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Journal of Peace Research, Vol. 35, No. 6. (Nov., 1998), pp. 723-742.

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The Rocky Road Toward Peace: Beliefs on Conflict in Israeli Textbooks*

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Since the late 1970s, the Israeli–Arab conflict has become less intractable and in recent years the Middle East has changed beyond recognition. The present research attempts to discover whether the changes in the nature of Israeli–Arab relations are followed by complementary changes in the conflict’s ethos of Israeli society as reflected in school textbooks. One hundred and twenty-four textbooks on Hebrew language and literature (readers), history, geography and civic studies, approved for use in the school system (elementary, junior-high, and high schools in the secular and religious sectors) by the Ministry of Education in March 1994, were content analyzed. The analysis examined the extent to which the textbooks presented societal beliefs reflecting ethos of conflict: societal beliefs of security, positive self-image, victimization, delegitimization of the opponent, unity, and peace. The findings do not reveal a unified picture. Textbooks, subject matters, level of schools and sectors differ in their emphasis on the investigated societal beliefs. The analysis shows that societal beliefs of security received most emphasis; subsequently, the societal beliefs of positive self-image and Jews victimization appeared. Societal beliefs of unity and of peace appeared infrequently. Finally, the analysis shows a very rare delegitimization of Arabs, but the majority of books stereotype Arabs negatively. These findings are discussed in the framework of the required changes in the societal ethos that must accompany the peace process which has dramatically altered the nature of Israeli–Arab relations.

Societal Beliefs in the Israeli–Arab Conflict

Since the late 1970s, the Israeli–Arab conflict has become less intractable and has moved on to the rocky road leading to peace. The peace agreement with Egypt and the events following the Madrid conference in 1991 have changed the Middle East beyond

recognition. The present study poses the following research question: in Israeli society, how dominating are the societal beliefs of ethos functional for successful coping with intractable conflict, which fuel its continuation, when the peace process is well under way? This question is of crucial importance because political change has to be accompanied by the evolvement of societal beliefs to support it. I answer it by analyzing Israeli school textbooks in use in the school year 1994–95, which are assumed to express the leading societal beliefs of the ethos. First, however, the article will discuss the nature of intractable conflict and the societal beliefs which emerged in order to cope with it successfully. Subsequently, a

*The study reported in this paper was supported by a grant from NCJW Research Institute for Innovation in Education, School of Education, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The author expresses his deepest gratitude to Karmit Hadas and Guy Asharov, who helped to carry out the content analysis of the school textbooks. A list of the content-analyzed books and a longer version of this article, as well as the data analyzed, are available from the author: Daniel Bar-Tal, School of Education, Tel-Aviv University, Tel Aviv 69978, Israel.

study that analyzed the reflection of these societal beliefs in Israeli school textbooks will be reported.

Intractable conflicts are defined as being protracted, irreconcilable, violent, of zero-sum nature, total and central, and parties involved have an interest in their continuation (see Azar et al., 1978; Bar-Tal, 1998a; Goertz & Diehl, 1993; Kriesberg, 1995); they are demanding, stressful, painful, exhausting, and costly both in human and material terms. This requires that society members develop conditions which enable successful coping. Examples of such conditions are devotion to the society and country, high motivation to contribute, persistence, readiness for personal sacrifice, unity, solidarity, determination, courage, maintenance of the society's objectives, and endurance (Bar-Tal, 1998a).

Societal beliefs fulfill an important role in the formation of the psychological conditions for successful coping with intractable conflict. Societal beliefs are society members' shared cognitions on topics and issues of special concern for their society and contribute to their sense of uniqueness. They are part of society's ethos (Bar-Tal, 1998b). These beliefs construct society members' views of the conflict and motivate them to act. Thus, they provide the informational and motivational base that are of crucial importance for societal action. Members of society have to believe in certain ideas to bear the stress and hardship of intractable conflict, and they must be motivated to act on behalf of the society in times of threat. In this conceptual framework, eight societal beliefs were suggested to serve as a kind of ideology of conflict.

Societal beliefs about the justness of one's own goals deal with the reasons, explanations and rationales of the goals which lead to the conflict and, foremost, justify their crucial importance. They motivate the members of society to struggle and fight for these goals

and to endure and bear the sacrifices, losses, stresses, and costs of the intractable conflict.

Societal beliefs about security stress the importance of personal safety and national survival, and outline the conditions for their achievement. Thus, beliefs about military conditions which allow maintenance of security, including heroism on the part of the soldiers, are essential for a society engaged in intractable violent conflict which involves violence in the form of hostile acts and wars. They give security a high priority, serve as a rationale for personal and societal decisions and actions, mobilize the members of society for active participation in the conflict, and forge them to live in stressful conditions.

Societal beliefs of positive self-image concern the ethnocentric tendency to attribute positive traits, values, and behavior to own society. In times of intractable conflict, special effort is made to propagate on the one hand characteristics related to courage, heroism, or endurance and on the other hand characteristics related to humaneness, morality, fairness, trustworthiness, and progress. These characteristics are presented in contrast to those of the enemy permitting a clear differentiation between the two parties. Moreover, these beliefs supply moral strength and a sense of own superiority.

Societal beliefs of own victimization concern self-presentation as a victim, especially in the context of the intractable conflict. The focus of these beliefs is on the unjust harm, evil deeds, and atrocities perpetrated by the adversary. They provide the moral incentive to seek justice and oppose the opponent as well as allowing mobilization of moral, political, and material support of the international community.

Societal beliefs of delegitimizing the opponent concern beliefs which deny the adversary's humanity. Through dehumanization, extreme negative trait characteriz-

ation, outcasting, use of political negative labels, and negative group comparison, a society categorizes the opponent 'into extreme negative social categories which are excluded from human groups that are considered as acting within limits of acceptable norms and/or values' (Bar-Tal, 1989: 170). These beliefs explain the causes of the conflict's outbreak, its continuation, and the violence of the opponent. They also justify of own hostile acts.

Societal beliefs of patriotism generate attachment to the country and society, by propagating loyalty, love, care, and sacrifice (Bar-Tal, 1993). Patriotic beliefs increase cohesiveness and dedication, and serve an important function for mobilizing the members of society to participate actively in the conflict and endure hardship and difficulties.

Societal beliefs of unity refer to the importance of ignoring internal conflicts and disagreements during intractable conflict in order to unite the forces in the face of the external threat. These beliefs strengthen the society from within, develop a consensus and feelings of belonging, increase solidarity, and allow the direction of society's forces and energy towards coping with the enemy.

Finally, *societal beliefs of peace* refer to peace as the ultimate desire of the society. They present peace as an ultimate goal of the society, and its members as peace-loving. Such beliefs have the role of inspiring hope and optimism. They strengthen positive self-image and contribute to empathic self-presentation to the outside world.

These societal beliefs can be found in societies engaged in intractable conflict, especially those that successfully cope with it. They are far from being sufficient to win a conflict, but they are necessary to endure it.

The Israeli–Arab conflict has been going on for about 100 years, reaching its

most intractable phase from the late 1940s to the early 1970s (Azar et al., 1978; Sandler, 1988). In these violent years, societal beliefs functional for coping with intractable conflict were – intentionally and unintentionally – propagated in Israeli society. Eventually, they became part of the Israeli ethos, and language, symbols, myths, and collective memories were constructed around them (Kimmerling, 1984; Liebman & Don Yehiya, 1983; Lissak, 1984; Zerubavel, 1995). I assume that a similar process took place in Arab societies also, but the present analysis focuses on Israel.

Textbook Analysis

School textbooks transmit the societal ethos from generation to generation (Apple, 1979; Bourdieu, 1973) acting 'as the interface between the officially state-adopted and sanctioned knowledge of the culture, and the learner' (Luke, 1988: 64). Textbooks construct the social reality of the students. They enforce the self-perception values of a society, or more accurately its dominant elite, required norms, societal goals, nature of relations with different outgroups, stereotypes of other groups (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991; Meyer, 1977; Paquett, 1991; Rothstein, 1991).

School textbooks are perceived by students as authoritative and factual, and teachers rely on them to organize their lectures and to test students' learning. For many students, textbooks are their first and sometimes only exposure to certain areas of knowledge, and social and educational researchers have often looked to them for the dominating values of a society (Anyon, 1979; DeCharms & Moeller, 1962; Ichilov, 1993; McClelland, 1961; Selden, 1987, Wiberg & Bloom, 1970).

Textbooks in Israel are based on curricula developed by the Ministry of Education and

Culture which outlines the didactic, scholastic, and societal objectives. In the early years, the Ministry of Education openly declared that one of the main objectives of the educational system was to shape national views of the schools' students (Eden, 1976:11). School textbooks from this period transmitted an ethos of conflict, particularly through textbooks in history, geography, literature, and Hebrew. Four comprehensive studies of early Israeli textbooks reach very similar conclusions:

Firer (1985) showed that history textbooks during the 1950s and 1960s were used to present the justifications for the Jewish people's claims on the land. The basic justification referred to the historical origin of the Jews in the land of Israel (*Eretz Israel*) where they formed their nation and lived for many centuries until they were forcibly exiled. The same textbooks denied Arab rights to land through the delegitimization of Arabs, the denial of a national Arab movement and the refusal to recognize a Palestinian entity.

Similarly, Bezalel (1989) found that Hebrew readers focused on two main justifications with regard to the national goals. One pertained to the 'general human right to a homeland', in view of the persecutions suffered in exile. This line presented 'the Zionist-pioneering solution, which dominated Zionism in Europe as the only and right solution to the existential dangers of Jews in the exile' (Bezalel, 1989: 314). The other justification was based on the historical ties between the Jews and the land of Israel 'because of our ancestors' rights, ... and continuous Jewish settlement in the country during all the years' (Bezalel, 1989: 315).

Bar-Gal (1993) found that geography textbooks were also dominated by an emphasis on nationalist values, presenting 'the glory of the ancient past the destruction and negligence when the people went to

exile, and renewal and revival of the landscape with the help of the Zionist movement' (Bar-Gal, 1993: 150). This justified the return of the Jews to their homeland, successfully turning the swamps and desert into blossoming land. The Arabs, on the other hand, neglected the country, did not cultivate the land, and were characterized by primitivism and backwardness. In direct negative stereotyping, Arabs featured as: 'unenlightened, inferior, fatalistic, unproductive, apathetic, with the need of a strong paternalism ... They are divided, tribal, exotic, people of the backward East, poor, sick, dirty, noisy, colored ... And they do burn, murder, destroy, are easily inflamed, and vengeful' (Bar-Gal, 1993: 189). Positive traits such as hospitality, combativeness, and hard work mainly depended on collaboration with the Zionist enterprise. The books absolutely ignored the tragedy of the Arabs experienced during the war of 1948–49.

History textbooks used during the years 1948–67 also presented the Arabs very negatively (Firer, 1985) – as primitive, hostile to Jews, violent, and easily agitated. Zohar (1972) found that Hebrew readers used in the 1950s and 1960s, mostly referred to Arabs (including Israeli citizens) as a collective, and rarely included the description of particular individuals. Arab societies were seen as primitive and backward and the Arabs as enemies (Zohar, 1972: 72). The readers tended to describe the acts of Arabs as hostile and cruel, immoral, unfair, with the intention to hurt Jews and to annihilate the State of Israel. Within this frame of reference, Arabs were delegitimized, by the use of, for example, such negative labels as 'robbers', 'wicked ones', 'blood thirsty mob', 'killers', gangs or rioters. Jews, on the other hand, were presented in a very positive light. All violent acts had been forced on the Jews, who were in quantitative inferiority, but who nevertheless were presented as winning

most hostile encounters because of their determination and bravery. Jews were also described as more advanced, educated, and industrious as well as moral, human, and fair.

All the history textbooks presented a picture of the Jewish people as victims of anti-Semitism. Jewish history was presented as an unbroken sequence of pogroms, special taxation, libel, and forced conversion, with the Holocaust forming its climax. In the words of Firer, 'The dominant approach in the books is that the hatred against Jews is eternal with only its external manifestation changing according to periods' (Firer, 1985: 57). These textbooks transmitted intensively negative attitudes towards the non-Jewish world, with negative stereotypes and offensive names to the '*goyim*'.

History textbooks emphasized the uniqueness of the Jewish people in surviving the persecution, their moral and cultural superiority, and the exceptionality of the nationalist Zionist movement. Some textbooks referred to Jews as 'the chosen people' and even 'the pure race'.

Geography textbooks during the same period attempted to nourish love of the country by describing it as beautiful and the pioneers who settled it as devoted Zionists. The books glorified the immense sacrifices of the pioneers. They were portrayed as dedicated, industrious and brave laborers who drained the swamps, cultivated the land, built Jewish settlements, and defended themselves successfully against Arab violence.

These four studies show that the Israeli educational system attempted to inculcate societal beliefs in a manner approaching indoctrination. These societal beliefs about the justness of own goals, and about the importance of security – beliefs that delegitimized Arabs, while allowing positive self-presentation, beliefs about self-victimization – played an important role in

the struggle with the Arabs, and supported the development of psychological coping conditions.

Changing the Nature of the Israeli–Arab Conflict

Since the mid-1970s the Israeli–Arab conflict has started on its long way toward a solution, through such milestones as the 1979 Camp David accord and the Israeli–Egyptian peace agreement, the 1991 Madrid conference, the 1993 Oslo agreement between the Israelis and Palestinians, the 1994 peace treaty with Jordan, and the ongoing negotiations between Israel and Syria. While the conflict between some Arab countries and Israel continues, the days of intractable conflict are over. Israel is moving through a transitional period towards an era of acceptance and recognition by most of its Arab neighbors.

The societal beliefs which are functional for coping with intractable conflict also contribute to its continuation. They support far-fetched and uncompromising goals, ways and means for perpetuation of the conflict, and they foster perceptions of self and of the adversary which are detrimental to peaceful conflict resolution. These beliefs are part of the vicious cycles of violence which characterize intractable conflicts. It is therefore imperative that a peace process also involves a change of those societal beliefs which inhibit it, and especially a change of beliefs related to the justness of own goals, delegitimization of the opponent, and to the peace process.

The present study examines the extent to which textbooks, used at the height of the peace process, still reflect societal beliefs that support the intractable conflict. The study undertook quantitative content analysis of books used for Hebrew, history, geography, and civic studies with regard to their presentation of the following six clusters of societal

beliefs: security, self-image, victimization, delegitimization of the opponent, unity, and peace.¹ This is the first study that purposely examines the reflection of the societal beliefs of the conflictual ethos in school textbooks. It determines whether the school textbooks express the changes that have taken place in the nature of Israeli–Arab relations and whether they prepare the Israeli youngsters to relate to the new Middle East in accordance with the new political reality.

Method

One hundred and twenty-four school textbooks were content analyzed to examine the extent to which they expressed the six beliefs mentioned above. These books were drawn from the list of approved textbooks for use in the Israeli educational system (elementary, junior-high, and high schools in the secular and the religious sectors) for the study year of 1994–95, published by the Ministry of Education and Culture in March 1994. The study included textbooks in the Hebrew language and literature (i.e. readers), history, geography, and civic studies (see Tables I to IV for the detailed description of distribution according to subject matter and type of schools). The analyzed books included approximately 95% of the approved books. We have no data regarding the extent of use of each book because schools are free to choose from the approved list. However, an informal inquiry to the three largest text suppliers in Tel Aviv and to the general inspectors of the relevant subjects provided a list of popular books, all of which were included. It should be noted that the approved books were published in

different years throughout the last two decades.

Coding Belief

The textbooks were coded according to six societal beliefs:

Beliefs of Security References to military activities carried out by Jews, heroic acts performed by Jews, functionality of an army, conditions for maintaining it, and formation and maintenance of institutions and organizations whose function is to ensure security.

Beliefs of Positive Self-Image References to heroic acts by Jews, positive acts by Jews, their positive qualities and uniqueness.

Beliefs of Jews' Victimization References to the persecution of Jews and to harm done to them by other nations, or attempts to harm them, as well as references to prejudice against Jews and anti-Semitism.

Beliefs of Arabs' Delegitimization References to labels which put Arabs in extremely negative terms as a group not worthy of humane treatment.

Beliefs of Unity References to Jewish unity, including the cost of division and disagreement.

Beliefs of Peace References to Israel's love of and yearning for peace, the nature of peace, and attempts to resolve the Israel–Arab conflict peacefully.

For each belief, the references were classified into four categories:

None: No reference in the book was found to a particular belief.

Few: Between one to five references to a particular belief were found in the book.

Some: Over five references to a particular belief were detected in the book. But

¹ Two societal beliefs were omitted. Beliefs about the justness of own goals constitute the major theme in almost all the books, and beliefs about patriotism overlapped to a large extent with the beliefs called security, positive self-image, and unity.

although the particular belief may dominate a chapter, it does not dominate most of the chapters.

Much: The particular belief dominates (i.e. there is frequent reference to it) either the whole book or the chapters which concern Jewish history, the State of Israel or Jewish society.

Approximately 30% of the books were coded by two graduate students, with 93% intercoder agreement.

The Readers

Readers constitute a collection of literary texts, frequently with commentaries by the editor. First-grade readers were analyzed separately because the text was more limited in content.

First Grade Two thirds of these readers introduce the reality of the Israeli-Arab conflict at this early school stage (Table I). In each reader, there are several pieces referring to soldiers, their mission, and a suspected object which may be a bomb planted by a terrorist, or to an orphan whose father died in a war. In three readers, there is at least one reference to peace, in the form of a wish, hope, or a prayer. One reader includes a story about friendship between Jewish and Arab boys. Only one reader refers to all six examined societal beliefs. It presents one of the most important symbols of the Jewish society in Israel – the Tel Hai story, which describes the heroic defence of a settlement by a handful of Jews against crowds of Arab attacks and the fall of the commander.

Elementary School Whereas first-grade readers only occasionally or rarely refer to conflict-related societal beliefs, readers used in higher grades extend their preoccupation with these beliefs considerably. However, analysis of the grade 2–6 readers in secular elementary schools reveals considerable vari-

ation in this regard (Table I). Of the six societal beliefs, two relating to security and of victimization are relatively frequently presented. Of the twenty readers, four do not refer to societal beliefs of security, while in eleven this is a prominent theme. Some readers glorify heroism; others deal with human losses and bereavement, notably soldiers killed in hostile actions. Many stories glorify the Israeli army. Some of the readers include beliefs which express the basic symbols of security in the context of the Israeli-Arab conflict. Examples include: 'Israel's heroism runs through all the generations', 'The homeland should be defended', and 'Our dream is to die for our people'. It should be noted that these described societal beliefs about security also nourish patriotism. They pertain to the love of the country, loyalty and even readiness for sacrifice in its defence, and the heroes presented serve as patriotic models for the children.

Another leading theme is the victimization of the Jews. Of nineteen readers used in elementary secular school only six do not deal with this theme. In their preoccupation with victimization, the readers present the continuity of this phenomenon throughout the Jewish history, some going all the way back to ancient Egypt. The victimization of the Jews is also presented in the context of the Israeli-Arab conflict in stories of Jews who return to their homeland to lead a normal and peaceful life and to re-establish their state, but are harassed, attacked, and murdered by Arabs. In the words of one reader, describing the first settlements in the Galilee, 'We were lonely . . . pioneers surrounded by a sea of enemies and murderers'. It is always the Arabs who initiate violence against the Jews, who consequently are forced to defend themselves.

Most elementary secular school readers have at least one story which explicitly focuses on the positive image of Jewish Israelis. Jews are described as cultivating the

Table I. Frequency of References to the Six Societal Beliefs in the School Readers Used in 1994-95

<i>Type of School</i>	<i>Security</i>			<i>Positive Self-Image</i>			<i>Jews' Victimization</i>			<i>Arabs' Delegitimization</i>			<i>Unity</i>			<i>Peace</i>								
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4				
<i>Secular</i>																								
Elementary	3	6	-	-	8	1	-	-	8	1	-	-	9	-	-	-	8	1	-	-	6	3	-	-
1st Grade (9 readers)																								
2nd to 6th Grades (20 readers)	4	5	11	5	7	7	6	-	7	7	6	2	14	6	-	-	15	.					2	-
Junior High (13 readers)	3	6	4	2	5	6	1	1	2	9	2	-	10	3	-	-	11	.					-	-
<i>Religious</i>																								
Elementary (11 readers)	1	-	10	4	1	6	4	-	2	3	6	3	4	7	-	-	8	3	-	-	/	4	-	-
Junior High	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-

1 = No reference was found; 2 = up to five references to a theme were found; 3 = over five references to a theme were found; 4 = a theme was found to dominate a book.

land and as heroic and brave fighters; moreover, they are depicted as progressive, helpful, peace-loving, determined, and educated. The positive description of Jews contrasts with the description of Arabs. Although only six readers present specific delegitimizing labels, most of the books stereotype Arabs negatively. However, most of the readers have very few pieces about Arabs or Jewish–Arab relations, and even when they do the references to Arabs are latent in the context of the Israeli–Arab conflict, while the textual fragment focuses on the Jews.

Some readers also contain positive images of Arabs. These all are at the interpersonal level and describe friendship between a Jew and an Arab or how an Arab helped a Jew. In most of these stories the Arab is a low-status person. Positive images of Arabs are also conveyed in stories focusing on the way of life of individual Arabs.

Explicit reference to unity is rare in the Hebrew language readers used in elementary secular school. The inculcation of unity is achieved through numerous more indirect references to common tradition, history, and origin, from which children can construct the boundaries of unity.

Finally, only two readers used in secular elementary schools devote a chapter to the subject of peace, and two other readers mention peace, briefly. In general, peace is described rather vaguely, for example by referring to it in utopian terms. Only one story refers to peace with Egypt, symbolized by the visit of President Sadat in Jerusalem.

In general, the readers used in the religious elementary schools present the societal beliefs functional to the intractable conflict in ways that are similar to the approach used in secular elementary schools. But these beliefs receive a more prominent place in the religious readers and the societal beliefs are presented through several new contents. The religious elementary readers devote consider-

able attention to societal beliefs concerning security and victimization. As in the case of secular readers, the descriptions of heroism are a major constituent of security beliefs. The texts presenting the societal beliefs of Jews' victimization extend the scope of the historical periods. Several of these readers present a gloomy picture of Jewish relations with Gentiles, dominated by the persecution and oppression of Jews.

On the few occasions where Arabs are mentioned, they are presented as the enemy. Several religious readers even include delegitimizing labels such as 'rioters', 'blood thirsty', or 'wild mob'. Still, several readers also include stories which describe positive relations between Jews and Arabs, in the form of friendship between a Jew and an Arab or Arabs' help to Jews.

Junior High School Readers used in junior high schools differ considerably from those employed in the elementary schools. Their objective is to introduce the students to literary works. In general, these textbooks include less reference to the six societal beliefs than do the elementary readers.

Similar to the elementary school readers, the junior high school readers refer relatively more to societal beliefs about security and about victimization (see Table I). Only two readers refer to unity and three readers relate to peace. Dealing with the societal beliefs about security and victimization, the focus is almost entirely on the victimization and heroism during the Holocaust and in the context of the conflict with the Arabs. Many of the readers include special chapters which deal with these themes.

A major difference with the elementary school readers occurs with regard to the presentation of Arabs. Although there are very few cases of delegitimization and Arabs are still often stereotyped negatively (mostly as uneducated people and enemies who initiate the violence), some pieces introduce a com-

pletely new image of Arabs – one which was absent from elementary school readers. These readers include stories written by Arab writers that describe Arabs as humane individuals in their everyday life. The readers also include a number of stories by Israeli Jewish writers who describe Arabs humanely and sympathetically.

History Textbooks

Not all the history textbooks refer to Arabs in general or to the Israeli–Arab conflict, because they describe the long history of humankind in general, and the history of the Jewish people in particular.

Elementary School Ten history textbooks in use at secular elementary schools were content analyzed. Table II shows that many of these books stressed societal beliefs of security and positive self-image. Forty percent of the books made some reference to unity and 20% referred to Jews' victimization. In 20% of the books, at least one reference was found to a societal belief of delegitimizing Arabs.

The history textbooks of the elementary secular schools that were studied fall into two categories. Six books covering the pre-state Jewish history in Israel describe the life of the Jewish pioneers in Palestine at the end of the 19th century and in the early 20th century. Almost all these books draw a patriotic picture of pioneers who make their living by cultivating desolate land, and who defend themselves against the attacks of Arabs. Four books dedicated to early Jewish history include themes relating to beliefs about security, positive self-image, and importance of unity, as well as about Jews' victimization. As regards security beliefs, the books greatly emphasize the heroic acts of Jews in wars throughout ancient Jewish Israel. The textbooks also develop the image of Jewish victimhood from the earliest stages of Jewish history, starting with the descrip-

tion of the first exile in Babylon and rising to prominence in the chapters describing the Greek and Roman occupation in ancient history. Persecutions of Jews on religious grounds are also stressed.

Junior High School The history textbooks of the secular junior high schools cover a long period of Jewish and world history beginning with ancient Rome and ending with modern times. Despite the wide range of periods covered, one theme emerges as absolutely dominant in six of the books that focus on Jewish history – this is the theme of Jews' victimization (see Table II). The history books describe the Jews as being constant and continuous victims, wherever they are. Jews suffer religious persecutions, libels, pogroms, expulsions, punitive taxations, forced conversion, torture, and executions. Other books continue to present the victimization of Jews in modern times, especially in pre-state Israel. One book analyzes modern anti-Semitism as a basis for the evolution of the Zionist movement, one book describes the genocide of the Jews during War World II, and two books present the victimization of the Jewish settlement in Palestine during the pre-state period by the Turks, the British, and especially by the Arabs.

The latter two books present a very negative picture of the Arabs. Arabs are presented as continuously plotting against Jews, from the very beginning of the Jewish return to Palestine. They are shown to object to Jewish immigration, bother Jewish pioneers, murder them, and carry out pogroms. The books do present the Palestinian national aspirations, albeit as an uncompromising and extreme position. The books describe the Arab people as being forced and agitated by extreme leadership which leads them to violence, e.g. 'In order to stoke the fire of the rebellion and prevent compromises they used internal terror. An Arab who was known as a moderate was killed'.

Table II. Frequency of References to the Six Societal Beliefs in History School Textbooks Used in 1994-95

Type of School	Security			Positive Self-Image			Jews' Victimization			Arabs' Delegitimization			Unity			Peace								
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4				
<i>Secular</i>																								
Elementary (10 books)	1	2	2	5	2	1	4	3	1	5	4	-	8	2	-	-	6	-	4	-	9	1	-	-
Junior High (8 books)	2	2	2	2	1	1	4	2	1	-	2	5	6	2	-	-	2	3	2	1	6	2	-	-
High School (14 books)	7	-	3	4	3	1	9	1	1	4	2	7	11	3	-	-	9	2	1	2	13	1	-	-
<i>Religious</i>																								
Elementary (1 book)	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-
Junior High (4 books)	1	-	-	3	-	1	-	3	-	-	-	4	4	-	-	-	-	1	1	2	4	-	-	-
High School (3 books)	-	1	-	2	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	3	3	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	3	-	-	-

1 = No reference was found; 2 = up to five references to a theme were found; 3 = over five references to a theme were found; 4 = a theme was found to dominate a book.

In contrast to Arabs, Jews in the context of the Israeli–Arab conflict are presented in very positive light. They are described as hard-working, peaceful, and moral people who are forced to defend themselves, which they do with courage and determination. One book summarizes this view explicitly: ‘They [the Arabs] are extremists and we are moderates: They murder indiscriminately and we defend ourselves. They violate laws and we obey laws.’

The four history textbooks for the religious junior high school cover different historical periods. In three textbooks, four of the six investigated societal beliefs receive a very prominent place (societal beliefs of security, positive self-image, victimization and unity).

High School Twelve of the fourteen history textbooks for the secular high school concentrate on the last two centuries. The following results of the analysis regarding the investigated societal beliefs, as shown in Table II, are based on books, or chapters, which deal with Jewish history.

Our analysis shows, as with the other history books, that the theme of Jews’ victimization predominates, with much of the material dedicated to Jewish suffering as a result of persecutions. Another salient theme in Jewish history books pertains to security beliefs. This is reflected in numerous descriptions of the heroism of Jews in their struggle to defend themselves and the land during both their ancient and new history. Similar to the other textbooks, and in contrast to the positive image of the Jews, the history textbooks of the secular high schools stereotype the Arabs negatively in the context of the Israeli–Arab conflict. Arabs are presented as intransigent in their opposition to the Jews and in their refusal to accept a reasonable compromise to end the conflict. They attack Jews, organize strikes, and carry out pogroms and riots in which

agitated crowds participate. They refuse to recognize the newly established State of Israel and continue to perform hostile acts against it.

Geography School Textbooks

The analysis of geography school textbooks included only those books which deal either with *Eretz Israel* (Land of Israel) or with the Middle East, since it is mainly these books that carry references to the investigated societal beliefs.

Elementary School Of the ten textbooks analyzed, seven describe different geographical regions of Israel, one focuses on the relations between Jews and Arabs and two describe the geography of the Middle East. The books differ greatly in their reference to the six societal beliefs. As Table III shows, in none of the books do these beliefs feature in a major way.

Two of the textbooks, while dealing with geography, also describe events in ancient history and concerning the Israeli–Arab violent conflict. They refer to heroic acts of Jews and emphasize territorial factors in ensuring the security of the land. These two books present the Jews both as victims and as heroes: from the beginning of their history Jews suffered as their country was overrun by powerful enemies and in modern times Arabs initiated hostile acts. Both books also stereotype Arabs negatively. In contrast, Jews are presented as bringing progress and modernity to Arabs. They helped the Arabs develop villages in Galilee after the 1948–49 war, bring water and electricity, introduce modern agriculture, and develop an educational system. Similarly, two books describe Israel’s help in the Gaza Strip following its conquest in the Six Day War: Jews helped to develop agriculture and improve public service. Five other books, in describing regions of Israel, make few references to societal beliefs of security or victim-

Table III. Frequency of References to the Six Societal Beliefs in the Geography Textbooks Used in 1994–95

<i>Type of School</i>	<i>Security</i>				<i>Positive Self-Image</i>				<i>Jews' Victimization</i>				<i>Arabs' Delegitimization</i>				<i>Unity</i>				<i>Peace</i>			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Elementary (10 books)	2	6	2	–	7	1	2	–	4	5	1	–	9	1	–	–	10	–	–	–	6	4	–	–
Junior High (5 books)	1	1	3	–	2	3	–	–	1	3	1	–	5	–	–	–	5	–	–	–	5	–	–	–
High School (5 books)	1	1	2	1	2	2	1	–	2	2	–	1	4	1	–	–	5	–	–	–	3	1	1	–

1 = No reference was found; 2 = up to five references to a theme were found; 3 = over five references to a theme were found; 4 = a theme was found to dominate a book.

Table IV. Frequency of References to the Six Societal Beliefs in the Civic Studies Textbooks Used in 1994–95

<i>Type of School</i>	<i>Security</i>				<i>Positive Self-Image</i>				<i>Jews' Victimization</i>				<i>Arabs' Delegitimization</i>				<i>Unity</i>				<i>Peace</i>			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Elementary (2 books)	2	–	–	–	1	1	–	–	2	–	–	–	2	–	–	–	2	–	–	–	2	–	–	–
Junior High (4 books)	–	1	3	–	1	2	1	–	2	2	–	–	4	–	–	–	3	–	1	–	4	–	–	–
High School (4 books)	2	–	–	2	2	–	–	2	1	1	–	2	3	1	–	–	4	–	–	–	2	–	–	2

1 = No reference was found; 2 = up to five references to a theme were found; 3 = over five references to a theme were found; 4 = a theme was found to dominate a book.

ization in the context of either ancient historic events or the Israeli–Arab conflict. Three of these five books refer to peace. One book, for example, writes about the likely economic benefits of peace. In its introduction, the author states that the book’s aim is ‘to offer you the students an opportunity to learn about other people and to get to know them more intimately through common meetings and trips’ (p. 4). This is an exceptional book which also describes the life of Arabs in Israel, and Jewish–Arab relations from the Arab perspective.

Junior High School Five geography textbooks for the junior high schools were analyzed (see Table III). One book describes the general geography of Israel and relates demography to security considerations with respect to the planning of settlements and population distribution in Israel. Of the four books focusing on specific regions of the country, three have a number of references to societal beliefs of security, victimization of Jews, and positive images of Jews. These references occur in the context of either ancient history or the modern history of the Israeli–Arab conflict.

High School Five textbooks recommended for the high schools were found to be relevant for the present study and therefore were content analyzed. With the exception of one book, all refer to security beliefs and in two of them security is a repeated theme. This theme is frequently related to themes concerning a positive self-image and victimization, and sometimes to negative stereotyping of Arabs.

Civic Studies Textbooks

Elementary School Only two textbooks relevant to the present study are used regarding ‘Homeland and society studies’. One book describes the life of the Bedouins

in Israel and the other presents the Arab citizens of Israel. The books do not concern societal beliefs relevant for coping with intractable conflict (see Table IV). The former presents to the Jewish pupils the customs and traditions of the Bedouins in Israel. The latter describes Arab society and focuses on Arab–Jewish relations in Israel. It tries explicitly to impart the values of equality and pluralism and to advance the coexistence between the two groups living in the State of Israel. The book also tries to diminish Jewish children’s prejudice against Arab people and to promote encounters between pupils of both populations.

Junior High School Four civic studies textbooks for the junior high school were analyzed. The first book, designated for secular schools, is almost identical to the book designated for the religious schools. Both books describe the basic concepts of the state and of citizenship, as well as the political system of Israel.

High School Four textbooks in high school civic studies were found to be of relevance to the purpose of the present study and were content analyzed. The first book, dealing with labor relations in Israel, makes a reference to only one investigated societal belief – the victimization of Jews.

Another book presents Arab society in Israel to Jewish students. This book describes the life of Arabs in Israel and their relations with the Jewish majority, and it is one of the few books, and possibly the only one, which mentions and discusses Arab discrimination in Israel. This book aims to provide updated information about Arabs and to change their negative stereotype in Israel in order to advance positive coexistence between the two groups.

Of special significance to the present study is the analysis of the only textbook (and supplement) which is entirely devoted

to the presentation of the Israeli–Arab conflict. This book contains mostly original material (speeches, documents, articles) without commentaries. It is the first textbook which also includes a score of original texts in an effort to present the Arab perspective on the conflict. The book consists of two parts: one part devoted to the conflict in the pre-state period, and the other devoted to the conflict after the establishment of the State of Israel. The first part of the book has significantly more Jewish than Arab material, in terms of both the length and the elaborateness of the text. In general, the Arab side is presented as relatively homogeneous in its irreconcilability and intransigence. According to the book, Arabs refused to compromise their position by sharing the land with Jews and rejected the Zionist idea and its implementation. Also, the book argues that despite some Jewish–Arab negotiations and some positive Jewish–Arab relations, the Arab community in general revealed a hostile attitude and behavior toward the Jewish settlement. In contrast, the material samples a wide spectrum of opinions that were prevalent in the pre-state Jewish community and emphasizes the Jewish willingness to compromise and to recognize Arab claim on the contested land.

A similar line is taken in the second part of the book, which deals with the interstate conflict between Israel and the Arab states. The book provides material that justifies the Sinai War and the Six Day War and presents the uncompromising positions of the Arab leaders in contrast to Israeli willingness for peace. This part also presents the heterogeneity of Israeli opinions with regard to the solution of the Israeli–Arab conflict. Furthermore, it deals with the Israeli–Egyptian peace process, presenting the Israeli–Egyptian disengagement agreement of 1975 and the speeches of President Sadat, Prime Minister Begin, and opposition leader

Peres in the Knesset during Sadat's visit to Jerusalem in 1977.

The supplementary book published in 1989 contains four articles written by Israeli Jews (dealing with intra-Arab relations, the Palestinian national movement, the Arab population in the Occupied Territories, and Israel's security policy) and six documents (the Camp David agreement, the decisions of the Arab summit meeting in Algiers, 1988, decisions of the Palestinian Council in 1988, two Intifada proclamations, and a peace proposal of the Israeli government of 14 May 1989). This book takes a line very similar to that of the first one.

Discussion

The Middle East is witnessing a continuous movement towards peaceful resolution of the Israeli–Arab conflict. Israel now maintains relations with Arab countries which range from full peace (i.e. Egypt and Jordan) to complete hostility (e.g. Iraq). Negotiation has become the primary way of dealing with most specific conflicts. However, while observable political and economic conditions have changed, the question must be posed whether complementary changes have taken place in the educational system which is responsible for the socialization of the new generation of citizens in this troubled region. The present study investigated whether the textbooks used in Israeli schools during the peace process continue to transmit societal beliefs which reflect an ethos of conflict with the Arab people. The content analysis of these textbooks does not reveal a unified picture. Some books repeat most of the societal beliefs functional for coping with intractable conflict, but others place less emphasis on them, and some never refer to them.

Security is the societal belief which receives most emphasis. The observed emphasis on security in the school textbooks

is not surprising in view of the conflict which raised the problem of security to the top of Israel's agenda. Security remains a central concern of Israeli Jews and a master symbol in the Israeli Jewish ethos (Arian, 1995; Bar-Tal, 1991; Bar-Tal et al., 1998b; Horowitz, 1984; Lissak, 1984; Stone 1982; Yaniv, 1993).

The next most prominent societal beliefs are positive self-image and victimization. These two societal beliefs are embedded in the Jewish tradition (Bar-Tal & Antebi, 1992; Hareven, 1983; Liebman & Don Yehiya, 1983; Smooha, 1987): the ethnocentric view of a chosen people and the siege mentality perspective, whereby the world is perceived to be generally against the Jews, have been transmitted through many centuries. The intractable conflict with the Arabs reinforced these beliefs. The textbooks present Jews as heroic, progressive, and moral people who fight just wars as humanely as possible against an Arab enemy who refuses to recognize the Jewish entity in Israel and initiates vicious attacks on the Jews and their state. Jews are presented as the bringers of progress, development, and benefit to the Arab people in the pre-state period and after Israeli independence, and to the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories following the 1967 war.

Societal beliefs of unity appear infrequently in the readers of elementary and junior high schools and somewhat more frequently in the history books. The references either concern Jewish unity and point to its importance for national survival or describe the negative consequences of disagreement, internecine strife, and schism. The societal beliefs of peace are presented rarely. In the literary texts selected for the readers, peace is referred to as a wish, hope, or dream. The history books briefly mention various attempts, during the pre-state period, to resolve the conflict peacefully and only very

few books note the 1979 peace agreement with Egypt.

Of special interest are societal beliefs of delegitimizing Arabs. Delegitimization (see Bar-Tal, 1989) occurs relatively infrequently. However, negative stereotyping occurs almost whenever Arabs are referred to. Positive stereotyping is an exception. This presentation is in line with the prevalent view of the Arabs as the enemy during the long years of the conflict (Bar-Tal, 1988, 1990). For a number of decades, Arabs waged a total war on the Jewish state, including an economic embargo and a political boycott. It is thus not surprising that their negative stereotypes penetrate all the cultural and educational products of Jewish-Israeli society, including school textbooks (Bar-Tal & Zoltack, 1989; Ben Ezer, 1968; Bitan, 1991; Cohen, 1985; Herzl, 1987; Urian, 1997) and that they still prevail among Israeli Jews.

The analysis shows a difference between the books used in secular and religious schools. Books used in religious schools emphasize societal beliefs of security, positive self-image, Jews' victimization, and unity considerably more frequently, particularly history textbooks. The religious educational system is explicitly ideological with a formal credo based on a combination of religious and Zionist values (Kleinberger, 1969; Schwarzwald, 1990). Of special importance for the religious public educational system is its focus on Jewish identity, which it equates with a religious identity and which has its roots in Jewish history and tradition (Schiff, 1977).

Although it is very difficult to compare findings from the earlier textbook analyses with those of the present study, some differences can be detected between the textbooks used at the apex of the Israeli-Arab conflict and those used recently. Even the early studies found changes over time in emphasis and content, especially during the 1970s and

1980s. The textbooks from the 1970s and 1980s, compared to those used in the 1950s and 1960s, reflected more didactic and scientific considerations and less national and Zionist goals. The textbooks analyzed have shown considerably less explicit delegitimization of Arabs, even though negative stereotyping is widely practiced. There is less emphasis on inculcation of blind patriotic beliefs and less unidimensional, ethnocentric, self-presentation of Jews. Moreover, in the mid-1980s, textbooks were published with a new image of the Arab citizens of Israel. These books were written with the explicit objective of reducing prejudice and strengthening Jewish–Arab coexistence within the country.

Despite these changes, the present study still finds substantial traces of the conflictual ethos, based on societal beliefs of security, positive self-image, Jews' victimization, and negative stereotyping of Arab. This results in self-righteous, ethnocentric, simplistic, and black-and-white presentations of Israeli–Arab relations in many of the school textbooks. Some of the books used in 1994–95 continue to reflect the intractable conflict and are not adapted to the reality of the peace process. Especially detrimental to peace efforts are beliefs concerning the absolute justness of some or Israel's own far-reaching goals and involving the negative and homogeneous stereotyping of Arabs. The former disregard Arab claims to land and national identity and prevent a possible compromise. The latter perpetuate the negative and general perception of Arabs as a violent and backward enemy, which feeds the feeling of threat and insecurity.

Not all the societal beliefs functional for successful coping with the intractable conflict are dysfunctional during peaceful intergroup relations. Beliefs about positive self-image, unity, patriotism, peace, and security serve essential functions for a society also in times of peace. Nevertheless, some

content of the discussed societal beliefs will have to be changed in order for Israeli society to adapt to the new era. Specifically, in order to socialize the next generations to live in a reality of tractable conflict with some of the Arab nations (rather than an intractable one with *all* of them), Israeli society, for example, will have to gain access to a differentiated, complex, multidimensional, and more empathetical image of the Arab people. This new image will also have to be integrated with the way Israeli society looks back on the intractable conflict of the past. Furthermore, there is a need to present a more critical and complex view of their own group, the Jews, in the conflict. It is also important to teach about peace in terms of its benefits and of concrete steps of conflict resolution. It should be noted that ethos of peace requires not only the elimination of several societal beliefs of ethos of conflict and modification and change of others, but also the formation of new societal beliefs, which concern themes such as cooperation with the past opponent, its trust and respect, understanding and consideration of the needs of the former opponent, or emphasis on commonalities with it.

The analysis of the school textbooks showed that only a few books attempted to transmit completely new societal beliefs which are functional for the coexistence and peace process with Arabs. A few readers, geography and civic studies textbooks established a new educational agenda, providing balanced knowledge about Arabs and presenting them as partners to mutual understanding.

In order to put the present findings into a proper perspective, one remark should be made. Despite the fact that the Israeli–Arab conflict lost some of its intractable characteristics when the peace agreement with Egypt was signed in 1979, the peace process accelerated only after the Gulf War in 1991, which was followed by the Madrid

convention in the same year. The political agreements signed in the years 1992–94 were dramatic and further changed the Middle East and Israeli–Arab relations. We may assume that the political climate has been changing too rapidly for the ethos of society, fuelled by the reality of intractable conflict through many decades, to keep pace with it. The school textbooks cannot as yet be expected to reflect these very recent political developments. The development of new curricula and the subsequent publication of new textbooks can be slow. In the meantime, old textbooks which do not reflect the new reality are currently used in schools.

Conclusion

The present study should be seen as descriptive in its nature. The results describe the contents regarding conflict ideology transmitted to the young generation of Israelis. They reflect the educational reality which we must consider when we try to tackle the question of whether the transmitted contents of societal beliefs correspond to the new political reality formed in the Middle East.

Israeli society has been in transition for the last twenty years, slowly changing from its engagement in intractable conflict towards involvement in conflicts of a less all-encompassing nature. The political and economic events of recent years have already established a new Middle East. However, there is need to cement this newly emerging reality with new societal beliefs that reflect and support the peace process. Change of societal beliefs is a long process. Years of ideological socialization cannot easily be undone, and members of society face the complex task of constructing and maintaining a new social reality. Clearly, in such a process, societal, cultural, political institutions and channels of communication take

an active part. Of special importance is the educational system with all its mechanisms. School textbooks play an important role in shaping the beliefs prevalent in a society. In view of the emerging new reality in the Middle East, these books should present students with updated information concerning both the past and present, and they should be characterized by openness and complexity. The development of a new ethos of peace is a major objective for all societies involved in the peace process in the Middle East.

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