

Reactions to Imposed Political Change: A Prospective Experimental Investigation of
Jewish Settlers' Resistance to State Contraction

Sivan Hirsch-Hoefler

Dennis T. Kahn

Gilad Hirschberger

RUNNING HEAD: Resistance to imposed political change

Please address all correspondence to Gilad Hirschberger, School of Psychology,
Interdisciplinary Center (IDC) Herzliya, P.O. Box 167, Herzliya, Israel 46150. E-mail:
ghirschberger@idc.ac.il

We would like to thank D.S.B.H for his invaluable contribution to this research, and Shay
Passal for her assistance on this project.

Abstract

The implementation of a peace agreement between adversarial parties often carries a price, such as the imposition of political change on a population that opposes the peace agreement. The current research employs a resistance to change perspective and focuses on Jewish settlers in the West Bank as a case example of reactions to potential imposed political change. An experimental field study of Jewish West Bank settlers ($N=453$) was conducted to understand the influence of ideology and psychological-contextual factors on resistance to change. On this basis, we examined four determinants, one ideological and three related to psychological resistance: (a) the *character of the settlers* (ideological vs. quality of life settlers); (b) *legitimacy* (size of the majority in parliament); (c) *recompensation* (a unilateral withdrawal with no tangible benefits, or a bilateral quid-pro-quo agreement); and (d) *group-affirmations* (messages that boost perceived in-group value). We measured explicit support for legal (normative) and unlawful (non-normative) resistance, and measured implicit aggression using a lexical decision task. Results showed that both ideological and psychological-contextual factors played a significant role in resistance: Ideological settlers showed greater support for normative resistance, and exhibited high implicit aggression, but primarily in response to perceptions of recompensation. Group affirmations, however, backfired and elicited greater resistance in this group. Quality of life settlers exhibited low support for resistance, and responded more positively to group affirmations. Legitimacy played no significant role in resistance to forced evacuation. Results reveal that ideology alone does not predict resistance to

imposed political change, suggesting that psychological interventions may help settler populations cope with imposed change.

KEY WORDS: Resistance to political change, conflict resolution, perceived legitimacy, normative resistance, implicit aggression.

Reactions to Imposed Political Change: A Prospective Experimental Investigation of
Jewish Settlers' Resistance to State Contraction

Conflict resolution often carries a cost – it requires change and compromise, and it is often those who oppose the new policy that are required to pay the price of its implementation. The forceful evacuation of populations from their place of residence is one such cost that may advance the cause of conflict resolution (Gerrity & Steinglass, 2003), but also requires strong-arming a population to acquiesce with a policy they adamantly oppose. Settlements in disputed lands have been an important feature of many conflicts around the world, including Israel and the Palestinian-populated territories conquered by Israel in the 1967 war, Morocco and Western Sahara, Cyprus, Tibet, and Mindanao (Haklai & Loizides, 2015). In fact, from 1940 to 2000, 73 percent of all ethnic wars revolve around territorial disputes (Toft, 2002), and in most (if not all) of these territorial disputes land is perceived as indivisible (Hassner, 2003).

When France withdrew from Algeria in 1962, over one million French nationals were forced to leave their homes and return to France. And in the case of widespread ethnic cleansing during the Balkan Wars in the 1990s, people were uprooted and resettled against their will (Carmichael, 2003). These historical examples suggest that macro-level agreements often depend on the cooperation of individuals who are required to make great personal sacrifices even when they are ideologically opposed to this policy.

The current research which stems from a resistance to change theoretical perspective, set out to identify factors that may predict resistance to imposed political change among Jewish settlers living in the West Bank. We focused on this population because any future agreement between Israel and the Palestinians will likely require the

mass uprooting and relocation of some of these settlers. Most of the scholarship on this population assumes that ideological factors are the main driving force in determining the likely reaction to a future evacuation (Sheleg 2004). In the current research, we challenge this assumption, and examine whether psychological-contextual factors that have been identified in the resistance to change literature, such as recompensation (i.e., perceived losses and gains: Kahneman & Tversky, 1979), and perceived legitimacy (Ford, Ford, & D'Amelio, 2008), may also play a significant role in predicting resistance to political change. Specifically, we examined whether perceptions of gain from a future agreement (i.e., recompensation), and perceived political legitimacy of an agreement (i.e., broad social consensus) may influence resistance to change, even among ideological populations. We further examined whether collective affirmations buffer the insidious effects that imposed change often has on the social identity of affected populations, thereby reducing resistance to change. To examine these questions we conducted an experimental field study on a representative sample of Jewish settlers in territories that are likely to be evacuated in the event of an Israeli-Palestinian agreement.

The psychological cost of forced evacuation

Forced evacuation creates a significant disturbance in the lives of evacuated peoples, a collapse of social and community systems, loss of material resources, and a threat to fundamental religious and moral beliefs (Billig, Kohn, & Levav, 2006; Hall et al., 2008). Consequently, forced evacuations are perceived as a significant loss (Katz & Florian, 1987), and as an existential threat for the individual and the community (Hirschberger & Ein-Dor, 2006). It is not surprising, then, that forced evacuations are extremely traumatizing (Hall et al., 2008), and may lead to violent resistance among

evacuated populations in an attempt to regain control over their fate (Hobfoll, 1989). Withdrawal from territory, or *state contraction* (Lustick, 1993), however, is sometimes a necessary process of overcoming internal ideological barriers and concerns over the viability and safety of the state, that once overcome, enables a process that may lead to improved intergroup relations in the future. We, therefore, employed a resistance to change perspective to examine reactions to potential forced evacuation among Israeli West Bank settlers – some of whom may be required to relocate from their place of residence in the case of an agreement between Israel and the Palestinians.

Whereas in past evacuations several thousand settlers were evacuated and resettled, a withdrawal from most of the West Bank (excluding the main settlement blocks), would most likely require the evacuation and relocation of over 100,000 settlers according to unofficial accounts of negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians (Arieli, 2013). A West Bank withdrawal would thus be an event unprecedented in scope and significance; it would have a profound influence on Israeli society, and would present an enormous challenge both during the process of mass evacuation, and in the aftermath of this event when the efforts of resettlement and rehabilitation take place. We conducted this research from the theoretical perspective of resistance to change (e.g., Lewin, 1947; Taylor, & de la Sablonniere, 2014), and within this framework, set ideological factors against psychological-contextual factors that may influence resistance to imposed political change, to determine whether ideology is the main reason for resistance, or whether pragmatic concerns also play an important role.

Ideological resistance to imposed change

Although the settlers in the West Bank are often perceived to be a homogenous ideological/religious group (Byman & Sachs, 2012), investigations of West Bank settlers have indicated that they constitute a diverse group in terms of religiosity, ideology, education, socio-economic status, and motives for settlement in disputed territories (Hirsch-Hoefler, Saguy & Hirschberger, in press). The extant scholarship on this population shows that the most important distinction between settlers is whether they are *ideological* settlers or *quality of life* settlers (Hirsch-Hoefler, Canetti & Eiran, 2016; Sheleg, 2004).

Israel launched its settlement project in the West Bank in the 1970s, a region heavily populated by Palestinians, several years after Israeli forces occupied the region in the 1967 Six Day War. The project was initially supported by the Labor government in power and consisted mostly of settlements around Jerusalem and regions of strategic value such as the Jordan Valley. The initial justification for constructing these settlements was that they create a security buffer around Jerusalem and the central region of Israel, and could be used as leverage in future peace agreements (Tenenbaum & Eiran, 2005). Following the rise to power of the conservative Likud party in 1977, national-religious settlers became more dominant, and their organization, Gush Emunim, cooperated with the government in creating dozens of new settlements (Alimi & Hirsch-Hoefler, 2014; Mendelsohn, 2014) in the midst of Palestinian-populated regions. These settlements were constructed for religious-ideological reasons rather than for security reasons, and reflected, for the settlers and their supporters, the return of the Jewish people to the Biblical Land of Israel. In the 1980s the settlements were further expanded to include non-religious and non-ideological populations by offering generous government subsidies

and an affordable cost of living. Currently, some 420,000 settlers reside in the West Bank (excluding East Jerusalem) in over 220 communities (Central Bureau of Statistics, State of Israel, 2016).

Ideological settlers, constituting a third of the settler population (Hirschberger & Hirsch-Hoefler, 2016) are motivated primarily by religious and ideological zeal, and the belief that the ancient land of Israel is a sacred value (Ginges & Atran, 2013). Consequently, they maintain that settling the holy land is a pursuit of overarching ideological and religious importance, and that compromises over these territories are inconceivable (Hirsch-Hoefler & Mudde, 2013).

Quality of life settlers, which make up another third of the settler population (Hirschberger & Hirsch-Hoefler, 2016), while not completely devoid of ideological convictions, do not share the fervor and zeal of their ideological counterparts. These individuals and families were attracted mainly by the material advantages of living in the West Bank, such as highly subsidized housing close to major metropolitan areas. We suggest that the division between quality of life and ideological settlers is critical when examining resistance to a possible forced withdrawal from the West Bank. For ideological settlers, living in the territories is an inseparable part of their identity and religious beliefs, and we would therefore expect this population to show high levels of resistance to withdrawal. For quality of life settlers, reactions to an Israeli withdrawal is likely to be much more contingent on the material compensations they are offered in exchange for leaving their homes, and we would consequently expect relatively lower levels of resistance from them (Haklai & Loizides, 2015). The remaining third of settlers are ultra-orthodox (i.e., Haredi) and will not be further considered in this research for two

main reasons: First, the majority of them reside within the Zone of Probable Agreement (ZOPA) an area that will most likely remain in Israel in any final agreement with the Palestinians (Arieli, 2013). Second, whereas national-religious settlers are ideologically committed to settling the Land of Israel, ultra-orthodox Jews do not share this sentiment. They are officially non-Zionist and view Israel as a secular and even sacrilegious state (Rubin, 2015). Thus, in the current research we focused on quality of life and ideological settlers residing outside of the ZOPA, and wished to examine whether ideology is the sine-qua-non of resistance to political change or whether even among ideological settlers, psychological-contextual factors influence resistance to imposed change.

Psychological resistance to imposed political change

Most of the research on resistance to change is conducted in the context of organizational change (e.g., Bridges, 1986; Conner & Patterson, 1982) – an area far removed from the interest of the current research. The scholarship in this field, however, may prove relevant – especially if West Bank settlers are not driven by ideology alone, and if contextual and psychological factors identified in the resistance to change literature are also important predictors of reactions to forced evacuation.

Change by definition is psychologically challenging because it involves a transformation from one state to another and the interruption of a given state of affairs (Fox, 1998). When change is unwanted and imposed by others, the disequilibrium resulting from change may have a pronounced and deleterious effect on psychological equanimity. These negative effects of change may be further amplified when the change involves sacred values (Ginges & Atran, 2013) and cherished worldviews. In such cases,

change may pose a threat to fundamental existential needs and challenge people's notions of meaning and belongingness (Hirschberger & Shaham, 2012).

Resistance to change is defined as a negative attitude toward change which includes affective, behavioral, and cognitive components (Oreg, 2006), and some of the main reasons that change often elicits resistance is the sense of uncertainty and decreased sense of control that accompany most change processes (Fox, 1998). Change that is perceived as haphazard and unreasonable is, thus, most likely to elicit resistance compared with change that is justifiable, even if undesirable. We reason that two factors that may increase the perception of change as justifiable and reduce feelings of uncertainty and loss of control are: (a). Perceptions of possible gain – whether the change offers some form of improvement or recompensation; and (b) whether most people agree with the proposed change. Change that enjoys consensus, is perceived as legitimate, and is seen as beneficial, is likely to reduce resistance.

Recompensation

Prospect theory (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979) offers insight into how perceived gain may play an important role in reactions to change. It shows that people's attitudes toward risks involving gains may be quite different from their attitudes toward risks involving losses. The robust findings emanating from this research indicate that people are loss averse and are likely to prefer change that is framed in terms of gains rather than losses. On this basis, in the current research we examined whether framing imposed change as comprising political gain or recompensation (i.e., a bilateral agreement that confers benefits) would offset the effects of loss of territory and decrease resistance compared to a no-gain condition (i.e., a unilateral withdrawal). The current research

examines whether these considerations of recompensation influence resistance to change and whether this effect is different among quality of life and ideological settlers.

Perceived legitimacy

Resistance to change is also sensitive to others' reactions to the proposed change. When the majority is perceived as opposed to the change, processes of conformity and compliance are likely to increase resistance. When there is social consensus with regards to the change, however, the opposite dynamics may occur and the motivation to resist the change may be tempered (Ford et al., 2008; Hon, Bloom, & Crant, 2014).

The issue of perceived legitimacy has been at the center of the political debate in Israel since the Oslo Agreements. These agreements were approved by the Knesset by an extremely narrow margin, a point that has often been made by opponents to indicate the illegitimacy of the agreements. In the current research, we conceptualized legitimacy as the extent of support the withdrawal enjoys in the Knesset (Israeli Parliament). Low legitimacy was defined as a narrow majority of 51%, and high legitimacy was defined as a substantive majority of 66% (the legal definition in Israel of a substantive majority).

Group affirmation

The resistance to change literature suggests that resistance is not only determined by present-moment contextual concerns, but also with concerns over the identity of the individual or group in the future, after the change is implemented. Change may have catastrophic consequences for groups whose identity is predicated on a value or resource that may be lost as a result of the change. In this case, it is not only the tangible resource that is lost, but also the group's sense of identity, meaning, and its ability to persevere after the change takes place. For ideological Jewish settlers in the West Bank, the

settlements are more than just a place of residence, they are their *raison d'être*. The uprooting of settlements and termination of the settlement project may, thus, trigger an existential crisis among them (Hirschberger & Ein-Dor, 2006).

From this perspective, resistance to change may be based on an inability to imagine a future cause and identity for the group. We, thus, reasoned that affirming the value of the settler group may modulate reactions to forced evacuations, by bolstering their sense of value and identity, and also their sense of belongingness to the greater Israeli society. The literature on the effects of group affirmation, however, shows mixed results, with some studies indicating that group affirmations protect the self from threat (Spencer-Rodgers, Major, Forster, & Peng, 2016); other studies showing no significant effect on intergroup relations (Čehajić-Clancy et al., 2011); and still others suggesting that unlike self-affirmations, group affirmations may backfire and increase intergroup hostility (Ehrlich & Gramzow, 2015). We, therefore, decided to test two different types of group affirmations: The first affirmed the value of the settler group as the spearhead of Israeli society, a vanguard that leads and paves the way for others. The second group affirmation manipulation focused on the role of the settler group in maintaining the unity of the people of Israel, while emphasizing that maintaining this unity is more important than all other values. This manipulation affirms not only the settler group, but also the superordinate group of Israeli Jews. We examined whether these group affirmations would offset settlers resistance to an undesirable policy that poses a direct threat to them.

Types of resistance to imposed political change

To capture a broad spectrum of resistance strategies, the current research examined both legal, institutionalized protest and unlawful, potentially violent resistance.

Further, because self-reported resistance is susceptible to social desirability biases and may raise legal concerns (i.e., supporting illegal acts of violence), we also employed a measure of implicit aggression using a lexical decision task (based on Ayduk, Mischel, & Downey, 2002 and adapted to Hebrew by Talmor et al., 2018) that is resistant to impression management concerns, and can tap into subtle changes in aggressive tendencies.

Resistance to government policies can take many shapes and forms. In democratic systems, the expression of resistance is an inherent tool for a population that wishes to protest a policy that it considers unfair or unjust. Democracies offer their citizens a variety of means to express their discontent under the protection of the law such as petitions, demonstrations, and lobbying legislators. This type of resistance, often deemed normative resistance, refers to acts sanctioned by laws and regulations (Shuman et al., 2016). Normative resistance, however, is restricted in nature and may seem ineffective for a population determined to stop a policy from being implemented by any means necessary. In this case, people may be tempted to engage in non-normative resistance which entails acts that are illegal and are intended to affect public policy through the use of illegitimate force (Kaase & Marsh, 1979). Non-normative resistance varies in the degree that it violates the law and can range from relatively mild infractions such as blocking roads, to extreme acts of sabotage and terrorism (e.g. Hirsch-Hoefler, Canetti & Eiran, 2016; Tausch et al., 2011; Wright, Taylor & Moghaddam, 1990).

In the current research, we sought to prospectively investigate the factors that amplify or curb violent resistance to forced evacuation, and focus on the characteristics of

the settler population and on psychological-contextual factors as the main determinants of resistance to imposed political change.

The present research

To examine Jewish settler's resistance to a potential forced evacuation from the West Bank, we conducted a large-scale experimental survey on representative samples of ideological and quality of life settlers in the West Bank. In this door-to-door survey that was conducted over a period of eight months, participants were randomly assigned to scenarios describing an Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank that varied on levels of political legitimacy and recompensation. Participants were also assigned to group affirmation conditions after which they indicated their support for normative and non-normative resistance to forced evacuation on a self-report scale, and also completed a lexical decision task to gauge implicit aggression. We hypothesized, in accordance with previous scholarship, that ideology would play a central role in resistance and would be impervious to considerations of legitimacy and recompensation. However, ideological settlers may be attentive to affirmations that specifically target their group. On this basis, we hypothesized that:

- H1. Ideological settlers would show higher levels of all forms of resistance compared with quality of life settlers;
- H2. Political legitimacy and recompensation would have a significant effect only on quality of life settlers such that resistance would be lowest when legitimacy and recompensation were high;
- H3. Group affirmation manipulations would have an effect primarily on ideological settlers, as the content of the affirmations target this group, and would

reduce their support for resistance. We did not have a priori predictions on the differences between the two affirmation manipulations.

Method

The current study was a field experiment conducted on representative samples of ideological and quality of life West Bank settlers. The sample excluded settlers living within the settler blocs that constitute a zone of probable agreement (ZOPA) that has been negotiated between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, and that will most likely be annexed to Israel in any future agreement (Arieli, 2013). Thus, ultra-orthodox communities were not sampled in this research as they reside within the ZOPA. We also did not sample Jordan Valley settlers who constitute 1% of the settler population and have different characteristics than quality of life and ideological settlers (Arieli, 2013). We employed a stratified 3-stage cluster random sampling strategy for Jewish-Israeli adults living in ideological and quality of life West Bank settlements. First, the Jewish communities beyond the "Green Line" were stratified by type of community - quality of life settlements and ideological settlements – based on previous categorizations of these settlements (Peace Now, 2016; Sheleg, 2004.). Then, settlements (clusters) were randomly selected in each regional council (Gush Etzion, Shomron, Binyamin, Hebron, Ariel and Ma'ale Adumim), with the number of settlements chosen proportional to the size of the regional council. Once we knew how many settlements would be sampled in each regional council, we randomly decided (i.e., by the throwing of a die) the specific settlements from which we would recruit participants (see Figure 1 for map of participating settlements). The number of households to sample in each of the chosen settlements was proportional to the size of the settlement (Central Bureau of Statistics,

2013). Interviewers approached the first house encountered in a certain settlement and asked the family member who was present and was at least 18 years old to participate. The interviewers then chose the next household based on the sampling ratio (e.g. if every third house was sampled the research assistant passed three doors down) and repeated the same procedure.

Sample

The experimental survey presented here is part of a larger study conducted on 590 Jewish settlers (over 18 years old) about their feelings regarding a possible future withdrawal from the West Bank. Of this total sample, 303 settlers (51%) were from ideological settlements (only established settlements and not rogue outposts) and 287 (49%) from quality-of-life settlements (see Figure 1). In the experiment which is the focus of the current research 453 participants of the total sample were assigned to experimental conditions. This sub-group was chosen at random from the larger sample, and the overall response rate was 41%. Among these participants, 193 (42.60%) were male, 246 (54.30%) female (14 individuals didn't state their gender) ranging in age from 19 to 85 ($M = 40.39$, $SD = 15.09$). Two-hundred and forty-two (53.42%) participants lived in *ideological* settlements and 211 (46.58%) lived in *quality of life* settlements. There were no significant differences in gender $\chi^2(2, N = 453) = .64, p = .727$ nor in age $t(433) = -.72, p = .619$ between the ideological and quality of life settlement samples. However, as would be expected, the participants in the ideological settlements were more religious than the participants in quality of life settlements. While among the ideological settlers a vast majority (90.75%) defined themselves as being religious, religious participants were in the minority (28.22%) among the quality of life settlers $\chi^2(1, N = 429) = 176.18, p <$

.001. Further, while the total sample had a clear rightist political leaning (84.26% self-reported rightists), ideological settlers were significantly more right-wing ($M = 4.04$, $SD = .49$) than quality of life settlers ($M = 3.77$, $SD = .62$) $t(356) = 4.94$, $p < .001$.

Measures

Experimental manipulations

The study followed a 2 (legitimacy: narrow majority vs. wide majority) X 2 (recompensation: unilateral withdrawal vs. peace agreement) X 3 (group affirmation: vanguard vs national unity vs. control) experimental design. Participants were randomly assigned by a computerized program to the different experimental conditions. In each experimental condition, a possible scenario regarding withdrawal from West Bank settlements was described (see Appendix for the full wording of the scenarios). These scenarios differed with regards to type of withdrawal (unilateral withdrawal from the West Bank or bilateral withdrawal as part of a peace treaty with the Palestinian Authority) and the size of the majority behind the decision to withdraw (narrow majority of 51% or a wide majority of 66% of the Israeli Knesset). After having read one of these four scenarios, participants were randomly assigned to one of three messages. Two group affirmation messages (vanguard and national unity message) compared with a neutral control. Participants in the *vanguard* condition were asked to read an excerpt attributed to one of the leading rabbis in the national-religious camp which stated that the settlers in the West Bank are the spearhead of the Israeli nation, a “pillar of fire¹” leading the people along the way. The *national unity message* was similarly attributed to a leading rabbi in the national-religious community and emphasized unity of the people of Israel as a

¹ The “pillar of fire” is a metaphor taken from the Biblical story of the Exodus from Egypt, where God is said to have shown the Israelites the way to the Promised Land in the shape of a pillar of fire.

principal value. Finally, the control message was attributed to the finance minister and stated that dairy prices will be increased.

Dependent variables

Normative/legal resistance. Normative resistance was measured by assessing participants' willingness to take part in non-violent activities in order to oppose plans to evacuate West Bank settlements (based on Tausch et al., 2011). These included signing a petition, participation in a political demonstration, taking part in meetings arranged by a political organization, or establishing a political party to represent West Bank settlers. Participants indicated the degree to which they were willing to participate in these activities on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 ("not willing at all") to 7 ("very willing") $\alpha = .86$.

Non-normative/unlawful resistance. Non-normative resistance was assessed by soliciting participants' willingness to engage in violent and/or illegal activities in order to prevent settlement evacuation (based on Tausch et al., 2011). These activities included trespassing on private property such as governmental offices, damaging equipment and property belonging to the government, and using physical violence against elected representatives or security forces. Support of such violent resistance was assessed on a 7-point scale with item responses ranging from 1 ("not willing at all") to 7 ("very willing") $\alpha = .79$.

Implicit aggression. Due to concern that social desirability motivations would influence self-reported support for aggression and violence, especially illegal activities, we administered a lexical decision task (LDT, Ayduk, Mischel, & Downey, 2002) to measure implicit aggression. In the LDT, participants watched a sequence of letter

combinations presented on a computer screen and were asked to indicate whether a certain letter combination constituted a word or not, by pressing corresponding keys (yes, no) as quickly as possible. The letter combinations in the present LDT were divided into four categories: aggressive words (e.g. rage, revenge, attack), negative non-aggressive words (sadness, poverty, dirt), neutral words (e.g. flour, circle, pants), and non-words (random strings of letters). A short response time to a certain category indicates greater cognitive accessibility of that category, such that short response times to aggression words indicate implicit aggression. This procedure was recently adapted to Hebrew and validated (Talmor et al., 2018). Because of the nature of the field experiment, and in an effort to standardize the administration of this cognitive task, a laptop computer was placed on a table or desk in a room of the participants' home that was sufficiently dark. Participants were asked to sit at arm's length from the screen when completing the task.

Procedure

Data collection took place between April and November 2013. A research assistant knocked on the door of the designated household and asked the family member who opened the door to take part in a psychological study on the experience of people living in the region. Whoever opened the door and was above 18 years old was asked to participate. Research assistants brought laptop computers, and the study was administered on Qualtrics (Qualtrics Labs, Inc. software, Version 2012 of the Qualtrics Research Suite) and Direct RT (Jarvis, 2008) platforms. Participation in the study was on a voluntary basis and participants were not remunerated. Ten trained research assistants collected data for this research. Before beginning the study, participants were asked to sign an informed consent sheet.

Following random assignment to one of the four withdrawal scenarios (one out of the four combinations of legitimacy and recompensation), participants were randomly assigned to one of three affirmation messages (vanguard, national unity, control). Then, they completed the two scales on normative and non-normative resistance. Following the self-report questionnaires, participants completed the lexical decision task on a Direct RT (Jarvis, 2008) platform. Finally, participants completed a demographic questionnaire and were debriefed and thanked for their participation.²

Results

As a preliminary step, we examined differences in support for normative versus non-normative resistance, and found that whereas participants showed a relatively high degree of willingness to engage in normative resistance against a withdrawal ($M = 4.66$, $SD = 1.83$), support for non-normative resistance was significantly lower ($M = 1.49$, $SD = .99$) $t(418) = 34.96$, $p < .001$. Support for normative resistance was positively correlated with non-normative resistance $r(417) = .25$, $p < .001$, as well as with implicit aggression $r(301) = .16$, $p = .004$. However, non-normative resistance and implicit aggression were not significantly correlated $r(298) = -.02$, $p = .67$.

Normative resistance. To examine the effect of the experimental manipulations on normative resistance, we ran a 3-way 2 (settler group: quality of life; ideological) X 2 (recompensation: unilateral, peace agreement) X 3 (group affirmation: vanguard, national unity, control) ANOVA³, with normative resistance as the dependent variable, controlling

² The current study was conducted as part of a larger procedure including questionnaires assessing: willingness to adjust to a new post-evacuation reality; coping; emotions towards Palestinians; attitude towards the state; perception of the state's attitude towards the settlers; and attitudes towards other Israeli citizens (these findings are summarized in an internal report in Hebrew: Hirschberger et al, 2014).

³ Legitimacy and its interaction with the other variables was not significant, we therefore included legitimacy only as a covariate in all analyses. The pattern of results does not significantly change when removing this covariate, or when adding legitimacy as a fourth factor in the analysis.

for the perceived legitimacy of the decision. The analysis revealed a main effect of settler group with ideological settlers ($M=5.10$ $SD=1.55$) showing more support for normative resistance than quality of life settlers ($M=4.14$ $SD=2.00$) $F(1, 412) = 31.35, p < .001, \eta p^2=.07$. This main effect was qualified by a significant three-way interaction between settler group, recompensation and group affirmation $F(2, 412) = 3.21, p < .05, \eta p^2=.02$. To further probe the source of the significant three-way interaction, we ran tests for simple main effects with Bonferroni correction and controlling for the effects of legitimacy. These analyses indicated that in the case of a bilateral peace agreement, the vanguard group affirmation increased normative resistance of ideological settlers compared to quality of life settlers $F(2, 412) = 13.23, p < .001, \eta p^2=.03$. The difference between ideological and quality of life settlers in support for normative resistance was also found in the affirmation control condition $F(2, 412) = 5.92, p = .02, \eta p^2=.01$, but the national unity condition moderated the effect such that the difference in support for normative resistance between the two settler groups was erased $F(2, 412) = 1.01, p = .32$ (see Figure 2).

In the case of a unilateral withdrawal, ideological settlers expressed greater support for normative resistance in the national unity $F(2, 412) = 12.46, p < .001, \eta p^2=.03$ and control conditions $F(2, 412) = 6.14, p = .01, \eta p^2=.015$, but in the vanguard condition support for non-violent resistance increased among quality of life settlers such that it was no longer significantly different from ideological settlers $F(2, 412) = .67, p = .42$ (see Figure 3).

Non-normative resistance. The analysis on non-normative resistance revealed a difference between ideological and quality of life settlers that did not reach significance

$F(1, 408) = 2.82, p = .09$ according to which ideological settlers were slightly more supportive of violent resistance ($M=1.57$ $SD = 1.07$) than quality of life settlers ($M = 1.41$ $SD=.90$). The expected three-way interaction between settler group, recompensation, and group affirmation did not reach statistical significance $F(2, 408) = 1.99, p = .14$, but because some of the means were in the expected direction we conducted follow-up tests for simple main effects. These analyses indicated that for ideological settlers, a unilateral agreement elicits greater support for violent resistance than a peace agreement $F(1, 408) = 5.27, p = .02$, and that the difference between ideological and quality of life settlers in support for violent resistance increased in the case of a unilateral withdrawal $F(1, 408) = 6.17, p = .01$, but this difference was attenuated by group affirmation messages (national unity $F(1, 408) = .03, p = .86$; vanguard $F(1, 408) = .02, p = .90$). Specifically, national unity messages significantly reduced support for violent resistance among ideological settlers in the case of a unilateral withdrawal $F(1, 408) = 3.23, p = .04$). These results suggest that the level of support for violent resistance was low among both ideological and non-ideological settlers, but that a unilateral withdrawal in particular increases support for violent resistance among ideological settlers.

Implicit aggression. The analysis on implicit aggression revealed a significant effect of settler group, with ideological settlers ($M = 908.9$ $SD = 215.13$) showing faster reaction times to aggressive words compared with quality of life settlers ($M=960.1$ $SD=240.97$) $F(1, 303) = 4.29, p < .05, \eta p^2 = .014$. This main effect was qualified by a significant three-way interaction between settler group, recompensation, and group affirmation $F(1, 303) = 3.04, p < .05, \eta p^2 = .02$. To probe the source of this significant three-way interaction, we ran tests for simple main effects with Bonferroni correction and

controlled for the effects of legitimacy. This analysis revealed that in the case of a peace agreement, the vanguard group affirmation increased reaction times to aggression words (increased implicit aggression) among ideological settlers ($M = 831.93$ $SD = 151.38$) compared with quality of life settlers ($M=938.56$ $SD=264.16$) at marginal significance $F(1, 303) = 3.34, p = .07, \eta p^2 = .01$ (see Figure 5). In the case of a unilateral withdrawal, the solidarity message increased reaction times to aggressive words (increased implicit aggression) among ideological settlers ($M=910.69$ $SD=209.29$) compared with quality of life settlers ($M=1059.74$ $SD=255.1$) $F(1, 303) = 6.02, p < .05, \eta p^2=.02$ (see Figure 6). For quality of life participants exposed to the solidarity group affirmation, a peace agreement ($M = 897.02$ $SD = 180.3$) compared with a unilateral withdrawal ($M = 1059.74$ $SD = 255.1$) increased reaction times to aggressive words $F(1, 303) = 5.63, p < .05, \eta p^2 = .02$.

Discussion

The implementation of a peace agreement between adversarial groups holds the promise of a better future, but often also requires the imposition of a new policy on populations that oppose the political change. Forced evacuation of populations is one such case wherein the successful execution of a peace agreement requires coercion and the bearing down of a policy on a resistant population. The current research focused on Jewish settlements in the West Bank as the most poignant contemporary example of a population that may be required to bear the brunt of a peace agreement to which they are fundamentally opposed.

The findings provide an empirical basis for the distinction between settler groups, and indicate that quality of life and ideological settlers are distinct over a range of socio-demographic and political factors. The results, however, also disconfirm our assumption

that ideological considerations would trump any other practical or psychological determinant of reactions to change, and show that merely imagining a future evacuation arouses significant resistance among settlers, with the specific nature of their response affected by the following factors: (a) the character of the settlers (quality of life settlers vs ideological settlers); (b) the nature of the withdrawal (a unilateral Israeli decision with little recompensation, or part of a peace treaty with the Palestinians with high potential recompensation); and (c) group affirmation (the messages conveyed to the settler public: collective self-enhancement or national unity). Thus, resistance to the prospect of imposed political change is determined by a combination of ideological and psychological-contextual factors, such that even ideological populations are attentive to psychological and practical considerations.

Using an experimental survey design, our analyses consistently show that ideological settlers differ from quality-of-life settlers in many important respects. Ideological settlers are not only more right-wing and religious than quality of life settlers, they also express a greater propensity to resist an Israeli government's decision to withdraw from the West Bank and dismantle the settlements. This difference in political resistance does not only occur at the conscious explicit level, but is reflected in subtler implicit aggressive tendencies indicating how deeply entrenched the resistance to withdrawal is. At the same time, however, support for non-normative resistance was low and barely differentiated between the settler groups. The significant association between implicit aggression and normative resistance, and the absence of such an association with non-normative resistance, further suggests that even implicit aggression is somewhat

contained, as it relates only to normative resistance, and thus the low level of support for non-normative resistance may not merely reflect a presentational bias.

The results of the experiment reveal a similar pattern in both explicit support for normative resistance and implicit aggression. In both cases, the vanguard group affirmation message had the same unexpected effect, and increased support for resistance and implicit aggression among ideological settlers in the case of a bilateral peace agreement. This form of group affirmation also increased aggressiveness and support for resistance among quality of life settlers to the level of ideological settlers in the case of a unilateral withdrawal. It seems, therefore, that the vanguard group affirmation message consistently backfires and increases hostility rather than reduces it. These findings are consistent with Ehrlich and Gramzow (2015) who first detected the backfiring potential of group affirmations. Unlike self-affirmations, group-affirmations encourage group members to enhance the position (or ideology) of the group. In the current research, the vanguard message was meant to convey empathy and support for the settlers, but rather than instilling a sense of empathy and understanding, this message seemed to have reinforced the ideological settlers resolve and ideological fervor. It is likely that when West Bank settlers (particularly ideological settlers) are confronted with a policy they strongly oppose and with messages that they are the vanguard of the Jewish people, it will motivate them to resist a government policy that runs against their core beliefs. Thus, their propensity for resistance and aggression increases.

The other form of group affirmation tested in the current study, national unity, yielded mixed effects. Among quality of life settlers, this form of affirmation reduced the propensity for aggression and resistance when faced with a unilateral withdrawal

scenario. Among ideological settlers, the message reduced aggressive tendencies toward a bilateral peace agreement. But in the case of a unilateral withdrawal it had the opposite effect and increased support for normative resistance and implicit aggression, though it also somewhat reduced support for non-normative resistance. For ideological settlers, both forms of group affirmation may potentially backfire and policy-makers would be wise to vet their policies vis-à-vis this group before implementing them.

The bilateral agreement elicited more overall resistance than a unilateral withdrawal among ideological settlers. Jewish settlements in the West Bank are a core aspect of the identity of ideological settlers, and constitute a protected or sacred value (Ginges & Atran, 2013). Withdrawal from these settlements may entail the disintegration of this cherished worldview (Hirschberger & Ein-Dor, 2006). Sacred values are perceived as non-negotiable, and should be exempt from the trade-offs and quid pro quo reasoning that typically underlie bilateral agreements. We reason that the taboo tradeoff entailed in the bilateral withdrawal condition may have been particularly provocative for the ideological settlers, especially when their ideological fervor was strengthened by the vanguard message.

The strong reaction ideological settlers expressed to the bilateral agreement condition may also reflect reactive devaluation (Ross & Ward, 1995) wherein out-group proposals elicit greater opposition than similar in-group proposals (e.g., Kahn, Liberman, Halperin & Ross, 2016). Whereas the source of the unilateral withdrawal can be assumed to be the Israeli government, a bilateral withdrawal necessarily reflects the Palestinians' interests and motivations as well, leading to a greater devaluation of such a withdrawal proposal especially when the group is affirmed as the vanguard. The results also

demonstrate that, counter to expectations, ideological settlers were significantly influenced by recompensation, whereas political legitimacy played no significant role whatsoever.

The research reported here provides but an initial glimpse into the complex behavioral ramifications of forced evacuation, and places these reactions into a larger theoretical framework of resistance to change (e.g., Bridges, 1986; Conner & Patterson, 1982). In contrast to the prevailing view, we found that ideological settlers *do not* comprehensively and unequivocally reject withdrawal from areas of the West Bank. This conclusion stems primarily from the fact that the ideological settlers reacted differently to the various evacuation scenarios. Had they completely rejected any possibility of withdrawal, their reactions to all scenarios would have not been influenced by psychological-contextual factors. The malleability of the settler worldview to external considerations suggests that resistance to imposed political change in this population is not determined by ideology alone. This conclusion carries important practical lessons, and indicates that if and when an evacuation from territories should occur, policy makers would be wise to consider the various ways to approach and reason with even the most ideologically zealous.

This research constitutes a unique attempt to prospectively anticipate the reactions of Jewish settlers in the West Bank to a possible forced evacuation. The research was conducted on representative samples of ideological and quality of life settlers and utilized an experimental methodology to assess resistance to imposed political change through both implicit and explicit measures of violence and aggression. Along with these strengths, however, come several limitations that need to be acknowledged. One of the

limitations of using a representative sample is the small percentage of ultra-nationalist settlers (a sub group of ideological settlers) in the sample. Such settlers are few in numbers, but are potentially violent and often value the settlements over the state to the extent that they do not accept democracy or the rule of law (Hirschberger & Hirsch-Hoeffler , 2016). Although these settlers comprise only a fraction of the settler enterprise, their potential for violent resistance is substantial. Additionally, although this research identifies factors that may be important in addressing resistance to future forced evacuation, the weak relationship between attitudes and behaviors (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977), as well as social dynamics that may increase pluralistic ignorance and the misperception of the prevailing social norm (Prentice & Miller, 1993) in the case of an evacuation, render the current research tentative in its ability to reliably predict future behavior.

In spite of these limitations, this research constitutes one of the only attempts to understand the psychology of future forced evacuation in the context of a conflict wherein the evacuation of over 100,000 settlers is a central barrier to conflict resolution. The results of this research have both theoretical and practical implications that may assist policy makers in carrying out policies concerning West Bank settlements. Specifically, understanding the concerns of different groups of settlers, understanding the factors that influence resistance to change, and taking into account the potential backfiring effects of well-intended messages may facilitate the daunting task of state contraction and settlement evacuation. Context and framing clearly matter in overcoming resistance to political change and indicate that even ideological zealots can be reasoned with at a time when their core belief system is under threat.

References

- Ajzen, I., & Fishbein, M. (1977). Attitude-behavior relations: A theoretical analysis and review of empirical research. *Psychological Bulletin*, *84*(5), 888-918.
- Alimi, E. Y., Hirsch-Hoefler, S. (2012). Structure of Political Opportunities and Threats, and Movement-Counter-movement Interaction in Segmented Composite Regimes, *Comparative Politics*, *44*, 331–349.
- Arieli, S. (2013). *A Border between Us and You*. Tel Aviv: Yeditoth Ahronoth Books (Hebrew)
- Ayduk, O., Mischel, W., & Downey, G. (2002). Attentional mechanisms linking rejection to hostile reactivity: The role of “hot” versus “cool” focus. *Psychological Science*, *13*(5), 443-448.
- Billig, M., Kohn, R., & Levav, I. (2006). Anticipatory stress in the population facing forced removal from the Gaza Strip. *The Journal of Nervous & Mental Disease*, *194*(3), 195-200.
- Bridges, W. (1986). Managing organizational transitions. *Organizational dynamics*, *15*, 24-33.
- Byman, D., & Sachs, N. (2012). The Rise of Settler Terrorism: The West Bank's Other Violent Extremists. *Foreign Affairs*, *91*, 73-86.
- Carmichael, C. (2003). *Ethnic cleansing in the Balkans: nationalism and the destruction of tradition*. New York: Routledge.
- Čehajić-Clancy, S., Effron, D. A., Halperin, E., Liberman, V., & Ross, L. D. (2011). Affirmation, acknowledgment of in-group responsibility, group-based guilt, and

support for reparative measures. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, *101*(2), 256-270.

Central Bureau of Statistics, State of Israel. (2016). *Statistical Abstract of Israel* - No. 66 Subject 2. Table 2.17. Localities and Population, by Population Group, District, Sub-District and Natural Region.

Conner, D. R., & Patterson, R. W. (1982). Building commitment to organizational change. *Training & Development Journal*.

Ehrlich, G. A., & Gramzow, R. H. (2015). The Politics of Affirmation Theory: When Group-Affirmation Leads to Greater Ingroup Bias. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *41*(8), 1110-1122.

Ford, J. D., Ford, L. W., & D'Amelio, A. (2008). Resistance to change: The rest of the story. *Academy of Management Review*, *33*(2), 362-377.

Fox, S. (1998). *The psychology of resistance to change*. Ramat-Gan, Israel: Bar Ilan University Press.

Gerrity, E.T., & Steinglass, P. (2003). Relocation stress following catastrophic events. In Ursano, Robert J., Carole S. Fullerton, & Ann E. Norwood (Eds.), *Terrorism and Disaster: Individual and Community Mental Health Interventions* (pp. 259-286). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Ginges, J., & Atran, S. (2013). Sacred values and cultural conflict. In Michelle J. Gelfand, Chi-Yue Chiu, & Ying-yi Hong (Eds.), *Advances Culture and Psychology*, Vol. 4. New York: Oxford University Press.

Haklai, O., & Loizides, N. (2015). *Settlers in contested lands: territorial disputes and ethnic conflicts*. Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press.

Hall, B. J., Hobfoll, S. E., Palmieri, P. A., Canetti-Nisim, D., Shapira, O., Johnson, R. J., & Galea, S. (2008). The psychological impact of impending forced settler disengagement in Gaza: Trauma and posttraumatic growth. *Journal of Traumatic Stress, 21*(1), 22-29.

Hassner, R. E. (2003). "To halve and to hold": Conflicts over sacred space and the problem of indivisibility. *Security Studies, 12*(4), 1-33.

Hirsch-Hoefler, S., Saguy, T. & Hirschberger, G. (forthcoming). The Psychological Effects of Forced Evacuation: The Case of Jewish Settlers in the West Bank. In Golan, G. & Sher, G. (Eds.) *Spoilers and Israeli Peacemaking*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Hirsch-Hoefler, S., Canetti, D., & Eiran, E. (2015). Radicalizing Religion? Religious Identity and Settlers' Behavior. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, 6*, 500-518.

Hirsch-Hoefler, S., & Mudde, C. (2013). Right-Wing Movements. In Donna Della Porta, Bert Klandermans, and Doug McAdam (Eds.) *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social and Political Movements* (pp. 1116-1124). New Jersey: Blackwell Publishing, Ltd.

Hirschberger, G., & Ein-Dor, T. (2006). Defenders of a lost cause: Terror management and violent resistance to the disengagement plan. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 32*(6), 761-769.

Hirschberger, G., & Hirsch-Hoefler, S. (2016). *Socio-demographic and ideological differences among West-Bank Settlers: A comparison of four distinct groups*. (Issue brief). Commanders for Israel's Security (CIS).

Hirschberger, G., & Shaham, D. (2012). The impermanence of all things: An existentialist stance on personal and social change. In M. Mikulincer and P. Shaver (Eds.), *Meaning, mortality, and choice: The social psychology of existential concerns*, (pp. 111-125). Washington, DC: APA.

Hobfoll, S. E. (1989). Conservation of resources: A new attempt at conceptualizing stress. *American psychologist*, *44*(3), 513-524.

Hon, A. H., Bloom, M., & Crant, J. M. (2014). Overcoming resistance to change and enhancing creative performance. *Journal of Management*, *40*(3), 919-941.

Jarvis, W.B.G. (2008). *DirectRT* [Computer software]. New York, NY: Empirisoft.

Kaase, M., & Marsh, A. (1979). "Political Action: A Theoretical Perspective," In Samuel Barnes & Max Kaase (Eds.), *Political Action: Mass Participation in Five Western Democracies* (pp. 27–56). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Kahn, D. T., Liberman, V., Halperin, E., & Ross, L. (2016). Intergroup sentiments, political identity, and their influence on responses to potentially ameliorative proposals in the context of an intractable conflict. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *60*(1), 61-88.

Kahneman, D., & Tversky, A. (1979). Prospect theory: An analysis of decision under risk. *Econometrica*, *47*, 263-91.

Katz, S., & Florian, V. (1987). A comprehensive theoretical model of psychological reaction to loss. *The International Journal of Psychiatry in Medicine*, *16*(4), 325-345.

Lewin, K. (1947). Frontiers in group dynamics: Concept, method and reality in social science; social equilibria and social change. *Human relations*, 1, 5-41.

Lustick, I. S. (1993). *Unsettled States, Disputed Lands: Britain and Ireland, France and Algeria, Israel and the West Bank-Gaza*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Mendelsohn, B. (2014). State Authority in the Balance: The Israeli State and the Messianic Settler Movement, *International Studies Review* 16, 499-521.

Oreg, S. (2006). Personality, context, and resistance to organizational change. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 15, 73-101.

Peace Now. *West Bank Settlements - Facts and Figures* (2016, February 05). Retrieved October 04, 2017, from <http://peacenow.org.il/en/west-bank-settlements-facts-and-figures>

Prentice, D. A., & Miller, D. T. (1993). Pluralistic ignorance and alcohol use on campus: some consequences of misperceiving the social norm. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, 64(2), 243-256.

Ross, L., & Ward, A. (1995). Psychological barriers to dispute resolution. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 27, 255-304.

Rubin, D. (2015). Haredi Settlers: The Non-Zionist Jewish Settlers of the West Bank. In *Citizenship after Orientalism* (pp. 70-97). Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Sheleg, Y. (2004). *The political and social ramifications of evacuating settlements in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip* (Vol. 42). Jerusalem: Israel Democracy Institute.

Shuman, E., Cohen-Chen, S., Hirsch-Hoefler, S., & Halperin, E. (2016).

Explaining normative versus non-normative action: The role of implicit theories. *Political Psychology*, 37(6), 835-852.

Spencer-Rodgers, J., Major, B., Forster, D. E., & Peng, K. (2016). The power of affirming group values: Group affirmation buffers the self-esteem of women exposed to blatant sexism. *Self And Identity*, 15(4), 413-431.

Tausch, N., Becker, J. C., Spears, R., Christ, O., Saab, R., Singh, P., & Siddiqui, R. N. (2011). Explaining radical group behavior: Developing emotion and efficacy routes to normative and nonnormative collective action. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, 101(1), 129-148.

Taylor, D. M. & de la Sablonniere, R. (2014). *Toward constructive change in Aboriginal communities: A social psychological perspective*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press.

Tenenbaum, K., & Eiran, E. (2005) Israeli Settlement Activity in the West Bank and Gaza: A Brief History, *Negotiation Journal*, 21, 171–175.

Toft, D. M. (2002). Indivisible territory, geographic concentration, and ethnic war. *Security Studies*, 12(2), 82-119.

Wright, S. C., Taylor, D. M., & Moghaddam, F. M. (1990). Responding to membership in a disadvantaged group: From acceptance to collective protest. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, 58(6), 994-1003.

Figures

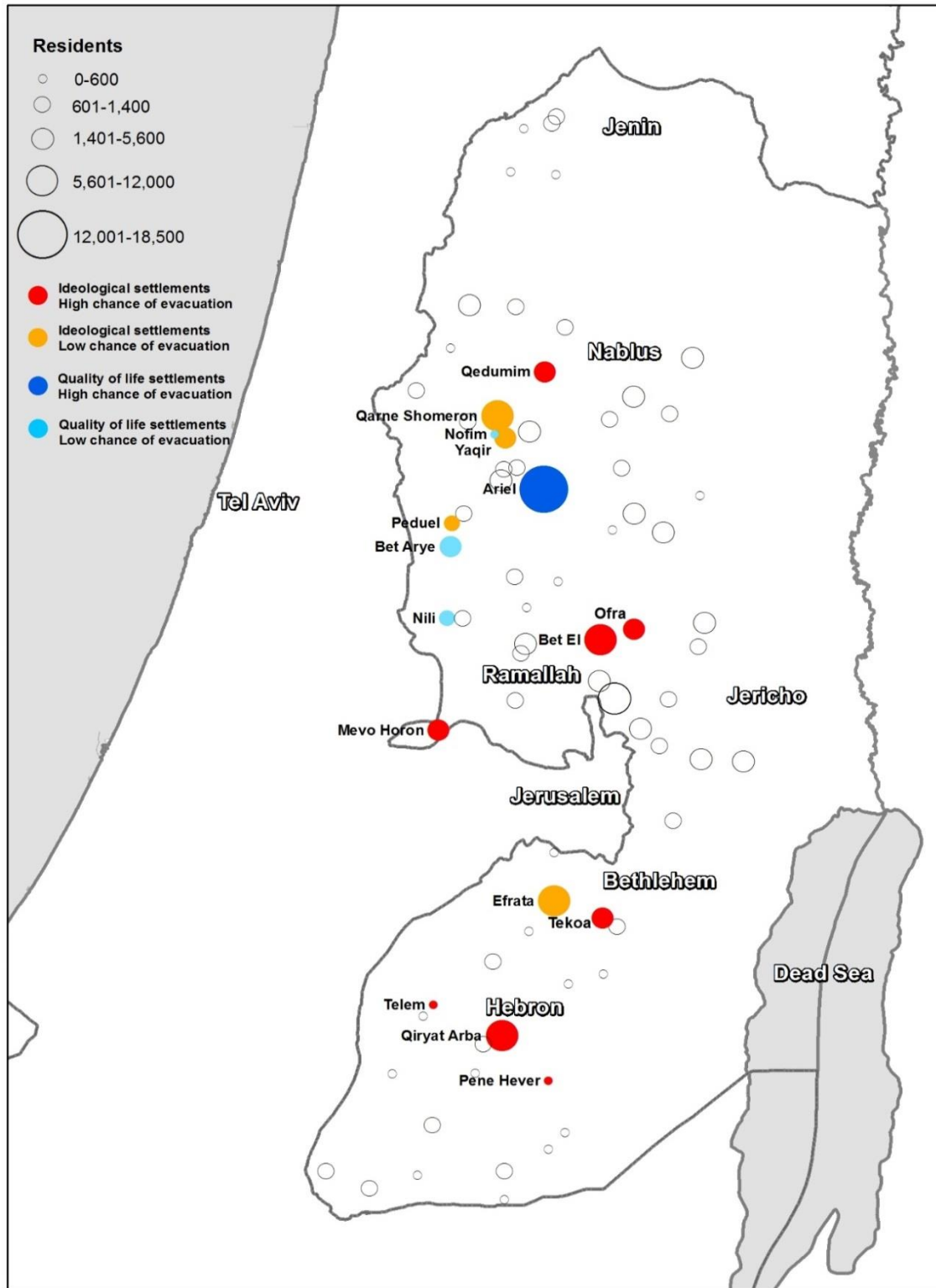


Figure 1. Sampled settlements. Arc GIS map of sampled Israeli settlements

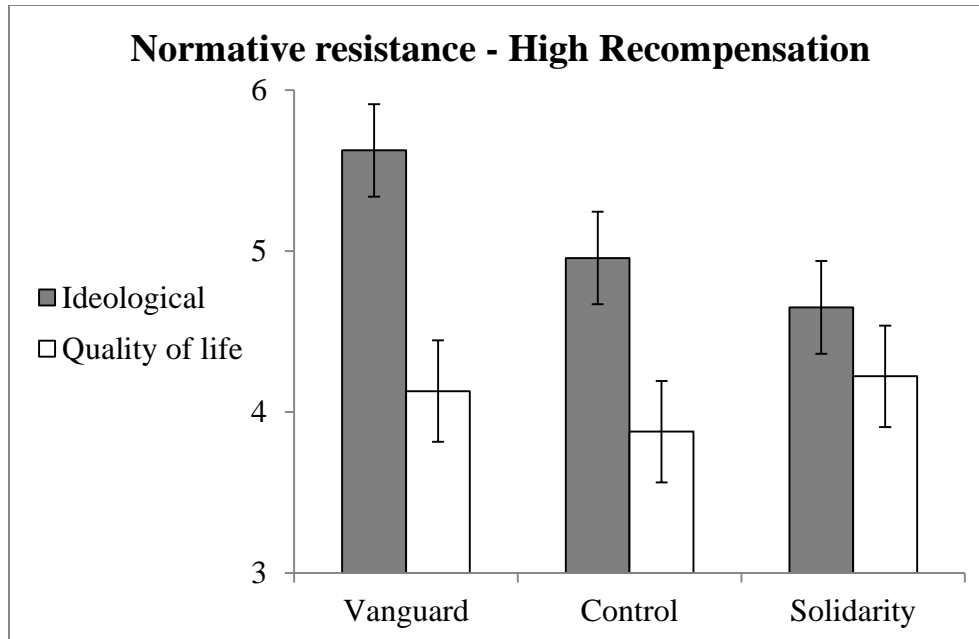


Figure 2.

Mean estimates (controlling for size of majority) for normative resistance among ideological and quality of life settlers in the high recompensation condition. Error bars indicate standard error.

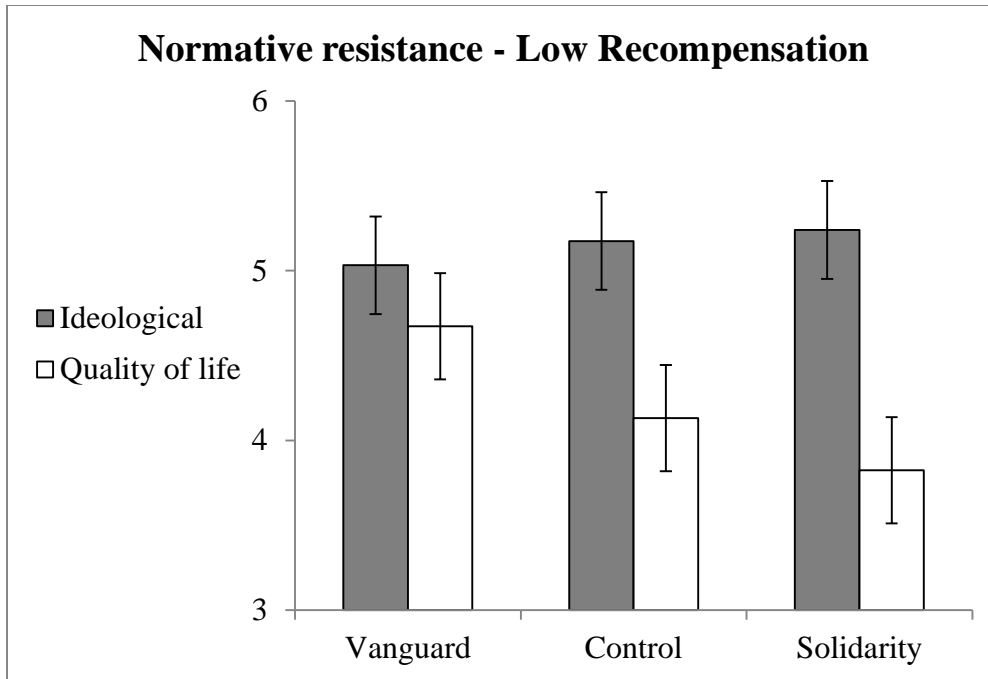


Figure 3.

Mean estimates (controlling for size of majority) for normative resistance among ideological and quality of life settlers in the low recompensation condition. Error bars indicate standard error.

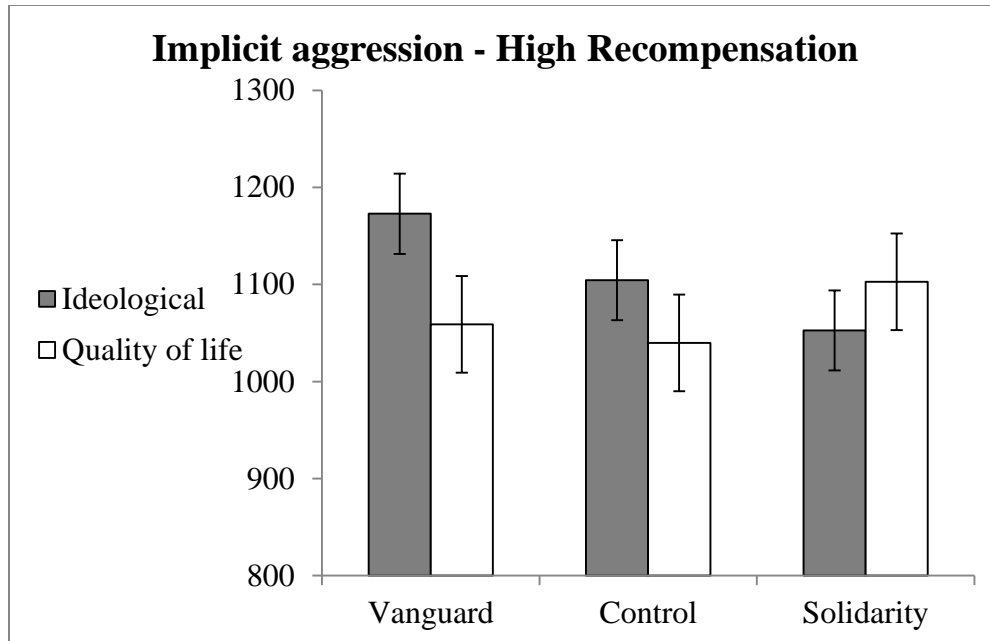


Figure 4.

Mean estimates (controlling for size of majority) for implicit aggression among ideological and quality of life settlers in the high recompensation condition. The values have been subtracted from 2000 ms so that high values indicate a high degree of implicit aggression. Error bars indicate standard error.

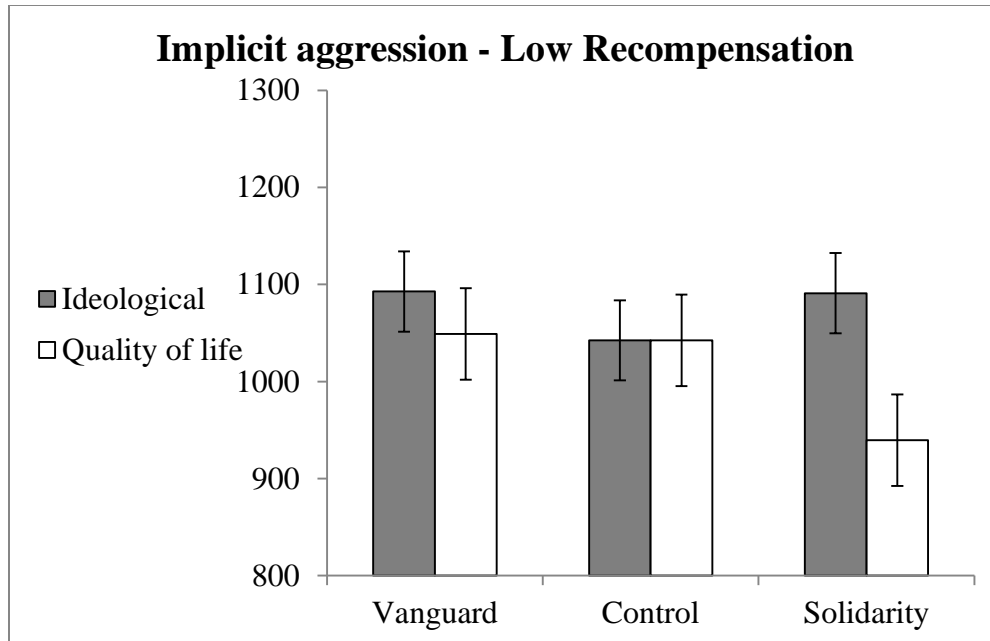


Figure 5.

Mean estimates (controlling for size of majority) for implicit aggression among ideological and quality of life settlers in the low recompensation condition. The values have been subtracted from 2000 ms so that high values indicate a high degree of implicit aggression. Error bars indicate standard error.