Replicating What Motivates Conflicting Groups to Engage in Competitive Victimhood: The

Roles of Need for Power and Need for Morality

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Abstract

Because of the growing evidence pointing to the adverse impact of competitive victimhood on intergroup relations, research has focused on revealing what motivates conflicting groups to engage in competitive victimhood. Whereas Sullivan et al. (2012) showed that need for morality – that is, protecting ingroup's moral identity – predicted engagement in competitive victimhood, Kahalon et al. (2019) found that when considered simultaneously, need for power was the primary motivator of competitive victimhood. The main objective of the present research was to replicate Kahalon et al.'s (2019, Study 1) findings, testing the robustness of their results by conducting it in the context of a unique threat (i.e., COVID-19). Our results, involving a well-powered sample of Jews ($N = 205$) and Arabs ($N = 152$) living in Israel, demonstrated that while need for morality and need for power individually related to competitive victimhood, when included simultaneously in a regression need for power but not need morality predicted competitive victimhood among members of both a disadvantaged group (Arabs living in Israel) and an advantaged group (Jews living in Israel). Replicating the results from Kahalon et al. (2019) in the unique context of the COVID-19 indicates the persistent position that competitive victimhood plays in Arab-Jewish intergroup relations and helps to illuminate its underlying dynamics.

Keywords: competitive victimhood, COVID-19, moral needs, power needs, replication

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Societies involved in protracted conflicts typically live under challenging conditions

characterized by violence, physical danger, and loss of life (Bar-Tal, 2013; Oren & Bar-Tal,

2006). One of the frequent consequences of these conditions is that members of conflicting

groups view their ingroup as the only legitimate victims, while deeming the adversarial group

as the illegitimate perpetrators of unjust and immoral injustices (Noor et al., 2008; Vollhardt,

2015). This phenomenon, coined as competitive victimhood (Noor et al., 2012), is considered

as a common form of conflict-specific exclusive victim consciousness (i.e., people's focus on

how their group has suffered in unique and significant ways; Vollhardt, 2015; Vollhardt &

Bilali, 2015; see also Noor et al., 2017). The tendency to see one's ingroup as having

suffered more than a harmed outgroup can be psychologically powerful in maintaining the

conflict. Competitive victimhood has been shown to predict anti-social and anti-conciliatory

intergroup outcomes in conflicts across the world (Noor, Brown, Gonzalez et al., 2008;

Shnabel et al., 2013). The main objective of the present research was to replicate previous

findings concerning the motivations underlying collective victimhood (Kahalon et al., 2019)

by testing the robustness of their results in the unique context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Moving beyond evidence of the adverse consequences of competitive victimhood on

intergroup relations (Noor et al., 2012; Young & Sullivan, 2016), research has further

examined the influences that motivate members of groups to engage in competitive

victimhood. Theoretically, understanding the processes that motivate people to engage in

competitive victimhood offers insights into why people adopt this strategy that may exacerbate intergroup tension and conflict; practically, identifying how these processes operate can guide the development of interventions to channel intergroup exchanges in more productive ways.

Earlier work on this topic by Sullivan et al. (2012) proposed that implications of harm caused unjustly by one's group threatens group members' moral identity and motivates attempts to restore this moral identity by claiming that the ingroup has suffered more than the harmed group. Although Sullivan et al. (2012) found support for their hypotheses, more recent research by Kahalon et al. (2019) tested the relationship of both need for morality and need for power – two fundamental needs motivating responses in intergroup exchanges generally (Nadler & Shnabel, 2015) – to competitive victimhood. Kahalon et al. (2019, Study 1) focused specifically on revealing the motives of Israeli Arabs and Israeli Jews in engaging in competitive victimhood. While relations between these groups in Israel are not directly characterized by violent conflict, Israeli Arabs are a significantly disadvantaged group in Israel while Israeli Jews are the advantaged group (Smooha, 2016, 2019). Kahalon et al. (2019, Study 1) found that Israeli Arabs, expressed higher levels of competitive victimhood, as well as stronger morality and power needs, on average than did Israeli Jews. These findings are consistent with large body of research guided by social identity theory showing that members of low status groups are particularly motivated to enhance the standing of their group, psychologically and materially through a range of strategies (Hogg et al., 2017; Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Kahalon et al. (2019) further showed that competitive victimhood was associated not only with need for morality but also with need for power both for members of the disadvantaged group (Arabs) and for the advantaged group (Jews). Moreover, while the correlations of both morality and power needs with competitive victimhood were significant

for both Arabs and Jews, when the effects were tested simultaneously for each group, need for power was a significant predictor of competitive victimhood but need for morality was not. These effects persisted above and beyond the influence of strength of ingroup identification and the perceived legitimacy and stability of existing status relations.

As Kahalon et al. (2019) explained, while morality and power needs may be related similarly to competitive victimhood for both disadvantaged and advantaged groups, competitive victimhood may have somewhat different underlying strategic goals for each group. Recognition of the disadvantaged group victimization serves to defend the ingroup's moral identity by claiming the innocent victim status and is likely to promote institutionalized measures intended at compensating and empowering it (Nadler & Shnabel, 2015). Whereas needs for power and morality among members of disadvantaged groups motivate them to engage in strategies to improve their group's status, needs for power and morality among members of advantaged groups motivate them to pursue strategies to maintain their status and dominance.

Intergroup relations, however, are dynamic, often changing as a function of events not only seen as directly attributable to specific actions taken by the groups (e.g., escalated political or armed conflict between the groups) but also may involve influences by other sources or events that affect the relationship (Bodenhausen, 1993). These influences or events not directly originating from the actions of the groups or their members can be important contextual influences on how groups relate to each other. While existing health disparities between Arabs and Jews in Israel represented a significant social inequity prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (Daoud et al., 2018), the COVID-19 pandemic, which arose independently of relations between Arabs and Jews residing in Israel, drew public attention to these health disparities and exacerbated these disparities in part through the disproportionate negative impact of the health of Arabs living in Israel (Luxenburg et al., 2022). The present

research examined the dynamics of competitive victimhood in the context of a major global

event – the outburst of COVID-19. To examine the robustness of the phenomenon, the

current research replicated the work of Kahalon et al. (2019) on the motivations underlying

competitive victimhood between Arabs and Jews in Israel under the conditions of the initial

wave of the of the COVID-19 pandemic, a context of distinctive threat experienced by

members of both groups.

Threat, in its various forms, plays a key role in the dynamics of intergroup relations

(see Intergroup Threat Theory; Stephan et al., 2015). Existential threat, such as the elevated

mortality threat that occurred during the initial wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, tends to

exacerbate intergroup competition and bias (Greenberg & Kosloff, 2008; Pyszczynski et al.,

2021). Alternatively, shared global threats, like natural disasters, can increase shared group

identity, which can reduce competitiveness between the groups (see Gaertner et al., 2015) and

improve relations on the interpersonal and intergroup levels (Drury et al., 2016; Lee, 2021;

Maki et al., 2019; Vezzali et al., 2015). Indeed, despite the horrific health consequences of

the highly infectious strain of Coronavirus (COVID-19) during the initial period of the

pandemic, research has pointed to some potential benefits of the COVID-19 for intergroup

relations. For instance, Bagci et al. (2023) found that, in part because "the pandemic is likely

to induce a feeling of a 'common enemy' against which all humanity is fighting" (p. 1037), it

motivated more positive intergroup contact among children after the initial wave of the

pandemic and a subsequent improvement in intergroup attitudes.

Recognizing the potentially varied impact of exposure to threat on intergroup

relations, we tested the robustness of previous findings (Kahalon et al., 2019) concerning how

morality and power needs predict competitive victimhood. Accordingly, the current study

was conducted in the context in which major actions were taken by the Israeli government to

control the infection rate of the COVID-19 virus. These actions – which included imposing

isolation and quarantine, limiting access to public transportation, and closing schools and businesses – emphasized the common life-threatening circumstances for all of the Israeli citizens. The current objective was to test the robustness of Kahalon et al.'s (2019) findings by replicating that research (specifically, Kahalon et al., 2019; Study 1) under unique conditions associated with COVID-19, and examining the motives underlying the engagement of both Arab and Jewish individuals living in Israel, the disadvantaged and advantaged groups (Smooha, 2016; 2019), in competitive victimhood.

Beyond the importance of conducting direct replication of prior studies in helping establishing the veracity of an effect (Brandt et al., 2014; Simonsohn et al., 2014), testing the dynamics of competitive victimhood under the unprecedented circumstances (i.e., COVID-19 pandemic) that had a huge impact on human behavior worldwide (van Bavel et al., 2020) can illuminate the robustness of the findings of the Kahalon et al. (2019), which found that both need for morality and need for power were related to competitive victimhood (cf. Sullivan et al., 2012). Hence, the present research should not be considered a mere replication of the original findings, but a replication of these findings under different conditions (i.e., a robustness test).

Replicating and testing the robustness of Kahalon et al.'s findings is important for several reasons. First, replication studies increasingly constitute a key component of cumulative science leading to increased credibility and confidence in psychological science (Asendorpf et al., 2013; Brandt et al., 2014). Second, given that competitive victimhood is identified as a major obstacle in the process of achieving reconciliation between conflicting groups (Noor et al, 2012; Vollhardt et al., 2023), it is crucial to increase confidence in the underlying motivations behind why conflicting groups engage in competitive victimhood. Third, replication studies also afford researcher opportunities to examine how robust the original findings might be under different circumstances.

As such, we tested, in the uniquely threatening circumstances in which the COVID-19 global pandemic affected lives of countless individuals internationally, the primary findings from the original study of Arabs and Jews living in Israel by Kahalon et al. (2019) that (a) Arabs would have greater morality and power needs and a higher level of competitive victimhood than would Jews; (b) for both groups, greater morality (see also Sullivan et al., 2012) and power needs would correlate with higher levels of competitive victimhood; and (c) when tested simultaneously as predictors, need for power would significantly predict competitive victimhood but need for morality would not.

Building on previous research that documenting the relationship between shared threat and increased solidarity between minority and majority group members (see Drury et al., 2016; Glasford & Calcagno, 2012), it is possible that the context of the threat of COVID-19 pandemic might make a sense of shared humanity and commonality with other groups salient (Bagci et al., 2023). While we did not measure shared threat directly, we did assess participants' general sense of commonality with members of other groups. As previous research has shown, having a common identity produces more positive intergroup orientations (Carmona et al., 2022) and dampen motivations for competition between the groups (Gaertner et al., 2015), which could weaken the relationships between morality and power needs and collective victimhood. Thus, while our research is a direct procedural replication of the Kahalon et al. (2019) research, performing the work in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic can shed light on the robustness of the effects in Kahalon et al. (2019).

Method

Participants

As in the original study of Kahalon et al. (2019), participants were Arab and Jewish citizens of Israel. Specifically, the final sample included one hundred fifty-two Arab Israelis (86 women and 66 men; ages ranging between 18 and 69, $M = 35.27$ years) and two hundred

and five Jewish Israelis (101 women and 104 men; ages ranging between 18 and 74, $M =$ 43.10 years). They were recruited through advertisement in various social media platforms, using a convenience sampling method. Participation in the study was on voluntary basis. A priori statistical power analysis using G*Power version 3.1.9.2 (Faul et al., 2009) indicated that a sample size of 102 participants would be required to detect a medium effect size $f =$ .15 with 90% power. Appropriate informed consent materials from the participants were obtained for participation in the study.

   With respect to demographic details, among the Arab participants, 31 had completed high school, 32 had pursued some form of post-secondary education, and 99 had attained academic education. Their average level of religiosity, rated on a scale of 1 ("very secular") to 7 ("very religious"), was $M_{religiosity} = 3.46$ ($SD = 1.75$). In terms of residence, 4 were from Jerusalem, 80 from northern Israel, 46 from Haifa, 7 from Tel-Aviv, 13 from other areas in central Israel, and 12 from southern Israel.

   As for the Jewish participants, 81 had completed high school, 63 had pursued some form of post-secondary education, and 90 had academic education. Their mean religiosity score was 2.98 ($SD = 2.04$). Eighteen resided in Jerusalem, 22 in northern Israel, 25 in Haifa, 64 in Tel-Aviv, 78 in other areas of central Israel, 22 in southern Israel, and 7 in the West Bank.

Procedure and Measures

   The present research, replicating the procedure and using the same measures of Kahalon et al. (2019, Study 1), was conducted between April 12 and April 16, 2020 during the period after the first wave of the pandemic in which more than 17,000 residents of Israel were found positive for COVID-19 and following the first major and comprehensive quarantine (https://corona.health.gov.il/last-update/). Participants were asked to take part in an online survey regarding relations between Jews and Arab in Israel. In the present research,

to explore how participants appraised their relations with others in the context of COVID-19, we first presented participants with four items that were adapted from previous research (Gaertner et al., 1989; see also Beaton et al., 2008; West et al., 2009), that measure commonality perceptions between members of different groups. We did not specify in the instructions for these items or in the wording of the items themselves that the focus was on commonality between Arabs and Jews specifically. The commonality items assessed the general tendency to see the distinct groups as one (e.g., "I feel that we are all in one boat without any difference"; "In these days I feel that what divides us from others is falling"); $\alpha_{Jews} = .69$, $\alpha_{Arabs} = .79$. Then, participants completed a set of items that corresponded exactly with those employed by Kahalon et al. (2019, Study 1). Unless otherwise noted, they completed all the measures used in the Kahalon et al. (2019) study on 7-point Likert scales (1 = *completely disagree* to 7 = *completely agree*).

Ingroup identification. As in Kahalon et al. (2019), participants were asked to rate their level of identification with the ingroup using a three-item scale (e.g., "I identify with the group of Arabs/Jews in Israel"; Doosje et al., 1995); $\alpha_{Arabs} = .90$, $\alpha_{Jews} = .88$.

Legitimacy perceptions. Four items measured participants' perceptions of the existing status relations as legitimate. These items were adapted from Weber et al. (2002) (e.g., "In general, Israeli society is fair with regard to the relations between Arabs and Jews"); $\alpha_{Arabs} = .73$, $\alpha_{Jews} = .76$.

Stability perceptions. For the perceptions of stability, participants rated how stable existing status relations between Jews and Arabs are. As in the original study, we used a scale of three items (e.g., "I believe that Israeli Arabs would attain more positions of power in the state in the near future," reverse scored) taken from Shnabel et al. (2015); $\alpha_{Arabs} = .65$, $\alpha_{Jews} = .79$.

Need for power. Four items taken from SimanTov-Nachlieli and Shnabel (2014) measured participants' need for power (e.g., "It is of highest priority for me that the group of Arabs/Jews in Israel become more powerful"); $\alpha_{Arabs} = .96$, $\alpha_{Jews} = .97$. Items were strongly worded to avoid a ceiling effect.

Need for morality. Participants were asked to indicate their need for morality using four items scale (e.g., "I wish the Arabs/Jews would perceive us, Jews/Arabs, as moral"; SimanTov-Nachlieli & Shnabel, 2014); $\alpha_{Arabs} = .93$, $\alpha_{Jews} = .92$.

Also, as in Kahalon et al. (2019) study, and based on the argument that the need for morality could reflect the wish to either protect the ingroup's moral *essence* or defend its moral *reputation*, we included two additional scales, of moral essence and of moral reputation, for the Jewish participants. Following procedure in the Kahalon et al. (2019) study and because of the concern that these items might evoke negative feelings and even be perceived by Arab participants as insulting, these two additional scales were presented to Jewish participants only.

Moral essence is defined as concerns of shame due to the ingroup's violation of core moral values, while moral reputation is concerns of shame due to the damage of the ingroup's image (Hässler et al., 2019). Following the procedure of Kahalon et al., (2019), moral essence was assessed by three items measuring the wish that the ingroup behave more morally (e.g., "In order to give the Arabs equal treatment we, Jews, should be ready to pay a certain price if needed"); $\alpha = .96$. Three additional items measured the need to defend the ingroup's moral reputation (e.g., "I would like the Arabs in Israel to acknowledge that they receive fair treatment from the Jews"), $\alpha = .89$.

Competitive victimhood. Paralleling Kahalon et al. (2019), the competitive victimhood measure (based on Shnabel et al., 2013) included nine items relating to participants' perception that their ingroup suffers greater injustice than the outgroup. The

nine items used to assess competitive victimhood were: (a) "When considering all life

perspectives in the Israeli society, one can say that Jews/Arabs suffered more injustice than

Arabs/Jews"; (b) "Economically, Jews/Arabs in Israel are discriminated against compared to

Arabs/Jews"; (c) "The interests of Jews/Arabs are not well represented in Israeli politics in

comparison to the interests of Arabs/Jews"; (d) "In comparison to Jews/Arabs, the

Arabs/Jews have less impact on cultural aspects in the country (for example: books, films,

and art)" (e) "In the juridical system Jews/Arabs have a lower status in comparison to

Arabs/Jews"; (f) "Jews/Arabs compared to Arabs/Jews suffer more discrimination with

regard to their civic duties"; (g) "It is of highest priority for me that people acknowledge that

my group, Jews/Arabs, is discriminated against compared to Arabs/Jews" (h) "It is of highest

priority for me that people understand that in Israel the injustice my group suffers is way

more than the injustice that Jews/Arabs face"; (i) "People must know that those who suffer

more from discrimination in Israel, are the Jews/Arabs"; $\alpha_{Arabs} = .87$, $\alpha_{Jews} = .90$.

   Realistic resources policies. As in Kahalon et al. (2019), participants were instructed

to rate their agreement on four items that assessed their support for policies intended to

provide Israeli Arabs with concrete resources (e.g., "Israeli universities should allocate quotas

and scholarships to Arab students, to promote higher education in this sector"; adapted from

Sibley & Duckitt, 2010); $\alpha_{Arabs} = .80$, $\alpha_{Jews} = .89$. We anticipated, in line with Kahalon et al.

(2019), a significant positive relationship between competitive victimhood support for these

policies among disadvantaged group members, and for opposition to these policies among

advantaged group members.

   Symbolic resources policies. This measure, as in Kahalon et al. (2019), included three

items measuring, from 1 (*strongly oppose this policy*) to 8 (*this policy should be top priority*),

support of participants for policies that meant to provide Israeli Arabs with symbolic

resources (e.g., "A committee should be established to examine possible ways to change the

state's symbols, such as the flag and anthem, to reflect the identity of Israel's Arab citizens";

Sibley & Duckitt, 2010); $\alpha_{Arabs} = .66$, $\alpha_{Jews} = .73$.

Results

As shown in Table 1 and in line with Kahalon et al.'s (2019) findings, perceptions of

competitive victimhood were significantly higher among Israeli Arabs compared to Israeli

Jews, $t(352) = 16.28$, $p < .001$. Furthermore, Arabs, as in the original study, exhibited

stronger needs for power and morality than Jews, $t(355) = 4.46$, $p < .001$ and, $t(355) = 4.15$, p

$< .001$, respectively. Also, as in the original study, perceptions of legitimacy were higher

among Jews than among Arabs, $t(356) = 5.90$, $p < .001$. However, while Kahalon et al.

(2019) did not find group differences on the measure of ingroup identification, in the current

study it was significantly higher for Jews than for Arabs, $t(356) = 2.30$, $p = .022$. In addition,

while in Kahalon et al. (2019) perceptions of stability were higher among Arabs than among

Jews, in the current study perceptions of stability were higher among Jews compared to

Arabs, $t(356) = 2.08$, $p < .038$, respectively.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Variables	M_{Jews} (SD)	M_{Arabs} (SD)	Correlations									
			1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
1. Commonality perceptions	5.08 (1.41)	5.41 (1.43)	--	.25**	.25**	.30**	.21**	.29**	-	-	.22**	.30*
2. Ingroup identification	5.47 (1.32)	5.11 (1.58)	-.07	--	-.09	.15	.72**	.59**	-	-	.65**	.64**
3. Legitimacy of status quo	4.12 (1.26)	3.30 (1.32)	-.08	.40**	--	.62**	-.16*	-.07	-	-	-.25**	-.22**
4. Stability of status quo	4.02 (1.33)	3.71 (1.50)	-.01	.01	.20**	--	.15	.18*	-	-	.04	.06
5. Need for power	4.02 (1.33)	4.83 (1.63)	-.26**	.53**	.61**	.11	--	.70**	-	-	.70**	.56**
6. Need for morality	4.58 (1.27)	5.17 (1.42)	.03	.28**	.25**	.07	.44**	-	-	-	.56**	.54**
7. Moral essence	4.28 (1.45)		-.02	.35**	.51**	.14*	.62**	.68**	--	-	-	-
8. Moral reputation (defensiveness)	3.40 (1.52)		.32**	-.31**	-.57**	-.01	-.46**	.13*	-.11	--	-	-
9. Competitive victimhood	2.94 (1.34)	5.16 (1.16)	-.33**	.20**	.44**	.19**	.57**	.18**	.36**	-.44**	--	.59**
10. Realistic resources policies	4.34 (1.55)	6.19 (1.51)	.35**	-.26**	-.46**	.02	-.53**	.02	-.18*	.70**	-.47**	--
11. Symbolic resources policies	3.06 (1.43)	5.49 (1.61)	.38**	-.41**	-.53**	.01	-.63**	-.13	-.33**	.71**	-.44**	.67**

Note. N_{Jews} = 205, N_{Arabs} = 153, *p* < .05. **p* < .01.
Correlations for the Arab sample are presented above and for the Jewish sample below the diagonal.

In addition and in accordance with findings of Kahalon et al. (2019), as indicated by the correlations in Table 1, greater needs both for power and for morality were associated with greater competitive victimhood among both Arabs and Jews. Also, among Jewish participants (below the diagonal in Table 1), greater motivation to defend the group's moral reputation was related to less competitive victimhood while greater motivation to protect the group's moral essence related to greater competitive victimhood.

Stronger ingroup identification was associated with greater competitive victimhood and, as anticipated, perceived legitimacy and competitive victimhood correlated positively among Jews, and negatively among Arabs. Finally, aligning with the findings of Kahalon et al. (2019), among Arabs, competitive victimhood correlated positively with support for

policies intended to secure concrete and symbolic resources for the Arab minoritsuy; among Jewish participants, these correlations were negative.

Following Kahalon et al. (2019, Study 1), in the main analyses, separate linear regressions for Arabs and Jews were conducted to test the unique contributions of need for power and need for morality to competitive victimhood. Background variables (identification, legitimacy and stability) were entered in the first step as predictors, while power and morality needs were entered in the second step.

In line with the original study and as shown in Table 2, power and morality needs significantly improved the model for the Arab group when they were added (see Comparison Tables in Supplementary Materials for details). Importantly and as further shown in Table 2, Arab participants' need for power significantly predicted competitive victimhood. However, in this regression analysis, Arab participants' need for morality did not significantly predict competitive victimhood. The magnitude of the effect for need for power, as indexed by ß, in the current research was stronger, ß = .41, than in the comparable analysis for Kahalon et al. (2019), ß = .23. The strengths of the effect for need for morality, when tested in the regression along with need for power, were similarly weak in the present research, ß = .08, and in Kahalon et al., ß = .06.

Table 2

Results of Regression Analyses predicting competitive victimhood among Israeli Arabs

Predictors	*B*	*SE*	*β*	*T*	*P*	*ΔF*	*ΔR²*
Block I							
Intercept	3.31	.30		10.71	.001		
Ingroup identification	.45	.04	.60	9.67	.001		
Legitimacy of status quo	-.23	.07	-.26	-3.33	.001		
Stability of status quo	.08	.06	.10	1.34	.181		
						43.70**	.47
Block II							
Intercept	2.75	.31		8.82	.001		
Ingroup identification	.21	.05	.28	3.54	.001		
Legitimacy of status quo	-.15	.06	-.17	-2.32	.021		
Stability of status quo	.01	.05	.02	.33	.740		
Need for power	.29	.06	.41	4.46	.001		
Need for morality	.06	.06	.08	1.02	.309		
						16.50**	.09

*Note. $N_{\text{Arabs}}= 152$, *p < .05. **p < .001.*

For the Jewish participants (Table 3), when power and morality needs were added as predictors, the model was significantly improved. Importantly, and as in the original Kahalon et al. study, only need for power significantly predicted competitive victimhood. For Jewish participants, the magnitude of the effect for need for power in the current research was similarly strong in the current research, ß = .58, and in Kahalon et al. (2019), ß = .54. The strengths of the effect for need for morality, when need for power was simultaneously

considered in the regression, were similarly weak in the present research, ß = -.08, and in

Kahalon et al., ß = -.04.

Table 3

Results of Regression Analysis Predicting Competitive Victimhood among Israeli Jews

Predictors	*B*	*SE*	*ß*	*t*	*P*	ΔF	ΔR^2
Block I							
Intercept	.50	.45		1.13	.260		
Ingroup identification	.03	.07	.03	.55	.583		
Legitimacy of status quo	.43	.07	.40	5.78	.001		
Stability of status quo	.11	.06	.11	1.70	.090		
						17.69**	.21
Block II							
Intercept	1.24	.45		2.76	.006		
Ingroup identification	-.14	.06	-.14	-2.12	.035		
Legitimacy of status quo	.15	.07	.14	1.96	.051		
Stability of status quo	.10	.05	.10	1.82	.070		
Need for power	.45	.06	.58	7.13	.001		
Need for morality	-.08	.06	-.08	-1.29	.198		
						21.58**	.19

Note. $N_{\text{Jews}} = 205$, **$p < .001$.

Exploratory Analysis: Mediation Analyses and Commonality Perceptions

We conducted two different sets of exploratory analyses. First, while the primary

analyses tested the direct relationship between need for morality and need for power with

competitive victimhood, we also conducted exploratory analyses examining the possibility of

indirect relationships, specifically whether (a) need for power mediated the relationship

between need for morality and competitive victimhood, and (b) need for morality mediated

the relationship between need for power and competitive victimhood. Second, because the

current research was conducted under the unique circumstances of shared threat associated

with the COVID-19 pandemic, we also explored the impact of commonality perceptions in a

regression analysis that also included all of the measures from Kahalon et al. (2019) as

predictors of competitive victimhood (see Supplementary Materials for details).

In our tests of mediation, we tested the possibility that the relationship between need

for morality and competitive victimhood might be mediated by need for power separately for

Jewish and Arab participants using the PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2012; Model 4).   Findings

of bootstrapping mediation analysis (1,000 re-samples) for Jewish participants revealed that

the indirect effect of the need for morality on competitive victimhood through need for power

was statistically significant, 95% CI [.17, .39]. This indirect effect was also significant, 95%

CI [.27, .48], for Arab participants. By contrast, comparable analyses testing the indirect

effect of the need for power on competitive victimhood through need for morality were

nonsignificant for Jewish participants, 95% CI [.17, .39], as well as for Arab participants,

95% CI [-.02, .12].

With respect to the exploratory analyses involving commonality perceptions, Arabs

reported stronger commonality perceptions than did Jews, Ms, 5.41 (SD = 1.43) and 5.08 (SD

= 1.41), $t(358)$ = 2.20, p = .028. Stronger commonality perceptions related to less competitive

victimhood for Jews, $r(205) = -.33$, $p < .001$, whereas, unexpectedly, for Arabs stronger

perceptions for commonality were associated with greater engagement in competitive

victimhood, $r(151) = .22$, $p = .006$.

When added to the regression predicting competitive victimhood among Arab

participants that included all of the variables corresponding to Kahalon et al. (2019), the

effect of commonality perceptions was not significant, $B = .07$, $SE = .03$, $ß = .08$, $t = 1.44$, p

$= .152$. As in the main analysis reported earlier, in this analysis need for power significantly

predicted competitive victimhood, $B = .29$, $SE = .06$, $ß = .41$, $t = 4.51$, $p < .001$, while need

for morality did not, $B = .04$, $SE = .06$, $ß = .06$, $t = 0.76$, $p = .447$ (see Supplementary

Materials). In the comparable analysis for Jewish participants, stronger commonality

perceptions predicted a lower level of competitive victimhood, $B = -.18$, $SE = .05$, $ß = -.19$, t

$= -3.41$, $p < .001$. The results for needs for power and morality were robust. Beyond the

effect of commonality perceptions, greater need for power among Jewish participants

significantly predicted greater competitive victimhood, $B = .38$, $SE = .06$, $ß = .49$, $t = 5.81$, p

$< .001$, while need for morality did not, $B = -.04$, $SE = .06$, $ß = -.04$, $t = -0.68$, $p = .493$.

Discussion

The main objective of the present study was to replicate research by Kahalon et al.

(2019, Study 1) on motivations to engage in competitive victimhood among Arabs and Jews

in Israel under the uniquely threatening circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. While

replication of research is valuable generally given the "replication crisis," in psychology,

replication efforts of the current type are particularly important for research on needs-based

models of intergroup conflict and reconciliation given recent replication challenges in this

area (Baranski et al., 2020). We found that the effects observed in Kahalon et al. were robust:

Kahalon et al.'s primary findings were confirmed in the present study. We showed that Arab

participants engaged in competitive victimhood more strongly than did Jewish participants

(Means = 5.16 vs. 2.94 on 1-7 scales, see Table 1), a result that was comparable to Kahalon et al.'s findings (Study 1 Means = 5.57 vs. 3.00; see also Shnabel et al., 2013).

In addition to the relative difference between groups, we note that Arab participants displayed responses well above the midpoint (of 4) of the scale (1 = *strongly disagreeing* to 7 = *strongly agreeing*) assessing competitive victimhood, while Jewish participants reported a level of competitive victimhood below the scale mean (for further analysis see Supplementary Materials). Future research might further investigate this difference in level of engagement in competitive victimhood between disadvantaged and advantaged groups and the processes that account for the difference in Arab-Jewish relations while examining the generality of the effect across other intergroup contexts. Such research might better situate competitive victimhood among the various ways that groups satisfy their group-based needs. One direction for additional research to pursue is to situate competitive victimhood within a broader view of how groups seek to satisfy group-based needs. While the research by Kahalon et al. (2019) and several related studies of competitive victimhood have been based on the needs-based model (Shnabel et al., 2023), which emphasizes need for power and need for morality, competitive victimhood may be driven by other motivations that have not yet received empirical attention. For instance, competitive victimhood might also be motivated by a benevolent desire for justice and equality in which no group should unjustly suffer more than any other group. Increasing emphasis on the extent to which one's own group has been victimized might thus be perceived as restoring equity.

Another possible line of research examining differences in the degree to which groups engage in competitive victimhood might focus on factors related to the strategic adoption of competitive victimhood. For instance, one possible reason is that claims of victimhood may be a more salient tool for gaining power and status among members of a disadvantaged group (and for whom victimhood may be a highly cognitively accessible construct) than it is among

members of an advantaged group. Another reason for the difference between members of

disadvantaged groups and of advantaged groups is that members of advantaged groups, who

engage in competitive victimhood as a strategy to maintain their power and dominance (Noor

et al., 2013), may recognize that, given their group's social position, claiming victimhood

may be viewed as less credible or socially acceptable to members of a disadvantaged group

and to members of other groups. Instead, members of advantaged groups may rely more on

other techniques (e.g., through policies controlling access to resources or through creating or

reinforcing system justifying ideologies; Foels & Pratto, 2015) available to them to protect

their position and power and that may be seen as moral and just.

Consistent with the findings of Kahlon et al., in the present study we also

demonstrated that Arab participants expressed greater need for power and need for morality

than did Jewish participants. Importantly, we also replicated the key finding from the original

study that revealed that while higher levels of need for morality and for need for power

correlated with greater competitive victimhood for both Arab and Jewish participants, when

the effects of these needs were considered simultaneously in a regression analyses, need for

power significantly predicted competitive victimhood while need for morality did not.

Practically, our findings in conjunction with those of Kahalon et al. (2019) suggest

that the dynamics of competitive victimhood – an orientation that tends to support and often

escalate intergroup conflict (Noor et al., 2008; Shnabel et al., 2013) – may be particularly

difficult to alter with limited interventions. Looked at from a wider perspective, these

findings further indicate the complexity of the relations between Arabs and Jews in Israel and

more generally. While our research does suggest that when intergroup relations, such as

between Israeli Arabs and Israeli Jews, are not directly characterized by violent military

conflict, the intergroup biases related to perceptions of victimhood are deeply rooted and not

necessarily affected even in the context of shared threat – in this case, the COVID-19
pandemic.

  Theoretically, the main findings of the present research, which converge with those of
Kahalon et al. (2019, Study 1), offer an important conceptual lens into the dynamics of
competitive victimhood. One reason why the effects initially observed by Kahalon et al.
(2019, Study 1) proved in the present research to be robust even under the unique
circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic is that the nature of competitive victimhood may
be grounded not only in a particular intergroup context but also in a specific aspect of that
intergroup relationship – mutual harmful actions and experiences of harm due to the actions
of the other group. Thus, while it is possible that shared experience of external threat (e.g., in
terms of COVID-19) and a consequent sense of commonality with respect to that threat might
improve other aspects of intergroup relations, such as motivation for positive intergroup
contact (Bagci et al., 2023) or general attitudes (Gaertner et al., 2015), an experience of
commonality with other groups generally (which could be particularly salient in the context
of shared threat during the COVID-19 pandemic) may not be able to impact the more specific
intergroup basis of competitive victimhood. Future research and the development of
interventions might more productively test the impact of strategies that more directly address
the more proximal factors driving competitive victimhood, such as need for power. While
factors that promote harmony between groups, such as creating a stronger sense of
commonality, may relieve intergroup tension, they often reinforce power inequities between
groups by distracting attention away from root causes of the particular conflict (Saguy et al.,
2009). In fact, members of advantaged groups may use shared (vs. competitive) victimhood
as a rhetorical strategy to create such a sense of commonality to reduce the acknowledgement
of power differences between groups (McNeill & Vollhardt, 2020). Thus, future research
might consider not only what kinds of factors influence competitive victimhood but also how

engagement in competitive victimhood (versus shared victimhood) influences other elements (e.g., perceived power) of intergroup relations.

Another aspect of the findings of the current research, which converged with those of Kahalon et al. (2019), highlights the conceptual and practical importance of considering the influences of both need for power and need for morality – and potentially other plausible influences – jointly in terms of their relationship with competitive victimhood. Earlier research focused primarily on need for morality. Sullivan et al. (2012) found that need for morality – that is, protecting ingroup's moral identity – predicted engagement in competitive victimhood. To the extent that need for morality is the primary motivator of engaging in competitive victimhood (Sullivan et al., 2012), other research suggests members of advantaged groups would engage in competitive victimhood *more* than would members of disadvantaged. Specifically, the needs-based model (Nadler & Shnabel, 2015) proposes that in the context of intergroup relations with a disadvantaged group, members of an advantaged group, who are often subjected to stereotypes that portray them as bigoted, cold, and immoral (Fiske et al., 2007), experience a threat and consequent motivation to restore their moral social identity.

By contrast, the results of both the present research and of Kahalon et al. (2019) do not conform to these expectations and suggest that need for morality may not be the primary motivator of competitive victimhood, instead highlighting the primary importance of need for power both for Arabs (members of the disadvantaged group) and Jews (members of the advantaged group). In the present study and the Kahalon et al. research, Arab participants exhibited a greater need for morality, as well as a greater need for power, than did Jewish participants. Moreover, as noted earlier, while greater need for morality and greater need for power were each correlated with a higher level of competitive victimhood in both investigations, when these relationships were tested simultaneously, need for power was a

significant predictor while need for morality was not. This specifically echoes with findings related to the need based model for reconciliation in which the victim group members seek to restore their feelings of self-worth and their identity as powerful actors and group (Nadler & Shnabel, 2015).

We note that, in attempt to reconcile seemingly inconsistent results between their research and that of Sullivan et al. (2012) relating to the importance of the role of need for morality, Kahalon et al. (2019), identified two important contextual factors that should be considered in interpreting the results. First, whereas the earlier research by Sullivan et al. (2012) demonstrating the morality-competitive victimhood link was carried out in situations of slow violence and structural inequality in the United States, the Kahalon et al. (2019) research was carried out in situations of ongoing direct intergroup violent oppression and terror. In addition, there are important methodological differences between the Sullivan et al. work and the Kahalon et al. research: In addition to the different ways that competitive victimhood was assessed in the Sullivan et al. (2012) studies (a single-item measure in Sullivan et al., and a multi-item measure in Kahalon et al.), the Sullivan et al. (2012) research was experimental, while the Kahalon et al. (2019) study that we replicated was correlational. We concur with Kahalon et al. that that need for morality can be an equally or more important motivator of competitive victimhood depending on the social situation and salient factors. However, we also speculate about another possible dynamic that may be involved in the dynamics among need for morality, need for power, and competitive victimhood.

The additional possibility that we suggest is that while recognizing that need for morality and need for power are conceptually distinct motivations (Nadler & Shnabel, 2015), the effect of need for morality on greater competitive victimhood might, under some circumstances, be mediated by need for power. For example, prior research has demonstrated potentially complex relationships between morality and power. Previous research has

revealed that feeling more moral, for instance by engaging in actions demonstrating one's moral standing, can produce "moral licensing," which represents a form of empowerment for engaging in subsequent actions including less moral or egalitarian behavior, possibly without conscious intention (Merritt et al., 2010). Indeed, as the results of the present research reveal (see Table 1), need for morality and need for power are substantially correlated for both Arab and Jewish participants. Exploratory analyses further revealed, consistent with this reasoning the relationship between need for morality and competitive victimhood was mediated by need for power for Jewish participants, Arab participants, and across both groups of participants (see Supplementary Materials).

These results of "correlational mediation" need to be interpreted with caution, though. In these analyses, both the predictor and the mediator were measured, not manipulated, variables; causal inferences are not warranted based on these data. As Spencer et al. (2005) recommend, such findings need to be considered in conjunction with experiments in which the hypothesized mediator is systematically manipulated. Nevertheless, findings suggest the possibility that while people may indicate that they are engaging in competitive victimhood to establish their moral standing, perhaps a more socially acceptable reason than to increase their power, their primary motivation may be to achieve a sense of greater power. Besides testing whether need for power mediates the relationship between need for morality and competitive victimhood in a more methodologically rigorous fashion, future research might also investigate factors that moderate this relationship. While need for power may be viewed as a socially unacceptable motivation when the perceived goal is to dominate another group, it may be seen as commendable when the goal is perceived as helping another group. When the need for power is seen in the context of a more benevolent purpose, people may have less motivation to cloak it as reflecting a different need (e.g., a need for morality). Understanding

these dynamics more fully has important conceptual and practical implications for intergroup

relations.

Further research investigating these dynamics might also address limitations in the

original Kahalon et al. (2019) research. The ways the key constructs of need for power, and

need for morality are measured particularly warrant further consideration. Need for power, as

measured by Kahalon et al. (2019, as well as in our replication study) is assessed in a way

(e.g., including the item, "It is of highest priority for me that the group of Arabs/Jews in

Israel become more powerful") that resembles social dominance orientation (Ho et al., 2015).

In general, people higher in social dominance orientation are less supportive of social policies

that benefit minoritized groups materially or symbolically (relating to the measures of

realistic and symbolic resource policies). In the present research, Jewish participants who

were less supportive of these policies that would benefit Arabs demonstrated higher levels of

competitive victimhood. Moreover, previous research shows that higher levels of social

dominance orientation directly relate to greater claims of victimization among high-status

groups (Thomsen et al., 2010). Thus, additional research might focus on potentially distinct

aspects related to need for power, such as autonomy and self-determination at a collective

level (as interpreted by Kahalon et al., 2019) or as a motivation for dominance or anti-

egalitarianism (the two main dimensions underlying social dominance orientation; Ho et al.,

2015), or some combination of these facets.

Additional research illuminating the underlying dynamics of the measure of need for

morality would also provide valuable insights to create a more comprehensive understanding

of what drives competitive victimhood. A need for morality, for example, may reflect a

desire for acknowledgement of moral standing specifically by members of the other relevant

group (as the current measure of competitive victimhood emphasizes) rather than a broader

need for perceiving one's group in a positive light, which previous research has shown can

have different intergroup consequences (Shnabel et al., 2014). With respect to the present

research, it is not clear how or why stronger expressions of competitive victimhood would

increase the outgroup's perception of the ingroup's morality. Thus, future research should

consider more comprehensively how different facets of need for morality – such as

perceptions of how moral one's group is seen by the other group in conflict, by other groups,

or with respect to particular ingroup standards – relate to competitive victimhood specifically.

Moreover, such research should consider further not only how the importance of moral

fulfillment might differ for by members of advantaged and disadvantaged groups but also

how the type of moral fulfillment needed may fundamentally differ between the groups

(Shnabel et al., 2023). While the inclusion of measures of moral essence and moral reputation

by Kahalon et al. (2019) and in the present study that were administered to Jewish students

may help to distinguish different types of morality needs for members of advantaged groups,

broader consideration of morality needs would help to more fully illuminate the nature of the

relationship between need for morality and collective victimhood (and the influences of such

needs relative to need for power), and such consideration should include measures applicable

to members of disadvantaged groups, as well.

Beyond the relevance of competitive victimhood to intergroup relations generally, it

may be particularly relevant to relations between Israeli Arabs and Israeli Jews and Arab-

Jewish relations more generally. Relations between Arabs and Jews, both within and outside

of Israel have been characterized by suspicion, tension, and conflict since the establishment

of Israel. As evidenced by the recent events in Gaza, the existing tensions have cascading

impact on relations between Arabs and Jews especially within Israel – most of Israeli Jews

perceive Arabs as threat and most of Arabs in Israel feel threatened as a minority (Nassir et

al., 2023). Accordingly, and as recently indicated, this heightened feeling of threat could feed

the motivation of Arabs and Jews to engage in competitive victimhood (Halabi et al., 2021),

for which examples can readily be drawn from the history of this challenging intergroup context and which can trigger further escalation of conflict (Noor et al., 2012). Confirming the results and conclusions from Kahalon et al. (2019) in the unique context of the COVID-19 pandemic provides robust support for the argument that advantaged and disadvantaged groups engage in competitive victimhood due to their *need for power* and indicates the persistent position that competitive victimhood plays in Arab-Jewish intergroup relations.

In conclusion, the current study, while following recommendations of Brandt et al. (2014) for a convincing replication (i.e., defining the effects and methods that the researcher intends to replicate; following as exactly as possible the methods of the original study; having high statistical power; providing complete details about the replication available; and evaluating replication results while comparing them to the results of the original study) increases the validity of the work on the predictors of competitive victimhood. We replicated the main findings of the Kahalon et al. (2019) research that showed that power needs among both disadvantaged and advantaged group members constitute a primary motivation to engage in competitive victimhood, even with the occurrence of a universal threat that potentially could create a reality of a common fate, a circumstance in which greater feelings of inclusiveness might be expected. This itself points to the robustness of the investigated phenomenon of competitive victimhood.

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