

# Chapter 5

## Receiving Population Appraisal as Potential Risk or Resilience for Immigrant Adaptation: The Threat-Benefit Model



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Empirical research suggests that among the factors relevant to understanding the adaptation and resilience of immigrant populations, it is critical to understand the attitude of the host population to the immigrant group (Berry, 2013). Whether it is through the acculturation strategies encouraged by the receiving populations (Bourhis, Moise, Perreault, & Senecal, 1997) or the levels of perceived threat (integrated threat theory, ITT) (Stephan, Lausanne Renfro, Esses, White Stephan, & Martin, 2005; Stephan & Stephan, 2000), a social psychology perspective in which attitudes influence behaviors highlights the relationship between the attitudes local people hold toward immigrants and their behaviors toward immigrants. Negative perceptions of immigrants can lead to policies restricting immigrant rights, welfare, health and education, avoidance of contact, and negative intergroup interactions, threatening immigrant integration and well-being (Bourhis, Montreuil, Barrette, & Montaruli, 2009; Zagefka, Brown, Broquard, & Martin, 2007).

However, to date, such theories (e.g., Stephan & Stephan, 2000) have tended to emphasize the negative or threat component of appraisal toward immigrants. In this chapter, through an integrative synthesis of two previously published studies (Tartakovsky & Walsh, 2016a, 2016b), we put forward a conceptual threat-benefit model (TBM) which aims to advance previously theoretical understandings by examining not only the threats that a particular immigrant group may represent but also the benefits or contributions that they may bring to a society. Informed by a resilience perspective (Masten & Powell, 2003), we suggest that positive appraisal of immigrants can be considered to be a form of “social resilience” incorporating a

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sense of acceptance and belonging and providing conditions for immigrant integration and well-being. In a context whereby immigration inevitably brings with it stressors which a society needs to accommodate, the ability to continue positive societal growth will relate to the ability to perceive the newcomers as contributing and benefitting the society.

## Appraisal of Immigrants

The most popular theory of appraisal of immigrants is the integrated threat theory (ITT) (Stephan & Stephan, 2000; Stephan, Stephan, & Gudykunst, 1999). The main assumption of ITT is that local people perceive immigrants as a threat (Stephan & Stephan, 2000). There are four types of threats that immigrants may possess for local people, including (a) realistic threat (competition for resources), (b) symbolic threat (perceived incompatibility in cultural values), (c) intergroup anxiety (out-group fear), and (d) negative stereotypes (anticipated negative behavior). Yet, ITT can be seen to have two major limitations. The first is that it does not delineate the predictors or the antecedents of appraisal of threats – what makes individuals perceive threats differently? The second is that its' focus on threats ignores the fact that many people regard immigration positively and support immigration to their countries (Lee & Fiske, 2006; Leong, 2008; Mayda, 2006; Velasco Gonzalez, Verkuyten, Weesie, & Poppe, 2008), despite the fact that empirical studies have also shown strong anti-immigration attitudes within local populations (Davidov, Meuleman, Billiet, & Schmidt, 2008; Gorodzeisky & Semyonov, 2009; Raijman & Semyonov, 2004).

In the current chapter, we explore a threat-benefit model which includes the appraisal of immigrants as both potentially threatening and beneficial (in different aspects) to the receiving society. It advances current theoretical perspectives in two ways which are as follows: (1) it enables an understanding of appraisal of immigrants as bringing with them positive contributions (benefits) to the receiving society as well as threats, and (2) it posits antecedents to appraisal in the form of personal values (Schwartz et al., 2012) that an individual holds, thus proposing that attitudes that individuals hold are related to personal motivations (Ponizovskiy, Grigoryan, Kühnen, & Boehnke, 2019). TBM therefore suggests a psychological mechanism explaining the origin and maintenance of both positive and negative appraisal of immigrants, and (3) it provides a framework for understanding behaviors as a consequence of values and attitudes held (Roccas & Sagiv, 2010).

## A Threat-Benefit Model of Appraisal of Immigrants

The threat-benefit model (Tartakovsky & Walsh, 2016a, 2016b) of appraisal of immigrants delineates four different threats and four different benefits that an immigrant group can represent for the local population. In the current section we explore the potential threats and benefits that a particular immigrant group may represent.

**Immigrants as a Threat** A particular immigrant group can represent any or all of a number of areas of threat, including threats to physical, economic, social cohesion, and modernity. *Physical threats* reflect a fear of local people that immigrants may cause physical harm, including the harm to the local people's body and property and terrorism (Stephan & Stephan, 1996). *Economic threats* reflect a fear of local people to lose their dominance over economic resources by competing for jobs and/or for welfare with the immigrants (McLaren, 2003). *Threats to societal cohesion* reflect a fear that immigrants will alter the existing value system and introduce new behavioral norms, customs, and rituals (Huddy & Sears, 1995). *Threats to modernity* reflect the fear that immigrants will bring non-modern values and behavioral norms.

**Immigrants as a Benefit** In addition, an immigrant group can also represent a range of potential benefits that it can bring with it to a new country, including economic, social cohesion, cultural diversity, and humanitarian. *Economic benefits* reflect the immigrants' potential to contribute to the economic development of the receiving country. The immigrants' potential to contribute economically is related to their readiness to work at the jobs local people do not want or lack the skills to do, as well as the immigrants' readiness to work longer hours and for a lower salary (Leong, 2008). In addition, immigrants' consumption of local goods and services may also benefit the local economy (Borjas, 2001). Finally, immigrants may bring the needed skills and international connections that may promote economics of the receiving country. *Social cohesion benefits* are related to the potential ability of some culturally close groups of immigrants to strengthen the majority group in the receiving country (Bourhis et al., 2013). *Cultural diversity benefits* are related to the new cultural elements (food, clothes, music, etc.) that immigrants bring with them, which may be perceived by local people as culturally enriching the receiving society (Leong, 2008; Vecchione, Caprara, Schoen, Castro, & Schwartz, 2012). *Humanitarian benefits* are related to the satisfaction of helping immigrants to save their lives and to improve their quality of living (Leong & Ward, 2006).

A threat-benefit model proposes that local people consider immigrant groups as representing both threats and also benefits for the receiving society. The model puts forward a three-level cognitive construct. At the most general level, an immigrant group is seen as generally benefitting or threatening the host society. These threats and benefits can then be divided into realistic and symbolic threats and benefits, and then, at the most differentiated level, we detail threats and benefits in different domains of society. This three-level model was confirmed in previous studies (Tartakovsky & Walsh, 2016a, 2016b).

Research suggests that levels of appraisal in each domain vary across immigrant groups (Tartakovsky & Walsh, 2019). For instance, social cohesion benefits may be relevant only for Diaspora immigrants (e.g., Jewish immigrants in Israel, or immigration of Latino immigrants to the United States which may strengthen the Latino community) (Amit, 2012). In addition, different groups of immigrants may be perceived as representing a threat, while other groups may be perceived as beneficial in the same area. A threat-benefit model assumes that for all immigrant groups, the

various domains of threats are positively correlated to each other, as well as the domains of benefits. Yet, we suggest that the strength of association between different aspects of appraisal will vary. When local people have less information regarding an immigrant group (from personal experience of contact with them and from the mass media), they are more likely to appraise it in a less detailed manner, as either entirely threatening or beneficial (Tartakovsky & Walsh, 2019; Timberlake & Williams, 2012). The groups more familiar to the local population are appraised in a more detailed manner, and the different aspects of their appraisal are less strongly related to each other.

On a theoretical level, according to cultural conflict theories, which consider differences in attitudes toward various immigrant groups as related to ethnocentrism and symbolic threats (e.g., Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2015), the higher the cultural distance between an immigrant group and the local population (measured as a difference in the skin color, ethnicity, religion, and language), the more negative will be attitudes toward the group (Dustmann & Preston, 2007; Pettigrew, Tropp, Wagner, & Christ, 2011). Several studies conducted in both the United States and Europe have supported these theories (Dustmann & Preston, 2007; Valentino, Brader, & Jardina, 2013). Similarly, receiving society members for whom certain values are more important (e.g., those with a higher level of religiosity and a higher preference for the conservation value) expressed more negative attitudes toward immigrants than receiving society members with lower levels of those values (Beierlein, Kuntz, & Davidov, 2016).

**Antecedents of Appraisal of Immigrants: Values** The threat-benefit model of appraisal of immigrants suggests that the appraisal one holds toward immigrants may be related to the system of personal values (Schwartz, 1992, 2006b; Schwartz et al., 2012) that an individual holds. Personal values theory (Schwartz, 1992, 2006b; Schwartz et al., 2012) defines values as desirable trans-situational goals that serve as guiding principles in people's lives. It specifies a comprehensive set of 12 motivationally distinct values: power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, self-direction, universalism, benevolence, humility, tradition, conformity, security, and face (Schwartz et al., 2012). Personal values theory assumes the existence of dynamic relations between these values in that pursuit of each value has consequences that may conflict or may be congruent with the pursuit of other values. The conflicts and congruities among all 12 values yield an integrated structure of four higher-order value types arrayed along two orthogonal dimensions: self-enhancement (including values of power and achievement) versus self-transcendence (universalism and benevolence) and openness to change (self-direction and stimulation) versus conservation (conformity, tradition, and security). Three of the 12 values are considered to overlap two higher-order value types: face (conservation and self-enhancement), hedonism (openness and self-enhancement), and humility (self-transcendence and conservation).

**Personal Values and Attitudes toward Immigrants** Psychologists assume that human cognitive structures are organized according to a hierarchy (Eagly & Chaiken, 1998). Values constitute the most general and abstract part of this hierar-

chy; they reflect individual preferences across a wide range of situations and have a motivational property (Schwartz, 2006a; 2006b). Attitudes are defined as the disposition to evaluate an attitudinal object with some degree of favor or disfavor, and therefore, they represent the individual's preferences for specific conditions and/or in relation to a specific social object (Maio & Haddock, 2014). One of the prominent functions of attitudes is to assert value preferences (Hitlin, 2003; Schwartz, 2006a). Researchers have found that attitudes toward minorities are positively associated with some values and contradict others (Sagiv & Schwartz, 1995; Schwartz, 2006a). Specifically, researchers found from studies of value and attitudes among locals in 19 nations that self-enhancement values (especially power) align with negative attitudes toward minority groups, while self-transcendence values (especially universalism) are associated with positive attitudes toward these groups. In addition, conservation values are associated with negative attitudes toward minority groups, while openness to change values is associated with positive attitudes (Davidov et al., 2008).

Schwartz (2006a) differentiates between anxiety-free values (openness to change and self-transcendence) which relate to self-growth, as opposed to anxiety avoidance values (self-enhancement and conservation) in which the individual is motivated toward self-protection against threat. Schwartz (2010) suggests that if people are preoccupied with pursuing specific values to control their anxiety, they have fewer psychic resources to be open to the "other," suggesting a relationship between anxiety avoidance values and negative appraisal of immigrants. These theoretical assumptions have been supported in empirical studies on attitudes toward immigrants conducted on both the individual level (Feather & McKee, 2008; Leong, 2008; Vecchione et al., 2012) and at the level of societal value preferences (Davidov et al., 2008; Leong & Ward, 2006). These findings suggest that negative appraisal of immigrants can allow attainment, expression, or fulfillment of anxiety avoidance values, while positive appraisal can enable the attainment or fulfillment of anxiety-free values.

**Behavioral and Emotional Responses Toward Immigrants** The threat-benefit model also suggests that the appraisal a member of the host society holds will have implications for their responses or behaviors directed toward immigrant groups. Appraisal of immigrants is likely to impact diverse responses such as levels and types of interaction and attitudes they will hold toward immigrant rights and behaviors. Critical to this is the understanding that while the threat-benefit model postulates an overall negative correlation between threats and benefits, they are not two ends of a unidimensional continuum (Tartakovsky & Walsh, 2016a). Examining benefits expands the ability to understand responses to immigrants, over and above a focus on threats. As such, we increase our conceptual understanding and may be able to explain greater variance of local population responses. For instance, in an examination of predictors of voluntary contact (e.g., socializing, dating, visiting homes) of young adults with immigrants from the FSU in Israel (Walsh, Tartakovsky, & Shifter-David, 2018), perception of threats helped understand why young people chose to avoid contact but not necessarily why they would choose to get close to

immigrants. By examining the benefits that the immigrants bring with them (such as cultural diversity and social cohesion), we add in our ability to appreciate the positive relationships created.

In addition, we suggest that positive appraisal of immigrants within a society promotes a form of societal resilience, which, in turn, enhances immigrant resilience. We consider that positive appraisal of immigrants is a sign of health and resourcefulness of the society and a sign of a high level of self-assurance and a low level of “societal anxiety”. Resilience (Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000; Masten & Powell, 2003) has been considered the ability to continue toward positive development and growth despite stressors which can challenge the individual or group. The incoming of immigrant groups can increase stressors in a society in its process of absorbing and integrating the newcomers. It may be that growth of the receiving society can be represented by positive attitudes to immigrant rights (e.g., education, health, and welfare), ability to provide effective services with immigrant groups and sought contact with the newcomers.

**Empirical Studies: An Overview** In the following sections, we relate to two studies (Tartakovsky & Walsh, 2016a, 2016b) which explored the threat-benefit model and how it related to two outcomes among social workers: attitudes toward immigration policy toward asylum seekers (Tartakovsky & Walsh, 2016b) and feelings of burnout when working with Diaspora immigrants (Tartakovsky & Walsh, 2016a). The focus on social workers was chosen because this professional group, along with other human services professionals (e.g., educators, law enforcement officers, and medics), is at the forefront of working with immigrants and is pivotal in enabling positive adaptation and integration of immigrant groups. Since most social workers are placed in the government or governmentally subsidized agencies, they are responsible for distribution of state welfare resources (Ayalon, Kaniel, & Rosenberg, 2008). In addition, in Israel and in many other countries, social workers affect policy regarding immigrants and asylum seekers, through different nongovernment bodies, court rulings, and parliament commissions (Kritzman-Amir, 2012). Despite their centrality in processes of integration and adaptation of immigrant groups, to the best of our knowledge, former studies have not examined predictors and outcomes of their attitudes toward the populations they work with.

The two studies took place in Israel. Israel is a special immigration context in which Jewish Diaspora groups are formally encouraged to immigrate to Israel (Amit, 2012; Titzmann & Stoessel, 2014). Recent years, however, have seen an influx of additional immigrant groups, including asylum seekers, especially from Eritrea and Sudan, and both legal and illegal foreign workers from countries such as Romania, Thailand, and the Philippines who are involved in caretaking, the building industry, and agriculture, making Israel more similar to other countries.

The first study focused on appraisal of asylum seekers, and the second study examined the appraisal of two Diaspora immigrant groups from the Former Soviet Union and from Ethiopia. The decision to explore the appraisal of asylum seekers was guided by the fact that the number of asylum seekers in the world is rapidly growing (Kritzman-Amir, 2012; Yaron, Hashimshony-Yaffe, & Campbell, 2013).



Debates on policy regarding asylum seekers are heated both in Israel and in the world (Stratham, 2003). An understanding of predictors of appraisal held by the receiving population toward asylum seekers may provide important suggestions for improving positive attitudes toward this group. In 2019, there were around 38,500 asylum seekers living in Israel. Ninety percent of them were from Eritrea and Sudan, and the rest were from other African countries (IPA, 2015). Asylum seekers constitute the most culturally distant immigrant group in Israel, and Israeli mass media has repeatedly reported conflicts between them and the local people (African Refugee Development Center, 2012; Kritzman-Amir, 2009).

Public debate in Israel has been heated around whether asylum seekers should be strongly encouraged to return to their countries of origin and around the issue of building detainment centers for asylum seekers. Due to the cultural gap between asylum seekers and the local population and their non-Jewish status, the position of social workers in their contact with asylum seekers may be ambivalent: on the one hand, they are supposed to help asylum seekers to adjust and to defend their rights, while on the other hand, they are supposed to defend the interests of receiving society (Ayalon et al., 2008).

Diaspora immigrants from the Former Soviet Union (FSU) and Ethiopia are the top two groups that have arrived in Israel during the last 25 years. Together with their children born in Israel, it has been estimated that about 1,200,000 immigrants were from the FSU and 100,000 immigrants from Ethiopia (CBS, 2016). The wave of immigrants from the FSU following 1990 took place after the breakup of the FSU, in the socioeconomic crisis and instability that ensued (Remennick, 1999). FSU immigrants came with high levels of education and human capital, and studies have documented impressive levels of employment and integration (Amit, 2012; Remennick, 2012). Yet, they have been subject to discrimination on the basis of their perceived symbolic and realistic threat (Tartakovsky & Walsh, 2016a) and questioned Jewish status (Remennick, 2012).

Ethiopian immigrants, who make up around 2% of the Jewish population in Israel, came to Israel in two major waves of immigration in 1984 and 1991, with continued immigration into the twenty-first century. Difficulties in integration have resulted from deep cultural differences (Kaniel, 1990; Tannenbaum, 2008), such as the transition from poor rural living to an urban society, significant illiteracy, and a more patriarchal culture with religious and community leaders acting as high authority (Kurman & Ronen-Eilon, 2004), as well as racism and discrimination on the basis of skin color (Offer, 2007).

Research showed the overall disadvantaged socioeconomic status of the Ethiopian community, as well as substantial gaps in educational and occupational attainment (Offer, 2004, 2007). In 2015, waves of protest among the Israeli-born (“second-generation”) Ethiopian-heritage young people, following the videotaped attack on a young Ethiopian man by police (Abu, Yuval, & Ben-Porat, 2017; Wahle, Ponzivsky-Bergelson, Dayan, Erlichman, & Roer-Strier, 2017), highlighted the still existing feelings of racism, disadvantage, and unequal opportunities that Ethiopian-heritage young people in Israel experience today, despite their full participation in the army and the workforce.

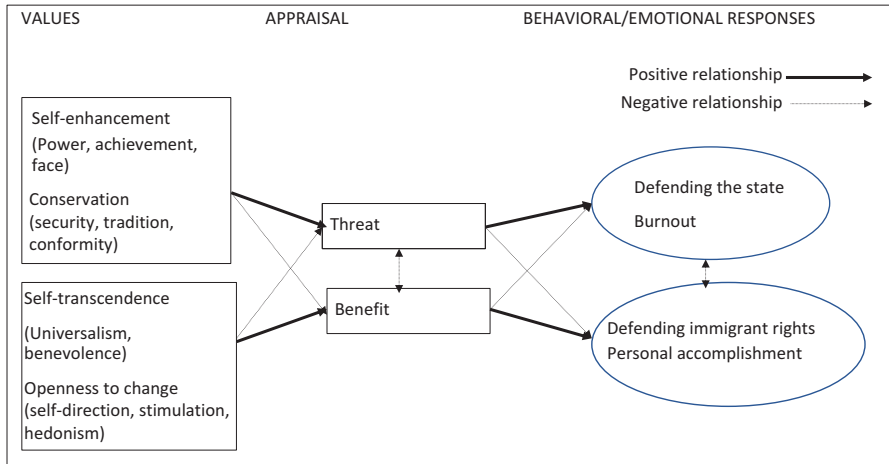


Fig. 5.1 Conceptual model

Both studies examined a model in which personal values (Schwartz et al., 2012) predict threat-benefit appraisal which in turn predict behavioral and emotional outcomes (see Fig. 5.1). Our model is in line with the value-attitude-behavior hierarchy (Homer & Kahle, 1988) in which we suggest that opinions toward immigrant policy are attitude-directed behavior intentions and burnout is an emotional and behavioral response and hence may be assumed to follow appraisal. In the model, we suggest that self-transcendence and openness to change values (anxiety-free values) are related to a higher appraisal of benefits of immigrants, while higher levels of self-enhancement and conservation values (anxiety avoidance values) are related to greater levels of threat appraisal. We suggest that threat-benefit appraisal mediates the relationship between personal values and behavioral and emotional responses.

### Study 1: Attitudes of Social Workers Regarding Immigration Policy in Israel

In the first study (Tartakovsky & Walsh, 2016b), we used the threat-benefit model to understand the appraisal of social workers toward asylum seekers and attitudes toward immigration policies. In line with former studies (Ajzenstadt & Shapira, 2012; Ayalon et al., 2008; Dhont, Cornelis, & Van Hiel, 2010; Kritzman-Amir, 2012), we suggest a conceptualization of the local people’s opinions regarding immigration policy as lying along two dimensions: (1) preserving the interests and rights of the immigrants (promoting their culture and providing them with rights and socioeconomic benefits) and (2) defending interests of the local people (preserving the dominant culture and immediate economic, security, and other interests of the local population).



## ***Main Hypotheses of the Study***

Based on previous literature, we hypothesized that higher preference for the anxiety-free values (especially universalism and self-direction) would be associated with a more positive appraisal of asylum seekers (i.e., a higher perception of them as beneficial and a lower perception of them as threatening for Israeli society). A higher preference for the anxiety avoidance values (especially tradition, conformity, security, and power) would be associated with a more negative appraisal of immigrants (i.e., perceiving them as threatening). In addition, we hypothesized that a tendency to perceive asylum seekers as beneficial for Israeli society would be associated with stronger support of policy defending immigrants' rights, while perceiving them as a threat would be associated with supporting policy aimed toward defending Israeli society. Lastly, we hypothesized that appraisal of asylum seekers as threatening or beneficial for Israeli society would mediate the relationship between personal value preferences and opinions on immigration policy regarding asylum seekers.

## **Method**

### ***Sample and Procedure***

Two hundred eighty-three social workers living across Israel and working in different social service organizations participated in the study. The sociodemographic characteristics (e.g., gender, education level) of the participants were similar to the characteristics of social workers in the most recent survey of all social workers in Israel (Bar-Zuri, 2004). Self-report anonymous questionnaires were distributed by research assistants in organizations focusing on different fields of social work across Israel. In addition, the questionnaires were distributed through professional Internet forums and social networks. The study was approved by the Tel Aviv University Ethical Research Board.

### ***Instruments***

**Personal Value Preferences** Portrait Values Questionnaire (PVQ-R) (Schwartz et al., 2012). This questionnaire uses a 6-point Likert scale (1 = *not like me at all*; 6 = *very much like me*) to measure the extent to which a respondent sees himself/herself as similar to a person described as holding various aspirations, goals, and wishes. The PVQ-R contains 57 items which measure the 12 different basic values. Example items include "It's important for him/her to be very successful" (achievement) and "It's important to him/her for everyone to get fair treatment, including

people she/he doesn't know" (universalism). Scores for each value are calculated as means of the relevant items. Internal consistency of the scales for the 12 values was satisfactory (Cronbach alphas = 0.64–0.86).

**Threat-Benefit Appraisal** Appraisal of asylum seekers by social workers was measured by the Threats-Benefits Inventory (TBI) (Tartakovsky & Walsh, 2016a, 2016b). The initial inventory consists of 45 items (reduced to 38 in the second version) measured on a 5-point scale, from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Threats are examined in four areas: economic threats ("Asylum seekers drain welfare funds."), physical threats ("Asylum seekers commit many violent crimes against Israelis."), threats to social cohesion ("Asylum seekers are a threat to the Jewish character of Israel."), and threats to modernity ("Asylum seekers bring nonprogressive rules of raising children, e.g., physical punishment."). Benefits are measured in four areas: economic benefits ("Asylum seekers bring new knowledge and skills needed in the Israeli economy."), cultural diversity benefits ("Asylum seekers bring cultural diversity to our population and give us an opportunity to learn about cultures we might never learn about otherwise."), humanitarian benefits ("Accepting asylum seekers can help to save lives."), and physical benefits ("Asylum seekers are quiet and nice people."). Confirmatory factor analysis was used to confirm a three-level structure of the questionnaire. Individual threats and benefits were loaded onto four factors of realistic and symbolic threats and benefits with loadings above 0.50. These in turn were loaded onto two factors of threat-benefit with loadings above 0.72. Measures showed a good fit for the hypothesized model (see Tartakovsky & Walsh, 2016a for further details).

**Immigration Policy** The Immigration Policy Questionnaire (IPQ) was developed for the study to examine opinions toward different aspects of immigration policy. Twenty-one items measured on a 5-point scale, from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*), were divided into two scales: (1) policies directed toward defending the particularistic and distinct interests of Israelis and Israeli society (11 items; e.g., "The Israeli government should invest more to fortify the state borders and strengthen border control to prevent illegal immigration.") and (2) policies directed toward defending asylum seekers' rights (10 items; e.g., "Asylum seekers should be permitted to work so as to be able to support themselves and their families financially."). Confirmatory factor analysis supported a two-factor structure with loadings of the items above 0.40. Further details of the construction of the scale can be seen in Tartakovsky and Walsh (2016a).

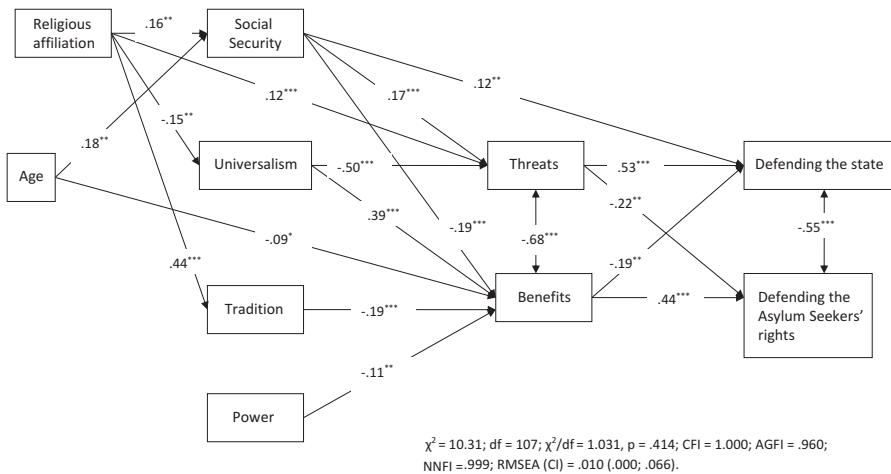
## Results

We used structural equation modeling (SEM) to test the suggested theoretical model of the connections between values, appraisal of immigrants, and opinions regarding immigration policy (Fig. 5.1). Analysis was carried using AMOS (Arbuckle, 2006)

in SPSS version 25. SEM using observed variables based on the average scores of the scales was used to test the connections between the variables in the study. In the initial model, values predicted the two aspects of the local’s appraisal of asylum seekers (threats and benefits), which, in turn, predicted opinions regarding the two aspects of immigration policy (defending the state and defending the immigrants’ rights). In addition, direct connections between all values and the two policy aspects were included in the model in order to test for mediation effects. All values were permitted to correlate with each other. Finally, four sociodemographic variables (age, gender, education, and religious affiliation as an ordinal variable [atheist, secular, traditional, religious, ultrareligious]) were included as control variables on all study variables.

In the best-fit model (Fig. 5.2), only social security values directly predicted immigration policy of directing the state. Appraisal of asylum seekers as a threat or a benefit was predicted by four values (universalism, power, social security, and tradition). Attitudes to policy were, in turn, predicted by threat-benefit appraisal. The only sociodemographic variables which were significantly related to other variables in the study were age and religious affiliation. The resulting model demonstrated a very good fit. It explained a substantial proportion of variance in appraisal of asylum seekers as a benefit ( $R^2 = 0.39$ ) and as a threat ( $R^2 = 0.43$ ). It also explained a significant amount of variance regarding opinions to policy directed at defending the asylum seekers rights ( $R^2 = 0.55$ ) and directed at defending the state ( $R^2 = 0.67$ ).

The total effects of the two sociodemographic variables (age and religiosity) and the four values (power, social security, universalism, and tradition) on the opinions regarding immigration policy were decomposed into indirect and direct effects, to examine the mediating role of threats and benefits. All indirect effects on the opin-



**Fig. 5.2** Study 1, the best-fit structural equation model including sociodemographic variables, values, appraisal, and immigration policy

ions regarding immigration policy were significant, as well as a direct effect of the social security values on policy directed at defending the state. As such, threat-benefit appraisal could be seen to fully mediate the relationship between the other three values (power, universalism, and tradition) on both aspects of policy and social security values on immigration policy directed at defending the asylum seekers' rights. In addition, values partly mediated the effects of sociodemographic variables (age and religiosity) on threat-benefit appraisal.

In sum, results partially confirmed our hypotheses. As hypothesized, threat appraisal was positively predicted by the conservation value of social security and negatively predicted by the self-transcendence value of universalism, while benefits were positively predicted by universalism and negatively predicted by conservation values of security and tradition and the self-enhancement value of power. Thus, higher levels of anxiety-free values were related to greater benefit and lower threat appraisal, while higher levels of anxiety-provoking values predicted the opposite. Threat-benefit appraisal mediated the relationship between values and opinions toward policy, with the exception of social security which also directly positively predicted defending the state. Older participants were less likely to see benefits of asylum seekers, while more orthodox religious affiliations were related to higher levels of threat and conservation values (tradition and security) and lower levels of universalism.

## **Study 2: Burnout Among Social Workers Working with Diaspora Immigrants**

In this second study (Tartakovsky & Walsh, 2016a), we applied the threat-benefit model to examining social workers' experiences of burnout in their work with immigrants from the Former Soviet Union (FSU) and Ethiopia in Israel. Work with immigrants can be exhausting and draining and lead to burnout (Tatar & Horenczyk, 2003). Burnout is a complex concept reflecting the individuals' work-related well-being/distress (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001) and has been considered to manifest through (1) overwhelming exhaustion; (2) feelings of cynicism, accompanied by detachment from the job, and depersonalization and dehumanization of the clients; and (3) a sense of ineffectiveness and lack of personal accomplishment (Maslach et al., 2001). Burnout can have serious implications for social workers as well as for their clients. It can impact negatively on the quality of service that the social workers provide (Maslach & Jackson, 1981) and impair treatment outcomes. In addition, burnout can have implications for the physical and mental welfare of workers and be responsible for high levels of turnover (Toppinen-Tanner, Kalimo, & Mutanen, 2002). There can be a number of specific stressors and difficulties when working with immigrants, such as fear, a lack of cultural and language understanding, and a conflict between helping one's own community and helping newcomers (Fong, 2004; Hepworth, Rooney, Rooney, Strom-Gottfried, & Larsen, 2009), which are likely to impact on burnout among those working with immigrants.

We assumed that social workers who appraise immigrants as more threatening to the receiving society may have greater difficulty in providing them with adequate psychosocial help. Such social workers may experience strong negative emotions toward the immigrants (e.g., fear, anxiety, and anger). In addition, they may have greater difficulty in understanding these immigrants and in empathizing with them. This cognitive-emotional reaction prevents the establishment of good therapeutic contact with immigrant clients and contradicts ethics of the social work profession (IASW, 1994; NASW, 2008). Therefore, social workers who appraise immigrants as threatening to the country may make efforts to conceal their negative feelings toward immigrants. However, management of negative feelings requires additional emotional investment and thus may constitute an additional burden for the social workers leading to greater work fatigue. As a result, they may suffer from a stronger sense of burnout than those social workers who consider immigrants as a potential benefit for the receiving country.

### ***Main Hypotheses of the Study***

Based on differences in the sociodemographic characteristics between the two immigrant groups (see overview of studies), we hypothesized the existence of differences in the social workers' attitudes toward immigrants from the FSU and from Ethiopia. We expected that immigrants from the FSU would be appraised as more beneficial economically and as less threatening to modernity as compared to the immigrants from Ethiopia. We, however, expected that Ethiopian immigrants would be appraised as more beneficial in the humanitarian and social cohesion aspects, yet as less threatening in physical aspects. In addition, as in study 1, we hypothesized that the self-transcendence and openness to change (anxiety-free) values would be associated with the social workers' appraisal of immigrants as beneficial for the receiving society, while the self-enhancement and conservation values (anxiety avoidance) would be associated with the appraisal of immigrants as threatening for the receiving society. Lastly, we hypothesized that higher levels of perceived benefits would be associated with a lower level of burnout (lower emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and higher professional achievement), while higher perceived threats would be associated with a higher level of burnout among social workers.

## **Method**

### ***Sample and Procedure***

The study included 358 social workers (mean age 37.6; 91% female) who had significant experience in working with immigrants from Ethiopia and the FSU. Of the participants, 177 filled in questionnaires regarding immigrants from Ethiopia and

181 regarding immigrants from the FSU. The average experience in social work was 9.8 years. The samples of social workers were representative of social workers in Israel (Bar-Zuri, 2004) in regard to sociodemographic characteristics. The data collection was carried out as in study 1.

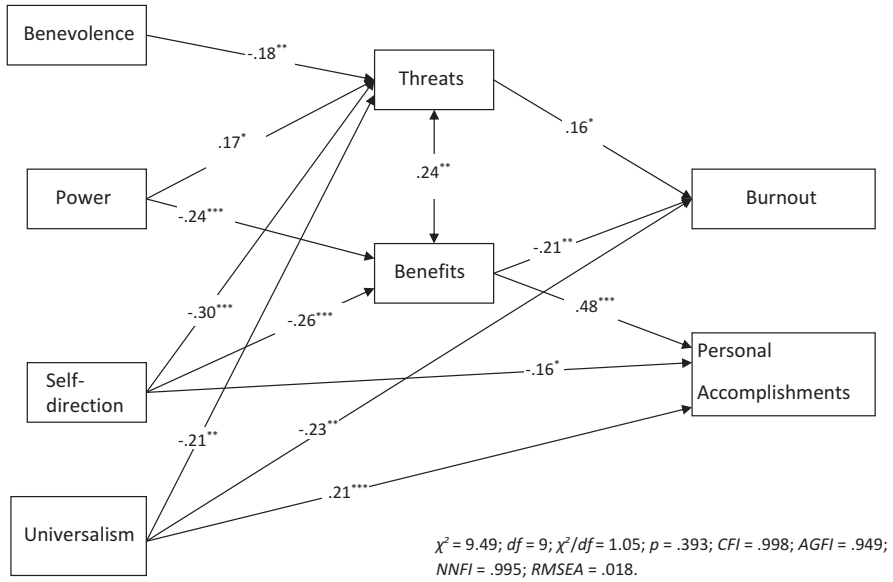
## ***Instruments***

As in study 1, the Portrait Values Questionnaire (PVQ-R) (Schwartz et al., 2012) and the Threats-Benefits Inventory (TBI, Tartakovsky & Walsh, 2016a) were completed. In contrast to the previous study, due to the difference in the population (the Diaspora nature of the two populations who can strengthen the Jewish state, in contrast with asylum seekers), we included a measure of social cohesion benefits and removed the physical benefits due to inadequate loadings.

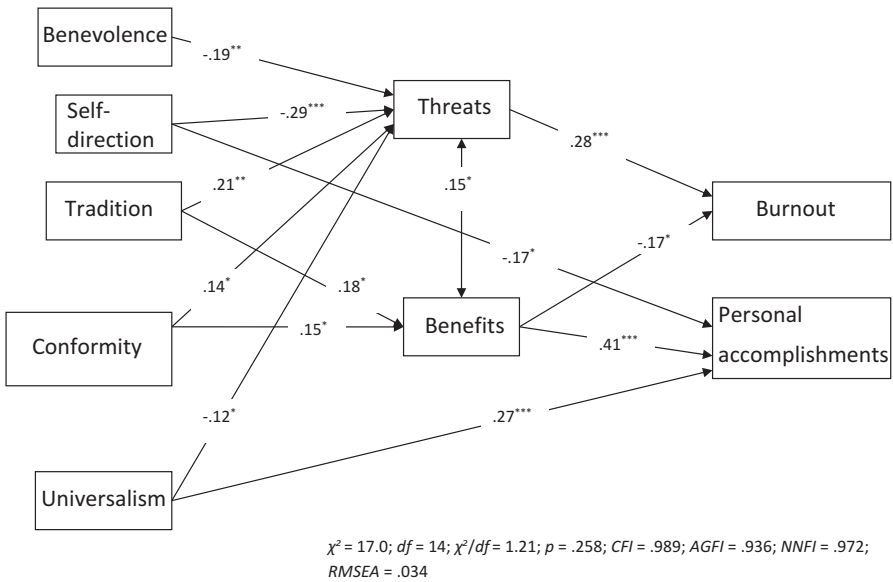
**Burnout** Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) – Human Services Survey (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996), adapted to the context of work with immigrants. The MBI consists of three scales, with a total of 22 items: emotional exhaustion (“I feel emotionally exhausted by my work with immigrants.”), depersonalization (“I have become more and more cynical about the possibility that my work with immigrants makes a contribution.”), and personal accomplishment (“I feel that I have a valuable contribution to make in my work with immigrants.”). As suggested by Maslach et al. (1996), depersonalization and exhaustion were combined into one scale of “burnout,” because of the high correlation between them. Half of the sample were asked about their feelings toward each of the groups of immigrants (FSU and Ethiopian), on a 5-point scale (from 1 = *completely disagree* to 5 = *completely agree*). The questionnaire has been well used and validated in Israel (Hamama, 2012; Tartakovsky, 2016).

## **Results**

As in study 1, we used structural equation modeling (SEM), using observed variables based on the average scores of the scales to test the suggested theoretical model of the connections between values, appraisal of immigrants, and burnout for each population separately (Figs. 5.3 and 5.4). The analyses were carried out with AMOS (Arbuckle, 2006) in SPSS version 25. In the initial model, values predicted the two aspects of the local’s appraisal of immigrants (threats and benefits), which in turn predicted burnout and personal accomplishment of the social workers. In addition, direct connections between all values and the two aspects of burnout were included in the model in order to test for mediation effects. All values were permitted to correlate with each other.



**Fig. 5.3** Study 2, the best-fit structural equation model including values, appraisal, and burnout: immigrants from Ethiopia



**Fig. 5.4** Study 2, the best-fit structural equation model including values, appraisal, and burnout: immigrants from the FSU



For the model examining attitudes toward Ethiopian immigrants, the model demonstrated excellent fit (see Fig. 5.3). Result showed that benefits were negatively predicted by self-direction and power values. Threats were positively predicted by power and negatively by benevolence, self-direction, and universalism. In addition, burnout was negatively predicted by benefits and positively predicted by threats. Benefit appraisal positively predicted personal accomplishments. Lastly, universalism (positively) and self-direction (negatively) predicted personal accomplishment. A significant proportion of variance in personal accomplishment ( $R^2 = 0.34$ ) and burnout ( $R^2 = 0.15$ ) threat ( $R^2 = 0.34$ ) and benefit ( $R^2 = 0.11$ ) were explained by the model.

To examine the mediating role of the appraisal of Ethiopian immigrants as threatening and beneficial for the local population, we decomposed the total effects of the four values (benevolence, universalism, power, and self-direction) on the burnout variables (burnout and personal accomplishment) into indirect effects and direct effects. The results indicated significant indirect effects of power and self-direction on personal accomplishment and power on burnout. In addition, significant direct effects of universalism and self-direction on personal accomplishment and universalism on burnout were found. Therefore, perceived threats and benefits fully mediated the effect of benevolence, conformity, and power and partially mediated the effect of universalism and self-direction.

The model examining attitudes toward FSU immigrants (see Fig. 5.4) explained a significant proportion of variance in personal accomplishment ( $R^2 = 0.26$ ) and burnout ( $R^2 = 0.09$ ) and showed excellent fit. Personal value preferences explained a significant proportion of variance in appraisal of immigrants as a benefit ( $R^2 = 0.06$ ) and as a threat ( $R^2 = 0.39$ ). Threats were negatively predicted by benevolence, universalism, and self-direction and positively predicted by conformity and tradition. Tradition and conformity positively predicted benefits. As in the model for immigrants from Ethiopia, threats positively predicted burnout, while benefits negatively predicted burnout and positively predicted personal accomplishments. In addition, universalism (positively) and self-direction (negatively) predicted personal accomplishments.

To examine the mediating role of the appraisal of FSU immigrants as threatening and beneficial for the local population, we decomposed the total effects of the five values (benevolence, universalism, conformity, tradition, and self-direction) on the burnout variables (burnout and personal accomplishment into indirect effects and direct effects). The results indicated significant indirect effects of conformity and tradition on personal accomplishment and significant indirect effects of benevolence, universalism, and self-direction on burnout. In addition, significant direct effects of universalism and self-direction on personal accomplishment were found. Therefore, perceived threats and benefits fully mediated the effect of benevolence, conformity, and tradition and partially mediated the effect of universalism and self-direction.

In sum, across the two populations, the study hypotheses were partially confirmed. For both populations, threat and benefit appraisal significantly predicted levels of burnout and personal accomplishment. Emphasizing the importance of benefit

appraisal in a resilience perspective, only benefit (and not threat) appraisal predicted personal accomplishment. Threat appraisal (partially) mediated self-transcendence values of benevolence and universalism for both populations, openness to change values (self-direction) for FSU immigrants, self-enhancement values (power) for Ethiopian immigrants, and conservation values (tradition and conformity) for FSU immigrants. Benefit appraisal (partially) mediated conservation values (tradition and conformity) for FSU immigrants and self-enhancement (power) and openness to change (self-direction) values for Ethiopian immigrants. Thus, as in study 1, higher levels of anxiety-free values were related to greater benefit and lower threat appraisal, while higher levels of anxiety-provoking values predicted the opposite.

## Discussion

Immigration is a societal stressor. The reception of immigrants, whether asylum seekers or more “desired” groups (Ford, 2011), inevitably places stress on the society and its resources. The host society is faced with the challenges of absorbing and integrating the newcomers, providing housing and employment, social services, and education (Van Oudenhoven, Ward, & Masgoret, 2006). In contrast, integration of immigrants may contribute to the process of growth and positive development of the receiving society (Holmes, 2015).

In the current chapter, with the use of a threat-benefit model, our findings have advanced current theoretical understandings in a number of ways. Firstly, TBT extends social psychological understandings in the area of intergroup relations to posit that receiving host members can see immigrants as bringing with them benefits to the new society such as economic contributions and cultural enrichment, as opposed to just being a core of threat as has been generally highlighted (Stephan & Stephan, 2000). This perspective stresses to researchers to place greater attention to the strengths and resources of the individual as well as the group.

Secondly, findings suggest that the attitude toward or appraisal of immigrants that a person holds is related to the personality of the individual in the form of personal values that the individual holds. As Ponizovskiy et al. (2019) stated, “value-initiating beliefs” are beliefs that an individual holds which can allow them to express their values. In continuation, TBT suggests that the appraisal of immigrants as bringing with them benefits is related to the existence of anxiety-free values, where the intrinsic lower level of anxiety can leave the individual open to receiving newcomers, whereas anxiety-provoking values can motivate a negative appraisal (Schwartz, 2006a; 2006b). Thirdly, the current studies based on the values-attitude-behavior paradigm (Homer & Kahle, 1988) showed that the appraisal that individuals hold toward immigrants would have implications for a host of behavioral consequences, including attitudes toward immigration policy (Tartakovsky & Walsh, 2016a), levels of burnout in work with immigrants (Tartakovsky & Walsh, 2016b), and levels of sought contact with immigrants (Walsh et al., 2018; Walsh & Tartakovsky, submitted).

The examination of not only the negative (threat) but also positive (benefit) appraisal is important conceptually and practically. By examining the ability of the local population to appreciate the benefits that an immigrant group can bring, we suggest that we are better able to understand and predict more positive emotions and behaviors of a local population. While a threat-oriented model may explain conflict, avoidance, and negative intergroup relations, it is an understanding of the way that a local population may experience the benefits of the group that may explain more positive responses. These may include the wish to grant extensive rights, the openness and willingness to form relationships (Walsh et al., 2018) and experience new cultures, the ability to feel a sense of accomplishment in work with immigrants, and a societal openness to integrating the incoming group.

TBT also posits the antecedents to appraisal of immigrants. Specifically, it examines the role of personal values (Schwartz, 2006a, 2006b; Schwartz et al., 2012) as predicting positive and negative appraisal. Schwartz (2006a, 2006b) differentiates between what he terms anxiety-free values (self-transcendence and openness to change) as opposed to anxiety avoidance values (self-enhancement and conservation). Individuals who are preoccupied with avoiding anxiety lack the resources to be open to “the other.” In the case of immigration, this can be seen to overlap with the concept of intergroup anxiety from ITT (Stephan et al., 2005; Stephan & Stephan, 2000). The present results do support or reinforce a model in which anxiety-free values predict more positive appraisal of immigrants and, in turn, more positive behavioral and emotional responses. Personal values are an individual characteristic and differ between people. However, past studies also found that societies and cultures may differ in their endorsement of particular values (Hofstede, 1984; Schwartz & Bilsky, 1990).

We take what we have termed a “societal resilience” perspective to describe a situation by which, despite the stressors involved, the host society is able to regard the immigrant group as providing benefits and contributions, becoming part of a healthy, rich, and growing society. We suggest that such positive appraisal is related to behaviors such as sought contact (Walsh et al., 2018), encouraging immigrant rights (Tartakovsky & Walsh, 2016b) and emotional responses as represented here by lower levels of burnout (Tartakovsky & Walsh, 2016a). A threat-benefit model suggests that the ability to perceive “the other” as a benefit is a societal resilience resource as it can strengthen the ability of the receiving society to welcome a new group and bring them into the new society, enabling more positive integration and harmonious intergroup relations. Considering immigrants only a threat prevents using their potential benefits for growth and development of the receiving society.

A concept of societal resilience has relevance not just for the growth of the society but also the well-being of the individuals within it. The attitudes that the host population holds toward the immigrant population have been found to impact on the levels of integration of the immigrant group and on the relationships between the groups (Zagefka et al., 2007). The current studies found that appraisal of immi-

grants has a direct association with behavioral and emotional responses such as attitudes toward policy. We suggest that appraisal of immigrants will relate to societal openness which will be reflected by rights given to the immigrants and ease in finding employment, housing, and so forth. As empirical studies have previously found, there is a relationship between employment experiences and immigrant well-being (Aycan & Berry, 1996). While not within the framework of the studies presented, we suggest that societal resilience may characterize societies with higher levels of anxiety-free values, societies that may have greater resources to integrate newcomers within it. The findings in the current study point toward the importance of encouraging self-transcendence and openness to change values in diverse and heterogeneous societies.

The threat-benefit model has important practical implications. An appreciation of the potential benefits that a group can bring to a country can enable the development of policy initiatives to highlight to the local population the positive contributions of the new population. Understanding the particular threats that a particular group of immigrants represents for the host population can enable authorities to direct efforts to ease levels of concern, through educational directives which can clarify to the host population the real situation of the immigrants (in contrast with threats which may be media-driven) and to increase resources in areas where real competition of resources may make harmonious relationships more challenging. Results suggest the necessity of explaining the potential benefits of immigrants to the receiving society to counteract anti-immigrant populist propaganda. For many reasons, the threats of an out-group may be more obvious and attended to than the benefits. Reducing levels of perceived threat and increasing awareness of benefits to the local population can, we believe, significantly enhance the integration process of immigrant populations.

The studies that we have presented have their limitations. They focus on a population of social workers who, while critical for the integration of immigrant groups, are unlikely to be representative of the general population. Indeed, their tendencies to hold higher levels of self-transcendence values (Tartakovsky, 2016) and their more positive leanings toward vulnerable populations may explain why smaller levels of benefits (in contrast to threats) were explained, since we would expect less variance than among the general population. The studies also take place in Israel among three immigrant groups. Israel is a special immigration context and further studies are needed to explore the model in additional cultural contexts.

Despite these limitations, a model emphasizing the ability of local population members to appreciate the benefits that a newcomer can bring is an essential part of building a society which encourages positive integration and harmonious intergroup relations. It strengthens a resilience perspective in which the ability to see the “other” as beneficial and bringing with them positive capital can enable healthy societal growth in the face of the stressors involved in immigration.

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