, with subscales for Israel and Palestine. Additionally, we generated items that were not found in the literature of the subject, but were in line with the guidelines presented by Sharansky. In the "irrational criticism" scale we avoided the items referring simultaneously to Israel and Palestine, so as not to commit a methodological error of "double-barreled questions" (MacKenzie, 2003). However, in the initial pool of the items we included the statements relating to both Israel and Palestine, formulated in such a way that they could be treated as an expression of rational, neutral attitudes toward the conflict in the Middle East. The initial pool contained

57 items, most of which were assigned to either rational or irrational criticism scales. Items that were impossible to assign without doubt to either one of the scales were left nonetheless due to the strategy of questionnaire construction.

Participants

In the study 786 observations were recorded – that is, the number of individuals who clicked on the link and answered a minimum of one question. The final sample, formed only by the participants who answered all of the questions, consisted of 301 respondents (135 women, 165 men, 2 people who declared a different gender, aged 17-83, M_{age} = 34.77; SD_{age} = 14.87).

Procedure

The study was conducted via the Internet, using the surveymonkey platform. In order to get the most representative sample, we distributed the questionnaire among the students of the University of Warsaw and among the users of thematic and regional internet forums, including the forum on Fronda.pl portal, forum.gazeta.pl (in regional and thematic threads) and forum.o2.pl (in thematic threads).

Results

In order to understand the structure of the collected data, principal axis factoring (PAF) was performed using orthogonal rotation (varimax) and oblique rotation (oblimin). Since both solutions were similar, the results for orthogonal rotation are presented, as they are easier to interpret. The number of factors was extracted on the basis of two separate criteria: Parallel Analysis, which allows extraction of more than a random number of factors, and MAP Test (O'Connor, 2000; Velicer, 1976; Velicer, Eaton, & Fava, 2000), which is based on removing the common variance from the correlation matrix. Both methods are commonly recommended ways of extraction of the number of factors (Lance, Butts, & Michels, 2006; Velicer et al., 2000). Although we expected that the items would form two scales: rational and irrational criticism, with subscales for Israel and Palestine, factor analysis indicated a three-factor solution, explaining 46.58% of the variance. Since the questionnaire was created for survey research, we decided to shorten the initial pool of 57 items to 12 statements, i.e., four items per scale. The statements that were most loaded by one of the factors and least loaded by the two remaining factors were selected. Moreover, we chose those statements that, if rejected, significantly decreased the reliability of each scale. Table 1 shows the final questionnaire with factor loadings for each of the items.

Such results allowed us to create a questionnaire with three subscales:

- Pro-Israelism (PI), which included statements about Israel and Palestine
- Pro-Palestinism (PP), which also included questions about Israel and Palestine
- Rational approach to conflict (RA), which reflects the understanding of the complexity of the conflict

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Table 1

Factor Loadings (Varimax Rotation) of Positions Forming the Questionnaire of Perception of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Item	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
The area between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan river belongs exclusively to Israel.	**.83**	-.14	-.13
The West Bank and the Gaza Strip should belong to Israel.	**.82**	-.20	-.03
The Palestinian People should move to the Arab states surrounding Israel.	**.81**	-.12	-.19
Peace can only be achieved in the Middle East if the solution of the conflict takes all the Israeli demands into account.	**.77**	-.15	-.13
I agree with most of the decisions made by the Palestinian government.	-.17	**.83**	-.02
The area between the Mediterranean Sea and the river Jordan should belong exclusively to the Palestinian People.	-.16	**.80**	-.02
Israel is solely responsible for the conflict in the Middle East.	-.15	**.79**	-.20
The suicide attacks used by Palestinian terrorists are a justified method of fighting a stronger opponent.	-.12	**.75**	-.22
There is no clear way of judging the conflict in the Middle East.	-.07	-.07	**.80**
Both sides in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are to blame.	-.11	-.04	**.79**
The solution to the conflict in the Middle East should take into account the needs of both parties.	-.15	-.09	**.76**
The Israeli occupation does not justify using terror.	-.10	-.19	**.61**

Note. Boldface indicates highest factor loadings.

The structure obtained as a result of the factor analysis is clear – the statements loaded by one factor are rather not loaded by the two remaining factors and the factor loadings for the four items within each scale are high and consistent.

As illustrated in Table 2, the reliabilities of the scales, measured by Cronbach's α, are satisfactory, especially given that each scale consists of four items. The scales of the questionnaire are negatively correlated and each correlation, although statistically significant, is small. The greatest negative relationship can be observed between the scales of pro-Palestinism and pro-Israelism. It is also worth noting that in the case of PP and PI scales, the means are similar and comparable, while the mean of RA scale is significantly higher.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics, Reliabilities and Intercorrelations of the Scales in the Questionnaire of Perception of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Scale	*M*	*SD*	α	1	2
1. Pro-Palestinism	2.21	1.03	.83		
2. Pro-Israelism	2.62	1.07	.85	- .34**	
3. Rational approach to conflict	3.69	1.05	.75	- .25**	- .24**

**$p < .01$.

Discussion

Although, on the one hand, the obtained data structure does not support the predictions, on the other hand, it is not surprising and seems to be clear. Though we expected to obtain two scales, with items that would be an expression of criticism of one or the other side of the conflict (and which would therefore be called the scales of "anti-Israelism" and "anti-Palestinism"), the factor analysis revealed that the statements that were most loaded by the factors were in fact an expression of uncritical support for each of the parties of the conflict. It may mean that the negatively formulated items, irrespective of whether they concern Israel or Palestine, contain both anti-Israeli and anti-Palestinian attitudes, and it is the uncritical, extreme support for one of the parties of the conflict that allows us to differentiate between anti-Israelism and anti-Palestinism. One of the aims of Study II was, therefore, to verify whether the responses on the PP scale could be treated as a manifestation of anti-Israeli bias and the responses on the PI scale as an expression of anti-Palestinian bias.

It is also worth paying close attention to the relationships between the scales (Table 2). The negative correlation between the PI and the PP scales might suggest that anti-Israelism, if expressed by uncompromising support for Palestine and anti-Palestinism, supposedly reflected in uncritical support for Israel, are, in fact, two separate dimensions, possibly related to two different types of prejudice. Importantly, such a structure is consistent with previous results (Bulska & Winiewski, 2014). In addition, the negative correlation between PI and PP and RA scales shows that the adoption of the perspective of either one of the parties of the conflict reduces the probability of a rational, fair-minded approach to the conflict – an approach that takes into account the needs of both groups.

Study 2

The aim of the second study was to examine the relationship between pro-Israelism and pro-Palestinism and traditional prejudice – Antisemitism and Islamophobia. Drawing on the results of previous research (Dunbar & Simonova, 2003; Frindte et al., 2005; Grzesiak-Feldman & Irzycka, 2009), showing that the so-called authoritarian personality is related to the expression of Antisemitic attitudes, we decided to look at the relationship between right-wing authoritarianism (Altemeyer, 1998) and pro-Israelism and pro-Palestinism. Assuming these two attitudes are in fact a camouflage for traditional prejudice, the results in pro-Palestinism and pro-Israelism will be correlated with the results of the right-wing authoritarism (RWA) scale. Moreover, we decided to look at the relationship between pro-Israelism and pro-Palestinism and the social dominance orientation (SDO). According to the Social Dominance Theory, the social dominance orientation can be defined as the widespread belief that there is a need for a strong hierarchical order of social groups (Sidanius, Levin, & Pratto, 1996). Interestingly though, the relationship between SDO and prejudice investigated in previous studies is not as clear as in the case of RWA. On the one hand, Ekehammar and colleagues have shown that SDO has a greater direct impact on generalized prejudice

than RWA (Ekehammar, Akrami, Gylje, & Zakrisson, 2004) and Zick and colleagues (2008) have proven that GFE is strongly linked to SDO, but not identical to this construct. On the other hand, research conducted in Germany by Frindte et al. (2005) shows that there is no connection between Antisemitic attitudes and SDO. According to these scholars, this may be due to the fact that the Jewish minority as well as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are not a threat to the status quo and to the strength of the members of the in-group.

In addition, considering the asymmetry of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the tendency of Polish society to sympathize with the Palestinians (ADL, 2005, 2007; CBOS, 2002; OBOP, 2002), we also investigated whether pro-Palestinian attitudes will be explained by a personal tendency to be empathetic.

Hypotheses

We had 6 hypotheses: Hypothesis 1. Pro-Palestinism will be positively correlated with the three types of Antisemitism. Hypothesis 2. Pro-Israelism will be positively correlated with prejudices against Islam. Hypothesis 3. A rational approach to conflict will be positively correlated with the secular critique of Islam. Hypothesis 4. Pro-Palestinism and pro-Israelism will be associated with right-wing authoritarianism. Hypothesis 5. Social dominance orientation will be positively linked to pro-Israelism and pro-Palestinism. Hypothesis 6. Pro-Palestinism will be partially explained by the personal tendency to feel empathy.

Method

In order to test the hypothesis, an online survey on a relatively large sample was conducted.

Participants

In the study, 376 responses were recorded – that is, the number of individuals who clicked on the link and answered a minimum of one question – but 186 of them were incomplete. The final sample of the study consisted of 190 participants (102 women, 87 men, 1 person who indicated the "other" gender option, aged 17 to 83 years, M_{age} = 32.73; SD_{age} = 14.68). Participants in the study were rural residents (21.6%), residents of cities up to 200,000 inhabitants (45.3%), of cities up to 500,000 inhabitants (7.9%) and of cities above 500,000 inhabitants (25.3%).

Procedure

An online survey was conducted using the surveymonkey platform. The participants first filled in a personal questionnaire followed by the RWA and SDO scales, the scale of Empathic Concern, the questionnaire of perception of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and, lastly, the three-factor scale of Antisemitism and the Islamophobia questionnaire. The order of the last two tools was rotated. The questionnaires were distributed among the students of the University of Warsaw, the Academy of Physical Education and the Warsaw School of Economics, as well as the users of thematic and regional forums on the Forum.

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gazeta.pl portal, ensuring that the questionnaire was published in thematic threads other than those in the case of Study 1.

Variables and Their Measurement

Pro-Israelism and *pro-Palestinism* were measured by the questionnaire of perception of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, consisting of three sub-scales: Pro-Israelism (PI), Pro-Palestinism (PP) and the Rational approach to conflict (RA). The respondents were asked to comment on twelve questions on a scale from 1 – *I strongly disagree* to 5 – *I strongly agree*. The psychometric properties of the sub-scales in this study were good or satisfactory: for the scale of pro-Israelism $\alpha = 0.85$; $M = 2.43$, $SD = 0.90$; for the pro-Palestinism $\alpha = 0.71$; $M = 2.45$, $SD = 0.83$; for the Rational approach to conflict $\alpha = 0.69$; $M = 3.88$, $SD = 0.86$.

Antisemitism was measured by a three-factor scale of Antisemitism (Bilewicz, Winiewski, Kofta, & Wójcik, 2013), inspired by previous concepts regarding Antisemitism, described in the literature. The three mentioned factors are: traditional Antisemitism, belief in Jewish conspiracy and secondary/modern Antisemitism. The respondents were asked to comment on twelve questions on a scale from 1 – *I strongly disagree* to 5 – *I strongly agree*. The psychometric properties of the scale are satisfactory: for the traditional Antisemitism $\alpha = 0.67$; $M = 2.06$; $SD = 0.99$; for the secondary Antisemitism $\alpha = 0.83$; $M = 3.55$; $SD = 3.14$ and for the belief in Jewish conspiracy $\alpha = 0.92$; $M = 3.15$; $SD = 1.08$.

Islamophobia. Anti-Muslim attitudes were measured by the questionnaire of Islamophobia by Imhoff and Recker (2012), translated by Bilewicz and colleagues (2014). The tool consists of two scales: Islamoprejudice, expressed by extremely negative attitudes towards the followers of Islam and Secular Critique of Islam, related to the non-negative attitudes of certain practices typical for this religion. The respondents were asked to comment on six questions on a scale from 1 – *I strongly disagree* to 5 – *I strongly agree*. The psychometric properties of the scale were satisfactory: for the Islamoprejudice scale $\alpha = 0.80$; $M = 3.07$; $SD = 1.18$; for the scale of Secular Critique of Islam $\alpha = 0.88$; $M = 4.10$; $SD = 0.88$.

Social dominance orientation (SDO) was measured by the SDO scale (Pratto, Sidanius, & Levin, 2006), translated by Bilewicz et al. (2014). The respondents answered five questions on a scale from 1 – *I strongly disagree* to 5 – *I strongly agree*. Psychometric properties of the scale used were satisfactory: $\alpha = 0.78$; $M = 2.43$, $SD = 0.82$.

Right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) was measured by the RWA scale (Altemeyer, 1998), translated by Bilewicz et al. (2014). This tool measures the tendency to be subordinate to authorities, as well as conventionalism, that is, the preference to follow accepted traditions. Respondents were asked to address six questions on a scale from 1 – *I strongly disagree* to 5 – *I strongly agree*. Psychometric properties of the scale were satisfactory: $\alpha = 0.72$; $M = 3.11$, $SD = 0.74$.

Empathy was measured by the Empathic Concern scale from the American Interpersonal Reactivity Index (Davis, 1983), translated to Polish. This scale is used to measure compassion for those who are in a worse position than ours and the tendency to react

emotionally to moving events. The participants were asked to address nine questions on a scale from 1 – *I strongly disagree* to 5 – *I strongly agree*. Despite the lack of full cultural adaptation of the tool, the reliability of the translated scale, measured by a Cronbach's α test, was satisfactory and equaled α = 0.83; *M* = 3.51, *SD* = 0.77.

Demographics. The participants were asked to fill in a short personal questionnaire with questions about their age, gender, place of residence, work status (student, worker) and political views, measured by two 7-point scale questions, where 1 meant either *strongly right-wing* or *strongly-conservative views*, and 7 either *definitely left-wing views* or *definitely liberal views*.

Results

In order to test the hypothesis of the study, a correlation matrix for all of the described variables was created, followed by a series of two-step regression analyses, with three dependent variables: PI, PP and RA. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was also conducted to confirm the structure of the questionnaire.

Relationships Between PI, PP, RA and Traditional Prejudices

Correlation analysis shows that pro-Palestinism scores are positively correlated with all three types of antisemitism, with the strongest relationship observed between PP and belief in Jewish conspiracy (see Table 3). When it comes to the scale of pro-Israelism, we did not observe any correlations between the Islamoprejudice scale as well as the Secular Critique of Islam. A statistically significant, positive, but rather small correlation was found between the answers in the Secular Critique of Islam scale and the Rational approach to conflict scale. In the case of right-wing authoritarianism, we observed a small positive correlation with the PP scale, whereas SDO was not related to any of the tested constructs. Moreover, we did not find any correlation between empathy and the results of PP scale.

When it comes to political attitudes, the most noticeable correlations were observed in the case of the RA scale – respondents declaring their political views as more leftist and liberal scored higher on this scale. Leftist attitudes were also positively related to the results of the PI scale.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that the obtained data structure for the questionnaire of perception of Israeli-Palestinian conflict was confirmed by means of Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). The test of model fitness proved to be significant $\chi^2(41) = 68.58$; $p = .004$. This may be due to the large sample size problem, which is widely described in the literature (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2014; Wheaton, Muthén, Alwin, & Summers, 1977). The relatively conservative criterion of interpretation (Wheaton et al., 1977) of the so-called relative Chi2 or Chi2 / *df* > 2 indicated a good fit and so did the other, more complex indexes of fitness: *CFI* = 0.95; RMSEA = 0.06 CI [0.03; 0.08].

Table 3

Intercorrelations of the Variables in Study 2

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Pro-Israelism												
2. Pro-Palestinism	-.19**											
3. Rational approach to conflict	-.05	-.34**										
4. Traditional Antisemitism	.06	.25**	-.22**									
5. Belief in Jewish conspiracy	-.18**	.42**	-.29**	.45**								
6. Modern Antisemitism	-.28**	.31**	-.17**	.31**	.72**							
7. Islamoprejudice	.06	-.02	-.11	.23**	.36**	.25**						
8. Secular Critique of Islam	.06	-.26**	.20**	-.23**	-.03	-.04	.18**					
9. RWA	.00	.18*	-.03	.13	.30**	.28**	.09	-.12				
10. SDO	-.04	-.07	-.12	.00	.13	.15*	.19*	-.15*	.01			
11. Empathic concern	.14†	.01	.16*	.02	-.06	-.08	-.03	.18*	.20**	-.30**		
12. Right-wing views – Left-wing views	.15*	-.1	.19**	-.18*	-.33**	-.39**	-.09	.23**	-.22**	-.24**	.17*	
13. Conservative-liberal attitudes	.06	-.09	.15*	-.11	-.18	-.27**	-.07	.25**	-.34**	-.11	.01	.53**

†$p < .06$. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

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Table 4

Regression Analysis for the DV's: Pro-Palestinism, Pro-Israelism and Rational Approach to Conflict

Measure	Pro-Palestinism		Pro-Israelism		Rational approach to conflict	
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2
SDO	-.06	-.09	-.01	.05	-.14†	-.05
RWA	.16*	-.01	-.02	.05	-.03	.03
Traditional Antisemitism		.04		.17*		-.08
Belief in Jewish conspiracy		.44**		-.12		-.30**
Modern Antisemitism		.03		-.30**		.11
Islamoprejudice		-.15*		.12		-.03
Secular Critique of Islam		-.16*		.02		.14
Empathic concern		.08		.08		.10
R^2	0.02	.21	0.00	.13	0.02	.14
F	2.50	7.23**	.04	2.50**	1.82	3.52**
ΔR^2		0.19		0.13		0.12
ΔF		8.60**		4.53**		4.02**

†$p < .06$. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

Regression Analysis

In order to assess the influence of traditional prejudice – Antisemitism and Islamophobia – on pro-Israelism and pro-Palestinism, we conducted a series of two-step regression analyses, treating PI, PP and RA as dependent variables (see Table 4). We entered RWA and SDO as predictors in the first step, and all three forms of Antisemitism, Islamoprejudice, Secular Critique of Islam and empathy as predictors in the second step.

As the results show, in the case of the PP variable, the belief in Jewish conspiracy turned out to be the strongest positive predictor, while anti-Muslim attitudes – both Islamoprejudice and Secular Critique of Islam – turned out to negatively predict the results of this scale. It is worth emphasizing that the whole model for the dependent variable PP explains quite a significant part of the variance.

As for the PI variable, secondary Antisemitism turned out to be the strongest negative predictor, while traditional Antisemitism was the strongest positive predictor. Interestingly, the model for the PI dependent variable explains a relatively smaller part of the variance than in the case of the PP dependent variable.

In the model for the RA variable, only conspiracy Antisemitism turned out to be a statistically significant, negative predictor. It is worth noting that the model for the RA dependent variable also explains a relatively smaller part of the variance in comparison to the model for the PP variable.

Discussion

The results of Study 2 are rather consistent with the results of previous studies (Cohen et al., 2009; Frindte et al., 2005; Kempf, 2010). Based on the results, we can conclude that at-

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titudes towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are at least partially shaped by anti-Jewish prejudices. People who believe that Jews secretly rule the world are more eager to express uncritical support for the behavior of the Palestinian side, and those who believe that Jews themselves are guilty of Antisemitism and the events of Second World War are much less inclined to support the actions of Israel.

Additionally, among those who present the most traditional Antisemitic prejudice, arguing, among other things, that contemporary Jews are responsible for the death of Jesus Christ, the probability of giving uncritical support to Israel is significantly higher. An explanation of this phenomenon may be related to the characteristics of traditional Antisemitism – these prejudices are said to be based on Christian religious beliefs. It is possible, therefore, that those who present such attitudes not only perceive the Jewish religion as culturally closer, but also, when formulating opinions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, rely greatly on the words written in the Old Testament, according to which Israel is the Promised Land for the Jews, in a way belonging to this nation. To test the validity of this hypothesis in subsequent studies, it would be worthwhile to include a measurement of social distance and the scale of the perceived similarity between Muslims and Christians as well as Jews and Christians.

At the same time, although it may seem that in the case of uncritical support for the Israeli side, anti-Muslim prejudice will play an important role, the study shows that they are not as important as Antisemitic attitudes. This may be due to the fact that anti-Muslim prejudices are more resistant to social approval – the expression of anti-Muslim attitudes in Polish society may be less exposed to social ostracism than in the case of Antisemitism.

The interpretation of pro-Palestinism as an attitude that is in fact a manifestation of anti-Israelism and pro-Israelism as a manifestation of anti-Palestinism is also worth commenting on. The results of Study 2 suggest that although pro-Palestinian attitudes can serve as a camouflage for rather socially unacceptable extreme anti-Israeli attitudes, as they are highly related to conspiracy Antisemitism, a similar statement cannot be made in the case of pro-Israeli attitudes. We did not notice any statistically significant relationship between pro-Israelism and Islamophobia. This result makes us wonder about the relationship between uncritical support and extreme critique for one or the other side of the conflict. In subsequent studies, it would be worthwhile to look at the relationship between these two types of attitudes.

The question of the lack of correlation between empathy scores and responses on the PP and PI scales is also worth considering. It would seem that if Palestine is actually perceived as a weaker party in this conflict, people with higher empathy levels will be more inclined to uncritically support all of the actions of this country. In the meantime, no relationship between empathy and the PI and PP scores has been reported. Of course this may be due to the fact that this study examined the personal, generalized tendency to be empathetic and compassionate, and not the specific tendency to sympathize with Palestine for its position in the conflict in the Middle East.

Based on this study we may also draw interesting conclusions about the relationship between right-wing authoritarianism and social dominance orientation and prejudice.

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Looking only at the correlations, RWA is more closely related to Antisemitism and to prejudice against Israel, manifested by uncritical support for Palestine, which is consistent with the results presented by Frindte and his colleagues (Frindte et al., 2005). Regression analysis shows, however, that the relationship between SDO, RWA and attitudes towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not relevant if we take into account Antisemitism and Islamophobia. Thus it can be stated that the relationship between SDO and RWA and attitudes towards the conflict is, in fact, the result of the relationship between personality traits and prejudice toward the parties involved in the conflict.

Undoubtedly, the described result may be an artifact related to the specifics of the tested sample. The undeniable limitation of the presented research is the lack of representativeness of the sample. Formulating far-reaching conclusions about the relationship between Antisemitism and uncritical support for Israel and Palestine is, therefore, unwise, firstly because of the selection process, and secondly, because the variance explained in the study is relatively small, suggesting that Antisemitism and Islamophobia play a certain, but not dominant role in the process of shaping attitudes toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In order to get a better understanding of the relationship between attitudes towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and traditional prejudice, SDO and RWA, Study 2 should be replicated on a representative sample. Furthermore, looking at the fact that the explained variance is relatively higher in the regression model with pro-Palestinism as a dependent variable in comparison to the two other dependent variables, we should be very cautious when formulating conclusions about the latter. Among the limitations of the study we should also mention the lack of cultural adaptation of the empathy scale. Although the psychometric values of this tool, used in the study, were satisfactory, it would be worthwhile to replicate the study with an appropriately adapted scale.

The almost complete absence of a relationship between political views and attitudes towards the conflict may also be surprising. While it may seem that people with right-wing views would be more inclined to support Israel, and those leaning left would rather advocate for Palestine, the data from the study do not confirm these predictions, and even deny them to a small degree, in the case of pro-Israelism. This can be explained by the relationship between the uncritical opinions about Israeli politics and Antisemitism, which, as a form of prejudice, is rejected from the perspective of the leftist worldview.

General Discussion

The presented studies show that the issue of attitudes toward Israel and Palestine is more complex than it might seem at first glance. First of all, according to the presented research, pro-Israelism and pro-Palestinism seem to be two relatively independent dimensions of conflict perception. This means that supporting the Israeli side of the Middle Eastern conflict does not necessarily mean criticizing Palestine, and vice versa. This fact deserves consideration in the context of future research focused on the perception of so-called intractable conflicts (Bar-Tal, 2007). The constructed scale suggests that the Israeli-Palestinian

conflict, which is said to be of a zero-one sum type of conflict, is not necessarily perceived as such. Consequently, it seems that the expression of anti-Jewish attitudes may also be independent from the expression of anti-Muslim opinions. In light of these findings, the examples cited in the introduction are not so surprising anymore.

It is also worth noting that the relationship between attitudes toward the conflict and Antisemitism and Islamophobia is not as clear as one might suspect. First and foremost, it should be emphasized that anti-Israeli attitudes are expressed not by criticism of Israel, but rather by uncritical support for Palestine – which is mainly apparent in the content layer of questions that eventually formed the scale in the questionnaire of the perception of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but also in the results of the regression analysis. It seems, therefore, that the attitudes toward Israel might not only be a camouflage for socially unacceptable anti-Jewish prejudice, but, more importantly, that this is a double camouflage, where Antisemitism is expressed not by criticism of Israel's actions, but by uncritical support for Palestine.

This result has implications. First of all it indicates that the situation in the Middle East is so complex and ambiguous that the study of attitudes towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict requires not only accurate and multilevel data analysis, but also caution when drawing conclusions. Secondly, it means that the relationship between Antisemitism and criticism of Israel is certainly not as straightforward as suggested by Forster and Epstein (1974).

There is no doubt, however, that attitudes towards Israel and the Middle East are at least partially shaped by Antisemitism, with belief in a Jewish conspiracy playing the biggest role. In future research, it would be worthwhile to investigate how uncritical support for one or the other side of the conflict is related to factual knowledge about the situation in the Middle East and to what extent that it is a matter of expressing opinions, not based on any knowledge, and probably motivated by anti-Jewish prejudice. In addition, it is worth considering why anti-Muslim prejudice does not seem as important when constructing the perception of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as Antisemitism, and whether this lack of relationship occurs only in the Polish society. The research presented in this paper is only a first attempt to explain the relationship between Antisemitism and anti-Israelism, and anti-Palestinism and Islamophobia. The results of the study suggest that the constructed scale is an additional, indirect measure of Antisemitic prejudice, which may be especially useful in examining social groups for which the expression of this kind of prejudice is associated with particular ostracism. In future research it would be fruitful to try to explain the direction of the relationship between the uncritical support of Israel and Palestine, and Antisemitism and Islamophobia. In other words, it would be good to see whether traditional anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim prejudices lead to greater support for one or the other side of the conflict, or whether it is the support of the political actions of a given state that leads to the increase in the level of prejudice. It seems, however, that the claim that the unreasonable support for Israel or Palestine can be seen as new clothes for traditional prejudices is an exaggeration, and the exact nature of this relationship should be explained in future research.

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Supplementary Materials

Data for this article are available at PsychArchives: https://doi.org/10.23668/psycharchives.787

Funding

Competing Interests

The authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

Acknowledgments

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