The Emotional Roots of Inter-Group Aggression - The Distinct Role of Anger and Hatred

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Current trends in the psychological study of emotions emphasize the distinct role of discrete emotions, and not the mere valence of the emotion, in guiding human behavior. Recently, the same perspective has been used by scholars who examine the association between inter-group emotions and inter-group aggressive behavior in situations of intergroup conflicts. The current chapter focuses on the role played by two of the most central emotions involved in this process – anger and hatred. It integrates theories from social psychology and conflict analysis to examine the characteristics and potential influence of anger and hatred on violent behavior in the context of inter-group conflicts. Based on extensive empirical studies conducted in the context of the Middle East conflict, I raise and examine the provocative argument, according to which neither of these two emotions, by itself, is sufficient to arouse public support for inter-group violence. The suggested approach maintains that only the integration of these two emotional factors can induce the support for large scale aggressive behavior.

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Introduction

Prolonged inter-group conflicts are saturated with belligerent actions, provocative statements and mutual insults. Notable examples are destructive terror attacks, the killing of innocent civilians, the kidnapping of citizens or soldiers, offensive maneuvers of military forces and extremely threatening speeches of political and religious leaders. In many cases members of society view the conflict through a uni-dimensional, biased lens and hence perceive these acts as unjust, unfair and as deviating from any acceptable norms (White, 1970). These perceptions are frequently amplified by blindness to the wrongdoings previously conducted by one's own group that could have otherwise been considered as the triggers for the opponent's current actions or statements (Bar-Tal & Halperin, 2008).

It is a given that dynamic, inter-group anger is a pivotal emotional factor in every conflict. Think for example about the emotional experience of U.S citizens who watched the 11/9 explosion in the World Trade Center in real time. Surely fury and rage (among other emotions) were central to their experience. Similarly, it is not hard to imagine the rapid heartbeats, the sweating faces and the extreme anger felt by Jewish Israelis who sat down to the Passover dinner table on March 27, 2002 and suddenly heard about the terrifying suicide bombing at Park Hotel in Netanya, which resulted in the killing of 30 citizens dressed in their festive holiday clothing. One can only speculate about the exact role that this public anger played in U.S decision to invade Iraq, or in Israel's decision to initiate a large scale military action against Palestinians in March 2002.

We do know, however, that emotions play a pivotal role in driving people to aggressive behavior. An age-old conviction holds that anger is the most powerful emotional motivator of aggressive behavior (Berkowitz, 1993). Accordingly, one would expect that the abovementioned bursts of public anger would lead automatically to widespread support for revenge through aggressive actions initiated by the in-group (For empirical support of this assumption, see: Skitka., Bauman., Aramovich & Morgan, 2006; Huddy., Feldman & Cassese, 2007). Fortunately it seems that the picture is more complicated than that. In most cases, despite the wide prevalence of inter-group anger, public opinion is divided in regard to the desired response (Maoz & McCauley, 2008). While some people encourage an aggressive response, others discourage it and strongly support self-restraint. Surely these differences in opinions can be explained, at least to some extent, by differences in rational calculations concerning the costs and benefits of such aggressive reaction.

Nevertheless, I would argue in the current chapter that utility considerations are not enough to explain public opinion and that a deeper acquaintance with the dynamic and role played by emotions in prolonged intergroup conflicts is needed in order to comprehensively understand the pluripotentiality embedded within anger in such events. More specifically, I suggest that within the context of prolonged intergroup conflict, short-term anger will lead to public support for an aggressive response mainly if it is backed by long-term, extreme negative sentiments towards the out-group. In other words, in the absence of long-term hatred towards the out-group (or in the presence of empathy), anger will not necessarily bring about support for aggression, and in some cases it might even lead to positive results (Fischer & Roseman, 2007; Halperin, 2008A). The mirror image of that argument is that long

term hatred towards the opponent that is not triggered by explosive anger will remain hidden and will not be translated into support for aggressive behavior.

In order to theoretically and empirically establish that provocative argument, the chapter begins with some basic conceptualizations and definitions of emotions and emotional sentiments within the context of intergroup conflicts. These conceptualizations are followed by the presentation of an appraisal based model of emotions in intergroup conflicts, which emphasizes the interrelations between long-term emotional sentiments, short-term emotions, and attitudes about aggressive reaction to conflict events. Then, the distinct nature of anger and hatred is discussed, using empirical findings obtained within the context of the conflict in the Middle East. Finally, some new data gathered in that context is used to illustrate the confluence of these two emotional phenomena on support for inter-group violence.

Emotions, Sentiments and Aggression – Some Basic Conceptualizations

If we are to understand the role of emotion in support for aggressive behavior in intergroup conflicts, we first must have a working definition of emotion. In this chapter, I adopt William James' (1884) classical perspective on emotions as response tendencies. According to this view, emotions are flexible response sequences (Frijda, 1986; Scherer, 1984) that are called forth whenever an individual evaluates a situation as offering important challenges or opportunities (Tooby & Cosmides, 1990). In other words, emotions transform a substantive event into a motivation to respond to it in a particular manner (Zajonc, 1998).

Core components of emotion include subjective feelings, bodily changes, facial expressions, and other physiological reactions. These components help to distinguish emotions from other phenomena such as attitudes or beliefs (Cacioppo & Gardner,

1999). However, following James Averill (1994), my perspective sees emotions as stories which help individuals to interpret meaningful events and guide their behavior in response to these events. That perspective on emotions highlights the role of two additional components – cognitive appraisals and emotional goals/response tendencies – which I view as central to the understanding of interrelations between emotions and support for aggression in intergroup conflicts.

Recognition of the symbiotic relations between emotion and cognition has led to extensive research on the cognitive aspects of discrete emotions (see Roseman, 1984; Lazarus, 1991; Scherer, 2004; Smith & Ellsworth 1985). It is now well established that in most situations, emotions include a comprehensive evaluation of the emotion-eliciting stimulus (which may be conscious or unconscious). In other words, in order for a discrete emotion to motivate support for aggressive behavior, its associated cognitive appraisals should accurately correspond with the basic themes underlying the use of such action. Therefore, emotions associated with appraisals of unpleasantness, out-group blame attribution, unfairness, relative strength (control), and low expectations for positive change, will more likely lead to aggression.

In addition to the appraisal component, motivational and behavioral tendencies are some of the most important features of emotions (Frijda, Kuipers, & ter Schure 1989). Arnold (1960) suggested that each emotion is related to a specific action tendency. More recently, Frijda (1986) identified specific types of action readiness that characterize 17 discrete emotions. Roseman (1984) has distinguished between actions, action tendencies, and emotional goals. While actual behavior depends on numerous external factors and hence cannot usually be predicted by specific emotions alone, the general motives or goals are inherent components of each emotion, and thus can be predicted by specific emotions (Frijda et al., 1989; Roseman, 2002). In this view, a

discrete emotion (like anger) will lead to support for aggressive action only if the individual who experiences the anger believes that the violent response will serve the goals stemming from the emotion felt.

Emotions represent just one of several types of affective responses (Gross, 2007). For the purposes of this chapter, it is important to distinguish among emotions and sentiments. As we have seen, emotions are multi-componential responses to specific events. Sentiments, by contrast, are enduring configurations of emotions (Arnold, 1960; Frijda, 1986; Lazarus, 1994). According to this view, an emotional sentiment is a temporally stable emotional disposition towards a person, group, or symbol (Halperin, 2008B). Emotional sentiments differ from moods in that moods typically do not have well-defined objects, whereas emotional sentiments do. According to the framework to be presented at a later stage of the chapter, only a unique composition of a specific long-term emotional sentiment and a momentary discrete reactive emotion towards an out-group will lead to support for aggression.

Both emotional sentiments and emotions that are relevant to the current discussion reflect inter-group and not inter-personal phenomena. In recent years, there has been growing interest in the concept of inter-group emotions, referring to emotions that are felt by individuals as a result of their membership in or identification with a certain group or society and targeted at another group (Mackie, Devos & Smith, 2000; Smith & Mackie, 2008; Iyer & Leach, 2008). Accordingly, research has shown that individuals may experience emotions not only in response to personal life events and activities, but also in response to events that affect other members of a group with which they identify, or activities in which other group members have taken part (Mackie et al., 2000; Smith, Seger, & Mackie, 2007; Wohl, Branscombe, & Klar, 2006; Yzerbyt., Dumont., Wigboldus, & Gordin, 2003). This chapter focuses on how

events experienced indirectly (and directly by other group members) elicit intergroup emotions towards the out-group, and bring about support for aggressive political action towards that out-group.

The current chapter adopts a *bottom-up* perspective, according to which, emotions, attitudes and actions of individuals and groups influence the course of the conflict. At least in democratic societies, public support for aggressive reaction to out-group provocative actions can encourage political decision making about initiating militant acts. Therefore, investigation of the emotional underpinnings of such support is of huge importance. This psychology of the "people" is even more important in intractable conflicts than in other contexts, because intractable conflicts are so often violent and protracted, demand extensive investment, play a central role in the lives of the involved societies, and are perceived as total, irresolvable and being zero-sum (Bar-Tal, 1998; Kriesberg, 1993).

The nature of these conflicts creates fertile ground for the continuation and aggregation of emotions above and beyond the immediate time frame. Some major conflict-related events, which may be accompanied by repeated dissemination of specific information about the conflict, may produce stable group-based emotional sentiments towards the opponent and the conflict. As a result, stable negative intergroup emotional sentiments such as hatred or despair become an inherent part of the standing psychological context of individuals in such conflicts (Kelman & Fisher, 2003). The interaction between these emotional sentiments and the emotions that arise in response to conflict-related events, as well as their joint influence on support for aggressive action, stand at the center of the proposed appraisal based framework of emotion and aggression in intergroup conflicts.

Emotions and Aggression in Intergroup Conflict: An Appraisal Based Framework

The model displayed in *Figure 1* illustrates how exposure to a new conflict related event is processed and transformed into support for certain political actions (or actual behavior). The model was previously tested within Jewish society in Israel and proved of high validity (Halperin, 2008B). According to the model, the link between the exposure to the event and the political position about the required response to it passes through a discrete emotional response elicited by the event. In turn, this emotional response is highly influenced by the long-term emotional sentiments the individual feels towards the out-group (See: Halperin, Sharvit & Gross, 2008). The model is general enough to capture processes induced by various conflict related events, including positive (e.g., a new peace proposal) or negative ones (e.g., a terror attack). For the purposes of the current chapter, however, I use it as a general framework demonstrating the process by which the nature of the discrete emotional reaction to out group violence or provocations, determines whether or not an individual will support an aggressive response to the event.

In greater detail, the process begins with the occurrence of a new event and/or the appearance of new information related to the conflict. Although events can be experienced personally, in most cases they are experienced directly by a few group members and transmitted to other group members through the mediation of leaders, the mass media or other individuals. In these cases, if individuals identify with the same group as the directly exposed individuals, they will experience group-based emotions (Smith, 1993; Mackie et al., 2000; Yzerbyt. et al., 2003).

FIGURE 1 – AROUND HERE

Such short-term events will elicit individual and group-based emotions and the ensuing political response tendencies, depending on the manner in which they are appraised. For example, a violent act committed by out-group members toward the in-group that is appraised as unjust and is accompanied by the evaluation of the in-group as strong will induce anger (Huddy, Feldman & Cassese, 2007; Halperin, 2008A). Hence, the subjective appraisal of an event is a crucial factor in determining the kind of emotion that will result from the event.

According to the proposed framework, in the context of long-term conflicts, the appraisal of events is influenced by three main sets of factors. The first is the way in which the event is presented to the public (i.e., the framing of the event). The second set constitutes a relatively wide range of non-affective factors (e.g., ideology, personality factors, moral values, implicit theories) (see: Halperin, 2008B; Sharvit, Halperin & Rosler, 2008). Finally, and most relevant, the appraisal-based framework assumes that long term emotional sentiments will bias the cognitive appraisals of specific events. This premise is based upon the *appraisal tendency* framework (Lerner & Keltner, 2000), according to which each emotion activates a cognitive predisposition to interpret future events in line with the central appraisal dimensions that triggered the emotion. For example, long-term external threat to the group could enhance long term emotional sentiments of fear and insecurity. Such emotional sentiments will make society members more attuned to threatening cues and will lead to higher appraised danger that will, in turn, elicit more frequent fear responses.

I suggest that the same event will be appraised differently by different individuals who hold different long term emotional sentiments about the opponent. Furthermore, I hypothesize that although it is reasonable to assume that a hostile, violent event like a terror attack or a kidnapping of innocent civilians will elicit harsh feelings of anger in

all members of the victimized society, the nature of that anger as well as its associated political response tendencies will differ based upon the levels of long-term hatred felt by each individual towards the opponent (See: Halperin et al., 2008). In order to fully comprehend this argument, it is necessary first to understand the necessary psychological preconditions to the support of aggressive action and then to point at the correspondence between the unique story of each of the studied emotional phenomena (i.e., hatred and anger) and these preconditions.

The "Story" of Intergroup Aggression – Necessary Preconditions

The most important precondition for intergroup conflict as well as for intergroup aggression is a perceived conflict of interests between the groups (Struch & Schwartz, 1989). In addition, a perception of long-term threat caused by the outgroup is a pivotal antecedent of intergroup aggression (Maoz & McCauley, 2008). Yet in the great majority of cases, in the absence of immediate provocation, conflict of interest or even perceived threat by themselves will not bring about violence.

Focusing on the more immediate antecedents of intergroup aggression, it seems that public support for aggressive/militant action results, in most cases, from a shared belief that the out-group committed a wrong, unjust and unfair action (or statement) targeted at the in-group. This action/statement should be perceived as an extreme deviation from moral norms as well as a deviation from the routine (acceptable) reciprocal intergroup hostile conduct.

A second precondition to the support of initiating an aggressive action would be that the group members perceive their group as strong enough to overpower the outgroup in a future military battle. This perception of strength and controllability provides the energizing basis for the aggressive action. Highly related to the appraised sense of relative power, support for aggressive response is strongly associated with heightened

willingness to take the necessary risks embedded within such a future battle. As a result, individuals who are characterized by a tendency to avoid risk taking are less likely to support the initiation of military campaigns.

Finally, given the high probable costs (e.g., human life, financial costs) of most belligerent campaigns, it is assumed that many people will support them only as the "last solution". In other words, most individuals who believe that their group will be capable of correcting the perceived wrongdoing using non-military means (e.g., diplomatic means), will oppose the use of military power, at least in the first stage. According to that rationale, in most cases, public support for aggressive response to the out-group's provocation is highly dependent on whether or not in-group members believe that the out-group action resulted from a stable, problematic or evil dispositions embedded within the out-group's fundamental characteristics. If this is not the case, other paths of correction may be perceived as equally beneficial and much less costly than the aggressive one. But if the immoral, aggressive militant provocation of the out-group is perceived as resulting from the stable characteristics of the out-group, aggressive response may be seen as the only reasonable solution. The extreme form of such perception of the out-group would be dehumanization (see: Struch & Schwartz, 1989; Bandura, 1990), but it seems that even more moderate "entity" perceptions of the out-group may lead to support for aggressive behavior (Opotow, 1990).

Intergroup Anger and Hatred – Similar but Different

In the next section, the correspondence between the story of aggressive action and the stories of anger and hatred will be tested. As mentioned, cognitive appraisals, emotional goals and response tendencies are the cornerstones of the story of each and

every emotion. In a series of empirical studies recently conducted within the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, an attempt was made to distill the unique components of each of these two emotions (see: Halperin, 2008A).[1] Although these two emotions share many common features, deeper understanding regarding the exclusive characteristics of each of them can contribute to strengthening the fundamental argument of the current chapter.

One of the studies (see "Study 2" in Halperin, 2008A) was based upon cognitive appraisal theories of emotions (see Roseman, 1984; Lazarus, 1991; Scherer, 2004; Smith & Ellsworth 1985) and aimed at uncovering the unique appraisals that are associated with anger and hatred. The basic assumption underlying appraisal theories is that similar events will elicit different emotions among different individuals, based upon dissimilarities in the way these individuals appraise the events (Roseman, 1984).

Hence, in order to point at the unique appraisals associated with each emotion, conflict related events (e.g., a terror attack) were presented to 241 Israeli students, followed by a short description of the way the protagonist of each event (an in-group member) appraised the event. The appraisals of the protagonist were altered according to the experimental condition and the participants were asked to assess the emotions felt by the protagonist based on his/her described appraisals.

It was found that both anger and hatred are associated with blaming the out-group for the conflict related events as well as with the appraisal of the out-group's behavior as unpleasant, hurtful and as contradicting the in-group's interests and goals. Yet, in concurrence with previous theoretical writings about anger and hatred (e.g., Ben-Zeev, 1992; Sterenberg, 2003; Royzman, McCauley & Rosin, 2005), the results also revealed a clear distinction between the patterns of appraisals of each of these two

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[1] In addition to hatred and anger these studies also tested the unique components of fear.

emotions. While the negative appraisals associated with anger focused solely on the out-group's specific action and appraised it as unjust and unfair, the hatred related appraisals focused on the nature of the out-group itself, suggesting that its actions are not aimed at achieving instrumental goals, but resulting from a pure motivation to hurt the in-group that stems from the stable evil character of out-group members.

Important as they may be, cognitive appraisals are just one part of the emotional story. It is well established that the appraisals associated with each emotion underpin the unique content of its corresponding motivational implications (see: Frijda et al., 1989). These motivational implications, usually defined as emotional goals and response tendencies, play a central role in determining whether or not individuals would support aggressive response to out-group's provocative action.

Therefore, in another study (see "Study 3" in Halperin, 2008A) I tested the unique emotional goals and response tendencies that are associated with anger at and hatred of the out-group in the context of intergroup conflict. For that purpose, I introduced a simple conflict related scenario to 313 Israeli interviewees in a national-representative sample,[2] and then asked them to rank the level of their felt emotions (i.e., hatred, anger and fear), emotional goals and response tendencies in reaction to the presented scenario. Then, in order to reveal unique associations between emotions and behavioral implications, each emotional goal and response tendency was regressed on the two emotions and on socio-political variables.

The results revealed some very interesting dissimilarities between these two emotions. Intergroup hatred was found to be the only emotion associated with the goals of "exclusion" ("removal of out-group members from one's life") and "attack" ("cause hurt to out-group members"). On the other hand, anger was significantly

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[2] For a detailed description of the sample and data analyses, see Halperin, 2008B.

correlated to the goal of "correction" ("improving the behavior of out-group members"). It seems that while anger drives people to initiate action aiming at the correction of the (perceived) wrongdoing itself, hatred reflects despair of any attempt to change or correct the out-group.

The results regarding the associations between hatred/anger and the more concrete response tendencies drew a more complicated and fascinating picture. Naturally, people who were dominated by hatred supported "physical and violent actions towards the Palestinians" and expressed willingness to "exclude Palestinians from basic political and social rights". Interestingly, anger was associated with two seemingly contradicting response tendencies – "support for educational channels to create perceptual change among Palestinians" and "support for physical and violent actions towards the Palestinians".

It seems that all individuals who feel angry at the out-group have a similar emotional goal – i.e., they wish to correct and improve the behavior of that group. Previous studies have demonstrated that when people feel angry they believe that they are in high control over the situation, they are more willing to take risks and they believe that they have the necessary capabilities to perform the needed actions to create change (Mackie et al., 2000; Lerner & Keltner, 2001; Lerner et al., 2003). These characteristics of anger accurately correspond with the first three psychological preconditions required to support aggression. And indeed, previous studies show that anger creates a tendency to confront (Berkowitz, 1993), hit, kill or attack the anger evoking target (Roseman, Wiest & Swartz, 1994).

Yet the results regarding the concrete response tendencies associated with anger as well as the results of another important recent study (Fischer & Roseman, 2007) show that while some of the "angry" individuals choose to achieve the required

improvement using destructive means (i.e., support for aggression), others, who experience the same anger, channel it into more constructive paths of reparation (e.g., education, future reconciliation).

The interesting question, hence, is what leads some angry individuals to choose a destructive-approach tendency and others to choose a constructive-approach one. As will be elucidated in detail in the following pages, I suggest that the most pivotal moderating factor for the effect of anger on aggressive behavior is the level of long-term hatred towards the out-group. It seems that the basic idea about the fixed evil nature of the out-group, which is embedded within hatred, undermines any aspiration to constructively change the out-group. Therefore, in a way, the essence of the hatred story fulfils the fourth precondition for the support of aggressive action and thus provides the last piece that enables us to complete the general "aggression-motivation" puzzle. Therefore, it is assumed that the integration of long-term hatred with short term anger creates fertile ground for the support of aggressive behavior.

Anger-Hatred interaction and support for intergroup aggression

As mentioned, the extant literature on emotions and aggression in intergroup conflicts points at anger as the most important, direct emotional antecedent of aggressive political action (Cheung-Blunden & Blunden, 2008; Huddy et al., 2007; Lerner et al., 2003; Skitka et al., 2006). Based on the previously presented model, the reviewed studies about the nature of anger and hatred, and on the basis of some recent studies that will be reviewed in the following section of this chapter, I would like to suggest that the real picture is more complicated.

This argument rests, to some extent, on the results of recent studies that tested the interrelations between intergroup emotions and political intolerance. Political intolerance is usually defined as the willingness to denounce the basic political rights

of individuals who belong to a defined out-group (Sullivan, Piereson, & Marcus, 1979). Such willingness is commonly seen as the political translation of aggressive intentions targeted at the out-group, and therefore, the process through which discrete intergroup emotions affect political intolerance is highly relevant for the purposes of the current analyses.

Two recent studies conducted in the post 9/11 era in the U.S (Skitka, Bauman & Mullen, 2004) and in the midst of the second Palestinian uprising in the Middle East (Halperin, Canetti-Nisim & Hirsch-Hoefler, 2008A) reveal similar patterns regarding the potential influence of anger and hatred on political intolerance. Linda Skitka and her colleagues (2004) used a two-wave national field study (N=550) to examine the effects of anger and fear in response to the 9/11 terror attack on political intolerance towards Arab Americans, Muslims, or first-generation immigrants four months later. They found that anger had no direct influence on political intolerance, and that most of the indirect effect of anger on intolerance was mediated via moral outrage and out-group derogation. Unfortunately, hatred towards the out-group was not measured as a separate emotion in this study, but arguably, moral outrage and out-group derogation can be seen as potential proxies of hatred.

In a more precise examination of the proposed argument, my colleagues and I (Halperin et al., 2008A) have recently examined the effect of intergroup emotions on political intolerance using four large scale representative samples among Jewish citizens in Israel. The surveys varied in their design (2 panel surveys and 2 cross sectional surveys), in their context (a war situation vs. a calm situation) and in the political intolerance measures being used in each of them ("most disliked group" vs. Palestinians as the defined out-group). Interestingly, the analysis of all surveys revealed identical pattern of results – i.e., anger at the out-group leads to political

intolerance only if it has been supported by hatred. Furthermore, the results showed that in some cases anger that appeared in the absence of hatred ("hatred free anger") even led to decrease in the levels of political intolerance (see: Halperin et al., 2008A for further results).

Interesting as they might be, these reviewed findings provide only a nuanced support for the main argument of the current chapter. Hence, in order to establish a more direct and robust support for this argument, I examined the same prediction, using two new survey-based data-sets in which explicit measures of support for military actions towards the out-group were utilized as dependent variables.

The first analysis is based on a nationwide representative telephone survey conducted among Jews in Israel in March 2008. The sample consisted of 781 Jewish-Israeli respondents (403 women, 378 men) and the overall response rate was 54%. In general, the characteristics of the sample corresponded with general distribution within the Israeli-Jewish society in all relevant socio-demographic aspects (level of education, income, religiosity, and immigration status). Of main importance to the current analysis, the reported political affiliation of participants in the survey mirrored the existing distribution within the Israeli society at the time of the survey – i.e., 37.3% identified as Rightists, 45.2% as centrists and 17.6% as leftists.

Among other items, the questionnaire included one item reflecting long term hatred towards Palestinians, two items (anger and rage) capturing the feeling of anger towards Palestinian actions, and two items representing support for aggressive actions towards Palestinians ("In time of significant Palestinian threat, Israel should use unconventional warfare", "Only by using force can you achieve anything in the Middle East"). All items were formed in a 1 (not at all) to 6 (very much) Likert scale.

To test the main hypothesis, support for aggressive action towards Palestinians was regressed on hatred, anger, the interaction of these two emotions and all socio-political control variables. The results showed that males (B= -.08, t= -2.43, $p<.05$), uneducated individuals (B= -.07, t= -2.01, $p<.05$) and rightists (B=.33, t=8.56, $p<.001$) had a higher tendency to support aggressive action. Interestingly, no main effect of anger (B= -.10 t= -1.52, $p=$ n.s.) or hatred (B= -.17 t= -1.23, $p=$ n.s) on aggressive action was found, but their interaction effect on aggressive action turned out to be significant (B=.40, t=2.45, $p<.05$). In Figure 2, regression slopes are presented to reveal the nature of the Hatred X Anger interaction. The interaction graph shows that, as hypothesized, anger leads to heightened support for aggressive action only in the presence of high levels of long-term hatred. On the other hand, anger had no effect on support for such action among those who hold low levels of hatred towards the Palestinians.

FIGURE 2 – AROUND HERE

Given the provocative nature of the findings, replication of the results was called for. Therefore, I used another nationwide survey, conducted in Israel during August and September 2008. This sample included 500 respondents, of whom 48.4% were men and 51.6% women. The mean age was 45.5 years ($SD = 16.49$), and (again) the distribution of main socio-demographic variables represented that of the Israeli-Jewish adult population at the time of the survey. Regarding political orientations, 41% of the respondents defined themselves as rightists, 28.9% as centrists, and 18.3% as leftists (11.3% refused to answer that question). The overall response rate was 38.55% and the cooperation rate 50.35%. The socio-demographic measures and the scales of anger and hatred were similar to the ones used in the previous survey. The scale of support for militant action was slightly different from the one used before. It

consisted of two items: "support for initiating a large military operation of the Israeli army" and "support for using severe military action, even if it meant harming innocent civilians" ($\alpha = .74$).

Again, support for aggressive action towards Palestinians was regressed on hatred, on anger, on the interaction of these two emotions and on all socio-political control variables. Except for minor dissimilarities in the effects of socio-political variables on support for aggressive action, the results showed exactly the same patterns that were found in the first survey. In more detail, the results showed that men are more supportive of aggressive action than women (B= -.15, t= -3.40, $p<.01$) and that rightists are more supportive of such action than leftists (B= -.18, t= -4.02, p<.001). Again, no main effect of anger (B= -.04, t= -.45, p= n.s.) or hatred (B= -.11, t= -.85, p= n.s) on aggressive action was found, but their interaction effect on aggressive action turned out to be significant (B=.45, t=2.64, $p<.01$). The interaction graph, presented in Figure 3, reveals an accurate replication of the interaction presented in Figure 2, namely, only the combined effect of high anger and high hatred significantly elevates levels of support for aggressive actions.

FIGURE 3 – AROUND HERE

Concluding Comments

Protracted intergroup conflicts inherently include mutual provocations, violent behaviors and transgressions. As a result, members of societies that are involved in such conflicts experience frequent episodes of extensive anger targeted at the out-group, its leaders and its representatives. That anger, in various magnitudes, is an inevitable component of every intergroup conflict. The developing literature on emotions in conflicts shows that anger at the out-group is highly associated with

support for retaliatory aggressive reaction (Skitka et al., 2006; Huddy et al., 2007). In turn, widespread public support for such action may legitimize and even encourage political decision making about initiating large scale militant actions (Zaller, 1994). This dynamic can easily trigger a vicious cycle of violence that will bring about widespread loss of human life for both sides of the conflict.

However, the theoretical model and the bulk of empirical data presented in this chapter suggest that the seemingly direct link between anger and the cycle of violence is not unavoidable. According to the model and the supporting data, the link between anger and support for aggressive action is highly dependent on the levels of hatred that each individual feels towards the out-group. In other words, in order for support in a violent reaction to be developed, momentary aversive feelings and appraisals about the nature of the specific actions conducted by the out-group should be accompanied by long-term emotional sentiments that focus on the nature of the group as a whole.

More specifically, the results show that anger towards the out-group that is not supported by hatred towards it, will not necessarily lead to aggression. It seems that the "story" of anger that includes appraisals of out-group's blame attribution, unjustness of the out-group's action, and appraisal of relative strength, will lead to the emotional goal of correcting the wrongdoing (see: Fischer & Roseman, 2007). Yet this goal can be achieved in either destructive or constructive ways (Halperin, 2008B), and the selection of a destructive one (i.e., aggression) will materialize only if the individual believes that the hostile, one time event is an accurate reflection of the stable out-group's evil character. In these extreme cases, in which hatred dominates the general worldview about the out-group, the constructive response to anger seems implausible. If citizens strongly believe in the evil intentions of the out-group, and do

not believe in the out-group's capability to go through a process of positive change, there is no reason to try to constructively improve its behavior.

The other side of the coin is that despite the extreme negative evaluations of the out-group inherently included in hatred, this emotional sentiment by itself is not sufficient to lead to support for aggression. This is because hatred by itself lacks the energizing component that gives people confidence in their power and encourages them to take risks in order to achieve their goals. Some scholars have even suggested that hatred reflects a coping mechanism in the face of continuing feelings of insecurity (Fitness & Fletcher, 1993). Therefore, in many cases hatred will remain hidden and will not be translated into aggressive action. On the other hand, anger, by nature, provides the "necessary" energy to provoke violence. In addition, in many cases, the (perceived) unjust anger stimulating event provides the legitimization to act violently against an already hated out-group.

The pluripotentiality of anger in the context of intergroup conflicts, as demonstrated in the current chapter, calls for future studies that will explore additional moderating factors that can turn this seemingly destructive emotion into much more constructive one. A non-exhaustive list of such potential moderators would probably include other emotional sentiments like despair or empathy, but it can also include non-affective factors like personality factors (e.g., authoritarianism, need for structure), implicit theories about individuals and groups, adherence to moral values, socio-economic status, and long term ideology about the conflict and the opponent.

From a broader perspective, the current chapter stresses the pivotal role played by intergroup emotions in determining public opinion about aggressive action. Yet mapping the unique role of specific emotions (like anger) in this process is just a first

and unsatisfactory step, which should be followed by extensive attempts to regulate these emotions in order to mobilize public opinion to prevent militant actions (see: Halperin et al., 2008B for elaboration). The easiest, yet much less realistic way to do so could be to try to up-regulate positive emotions like intergroup empathy or even love in order to achieve this important purpose. Yet the current framework takes up the challenge of trying to reveal ways to channel the already existing negative emotions (like anger) into more constructive political response tendencies. Hopefully, it will modestly contribute to future attempts to reduce support for retaliatory actions.

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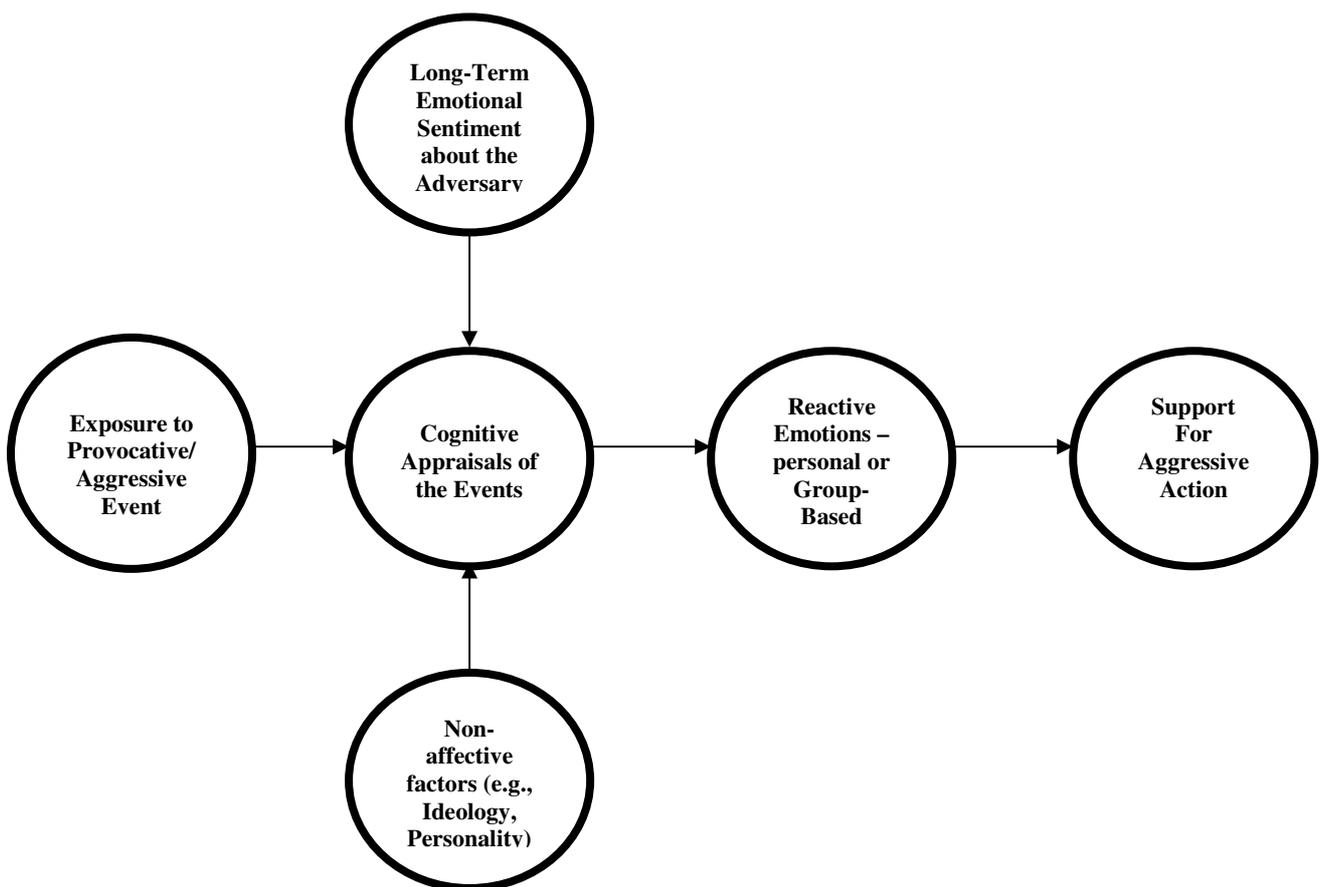
Figure 1: An appraisal based framework for the influence of emotions on support for aggressive action
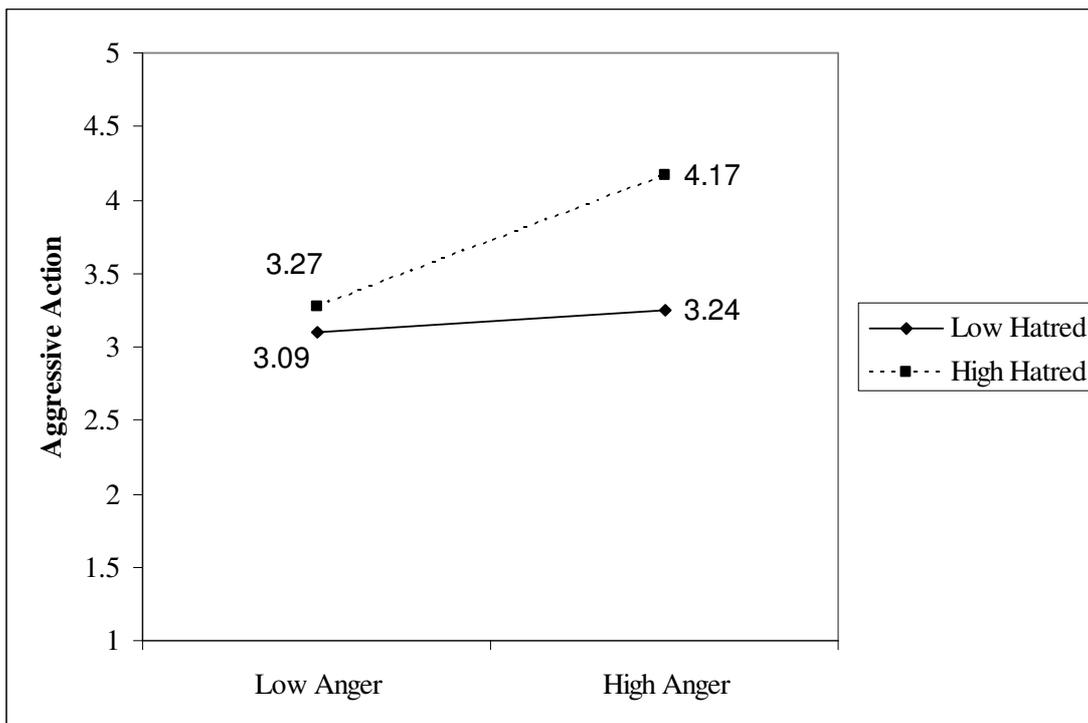
Figure 2: Regression slopes representing the Anger X Hatred interaction effect on support for aggressive action towards Palestinians in the first nationwide survey (N=781).
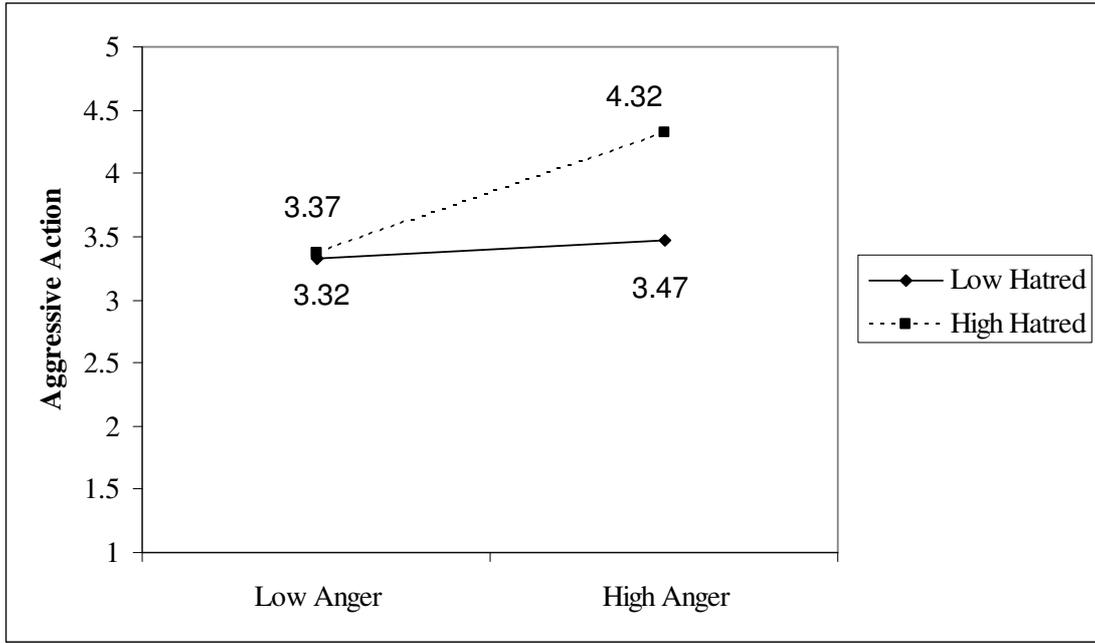
Figure 3: Regression slopes representing the Anger X Hatred interaction effect on support for aggressive action towards Palestinians in the second nationwide survey (N=500).