

The Effect of News Coverage Concerning the Opponents' Reaction to a Concession on Its Evaluation in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

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This research studied the effect of news coverage on evaluation of concessions offered in negotiation. Specifically, it examined the influence of a press report concerning the opponents' reaction to a proposed concession—stating that the opponent has rejected the concession or that the opponent has accepted it—on the evaluation of a concession in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The research also examined the effects of the political affiliation of respondents—as hawks or as doves in the conflict—on their evaluation of the concession. An experimental design was employed in which Israeli-Jewish respondents read a news report that described a concession proposed by the Israelis in the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. In line with the research hypotheses, the findings demonstrated the operation of a reactive reevaluation effect, whereby Israeli-Jewish respondents evaluated a compromise proposal more positively when it was framed in the news press report as rejected by the Palestinians than when the same compromise was framed as having been accepted by the Palestinians. This bias was also found to affect dovish respondents, while hawkish respondents were not affected by the news coverage concerning the opponents' response to a concession.

Keywords: *news coverage; news framing; Israeli-Palestinian conflict; media in conflict; concession making; framing effects; hawks-doves; negativity effects*

The breakdown of the Israeli-Palestinian Oslo Peace process and the reeruption of violence between the two sides in late September 2000 led to intensive attempts to understand this failure (Maoz 2002; Rothstein 2002; Shikaki 2002). Part of the debates centered on the collapse of the July 2000 Camp David Summit negotiations and on the event that came to symbolize it in which the Palestinian

Authority Chairman, Yassir Arafat, rejected the compromise proposal that was offered to him by the then–Prime Minister of Israel, Ehud Barak (Maoz 2002). There evolved two major contesting claims regarding this rejection (Meital 2004; Shikaki 2002). One claim was that Barak had offered Arafat a very large (or even a maximal) concession that had included Israel yielding most of the West Bank and Gaza Strip to the Palestinians and a radical compromise in Jerusalem, and yet Arafat had rejected this proposal, thus proving unequivocally the general Palestinian unwillingness to reach a compromise in the conflict (Morris 2002a, 2002b). Yet others explained Arafat's rejection as indicating that the compromise proposed was in fact not as maximal and generous as depicted, thus clearly demonstrating the Israeli basic unwillingness to make significant compromises, necessary for the resolution of the conflict (Malley and Agha 2002).

This case, like many other cases of conflict and negotiation, exemplifies how the response of the opponent to a concession proposal can be a powerful informational cue for the parties involved. However, the effects of this response on partisans' attitudes were not yet systematically studied.

The goal of this study is to examine the extent to which news-reported information concerning the opponents' response to a compromise proposal in conflict can influence attitudes and assessments of the parties concerned.

The news media are a major source of public information on political processes and can be regarded as a crucial tool for mobilizing opinions in political and social conflicts and disputes (Iyengar 1987; Wolfsfeld 1997a, 1997b, 2002, 2004). My research relates to the effects of news coverage in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Specifically, it examines the influence of news reports concerning the Palestinian reaction to a proposed concession—stating that the Palestinians have rejected the concession or that they have accepted it—on the Jewish-Israeli evaluation of this concession. This question is studied by focusing on the individual recipient and using an approach that deals with framing and processing of political information in conflict, and with effects of news framing.

Framing and Processing Political Information in Conflict

Subjective comprehension of social reality, perceptions, interpretations, and processes of biased inference play an important role in conflicts and disputes in society. Conflict situations are typified by high levels of uncertainty, alongside a strong drive to interpret and to explain the opponents' behavior, and to try to form expectations regarding the opponents' behavior and to predict it, as well as a strong motivation toward self-justification, on one hand, and criticism of the opponent, on the other (Rosenberg and Wolfsfeld 1977). Under these circumstances, people tend to subjectively perceive and interpret information and messages relayed in conflict (Hirshberg 1993; Maoz 2004). A number of studies have pointed to a phenomenon whereby the affiliation of people to a

side in conflict, and attitudes related to this affiliation, lead them to form biased interpretations of information or messages relayed during the course of a dispute (Griffin and Ross 1991; Lord et al. 1979; Vallone et al. 1985).

Subjective perception of information in conflict and in social disputes is importantly affected by the way in which this information is framed by the media or by other sources. Framing theory posits that the way in which information is presented influences the responses individuals will have to the issue at hand (Nabi 2003). As Entman (1993: 52) argued in a frequently quoted definition, "To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text in such a way to promote a particular problem definition, casual interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation."

Several prominent studies conducted in a variety of contexts provide evidence for framing effects in which subtle alterations in the framing or presentation of the same information or message led to different responses and evaluations (Iyengar 1987; Gilliam et al. 1996). These studies have demonstrated how language choice influences risky decision making (Kahneman and Tversky 1984), how television news framing affects attributions of responsibility for both the causes of and the treatments for social problems (Iyengar 1991), and how news coverage of political campaigns influence how the public thinks about political processes (Cappella and Jamieson 1997). In sum, these research programs indicate that the way information is presented can influence how people understand, evaluate, and act on a problem or issue (Nabi 2003).

Important types of information relayed in conflict situations are concession and solutions offered by the sides during the course of negotiations between them. The way in which these concessions are framed or presented can influence the sides' perception and evaluations of these concessions and solution proposals and their readiness to agree to them, as well as the chances of reaching an agreement between the sides.

Effects of Framing on Evaluation of Concessions

As a result of the inherent ambiguity of negotiation situations, in which in many cases, the issues being negotiated are of uncertain value, the way these issues are framed or presented can influence how the sides perceive, judge, and evaluate proposed concessions and solutions. In this specific context of peace making, Geva et al. (1996) define framing as introducing organizing themes into a policy debate that affect how the public views a political issue. They argue that framing is especially feasible in the area of foreign and security affairs, where the public has relatively limited independent knowledge about events.

Until now, there have been few studies conducted that were directly concerned with the effect of framing on the evaluation of concessions. One of the few, prominent attempts to systematically research this topic was in a series of

studies conducted in the context of the Israeli-Arab conflict that demonstrated the effects of framing peace processes in terms of gains or losses on attitudes of Israeli Jews and Arabs, as well as of Jordanians, toward peace agreement and toward potential territorial concessions (Geva et al. 1996; Mintz and Geva 1997).

This study relates to another important series of studies on factors affecting the evaluation of concessions that were conducted by Lee Ross and his colleagues (Ross 1995; Ross and Stillinger 1991). These studies were the first to demonstrate the *reactive devaluation effect*—in which presenting or framing concessions as offered by the opponent (as compared to framing the same concessions or solution proposals as ones that had been offered by ones' own side) caused sides in conflict to devalue these concessions (Ross and Stillinger 1991).

The operation of the reactive devaluation effect was also demonstrated in another study, which was done within the realistic context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Maoz et al. 2002). This study found that Jewish-Israeli respondents tended to evaluate authentic proposals for interim arrangements, taken from ongoing negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians, as less pro-Israeli when presented to them as offered by the Palestinian delegation to the negotiation and as more pro-Israeli when the same proposals were presented as offered by the Israeli delegation.

Effects of News Framing

Because citizens depend primarily on the media for information about the political world, news coverage represents a powerful vehicle for political framing effects.

The news media is thus recognized as a major framing agent that can significantly influence audiences' political and social perceptions (Iyengar 1987). A sizeable amount of research has been conducted on the effects of framing of news reports. It can be considered amply established that variations in news frames are capable of creating substantial differences in audiences' responses, interpretations, and judgments. Alterations in the presentations of news reports have been found to influence the perception of events and issues as well as attitudes toward them (Capella and Jamieson 1997; Iyengar 1991; McLeod and Detenber 1999; Price et al. 1997).

However, only scarce research attention has been given to empirically testing the effects of news coverage or media framing on perceptions of concessions proposed in a conflict. One such study, again, conducted in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, demonstrated the "Positive Media Effect of Third-Party Communications in Negotiations." Specifically, this study found that that a press reported concession appeal was judged more favorably when it was framed in the news report as an "American appeal" that was made by U.S. officials as compared to the same appeal when framed as a "Palestinian appeal" made by Palestinian representatives (Maoz 1999).

This effect of news framing on the evaluation of a concession appeal can be seen as resulting from a cognitive process in which news frames increase access to certain information and beliefs that, in turn, influence problem interpretation and decision making (Capella and Jamieson 1997; Iyengar 1991; Mintz and Geva 1997; Nabi 2003). More specifically, and in terms of major theories of social information processing, this effect can be understood as reflecting a process in which stereotypical cues concerning the identity of the offerer that are presented in the news report elicit expectations that affect evaluation of the concession (Fiske and Neuberg 1990; Gilliam et al. 1996; Trope 1989).

For example, framing a concession as one that was offered by the Palestinians can elicit in Jewish-Israeli respondents stereotypical beliefs or expectations such as "Palestinians are against the Israelis" or "The steps taken by Palestinians in the conflict are necessarily bad for the Israelis." These beliefs lead to the evaluation of the concession as negative for Israelis. Thus, a concession that is categorized on the basis of its news framing as a "Palestinian concession" will be evaluated consistently with this categorization and, with the expectations that arise as a result of this categorization, as anti-Israeli (Fiske and Neuberg 1990). In line with this informational conceptualization, it can be predicted that also framing a concession in terms of the opponents' response to it, for example, framing it as a concession that was *rejected* by the opponent, will also influence the evaluation of the concession.

An important type of information that is relayed in negotiation processes is information concerning the opponents' reaction to a proposed concession. Within the dynamics of negotiation, the opponents' reaction is a significant cue, which indicates the value of this concession for the opponent and, as a result, for the offerer.

An especially informative response in the negotiation between the sides is the decision of one side to reject (not to accept) a concession proposal offered by the other side. Information given in the context of the proposal that defines it as a proposal that was rejected by the opponent can serve as an important cue indicating the value of this concession for those who proposed it. Assumptions and expectations of sides in a negotiation that are related to the stereotype of the opponent in a conflict, such as "The opponent is against our side" or "A proposal that is bad for the opponent, can be good for our side"—zero-sum perceptions of incompatibility in the interests of sides in a conflict—can lead to evaluation of a concession proposal that was rejected by the opponent as more beneficial for one's own side.

In other words, an effect of *reactive reevaluation* is suggested here, which complements the reactive devaluation effect documented in previous studies (Maaz et al. 2002; Ross 1995). The reactive reevaluation effect relates to the tendency of sides in conflict to assign greater value to concessions and solutions that are framed as rejected by their opponents, so that the very fact that the opponent has rejected the proposal causes it to be valued more in the eyes of those who offered it.¹

In the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it was thus hypothesized that

Hypothesis 1: An effect of news framing of a concession proposal will be found where an Israeli concession that is framed as rejected by the Palestinians will be evaluated by Jewish-Israeli respondents as more beneficial to Israel in comparison to their evaluation of the same concession when framed as accepted by the Palestinians.

An experimental design was employed to empirically test this effect. It manipulated the information given in the press report on the Palestinian response to an Israeli concession proposal that was presented as being either acceptance or rejection. The concession proposal used in this study was a proposal of principles for an Israeli-Palestinian permanent agreement. It was fashioned after proposals that appeared in the Israeli press during that time and dealt with Israel conceding a significant part of the territories in the West Bank to the Palestinians. Though Israeli territorial concessions are regarded as a major point in most of the proposed Israeli-Palestinian arrangements, this issue is highly controversial within Israel, with large and influential factions in the Jewish public strongly opposing such concessions (Wolfsfeld 1997b).

It is thus important to determine the possible role that the news media, an essential element in conflict and conflict resolution (Wolfsfeld 1997a, 1997b, 2004), and specifically news framing, can play in mobilizing Israeli public opinion regarding these issues.

Political Affiliation and the Evaluation of Concessions

So far, I have dealt with how the framing of political concessions may affect recipients' opinions and attitudes toward conceding in negotiations. However, attitudes toward concession making may also depend upon attributes of the partisan audience, such as their affiliation with specific political parties on their side in the conflict and their degree of initial support of the peace process (Geva et al. 1996).

A major distinction in Israeli political life is between hawks and doves. This distinction is used in Israeli public-political discourse for organizing beliefs regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict in general and the Palestinian problem in particular. Hawks take a relatively uncompromising position in the conflict with the Palestinians, supporting the notion of a greater Israel that implies keeping the territories (annexation) and the Jewish settlements in the territories. Doves, in contrast, support compromise with the Palestinians, advocate yielding all or most of the West Bank and the Gaza strip territories in return for peace, and oppose Jewish settlement in the territories (Bar-Tal et al. 1994). These differences in opinions and in attitudes toward the other side in conflict

can lead one to expect that compared to Israeli doves, hawks will express less favorable attitudes toward a given Israeli concession proposal.

Hypothesis 2: An effect of the political identification of the respondents will be found where Jewish-Israeli hawks will evaluate an Israeli concession proposal more negatively—as less beneficial for Israel—than doves.

In addition, due to their different conceptions of the conflict, and of the opponent in the dispute, Israeli hawks and doves may be differentially prone to biases and framing effects when evaluating concessions proposed in the conflict. Findings of previous research have indicated that framing had differential effects on Jewish-Israeli respondents that were affiliated with dovish versus hawkish political parties (Geva et al. 1996). In the specific context of reactive devaluation effects, it was found that Jewish-Israeli doves were more affected than hawks in their evaluation of concessions in the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations (Maoz et al. 2002). One plausible explanation for these findings relates to a conceptual ceiling effect of the perceived negativity of the concession. According to this explanation, hawks, who basically view conceding to the opponents as negative and as outside their range of acceptance, are thus not further influenced by the framing of the concession as offered by the opponent. In line with this, it can be also expected that hawks will be less influenced than doves by the news framing of a concession proposal as accepted or as rejected by the opponent.

Hypothesis 3: An interaction effect will be found where the news framing of an Israeli concession proposal as accepted or rejected by the Palestinians will have a larger effect on doves' evaluation of the concession than on hawks' evaluation of it.

Rejection can be defined as an informational cue that carries a negative valence and thus may have a larger impact on information processing (Wyer and Srull 1981). It is therefore interesting to see if hawks' negative perception of the concession proposal will override this effect, and thus they will still not be influenced by the news framing of the proposal.

The above-described effects on the evaluation of a concession proposal were examined in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. In the experiment described below, Jewish-Israeli hawks and doves read a news report that described a concession proposed by the Israelis in the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. To one group of doves and to one group of hawks the news report described the proposal as *rejected* by the Palestinians. To a second group of doves and a second group of hawks the news report described the *same* concession proposal as *accepted* by the Palestinians. The participants were asked to rate the proposal on scales of positivity and negativity.

Table 1
Experimental conditions

Political Affiliation	Framing of Concession Proposal	
	Accepted by Palestinians	Rejected by Palestinians
Doves	1	2
Hawks	3	4

Method

Research Design

To assess the effect of the framing of the proposal and of the respondents' political affiliation on their judgments of a press-reported concession proposal, a bifactorial 2×2 research design was employed. The first independent variable (the manipulation variable) was the framing of the concession proposal in the news report (as a proposal rejected by the Palestinians vs. a proposal accepted by the Palestinians). The second independent variable (selective variable) was the political affiliation of the participants (hawks vs. doves). Respondents from each political affiliation group were randomly assigned to the "Rejected by the Palestinians" or the "Accepted by the Palestinians" experimental conditions as illustrated in Table 1.

Participants

A total of 156 Jewish-Israelis participated in this experiment.² The majority of participants were social science undergraduates. The participants were recompensed for their participation in the experiment, or did so to fulfill one of their course requirements. The experiment was conducted with participants on an individual basis, or in groups of between 5 and 30 people.

Procedure

The respondents were told that they would be participating in a study investigating the way in which people understand, judge, and evaluate news reports about proposed concessions in the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations and were asked to supply demographic information that included gender, age, and nationality. Then they were exposed to a printed news report, presented to them as a recent item from the front pages of one of the major newspapers in Israel (*Haaretz*). This news item reported on a proposal of principles for an Israeli-Palestinian permanent agreement. It was fashioned after similar news items that appeared in the Israeli press during that time and included points that dealt with two major issues: (1) significant Israeli withdrawal from territories in the West Bank or (2) Palestinian commitment to clamp down the infrastructure of terror.

For one group of participants ($n = 81$) (58 doves and 23 hawks), the news report described the proposal as one that had been offered by the Israelis and *rejected* by the Palestinians. For a second group of participants ($n = 66$) (45 doves and 21 hawks), the news report described a completely identical proposal as one that had been offered by the Israelis and *accepted* by the Palestinians. After reading the proposal participants completed the research questionnaire.

Description of the Research Questionnaire

The questionnaire comprised the following sections:

1. Manipulation Check

To test if participants had correctly grasped the identity of the side offering the proposal and the side responding to it, and the nature of the response to the proposal, as described in the heading of the news report that they had read, they were asked to indicate

1. what was the topic of the proposal they had read,
2. which party was offering the proposal (national affiliation),
3. which party was responding to the proposal (national affiliation), and
4. what was the response to the proposal.

2. Evaluation of the Proposal

Participants answered questions relating to their evaluation of the proposal as pro-Israeli and as pro-Palestinian on the following two scales:

1. The extent to which the proposal is "good for the Palestinians." This was rated on a 7-point scale where 1 equals *very bad for the Palestinians*, 4 is *balanced*, and 7 equals *very good for the Palestinians*.
2. The extent to which the proposal is "good for the Israelis." This was rated on a 7-point scale where 1 equals *very bad for the Israelis*, 4 is *balanced*, and 7 equals *very good for the Israelis*.

3. Political Affiliation Questionnaire

The participants were asked to answer two questions concerning their political affiliation, as follows:

1. rank their political identification with doves or with hawks on a 7-point scale when 1 = *hawk* and 7 = *dove*; and
2. note the party or political movement with which they identify, out of the parties and political movements active in Israel.

The data received from this questionnaire was used to divide the participants into categories, according to political affiliation, by applying the following rules:

1. Participants who rated 5, 6, or 7 on the hawk-dove scale, and noted their identification with a party or political movement that was categorized by three expert independent judges as representing the dove faction (for example, the Labor Party), were defined as doves.
2. Participants who rated 1, 2, or 3 on the hawk-dove scale, and noted their identification with a party or political movement that was categorized by three expert independent judges as representing the hawk faction (for example, the Likud Party), were defined as hawks.
3. Participants who rated 4 on the hawk-dove scale, and those whose personal identification as dove or hawk was inconsistent with the political party or movement with which they identified, could not be clearly allocated to either category for the variable political affiliation. These participants were not included in the sample used for the purpose of calculating the results of this experiment.

Debriefing

Once the questionnaire was completed, the participants were asked for their opinion about the study, their impression of the concession proposal, and how they felt while filling in the questionnaire. Following this, the objective and the nature of the experiment were explained to the participants.

Results

Results for the manipulation check revealed that out of 156 participants who originally took part in the study, 5 answered questions relating to the identity of the side offering the proposal, identity of the side responding to the proposal, or the nature of the response to the proposal in a way that was inconsistent with the information that was presented to them in the questionnaire they had received (the 5 included 2 doves from the experimental group "A proposal rejected by the Palestinians" and 3 hawks from the experimental group "A proposal accepted by the Palestinians"). These participants' questionnaires were excluded from the study and are not included in the sample for this experiment. Four more participants that could not be allocated to either category of hawks or doves (2 were in the experimental group "A proposal accepted by the Palestinians" and 2 were in the experimental group "A proposal rejected by the Palestinians") were also excluded from the experimental sample.

To test the research hypotheses, participants' ratings of the news reported proposal as pro-Palestinian and as pro-Israeli was subjected to a two-way analysis of variance, where the factors of the news framing of the proposal (as rejected or as accepted) and the political affiliation of the participants (doves or hawks) were tested between respondents. The results of the analysis of variance confirmed the research hypotheses. In accordance with the first hypothesis, Israeli Jews evaluated the concession proposal in a more positive way—as less pro-Palestinian and as more pro-Israeli—when it was presented in the

Table 2

Means (and standard deviations) of "pro-Palestinian" ratings as a function of the news framing of the concession proposal and the political affiliation of the participants

Political Affiliation	Framing of the Concession Proposal	
	Accepted by Palestinians	Rejected by Palestinians
Doves	5.27 (1.14)	4.17 (1.44)
Hawks	5.71 (0.90)	5.74 (1.25)

news report as rejected by the Palestinians in comparison to when it was presented as accepted by the Palestinians. In line with the second hypothesis of this study, participants whose political affiliation was that of doves evaluated the concession in a more positive way than did participants whose political affiliation was that of hawks.

In accordance with the third hypothesis of this study, the effect of news framing of the proposal was greater for doves than for hawks. The ratings of the hawkish participants were almost entirely unaffected by the framing of the proposal in the news report as accepted or as rejected by the Palestinians. Following is a detailed presentation of the results for each of the separate measures.

Pro-Palestinian Measure

An analysis of variance performed on the pro-Palestinian ratings revealed a significant main effect for the framing of the proposal in the news report $F(1,146) = 5.55, p < .02$; a significant effect for the political identification of the participants, $F(1,146) = 19.68, p < .001$; and a significant effect for the interaction between the framing of the proposal and the political affiliation of the participants $F(1,146) = 6.07, p < .01$. Table 2 presents the findings for the pro-Palestinian measure for each of the experimental conditions.

The findings in Table 2 illustrate that in accordance with the research hypotheses, the concession proposal was rated as less pro-Palestinian when presented in the news report as rejected by the Palestinians than when presented as accepted by the Palestinians. However, also in accordance with the research hypotheses, this difference in rating according to the news framing of the proposal was found among doves but not among hawks. The hawks rated the concession as pro-Palestinian to a relatively high and almost equal extent, whether it was framed as accepted by the Palestinians or as rejected by them.

In line with these findings, a *t*-test examining the effect of the framing of the proposal on its rating by dovish respondents revealed a significant effect, $t(101) = -4.18, p < .001$; while there was no significant effect of the framing of the concession on its rating by hawkish respondents, $t(42) < 1$.

Table 3

Means (and standard deviations) of "pro-Israeli" ratings as a function of the news framing of the concession proposal and the political affiliation of the participants

Political Affiliation	Framing of Concession Proposal	
	Accepted by Palestinians	Rejected by Palestinians
Doves	3.87 (1.29)	5.10 (1.24)
Hawks	2.76 (0.89)	2.56 (1.19)

Pro-Israeli Measure

An analysis of variance performed on the pro-Israeli ratings revealed a significant main effect for the news framing of the proposal, $F(1, 146) = 10.82$, $p < .001$; a significant main effect for the political affiliation of the respondents, $F(1, 146) = 55.85$; and a significant effect for the interaction between the framing of the proposal and the political affiliation of the respondents, $F(1, 146) = 5.74$, $p < 0.02$.

Table 3 presents the findings for the pro-Israeli ratings for each of the experimental conditions. The findings in Table 3 illustrate that in accordance with the research hypotheses, the concession proposal was rated as pro-Israeli to a much greater extent when it was presented as rejected by the Palestinians than when it was presented as accepted by the Palestinians. However, and also in accordance with the research hypotheses, dovish respondents but not hawkish ones were affected by the news framing of the proposal. Hawks rated the compromise as pro-Israeli at a relatively low and similar extent whether it was presented to them in the news report as accepted or as rejected by the Palestinians. In line with these findings, a *t*-test examining the effect of the framing of the concession proposal on dovish respondents' ratings of the concession revealed a significant effect, $t(101) = 4.94$, $p < .001$; while there was no significant effect of framing of the concession on the hawkish respondents' ratings of the concession, $t(42) < 1$.

Discussion

In accordance with the research hypotheses, this study demonstrated the operation of a reactive reevaluation effect, whereby Israeli-Jewish respondents evaluate a compromise proposal more positively—as more pro-Israeli and as less pro-Palestinian—when it is framed in a news report rejected by the Palestinians than when the same compromise is framed as having been accepted by the Palestinians.

Consistent with findings of previous research on framing peace agreements in the Israeli Arab conflict (Geva et al. 1996), my study indicated that framing

had differential effects on Jewish-Israeli respondents that were affiliated with dovish versus hawkish political parties. More specifically, like other cognitive biases in the evaluation of concession that were studied in the Israeli-Palestinian context (Maoz et al. 2002), this bias was also found to affect dovish respondents, while hawkish respondents were not affected by the news framing of the concession proposal.

These findings concerning the effect of the opponents' reaction to a concession are of innovative value. Despite the significant role reactions such as rejection or acceptance of a proposed concession play in the dynamics of the negotiation process, their effects on perceptions and evaluations in conflict have not yet been systematically studied.

In addition, the findings of this study strengthen and extend the findings of previous studies, according to which hawks are influenced by bias mechanisms to a smaller extent than are doves in their evaluation of compromises in the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. Previous research has repeatedly found that the presentation of a compromise as one that was offered by the opponent decreases the value of that compromise among doves but does not influence the evaluation of the compromise among hawks (Maoz et al. 2002). Extending on these findings, the present study found that also presenting an additional informational cue that carries a strong negative valence, and thus may have a more powerful effect on attitudes and evaluations (Bizer and Petty 2005; Lau 1985; Wyer and Srull 1981), that is, framing the compromise as one that was *rejected* by the opponent, increases the value of the compromise among doves but still does not influence the evaluation of the compromise among hawks.

Concession Framing and News Framing Effect

More generally, my findings indicate that the way in which the news media frame concession proposals that are exchanged between the sides in conflict can significantly influence public attitudes or support toward these concessions.

Several research programs have examined news framing and news coverage in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, studying the processes underlying the evolution, production, and construction of news frames; the contents of frames; the competition between news frames; and the dynamics and factors that make certain frames the dominant or hegemonic ones in conflict (Liebes 1997; Wolfsfeld 2002, 2004) as well as the meanings, connotations, symbolism, and interpretation of news frames in the conflict (Liebes 1997, 1998). A significant part of these studies focused on news framing and news coverage of specific events or phases in this conflict such as framing of the first Palestinian uprising in the territories (1987–1993) (Cohen and Wolfsfeld 1993), news coverage and framing of the Oslo Peace process (1993–2000) (Levine 2003; Wolfsfeld 1997a, 1997b, 2004), news coverage and framing of the second Palestinian uprising and of terrorists attacks on Israel (2000–2003) (Liebes and First 2003; Liebes and Kampf

2004; Wolfsfeld 2001), and finally, perceptions of hostile media coverage during the Israeli disengagement from the Gaza strip (Tsfati and Cohen 2005).

The present study completes and continues these studies by taking another research approach to news frames that examines their *effects* on audiences³ in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict while focusing on one particular news frame relating to the specific issue of compromise proposals made by the sides in the conflict.

In terms of previous research on news framing effects, prominent studies in this domain have documented that news frames shape how readers and viewers interpret specific issues or events (Nelson et al. 1997), attributions of responsibility (Iyengar 1991), and evaluations of political actions (Cappella and Jamieson 1997). The present study ties news framing effects more closely to conflict and conflict resolution, showing how subtle alterations in the framing of a news-reported concession proposal can significantly influence audience response to this concession.

Framing as Rejected and the Negativity Effect

Our study concerning the effect of framing a political issue (concession) as *rejected* by a target person (in this case, the opponent) can be also be seen as linked to the psychological tradition of research on the negativity effect (Wyer and Srull 1981), demonstrating that negative information often has a more powerful influence on attitudes and evaluations than positive information. For example, it was found that negative information has a stronger impact on political candidates' evaluation as compared to positive information (Lau 1985). More specifically relevant to this case, a recent study has demonstrated the effect of valence framing on the strength and resistance of political attitudes (Bizer and Petty 2005). Specifically, this study found that merely framing one's political preferences as opposing something makes these preferences stronger and more resistant to change than when framing the *same* preferences in terms of supporting something. Taken another step further and applied to this case, it may be that framing the opponents' attitudes negatively, as *rejecting* a concession, causes these attitudes of the opponent to be perceived as stronger and more stable than positively framing the preferences of the opponent as accepting or endorsing a concession. Thus, one would expect that framing a concession as rejected by the opponents will have a stronger effect on respondents' evaluations than framing the concession as accepted by them. This possibility merits further research that will examine more fully and systematically the processes and mechanisms underlying the rejection effect and make it possible to more clearly assess its relative impact on concession evaluation.

However, findings of a previous study, conducted on the evaluation of a similar concession (Maoz 1999), enables an interesting comparison of effects of framing concessions that can give one an initial indication on the relative power of the

rejection-framing effect. This study found that Jewish-Israeli doves evaluated a concession as beneficial to Israelis to a significantly lower extent ($M = 2.85$, $SD = 1.18$) when it was presented as offered by the Palestinians than when the same concession was presented as offered by American officials ($M = 4.9$, $SD = 1.29$). When taken together with the results of the present study, one can see an interesting ordering of framing effects, where a concession framed as *offered* by the Palestinians is evaluated as markedly less beneficial to Israelis (2.85) than one presented as *accepted* by them (3.87). On the other hand, a concession framed as *rejected* by the Palestinians is evaluated as being as good for the Israelis (if not even somewhat better) (5.10) as one that was offered by American officials (4.9). Though this comparison is not a full and systematic one, it still gives an interesting indication that negatively framing a concession as *rejected* by the Palestinian opponents has an equally powerful positive impact on its evaluation as framing it as *proposed* by the Americans, who are seen by Israelis as trustworthy, fair, and supportive allies in the conflict (Maoz 1999).

Social, Political, and Practical Implications

The findings of the present research have important social, political, and practical implications. These findings can help to identify expected sources of bias in negotiation processes and determine the conditions that limit the biasing effects and thus enhance the probability of the sides reaching a mutual agreement. The knowledge acquired in this research can be rendered useful in planning the procedures of the negotiation and act as a consideration in the decision of how to relay information between the sides concerning the opponents' reaction to a proposed concession.

Our findings also point to the extent to which it is possible to influence the attitudes of sides in conflict with regard to compromise proposals by manipulating the news framing of these proposals. In this respect, they are consistent with the approach of "Marketing the peace process" (Astorino-Courtois 1996, 2000; Geva et al. 1996; Mintz and Geva 1997). This approach (demonstrated in a series of studies) suggests that leaders can influence public views on peace initiatives by strategically framing the discussion of peace accords so that making the needed concessions to the other side is presented as being one's own side's best policy option in the conflict (see also Mintz and Redd [2003] for a more general discussion on strategic framing of policy issues).

More specifically, my findings indicate that emphasis put in news coverage on the nature of the opponents' response to a compromise proposal can mobilize public opinion toward objection to or support of proposals negotiated between parties in conflict.

Finally, if one returns to Arafat's rejection of the Israeli concession proposal during the July 2000 Camp David Summit, it is interesting to note that one

explanation of this rejection (which was more characteristic of the Israeli left wing/dovish camps) is consistent with the reactive reevaluation effect demonstrated in this study. Specifically, this view sees the Israeli proposal offered in this summit as not compromising enough, as more pro-Israeli and less pro-Palestinian than originally depicted, since it was rejected by Arafat (Malley and Agha 2002).

In contrast, the other view concerning this rejection (which was more characteristic of Israeli hawks) still sees the concession as compromising too much, as very pro-Palestinian and not pro-Israeli, although it was rejected by Arafat, explaining the rejection as part of the Palestinian basic unwillingness to compromise (Morris 2002a, 2002b). These different explanations of the same realistic event can give one a glimpse of the assumptions and mechanisms underlying hawks' and doves' responses to concessions that are framed as rejected by the opponent. Doves, who believe (and wish to go on believing) that a peace agreement based on Israeli territory is desirable and possible, explain the rejection in a way that is consistent with their prior beliefs—as stemming from a proposal that was not compromising enough. In contrast, hawks, who believe (and wish to go on believing) in the futility of a compromise with the Palestinians, accordingly explain the rejection as stemming from the Palestinian fundamental unwillingness to compromise.

In line with previous research on the hostile media effect phenomena (Vallone et al. 1985), it thus seems that hawks and doves encode and relate to the same news coverage from different points of reference (see Hall 1999; Liebes 1997) and thus understand and evaluate differently the same news frame of “rejection by the opponent.”

Acknowledgments

This research was supported by a Grant from the Israel-Foundation Trustees (1998-2001) and by a Grant from the Smart Family Institute of Communications, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Notes

1. I am deeply indebted to Michael Katz from Haifa University for coining and first suggesting this effect. I also thank Lee Ross from Stanford University for the long discussions that helped me refine these ideas. However, the above mentioned bear no responsibility for the quality and contents of this article.
2. Nine respondents were dropped from the experimental sample following the manipulation check.
3. See Carragee and Roefs (2004) for a relevant discussion of two recent trends in news framing research: one concerned with production, construction, and meaning of frames and the other with effects of news frames. See also D'Angelo (2002) for a related discussion of the cognitive, constructionist, and critical paradigms of news framing research.

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