

Collective emotions and emotion regulation in intractable conflicts

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As presented in other chapters contained within this book, emotions, and particularly their social aspects, have a vast influence on people's attitudes, motivations, and behaviors in almost every domain of life. Yet, in some domains emotions operate merely peripherally and at times even as negligible psychological forces. In other domains, however, and under specific circumstances, collective emotions play a pivotal role in producing the screenplay of events and orchestrating the behavior of all involved individuals and groups.

This is the case in intractable conflicts, a particular type of severe conflicts that last for a long period of time, as the parties involved can neither win, nor are willing to compromise in order to reach a peaceful settlement (Azar, 1990). Anyone who has ever experienced, either directly or indirectly, a conflict such as those ongoing in the Middle East, Kashmir, Sri Lanka, Chechnya, or Rwanda, knows that these conflicts are fueled by high-magnitude, negative emotions like fear, hatred, despair, and contempt. These emotions can be felt when personally interacting with individuals involved in these violent conflicts, but they are also very dominant in these societies' general atmosphere, and hence can be found in public discourse, mass media, cultural products (e.g., arts, literature), national ceremonies, etc. (e.g., Bar-Tal, Halperin, & de Rivera, 2007).

Accordingly, to fully understand the nature of intractable conflicts and to reveal paths for the promotion of these conflicts' resolution, one must decipher the ways in which various emotional phenomena operate within these conflicts and perhaps, more importantly, the ways they influence people's individual, social, and political action tendencies regarding conflict-related events. Hence, it is quite surprising that in spite of conflict resolution scholars' wide acknowledgment of emotions' role in intractable conflicts (e.g., Bar-Tal et al., 2007; Petersen, 2002; Staub, 2005), empirical investigations into the nature and implications of emotions in these contexts were quite rare until the recent decade (see Halperin, Sharvit, & Gross, 2011, for a recent review).

This chapter's goal is to bridge this gap by bringing together recent theoretical frameworks as well as empirical findings illuminating the role and implications of collective emotions in intractable conflicts. More specifically, I attempt to reveal the reciprocal influence of the unique context (physical and psychological) of intractable conflicts on the one hand, and the emotional reactions of those involved in such conflicts on the other.

In a nutshell, my main argument is that, as time goes by, some enduring emotional phenomena become an inherent part of the conflict's psychological context, which then feeds into emotional reactions to conflict-related events.

Although it is equally important to understand the emotional aspects of all phases of conflict (i.e., eruption, escalation, management, resolution, and reconciliation), what is particularly intriguing about intractable conflicts is their perpetuation and, even more importantly, the involved parties' continuous inability to promote their resolution, in spite of the understanding that such a resolution (in many cases) would benefit their people. Therefore, the current chapter focuses exclusively on the role of collective emotions as one of the main psychological forces that propagate conflict and constitute a powerful barrier to conflict resolution. More specifically, it focuses on two sides of the same coin. On the one hand, I will describe and demonstrate the mechanism through which various emotional phenomena contribute to the continuation of intractable conflicts and hinder attempts at putting an end to them. On the other hand, in the ensuing parts of this chapter, I shall put forth the argument that, given the central role of emotions in intractable conflicts, emotional change (through direct or indirect emotion regulation) can pave the way toward conflict resolution.

In what follows, I shall first describe the unique context of intractable conflicts and discuss the implications of that very context on individual and collective emotions. Then I will present a general theoretical framework, describing the way in which collective emotions influence people's attitudes and behaviors regarding conflict-related events, followed by a review of some empirical data supporting that model. Next, I will discuss various avenues of influence and provide preliminary data regarding the potential role of direct and indirect emotion regulation in conflict resolution processes. Finally, I will describe future challenges in studying emotions and emotion regulation in intractable conflicts, at both theoretical and applied levels.

Intractable conflicts and their psychological context

Kurt Lewin (1951) suggested that human behavior is a function of an environment in which a person operates, and that any behavioral analysis must begin with the description of the situation as a whole. This is due to the fact that people's conception of the context determines their behavioral options to a large extent, and eventually their chosen routes of action. In line with this classic notion, I argue that collective emotions do not operate in a vacuum. As such, their generation, nature, and implications are influenced by the specific context in which they appear. The collective context's significance lies within the fact that it dictates society members' needs and goals as well as the challenges they encounter in order to satisfy them. Therefore, when analyzing the role of collective emotions in intractable conflicts, special attention should be given to these conflicts' unique context, and more specifically, to its psychological implications.

Intractable conflicts are usually defined by the following characteristics (Bar-Tal, 2007): (1) they are perceived as being about essential and even existential goals, needs,

and/or values; (2) they are perceived as irresolvable; (3) they include an enduring and destructive element of mutual violence; (4) they are perceived as being of a zero sum nature; (5) they occupy a central place in the lives of individual society members and of society as a whole; (6) they demand extensive material (i.e., military, technological, and economic), educational, and psychological investment; and (7) they persist for a long period of time, that is, for at least one generation.

The collective setting of intractable conflict should be seen as one lasting for decades, as durability is one of its most important characteristics. Throughout these years, members of societies live under high levels of perceived threat and uncertainty, and many of them even face violence, suffering, and victimization in most direct and personal ways. Thus, the nature of the *lasting context of conflict* has relevance to the well-being of society members—it engages them personally as well as occupying a central position in public discourse. It supplies information and experiences that compel society members to construct an adaptable world view.

Consequently, individuals living in such an environment are often characterized by more competitive world views, less cognitive flexibility, more “black and white” thinking, and higher sensitivity to various threat cues. On the collective level, this described psychological context poses three basic challenges to societies involved in intractable conflict (Bar-Tal, 2007). First, society members need to somehow satisfy the human needs that remain deprived during intractable conflicts, such as the psychological needs of knowing, feeling certainty, mastery, safety, positive identity, and so on (e.g., Reykowski, 1982; Staub, 2003). Second, they must learn to cope with stress, fear, and other negative psychological experiences that accompany intractable conflict (e.g., Hobfoll, Canetti-Nisim, & Johnson, 2006). Third, societies must develop psychological conditions that would be conducive to successfully withstanding the rival group. In other words, to attempt to win the conflict or, at least, avoid losing it.

To face these challenges, societies involved in intractable conflict are characterized by high levels of social cohesion and unity. As such, the group’s strong and salient collective identity is directed at new and evolved goals, that is, the need to correct and improve the ingroup’s position, or at the very least withstand the conflict (Brewer, 2011). To support social cohesion and strong identification with the group, these societies often develop a functional psychological infrastructure composed of a biased, one-sided, and oversimplified collective memories of the conflict, accompanied by a tailored ethos of conflict (Bar-Tal, 2012). This mechanism fulfills basic psychological needs of forming a meaningful world view that provides a coherent and organized picture in times of stress, threat and deprivation (e.g., Greenberg, Pyszczynski, & Solomon, 1997; Janoff-Bulman, 1992).

The collective emotional aspect of the psychological context

In concert with collective memories and the specific ethos of the conflict, societies develop, and are later characterized by, a dominant emotional culture, emotional climate of conflict (de-Rivera, 1992), and a collective emotional orientation (Jarymowicz & Bar-Tal,

2006). All three concepts capture a collective, rather than an individual expression of emotions; however, an in-depth discussion regarding the differences between them is beyond the scope of the current chapter. Taken together, these closely related collective emotional phenomena lead to a society characterized by sensitization to, and amplification and expression of, a particular emotion.

Content-wise, in the context of intractable conflict, the emotional climate/culture/orientation are driven by the dominant narratives and societal beliefs related to the conflict (i.e., the collective memory and the ethos of conflict). Hence, for example, the societal belief that the conflict is irresolvable translates into an emotional climate of despair, a belief in the delegitimization of the outgroup translates into an emotional orientation of hate, and the belief of victimization is associated with an emotional climate of fear and collective angst. This repertoire is learned from an early age on, as society members are socialized to acquire the culturally approved emotional orientation (Fiske, Kitayama, Markus, & Nisbett, 1998). Consequently, it is not uncommon to identify a hate culture or climate among groups of individuals who have never met or encountered outgroup members, or high fear sensitivity among those who are still too young to personally experience war themselves.

Individual-level emotions in intractable conflict: from emotional sentiments to intergroup emotions

In sum, all earlier collective emotional phenomena form the conflict's psycho-emotional context (Bar-Tal & Halperin, 2013). This psycho-emotional context characterizes society and hence represents more than just the aggregate emotional experiences of all individuals involved in the conflict. Yet, it undeniably has an effect on the generation and development of these individual-level emotional experiences. Given that in most intractable conflicts a majority of individuals do not experience these events directly, but rather via leaders, the mass-media and other forms of narration, a large proportion of individual-level emotional experiences are group-based, namely, are experienced "in the name" of other members of the group, specifically those who directly experienced the event, and as a result of one's identification with the group (Mackie, Devos & Smith, 2000; Wohl, Branscombe, & Klar, 2006; Yzerbyt, Dumont, Wigboldus, & Gordin, 2003; also see Ray, Mackie, & Smith, Chapter 16, this volume). Interestingly, in contrast to the appraisal process underlying individual emotions, which takes place mostly inside the individual "black-box," most of the appraisal processes of group-based emotions take place in the public sphere, and as a result are widely influenced by the emotional culture, climate, and orientation.

In addition to the "classical" phenomenon of short-term emotional experiences, the enduring nature of the conflict encompasses fertile ground for the development of a more enduring, individual emotional experience—emotional sentiments. While emotions are multi-componential responses to specific events, sentiments are enduring configurations of emotions (Arnold, 1960; Frijda, 1986). According to this view, an emotional sentiment is a temporally stable emotional disposition toward a person, group, or symbol (Halperin, 2011). In the context of intractable conflict, sentiments are usually targeted

at the outgroup as a homogeneous unit and draw their content and magnitude from the psycho-emotional context as well as from the aggregation of more concrete emotional experiences. As such, long-term sentiments such as hatred, fear, or despair can be seen as the individual level expression of the collective emotional culture, climate, and orientation (i.e., the psycho-emotional context).

The process through which these sentiments feed into emotional reactions can best be understood by utilizing Lerner's and Keltner's (2000) *Appraisal Tendency Framework*, according to which each emotion activates a cognitive predisposition to interpret events in line with the central appraisal dimensions that triggered the emotion. Accordingly, dominant long-term sentiments will increase the probability of their respective emotions' occurrence, through the elicitation of those core appraisal themes associated with the emotions. For example, Halperin and Gross (2011) recently found that Israelis' anger toward Palestinians during the war in Gaza was influenced, to a large extent, by Israelis' enduring sentiment of anger toward the Palestinians, measured more than a year prior to the war. Altogether the described process elucidates the way in which long- and short-term emotional phenomena jointly operate to form people's emotional reactions to conflict-related events. But how exactly does that process shape individual and collective actions that prevent conflict resolution?

Emotions and the continuation of intractable conflict

We have recently introduced (Halperin, Sharvit, & Gross, 2011) and empirically tested (Halperin, 2011) a comprehensive, *appraisal-based model*, demonstrating how discrete emotional phenomena shape individual's attitudinal and political reactions to conflict-related events, and hence preserve the destructive conflict's status quo and hinder progress toward peace (see Halperin, Sharvit, & Gross, 2011, figure 1). The process begins with the occurrence of a new event and/or appearance of new information related to the conflict and/or recollection of a past conflict-related event. The event or information can be negative (e.g., war, terror attack, rejection of a peace offer) or positive (e.g., a peace gesture, willingness to compromise), but it must be perceived as meaningful. As previously mentioned, in most cases such events are experienced directly only by very few group members, but are then framed and conveyed to the remaining group members through various agents and channels of communications. In these cases, the first part of the appraisal, referring to the conflict-related event as meaningful, is conducted within the public sphere, and as such is directly influenced by the dominant psycho-emotional collective context.

Such short-term events elicit individual and group-based emotions and the ensuing political action tendencies, depending on the manner in which they are appraised. For example, a violent act committed by outgroup members toward the ingroup, appraised as unjust and accompanied by the evaluation of the ingroup as strong, would induce anger (Halperin, 2008). Hence, the subjective appraisal of an event is a crucial factor in determining the kind of group-based emotion stemming from the event. Interestingly, the

appraisal process of an event related to an intractable conflict is influenced by a configuration of long-term collective aspects (i.e., psychological context), long-term individual aspects (e.g., sentiments, ideologies) and short-term evaluations.

In more detail, and as already mentioned, the appraisal of every conflict-related event is widely affected by society's emotional climate, as well as its collective emotional orientation. Beginning from the collective appraisal process, prior even to information being transmitted to the general public, conflict-related events are framed in line with societal emotional tendencies. Hence, in societies characterized by a high-fear and low-trust climate, even the seemingly most promising actions or statements of outgroup leaders would be transmitted with a flavor of suspicions. Given that the psycho-emotional context of societies involved in intractable conflict is usually negatively tuned, positive messages are frequently not evaluated as such. Accordingly, different frames for the same event may lead to different cognitive appraisals, which, in turn, may lead to different emotional responses. For example, a military action by the opponent, framed as a defensive response to previous militant actions by one's own side, may elicit fear or possibly sadness. But if framed as an aggressive action with no justified cause, it may lead to extreme anger or possibly hatred.

But even when information is obtained by the general public, different individuals still appraise it in very different ways. This diversified appraisal derives from each and every individual's experiences, ideologies, and sentiments related to the outgroup, the ingroup, and the nature of the conflict. The list of these individual-level factors is long, and an exhaustive overview of it is beyond the scope of the current chapter, but a non-exhaustive list of them would include personality factors (e.g., authoritarianism, need for structure, implicit theories), adherence to moral values, socio-economic status, and long-term ideology regarding the conflict as well as the opponent (see Halperin, 2011). Additionally, and most pertinently, this appraisal-based framework assumes that long-term emotional sentiments will lead to biased cognitive appraisals of specific events. For example, a long-term, external threat to the ingroup makes society members more attuned to threatening cues and leads to higher appraised danger that elicits, in turn, more frequent fear responses (Bar-Tal et al., 2007).

I suggest that the occurrence of a new event, integrated with these three groups of factors, shapes the event's cognitive appraisal, which provides the basis for the development of corresponding discrete emotions. In turn, these discrete emotions, and particularly the emotional goals and response tendencies embedded within them, dictate the behavioral and political responses to the event (see Halperin, 2008).

Discrete emotions and intractable conflict continuation

According to the earlier described process model, discrete emotions, rather than the mere valence of emotions, would determine people's attitudinal and behavioral reactions to conflict-related events. Hence, it is crucial to uncover the unique story and reveal the nature of each emotion in order to better understand its role as a barrier to conflict resolution. Various emotions contribute to the perpetuation of intractable conflicts, and the

scope of this chapter limits me from discussing them all. Among those that will not be discussed at length, it is important to at least mention anger, contempt, and humiliation, all of which play an important role in promoting aggression and sustaining the vicious cycle of conflict (for an alternative view of anger in conflicts, see: Reifen-Tagar, Halperin, & Federico, 2011).

Yet, even compared to these destructive emotional phenomena, *hatred* stands clearly as the most powerful affective barrier to peace (Bar-Tal, 2007; Staub, 2005). Hatred is driven by an appraisal of the outgroup's harming behavior as stemming from a deeply-rooted, permanent evil character (Sternberg, 2003). Consequently, a key aspect of hatred is the belief that it is impossible for both a positive change in the outgroup, and in the relations between the ingroup and the outgroup to ever take place (Halperin, 2011). This belief has dramatic implications on attitudes toward the peace process and negotiations. For example, two recent studies found that individuals who experienced short-term episodes of hatred in times of negotiations in the Middle East expressed an emotional goal of harming and even eliminating the opponent (Halperin, 2008). They likewise tended to reject any positive information regarding the opponent (i.e., lack of openness) and opposed the continuation of negotiations, compromise, and reconciliation efforts (Halperin, 2011). Importantly, given that hatred is associated with a fundamental negation of the outgroup as a whole, and not of the group's concrete actions or behavior, those who feel hatred toward the outgroup oppose even the smallest gestures and symbolic compromises, thus refusing to even entertain new ideas which may lead to peace.

Another powerful emotional barrier to peace is fear. Fear is usually associated with an appraisal of low strength and low control over the situation (Roseman, 1984). As such, it leads to increased risk estimates and pessimistic predictions (Lerner & Keltner, 2001). Accordingly, and given its inhibitory nature and the avoidance tendencies associated with it, fear is associated with the kind of caution that prevents people from taking any risks in the course of the conflict, which in turn also leads them to oppose any compromise that may potentially increase such risks (e.g., Bar-Tal, 2001). Indeed, studies show that experiences of threat and fear increase conservatism, prejudice, ethnocentrism, and intolerance (e.g., Feldman & Stenner, 1997; Stephan, Renfro, & Davis, 2008). Other studies, such as those done within the *Terror Management Theory* framework, show that an existential threat leads to more right-wing inclinations and to less compromising political tendencies (e.g., Hirschberger & Pyszczynski, 2010). More specific to the negotiation process itself, fear and collective angst (i.e., fear for the future survival and endurance of the ingroup) lead to the strengthening of ingroup ties (Wohl Giguère, Branscombe, & McVicar, 2011), cognitive freezing, risk-averse political tendencies, suppression of creative ideas aimed at resolving the conflict, and concrete objection to intergroup negotiation (Sabucedo, Durán, Alzate, & Rodríguez, 2011). Additionally, intergroup anxiety reduces motivation for intergroup contact, thus hindering another important avenue to the promotion of peaceful resolution of conflicts (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

Yet, the story of fear is more nuanced than the one-sided story of hatred, mainly since people who feel fear just want to secure their present and future (and that of their

collective) rather than to hurt the outgroup (see Halperin, 2008). Unfortunately, the goal of guaranteeing the future is associated oftentimes with defensive or aggressive tendencies. Yet, it is important to bear in mind that the same emotional goal can, under the right circumstances, lead people to support conciliatory actions. When societies are dominated by a fearful emotional climate, any solution that is perceived as a potential threat reducer is favorably considered. Consequently, a compromising solution, framed as a “threat-reduction” tool rather than a conciliatory act or a gesture, can penetrate the filters of the psycho-emotional context and the individual emotions of fear and angst. And indeed, a handful of recent studies have shown a positive association between collective fear or angst and the willingness to make compromises for peace (e.g., Halperin, Porat, & Whol, 2013). In all of these studies, compromises are perceived by participants as the most efficient way to reduce risks, and in this way increased fear contributes to more conciliatory positions.

Finally, another powerful emotion that constitutes a barrier for peace is despair, defined also as a complete lack of hope. *Hope* involves expectation and aspiration for a positive goal, as well as positive feelings about the anticipated outcome (Staats & Stassen, 1985). Hope facilitates goal setting, planning, use of imagery, creativity, cognitive flexibility, mental exploration of novel situations, and even risk taking (Snyder, 1994). Accordingly, hope allows members of groups involved in violent conflicts to imagine a future that is different from the past as well as the negative present and come up with creative solutions to the disputes at the core of the conflict (Jarymowicz & Bar-Tal, 2006). The belief that a peaceful resolution is possible is an essential step toward taking risks and compromising.

When people lack hope for the resolution of the conflict, they tend to see the situation as static rather than dynamic (Cohen-Chen, Halperin, Crisp, & Gross, 2013). A static perception of the conflict can be driven by one of the following beliefs or by a combination of them in various forms: (1) the belief that the outgroup will never change its behavior, positions, goals and values; (2) the belief that conflict of this kind cannot really be resolved; (3) the belief that the ingroup (and especially those in the ingroup who are defined “spoilers”) will never change its behavior, positions, goals and values. Altogether, a static perception of the conflict leads to apathy, low sense of individual, group and political efficacy, and very concrete, rather than abstract view of the conflict’s issues.

And indeed, a study conducted in Northern Ireland found that hope was positively associated with the dissipation of a desire to retaliate, which, in turn, was positively related to the willingness to forgive the adversary (Moeschberger, Dixon, Niens, & Cairns, 2005). Another study (Rosler, Halperin, & Gross, n. d.) compared hope and empathy’s effects on support for compromises in the Middle East. Interestingly, results showed that hope, but not empathy, led to an increase in Israelis’ support for compromises in peace negotiations. Finally, a study recently conducted by Cohen-Chen and colleagues (2013) found that Israeli-Jews who experienced high levels of hope expressed higher support for concessions, more openness to meet Palestinians and listen to their narrative.

Can emotion regulation promote the resolution of intractable conflicts?

Emotion regulation involves processes that are targeted at influencing emotions we (or others) experience, when we (or others) experience them, and how we (or others) experience and express these emotions (Gross, 1998). An attempt to regulate emotions, or to encourage emotion regulation among others, can be accomplished in various ways and at different times throughout the emotion generation process (Gross, Richards, & John, 2006). An important question, therefore, and one that lies at the heart of our research in recent years, is whether and in what ways intergroup emotions can be effectively regulated so as to reduce aggression, promote more conciliatory positions, and pave the way to conflict resolution. Based on a slightly nuanced version of the previously made distinction between explicit and implicit emotion regulation (Mauss, Bunge, & Gross, 2007), I suggest two possible strategies that may assist those who wish to promote conflict resolution.

First, I argue that contemporary knowledge regarding the nature and political implications of discrete emotions can help form more focused, emotion-based interventions that hold the potential to promote peace. By utilizing *indirect (or implicit) regulation strategies*, those interested in understanding and promoting peace can form dedicated interventions aimed at altering concrete cognitive appraisals, thus changing public opinion about peace by changing peoples' discrete emotions. In these interventions' framework, the target audience is not trained or probed directly to regulate their emotions, but instead is exposed to concrete messages aimed at altering specific cognitive appraisals and in turn also to change the associated emotions.

Second, a more *direct emotion regulation* approach suggests that traditional and effective emotion regulation strategies, such as *cognitive reappraisal*, can be used in conflict situations, in order to change people's intergroup emotional experiences, and subsequently their political positions as well. In a typical training of such direct (or explicit) emotion regulation, the target audience is presented with a task that involves processing stimuli and is thus trained to regulate their emotional responses (regulation trial) using a strategy specified by the researcher (or trainer). This approach's underlying assumption is that by directly training individuals to regulate their negative emotions, one can potentially modulate their future emotional and political reactions to conflict-related events. In the following sections, the two approaches are briefly described, elucidated, and demonstrated.

Promoting conflict resolution by using indirect regulation strategies

Indirect emotion regulation refers to attempts to change people's core appraisals, associated with emotions that are considered powerful barriers to peace, by conveying concrete messages. Outside the lab, these messages can be conveyed to those involved in intractable conflict through the education system (e.g., Bar-Tal & Rosen, 2009), dialogue groups (e.g., Maoz, 2011), mass media, or even dramas or soap operas (e.g., Paluck, 2009).

In what follows, I describe an indirect emotion regulation approach we developed in recent years, which offers a focused, emotion-based intervention. The first step is tying the intervention's main goal to a discrete emotional phenomenon. For example, based on our accumulated knowledge, we know that promoting support for tangible compromises can be accomplished by reducing hatred and fear, while inducing anger or hope to effectively promote risk taking. Next, the core appraisals associated with these respective emotions are defined as the key target of the intervention, and in the final step an appropriate, well-established intervention is used in order to alter these core appraisals.

One example of this "reverse engineering"-based process is demonstrated in a study we conducted recently in Israel and Bosnia and Herzegovina (Čehajić-Clancy, Effron, Halperin, Liberman, & Ross, 2011). The aim of this study was to increase the willingness of Jewish-Israelis as well as Serbs to support reparation policies to their respective victimized groups. During the first step we used past research (e.g., Branscombe & Doosje, 2004; Iyer, Leach, & Crosby, 2003) to identify *group-based guilt* as the single-most effective emotion with the potential to promote such a goal (see also Ferguson & Branscombe, Chapter 17, this volume). Then, we relied on other prior studies (e.g., Brown & Čehajić, 2008) to pinpoint the acknowledgment of the ingroup's responsibility as the core appraisal theme of group-based guilt, and subsequently searched for an appropriate manipulation that would induce such an appraisal. The simple manipulation of *self-affirmation* (Sherman & Cohen, 2006), which has been shown to decrease the need to respond in a biased or defensive manner to potentially threatening challenges to one's competence or rationality, adequately served this goal. Results demonstrated that, in both contexts, affirming a positive aspect of the self can increase one's willingness to acknowledge ingroup responsibility for wrongdoings against others, express feelings of group-based guilt, and as a result, provide greater support for reparation policies (Čehajić-Clancy et al., 2011).

Another interesting example of the same approach's utilization can be found in a study we recently conducted in Cyprus, the aim of which was inducing the motivation of Turkish Cypriots to engage in contact with Greek Cypriots (Halperin, Crisp, Husnu, Dweck, & Gross, 2012). Again, we first identified *intergroup anxiety* as the emotion that has the widest influence on peoples' motivation for intergroup contact (e.g., Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). In a search for intergroup anxiety's core appraisal themes, we then realized that intergroup anxiety in intractable conflict is driven by a combination of two appraisals: (1) the outgroup repeatedly hurt the ingroup, and (2) the outgroup will never change and so they will try to hurt the ingroup during any encounter in the future. Then, in a search for a simple manipulation that addresses these appraisals, we adopted ideas suggested in the literature on implicit theories (e.g., Dweck & Leggett, 1988).

According to this body of work, leading people to believe that group characteristics are malleable (versus fixed) can serve to reduce stereotypes (e.g., Rydell, Hugenberg, Ray, & Mackie, 2007) and increase motivation to compromise in intergroup conflict (Halperin et al., 2011). We speculated that such a belief change would also reduce intergroup anxiety by creating expectations for less threatening behavior by the (already-changed) outgroup. Indeed, results showed that Turkish Cypriots who were led to believe that groups can

change (with no mention of the specific groups involved) reported lower levels of intergroup anxiety and higher motivation to interact and communicate with Greek Cypriots in the future, compared to those who were led to believe that groups cannot change.

Direct regulation strategies: promoting conciliatory attitudes by using effective emotion regulation strategies

Another potentially efficient usage of contemporary psychological knowledge on emotions, which has enriched the conflict resolution field, is the use of well-established emotion regulation strategies as an educational tool aimed at promoting peace. One antecedent-focused strategy that has received considerable empirical attention is cognitive reappraisal. Cognitive reappraisal (or “reappraisal” in short) involves changing the meaning of a situation so as to change the person’s emotional response to it (Gross, 1998). Empirical evidence suggests that people who used reappraisal more frequently to regulate their emotions reported significantly less negative emotions and showed more adaptive patterns of physiological responding (e.g., Mauss et al., 2007). Reappraisal has also been found to decrease aggression (Barlett & Anderson, 2011).

Most of the research on emotion regulation to date has focused on individuals or dyads. I argue that many of the insights from such research can and should be applied to the context of intergroup conflicts. Reappraisal, in particular, may be an effective strategy for regulating intergroup emotions. This is because reappraisal, by definition, can help individuals redirect their attention to the broader meaning or consequences of events (Ray, Wilhelm, & Gross, 2008). Given that reappraisal can lead people to adopt a more balanced perspective of emotion-eliciting events, it may reduce negative intergroup emotions and, in doing so, promote more conciliatory reactions to conflict-related events.

The first correlational evidence that reappraisal is associated with conciliatory attitudes was found in a study conducted by Halperin and Gross (2011) in the midst of a war between Israelis and Palestinians in Gaza. In this study, we tested whether individual differences in the use of reappraisal were associated with different reactions during times of war. To test this, we conducted a nationwide survey ($N=200$) of Jewish-Israeli adults. We found that Israelis who tended to use reappraisal more frequently to down-regulate their negative emotions during the war were more supportive of providing humanitarian aid to Palestinian citizens.

Although interesting, these results did not provide an indication for a causal influence of reappraisal on intergroup emotions and attitudes toward peace. To address this limitation, we (Halperin, Porat, Tamir, & Gross, 2013) conducted a study in which we conducted a reappraisal training session (or not—control group) with participants ($N=60$) one week prior to a real, dramatic political event (the Palestinian United Nations bid), and then measured emotional and political reactions to the event 1 week, as well as 5 months, after the event. The results showed that participants who were trained to reappraise (versus not) showed greater support for conciliatory political policies toward Palestinians even 5 months after their training session, and that these effects were mediated by the experience of intergroup anger. Together, these studies provide preliminary supportive

evidence for our predictions, demonstrating that regulating emotions effectively by using reappraisal can lead to decreased negative intergroup emotions as well as to increased support for conciliatory rather than aggressive policies toward the rival group.

Conclusion

The study of collective emotions and of emotion regulation processes have rapidly developed in recent years. The main premise of the framework presented in the current chapter is that, while much can be learned from these developments regarding the psychological underpinnings of intractable conflict, the unique psychological context of such conflicts requires a more nuanced understanding of emotional mechanisms. According to this approach, the emotional aspect of societies involved in intractable conflicts diverges from that of other societies both quantitatively (i.e., the emotions experienced are of higher magnitude) and qualitatively (i.e., unique relationships between short/long, individual/collective emotions). Yet, as demonstrated in this chapter, a deep understanding of these emotional processes can create fertile ground for emotionally-focused conflict resolution processes. In that regard, I see the emotional aspect of intractable conflicts as an opportunity, calling for intervention through direct or indirect emotion regulation, rather than an unmanageable barrier.

Despite important developments in recent years, the study of emotions in conflict is still at its initial stages. Further theoretical and empirical work is needed in order to elaborate key aspects of the proposed framework, especially in terms of complex relationships between different emotional aspects and the ultimate timing, content, and structure of emotion-addressing interventions. Future studies should examine a wider range of emotions and emotion regulation strategies, and should aspire to integrate the understanding of the emotional mechanisms with those of intractable conflicts' more classical psychological dimensions, like ideologies and narratives of collective memories. These future efforts should be based upon a theoretical and empirical integration of all relevant sub-fields, namely, the study of international conflicts, the study of emotions and the study of emotion regulation.

With these thoughts in mind and supported by new promise in the emerging field of emotion regulation, I am confident that it is possible to proactively and deliberately pave the way toward a greater chance at peace, by helping parties acquire or further cultivate emotions which sustain or lead to more conciliatory attitudes and behavior.

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