

1
3 TOWARD A MORE JUST WORLD:
5 WHAT MAKES PEOPLE
7 PARTICIPATE IN SOCIAL ACTION?
9

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13
15 **ABSTRACT**

17 *Citizen willingness to participate in social action depends, in part, on*
19 *certain beliefs about the world and one's power to initiate change. This*
21 *study examines how belief in a just world (BJW) affects willingness to*
23 *participate in social action. The model also incorporates antecedents to*
25 *BJW, including personality factors (authoritarianism, self-esteem,*
27 *powerlessness); political orientation (national identity, patriotism);*
social characteristics (religiosity, ethnicity, education, income); and the
relationships among these factors. Data are from a representative sample
of the Jewish Israeli population. Findings indicate that as BJW decreases,
so to does the willingness to act, and that personality, political, and social
characteristics influence both BJW and willingness to participate in social
action.

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31 In recent years, people in many western societies have realized that their
33 governments are unable to address *all* the needs of the citizens (Cass, 1994).
This realization increased the awareness that citizens should participate in

35 _____
Justice

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1 social action and take on some of the responsibilities that governments are
unable or unwilling to assume (Nicolaidis, 1997).

3 The term social action refers to all solidarity-based, voluntary actions
taken by individuals to improve their society (France, 1998), and in this
5 study it indicates willingness to contribute time, money, and/or effort to
attain this goal. This definition derives from Bell's (1998) view of modern
7 society as one in which people are active and purposeful beings whose
behavior helps create not only their own future, but also the social order
9 itself. In most societies today, citizens' involvement is sanctioned, even taken
for granted (Rossi, 2001; Warren, 2002),¹ and social action is seen as having
11 the potential to strengthen the sense of community (O'Neill, Duffy, Enman,
Blackmer, & Campbell, 1988), decrease tension among groups, and increase
13 cooperation and social justice (Bierhoff, 2002). The sphere in which citizens'
involvement is legitimated in each society varies, and individuals who are
15 members of diverse groups may be willing to assume responsibility in
different spheres.

17 However, not all individuals are willing to act for their society. People are
more willing to become involved and act when their interests are threatened,
19 but even among those who are equally threatened, different levels of
involvement are found. Moreover, people get involved in issues that do not
21 affect them directly (O'Neill et al., 1988). Hence, direct threat to one's
interests cannot explain the whole issue of participation in social action.

23 A comprehensive model of willingness to participate in social action
should include several levels of analysis, from the social structure to the
25 individual citizen. Most studies, however, focus either on social structure or
on personality. The former emphasizes the social order and the location of
27 the individuals' ethnic, racial, class, and/or religious group in the social
structure as conditioning participation (i.e., although the poor, the weak
29 and/or the disadvantaged may have more to gain by social change, members
of these groups are less able or willing to contribute time or effort to create
31 this change than members of the rich and advantaged groups) (Arneson,
2002; Hegtvedt, 2005; Jasso, 2005). The latter emphasizes attitudes and
33 personality as the main factors influencing willingness to act, (e.g.,
individuals with weaker internal control, lower self-esteem and self-efficacy,
35 and stronger authoritarianism are less willing and able to participate than
their counterparts) (Cass, 1994).

37 This study is based on the notion that both the structural and personal
levels are necessary to explain willingness to act, as the "social structure *and*
39 personality" approach indicates that individuals' positions (i.e., member-
ships in social groups) shape their personal characteristics and attitudes

1 which, in turn, affect their willingness to participate in social action.
2 However, not all individuals who belong to the same social categories and
3 have similar personality traits are equally willing to act. This study assumes
4 that the relationship between willingness to act and social structure and
5 personality factors is mediated by the beliefs of citizens that social action is
6 necessary (i.e., justified), ideologically-legitimized, and within peoples'cap-
7 abilities (Gecas, 2000). Here, justification takes the form of belief in a just
8 world (BJW) (Lerner, 1980); legitimization is represented by political
9 orientation (i.e., identification with the nation, patriotism, and voting for
10 conservative (religious or right-wing) parties; and capabilities refer to
11 individuals' characteristics (both social and personality). The primary goals
12 of this study are, therefore, to examine (1) how BJW affects willingness to
13 participate in social action and (2) how personality factors, political
14 orientation, and social characteristics influence BJW and willingness to
15 participate in social action.

16 Fig. 1 presents the theoretical model of expected relationships. The model
17 indicates that the social context influences both personality factors and
18 political orientation, which influence individuals' BJW, which, in turn,
19 influences willingness to participate in social action. Direct influences of
20 personality factors and political orientation on willingness to participate in
21 social action are also expected.² Data to test the model come from a survey
22 of Israeli citizens. As a consequence, the study highlights social factors
23 important to that nation.

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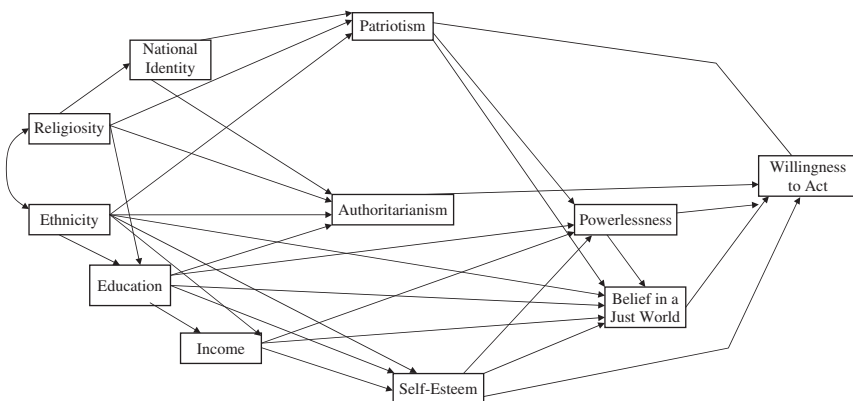


Fig. 1. Theoretical Model.

1 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

3 *Belief in a Just World and Willingness to Participate in Social Action*

5 The belief that people get what they deserve and deserve what they get was
 7 first addressed by Melvin Lerner (1980). The belief develops in early
 9 childhood from socialization processes that create in some children the
 11 belief that their actions lead to predictable outcomes or consequences: good
 13 deeds are rewarded and evil ones are punished; those who are more talented
 15 and/or try harder should attain more than others. Moreover, people high in
 17 BJW tend to be confident that their investments will be fairly rewarded
 (Dalbert, 1999). Implied in these notions is a belief that the world is stable
 and orderly, and, therefore, predictable (Bell, 1998). However, recent studies
 show that when considering justice in social situations, people tend to
 differentiate between a belief in justice for the self (BJW-S) and justice for
 others (BJW-O), and that the two are often not correlated. This study
 focuses on BJW-O only, as it is directly related to social action (e.g., Sutton
 & Douglas, 2005).

19 According to the just world hypothesis, the intensity of BJW varies
 (Rubin & Peplau, 1975) so that the stronger the BJW, the stronger the need
 21 to maintain congruence between belief and the reality the individual
 23 perceives. People with a strong BJW are highly motivated to defend their
 belief, especially when they encounter situations of misfortune (e.g., victims
 of crimes (Libow & Doty, 1979), victims of accidents (Bulman & Wortman,
 25 1977), unjust job loss (Lerner & Somers, 1992), inability to escape poverty
 (Appelbaum, Lennon, & Aber, 2003)).

27 To protect their BJW when it is threatened in a specific situation, people
 tend to adjust their evaluation of the situation to their belief (Lerner, 1980;
 29 Mikula, 1990). According to Crosby and Ropp (2002), three types of
 adjustments (or re-evaluations) can take place: re-evaluation of the victim,
 31 of the cause, or of the outcome. Re-evaluation of the victim means seeing
 something in the victim's character as leading to the negative consequences
 33 (i.e., the victim chose to be in the situation, Lerner & Simmons, 1966).
 Re-evaluation of the cause means seeing the victimization as – at least
 35 partially – the victim's fault (Karuza & Carey, 1984). Re-evaluation of the
 outcome means playing down the severity of the consequences (Hafer, 2002;
 37 Montada, Schmitt, & Dalbert, 1986).

39 Studies of BJW are usually based on laboratory experiments and focus on
 the evaluation of outcomes for specific individuals (including the self).
 Fewer studies examine how BJW affects perceptions of social situations (like

1 group inequality), or the behavioral tendencies that follow such perceptions.
2 Among these exceptions are studies like those of Rubin and Peplau (1975)
3 and Furnham (1991), which examine the characteristics of people with
4 strong beliefs in a just world. They found that people who have a strong
5 tendency to believe in a just world also tend to be richer, more religious,
6 more authoritarian, more conservative, more self-reliant, and more likely to
7 have negative attitudes toward underprivileged groups.

8 Moreover, most of the studies of BJW derive from the individualistic
9 approach, which focuses on individuals as independent people, who are free
10 to choose how to act (i.e., individual freedom and life opportunities are not
11 constrained by background characteristics, such as gender, ethnicity, or race
12 of individuals). Consequently, if inequality exists, it should be considered
13 just, as it is the result of differences in individual abilities and efforts. People
14 with strong BJW also tend to see policies to reduce racial or economic
15 inequality as a contradiction of individual efforts (Cole & Clay, 1990), and
16 are less likely to support programs that increase social equality (Lipkus &
17 Siegler, 1993). These suggestions may have significant social implications, as
18 strong BJW may undermine peoples' willingness to act to increase social
19 justice: it is easier to assume that forces beyond their control are responsible
20 for injustice (but see Baron & Miller, 2000). When that occurs, people may
21 find it easier to evade personal or social responsibility. However, the
22 relationship between BJW and willingness to act was not examined directly
23 in previous studies.

24 The present study assumes that when people see circumstances rather
25 than individual actions as causing unjust inequality, they will be more
26 willing to act in order to decrease inequality. This willingness to act may be
27 in the social sphere (like voluntary work with weak or disadvantaged
28 groups), in the economic sphere (like contributing funds), and/or in the
29 political sphere (e.g., political activism, participation in demonstrations).
30 Factors that may influence BJW directly and willingness to act indirectly
31 include focus on social structural and personality characteristics.

32

33 *The Influence of Personality Factors, Political Orientation, and Social*
34 *Characteristics on BJW and Willingness to Act*

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37 Because individuals' social positions shape their personal characteristics and
38 political attitudes that, in turn, affect their beliefs and their willingness to
39 participate in social action, the comprehensive model examined in this study
includes personal, political, and social characteristics.

1 *Personality Factors*

2 Previous studies have examined the influence of diverse personality factors
3 on BJW or on willingness to act, not on both. This study focuses on three
4 seemingly distinct dimensions of personality that relate not only to BJW but
5 also to willingness to act: powerlessness, self-esteem, and authoritarianism.
6 These measures address diverse aspects of individuals' perceived capability
7 to influence their society.

8 *Powerlessness.* Powerlessness is created when individuals believe they lack
9 control over their life situations and that outcomes of situations are
10 determined by forces outside the individual, which the individual cannot
11 control (Paulhus, 1983). At the other end of the continuum, perceived control
12 is the "belief in individual agency, synonymous with mastery, efficacy, and
13 internal locus of control" (Mirowsky, Ross, & van Willigen, 1996, p. 322).
14 Thus, powerlessness, like perceived control, refers to assumed internal states
15 that explain why certain people actively and willingly try to deal with difficult
16 circumstances, while others do not (Lewis, Ross, & Mirowsky, 1999).

17 Individuals who depend on the effort to produce outcomes are more apt
18 to exert themselves when engaged in diverse tasks and are more willing to
19 see such action as effective (Geis & Ross, 1998). In contrast, powerless
20 individuals tend to see others (e.g., the state, fate, luck, or God) as
21 responsible for life occurrences. Individuals who do not see outcomes as
22 dependent on their actions are more apt to consider efforts to influence
23 situations as futile, and will make fewer attempts to gain control (Lefcourt,
24 1981; Rotter, Chance, & Phare, 1972).

25 There are varied definitions and measures of powerlessness (Antonucci,
26 2001), but they greatly overlap (Prenda & Lachman, 2001). This study
27 focuses on the social implications of powerlessness and sense of control
28 (Rotter, Chance, & Phares, 1972; Paulhus, 1983). According to this
29 approach, because powerless individuals do not believe in their ability to
30 change social situations, they will be less willing to act than those who
31 believe they have control.

32 *Self-Esteem.* Definitions of self-esteem vary but all agree that high self-
33 esteem reflects self-approval, self-worth, self-efficacy, self-respect, and/or
34 self-acceptance (Battle, 1990; Dalbert, 1999), and that it is correlated with
35 social status (Faunce, 1989). More specifically, it means having a positive
36 attitude toward life, highly valuing ones accomplishments, believing in one's
37 abilities, and seeing oneself as competent and in control of his or her life
38 (Blascovich & Tomaka, 1991).

39 Most approaches agree that the term self-esteem includes cognitive,
40 affective, and behavioral aspects (Blank, 2003; Walker, 1999). The cognitive

1 aspect refers to the evaluation of oneself and the perception of discrepancy
2 between ones ideal self and the realistic appraisal of how one perceives
3 oneself. The affective aspect refers to the feelings or emotions that one has
4 when considering self-worth. The behavioral aspects of self-esteem are
5 manifested in behaviors such as resilience, assertiveness, decisiveness, and
6 social activism (Steffenhagen & Burns, 1987). Green (2003), for example,
7 suggests that self-esteem contributes significantly to the development of
8 tolerance and respect for culturally different groups, and Myers (2000)
9 shows that both self-esteem and social responsibility are rising in the United
10 States.

11 Sutton and Douglas (2005), show that while the belief that the world is
12 fair to others (BJW-O) is associated with more critical and negative social
13 attitudes, which may, in turn lead to lower willingness to act for others,
14 BJW-S is positively associated with measures of psychological health (like
15 self-esteem) (see also Begue, 2005; Dalbert, 2002). However, these studies
16 consider the impact of BJW on self-esteem, not the influence of self-esteem
17 on BJW, and they do not consider the association between self-esteem and
18 BJW-O. Dalbert (2002), for example, shows that those who are high
19 in BJW-S suffer no decrease in self-esteem compared to those who are low
20 in BJW in anger provoking situations. Also, Begue (2005) shows that high
21 BJW-S even contributes to the preservation of self-esteem in threatening
22 social situations (however, when BJW was low, self-esteem was not
23 affected). In the present study the effect of self-esteem is examined on both
24 the BJW for others (BJW-O) and willingness to participate in social action.³

25 *Authoritarianism.* Authoritarianism is one of the main factors that
26 explains how societies perpetuate acceptance of social orders and existing
27 hierarchies (Mummendey, Kessler, Klink, & Mielke, 1999).⁴ According to
28 all approaches, authoritarianism reflects conformity and conservatism, and
29 acceptance of the existing social order and the social hierarchy that it defines
(Feather, 1993; Jost & Sidanius, 2004).

31 This study follows Altemeyer's (1981, 1996) approach in which
32 authoritarianism is associated with submission to authority, so that
33 authoritarians tend to expect those in legitimate power positions to assume
34 responsibility (Peterson, 2003; Reynolds, Turner, Haslam, & Ryan, 2001).
35 This learning-through-experience approach indicates that individuals who
36 belong to different groups have diverse opportunities to experience
37 situations that are more (or less) conducive to the formation of
38 authoritarian attitudes (Pentony et al., 2000; Sutton & Carlson, 1977).

39 This claim is supported by the many studies that have shown the positive
effect of authoritarian attitudes on nationalism, religiosity, and conservative

1 political attitudes in diverse societies, including Israel (e.g., Altemeyer &
 3 Hunsberger, 2005; Levi, 2005). Thus, authoritarian individuals tend to be
 5 more religious, more patriotic and nationalistic, and more supportive of the
 7 existing social and political order (Feather, 1993; Feldman & Stenner, 1997).
 As such, they will be less willing to support attempts to change the existing
 order, and will be less willing to participate in social action that may lead to
 such changes (Rubinstein, 1995).⁵

Not many studies examined the relationship between authoritarianism
 and BJW, and they do not show conclusively whether BJW influences
 authoritarianism or vice versa. In most of them, both BJW and
 authoritarianism influence a behavioral tendency (e.g., Cohn & Modecki,
 2007) or perceptions (like the perception of risk, e.g., Lambert, Burroughs,
 & Nguyen, 1999). The findings in these studies are inconclusive. In some
 (e.g., Cohn & Modecki, 2007; Lambert, Burroughs, & Chasteen, 1998),
 authoritarianism and BJW are positively correlated, indicating that
 authoritarians use their BJW to construct their reactions to social situations
 (Lambert, Burroughs, & Chasteen, 1998). In other studies (e.g., Mudrack,
 2005), authoritarianism is only linked to the negative consequences of BJW
 (i.e., the more authoritarian believe that people suffer because they are bad,
 but higher authoritarianism was not associated with a belief that people
 prosper because they are good).

23 *Political Orientation*

Perception of the socio-political context as providing (or withholding)
 ideological legitimization influences willingness to participate in social
 action, in addition to the personality factors (powerlessness, self-esteem, and
 authoritarianism). Two distinct, though related factors capture the diverse
 aspects of how the socio-political context influences willingness to act:
 Identification with the national collective, and patriotism.⁶

Identification with the national collective indicates acceptance of the
 existing social order (Abrams & Emler, 1992; Kimmerling & Moore, 1997)
 and reflects feelings of belonging to a community, its symbols, beliefs, and
 attitudes and values (Hogg, 2003; Kalkhoff & Barnum, 2000). Those who
 strongly identify with the national collective, have the will to act to ensure
 their political destiny, and maintain the existing social order (Hinkle, Fox
 Cardamone, Haseleu, Brown, & Irwin, 1996; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). As
 several hierarchies can exist concurrently in any society, and each hierarchy
 reflects a different social order, identities become codes for given social
 orders (Moore, 2000a; Stryker & Serpe, 1994). Identification is also related
 to perceptions of justice (Clayton & Opatow, 2003; Moore, 2000b). Wenzel

AU 2

AU 3

1 (2001), for example, shows that social identity is the link between perception
of inputs and the justice motive (see also Hegtvedt, 2004; Tyler & Blader,
3 2003).

Identification with the national collective tends to be more salient in
5 societies that are in the process of building a nation, where people are often
required to relinquish personal freedom (Ferge, 1997). Such societies tend to
7 encourage “dedication to one’s nation by surrendering one’s personal
comforts in service to the country” (Realo & Allik, 1999, p. 134), they will
9 also tend to see collective participation in socio-political activity as
legitimate-even expected-behavior (Ellemers & Bos, 1998). This dedication
11 to one’s nation is the basis for patriotism (Bar-Tal & Ben-Amos, 2004).
Although there are many definitions of patriotism, most of them see patriots
13 as individuals who are ready to sacrifice themselves to defend their nation
against enemies (Realo & Allik, 1999). Patriotism is noticeable in many
15 societies that are in the process of building a nation state, where people are
required to relinquish not only material goods but also, quite often, personal
17 freedom (Kimmerling & Moore, 1997).

Patriotism is discussed mostly in the context of nation-states, in which the
19 civic duties of individuals are considered an important part of individuals’
loyalties and obligations (Staub, 1997). In this respect, patriotism is related
21 to national identities so that the stronger the identification with the
collective, the stronger the feelings of patriotism. This study also assumes
23 that patriotism is related to willingness to act so that more patriotic
individuals will be more willing to participate in social action than those
25 who are less patriotic.

These issues were not examined in Israel and this study examines whether
27 Israelis whose national identity is salient are more patriotic, have stronger
BJW and tend to be more willing to participate in social action than those
29 whose national identity is less salient.

31 *Characteristics of the Social Context*

The social context is essential to the understanding of social action as it
33 defines the viewpoints of members of diverse social groups and categories.
Location in the social structure influences the willingness of members of
35 social groups to act to improve society (France, 1998), what they see as an
improvement (Bell, 1998), and whether they perceive legitimation for such
37 action (Rossi, 2001). In each society, the social context is determined by
different factors and issues such as race, ethnicity, nationality, culture,
39 religion, SES, urbanity and/or gender. Thus, social characteristics define the
major dimensions of social context.

1 The Israeli social context is defined by a high degree of politicization and
 3 by several, somewhat overlapping bi-polar divisions that include religion,
 5 ethnic origin, and socio-economic divisions (Horowitz & Lissak, 1989).⁷
 7 These divisions operate in tandem when socio-political issues are at stake,
 9 making the demographic categories very clear, and forming the bases for
 11 social identities, attitudes, beliefs, and social behaviors (McDonough,
 13 Barnes, & Pina, 1988). For example, Israeli Jews are “split” regarding the
 15 peace negotiations in the Middle-East (Moore & Aweiss, 2004, 2007):
 17 Religious Jews, of Eastern origin, with lower education and SES tend to be
 19 right-wingers and oppose territorial concessions, while secular Jews, of
 21 Western origin, with higher education and SES tend to be left-wingers,
 23 supporters of territorial concessions (Kimmerling & Moore, 1997; Unger &
 25 Safir, 1994).

15 Previous studies of willingness to participate in social action examine
 17 diverse combinations of these social categorizations (e.g., Fabick, 2004;
 19 Flanagan, Galloway, Gill, Galloway, & Nti, 2005; Linney, 2004; (Oliner &
 21 Krause, 2001), and indicate that disadvantaged racial or ethnic groups tend
 23 to be less willing to participate in social action than advantaged groups
 25 (Oliner & Krause 2001), while religious individuals tend to be more willing
 27 than others (Keyes, 2002; Linney, 2004). Similarly, the more highly educated
 29 individuals tend to be more willing to assume responsibility than those with
 31 lower education (Markus, Ryff, Conner, Pudberry, & Barnett, 2001). Other
 33 studies demonstrate that religious individuals tend to have stronger BJW
 35 (Begue, 2002; Lipkus & Siegler, 1993; Dzuka & Dalbert, 2002), and that
 37 whites tend to have stronger BJW than Blacks or Latinos (Hunt, 2000).
 Differences were also found by SES, with greatest support for BJW found
 among persons of low SES (Hunt, 2000). No studies link these social
 characteristics with both willingness to act and BJW while controlling for
 personality characteristics and political orientation.

AU :4

31 33 HYPOTHESIS AND THE MODEL 35 OF OTHER INFLUENCES

37 The theoretical model presented in Fig. 1 guides my analysis. Based on the
 39 above review, I expect:

39 **Hypothesis 1.** The stronger the BJW, the weaker the willingness to
 participate in social action.

1 In addition, the review suggests inter-relationships between social context,
3 personality factors, political orientation, and both BJW and willingness to
5 participate in social action. Here I explore how social context influences
7 personality factors and political orientation, which in turn affect individuals'
9 BJW, and subsequently willingness to participate in social action. Direct
11 influences of personality factors and political orientation on willingness to
13 participate in social action are also expected.⁸

11 METHODS

13 *Participants and Procedure*

15 The representative sample ($N = 510$) was drawn from the Jewish Israeli
17 population in December, 2005–January, 2006. Sampling was done in two
19 stages. In the first stage, a representative stratified cluster sample of cities,
21 towns, and rural areas was performed, maintaining the proportions of
23 residents in each city in the sample. In the second stage, in each city, a
25 random sampling of residents was performed. Data were collected by
27 telephone interviews (only home phones were sampled, not cell phones).
Interviews were conducted within 2 months in order to limit possible biases
caused by national and political changes that might have sensitized
respondents to the analyzed issues. Incomplete questionnaires (3%) and
refusals to respond (6%) were excluded from further analysis and replaced
by data from others. These percentages are similar to most phone surveys in
Israel.

The respondents' ages ranged from 20 to 70 years. The sample includes
29 319 women and 188 men, 37% of them religious or tradition-oriented and
the rest secular (63%). About 40% of the sample defined themselves as
31 having above-average income, another 40% as having about average
income, the rest as below-average income. The average education is 13.5
33 years of schooling. No considerable differences in religiosity, ethnicity, age,
income, or education were found between the sample and the population,
35 and the proportions of age categories, ethnic origin, and geographic location
categories in the sample correspond to those of the entire population in
37 2004, as reported by the Israeli Bureau of Statistics (2005). The
questionnaire had many other questions that pertain to political attitudes
39 and opinions that were not analyzed in the present study and are therefore
not discussed here.

1 *Variables, Measures and their Descriptive Statistics*

3 *Dependent Variables*

4 *Willingness to participate in social action.* Three questions were combined:
 5 (1) Have you ever (or do you still) volunteer for some social activity without
 6 financial reward (e.g., neighborhood watch, activity in a non-profit social
 7 association)? (1 = never volunteered, 2 = volunteered in one area of
 8 activity, 3 = volunteered in more than one area of activity). (2) Are you
 9 willing to contribute regularly from your earnings to improve the situation
 10 of weak groups (e.g., the elderly, physically impaired)? (1 = not willing to
 11 contribute at all, 2 = willing to contribute a little, and not regularly,
 12 3 = willing to contribute regularly). (3) Did you participate in demonstra-
 13 tions for or against the political actions of the government? (1 = I did not
 14 participate, 2 = I participated once, 3 = I participated more than once). A
 15 principal component analysis revealed a single factor in which the higher the
 16 value, the more willing to act, Cronbach $\alpha = .73$.

17 *BJW.* Three items drawn from Dalbert (1999) constituted the BJW
 18 measure. For each item, respondents indicated on a 1–6 point scale if the
 19 statement was “totally incorrect” (1) or “very correct” (6). The statements
 20 were: (1) The good things people do often go unnoticed and unrewarded;
 21 (2) People like me do not always receive the rewards we deserve; (3) There is
 22 no justice in our world and often people are not punished for their bad
 23 actions. A principal component analysis revealed a single factor in which the
 24 higher the value the stronger the BJW ($\alpha = .66$).

25 *Personality Factors*

27 *Socio-political Powerlessness Scale.* Respondents were asked how true each
 28 of the five items was in their view. The scale ranged from (1) totally untrue
 29 to (6) very true. Items drawn from Paulhus (1983) included: (1) Things have
 30 become so complicated nowadays, that I don’t really understand what’s
 31 happening; (2) Things change so quickly nowadays, that I don’t know what
 32 will remain the same tomorrow; (3) People like me cannot influence
 33 government policy; (4) The world is run by a few strong people and people
 34 like me cannot do anything against that; (5) People like me are powerless to
 35 change what’s happening in the country. A principal component analysis
 36 revealed a single factor in which the higher the value the stronger the
 37 powerlessness ($\alpha = .79$).

38 *Self-Esteem Scale.* Based on Rosenberg’s (1965) measure of self-esteem, AU:5
 39 respondents indicated how accurate (1 = totally inaccurate, 6 = very

1 accurate) each of the following represented their perception of themselves:
2 (1) There are a lot of things about myself I'd change if I could; (2) I often
3 wish I were someone else; (3) I often feel worthless; (4) I'm pretty satisfied
4 with my myself. Items 1–3 were reverse coded, and a principal component
5 analysis revealed a single factor in which the higher the value the stronger
6 the self-esteem ($\alpha = .68$).

7 *Authoritarianism.* Altemeyer's (1981) right-wing authoritarianism (RWA)
8 scale was used, as it is the measure best suited for inter-cultural analyses.⁹
9 Respondents answered: How important for you is each of the following?
10 (Range: 1 = totally disagree to 6 = totally agree). Four of the eight RWA
11 items relating to *Authoritarian submission* were retained on the basis of item-
12 to-scale-correlations. The items include: (1) It is good to have a strong
13 authoritarian leader; (2) Obedience and respect for authority are the most
14 important virtues children should learn; (3) For their own good, children
15 should comply with the ideas and values of their parents. (4) We should be
16 grateful to our leaders who can tell us what to do. A principal component
17 analysis revealed a single factor in which the higher the value the stronger
18 the authoritarianism ($\alpha = .68$).

19

21 *Political Orientation*

22 *Patriotism.* The measure draws from Blank (2003) and consists of responses
23 to: How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the following seven
24 items? The scale ranged from (1) totally disagree to (6) totally agree.
25 Statements included: (1) For me Israel is the best country in the world; (2)
26 The morality of Israelis should serve as a model for other countries; (3) The
27 world will be a better place if all countries will be like Israel; (4) People need
28 to support their country even when it is wrong; (5) Jews should decide most
29 things in the country; (6) I want Israel to be a Jewish state, first and
30 foremost; (7) I would like there to be as few non-Jews as possible in Israel.
31 Principal component analysis revealed a single factor in which the higher the
32 value the stronger the patriotism ($\alpha = .77$).

33 *National Identity.* Respondents were asked to rank nine components of
34 social identities: occupation, family, nationality, civic, local, ethnic, gender,
35 political attitudes, and religiosity. Respondents were asked to rank order all
36 the identities they consider relevant. Only the rankings of national (Jewish/
37 Palestinian) and civic (Israeli) identities are analyzed in the present context:
38 1 = most salient identity (ranked in first place); 0 = less salient identity
39 (ranked in second place or lower) (Mean = .29; s.d. = .465).

1 *Social Context*

2 *Religiosity.* A dummy coded variable represented the respondent's
3 religiosity: -orthodox, religious, and traditional = 1; secular = 0.

4 *Ethnicity.* The coding for ethnicity were: Asian or African origin = 1,
5 Western origin and Israeli born = 0.

6 *Income.* The income measure stated, "The average income in Israel today
7 is about 7,000 NIS. In comparison, do you earn more than average, less
8 than average or about the average?" Responses were recoded so that 1 =
9 above average and much more than the average; 0 = average or below.

10 *Education.* Measured as a continuous variable, respondents indicated the
11 number of years of formal education that they had.

12 *Method of Analysis*

13
14
15 First, to analyze the basic relationships among the models' components, the
16 Pearson correlations were examined. Then, to address the theoretical model,
17 the study analyzes a recursive structural equation model (SEM) using
18 AMOS 5 (Arbuckle & Wothke, 1999).¹⁰ SEMs entail, according to Byrne
19 (1998), two implications. First, that the causal processes under study are
20 represented by a series of structural (i.e., regression) equations. Second, the
21 structural relations can be presented graphically. The hypothesized model
22 can be tested statistically in a simultaneous analysis of the entire system of
23 variables to determine the extent to which it is consistent with the data.

24
25 **RESULTS**

26
27 The study focuses on two issues: (1) How BJW affects willingness to
28 participate in social action and (2) how personality factors, political
29 orientation, and social characteristics influence both BJW and willingness to
30 participate in social action. To address these issues, a theoretical model was
31 created and empirically examined. According to the model (see Fig. 1),
32 social context characteristics influence both personality factors and political
33 orientation, which influence individuals' BJW, which, in turn, influences
34 willingness to participate in social action.

35
36
37 *BJW and Willingness to Act*

38
39 BJW is negatively correlated with willingness to act, therefore, the stronger
the BJW, the weaker the willingness to act, as Hypothesis 1 predicted (see
Table 1).

Table 1. Correlation Matrix.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1 Willingness to act	1	-.098**	-.168*	.086**	-.143*	.098**	.092**	.160*	.170*	.202*	-.048
2 BJW		1	.057	.262*	-.388*	-.218*	.014	.208*	.092**	-.136*	-.178*
3 Powerlessness			1	-.033	-.049	.006	.018	.045	.113*	-.084	.010
4 Self-esteem				1	-.187*	-.098**	.020	.085	.032	.017	.024
5 Authoritarianism					1	.507*	.059	-.342*	-.094**	.353*	.299*
6 Patriotism						1	.183*	-.240*	-.047	.446*	.226*
7 National identity (Ranked 1 = 1)							1	-.038	.077	.234*	.099*
8 Education								1	.188*	-.148*	-.350*
9 Income									1	-.091*	-.010
10 Religiosity										1	.322*
11 Ethnicity (Asian origin = 1; else = 0)											1

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1 This finding supports earlier conclusions according to which, if inequality
 3 exists, it is often seen as just, because it is considered the result of differences
 5 in individual abilities and efforts. These suggestions may have significant
 7 social implications, as strong BJW may undermine peoples' willingness to
 9 act to increase social justice: It is easier to assume that forces beyond their
 11 control are responsible for injustice, and its correction.

13 Moreover, when the other variables in the model are controlled, the
 15 relationship between BJW and willingness to act strengthens (from
 17 $r = -.098, p = .05$ to $r = -.14, p = .00$) (see Table 1), so that those who
 19 have strong BJW are even less willing to participate in social action. This
 21 indicates that the other variables in the model strengthen the influence of
 23 BJW on willingness to act (among them: patriotism, which has a significant
 25 negative influence on BJW and a significant positive influence on willingness
 27 to act; authoritarianism, which has a significant indirect positive effect on
 29 willingness to act that counterbalances its negative direct effect, and so
 31 forth.¹¹

33 *Effects of Personality Factors, Political Orientation, and Social*
 35 *Characteristics on BJW and Willingness to Act*

37 According to the bivariate correlations in Table 1, most of the personality
 39 factors, political orientation, and social characteristics influence both BJW
 and willingness to act. Highly educated, well-off, secular individuals, and/or
 those of European descent believe that the world is more just than less
 educated, poor, religious, and individuals of Asian-African descent. It is
 easy to understand why the rich and well-educated see the world as more
 just, but why do the secular see it as more just than religious individuals?
 Justification of BJW for religious and seculars may be based on different
 philosophies. Jewish religion, like Christianity and Islam, proclaims that in
 most cases good deeds are rewarded and evil ones are punished, and that
 reversal of this principal is rare and temporary (For example: "Trust in the
 Lord, and do good, ... and thou shalt be fed with its riches" (Psalms, 37,
 p. 3). "For evildoers shall be cut off: but they that wait upon the Lord, they
 shall inherit the land" (Psalms, 37, p. 9). The fact that religious individuals
 have weaker BJW indicates, perhaps, that "being religious" refers to
 behaviors according to religious decrees (i.e. prayer, covering hair), not
 necessarily according to religious beliefs (other influences were analyzed
 only for willingness to act).

1 Examining who are the most willing to donate funds, to participate in
2 political demonstrations, and/or to volunteer, Table 1 shows that religious
3 individuals, those who are well-off, and individuals with higher education
4 are more willing to act than poor, less educated, and/or secular individuals.
5 Table 2 also examines the basic relationships between willingness to act and
6 personality and political orientation measures in the model and shows that
7 they are indeed related to all the models variables and measures (except
8 political attitudes): Powerlessness is negatively correlated (i.e., the stronger
9 the powerlessness, the weaker the willingness to act); self-esteem is positively
10 correlated (i.e., the higher the self-esteem, the stronger the willingness to
11 act); authoritarianism is negatively correlated (i.e., the stronger the
12 authoritarianism the weaker the willingness to act); and national identity
13 is positively correlated (i.e., the stronger the identity, the stronger the
14 willingness to act) and patriotism is positively correlated (i.e., the stronger
15 the patriotism, the stronger the willingness to act).

16 To examine the direct and indirect influences of all the variables and
17 measures on willingness to act, a recursive SEM was used. The analysis
18 shows that when all the factors are included, some of their influences on
19 willingness to act (presented in Table 1) become stronger than they were
20 while other influences weaken (see Table 2).

21 The empirical examination of the model reveals that most expected
22 relationships are indeed confirmed (see Fig. 2). Even after controlling for
23 other effects, BJW significantly influences willingness to act. Thus,
24 willingness to act is directly influenced by BJW, powerlessness, self-esteem,
25 authoritarianism and patriotism. It is indirectly influenced by national
26 identities (through its influence on patriotism), by income and education
27 (through their influence on authoritarianism and powerlessness), and by
28 religiosity and ethnicity (through their influence on authoritarianism and
29 patriotism).

30 In addition, a stronger tendency to believe in a just world is associated
31 with stronger self-esteem and weaker authoritarianism, as the review of
32 these factors suggests, but it is not related to weaker patriotism, higher
33 status, or higher education.

34 Analysis of the model also shows that the *higher* the self-esteem, the
35 *stronger* the BJW, indicating that when individuals have a positive attitude
36 toward life, value their accomplishments, and believe in their abilities, they
37 are not only more willing to participate in social action, but also more able
38 to see their world as just and fair.

39 Also as the review anticipated, *higher* levels of authoritarianism are
40 associated with a *stronger* the BJW, indicating that authoritarians seem to

Table 2. Recursive Structural Equation ($N = 510$) Scalar Estimates (Default Model).

		Unstandardized Estimates	Standard Error	Critical Ratio ^a	Standardized Estimates	
1	Education	<-Religiosity	-.260	.299	-.869	-.038
7	Education	<-Ethnicity	-2.440	.320	-7.635	-.337*
	Income	<-Ethnicity	.061	.123	.492	.023
	Income	<-Education	.081	.017	4.742	.225*
9	Identity	<-Religiosity	.215	.040	5.437	.234*
	Authoritarian	<-Religiosity	1.789	.276	6.473	.280*
11	Authoritarian	<-Ethnicity	.749	.304	2.466	.110*
	Authoritarian	<-Education	-.250	.040	-6.211	-.265*
13	Authoritarian	<-Identity	-.178	.285	-.625	-.026
	Patriotism	<-Religiosity	2.658	.391	6.803	.281*
	Patriotism	<-Ethnicity	.145	.398	.364	.014
15	Patriotism	<-Identity	.987	.387	2.547	.096*
	Patriotism	<-Authoritarian	.591	.059	9.956	.399*
17	Self-esteem	<-Ethnicity	.362	.276	1.310	.062
	Self-esteem	<-Education	.090	.039	2.284	.111**
	Self-esteem	<-Income	-.042	.103	-.404	-.019
19	Powerless	<-Education	-.001	.007	-.168	-.008
	Powerless	<-Income	-.049	.018	-2.721	-.125*
21	Powerless	<-Authoritarian	.011	.008	1.296	.070
	Powerless	<-Patriotism	-.004	.005	-.779	-.040
23	Powerless	<-Self-esteem	.007	.008	.952	.042
	BJW	<-Ethnicity	-.173	.106	-1.630	-.073
	BJW	<-Education	.017	.015	1.129	.053
25	BJW	<-Income	.001	.039	.013	.001
	BJW	<-Authoritarian	-.102	.018	-5.763	-.295*
27	BJW	<-Patriotism	-.002	.011	-.204	-.010
	BJW	<-Self-esteem	.080	.017	4.777	.198*
	BJW	<-Powerless	-.108	.096	-1.129	-.047
29	Willingness	<-Authoritarian	-.045	.016	-2.833	-.154*
	Willingness	<-Patriotism	.047	.010	4.590	.237*
31	Willingness	<-Self-esteem	.045	.015	2.933	.132*
	Willingness	<-Powerless	-.170	.086	-1.991	-.088**
33	Willingness	<-BJW	-.119	.041	-2.916	-.141*

Notes: Chi-square = 59.704; degrees of freedom = 22; probability level = .000; RMSEA = .05.

* $p \leq .001$.

** $p \leq .05$.

^aCritical ratio is the parameter estimate divided by its standard error. The estimate is significantly different from zero at the .05 level.

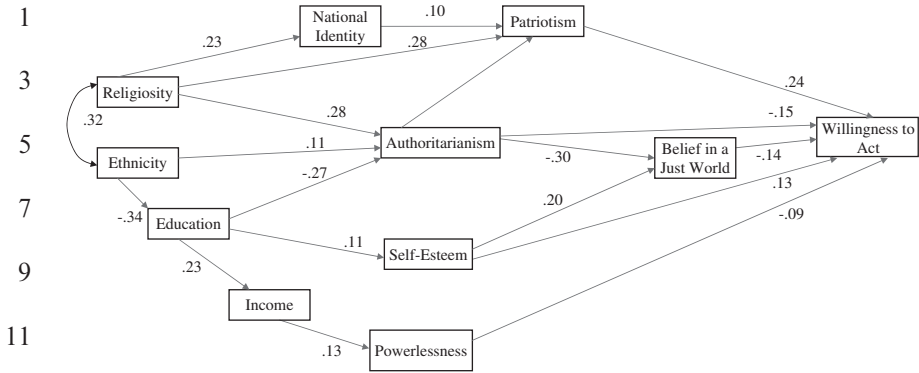


Fig. 2. Empirical Model.

accept the existing social order as the just order of things. Moreover, the fact that higher authoritarianism is *not* associated with lower powerlessness supports this interpretation: If the authoritarians expect the world to be just, they have no cause to feel powerless in it.

Examination of the groups more likely to be authoritarian shows that, in accord with previous findings, right-wing, religious and Jews of Asian origin, are more authoritarian than left-wing, secular and European ones, and highly educated individuals are less authoritarian than less educated ones. This study cannot determine whether authoritarianism influences political attitudes or vice versa, but the emerging pattern is clear – Jews of Asian origin tend to be more religious and more among them consider themselves right-wingers. Their education is also lower and they tend to be more authoritarian than that of European Jews. As authoritarianism reduces the willingness to participate in social action, it is clear that religious Jews of Asian origin will be less willing to act (even though religiosity itself is positively related with willingness to act (see Table 1).

DISCUSSION

Willingness to act is indeed influenced by many of the diverse factors included in the model. Willingness to participate in social action is related – directly or indirectly – to such concepts as BJW, self-esteem, authoritarianism, powerlessness, patriotism, national identities, education, income, ethnicity, and religiosity. These factors represent individual (personal)

1 characteristics, political orientation, and the social context. Although much
of the variance remains unexplained, these factors proved significant for the
3 prediction of willingness to act.

The main questions this study aimed to examine were: Does the BJW
5 *reduce* willingness to participate in social action? And what are the main
social, political and personality factors that influence both BJW and
7 willingness to participate in social action?

The analyses clearly show that BJW is significantly – and negatively –
9 correlated with willingness to act, even when other factors are included in
the analysis. This finding indicates that in Israel, much like in other Western
11 societies, people who believe that the world is just are *less* willing to act in
order to change it. As was expected, support for BJW is stronger among the
13 advantaged groups (the rich, secular, and/or people of European origin).
The disadvantaged group both see the world as more unjust and place a
15 higher priority on social responsibility, but they are also more powerless to
change the situation. Thus, BJW seem to represent the value system of the
17 socially advantaged groups.

It is interesting to note that while political orientation (i.e., patriotism,
19 political attitudes, and national identity) does not influence BJW, it does
influence the willingness to act. In fact, the impact of patriotism on
21 willingness to act is stronger than all other influences (so that the more
patriotic are more willing to participate in social action). As patriotism is
23 directly influenced by political attitudes, national identity, and religiosity,
one may conclude that in Israeli society, religious individuals, with a salient
25 national identity, who are right-wingers, consider themselves more patriotic
than secular, left-wingers with less salient national identities, and will be
27 more willing to act for their society. It seems that Israel's recent history and
the vehement demonstrations against evacuations of Jews from Gaza and
29 the parts of the West Bank show that this is true, at least in the political
sphere.

31 The importance of the socio-demographic characteristics is clear.
Religiosity, ethnicity, education, and income influence –directly or
33 indirectly – both BJW and the willingness to act. Religiosity, ethnicity,
income, and education are correlated and many of their influences interact
35 (especially those of religion and ethnicity) so that poor, religious Jews of
Eastern origin are a distinct group tend to see the world as unjust, they are
37 the most powerless, and the most relatively deprived group. They are also
more authoritarian than other groups, the most patriotic, and a greater
39 proportion among them are right-wingers. Their education is also lower
than that of all other groups.

1 Further research is necessary to ascertain whether these findings reflect a
3 major change in Israeli society. When created almost 60 years ago, Israel
5 was a collectivistic society in which economic inequality was among the
7 smallest in the world (Ben David, 1963). The basically underdeveloped,
9 agricultural society that existed before Israel's independence went through a
11 process of modernization and rapid development of its industry, followed by
13 a tremendous growth in its service sector. These changes were accompanied
15 by a shift from a predominant socialist and collectivistic ideology to a more
17 materialistic and individualistic value system, which is more typical of highly
19 industrialized societies. It is impossible to determine on the basis of the
21 present study what the ideological trend in Israel is, and whether it is turning
23 away from individualism as other Western societies seem to be doing. Only a
25 longitudinal study may shed some light on this issue. It may be interesting to
see whether societies that were until recently under communist regimes
undergo the same process of individualization, and whether the same forces
influence the process.

17 Also, further research is necessary in order to examine additional
19 individual-personal characteristics on the one hand and the social-political
21 context on the other hand. Although the current research elaborates our
23 knowledge of how willingness to participate in social action is formed and
the examined factors were found relevant and significant, their contribution
to the explaining of willingness to act is not high. Other factors that were not
examined in this study may, perhaps, further contribute to the explaining of
willingness to participate in social action.

25

27

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29 Cole & Stewart (1996); Schmitt (1998).

31

NOTES

33

1. In Israel, for example, the levels of involvement are particularly high in both the
35 political and the social spheres: In most elections, 85–88% of the adult population
turn out to vote; 2–5% of the entire population may be seen in a demonstration
37 organized by either peace activists or by anti-concessionists (which, in American
proportions, would mean 6–15 million individuals).

39

2. Not all possible recursive relations were examined. Some were not examined
because they are irrelevant, others – because it seemed less important to examine
them in the present context (e.g., does patriotism influence political attitudes or vice
versa).

1 3. The reverse was also examined in a nonrecursive AMOS model and was found
to be similarly effective, but less theoretically viable.

3 4. Diverse definitions of authoritarianism were offered: It was defined as a
personality trait by Adorno, Frenkel- Brunswik, Levinson, and Sanford (1950), as
5 the result of socialization processes by Lederer (1993), as a learning process by
Altemeyer (1981), and as a behavioral directive by Ray (1991).

7 5. However, studies of authoritarianism also show that when combined with
domination (as measured by Social Dominance Orientation scale), the worst
elements in both characteristics become apparent and the tendency of social
9 dominators to be power hungry, unsupportive of equality and amoral, strengthens
ethnocentric and dogmatic right-wing authoritarianism (Altemeyer, 2004).

11 6. The data set includes other measures (like political attitudes) as well. The
measures that were chosen for the analysis are not necessarily those with highest
correlations, but they more relate to the theoretical issues.

13 7. The Jewish–Arab distinction is an additional and highly significant categoriza-
tion, but is irrelevant in the present study which deals with Jews only.

15 8. Not all possible recursive relations were examined. Some were not examined
because they are irrelevant, others – because it seemed less important to examine them
in the present context (e.g., does patriotism influence political attitudes or vice versa).

17 9. Some items that are not relevant or do not apply to Israeli society – like
“Capital punishment should be abolished” – were removed.

19 10. AMOS was preferred because it avoids both list-wise deletion of cases and the
biases associated with some of the other methods (see also Fox, 1980).

21 11. Influence matrices available from the author.

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