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Can Abraham Bring Peace? The Relationship Between Acknowledging Shared Religious Roots and Intergroup Conflict

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Although the protracted Israeli-Palestinian conflict is rooted in contesting ethno-national narratives, it is often also framed and perceived in religious terms. While all 3 groups who consider the region a holy land, namely Jews, Muslims and Christians, have theological roots in common, the potential of emphasizing such commonalities among more than 2 groups and—most importantly—whether acknowledging such shared Abrahamic lineage generally may be an asset for actual peacemaking in the region remains unknown. Focusing on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, we aimed to fill this gap by using diverse groups and contexts. In Study 1, American Jews acknowledging their shared Abrahamic lineage with Muslims were more supportive of aid to, and peacemaking with, Palestinians. Next, we broadened this categorization to also include Christians. In Study 2, the more American Jews acknowledged this extended categorization including all 3 groups, the less biased they were toward Muslims and Christians and the more they supported political and territorial conflict solutions. We then took the paradigm to the Middle East. In Study 3, Israeli Jews acknowledging the Abrahamic category showed less bias toward Muslims and Christians and were more supportive of peacemaking, intergroup contact and the two-state solution. Finally, in Study 4, Palestinian-Muslims living in the Palestinian Territories who acknowledged this shared religious lineage showed less bias toward Jews, yet more bias toward Christians. In all studies, findings held when controlling for political orientation or social dominance orientation. Implications for using religious and Abrahamic categorizations for conflict resolution and intergroup relations are discussed.

Keywords: Abraham, Christians, Israel-Palestine conflict, Jews, Muslims

If only Sarah could have shared her love between Isaac and Ishmael! If only she could have brought them together instead of setting them apart! (. . .) The Palestinian problem is rooted in the separation of these two brothers.
—Elie Wiesel (1986), recently deceased Jewish Holocaust survivor and Nobel Laureate.[1]

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In the previous quote, the Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel suggests that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is rooted in the Genesis story in which Sarah, the wife of Abraham and mother of Isaac, drove her husband's pregnant mistress out to the desert to give birth to Ishmael. Many view Ishmael—the son Abraham had with his mistress—as a prominent ancestor of Muslims and the forefather of Mohammed, while Isaac—the son Abraham had with Sarah—is viewed as the forefather of Jews. Now, interfaith groups such as *The Abraham Fund* and the *Interreligious Coordinating Council in Israel* draw on this biblical narrative of a shared inheritance in an effort to promote peace in the region (Abu-Nimer, 2004; Kronish, 2015). But, can acknowledgment of these common theological roots actually help reduce conflict?

[1] Elie Wiesel. (1986). Ishmael and Hagar. In J. A. Edelheit (Ed.), *The life of covenant: The challenge of contemporary Judaism (essays in honor of Herman E. Schaalman*, p. 236). Chicago, IL: Spertus College of Judaic Press.

The Potential of Abrahamic Categorization for Peacemaking

One prominent way to reduce bias between different groups is to emphasize commonalities between them (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000). Yet, while an emphasis on shared commonalities may reduce intergroup bias and foster prosociality in many cases (e.g., Dovidio, Gaertner, Shnabel, Saguy, & Johnson, 2009; Dovidio et al., 1997; Gaertner, Dovidio, Guerra, Hehman, & Saguy, 2016; Kimel, Huesmann, Kunst, & Halperin, 2016; Kunst, Thomsen, Sam, & Berry, 2015), it may backfire and create more bias in others. This is especially the case when individuals perceive the emphasis on commonalities as threatening their need for group distinctiveness (Hornsey & Hogg, 1999, 2000; Leonardelli, Pickett, & Brewer, 2010). However, because acknowledgment of shared Abrahamic roots does not mean forsaking one's distinctive present-day religious identities, beliefs, views and customs, it may have the potential to effectively reduce intergroup bias.

Indeed, previous research supports the idea that Abrahamic categorizations—in which the shared theological origins of Muslims, Christians and Jews are delineated or acknowledged—may be effective for reducing bias, at least between some of the Abrahamic subgroups and within some contexts. For instance, among Christians and Muslims in Germany and Indonesia, dual Abrahamic categorizations—recognizing Christians and Muslims as sharing theological roots—led to less negative stereotypes and emotions toward the respective out-group (Kunst, Thomsen, & Sam, 2014; Mashuri, Zaduqisti, & Alroy-Thiberge, 2017). Moreover, in the context of the United States, it led to less bias in resource distribution dilemmas in form of actual donations to out-group members in need. For instance, Christian participants acknowledging common Abrahamic roots donated more money to a Muslim charity (i.e., Save the Children Syria; Kunst & Thomsen, 2015). However, while this research provided a first demonstration of the potential of Abrahamic categorization for prejudice reduction, no work to our knowledge has examined the effects of an Abrahamic category in contexts involving Jews, despite that they are the oldest Abrahamic subgroup. Crucially, the impact of Abrahamic categorizations on heated and protracted intergroup conflicts, such as the Israeli-Palestinians conflict, and for groups who are directly engaged in ongoing violence, such as Israeli-Jews and Palestinians, remains unknown. The present research aims to empirically address these gaps in the literature.

Although the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is multifaceted, extremely complex, and rooted in contesting ethno-national narratives, it is at the same time often framed and perceived in religious terms. The Holy Land has theological, historic, and symbolic importance to believers of the three monotheistic religions (Corrigan, Denny, Jaffee, & Eire, 2016). Accordingly, numerous scholars have argued that differing religious beliefs and ideologies are some of the drivers of this protracted conflict (Hogg, Adelman, & Blagg, 2010; Moghaddam, 2003; Rouhana & Bar-Tal, 1998). For instance, Rouhana and Bar-Tal (1998) stated in relation to the Jewish and Islamic states that are vying for control in the region, "both the claims of the religious Zionist parties for a Jewish state in the entire Land of Israel and Hamas for an Islamic state in all of Palestine invoke deep religious beliefs to rationalize their political claims" (p. 764). The divides evoked by these religious differences can be seen in the contestation over the status of Jerusalem (Armstrong, 2005; Jaspal & Coyle, 2014). Indeed, one of the first major clashes between Jews and Muslims in the Twentieth Century was sparked by conflict over praying rights at the Western Wall in Jerusalem (Cohen, 2015). As of July 2017, tension continues to erupt over religious rights and sovereignty of the holy sites in the Old City of Jerusalem.[2,3] Hence, because religious divisions are one important component of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and all three of the major groups in the region share Abrahamic roots, examining the potential of Abrahamic categorization in this context may be particularly important.

Because the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, like many other conflicts, involves more than two groups, interventions that can unify multiple involved groups—without excluding one of them—are critically needed. However, the majority of previous work on common group categorizations has addressed the effects of acknowledging categories involving just two groups. From a theoretical perspective, it is possible that believers would in fact reject a *triple* superordinate categorization that acknowledges Muslims, Christians, and Jews as all part of the Abrahamic category or that such a triple categorization may have unintended negative effects: By being more inclusive, acknowledging this broader type of categorization may threaten a group's need for distinctiveness (Brewer, 1993; Leonardelli et al., 2010) and thus lead to more bias. Following an in-group projection perspective (Bianchi, Mummendey, Steffens, & Yzerbyt, 2010; Wenzel, Mummendey, & Waldzus, 2007), such a triple Abrahamic category may also lead believers to perceive that their own group is especially prototypical of the larger category. For instance, Jews may acknowledge the shared Abrahamic category but still believe that their group is most prototypically Abrahamic. However, in a recent study, a dual Abrahamic categorization that included only Muslims and Christians predicted lower degrees of such in-group projection (Mashuri et al., 2017).

Here, we test whether the more inclusive extended *triple* categorization (including three Abrahamic groups) will also lead to lower in-group projection: Is it most beneficial to highlight similarities between only two groups in conflict or can one achieve the same effects by highlighting similarities among all three groups at the same time? Investigating these questions in different contexts may shed light on the type of categorization that is most effective in improving intergroup relations between religious groups in theory and practice. Therefore, in addition to testing the potential of Abrahamic categorization for new groups and contexts, the present research also aims to add new insight into the potential of using extended *triple* categorizations more generally.

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[2] McKernan, B. (2017, July 26). Palestinians continue protest at Jerusalem holy site despite Israeli attempts to diffuse growing "Temple Mount" crisis. *The Independent*. Retrieved from http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/jerusalem-temple-mount-crisis-haram-esh-sharif-palestinians-holy-site-israel-protest-a7860526.html

[3] Khoury, J., Hasson, N., Cohen, G., & Berger, Y. (2017, July 22). Three Palestinians killed in clashes with Israel as thousands protest over Temple Mount. *Haaretz*. Retrieved from http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.802708

The Potential Role of Power, Status, and Group Domination

Like many other ethnic or religious conflicts, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is asymmetrical (Rouhana & Fiske, 1995). Yet, how the effects of Abrahamic categorization are influenced by differences in power or status remains untested. Indeed, it is unknown whether the effects of triple categorizations are impacted by inequality and by the relative position that the involved groups occupy. Whereas the case of dual or common categorizations typically involves a dominant and superordinate group, in a triple categorization, the middle group may be dominant with respect to one group but subordinate with respect to the other. Starting from the observation that group relations within virtually every society are hierarchically structured, such that some groups hold more power and resources than others, a social dominance theory perspective (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999) argues that the degree to which people favor such between-groups hegemony should be reflected in their level of social dominance orientation (i.e., SDO; Ho et al., 2015; Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994). Indeed, across various Middle Eastern conflicts, including the Israeli-Palestinian one, individuals scoring high on SDO typically support military solutions and war (i.e., measures that, for the most part, tend to strengthen and enhance asymmetrical power relations between groups), while those scoring low on it, oppose war and support peaceful conflict resolution (i.e., measures which attenuate inequal power relations; e.g., Heaven, Organ, Supavadeeprasit, & Leeson, 2006; Henry, Sidanius, Levin, & Pratto, 2005; Ho et al., 2012; McFarland, 2005). More recently, research has started differentiating between two subdimensions of SDO, namely SDO-Dominance (i.e., SDO-D) and SDO-Anti-Egalitarianism (i.e., SDO-AE; Ho et al., 2012, 2015), suggesting that individuals who endorse SDO-D are in favor of a more active domination and oppression of low-power groups, while those endorsing SDO-AE show milder forms of opposition to inequality.

Given the heated conflict context that our studies took place in, we expected the SDO-D dimension, in particular, to predict Abrahamic categorization. Importantly, the way SDO-D relates to Abrahamic categorization may inform us about the relational function that people perceive this triple Abrahamic categorization to have for the societal hierarchy. Specifically, if those scoring *low* on SDO-D are the ones who are acknowledging an Abrahamic categorization in particular, this would suggest that they see it as attenuating the social hierarchy. Conversely, if those scoring *high* on SDO-D are the ones who acknowledge the Abrahamic categorization, then this would suggest that they see it as enhancing or stabilizing the hierarchical status quo. Given that a dual Abrahamic categorization led to more prosocial behavior and less bias among high- and low-power groups alike in previous research (Kunst & Thomsen, 2015; Kunst et al., 2014), we predicted that SDO-D would negatively relate to acknowledgment of the shared Abrahamic category. As a consequence, Abrahamic categorization would be expected to mediate the relationship between SDO-D and intergroup bias. In other words, SDO-D may be related to more intergroup bias, at least in part, because it makes people reject a shared, inclusive Abrahamic category.

The Present Research

Using the context of the Israel-Palestine conflict, we aimed to test the potential of acknowledging an Abrahamic categorization for increasing support for peacemaking and positive intergroup relationships in heated conflicts as well as the role of acknowledging commonalities between more than two groups. In Study 1, we provided an initial test of the relationship between acknowledging a dual Abrahamic categorization (encapsulating Jews and Muslims) and American Jews' attitudes toward peacemaking and their support of providing humanitarian aid to Palestinians. In Study 2, we provided the first test of a triple Abrahamic categorization and how acknowledging it relates to American Jews' feelings toward both Muslims and Christians, bias in resource distribution dilemmas related to the conflict and support for concrete territorial compromises. Here, we also tested the possibility that such an extended category may be too inclusive and, hence, may lead to in-group projection by increasing the perception that one's in-group is especially prototypical of the superordinate group (Wenzel et al., 2007). In both Studies 1 and 2, we controlled for political orientation as it has shown to systematically predict political attitudes in the Israel-Palestine conflict (Bar-Tal, Raviv, & Freund, 1994; Maoz, Ward, Katz, & Ross, 2002). Thus, it is important to establish whether Abrahamic categorization has any potential for peacemaking over and above this general political alignment.

The next two studies were conducted in a context of ongoing conflict and between high-power and low-power groups who are living in this context of ongoing violence and war. Specifically, we tested whether acknowledging a triple Abrahamic categorization also has potential for conflict resolution among Jews living in Israel (Study 3), as well as Palestinians living in the Palestinian territories of East Jerusalem and the region commonly referred to as "The West Bank" (Study 4). To test whether participants had a hierarchy-attenuating motivation when acknowledging the Abrahamic categorization, here, we included a measure of SDO and predicted that Abrahamic categorization would mediate the relationship between SDO and intergroup bias. Given that SDO substantially predicted conflict-related attitudes in previous research (Heaven et al., 2006; Henry et al., 2005; Ho et al., 2012; McFarland, 2005), these mediation analyses would also allow us to test the unique effects of Abrahamic categorization after controlling for participants' support of group-based dominance.

Study 1

Method

Participants. We recruited 98 Jewish participants through diverse yet Jewish-focused e-mail listservs in the United States. The average age was 39.42 years ($SD = 20.53$), and a majority of participants was women (66.3%). Asked about how often participants practiced their religion, the average score on a scale ranging from 1 (*several times a day*) to 5 (*never*) was around the midpoint of the scale ($M = 3.21$, $SD = 1.35$), and 40.8% of the participants reported wearing Jewish religious symbols or clothing on a daily basis. Moreover, their political orientation assessed on a scale ranging from 1 (*very liberal*) to 5 (*very conservative*) was around the midpoint ($M = 2.37$, $SD = 1.21$). We controlled for political

orientation in all analyses to exclude the possibility that the effects of Abrahamic categorization are spurious and caused by this third variable.

Materials. Unless stated otherwise, the following measures were completed on 7-point Likert scales ranging from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 7 (*totally agree*). In this and all remaining studies, the alpha coefficients that are presented are calculated based on the data from the respective study.

Dual Abrahamic categorization. We used a 4-item measure developed by Kunst et al. (2014) to assess the degree to which participants acknowledged that Muslims and Jews belong to a common Abrahamic category ($\alpha = .90$; e.g., "Because Abraham is the progenitor of both Judaism and Islam, one can say that Jews and Muslims belong to the same 'family' of religions" or "Even though Islam and Judaism are different religions, both belong to the same group of religions").

Personal connection to the concept of Palestine/Israel. Participants indicated their level of personal connection to the concept of "Israel" and "Palestine" (e.g., "I feel personally connected to Israel" and "I feel personally connected to Palestine").

Support for humanitarian aid to Palestinians. We used two items from Halperin and Gross (2011) to measure participants' support of humanitarian aid on 7-point scales ranging from 1 (*strongly oppose*) to 7 (*strongly support*): "What is your opinion about allowing the transfer of food and medicine to innocent Palestinians?" and "What is your opinion about providing medical care to injured Palestinian women and children in Israeli hospitals?" Both items were highly correlated at $r = .80$, $p < .001$.

Support for Israeli-Palestinian peacemaking. A 9-item scale ($\alpha = .95$) developed by Vail and Motyl (2010) and adapted to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by Kimel et al. (2016) measured support for Israeli-Palestinian peacemaking. The scale measured the extent to which participants believed that Israel should pursue diplomatic negotiations with the Palestinians (e.g., "In order to achieve its goals, Israel should pursue peaceful diplomacy with the

Palestinians instead of using aggressive actions"). Responses were scored on a 10-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 10 = *strongly agree*).

Results

The low percentage of missing values (<4.2% per variable) was deemed unproblematic (see Schlomer, Bauman, & Card, 2010), and no imputation was conducted. On average, Jewish participants acknowledged the dual Abrahamic category, $M = 5.09$, $SD = 1.46$, but felt more connected to Israel, $M = 5.68$, $SD = 1.71$, than to Palestine, $M = 2.03$, $SD = 1.14$; $t(96) = 16.45$, $p < .001$. The more right-wing participants' political orientation was, the lower both their support of humanitarian aid, $r = -.56$, $p < .001$, and peacemaking was, $r = -.65$, $p < .001$. Still, controlling for this political orientation, the more people acknowledged the dual Abrahamic category, the more they supported humanitarian aid to, $r_{partial} = .31$, $p = .001$, and peacemaking with Palestinians, $r_{partial} = .32$, $p = .002$. Moreover, the more they acknowledged the dual Abrahamic categorization, the more they felt connected to Palestine, $r_{partial} = .28$, $p = .006$. In contrast, Abrahamic categorization was unrelated to feelings of connectedness to Israel, $r_{partial} = -.03$, $p = .763$, again controlling for their political orientation.

Next, we used a regression approach to test whether this greater connectedness to Palestine would mediate the relationship between dual Abrahamic categorization and humanitarian aid and peacemaking. When connectedness to Palestine was added alongside dual Abrahamic categorization as predictor (and controlling for political orientation) in a mediation model with peacemaking as dependent variable, $F(3, 91) = 31.19$, $p < .001$, the effects of dual Abrahamic categorization became weaker, indicating partial mediation (Figure 1). Bootstrapping using the PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2013) with 5,000 random resamples showed that dual Abrahamic categorization in this model had an indirect and posi-
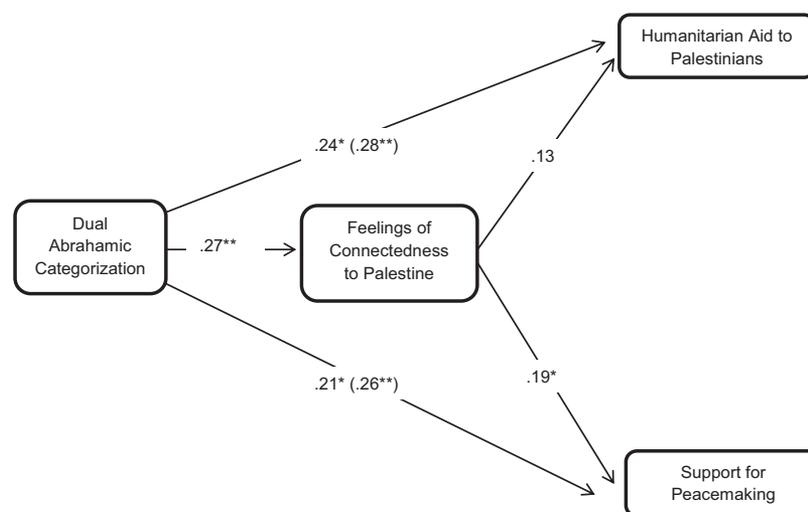
Figure 1. Perceived connectedness to Palestine partially mediated the relationship between dual Abrahamic categorization and support for peacemaking but not humanitarian aid among American Jews in Study 1. All coefficients are standardized. Political orientation is controlled for in the analyses. Coefficient in parentheses represent estimates before the mediator was added to the model. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

tive effect on peacemaking, $B = .06$, $SE = .03$, 95% confidence interval (CI) [.02, .14]. However, connectedness to Palestine did not mediate the effect of Abrahamic categorization in a model with humanitarian aid as dependent variable, $F(3, 91) = 19.82$, $p < .001$ (Figure 1).

Preliminary Discussion

Extending earlier work on dual Abrahamic categorization's effects on intergroup bias (Kunst & Thomsen, 2015; Kunst et al., 2014), here we demonstrated that acknowledging an Abrahamic categorization is associated with support for peacemaking in an ongoing and real-life intergroup conflict—the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The more participants acknowledged the Abrahamic categorization, the more they supported peacemaking with, and humanitarian aid to, Palestinians. Also, a feeling of connectedness to the concept of Palestine partially mediated the relationship between dual Abrahamic categorization and peacemaking. Hence, Jewish participants acknowledging the Abrahamic categorization felt more connected to Palestine, which was related to more willingness to engage in peacemaking with the Palestinian out-group in turn. However, no such mediation was observed for the effect on support of humanitarian aid.

While the present study offers new insights into the potential of dual Abrahamic categorization in the context of a real-world conflict, it did not address an important remaining question: Will acknowledgment of an Abrahamic category that includes not just two, but all three, Abrahamic subgroups still be beneficial for conflict resolution? According to an in-group projection perspective (Wenzel et al., 2007), such a triple Abrahamic category may be too inclusive, leading believers to perceive their own religious group as especially prototypical of the category while perceiving the out-groups as less prototypical, thereby, leading to more negative intergroup outcomes. A common in-group identity perspective, on the other hand, might suggest that acknowledging a more inclusive multiple-group categorizations—that still leaves room for subgroup identifications—could have beneficial effects on intergroup bias, *ceteris paribus* (Dovidio, Gaertner, & Saguy, 2007, 2009; Dovidio, Gaertner, Ufkes, Saguy, & Pearson, 2016; Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000; Gaertner et al., 2016). Indeed, previous research shows that even sweeping recategorizations as inclusive as common humanity may have such positive effects (Wohl & Branscombe, 2005). In the next study, we tested whether acknowledging a triple Abrahamic categorization can also lead to less bias or whether it would instead initiate a process of in-group projection.

Study 2

Method

Participants. We recruited 105 Jewish participants through predominantly Jewish-focused e-mail listservs in the United States. The average age was 30.83 ($SD = 14.47$), and a majority of participants was women (59.0%). On a scale ranging from 1 (*several times a day*) to 5 (*never*), the average score of religious practice was 3.59 ($SD = 1.60$), and 40% of the participants reported wearing Jewish religious symbols or clothing on a daily basis. On a political orientation scale ranging from 1 (*very liberal*)

to 5 (*very conservative*), participants scored an average of 2.07 ($SD = 1.06$). As in the previous study, this variable was controlled for in all analyses.

Materials.

Triple Abrahamic categorization. The same four items that were used to measure dual Abrahamic categorization in the previous study were reworded to encapsulate all three Abrahamic groups (e.g., "Because Ibrahim is the progenitor of Islam, Judaism and Christianity, one can say that Muslims, Jews and Christians belong to the same 'family' of religions"; $\alpha = .90$). We varied the verbatim order in which the three religious groups were listed in the items. This was done to prevent participants from systematically perceiving any implied superiority of one group over the others based on their order of appearance. Responses were rated on 7-point Likert scales ranging from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 7 (*totally agree*).

Perceived prototypicality. Adopted from Waldzus, Mummendey, Wenzel, and Weber (2003), we used one item per group (e.g., "How typical are Christians in regard of the Abrahamic group in general?") to measure the degree to which participants perceived Muslims, Christians and Jews as prototypical of the Abrahamic category. Responses were rated on 7-point scales ranging from 1 (*not typical at all*) to 7 (*very typical*). Given limitations of creating difference scores measuring relative prototypicality between the in-group and out-group(s) (Ullrich, 2009), each prototypicality rating was treated as separate variable.

Out-group feelings. A feeling thermometer adopted from Verkuyten (2007) was used to measure participants' bias toward Muslims and Christians. Specifically, participants rated their feelings toward both groups from 0 (*very negative and cold*) to 100 (*very positive and warm*).

Support for the two-state solution. Participants indicated how much they supported or opposed a two-state solution in Israel/Palestine on a 6-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly oppose*) to 6 (*strongly support*).

Support for political compromises with Palestinians. An adapted version of a scale developed by Halperin, Russell, Trzesniewski, Gross, and Dweck (2011) was used to measure participants' support for Israel making compromises with the Palestinians ($\alpha = .89$). Specifically, participants rated their support or opposition to five items about issues that have been identified as being critical to the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (e.g., "Israel making various concessions with the Palestinians about the status of Jerusalem", "Israel making territorial compromises with the Palestinians"). Responses could range from 1 (*strongly oppose*) to 6 (*strongly support*).

Resource distribution bias. As in previous research on the effects of Abrahamic categorizations (Kunst & Thomsen, 2015; Kunst et al., 2014), we adapted a Tajfel-like resource distribution task from Sidanius, Haley, Molina, and Pratto (2007) to assess the degree to which participants maximized in-group relative to out-group gains, even at the expense of absolute in-group gain. Here, participants were introduced to a hypothetical scenario in which *Doctors without Borders* was distributing funds for relief work in the Middle East. Participants where then asked how they would prefer this money to be distributed on a 7-point scale with a value of 1 representing maximized absolute gain for Israel (*"$190,000 to Israel and $250,000 to the Palestinian Territories"*), 4 representing an equal allocation of resources to both groups (*"$130,000 to Israel and $130,000 to the Palestinian Territories"*), and 7 repre-

Table 1
Correlations Among the Main Variables in Study 2

Variable	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Triple Abrahamic categorization	.19	.32**	.47***	.35***	.44***	.44***	.47***	−.30**	−.34***
2. Ingroup prototypicality		.24*	.32**	.09	−.05	−.04	−.11	.06	.12
3. Christian prototypicality			.42***	.29**	.25*	.26**	.28**	.01	−.14
4. Muslim prototypicality				.16	.45***	.37***	.45***	−.32**	−.30***
5. Positive feelings toward Christians					.41***	.16	.15	−.10	.11
6. Positive feelings toward Muslims						.44***	.65***	−.37***	−.47***
7. Support of two-state solution							.71***	−.37***	−.42***
8. Political compromise								−.55***	−.58***
9. Resource distribution bias									.24*
10. Political orientation									

$^*p < .05.$ $^{**}p < .01.$ $^{***}p < .001.$

senting maximized *relative* gain for Israel in comparison to the Palestinian Territories (*"$70,000 to Israel and $10,000 to the Palestinian Territories"*).

Results

Because of the low percentage of missing values (<4.9% per variable), no imputation was conducted. Zero-order correlations are presented in Table 1. On average, Jewish participants acknowledged the triple Abrahamic categorization, $M = 5.40$, $SD = 1.26$. A repeated-measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) showed that participants differed in the degree to which they perceived the Jewish group, as well as Muslims and Christians, as being prototypical of the shared Abrahamic category, $F(2, 98) = 5.20$, $p = .007$. Follow-up analyses showed that participants perceived Muslims, $M = 3.82$, $SE = .14$, as less prototypical than Jews, $M = 4.36$, $SE = .17$; $F(1, 99) = 9.11$, $p = .003$, and Christians, $M = 4.15$, $SE = .15$, $F(1, 99) = 4.45$, $p = .037$. No difference was observed between perceived Christian prototypicality and perceived Jewish prototypicality, $p = .284$. Controlling for political orientation, triple Abrahamic categorization was related to a higher perceived Jewish, $r_{partial} = .32$, $p = .001$, Christian, $r_{partial} = .24$, $p = .017$, and, in particular, Muslim prototypicality, $r_{partial} = .37$, $p < .001$; see Table 2 for all partial correlations controlling for political orientation. While Christian and especially Muslim prototypicality, in turn, generally predicted more positive out-group attitudes, in terms of zero-order correlations Jewish prototypicality was unrelated to the dependent variables (Table 1). This pattern of results was the same when controlling for political orientation

(Table 2). Hence, we set out to test mediation models in which Muslim and Christian prototypicality mediated the relationship between triple Abrahamic categorization and the dependent variables as in Mashuri et al. (2017).

As displayed in Figure 2, all relationships between triple Abrahamic categorization and the dependent variables, except for support of the two-state solution, were mediated by perceptions of out-group prototypicality. All of these models were estimated controlling for political orientation. Specifically, perceived Muslim prototypicality partially mediated the indirect effects of triple Abrahamic categorization on feelings toward Muslims, $F(4, 94) = 12.96$, $p < .001$, and fully mediated effects on political compromise, $F(4, 92) = 17.02$, $p < .001$, and resource distribution bias, $F(4, 92) = 4.81$, $p = .001$ (see Table 3 for the bootstrapped indirect effects and Figure 2 for the standardized coefficients in the models). Only the effect of triple Abrahamic categorization on feelings toward Christians was partially mediated by perceived Christian prototypicality, $F(4, 94) = 5.15$, $p = .001$. In a regression with support of the two-state solution as dependent variable, $F(4, 93) = 9.77$, $p < .001$, none of the prototypicality measures significantly mediated the effects.

Preliminary Discussion

Among American Jews, acknowledging a triple Abrahamic categorization was related to more positive feelings toward Christians and Muslims, as well as more support for peaceful resolution of the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis. Indeed, we found no evidence that the inclusive triple Abrahamic category involved a

Table 2
Partial Correlations Among the Main Variables in Study 2, Controlling for Political Orientation

	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Triple Abrahamic categorization	.31**	.26*	.38***	.38***	.35**	.34**	.27**	−.25*
2. Ingroup prototypicality		.29**	.41***	.12	.09	.07	−.01	.01
3. Christian prototypicality			.34**	.28**	.20+	.24*	.22*	.01
4. Muslim prototypicality				.16	.37***	.30**	.32**	−.32**
5. Positive feelings toward Christians					.50***	.17	.20+	−.14
6. Positive feelings toward Muslims						.26*	.52***	−.31**
7. Support of two-state solution							.60***	−.29**
8. Political compromise								−.52***
9. Resource distribution bias								

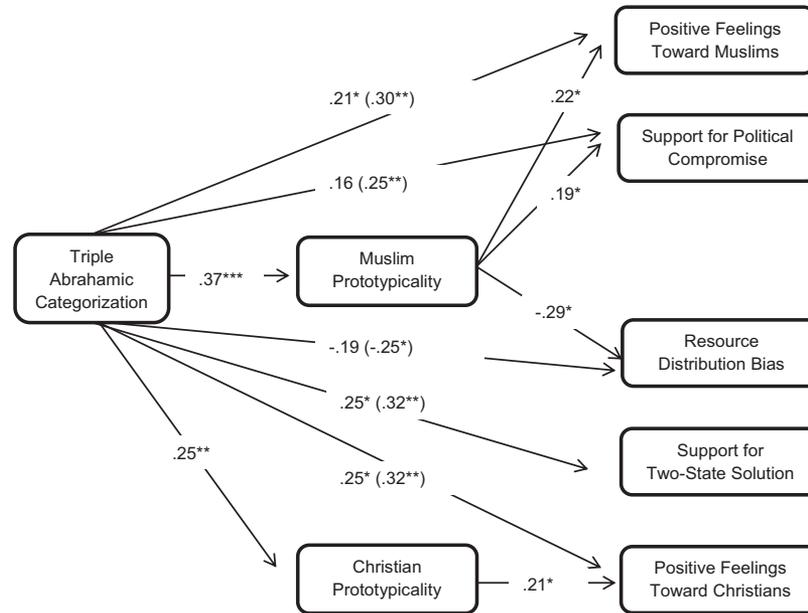$^+p < .06.$ $^*p < .05.$ $^{**}p < .01.$ $^{***}p < .001.$

Figure 2. In Study 2 conducted with American Jews, perceived Muslim prototypicality partially mediated all relationships between triple Abrahamic categorization and the dependent variables except for the relationship with feelings toward Christians that was mediated by perceived Christian prototypicality, and the relationship with support for the two-state solution that was unmediated. All estimates are standardized and controlling for the political orientation of participants. Estimates in parentheses represent coefficients before perceived prototypicality was entered to the models. * $p < .05.$ ** $p < .01.$ ** $p < .001.$

process of in-group projection resulting in more intergroup bias. On the contrary, the more Jewish participants acknowledged the shared triple Abrahamic category, the *more* prototypical they perceived Christians and Muslims to be of this category which, in turn, led to less intergroup bias. This finding is consistent with a previous dual Abrahamic categorization study conducted in Indonesia (Mashuri et al., 2017). Also, while Abrahamic categorization in our study was related to more perceived in-group prototypicality, these ratings did not predict any of the dependent variables.

Interestingly, triple Abrahamic categorization related particularly strongly to greater perceived Muslim (compared with Christian) prototypicality and perceived Muslim prototypicality was also the variable mediating most of the relationships between triple

Abrahamic categorization and conflict-related political attitudes. Arguably, perceptions of Muslims being prototypical of the common Abrahamic category mediated these relationships over and above Christian prototypicality because participants perceived Muslims as the primary counterpart in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Hence, while triple Abrahamic categorization was related to less intergroup bias toward Muslims as well as Christians, this finding may suggest that Jewish participants primarily saw the key feature of the triple category as invoking a bond with the Muslim out-group.

Although this study demonstrated, for the first time, the potential of a triple Abrahamic category for peacemaking, so far, we have examined these relationships only among American Jews.

Table 3

Indirect Effects Based on Mediation Analyses for Study 2 Are Displayed

	Indirect effect mediated by							
	Muslim prototypicality				Christian prototypicality			
			95% CI				95% CI	
Effect of Triple Abrahamic categorization on	B	SE	Lower	Upper	B	SE	Lower	Upper
Positive feelings toward Muslims	**2.00**	**1.06**	**.16**	**4.41**	.14	.67	−1.13	1.70
Positive feelings toward Christians	−.26	.77	−2.21	1.01	**1.04**	**.66**	**.06**	**2.84**
Support for political compromise	**.07**	**.04**	**.002**	**.18**	.02	.02	−.01	.09
Resource bias	**−.20**	**.10**	**−.44**	**−.05**	.10	.07	−.01	.29
Support for two-state solution	.06	.06	−.04	.21	.03	.04	−.04	.13

Note. CI = confidence interval. *SE* and confidence intervals are based on bootstrapping with 5,000 random re-samples. Significant indirect effects are displayed in bold.

While many American Jews have strong emotional attachment to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, they are not living directly within a context of war and ongoing violence. Thus, it remains unknown whether this triple category, as well as the Abrahamic categorization approach more broadly, would be related to less bias toward Abrahamic out-groups and more favorable peace-related attitudes among member of groups directly involved in a protracted conflict. To investigate this, in the next study, we tested whether triple Abrahamic categorization would be related to more peacemaking and less bias toward Arab-Muslims and Arab-Christians living in this region. Finally, we also included a measure of social dominance orientation (SDO) to test whether Abrahamic categorization would function as hierarchy-attenuating ideology and hence mediate the relationship between SDO and out-group bias.

Study 3

Method

Participants. We recruited 100 Israeli-Jewish participants (M_{age} = 31.60, SD_{age} = 9.89; women = 54.0%) through diverse university lectures and online social networks within Israel. Of this sample, 3% were ultraorthodox, 35% orthodox, 18% traditional, 32% secular and 12% atheists. The unique effects of Abrahamic categorization on the dependent variables, when controlling for SDO (instead of political orientation as in the previous studies), are estimated and can be obtained in the mediation models reported. The survey was forward-back-translated into Hebrew by bilingual researchers.

Materials. Participants completed a survey containing the following measures, rated on 7-point scales ranging from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 7 (*totally agree*), unless stated otherwise:

Social dominance orientation. The most recent SDO-7 scale (Ho et al., 2015) was used. Participants indicated their agreement with eight items (e.g., "Some groups of people must be kept in their place") measuring participants' support of the overt domination of other groups (i.e., SDO-D: α = .80) and eight items (e.g., "Group equality should not be our primary goal") measuring their antiegalitarianism (i.e., SDO-AE: α = .90). Responses were scored on 7-point scales ranging from 1 (*strongly oppose*) to 7 (*strongly favor*).

Triple Abrahamic categorization. The same scale as in the previous study was used to assess acknowledgment of the triple Abrahamic categorization (α = .90).

Intergroup contact. We measured positivity to contact with Arab-Muslims and Arab-Christians using each two items: (1) feelings toward having a Muslim/Christian neighbor, 1 (*extremely negative*) to 7 (*extremely positive*) and (2) desire for more or less contact with Muslims/Christians, 1 (*much less*) to 7 (*much more*). The neighbor and contact items were averaged for each group (i.e., Muslims and Christians; both pairs of items were highly correlated, r > .67, p < .001).

Support for various territorial solutions. On scales ranging from 1 (*strongly oppose*) to 7 (*strongly support*), participants rated support for (a) a two-state solution, (b) one binational state, and (c) having all territories under Israeli control.

Resource distribution. Participants were presented with the following Scenario:

"Imagine that the Jerusalem municipality needs to allocate 10 million Shekels for preserving historical religious sites in the city. Please indicate how many Shekels you would recommend to be allocated to preserving Jewish, Islamic and Christian sites (remember that all together should sum up to 10 million)?"

Next, they were asked to indicate how many Shekels they would allocate to each group on a sliding-response scale ranging from 0 to 10 million. We created difference scores to assess relative resource distribution bias by subtracting donations to either Islamic and Christian sites from donations to Jewish sites. Hence, higher scores on these two measures meant more relative resource distribution bias against Muslims and Christians respectively.

Political exclusion. We used a scale adopted from Halperin, Pliskin, Saguy, Liberman, and Gross (2014) to measure the degree to which participants supported the political exclusion of Arab-Muslim and Arab-Christian citizens of Israel (e.g., "Israeli-Arab Muslims' ability to gain power in state institutions must be curtailed"). Specifically, they completed the same five items twice, once framed toward Muslims (α = .96) and once framed toward Christians (α = .96).

Feelings toward religious out-groups. As in the previous study, we measured feelings toward Christians and Muslims on sliding-response scales ranging from 0 (*very cold/negative*) to 100 (*very warm/positive*).

Results

Because of the low percentage of missing values (<3% per variable), no imputation was conducted. On average, participants scored above the midpoint of the 7-point scale on the Abrahamic categorization measure, M = 4.39, SD = 1.69. SDO-AE, but especially SDO-D, was related to lower triple Abrahamic categorization scores, indicating that triple Abrahamic categorizations served a hierarchy-attenuating function (Table 4). As predicted, Abrahamic categorization, in turn, was related to more positive intergroup feelings, more positivity to out-group contact, less resource distribution bias, and less desire for political exclusion of Arab-Christian and Arab-Muslim citizens of Israel. Moreover, it was related to more support for both the two-state solution and a binational state, and less support for a state solution where all territories are under Israeli control.

Given that SDO-D and SDO-AE predicted more bias on these variables, we set out to test mediation models in which triple Abrahamic categorization mediated these relationships. To facilitate interpretations, we present clusters of mediation results for the different groups of dependent variables in separate figures. As SDO-D, β = −.32, p = .023, but not SDO-AE, β = −.03, p = .821, predicted triple Abrahamic categorization when entered together as predictors in a regression model, F(1, 87) = 4.02, p = .048, these mediation models were run only with SDO-D as predictor variable.

Intergroup feelings and contact positivity. Triple Abrahamic categorization partially mediated all relationship between SDO-D and the contact and feelings measures (Figure 3). To start with, in regressions with contact to Muslims, F(2, 97) = 33.57, p < .001, and contact to Christians as dependent variables, F(2, 97) = 23.92, p < .001, the effect of SDO-D got weaker when triple Abrahamic categorization was added to the models (Figure 3), indicating partial mediation. Bootstrapping showed that both

Table 4
Correlations Among the Main Variables in Study 3

Variable	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1. SDO-D	.71***	−.32**	.10	−.48***	−.35***	−.45***	−.38***	.48***	.47***	.37***	.31**	−.29**	−.33**	.37***
2. SDO-AE		−.26*	.10	−.50***	−.35***	−.38***	−.29**	.51***	.46***	.43***	.38***	−.47***	−.31**	.47***
3. Triple Abrahamic categorization			−.19	.50***	.52***	.58***	.53***	−.54***	−.52***	−.37***	−.38***	.44***	.42***	−.42***
4. Positive feelings toward Jews				−.12	.09	−.27***	−.14	.30**	.25*	.22*	.14	−.28**	−.09	.26**
5. Positive feelings toward Muslims					.72***	.76***	.60***	−.62***	−.59***	−.51***	−.43***	.44***	.32**	−.52***
6. Positive feelings toward Christians						.52***	.64***	−.46***	−.47***	−.20	−.32**	.39***	.18	−.43***
7. Contact with Muslims							.82***	−.59***	−.56***	−.48***	−.41***	.46***	.40***	−.52***
8. Contact with Christians								−.47***	−.47***	−.36***	−.42***	.40***	.33**	−.42***
9. Distribution bias Muslims									.97***	.66***	.59***	−.56***	−.37***	.65***
10. Distribution bias Christians										.63***	.56***	−.53***	−.32**	.60***
11. Support Muslim exclusion											.83***	−.48***	−.32**	.44***
12. Support Christian exclusion												−.44***	−.24*	.44***
13. Support two-state solution													.17	−.67***
14. Support one bi-national state														−.11
15. Support all territories Israeli														

Note. SDO-D = support of social dominance; SDO-AE = anti-egalitarianism.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

resulting indirect effects on contact to Muslims, $B = −.23$, $SE = .08$, 95% CI [−.41, −.10], and contact to Christians, $B = −.20$ $SE = .07$, 95% CI [−.38, −.09], were significant.

Also, in the regression models with positive feelings toward Muslims, $F(2, 94) = 27.50$, $p < .001$, and positive feelings forward Christians, $F(2, 94) = 20.67$, $p < .001$, the effect of SDO-D got weaker once triple Abrahamic categorization was added to the models, indicating partial mediation. Bootstrapping showed that the resulting indirect effects on positive feelings toward Muslims, $B = −3.09$, $SE = 1.13$, 95% CI [−5.83, −1.26], and positive feelings toward Christians, $B = −3.23$, $SE = 1.19$, 95% CI [−6.00, −1.29], were significant.

Support for various territorial solutions. As displayed in Figure 4, triple Abrahamic categorization fully mediated the effects of SDO-D on support for a two-state solution, $F(2, 97) = 13.81$, $p < .001$, and partially mediated the effects on support for one binational state, $F(2, 97) = 13.81$, $p < .001$, and a state were all territories are under Israeli sovereignty, $F(2, 97) = 15.45$, $p < .001$. Bootstrapping showed that the resulting indirect effects of SDO-D on support of the two-state solution, $B = −.20$, $SE = .08$, 95% CI [−.39, −.08], one binational state, $B = −.15$, $SE = .06$, 95% CI [−.29, −.06], and a state were all territories are under Israeli sovereignty, $B = .17$, $SE = .07$, 95% CI [.06, .34], were significant.
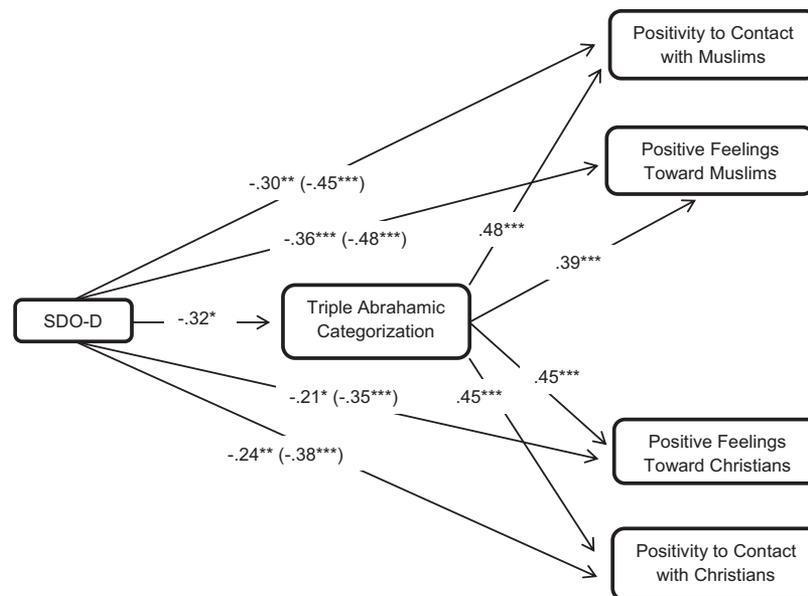

Figure 3. Abrahamic categorization partially mediated the relationship between social dominance (SDO-D) and intergroup contact and feelings among Israeli-Jews in Study 3. All estimates are standardized. Estimates in parentheses represent coefficients before Abrahamic categorization was entered to the models. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.
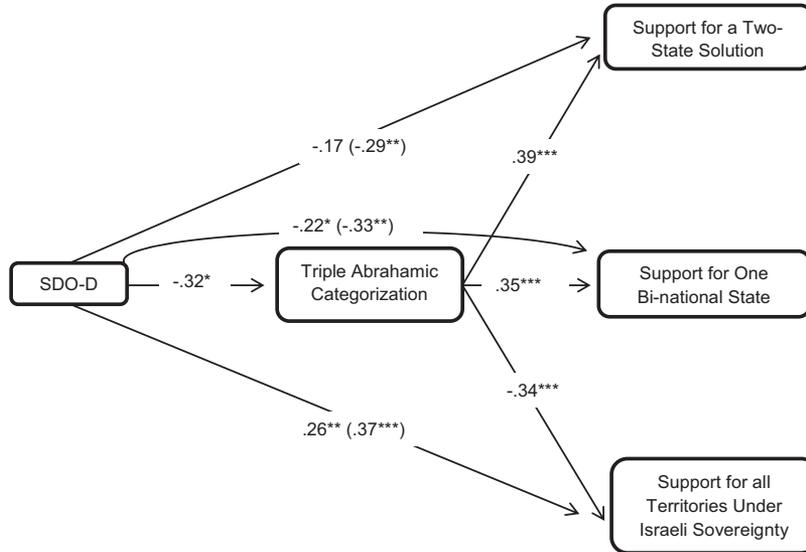
Figure 4. Abrahamic categorization at least partially mediated the relationship between social dominance (SDO-D) and Israeli-Jews' support for the different state solutions in Study 3. All estimates are standardized. Estimates in parentheses represent coefficients before Abrahamic categorization was entered to the models. * $p <$ .05. ** $p < .01.$ *** $p < .001.$

Resource distribution and political exclusion. As displayed in Figure 5, triple Abrahamic categorization partially mediated the effects of SDO-D on resource distribution bias toward Muslims, $F(2, 97) = 32.40$, $p < .001$, resource distribution bias toward Christians, $F(2, 97) = 28.70$, $p < .001$, exclusion of Muslims, $F(2, 97) = 12.76$, $p < .001$, and exclusion of Christians, $F(2, 97) = 10.70$, $p < .001$. Bootstrapping showed that the indirect effects

on resource distribution bias toward Muslims, $B = 460045.58$, $SE = 160294.72$, 95% CI [178328.29, 808323.86], resource distribution bias toward Christians, $B = 419767.77$, $SE = 151553.49$, 95% CI [167376.05, 768503.14], political exclusion of Muslims, $B = .15$, $SE = .07$, 95% CI [.04, .35], and political exclusion of Christians, $B = .14$, $SE = .07$, 95% CI [.04, .32], were significant.
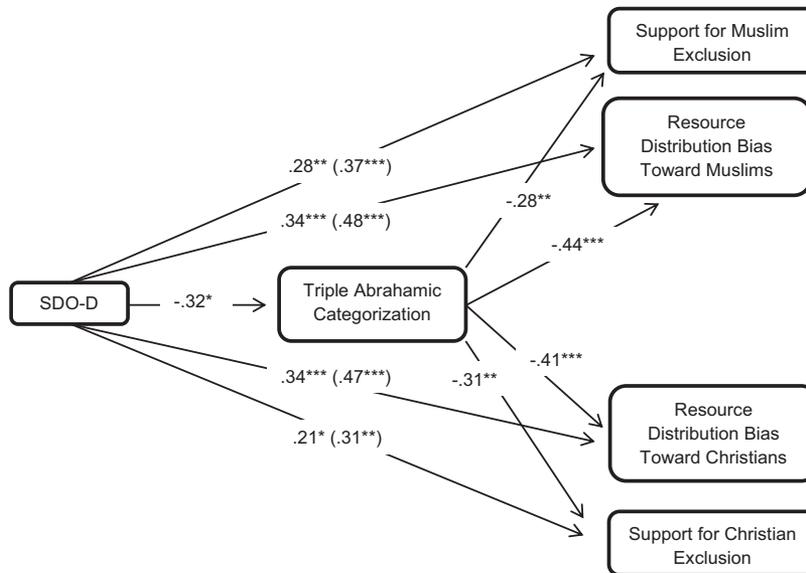

Figure 5. Abrahamic categorization partially mediated the relationship between social dominance (SDO-D) and Israeli-Jews' support for exclusion of Christians and Muslims and resource distribution bias in Study 3. All estimates are standardized. Estimates in parentheses represent coefficients before Abrahamic categorization was entered to the models. * $p < .05.$ ** $p < .01.$ *** $p < .001.$

Preliminary Discussion

Within a context of ongoing violent conflict, triple Abrahamic categorization was positively related to support for peaceful conflict resolution among Israeli-Jewish participants. It was also related to more positive feelings toward, and positivity to contact with, Arab-Muslim and Arab-Christian citizens of Israel. Importantly, Abrahamic categorization was in addition related to less resource distribution bias and political exclusion and more support for political compromises that recognize the states of both Israel and Palestine (i.e., the two-state solution or a binational state). Moreover, Abrahamic categorization was negatively related to SDO-D, indicating that it functioned as a hierarchy-attenuating ideology here. Indeed, it partially, and sometimes even fully, mediated the relationships between SDO-D and the various bias variables. This suggests that SDO-D may predict less willingness for peacemaking by making people see less commonality between their own and other's religious groups.

While this study replicated our previous results in a context characterized by heated conflict, it did so only among the high-power group. In the last study, we therefore tested whether triple Abrahamic categorization would also lead to less bias toward Jews and Christians among Palestinian-Muslims living in the Palestinian territories of East-Jerusalem and the West Bank. While this group is the numerical majority with respect to Palestinian-Christians, it is under occupation by Israel. Furthermore, although Muslims represent the numerically largest Abrahamic minority group within Israel, and the largest religious group within the Palestinian territories, the numerically smaller Palestinian-Christian minority holds higher status, shows more upward mobility and has more positive attitudes toward Israel and Jews (Horenczyk & Munayer, 2007; Khattab, 2005; Mazawi & Yogev, 1999; Okun & Friedlander, 2005; Sabella, 2001). Hence, in this region, Palestinian-Christians may be seen as a minority group that competes with Palestinian-Muslims for status. Taken together, this last study aimed at answering the following: Will Abrahamic categorizations still serve *hierarchy-attenuating* functions in such an intergroup context where subordinate groups compete for status? Or, may it in a sample of Palestinian-Muslims instead serve a *hierarchy-enhancing* function by facilitating a coalitional approach between Palestinian-Muslims and the dominant Jewish group at the expense of Palestinian-Christians?

Study 4

Method

Participants. We recruited 89 Palestinian-Muslims at different Palestinian universities and through convenience sampling in the Palestinian territories. On average, participants were young adults (M_{age} = 29.63, SD_{age} = 9.97) and a majority were women (61.8%). As in Study 3, participants' political orientation was assessed in the form of their SDO (see description of the measure in the next section). The unique effects of Abrahamic categorization, controlling for SDO, are estimated and can be obtained in the mediation models. The survey was forward-back-translated into Arabic by a bilingual team, consisting of a bilingual researcher and a professional translator. Participants completed a survey containing the following measures:

Materials.

Social dominance orientation. The SDO-6 scale (Pratto et al., 1994), with eight items representing social dominance (i.e., SDO-D) and eight items antiegalitarianism (i.e., SDO-AE; see Pratto, Sidanius, & Levin, 2006) was administered. After deleting two SDO-D items (i.e., "Sometimes other groups must be kept in their place" and "It's OK if some groups have more of a chance in life than others") that showed low interitem correlations, both scales showed acceptable reliability (SDO-D: α = .74; SDO-AE: α = .81).

Triple Abrahamic categorization. The measure from the previous two studies was used to assess participants' acknowledgment of a triple Abrahamic categorization (α = .81).

Miscegenation attitudes. We assessed attitudes toward miscegenation because this is a common way to indirectly tap intergroup prejudices and because such attitudes tend to correlate robustly with SDO (Pratto et al., 1994). We asked participants to indicate their approval of intermarriage between each pairing of the three groups. Specifically, on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*very negative*) to 5 (*very positive*) they reported their attitudes toward marriage between (1a) a Muslim woman and Jewish man and (1b) a Jewish man and a Muslim woman, (2a) a Muslim woman and Christian man and (2b) a Christian man and a Muslim woman, and (3a) a Christian woman and Jewish man and (3b) a Jewish man and a Christian woman. Miscegenation index scores were calculated for each pair of items.

Feelings toward religious out-groups. As in Study 2, feelings thermometers were used to measure participants' feelings toward the Christian and Jewish out-groups.

Results

Because of the low percentage of missing values (<2.3% per variable), no imputation was conducted. We found that SDO-D was, in fact, *positively* related to triple Abrahamic categorization among Palestinian-Muslims, suggesting that triple Abrahamic categorization served a hierarchy-enhancing function in this context (Table 5). Importantly, triple Abrahamic categorization was, in turn, related to *more* positive feelings toward the dominant Jewish group and to *less* positive feelings toward the competing Christian minority group, further supporting its hierarchy-enhancing role (Table 5). It also related to more approval of miscegenation between Muslims and Jews but was unrelated to approval of miscegenation between Muslims and Christians and between Jews and Christians.

Given that the SDO-D dimension was associated with triple Abrahamic categorization and the three bias variables on which the categorization measure had an effect (i.e., feelings toward Jews, feelings toward Christians and approval of Muslim-Jewish miscegenation; Table 5), we set out to test various mediation models. In these models, we predicted that triple Abrahamic categorization would mediate the effects of SDO-D, as would be expected if it serves a hierarchy-enhancing or attenuating function (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999).

In regression analyses, SDO-D predicted more positive feelings toward Jews, $F(2, 86)$ = 5.91, p = .004, more approval of Muslim-Jewish miscegenation, $F(2, 85)$ = 8.71, p < .001, and less positive feelings toward Christians, $F(2, 83)$ = 5.65, p = .005, but these effects became nonsignificant when the mediator triple Abra-

Table 5
Correlations Among the Main Variables in Study 4

Variable	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. SDO-D	.45***	.26*	.21*	−.04	−.21*	−.04	−.12	−.08	.27*	.04	.02
2. SDO-AE		−.02	.06	−.09	−.16	−.05	−.06	−.18	.06	.02	.00
3. Triple Abrahamic categorization			.30**	−.10	−.28**	.07	.03	.09	.38***	.13	.05
4. Positive feelings toward Jews				−.02	.05	.14	.20	.00	.43***	.13	−.09
5. Positive feelings toward Muslims					.09	−.48***	−.48***	−.54***	−.16	−.23*	−.11
6. Positive feelings toward Christians						.12	.18	.06	−.35**	−.03	−.04
7. Positive feelings toward Hindus							.91***	.66***	.16	.31**	.04
8. Positive feelings toward Buddhists								.67***	.18	.26*	.08
9. Positive feelings toward atheists									.09	.46***	.17
10. Approval of MJ miscegenation										.44***	.25*
11. Approval of MC miscegenation											.27*
12. Approval of JC miscegenation											

Note. SDO-D = support of social dominance; SDO-AE = anti-egalitarianism; MJ = Muslim-Jewish, MC = Muslim-Christian; JC = Jewish-Christian.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

hamic categorization was entered as predictor, indicating full mediation (see Figure 6 for the standardized coefficients). Indeed, bootstrapping with 5,000 random resamples showed that the resulting indirect effects of SDO-D on the bias variables through Abrahamic categorization were significant; positive feelings toward Jews: $B = 2.38$, $SE = 1.05$, 95% CI [.83, 5.10]; approval of Muslim-Jewish miscegenation: $B = .10$, $SE = .04$, 95% CI [.04, .21]; positive feelings toward Christians: $B = -2.12$, $SE = 1.19$, 95% CI [−5.14, −.36].

Preliminary Discussion

The results of this last study suggest that Abrahamic categorization may be effective at reducing Palestinian-Muslims' negative attitudes toward Jews in a heated, contentious conflict. However, triple Abrahamic categorization also appeared to motivate a desire to form a coalition between Palestinian-Muslims and Jews at the expense of the competing subordinate Palestinian-Christian outgroup. This notion is supported by the fact that SDO-D predicted higher levels of Abrahamic categorization which, in turn, was related to more negative feelings toward Palestinian-Christians but more positive feelings toward Jews. This finding may potentially be seen as a case of horizontal discrimination between two competing minority groups (White, Schmitt, & Langer, 2006) instead of solidarity between disadvantaged groups (cf. Cortland et al., 2017). Hence, insofar as an Abrahamic categorization does function as a coalition with the most dominant group in this context of competing subordinate minority groups, Palestinian-Muslims may acknowledge and, maybe, even endorse this categorization in an effort to exclude the Palestinian-Christian minority that competes with them for status.
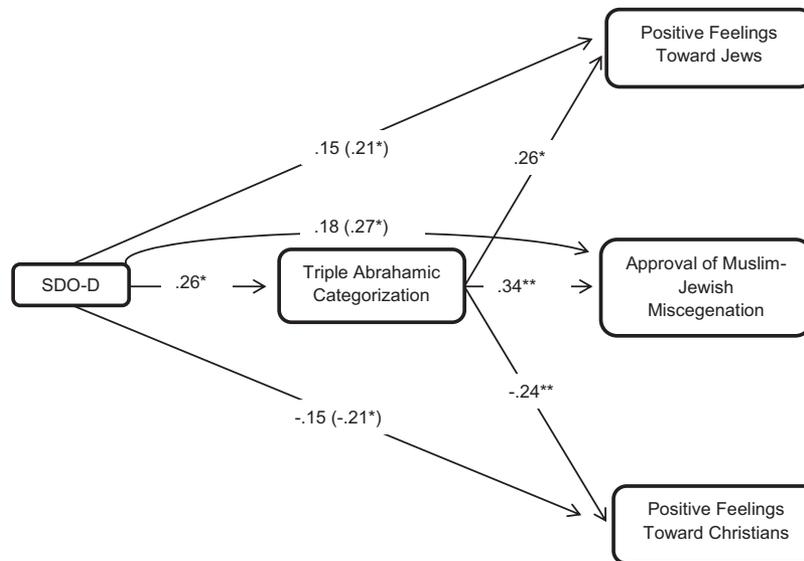

Figure 6. Abrahamic categorization functions as hierarchy enhancing myth, fully mediating the relationship between (SDO-D) and out-group bias in Study 4. All estimates are standardized. Estimates in parentheses represent coefficients before Abrahamic categorization was entered to the models. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

General Discussion

In a CNN special about the Israel-Palestine conflict, Muslim diplomat Dino Patti and Rabbi Sid Schwarz stated, "Political strategies have failed. Let us try a new strategy, one that goes back to the faith of our common ancestor Abraham. Start with that, and peace will follow" (Djalal & Schwarz, 2012). Here, we provide new evidence—from four studies—that acknowledging this Abrahamic categorization may indeed be related to greater support for peacemaking in conflicts involving tensions among Abrahamic groups. Moreover, we show that such categories may remain effective also when they include more than two groups.

Specifically, across different contexts (i.e., the US and Israel-Palestine) and diverse cultural groups (i.e., American Jews, Israeli Jews, Palestinian Muslims), we find support for our prediction that acknowledging shared Abrahamic roots is associated with more positive intergroup attitudes, including less negative feelings, more support of peacemaking and greater willingness to make concrete compromises in critical territorial disputes. Moreover, these effects held even when controlling for people's general political orientations and relational orientations toward group dominance.

For conflicts that involve more than two groups, it is critical to intervene in ways that do not create new divides among the groups involved (Kessler & Mummendey, 2001). Hence, a central part of the present research was to examine whether acknowledging a categorization that encapsulates all three Abrahamic groups might be related to positive intergroup outcomes. Among American-Jews, acknowledgment of a triple Abrahamic category was related to more support of peacemaking and less bias toward Muslims as well as Christians, suggesting that the extended categorization did not involve seeing one's own group as more prototypical of the shared category which, in turn, could have caused more bias (Wenzel, Mummendey, Weber, & Waldzus, 2003). On the contrary, because it was related to *higher* perceptions of Christians and, particularly, Muslims being prototypical of the superordinate Abrahamic group, it was related to more positive feelings toward these groups, to more support for Israel making political compromises with the Palestinians, more support for a two-state solution and to less bias in distributing resources to Jews over Muslims and Christians. Hence, consistent with previous work (Mashuri et al., 2017), such a triple category appeared to involve seeing the different Abrahamic groups as relatively equal members of the Abrahamic category, rather than seeing some groups as being less prototypical than others.

In the final two studies, we tested our paradigm within a context involving intense ongoing intergroup violence. Moreover, we included measures of social dominance orientation (SDO) to test for participants' relational motive for acknowledging an Abrahamic category. For Israeli-Jews, acknowledgment of the Abrahamic categorization was related to less bias and more positive attitudes toward Arab-Muslims and Arab-Christians. Moreover, it was related to more support for territorial solutions that recognize both Israel and Palestine (i.e., the two-state solution or a binational state). Importantly, SDO was negatively related to Abrahamic categorization. As a consequence, triple Abrahamic categorization mediated the relationship between SDO and all intergroup bias variables. In other words, for the dominant majority group of Israeli-Jews, SDO seemed to be related to more bias toward Arab-Muslims and Arab-Christians and to less support of peace-making, at least in part, because it was related to less acknowledgment of common Abrahamic roots and heritage.

For Palestinian-Muslims in the Palestinian territories, results were mixed. Here, we found that acknowledgment of a triple Abrahamic category led to less bias toward the dominant Jewish group but to *more* bias toward Christians. This suggests that Abrahamic categorization, for the low-power group in this high-conflict scenario, functioned as an exclusive coalition with the dominant Jewish group at the expense of the competing subordinate Palestinian-Christian group. Supporting this notion, Abrahamic categorization was *positively* related to SDO, such that the more participants were in favor of some social groups dominating others, the more they recognized a triple Abrahamic categorization. This finding suggests that Abrahamic categorization did indeed function as hierarchy-enhancing categorization in this context and for this group of participants. Hence, Abrahamic categorization may, in some contexts and with some groups, be less effective or even have harmful effects (e.g., turning two subordinate groups against each other).

Future Research and Societal Implications

The present research provided a test of our Abrahamic paradigm in various contexts and established consistent effects even when controlling for general political and relational orientations. Nevertheless, all studies were correlational and the causality in our models was based on previous experiments directly altering the acknowledgment of Abrahamic categorization, thereby testing the full causal chain of the mediation models (Kunst & Thomsen, 2015). Hence, future research is needed to test whether such experimental manipulations are equally effective within high-conflict scenarios such as that central to the present research.

We believe that by controlling for general political orientation, and the closely related SDO, we ruled out one likely alternative theory for the consistent relationship between acknowledging common Abrahamic origins and less intergroup bias. However, because our study was correlational, it is likely that other third variables may also be at play. For instance, group-based emotions such as fear, hate, hope and guilt could have been assessed given that they consistently predicted attitudes regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in previous research (Halperin, 2008; Halperin & Gross, 2011; Rosler, Cohen-Chen, & Halperin, 2015). Indeed, it would be of interest to test whether such emotions may be antecedents or outcomes of Abrahamic categorization.

We would also like to highlight that Abrahamic categorization here did not involve, nor was measured as, *identification* with the group per se, but as acknowledgment of shared religious lineages. The in-group projection model predicts that, in particular, dual identification (i.e., identification with the in-group and the superordinate group) leads people to perceive their in-group as more, and the out-group(s) as less, prototypical of the superordinate category (Wenzel et al., 2003, 2007). Hence, it is for instance possible that individuals strongly *identifying* with being both Jewish and "Abrahamic" (rather than acknowledging the shared category as in this research) also believe Jews to be more prototypical of the Abrahamic group. Nevertheless, even though this may be possible, our study did not find that perceived in-group prototypicality was associated with more out-group bias at all.

However, by using measures assessing Abrahamic identification rather than categorization, future research may shed additional light on whether such potential boundary conditions also apply for the present framework.

The last study was the only study suggesting an undesirable effect of Abrahamic categorization. Here, Palestinian Muslims who acknowledged the shared Abrahamic heritage were more positive toward Jews but showed somewhat less favorable attitudes toward Christians. This finding is interesting and should be followed up in future research. For instance, in addition to replicating our findings with a larger sample of Palestinian Muslims, it would be interesting to test whether the same mechanisms could be observed among Palestinian Christians. In other words, will Palestinian Christians who acknowledge the shared Abrahamic heritage show more positivity toward Jews but less positivity toward Muslims? Future studies should also address whether other triple categorizations that are not Abrahamic in nature may increase bias between competing subordinate groups while decreasing bias toward and among members of the dominant group. Such observations would suggest that the findings from the last study are rooted in the general power dynamics of the specific relational context (cf. Kunst, Fischer, Sidanius, & Thomsen, 2017) rather than in cultural characteristics specific to Palestinian Muslims.

While Abrahamic categorization may be beneficial for peace-making between Israeli Jews and Palestinians, this conflict should not be reduced to one that is solely, or primarily rooted in theological issues. Indeed, the current work only addresses *one* component of a very complex and multifaceted conflict and, thus, our approach may be most useful in combination with other promising approaches such as emphasizing common victimhood and loss (Gayer, Landman, Halperin, & Bar-Tal, 2009; Shnabel, Halabi, & Noor, 2013), stressing emotional similarities (McDonald et al., 2015), nurturing positive emotions such as hope and empathy (Rosler et al., 2015), satisfying the different conflict parts' specific social needs (Dovidio, Saguy, & Shnabel, 2009; Shnabel & Nadler, 2008; Shnabel, Nadler, Ullrich, Dovidio, & Carmi, 2009), emphasizing intergroup genetic similarity (Kimel et al., 2016), cognitive reappraisals (Halperin et al., 2014), third-party mediation (Schrodt & Gerner, 2004) or contact workshops (Malhotra & Liyanage, 2005; Shani & Boehnke, in press). Future research may benefit from comparing the strength of Abrahamic categorization to these other conflict reduction approaches and also test its effects in combination with them. Because acknowledging common Abrahamic origins means acknowledging fundamental theological commonality and shared ancestry, it may be a powerful first step in initiating willingness for contact among the groups. For instance, interfaith projects such as the "House of One" in Berlin—an interfaith center with prayer rooms for Jews, Muslims and Christians—or youth camps such as "Abraham & Co" may provide important venues for contact. Last, education with a focus on theological commonalities in primary school may be an important first step in developing a shared Abrahamic consciousness early on (Plante, 2009).

We believe that Abrahamic categorization may also be relevant to other conflicts beyond the Israeli-Palestinian one. Indeed, numerous other conflicts have involved groups with shared Abrahamic roots such as in the Yugoslav War, the ongoing Sudanese Conflict and the Nigerian Conflict. Moreover, religious categorizations between other groups with shared religious origins who have been involved in recent conflict, such as Buddhist and Hindus in Sri Lanka, may also be useful for improving intergroup attitudes. Future work could, thus, test the effects of acknowledging superordinate religious categories within different context and with other types of theological commonalities.

To conclude, some of the most intractable contemporary conflicts involve believers of religious groups that share theological roots. Using the context of the Israel-Palestine conflict, the present research provides evidence for the potential that acknowledging theological commonalities may have for conflict resolution.

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