

A photograph of a crowd of people, likely at a public event or protest. In the foreground, two women are embracing. The woman on the right has a French flag sticker on her cheek. The woman on the left is wearing a black leather jacket. The background shows other people, some looking towards the camera and others looking away. The overall mood appears somber or supportive.

# Under Threat of Attack: A Story of Trauma, Resilience and Political Reactivity

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# BASIC TENET OF CONSERVATION OF RESOURCES (COR) THEORY

- *Individuals strive to obtain, retain, foster, and protect that which they value.*
- Therefore people are directed to cultivate resources central to their lives even when stress is not occurring.
- When threat of resource loss or loss occurs people mobilize resources to offset, limit, or reverse impending or actualized loss.

Because resource loss meant threat to survival for evolutionary history and due to social conflict and issues of territoriality our brains are tuned to be in a defensive mode regarding resource protection and fear of loss.

# Reality of Resources

Resources are of course perceived, but...

- perceptions tend to be reality-based
- appraisals are generally products of real occurrences not mere social constructions
- social constructions that exist are shared.
- *Hence, appraisals do not differ greatly for different people for major stressors.*

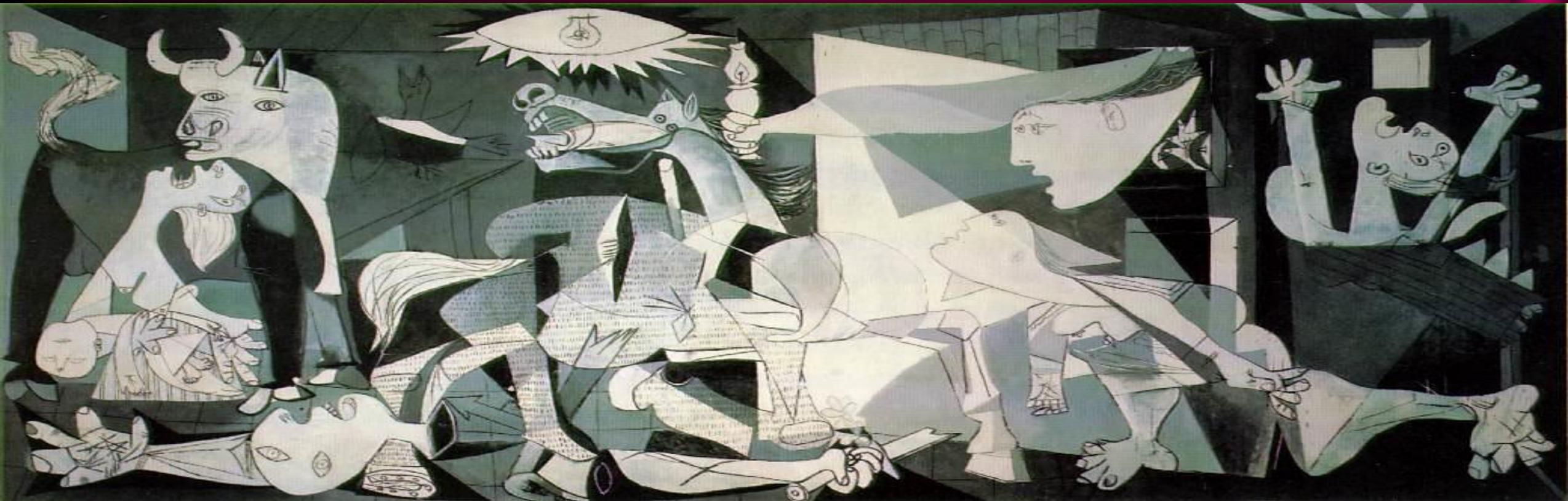
*It is racist, sexist and classist to assert that appraisal of stress is more critical than the real events occurring to minorities, women, the poor and victims of violence.*

*Asserting the primacy of appraisal allows us to study students and middle class whites, and those who are not oppressed or victimized and imagine we are studying the same thing as what occurs to these vulnerable populations*





...human thought is both social and public--  
that its natural habitat is the house yard, the  
marketplace, and the town square. Thinking  
consists not of “happenings in the head”  
...but on a traffic in...significant [shared]  
symbols (Geertz, 1973).



## Resources are defined as...

*...those objects, conditions, personal characteristics, or energies that we centrally value or that allow us to obtain, retain, foster and protect that which we value.*

These resources are socially interconnected and even individual resources (e.g., self-esteem) are linked to social conditions.

Life events are too static as units--events must be broken down into resources gained and lost.

Stress occurs in circumstances that represent a threat of loss or actual loss of resources required, or the endpoints that are necessary, to sustain the *individual-nested in family-nested in tribe*



# According to COR Theory Stress Occurs in 3 Instances...

- *...when resources are threatened with loss.*
- *...when resources are actually lost.*
- *...when there is failure to adequately gain resources following significant resource investment.*



For many severe or traumatic stressors, loss of resources is the central defining element of the experience. Loss may include loss of home, loss of identity, loss of social ties, loss of job, loss of status. And, all too often, losses of types that are unfathomable...



# Principles of COR Theory

- 1. Resource loss is disproportionately more salient than resource gain.*
- 2. People must invest resources to protect against resource loss, recover from losses, and gain resources.*
- 3. Resource gain becomes important in the context of resource loss.*

# Corollaries of COR Theory

- **Those with greater resources are less vulnerable to resource loss and more capable of orchestrating resource gain.**
- **Those with fewer resources are more vulnerable to resource loss and less capable of achieving resource gain.**
- **Hence, those who lack resources are less likely to have resources to invest to offset initial resource loss.**
- **Once loss begins, loss cycles gain speed and power**



# Prospective Study of Terrorism

Hobfoll, Tracy & Galea

Kent State University & Summa Health System

New York Academy of Medicine

- **We examined if resource loss independently predicted PTSD and Depression, controlling for demographic, peritraumatic & stressful events, and prior trauma?**
- **We examined if traumatic growth truly has positive impact?**



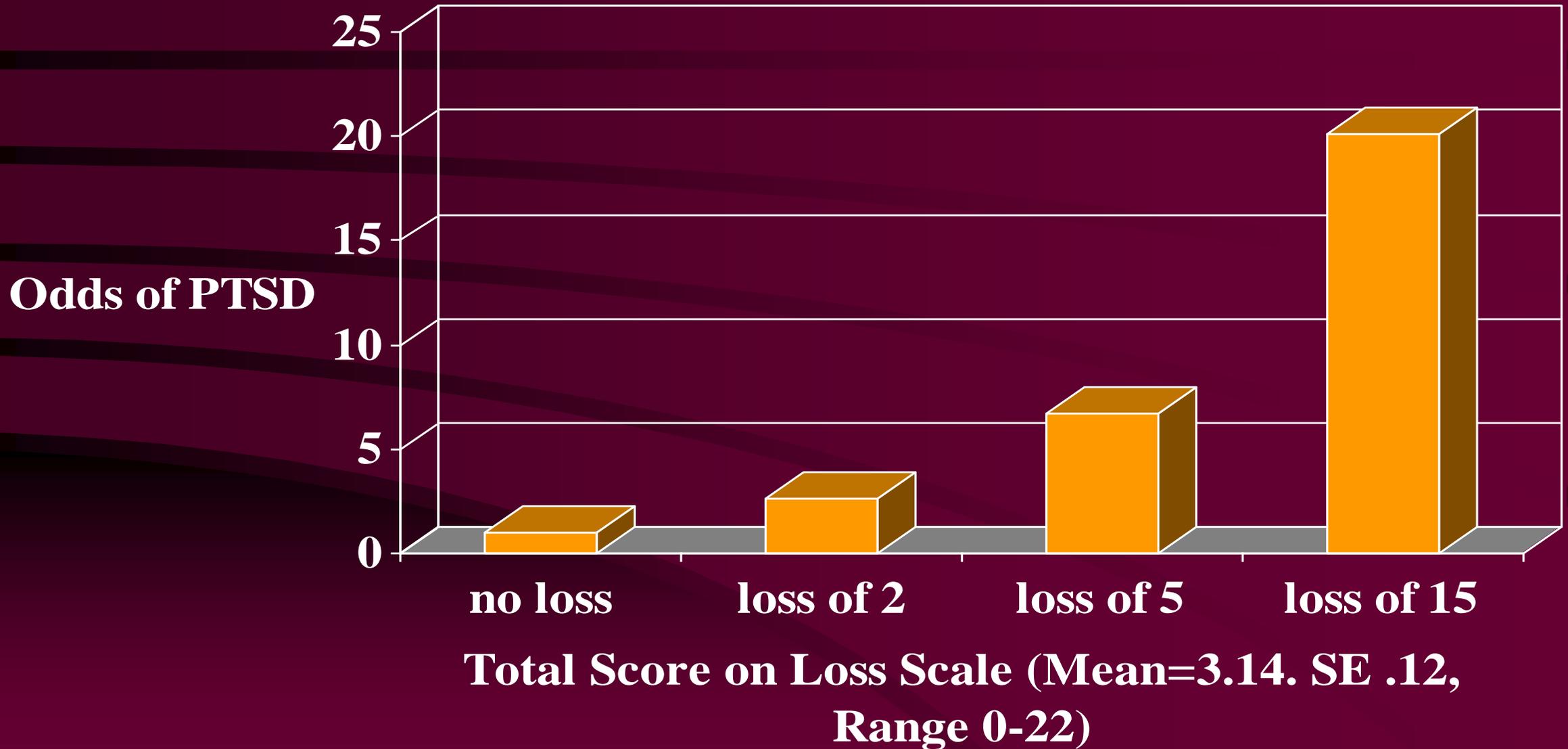
# WTC aftermath...

- **Followed large community sample (n=2752, retained 1939) of Manhattan residents from 4 months to 16 months after Sept. 11 attacks on WTC**
- **Prospective design predicting PTSD and Depression Diagnosis**
- **Phone survey, random digit dial**
- **Interviews in English, Spanish, Mandarin, and Cantonese**
- **11 items scale: Loss of job, loss of possessions, loss of life of family or friends, loss of health, loss of sense of control...**



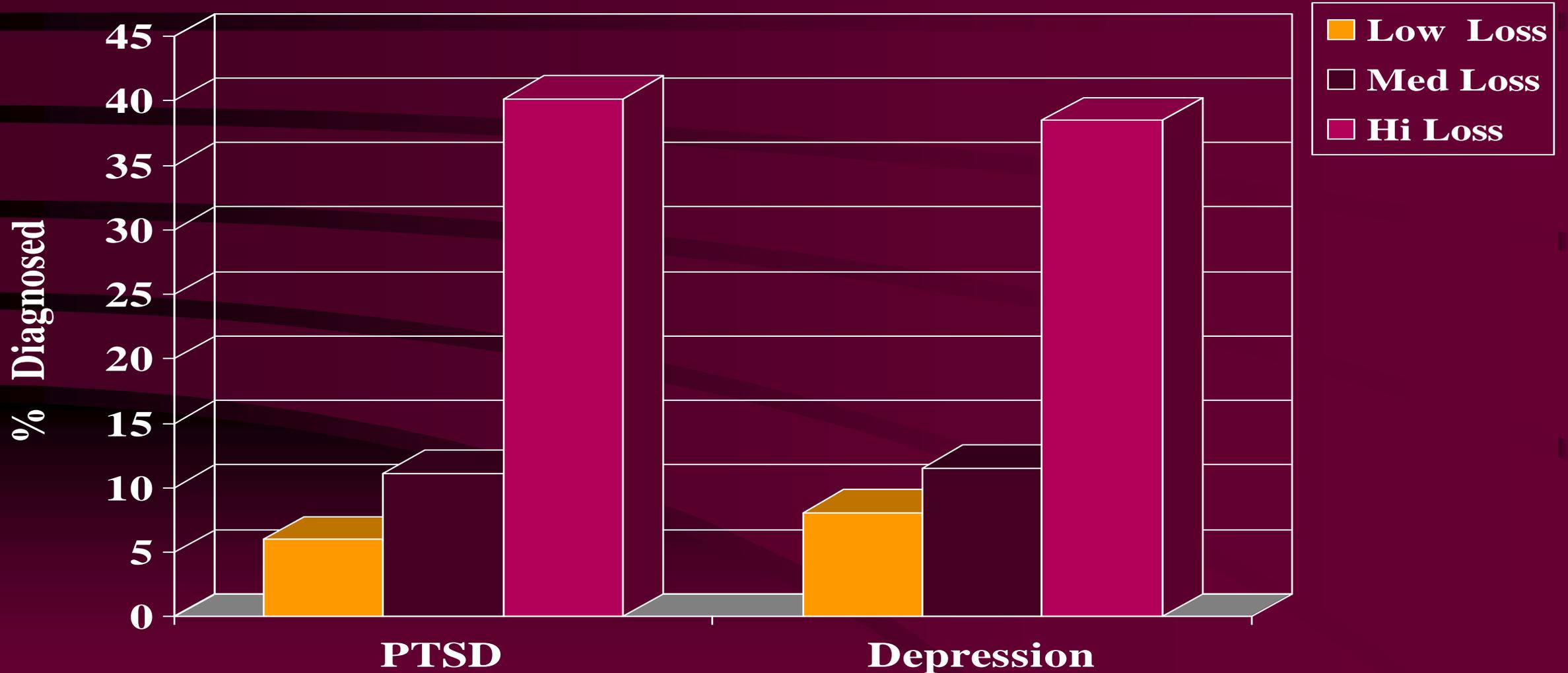
# Odds ratios for Total Loss

## Brief Resource Loss and Gain Scale

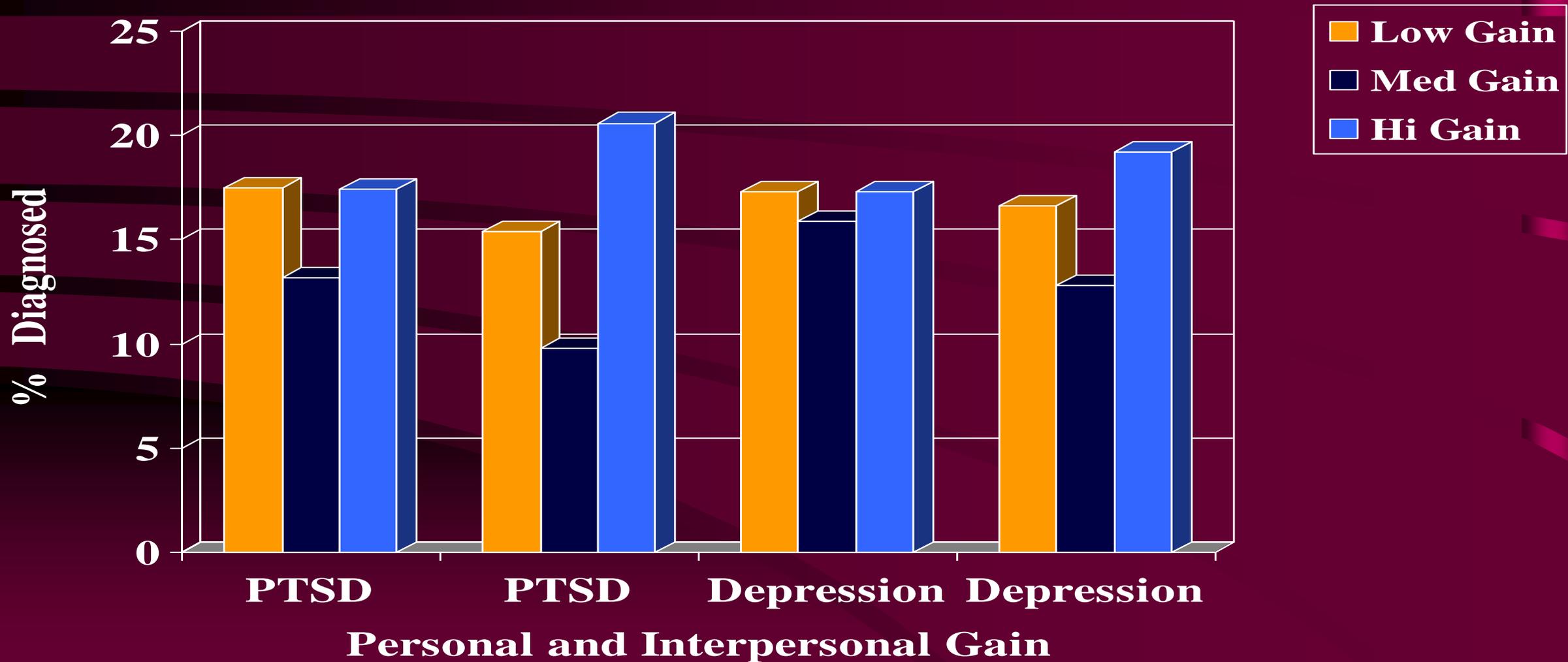


# Impact of Resource Loss and Gain on PTSD and Depression

## WTC Year after



# Curvilinear Impact of Traumatic Growth-WTC Aftermath



# Impact of Terrorism: A Glimpse at a Nation Under Attack

- Daphna Canetti-Nisim-University of Haifa
- Sandro Galea-University of Michigan
- Brian Hall-Kent State University
- Stevan E. Hobfoll-Rush Medical College
- Robert Johnson-University of Miami
- Patrick Palmieri-Summa Health System
- Ami Pedahzur-University of Haifa
- Joseph Varley-Summa Health System



About Summa



# Communal Responding to Loss

- **Because resource loss is over-weighted people will make a risky-shift such that as a group they will further exaggerate losses.**
- **Because loss is over-weighted and because threat to loss of the tribe is part of the self, communal threat will increase in-group versus out-group divisions**
- **Because people increase interconnections at times of loss stress-contagion and pressure-cooker effects will increase. These undermine social support's positive influence**

# Communal Responding to Loss

- **Lacking practiced coping repertoires, groups will look to outside sources for solutions**
- **High stress engenders cognitive narrowing and seeking early closure leading to “easy solutions.”**
- **Hence media and political construals of events will deeply affect people’s reactivity and thinking during communal crises**



Increased fears of loss of mortality results in identification with more extreme,  
protective views

(Greenberg, Schimel, Martens, Solomon, Pyszczynski, 2001)

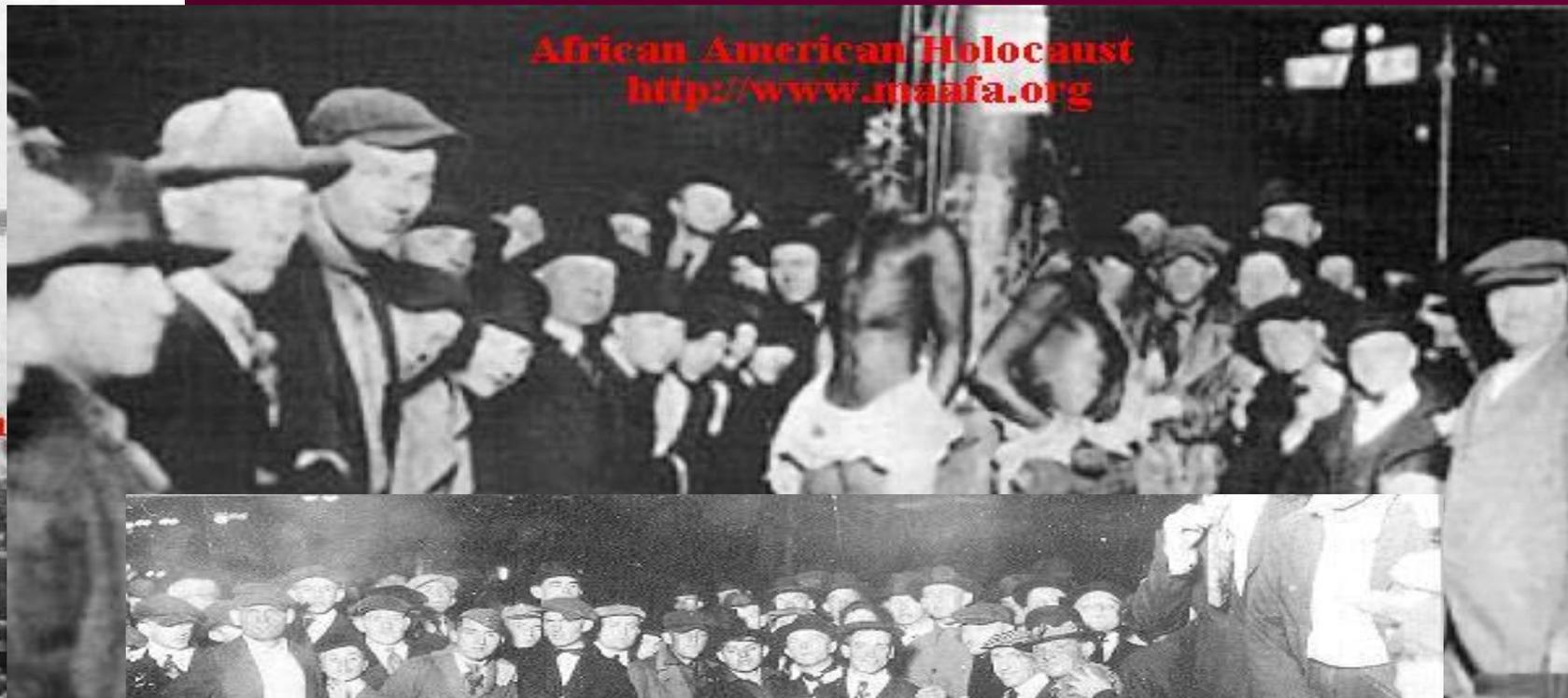
*Southern trees bear strange fruit,  
Blood on the leaves and blood at  
the root,  
Black bodies swinging in the  
Southern breeze,  
Strange fruit hanging from the  
poplar trees.*

-- *Written by Lewis Allan, recorded and made famous  
by Billie Holiday*

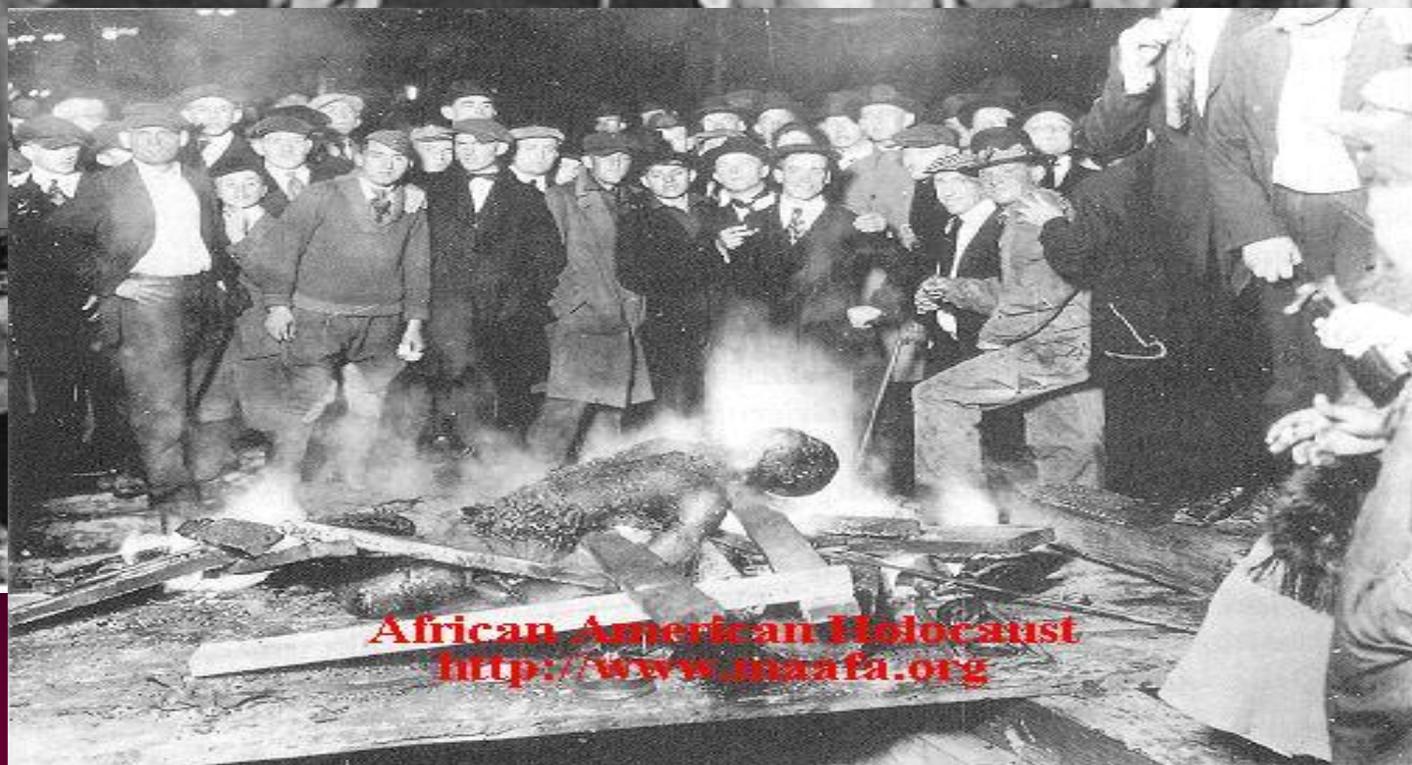




African American Holocaust  
<http://www.aaafa.org>



African American Holocaust  
<http://www.aaafa.org>



African American Holocaust  
<http://www.aaafa.org>

**Hence, Israeli attitudes toward Palestinians harden after terrorist attacks.**



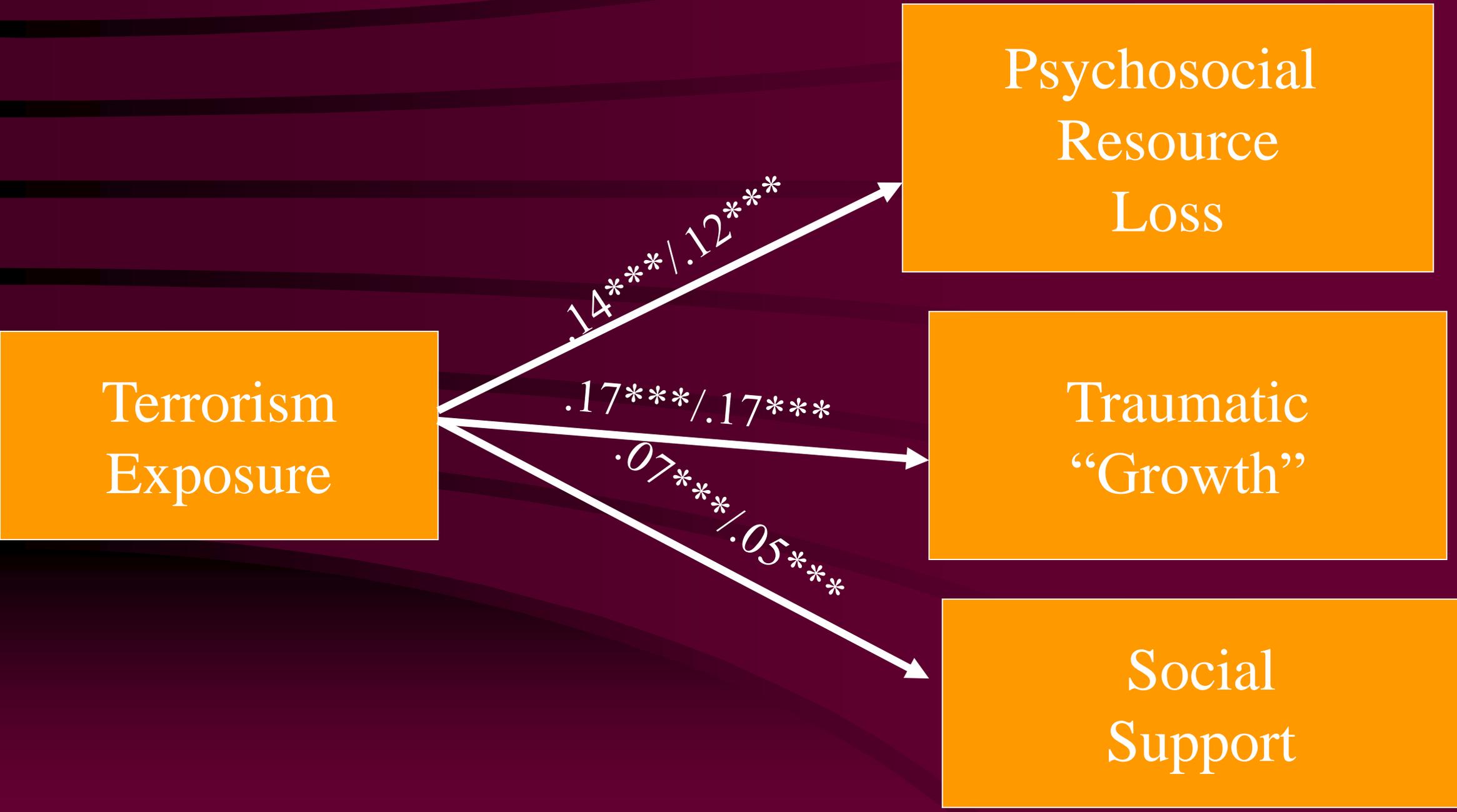
**And obviously the same is true for Palestinian attitudes, as each side's media shows its point of view.**



# Method

- Largest series of national studies on terrorism in Israel
- Phone surveys
- September 2003
- Jews and Arabs within Israel and Jews in Gaza and West Bank
- N=1012
- Resource Loss resulting from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Intifada
- Traumatic “Growth” (intimacy, meaning, spirituality) resulting from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Intifada
- PTSD and Depression
- Support for Political Violence
- Ethnocentrism (toward, Arabs, foreign workers, Russian immigrants)
- Dogmatism





Terrorism  
Exposure

Psychosocial  
Resource  
Loss

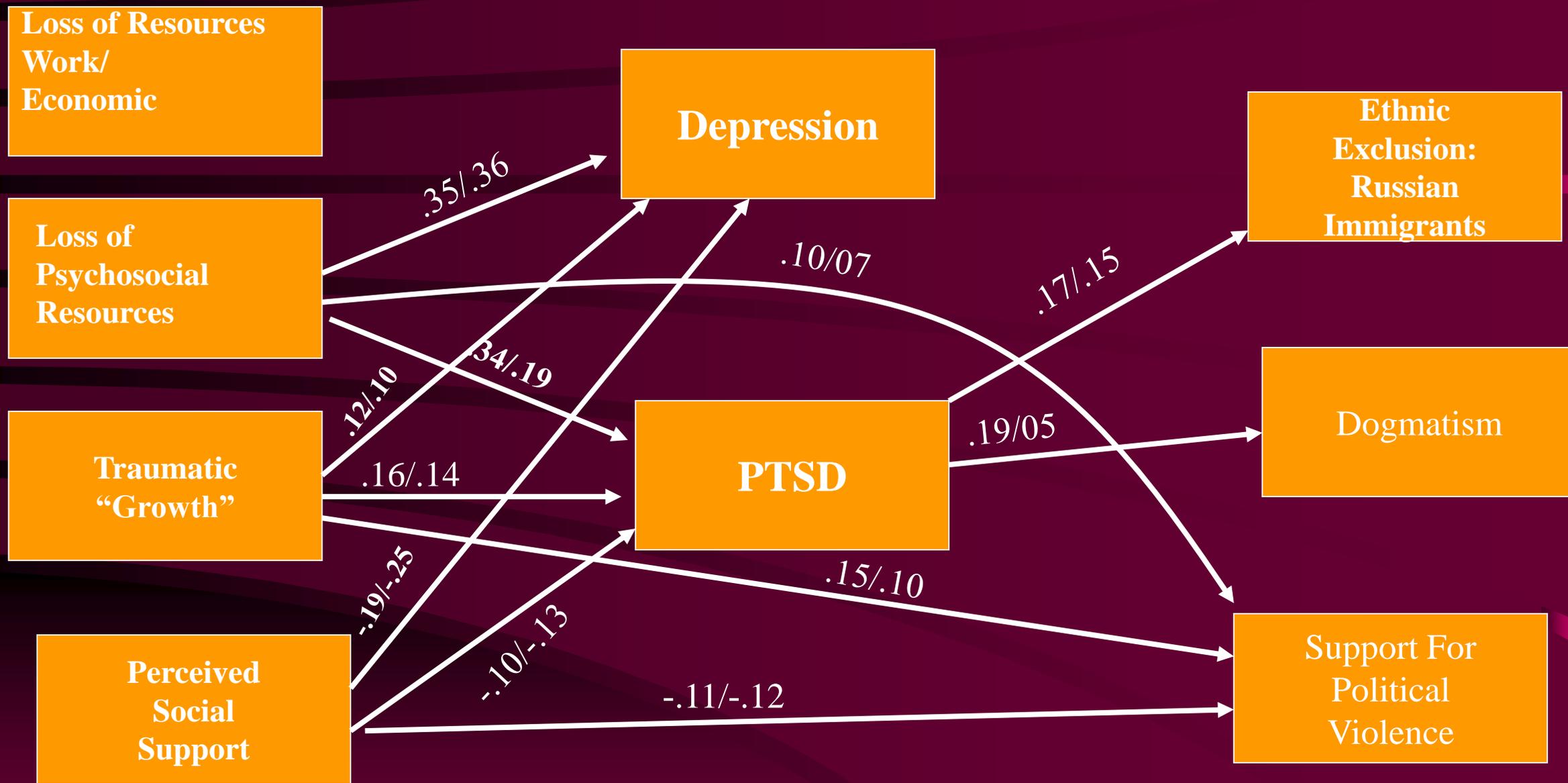
Traumatic  
"Growth"

Social  
Support

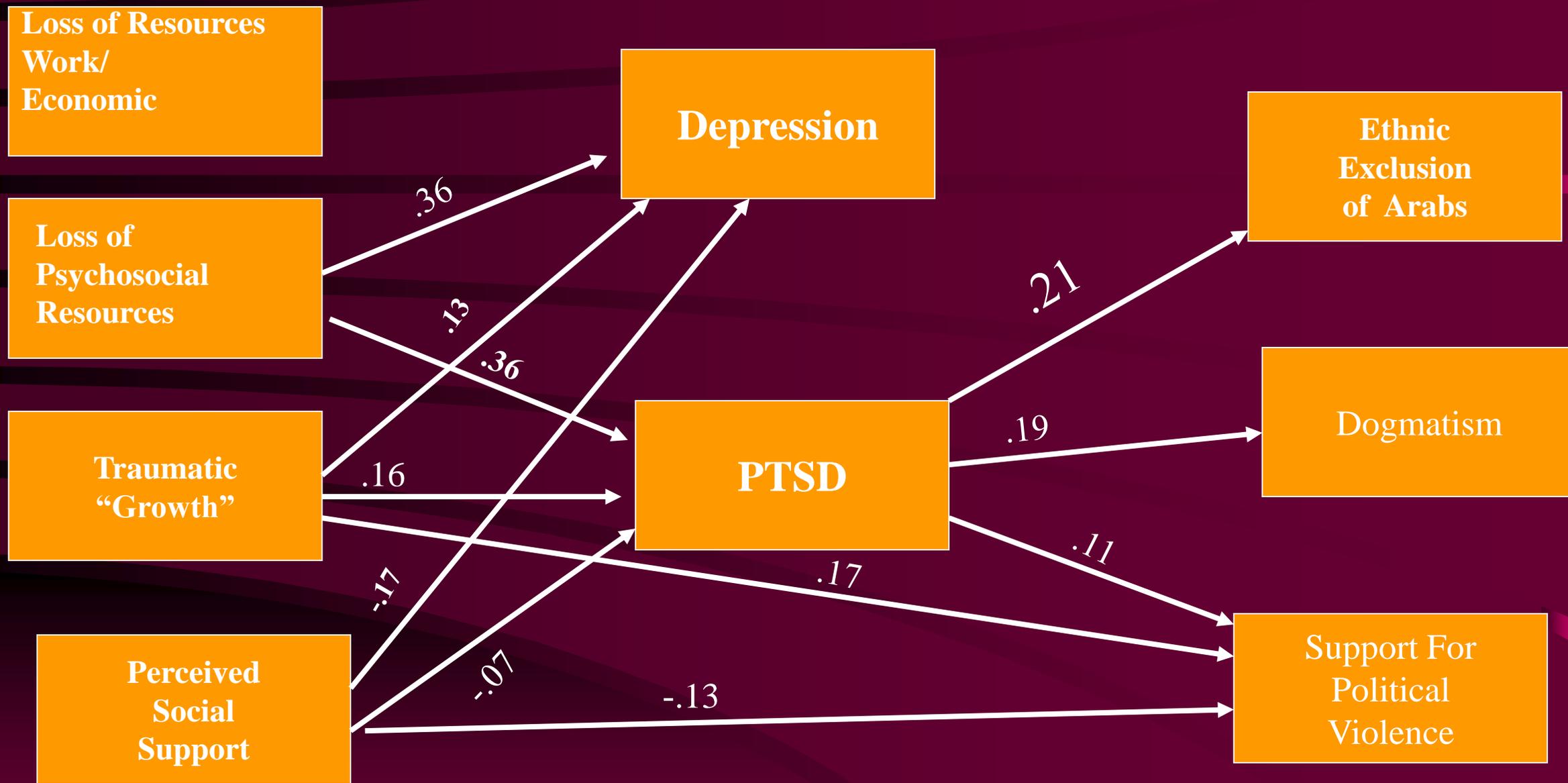
.14\*\*\*/.12\*\*\*

.17\*\*\*/.17\*\*\*

.07\*\*\*/.05\*\*\*



Impact of Terrorism on Jews and Palestinian Citizens of Israel



Impact of Terrorism on Jewish Citizens of Israel, Modeling Ethnic Exclusion of Arabs

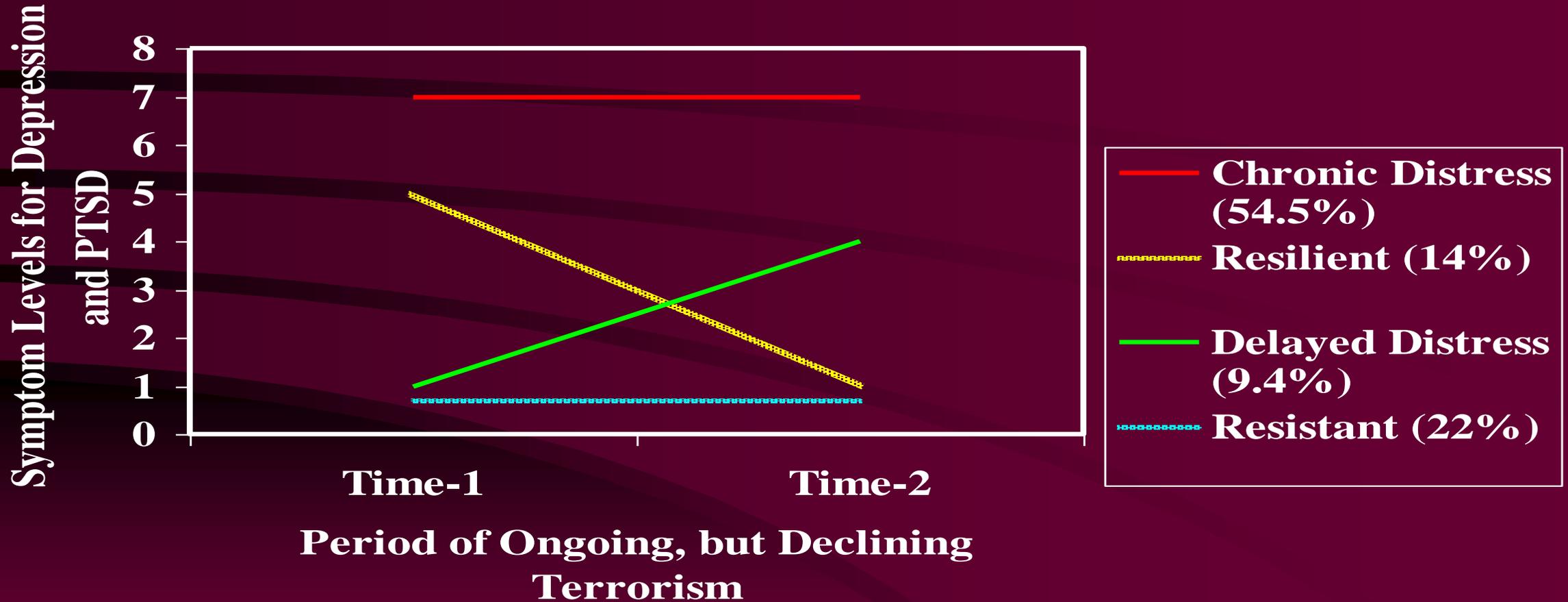
# Prospective Examination of Resilience (no or single symptom) in the Face of Terrorism and War: Jews and Arabs in Israel (n=742)

- Phone interviews were conducted to Jews in Hebrew or Russian and to Arabs in Arabic using random lists during late Summer 2004 (first wave) and early Fall 2005 (second wave)
- The initial response rate was 57%
- 55.4% reported direct or indirect recent terrorism exposure at time-1 and 7.4% at time-2 (still high but declining significantly)



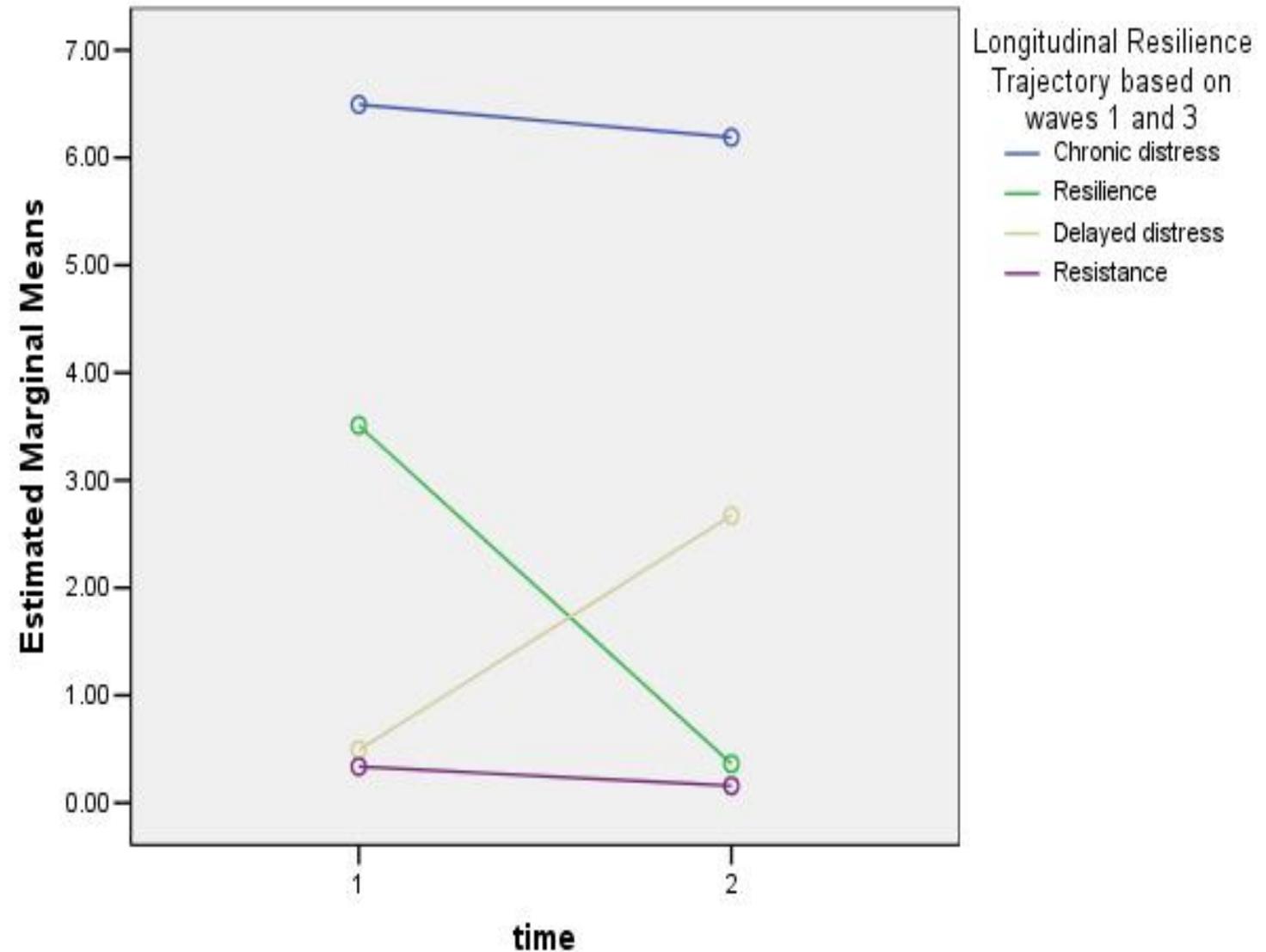


We constructed several theoretically based groups based on the work of Bonanno, Galea, Bucciarelli, & Vlahov, 2007 and of Chris Layne



- The actual groups for PTSD, for example, follow what we expected theoretically.
- ANOVA tests of interactions indicated that all expected interactions were statistically significant (i.e., all comparison except the two parallel lines). This indicates that these changes are not minor and indicate meaningful group trends.
- In analysis we generally used the chronic distress group as the comparison group.
- The high percentage of symptomatic individuals indicates that there is likely a large group of people with significant symptoms who do not meet frank clinical levels of disorder.

Estimated Marginal Means of MEASURE\_1



## Predictors of Trajectories

**Based on COR theory and the work of Bonanno et al. (2007), predicted that having greater material and psychological resources and not losing resources would be related to greater resilience and resistance. Further predicted that PTG would be related to lower likelihood of resilience or resistance**

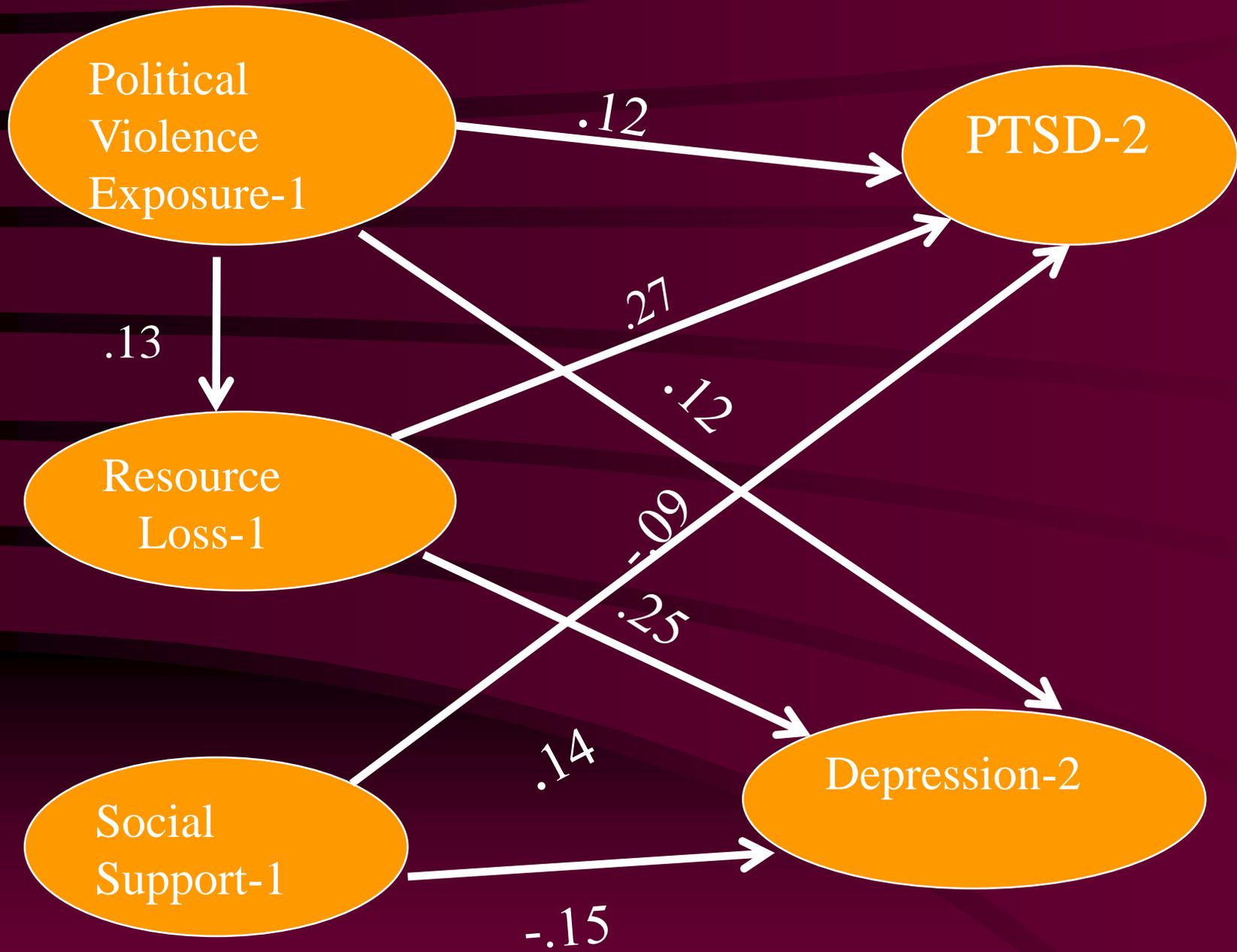
- **Being male (OR 2.5), Jewish (OR 4-50) , secular (OR 3.3), higher income (OR 2.2), and higher education (OR 2.2-2.3) were related to being resistant or resilient.**
- **Greater social support , less economic loss, less psychosocial loss (OR .80-.87 for every point on the scale), and LESS traumatic growth (OR .87) were related to greater likelihood of being resistant and resilient.**
- **Delayed distress was distinguished from resistance by similar factors, suggesting that resource loss and possession of resources were related to remaining resilient, and that PTG is related to declining resilience over time.**
- **The much greater prevalence of chronic distress and lower prevalence of resilience and resistance compared to studies of the WTC attacks clearly indicate that chronic trauma exposure impacts resilience substantially.**
- **We further examined those with sustained PTG at both times. This was also related to reduced likelihood of resilience or resistance trajectories.**

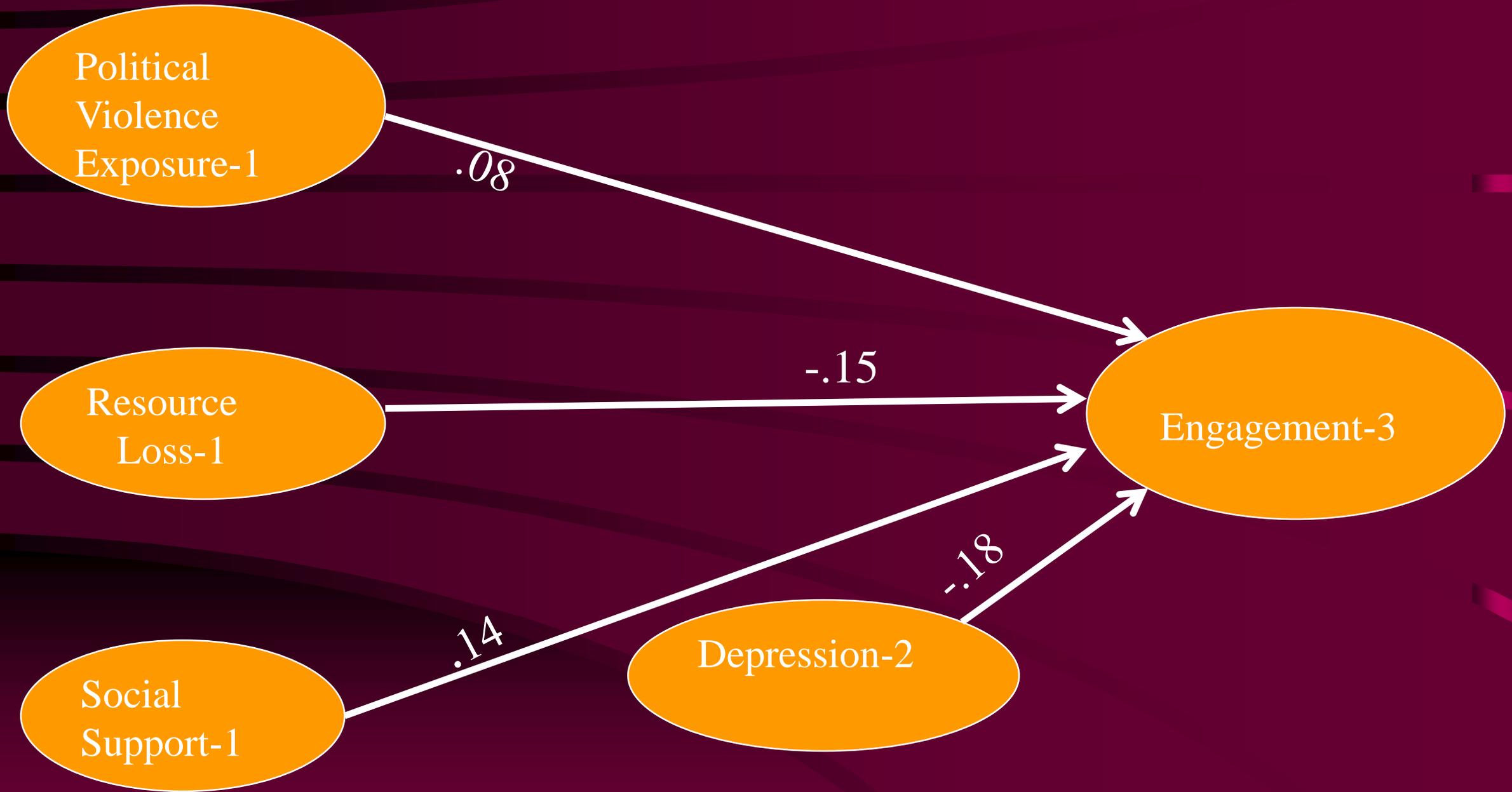
# New work on **engagement**: Sustaining an engaged self in the midst of trauma

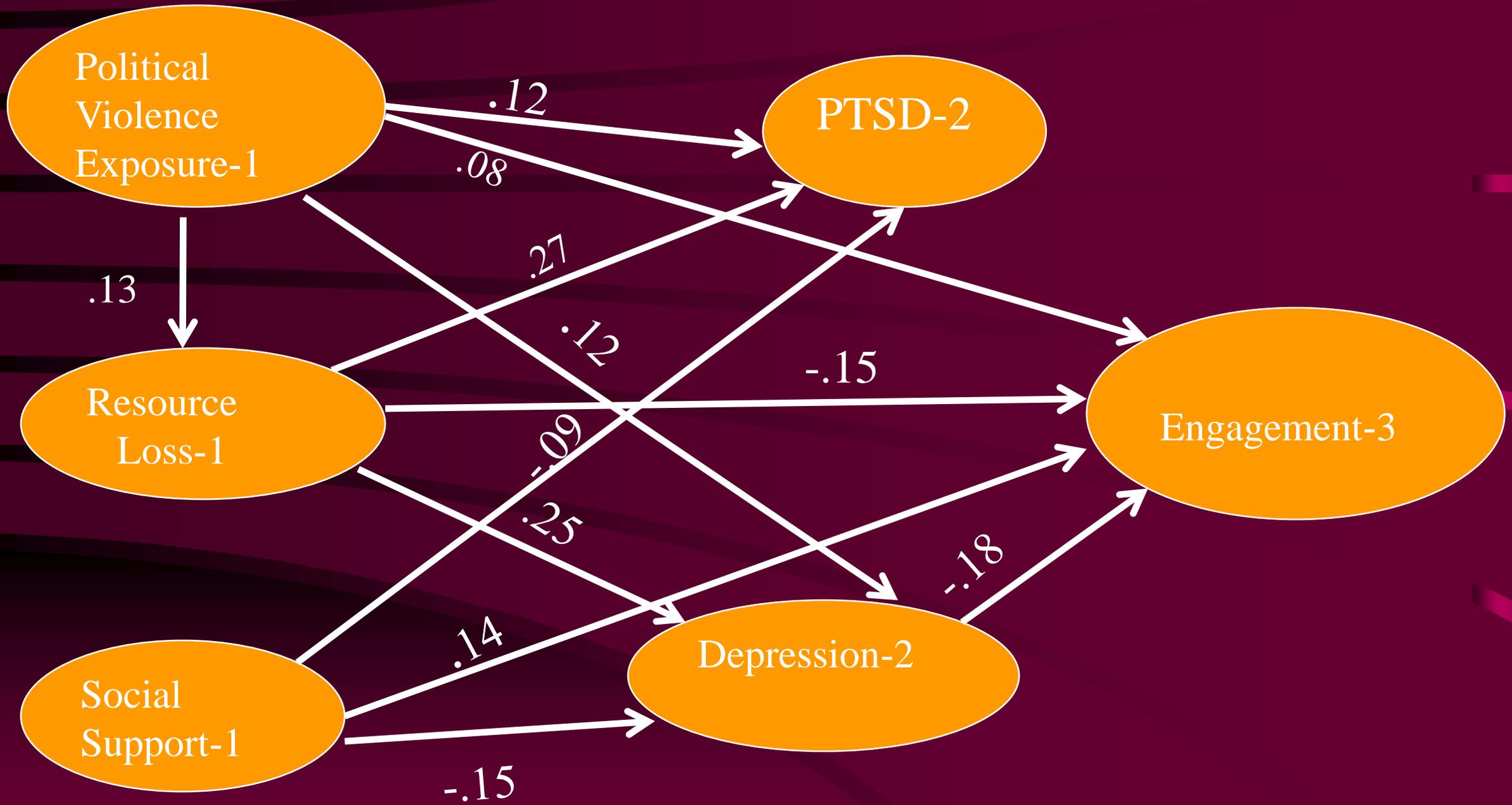
Hobfoll, Johnson, Canetti, Hall, Palmieri, and Galea

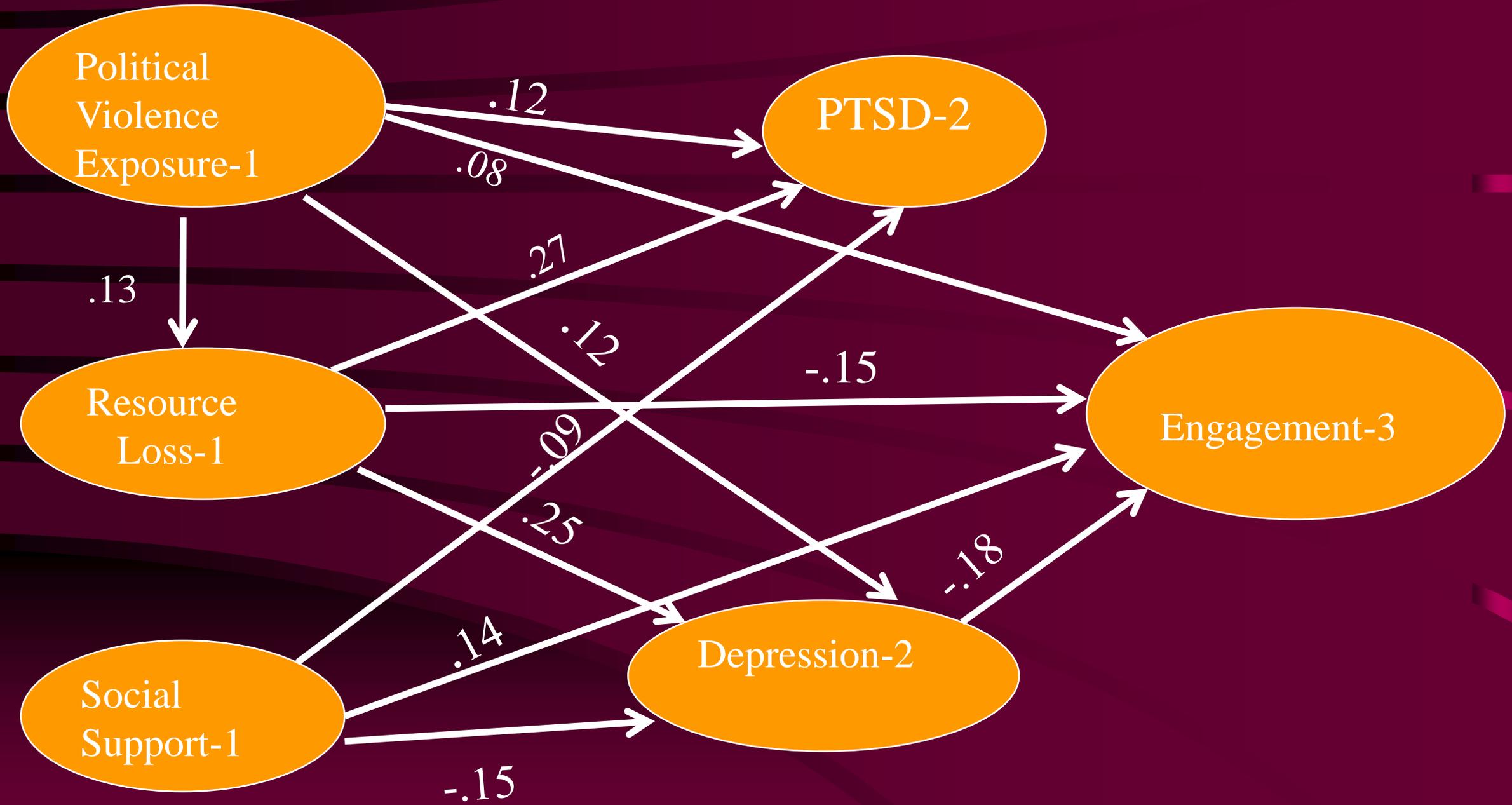
- **First study of Engagement in the Face of Trauma**
- Follows from the work of Wilmar Schaufeli in organizational psychology. We examined the predictors of sustained engagement in the face of exposure to violence and mass casualty.
- **We know almost nothing about how people remain involved and even absorbed and vigorous in life tasks, even while suffering greatly**
- Engagement consists of (1) vigor, (2) absorption (flow), and (3) commitment/dedication, adapted items include:
  1. I feel bursting with energy (v).
  2. I feel strong and vigorous (v).
  3. I find my life full of meaning and purpose (c/d).
  4. I am enthusiastic (c/d).
  5. Time flies when I am working (a).











## Findings

### Three Wave Study of Palestinians During Latter Intifada and Period of Gaza War

Hobfoll, Johnson, Canetti-Nisim, Hall, Palmieri, and Galea

- Among demographic findings: older and less educated individuals are less engaged
- Resource loss has the most marked effect on engagement, both directly and thru depression
- Social Support has a marked effect on engagement, both thru depression and directly
- Self-efficacy, as we often find, appears to have a more limited impact
- Controlled for depression, exposure to political violence activates engagement, even though it increases depression
- Perhaps the most critical finding for us to understand is that those with PTSD and even Depression for the most part remain engaged
- Also of interest is the possibility that engagement increases with exposure as an activation of the response system, “attend and defend”-as opposed to fight-flight

Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that. Hate multiplies hate, violence multiplies violence, and toughness multiplies toughness in a descending spiral of destruction....The chain reaction of evil -- hate begetting hate, wars producing more wars -- must be broken, or we shall be plunged into the dark abyss of annihilation.

--Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (1929-1968)

