

## EFFECTS OF JEWISH-ITALIAN CONSUMER ANIMOSITY TOWARDS ARAB PRODUCTS: THE ROLE OF PERSONALITY

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*Wars or politic hostility between nations can lead consumers to modify their behavior, reducing consumption of goods made in hostile countries. In particular, events concerning the Second Intifada (2000) can be related to the decreasing sales of Arab goods occurred in recent years. This phenomenon can be explained through Animosity, defined as “the remnants of antipathy related to previous or ongoing military, political or economic events towards current or former enemies” (Shoham et al. 2007, p. 93). This paper has the aim to analyze antecedents and effects of animosity of Jewish-Italian consumers towards Arab products and comparing results obtained in the study of Shoham et al. (2006) in Israel with those obtained in Italy, considering also the role of their personality traits. A nine-section questionnaire, containing different scales, was administered to a sample of Jewish-Italian consumers (i.e., “Jews of the Diaspora”). In spite of their animosity towards Arab goods, they are not dogmatic and buy these products, if these are perceived as being of high quality. This is a result of their utilitarian personality, measured by the Big Five Factors and Utilitarianism/Hedonism high-order meta-traits. In presence of strong animosity, companies have to accurately consider entry strategies, product strategy and communication strategy in foreign markets. This is the first study considering animosity of Jewish-Italian consumers, one of the most ancient Jewish communities. Furthermore, it is the first analysis which considers simultaneously animosity and consumers’ personality traits, showing the interesting result that utilitarian personality trait prevails on animosity attitude.*

### INTRODUCTION

Wars and political tensions between countries can change consumer behavior, reducing the purchase of products made by nations experiencing such events; in particular, the Second Intifada in September-October 2000 may be related to the decreasing sales of goods worldwide produced by Israeli Arabs (Katz 2002; Nir 2002). This phenomenon can be explained through *Animosity Theory*, according to which “the remnants of antipathy related to previous or ongoing military, political or economic events will affect consumers’ purchase behavior” (Klein, Ettenson and Morris 1998, p. 90). According to this theory, war and

economic disagreement influence and modify purchase behavior, regardless of product judgment (Papadopoulos and Heslop 1993).

The present study aims to assess the extent to which animosity towards Arabs, due to terrorist and military attacks on Israel by Arabs, affects the intention to buy of Italians of Jewish origin, the so-called “Jews of the Diaspora” – Jews expelled or who emigrated from Israel, but who maintain an attachment and a relationship with their original homeland (Safran 1991; Sarup 1996). Specifically, we aim to examine animosity (which arose from the Second Intifada) towards Arab Israeli products among Italian Jews, analyzing its antecedents and effects on intention to buy – thus replicating the study conducted by Shoham *et al.* (2006) in Israel in the Italian context. The results

obtained are only in part congruent with the conclusions drawn in the cited study, since the sample used does not reside in Israel, but in Italy. In fact, this study shows that Jewish-Italian consumers with a high level of *nationalism* and a low level of *internationalism* tend to show attitudes related to the animosity construct; moreover, the present study demonstrates that a high level of animosity negatively affects both judgments of Arab-made products and intention to buy, thus leading to a future change in purchase. Nevertheless, as regards those Italian Jews who are characterized by a *utilitarian* personality, their positive judgments of Arab products do not bring about a decrease in the intention to buy or a change in purchase behavior.

#### **PURCHASE BEHAVIOR FOR FOREIGN PRODUCTS**

As a consequence of international trade expansion and market globalization, researchers and operators' efforts have focused on the development of models which explain purchase behavior for foreign products and, in particular, change in consumer behavior as a result of war and economic disagreement. According to *Animosity Theory* (Klein, Ettenson and Morris 1998), which can be found in research on *country-of-origin effect*, people's opinion of a foreign country is reflected in the way they perceive its products' characteristics. Therefore, if consumers feel anger or hatred towards a foreign country, they will denigrate its products as well (Johansson *et al.* 1993). *Country-of-origin effect*, which is related to the association of a brand with a specific country of origin, has an influence on judgments and purchase choices of foreign products (Maheswaran 1994). *Country-of-origin effect* is stronger in the absence of other information useful for evaluating a product: in these cases, country image has a great relevance in the decision-making process and acquires even a symbolic and emotive meaning. Furthermore, *country-of-origin effect* is influenced by cultural and political similarity between consumers' and products' countries of origin, not only for ideological reasons, but also for practical ones

concerning conditions of use and safety standards.

Research on *country-of-origin effect* also includes *consumer ethnocentrism*, defined as "a belief that it is inappropriate, or even immoral, to purchase foreign products because to do so damages the domestic economy, costs domestic jobs and it is not patriotic" (Shoham *et al.* 2006, p. 108). *Ethnocentrism* represents the propensity to consider the members of one's own ethnic group as the centre of the universe and reject any requests or stimuli coming from outside individuals. The stronger the *in-group bias* (i.e. the sense of belonging to a particular group (Verlegh 1999), the more its members feel the necessity to evaluate their group positively. Thus the level of identification causes the strength of the group to increase (Tajfel 1978). *Ethnocentrism* has a negative influence on both purchase intention and judgment of foreign products (Shimp and Sharma 1987), leading consumers to prefer and buy national goods, not only because such a thing is considered morally right, but also because they are perceived as goods of higher quality, thus showing an inherent dislike for a large part of foreign products.

In marketing, the animosity construct concerning the analysis of purchase behavior for products made in hostile countries or in nations whose political, economic policies, or religious practices are seen as unacceptable, is based on Klein, Ettenson and Morris's seminal study (1998). Hatred due to war or economic disagreement between two countries has a negative impact on consumption. Consider, for instance, antipathy in China towards Japanese products, due to the Nanjing massacre, in 1937, in which the Japanese killed 300,000 Chinese. Furthermore, animosity is characterized by the irrelevance of judgments of foreign product quality. Consumers who are high in animosity, despite perceiving the superior quality of goods made in detested countries, usually still avoid buying them. This characteristic distinguishes the animosity construct from both *country-of-origin effect*, according to which "made-in" influences intention to buy and has an indirect

impact on product judgment (Papadopoulos and Heslop 2003; Peterson and Jolibert 1995; Verlegh and Steenkamp 1999), and *ethnocentrism* (Hinck 2004; Klein and Ettenson 1999; Witkowski 2000), whereby unwillingness to buy any foreign product affects product judgment. Animosity and *ethnocentrism* differ also because the ethnocentric consumer considers the purchase of products made in any foreign country as immoral (Shimp and Sharma 1987), whereas animosity manifests itself in people's refusal to buy goods or services produced by one particular nation, but at the same time they remain disposed to buy products of other countries (Klein, Ettenson and Morris 1998).

From a taxonomic point of view, animosity can be considered a stable construct – if due to ongoing events – or situational – if caused by temporary events; it can also arise from national events – related to a macroscopic perspective – or personal events– related to situations experienced by single individuals (i.e., labor loss caused by other countries) (Ang *et al.* 2004; Jung *et al.* 2002). Animosity originates from war (*war animosity*) – for example the mentioned Nanjing massacre or the situation in Israel – or from economic or diplomatic disagreement (*economic animosity*), deriving from fear of economic domination (Klein, Ettenson and Morris 1998; Riefler and Diamantopoulos 2007).

It is possible to classify animosity studies according to these items (see Table 1). As Table 1 shows, most studies deal with national problems rather than personal ones (Ang *et al.* 2004; Riefler and Diamantopoulos 2007); in addition, animosity caused by war mostly brings about ongoing problems, such as the unsolved issues related to the Second World War (Klein, Ettenson and Morris 1998; Nijssen and Douglas 2004) or to the American War of Independence (Shimp, Dunn and Klein 2004); on the contrary, economic crises are temporary, such as the dispute beginning after German Unification (Hinck 2004; Hinck, Cortes and James 2004). The studies mentioned in the middle of the table examine situations that

cannot be clearly classified; some events can have both economic and political causes, whereas others cannot be classified either as stable events, or as temporary events, since they are related to current situations but, at the same time, have a historical *background* (Klein 2002; Klein Ettenson and Morris 1998; Shin 2001; Witkowski 2000). Furthermore, some temporary events might change, turning into stable ones, or, vice versa, events that have been happening for a long time might turn into temporary situations.

The animosity literature can be divided into three main fields of research (Riefler and Diamantopoulos 2007): the first includes Klein, Ettenson and Morris's original studies (1998) and Klein and Ettenson's (1999), which contributed to establish the animosity construct as a variant of *ethnocentrism* (Shimp and Sharma 1987); the second includes studies which replicated previous research papers, carrying it out in different contexts (Cicic *et al.* 2005a,b; Klein 2002; Nijssen and Douglas 2004; Russell 2004; Shin 2001; Witkowski 2000); the third includes studies conducted in domestic contexts (Cicic *et al.* 2005a,b; Hinck 2004; Hinck, Cortes and James 2004; Shimp, Dunn and Klein 2004; Shoham *et al.* 2006). One of the studies belonging to the third field is that of Shoham *et al.* (2006), which demonstrated a direct link between the tragic events of the Second Intifada and the decreasing sales in Israel of goods produced by Arabs. Whereas the First Intifada (1987-1993) was a grass-root uprising, lacking an actual leader, the Second Intifada (September-October 2000) was characterized by violent demonstrations by Arabs.

Animosity studies consider dogmatism, nationalism, and internationalism as *antecedents* of animosity. *Dogmatism* is a philosophical stream which hypothesizes the pre-eminence of an object over a subject; it can be defined as “the extent to which a person asserts his/her opinion in an unyielding manner”, and therefore as the degree of openness or closeness in people's belief system (Bruner and Hensel 1992, p. 194). A high level

**TABLE 1**  
**Classification of Animosity Studies**

	Stable		Situational	
National	Gouliamos and Theocharous (2008): War Klein (2002): War Klein, Ettenson and Morris (1998): War Nijssen and Douglas (2004): War Shin (2001): War Shimp, Dunn and Klein (2004): Economy		Ang <i>et al.</i> (2004): Economy Bahae and Pisani (2009a,b): Politics Cicic <i>et al.</i> (2005a): War and Economy Cicic <i>et al.</i> (2005b): War Cui, Wajda and Hu (2009): Economy and Politics Edwards, Gut and Mavondo (2007): Diplomacy Ettenson and Klein (2005): Diplomacy Hinck (2004): Economy Hinck, Cortes and James (2004): Economy Klein and Ettenson (1999): Economy Nijssen and Douglas (2004): Economy Russell (2004): Politics Shoham <i>et al.</i> (2006): Armed conflict Witkowski (2000): Politics	
		Amine (2008): Diplomacy Kalliny and Lemaster (2005): War, Economy and Religion Klein, Ettenson and Morris (1998): Economy Klein (2002): Economy Leong <i>et al.</i> (2008): Economy Shin (2001): Economy Witkowski (2000): Economy		
Personal	Ang <i>et al.</i> (2004): Economy		Ang <i>et al.</i> (2004): Economy	

Source: Adapted from Ang *et al.* (2004), p. 197.

of dogmatism is typical of people who are less tolerant of minorities and more reluctant to change their beliefs and values; on the contrary, a low level of dogmatism corresponds to open-mindedness about new information and ideas different from one’s own (Mangis 1995).

*Nationalism* refers to “views that one’s country is superior and should be dominant (and thus implies a denigration of other nations)” (Balabanis *et al.* 2001, p. 160); it is precisely the belief that one’s nation should gain power in every field of economy and dominate internationally. A high level of nationalism characterizes people who are prone to aggressiveness and self-exaltation, prejudiced towards other nations and ethnic groups (Druckman 1994); in addition, highly nationalistic people show a high degree of *in-group bias*, that is the common need to develop one’s community (Tajfel 1978; Verlegh 1999). *Internationalism* refers to a positive attitude

towards other nations and cultures (Balabanis *et al.* 2001; Kosterman and Feshback 1989); it should not be seen as a polar opposite to nationalism, but as a general attitude towards or nations (Kosterman and Feshbach 1989), implying openness in a geographical sense and also open-mindedness about other ethnicities and religions, and about economic and political issues. Therefore, a high level of internationalism is inversely related to animosity, as it reflects “an open-mindedness and acceptance concerning other nations and cultures” (Balabanis *et al.* 2001).

As regards *effects* of animosity, Shoham *et al.* (2006), in the study mentioned above, in contrast to previous research, found that animosity does not affect only intention to buy, but also product judgment, thus showing consequences similar to those of country-of-origin effect (Peterson and Jolibert 1995) and ethnocentrism (Shimp and Sharma 1987). This

result depends on both the temporal nature of animosity and the typology of goods used in the study. Firstly, events which caused Jews to feel animosity towards Arabs – the Second Intifada, in September-October 2000 – are relatively recent; in addition, hostilities and tensions between the two sides are yet to be smoothed out. Consequently, hatred nourished by Jews towards Arabs leads them to denigrate Arab products and services, according to the principle of cognitive dissonance (Festinger 1957). Secondly, products used by Shoham *et al.* (2006) in their study – typical Arab consumer goods, such as bread and other baked goods, olives and olive oil, fruits and vegetables – lead consumers to make a more negative judgment, since those products remind them of the culture and habits of the country towards which animosity is held (Russell and Russell 2006). In contrast, a large part of previous research concerning animosity did not study purchase behavior for specific types of goods (Ang *et al.* 2004; Hinck 2004; Hinck, Cortes and James 2004; Jung *et al.* 2002), and even when it considered specific product categories – cars (Klein 2002; Nijssen and Douglas 2004), televisions (Klein, Ettenson and Morris 1998; Nijssen and Douglas 2004) or computers (Shimp, Dunn and Klein 2004) – they were not related to the culture of the country towards which animosity was felt.

### AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This research aims to study animosity, resulting from the Second Intifada, towards Arab products among Italians of Jewish origin, examining its antecedents and effects on intention to buy and product judgment, thus replicating the study conducted by Shoham *et al.* (2006) in Israel. Furthermore, we aim to analyze and compare the results obtained by Shoham *et al.* (2006) in Israel with those obtained in the Jewish-Italian community, in order to verify if it is possible to draw analogous conclusions, considering the strong relationship existing between Jewish Italians and Israelis. The present study has four objectives: the first is verifying if animosity is positively related to dogmatism and

nationalism, and inversely related to internationalism, according to the results obtained by Shoham *et al.* (2006). This objective is achieved verifying the following hypothesis:

**H<sub>1</sub>:** *Dogmatism, nationalism and internationalism are antecedents of animosity.*

The second objective is analyzing if animosity negatively affects judgment, intention to buy and behavior change (increase/decrease) in the purchase of Arab products – thus implying a decrease in purchase. This objective is achieved through the verification of the following three hypotheses:

**H<sub>2</sub>:** *The animosity construct negatively affects Arab products judgment.*

**H<sub>3</sub>:** *The animosity construct negatively affects intention to buy Arab products.*

**H<sub>4</sub>:** *The animosity construct negatively affects change in purchase behavior of Arab products.*

The third objective is verifying if a favorable product-quality judgment positively affects intention to buy and the future purchase of Arab products. This objective is achieved testing the following hypotheses:

**H<sub>5</sub>:** *Favorable judgment of Arab products positively affects intention to buy.*

**H<sub>6</sub>:** *Favorable judgment of Arab products positively affects change in purchase behavior.*

The fourth objective adds to those considered by Shoham *et al.* (2006) and involves examining Jewish Italian consumers' *personality*, in order to find out the predominant aspects of their characters and, specifically, to verify if they have utilitarian or hedonistic personality traits (cf. Babin *et al.* 1994). Consumers who are characterized by utilitarian personality are more rational, concerned with results, thus their purchase behavior is influenced by the functional features of goods/services, seen as things required to solve a certain problem. On the

contrary, consumers who are characterized by hedonistic personality are playful and have aesthetic inclinations; to them, shopping is a source of pleasure from which multi-sensorial and emotive benefits result, regardless of actual purchase of goods/services. The construct of multidimensional personality is examined through the *Big Five Model* (cf. Digman 1990). It summarizes the potentially infinite number of adjectives – so-called *markers* – in five main latent dimensions (called *traits*, *factors* or *components*), which properly describe the personality traits. The five traits are as follows: (1) *Agreeableness*, i.e., the propensity for sensitiveness and kindness towards other people; (2) *Openness to Experience*, i.e., the level of tolerance of different cultures and experiences; (3) *Conscientiousness*, i.e., the capacity for self-control, which enables the individual to achieve his/her objectives; (4) *Energy* (or *Extroversion*), i.e., the propensity to form relationships with others; and (5) *Emotional Stability*, i.e., the ability to react to stimuli, controlling one's emotions and impulses. This five-factor structure is further summarized in two meta-traits, called *higher-order factors*, in order to permit much more concise evaluation, following Digman's approach (1997), in psychology, and Guido *et al.* (2007, 2008), in marketing. Italians Jews' personality is examined through the meta-dimensions mentioned above: *Utilitarianism*, which is related to *Conscientiousness* and *Emotional Stability*, and *Hedonism*, which is related to *Openness to Experience*, *Extroversion* and *Agreeableness*. Due to phenomena of acculturation and psychic distance, this objective is achieved through the verification of the following hypothesis:

**H<sub>7</sub>:** *Jewish Italian consumers are characterized predominantly by a utilitarian personality.*

## METHODOLOGY

We drew up a questionnaire, composed of nine parts, following that of Shoham *et al.* (2006). The first section of the questionnaire concerns dogmatism, measured using Bruning *et al.*'s scale (1985) – a six-point Likert scale (ranging

from 1 = “strongly disagree” to 6 = “strongly agree”), including five *items* (such as: “*I try to convince others to accept my political principles*”). The second section concerns nationalism, measured by Kosterman and Feshbach's scale (1989) – a seven-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 = “strongly disagree” to 7 = “strongly agree”), including seven *items* (for example, an item stated: “*The first duty of every young Jew is to honor Israeli national history and heritage*”). The third section of the questionnaire measures internationalism using Kosterman and Feshbach's scale (1989) – a seven-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 = “strongly disagree” to 7 = “strongly agree”), including nine *items* (such as: “*If necessary, we ought to be willing to lower our standard of living to cooperate with other countries in achieving equal standards for every person in the world*”).

The fourth section concerns animosity, measured using Klein, Ettenson and Morris's scale (1998) – a seven-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 = “strongly disagree” to 7 = “strongly agree”), including nine *items*, adapted to the Italian context (for example, an item stated: “*I will never forgive Arabs for what they did during the Intifada*”). The fifth section measures product judgment using Klein, Ettenson and Morris's scale (1998), modified from that of Wood and Darling (1993) – a seven-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 = “strongly disagree” to 7 = “strongly agree”), including six *items* (such as: “*Products made by Arabs are carefully produced and display fine workmanship*”). Several attributes were considered, such as workmanship, quality, technology, *design*, reliability and convenience (Darling and Arnold 1988; Darling and Wood 1990; Wood and Darling 1993); a comparison between Israeli and Arab products was included as well, as Shoham *et al.* (2006) did in their questionnaire (for example, one of the items stated: “*Products made by Arabs are generally of lower quality than Israeli products or from imports*”). The sixth section concerns intention to buy, measured by Klein, Ettenson and Morris's scale (1998), modified from that of Wood and Darling (1993) – a seven-point

Likert scale (ranging from 1 = “definitely disagree” to 7 = “definitely agree”), including six *items* (such as: “*If two products were equal in quality, but one was Arab and one was not, I would pay 10% more for the Arab product*”).

The seventh section of the questionnaire concerns change in purchase behavior for Arab products over the last few years, as a result of the repeated terrorist attacks in Israel by Arabs. A five-point Likert scale was used (ranging from 1 = “large decrease” to 5 = “large increase”) to measure purchase change. In this study, for a best adaptation to the Italian context, two product categories were added to the six original ones considered by Shoham *et al.* (2006) (*pitas*, Arab bread and other baked goods, Arab olives and olive oil, Arab garage services, Arab restaurants, Arab tourism services, Arab fruits and vegetables). Products from the two categories of consumer goods we considered carry a clear Arab brand and therefore can be easily recognized as Arab produced (Arab products sold in supermarkets and books or movies dealing with Arab culture). The eighth section of the questionnaire includes a list of 25 adjectives – measured by a seven-point categorical scale – which describe the five personality traits, according to the *Big Five Model* (Caprara *et al.* 2001). The ninth section collects socio-demographic data.

The questionnaire was distributed in some Jewish meeting places in Rome (schools, rest houses, synagogues) and administered to a convenience sample of 241 Jewish-Italian consumers (43.6 percent M; 56.4 percent F), selected on the basis of a screening question – the so-called “Jews of the diaspora”, i.e., those who follow the Jewish religion, but do not reside in Israel. “Diaspora” generally refers to people who move from their country of origin to another, still maintaining a relation with it (Vertovec and Cohen 1999); however, in this case, most of the people of Jewish origin did not move from Israel to Italy, yet they maintain a relation with it because of a strong sense of belonging. An average Jew of the Diaspora sees Israel as a “return to one’s origins” or feels a “sense of home” (Cohen 2003).

## RESULTS

First of all, the reliability of the scales was tested, by calculating the Cronbach Alpha index (see Table 2). Findings show that, as the index is above .60, respondents indicate consistent attitudes towards each *item* related to the considered constructs; furthermore, scales prove to be valid and measure the constructs they refer to.

The descriptive statistics of the considered constructs were examined, i.e., mean and standard deviation, obtained through an additional procedure (see Table 3).

The correlation between the considered constructs appears in Table 4. The significant correlation coefficients ( $p < .05$ ) show that animosity is positively related to dogmatism and nationalism, and inversely related to internationalism; moreover, animosity is inversely related to both Jewish-Italians’ quality judgment of Arab products and change in purchase behavior of these products (increase/decrease). Finally, intention to buy Arab products is positively related to quality judgment of Arab products and to change in purchase behavior.

Hypotheses were tested through a series of linear regressions between the considered variables, thus determining the existence and the nature of the relationships between them. As regards  $H_1$ , which hypothesizes that the independent variables of dogmatism, nationalism and internationalism are valid predictors of animosity, the findings show a positive relation between the variables ( $R = .458$ ;  $R^2 = .210$ ; Adjusted  $R^2 = .20$ ), and from ANOVA results ( $F = 21.008$ ; Sig.  $< .01$ ). We infer that the null hypothesis can be rejected. Considering the effects of the single variables of the examined model, the level of significance and the related regression coefficients suggest that nationalism is the variable affecting most animosity – as nationalism is positively related to it – followed by internationalism – which is inversely related to animosity – whereas results

**TABLE 2**  
**Cronbach Alpha of the Considered Constructs**

	Cronbach Alpha	Cronbach Alpha based on standardized items	N. of items
Dogmatism	.822	.821	5
Nationalism	.700	.708	7
Internationalism	.725	.726	9
Animosity	.875	.877	9
Product judgment	.743	.746	6
Intention to buy	.754	.754	6
Purchase change	.880	.881	8

**TABLE 3**  
**Descriptive Statistics of the Considered Constructs**

	Mean	Standard deviation	N.
Dogmatism	3.790	1.221	241
Nationalism	3.698	.754	241
Internationalism	4.253	1.019	241
Animosity	4.880	1.257	241
Product judgment	3.246	1.032	241
Intention to buy	3.605	1.290	241
Purchase change	2.973	.918	241

**TABLE 4**  
**Correlation Between the Considered Constructs**

	Dogmat.	Nation.	Internat.	Animos.	Product judg.	Intent. to buy	Purchase change
Dogmatism	1						
Nationalism	.375(**)	1					
Internationalism	-.220(**)	-.225(**)	1				
Animosity	.241(**)	.415(**)	-.272(**)	1			
Product judgment	-.144(*)	-.239(**)	.260(**)	-.354(**)	1		
Intention to buy	-.198(**)	-.370(**)	.284(**)	-.546(**)	.546(**)	1	
Purchase change	-.026	-.244(**)	.172(**)	-.151(*)	.587(**)	.459(**)	1

Note: \* All correlation coefficients are one-way significant ( $p < .05$ ) (2-tailed). \*\* Correlation is significant for  $p < .01$  (2-tailed).

concerning dogmatism are not statistically significant (see Table 5). These findings are quite congruent: a high level of nationalism, on the one hand, and a low level of internationalism, on the other hand, positively affect animosity level. There is no clear pattern as regards dogmatism for Jewish-Italians consumers. Therefore, hypothesis H1, applied to the Italian context, can be accepted only partly.

Data analysis validates hypothesis H<sub>2</sub>, regarding the existence of a negative connection between animosity and quality judgment of Arab products; findings show that, though the linear model used does not fit data properly ( $R = .354$ ;  $R^2 = .125$ ; Adjusted  $R^2 = .122$ ), animosity statistically causes negative product judgments (see Table 6). This result, congruent with that obtained by Shoham *et al.* (2006), suggests that Jewish-Italians, if not asked to inspect Arab goods/services carefully, tend to make negative judgments of them.

As regards hypothesis H<sub>3</sub>, the findings show, as a consequence of the results obtained in the preceding analysis, the link between animosity and intention to buy (see Table 7). Consumers with a high level of animosity are less willing to buy Arab products. H<sub>3</sub> is therefore substantiated.

As for hypothesis H<sub>4</sub>, the results obtained validate it, as they show that animosity brings about a statistically significant reduction in the purchase of Arab products (Table 8).

Turning to hypothesis H<sub>5</sub>, regarding the existence of a positive relation between quality judgment of Arab products and intention to buy (see Table 9), the findings show that there is a link between the two variables, as positive product judgment has a positive influence on intention to buy, regardless of animosity levels. Therefore, data analysis validates hypothesis H<sub>5</sub> and also confirms conclusions concerning hypothesis H<sub>1</sub>, suggesting that Jewish-Italian consumers are not dogmatic and are willing to purchase Arab products if they perceive them to be of high quality.

As for hypothesis H<sub>6</sub>, regarding product judgment and change in purchase behavior (see Table 10), the findings show that positive judgment of Arab products generally brings about an increase in the purchase of these products.

In order to test hypothesis H<sub>7</sub>, concerning the personalities of Jewish-Italian consumers, we conducted a preliminary analysis, to test the existence of a multidimensional structure, congruent with that provided by the Big Five Model (cf. Caprara *et al.* 2001). The factor analysis, conducted using the principal component method, *Varimax* rotation and considering the extraction of five factors, shows a structure similar to that provided by the proposed theoretic model; it explains over 55 percent of the total variance (see Table 11). The factor coefficients obtained are above 0.35, in absolute value, except for the adjectives “Happy”, related to “*Agreeableness*”, “Efficient”, related to “*Conscientiousness*”, “Acute”, related to “*Openness to Experience*”, and “Well-balanced”, related to “*Emotional Stability*”. Nevertheless, these adjectives were included all the same: the indexes of internal congruence of the various sub-scales (*Cronbach Alpha*) obtained are above 0.65 and therefore the mentioned adjectives are congruent with the other adjectives describing each trait.

Jewish-Italians’ five personality traits were obtained using an additive procedure, specifically, by calculating the mean related to the five adjectives describing each trait. Afterwards, the five personality traits were added, calculating the mean values, in order to obtain two meta-dimensions, namely *Utilitarianism* and *Hedonism*. The procedure followed by Guido, Capestro and Peluso (2008) was used, with the difference that *Agreeableness*, *Conscientiousness* and *Emotional Stability* were combined into *Utilitarianism*, whereas *Openness* and *Extroversion* were aggregated, merging into *Hedonism*. This result is more congruent with the *Factors  $\alpha$*  and  *$\beta$*  described by Digman (1997) and more suitable for the context of our

**TABLE 5**  
**Effects of Dogmatism, Nationalism and Internationalism on Animosity**

<i>Factors</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Dogmatism	.073	.071	1.131	.259
Nationalism	.580	.348	5.518	.000
Internationalism	-.220	-.178	-2.975	.003

**TABLE 6**  
**Regression Between Product Judgment and Animosity**

<i>Factors</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Animosity	-.291	-.354	-5.850	.000

Notes: Dependent Variable: Product judgment;  $R = .350$ ;  $R^2 = .123$ ; Adjusted  $R^2 = .188$ .

**TABLE 7**  
**Regression Between Animosity and Intention to Buy**

<i>Factors</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Animosity	-.561	-.546	-10.078	.000

Notes: Dependent Variable: Intention to Buy;  $R = .546$ ;  $R^2 = .298$ ; Adjusted  $R^2 = .295$ .

**TABLE 8**  
**Regression of Change in Purchase Behavior on Animosity**

<i>Factors</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Animosity	-.111	-.151	-2.365	.019

Notes: Dependent Variable: Change in Purchase Behavior of Arab Products;  $R = .151$ ;  $R^2 = .023$ .

**TABLE 9**  
**Regression of Intention to Buy on Product Judgment**

<i>Factors</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Product judgment	.683	.546	10.072	.000

**TABLE 10**  
**Regression of Change in Purchase Behavior on Product Judgment**

<i>Factors</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Product judgment	.522	.587	11.211	.000

Notes: Dependent Variable: Change in Purchase Behavior of Arab Product;  $R = .587$ ;  $R^2 = .345$ ; Adjusted  $R^2 = .342$ .

study and represent social desirability – which concerns the individual’s response to socially acceptable matters concerning oneself or other people – and personal growth, that is openness to new experiences and use of one’s intellectual capacity.

Finally, in order to find out the predominant meta-dimension, the differences were analyzed, comparing the mean of the two sub-dimensions through a *paired-sample t-test*. The findings validate Hypothesis H<sub>7</sub>, demonstrating that Jewish-Italians are characterized predominantly by a *utilitarian personality* ( $t(241) = -6$ ,  $p < .000$ ) (see Table 12).

## DISCUSSION

Various results were obtained in the data analysis described in the preceding section. As regards hypothesis H<sub>1</sub>, which considers antecedents of animosity, the findings show that members of the Jewish community in Italy, characterized by high level of nationalism, tend to bear animosity, whereas those characterized by high level of internationalism are less inclined to animosity. Moreover, unlike the study conducted by Shoham *et al.* (2006), this research demonstrates that Italians of Jewish origin are not particularly dogmatic; this may

well be due to actual geographical distance from the conflict, whereas Jewish Israelis directly experiencing hostilities adopt more intransigent and inflexible attitudes towards Israeli Arabs than “Jews of the diaspora”.

Hypothesis H<sub>2</sub> is substantiated, as findings showed that animosity generally affects quality judgment of Arab products negatively. This result is congruent with that obtained by Shoham *et al.* (2006), showing that the animosity construct possesses features similar to *country-of-origin effect* and *ethnocentrism*. Furthermore, it is also congruent with analogous results achieved in contexts similar to the one considered in the present study – that is contexts characterized by situational animosity (Leong *et al.* 2008). Further research on animosity demonstrated that it causes resistance to goods/services related to the culture of the country towards which anger and hate are felt (Bahae and Pisani 2009; Russell and Russell 2006). The present study, like other surveys, clearly shows that animosity influences intention to buy. As a matter of fact, consumers who are high in animosity tend to avoid buying Arab-made goods, whereas other purchases remain unchanged, as hypothesis H<sub>3</sub> predicts. According to hypothesis H<sub>4</sub>, animosity also has an impact on the variable representing

**TABLE 11**  
**Descriptive Statistics and Factor Loading of the Adjectives**  
**Describing the Five Traits of Personality of Jewish-Italians.**

<i>Factors and adjectives</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard deviation</i>	<i>Factor loading</i>
<i>Factor 1: Extroversion (a = .715)</i>			
Dynamic	5.107	1.523	.721
Energetic	5.215	1.464	.704
Determined	5.439	1.371	.670
Competitive	4.937	1.428	.562
Happy	5.203	1.389	.111
<i>Factor 2: Agreeableness (a = .730)</i>			
Honest	5.929	1.147	.720
Genuine	5.609	1.359	.715
Generous	5.539	1.300	.575
Sincere	5.946	1.176	.556
Friendly	5.468	1.396	.534
<i>Factor 3: Openness to Experience (a = .755)</i>			
Original	4.871	1.520	.835
Modern	5.178	1.407	.758
Innovative	4.726	1.549	.688
Creative	4.813	1.654	.649
Acute	4.721	1.461	.049
<i>Factor 4: Conscientiousness (a = .678)</i>			
Careful	5.145	1.538	.641
Responsible	5.800	1.301	.636
Constant	4.709	1.518	.352
Reliable	5.705	1.294	.106
Efficient	5.348	1.236	.268
<i>Factor 5: Emotional Stability (a = .717)</i>			
Calm	5.095	1.456	.675
Confident	4.970	1.547	.650
Optimistic	5.037	1.610	.621
Solid	5.282	1.424	.379
Well-balanced	4.929	1.482	.299

Notes: N = 241. Extraction method: Principal component analysis. Rotation: Varimax. Total variance explained: 55%.

**TABLE 12**  
**Personality of Jewish-Italians**

<i>Factors</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>p-value</i>
Utilitarian personality	5.367	.772	-6	.000
Hedonistic personality	5.021	.917		

Note: N = 241.

purchase behavior of Arab products. This study proved that, as a result of the repeated attacks on Israel by Arabs, the average Jewish-Italian consumer with a high level of animosity tends to desist in the purchase of products made by Arabs or related to that culture, thus reducing consumption.

Data analysis also draws another interesting conclusion: a positive judgment of Arab products affects intention to buy them, as hypothesis H<sub>5</sub> predicts. Specifically, judgment deriving from animosity leads Jewish-Italian consumers to hold that they will not buy Arab products. Nevertheless, if consumers perceive a high product-quality, they say that they would buy that product all the same. The impact of product judgment on purchase behavior not only affects intention to buy, but also future change in purchase behavior (hypothesis H<sub>6</sub>). As a matter of fact, consumers who make a positive product judgment, besides maintaining their consumption habits, also tend to increase their purchases. In other words, the average Jewish-Italian consumer, despite bearing high animosity due to hatred for Arabs, does not change his/her predicted behavior if his/her product-quality assessment is high, therefore he/she tends towards purchase loyalty. As hypothesis H<sub>7</sub> predicts, this consumption behavior is typical of a utilitarian *personality*, which determines purchase behavior aimed at benefits of efficiency and functionality. In conclusion, Jewish-Italian consumers' purchase choices are not influenced only by animosity towards Arab products, but also by a criterion of economic convenience, deriving from assessment and appreciation of goods and services. This result is similar to that obtained in recent studies, which have demonstrated that some elements of personality and, in particular, socio-demographic characteristics can subdue animosity (Nakos and Hajidimitriou 2007).

#### THEORETICAL AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

As regards theoretical implications, the present study shows the similarity between *country-of-origin effect* and *ethnocentrism*, on the one

hand, and situational animosity (resulting from temporary events, such as the Second Intifada in Israel in 2000) on the other. Findings confirm, like other studies in recent times, that animosity among Jewish-Italians has a negative impact not only on intention to buy, but also on product judgment (Leong *et al.* 2008). Interestingly, this study also suggests that antecedents and effects of animosity should be examined in further research, considering both regional contexts (Klein, Ettenson and Morris 1998; Shimp, Dunn and Klein 2004) and individuals' personality and socio-demographic characteristics (Nakos and Hajidimitriou 2007). Like other studies on residents and immigrants (Mathur *et al.* 2008), this study provides evidence that there exist some differences between Jewish-Italians and Israelis due to the fact that the respondents to the questionnaire, despite belonging to a Jewish community, reside in Italy and therefore might be influenced by the local culture, as well as by the effects of globalization and socialization of consumer behavior.

In today's global economy, characterized by frequent conflicts, findings on animosity are also managerially significant. They can be useful to international marketing managers, who should carefully examine the implications of wars, of terrorist attacks or cultural disagreement on consumption, in order to avoid high risk investments. Specifically, a firm's entry strategy into a foreign market and the consequent marketing operations should take account of investigations designed to measure animosity among individuals, its antecedents and effects on intention to buy and product judgment, and to analyze individuals' personality traits (Ettenson and Klein 2005; Klein, Ettenson and Morris 1998; Nakos and Hajidimitriou 2007; Shoham *et al.* 2006).

Animosity, which has been found to have a stronger impact on *business-to-consumers* relationships than on *business-to-business* ones (Edwards, Gut and Mavondo 2007), can determine entry strategies into foreign markets. Several conflicts originating from historical, religious, and cultural issues have had a

significant role in economic matters. After Klein, Ettenson and Morris's studies (1998) on animosity in China, and Nijssen and Douglas's (2004) on animosity in the Netherlands, a large number of studies on entry strategies have examined cultural features and the distance between country-of-origin and target market (Hennart and Larimo 1998; Kalliny and Lemaster 2005). For instance, Kalliny and Lemaster (2005) showed that animosity affects the risk perception of investments in a foreign country; this, in turn, determines the amount of money a firm intends to invest, and consequently the entry strategy adopted. A high level of animosity is therefore linked to a high risk perception. Firms that decide to invest in a country in which high animosity is expected, prefer not to invest a great amount of financial resources and avoid exports; thus, no local relations are established, which could however be helpful in removing negative effects of animosity. Planning *joint-venture* investment or *licensing* trade activities depend on the degree of trust a firm has in its trading partners (Kalliny and Lemaster 2005). In any case, the greater the difference between two markets there is, the more preferable a *joint venture* entry is, rather than planning *greenfield* investments, which imply the actual location of new trade activities in the target country. It becomes clear that it is absolutely essential to design appropriate entry strategies, depending on the various types of risks. For instance, a firm that decides to target a market segment bearing animosity can opt for strategic alliances which contribute to reduce the risk level and obtain a competitive advantage. Some nations, such as the United States, tried to solve the problem of trade exchange with Arab countries by forming a series of alliances, preferring Middle Eastern brands and avoiding "made in USA" labeled products, thus averting retorts due to animosity. In addition, alliances are advantageous, as they reduce risks deriving from possible wars and allow firms more flexibility.

A high level of animosity has relevance to marketing operations and mainly to communication strategies planned by firms

targeting such markets. Firstly, the major role played by animosity in influencing purchase intention and product judgment should lead managers to produce, when necessary, so-called "hybrid" goods, i.e., products carrying the brand of a country, which is not however the country where they were made. Secondly, they should separate the image of the product from the culture of its country of origin – making it more standardized, and therefore international – and emphasize attributes that are unrelated to the country where the product is made (Klein, Ettenson and Morris 1998). Moreover, companies already operating in a specific market can deal with the problem of animosity, for example through communications or public relations, designed to soothe hostility or improve the perception of the nation – a strategy that mostly proves effective in situations of situational animosity (Klein, Ettenson and Morris 1998).

An accurate analysis on animosity should necessarily include the examination of its antecedents and effects as well. Unlike Israeli Jews, consumers belonging to the Jewish-Italian community show openness to new experiences and others' views, as they are influenced by the culture of the country where they reside – in other words, their personalities are characterized by *cross-cultural* heterogeneities and differences. According to Hofstede's classical model (1984), the level of *Individualism* (i.e., preference for the individual rather than for the community) among Israelis is lower than individualism among Italians: 48 percent in Israel versus 70 percent in Italy (for up-to-date statistics, see [www.geert-hofstede.com](http://www.geert-hofstede.com)). This also explains the low degree of dogmatism among Italians; that is the reason why in Italy internationalism is inversely related to animosity, but to a smaller extent than it is in Israel, as was found in the previous study. There also exist great disparities between the two countries, much greater for Italy, concerning two other dimensions: the *power distance* index – measuring the extent to which individuals accept and deal with a level of disparity – and the *masculinity* index – i.e., the level of aggressiveness between men and

women. Thus, those who reside in Italy are more disposed to accept an unequal distribution of power (and therefore tend to be less dogmatic), but harbor repressed anger (hence a higher degree of aggressiveness towards injustices).

International companies and executives should not consider only the implications of animosity, but also cultural differences, different types of personality and the other variables which might have an influence on purchase behavior. This study shows that high-animosity consumers' intention to buy is influenced by product judgment, as a consequence of Jewish-Italians' *utilitarian* personality. The positive relation existing between product judgment and intention to buy underlines the necessity of using traditional marketing methods, aimed at emphasizing technical and qualitative attributes of goods/services, and communication strategies, which should not focus so much on the country of origin of products, but on design, workmanship, and a superior quality. When targeted, consumers are found to adopt a *utilitarian* purchase behavior. Marketing high-quality and high-performance goods, provided with certificates attesting to their excellence, and showing a satisfactory quality-price ratio, can consequently prove successful.

Companies should be aware of the effects of animosity on consumers' purchase behavior, in order to predict possible risks, and to design entry strategies and advertising campaigns suitable for their target international markets. A wise and sensible plan of action, that implies all these devices and takes account of the context, can contribute to reduce possible investment *sunk costs*.

### CONCLUSIONS

The present study, based on Animosity theory (Klein, Ettenson and Morris 1998), replicating that of Shoham *et al.* (2006) in the Italian context, partly confirms the conclusions of the previous study and reveals new outcomes and differences. It demonstrates that Italians of Jewish origin, though they reveal a certain animosity towards Arabs, are willing to buy

Arab-made goods/services, if positively evaluated, as they are characterized by a *utilitarian* personality.

It would be interesting, in the future, to replicate this research, which is the first to be conducted in Italy using a Jewish sample, in order to make temporal comparisons. Further research could also replicate this study in Jewish communities in other countries and examine the economic damages deriving from the continuation of the Arab Israeli conflict. Today's numerous global controversies and fierce antagonisms between market segments determine a wide applicability of these findings to managerial operations; this study draws companies' attention to the necessity, when marketing to high-animosity individuals, of planning entry and communication strategies that avoid emphasizing the origin of a product or service. When necessary, companies should separate the image of the goods/service from the culture of its country of origin – making it more standardized – and emphasize characteristics that are unrelated to the country where the product is made.

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