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What is This?

Article

Communicating the right emotion makes violence seem less wrong: Power-congruent emotions lead outsiders to legitimize violence of powerless and powerful groups in intractable conflict

Elanor Kamans,[1] Martijn van Zomeren,[1] Ernestine H. Gordijn,[1] and Tom Postmes[1]

Abstract

In intractable intergroup conflicts, groups often try to frame intergroup violence as legitimate through the use of emotional appeals. Two experiments demonstrate that outsiders' perception of which emotion conflict parties communicate influences the extent to which they legitimize their violence. Results show that although outsiders typically give more leeway to powerless groups because of their "underdog" status, communicating power-congruent emotions qualifies this effect; observers legitimize intergroup violence most when *powerless* groups communicate *fear* and when *powerful* groups communicate *anger*. This is because fear communicates that the group is a victim that cannot be blamed for their violence, whereas anger communicates that the group is wronged and thus their violence seems righteous and moral. Results further show that sympathy for the powerless appears to be a more fragile basis for legitimization of violence than the moral high ground for the powerful. We discuss the theoretical and practical implications of these findings.

Intractable intergroup conflicts such as the Israeli–Palestinian conflict typically involve emotional outcries and moral justifications for intergroup violence (Bar-Tal, 2007; Halperin & Gross, 2011). For instance, the casualties caused by a brutal Israeli or Palestinian retaliatory strike are often accompanied by emotional outcries of

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anger or fear, which makes it difficult for outsiders to stay neutral and unaffected (e.g., van Zomeren & Lodewijkx, 2005). Indeed, in today's interconnected world, groups at war are not only involved in a physical but also in a media war in terms of winning the hearts and minds of outside observers (cf. Vandello, Michniewicz, & Goldschmied, 2011; see also Crabb, 1989; Loseke, 2009). In intractable intergroup conflicts, this often means that a group has to frame their violence as legitimate in the eyes of outsiders. In this article we focus on the power of communicating *power-congruent emotions* to achieve this goal.

Surprisingly little is known about the effects of communicating specific emotions on outsiders' perceptions (Fischer, Manstead, & Zaalberg, 2003; Klein, Spears, & Reicher, 2007; van Kleef, 2009). In fact, we are not aware of any study that tests *when* the communication of *which* specific emotion legitimizes intergroup violence most in the eyes of observers (but see Herrera & Reicher, 1998). Thus breaking some new ground, we focus on *anger* and *fear* as two fundamental emotions that are often experienced and expressed in intractable conflicts (e.g., Halperin & Gross, 2011). We investigate *when* and *how* perceiving others involved in intractable intergroup conflict communicate anger or fear influences the extent to which outsiders legitimize their violence.

When and *How* Do Outsiders Legitimize Violence?

Powerless and Fearful Groups

Recent research suggests that outsiders generally tend to side with the powerless in an asymmetrical conflict (Vandello et al., 2011). Presumably because people sympathize more with those in an "underdog" position (Vandello, Goldschmied, & Richards, 2007), the violence perpetrated by the powerless is condemned less than that of the powerful (Vandello et al., 2011). We propose that the communication of fear (which is likely to be experienced and expressed within violent intergroup conflict; Halperin & Gross, 2011; Kamans, Otten, & Gordijn, 2011) might have a similar effect on outsiders.

Specifically, fear indicates threat and danger of being harmed (e.g., "the concrete and sudden danger of concrete physical harm"; Lazarus, 1991, p. 235). Communicating fear is therefore likely to raise perceptions of a powerless group as a victim in need of assistance (Frijda, Kuipers, & ter Schure, 1989; Keltner, Horberg, & Oveis, 2006; Lazarus, 2001; Lerner & Keltner, 2001; Smith & Lazarus; 2001). Hence, fear can be used to frame intergroup violence as a response to harm being done or as to prevent future harm (Haidt, 2007; Keltner et al., 2006; Rozin, Lowery, Imada, & Haidt, 1999). Further, doing so is likely to evoke sympathy and compassion (Keltner et al., 2006) and the motivation to reduce harm, need, and suffering (Batson & Shaw, 1991; Eisenberg, Fabes, Bustamante, & Mathy, 1989) in outsiders. For this reason we argue that fear may help groups involved in intractable conflict to gain outsiders' sympathy that should allow them to legitimize group violence on this basis.

However, this should especially be true for powerless groups. Theory and research on power and emotions suggests that people have clear expectations about which emotions high- or low-power individuals feel and express (Tiedens, Ellsworth, & Mesquita, 2000). Specifically, individuals are likely to associate the powerful with anger and the powerless with fear. Because power can be viewed as the ability to control resources (Galinsky, Gruenfeld, & Magee, 2003; Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003) and conflict outcomes (Kamans, Otten, & Gordijn, & Spears, 2010), cognitive appraisals of control and certainty are easily associated with power. These two cognitive appraisals uniquely differentiate between anger and fear (e.g., Lazarus, 1991; Roseman, 2001; Scherer, 2001; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985), and hence anger is typically associated with the powerful (van Kleef, Homan, Finkenauer, Gündemir, & Stamkou, 2011) and fear with the powerless.

In the communication process, it might be important to stick to these expectancies. Research

on infrahumanization for example shows that violating "emotional codes" comes with the danger of coming across as unauthentic and untrustworthy (Wohl, Hornsey, & Bennet, 2012), and that groups are treated negatively when doing so (Vaes, Paladino, Castelli, Leyens, & Giovanazzi, 2003). Consequently, we propose that as the communication of fear "fits" with powerlessness, especially a powerless group's communication of fear offers more leeway (in terms of legitimization) for intergroup violence because of increased *sympathy* for them.

Powerful and Angry Groups

The same line of thought can be applied to the communication of anger or fear by the *powerful* groups involved in intractable conflict. We propose that whereas powerless groups may benefit most from communicating fear, powerful groups may benefit most from communicating anger. The underlying process explaining why anger is beneficial, however, should be different.

Specifically, within a context of intractable violence anger is extremely effective in claiming the moral high ground because it communicates that one is *wronged* (e.g., "a demeaning offense against me or mine"; Lazarus, 1991, p. 222). Anger indeed indicates that an unfair or even immoral event occurred involving a clear perpetrator (Frijda, 1986; Lazarus, 1991), and moreover communicates a motivation to attack or otherwise approach (Fischer & Roseman, 2007; Frijda, 1986; Mackie, Devos, & Smith, 2000). Therefore the communication of anger specifically provides powerful groups a strong justification for intergroup violence. It signals that there is a *moral* basis for the use of violence, and outsiders should thus perceive the group as more moral. This is not to say that any public expression of anger will always help to come across as moral; of course, the claim that one is wronged needs to be plausible. However, within a context in which violence begets violence, this is likely to be the case.

Taken together, we thus predict that (a) powerless groups should communicate fear (rather than anger) and powerful groups should communicate

anger (rather than fear) to legitimize their own violence in the eyes of outsiders; and (b) that different explanations underlie these effects for powerless groups (feelings of sympathy for the group) and powerful groups (perceived group morality) involved in intractable conflict.

The Potential Fragility of Outsiders' Sympathy for the Powerless

The aforementioned predictions may appear to suggest that the different processes leading to outsiders' legitimization of intergroup violence are equally effective. However, there may be a catch. That is, in intractable intergroup conflicts the use of violence to retaliate the wrongs inflicted on "us" is quite compatible with what anger communicates, yet it is less compatible with what fear communicates. We argue that this might affect how an act of violence influences the extent to which people consider a group as moral and sympathize with a group. More precisely, we argue that communicating fear by the powerless within an intractable conflict situation may be effective in gaining sympathy, but the very use of *violence* might undermine this once perpetrated. However, violence perpetrated by powerful groups communicating anger should not decrease the extent to which outsiders consider them as moral.

Indeed, because anger is associated with a strong sense of injustice, the use of violence by the angry powerful can be understood in moral terms. Hence, anger can call for moral action towards those responsible. Consequently, the use of violence by an angry powerful party will not negatively affect the extent to which outsiders consider the group to be moral, and outsiders' perception of the group's morality may therefore offer a fairly *stable* basis for outsiders' legitimization of violence.

By contrast, the use of violence is much less compatible with the communication of fear. As noted, fear is associated with a strong sense of sympathy for victimized groups in need of assistance, yet it does not provide a moral ground with respect to retaliation (indeed there is no such thing

as "righteous fear"). Hence, observers' initial perceptions of group sympathy for the fearful powerless may be negatively affected by the use of violence (see Vandello et al., 2011, Study 2 in which they show that violence by the powerless actually backfires in the sense that people side with the adversary) and sympathy may thus turn out to be quite *fragile* once this group actually perpetrates intergroup violence. This is not to say that powerless groups never use violence (should be to Kamans et al., 2011). However, the sympathy that outsiders have for the underdog might be undermined by it.

Taken together, our core argument is that powerful and powerless groups involved in intractable conflict can benefit from communicating anger and fear, respectively. Outsiders legitimize the violence of powerless groups that express fear through feelings of sympathy, and that of powerful and angry groups through morality. However, sympathy is a more fragile basis for violence than morality. As such, the catch here is that although the powerless' communication of fear may give the powerless an initial edge, the sympathy on which this is based is rather fragile. We tested this line of thought in two experiments in which observers evaluated the violence perpetrated by a group involved in intractable conflict.

Study 1

The aim of Study 1 was to test whether outsiders legitimize violence by the powerless more than violence by the powerful, and whether the group's communicated emotion qualifies this effect. Study 1 thus manipulated whether two groups involved in intractable conflict had high or low power, and whether they communicated feeling anger or fear in response to enemy attacks. We measured participants' legitimization of intergroup violence as well as their feelings of sympathy and perception of morality (regarding the violently acting group) both before and after intergroup violence had occurred. This enabled us to test our line of thought with respect to the different processes (sympathy, perceived group

morality) that should explain outsiders' legitimization of violence as well as testing the stability of the underlying constructs (sympathy and morality) it is thought to be based in.

More precisely, we predict the following. First of all, on top of a power main effect legitimizing low-power groups more (the *underdog hypothesis*; Vandello et al., 2011) we predict that violence of the powerless will be legitimized even more when they communicate fear, rather than anger, whereas violence of the powerful will be legitimized when they communicate anger, rather than fear (the *fit hypothesis*). Second, we predict that whereas sympathy should mediate the effect of type of emotion on legitimization for the powerless, morality should mediate this effect of type of emotion for the powerful (the *differential process hypothesis*). Finally, we compare, within condition, the two measures of sympathy and morality and we expect that outsiders feel less sympathy for fearful powerless groups once they read about the violent act, while we do not expect such a decrease in morality for angry powerful groups (the *stability hypothesis*).

Method

Participants and design. University students ($N = 60$; 47 females; $M_{age} = 21.33$, $SD = 1.43$) at a Dutch university were randomly assigned to a 2 (group's power position: low/high) x 2 (communicated emotion: anger/fear) between-subjects design.[1] The study materials were in English and most students were international students (46 German, 1 Bulgarian, 1 Finish-Bulgarian, 1 German-Belgium, 1 Polish, 1 Greek, 1 Turkish, and 1 Swedish), while seven had the Dutch nationality. We checked for univariate outliers on all reported dependent variables and we excluded participants that were identified as such ($N = 1$; standardized residual on legitimization > 3).[2] Participants received course credits or money (€ 7.00) as reward.

Procedure. We framed the study as a study on third party impression formation of international conflict and civil war. More precisely, we told participants: "within international conflicts and civil

Table 1. Means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations of dependent measures, Study 1.

Measure	M (SD)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Legitimization (1)	3.73 (1.23)	–	.29[*]	.50[**]	.08	.34**
Presympathy (2)	3.80 (1.24)		–	.72[**]	.42**	.17
Postsympathy (3)	3.28 (1.26)			–	.26*	.47*[*]
Premorality (4)	3.53 (1.08)				–	.42**
Postmorality5)	3.10 (1.20)					-

Note. [*]p < .05; **p < .01 (N = 59).

wars, the role of third parties such as the United Nations becomes increasingly important. These third parties have to make decisions on when and how to intervene. With this study we want to examine how people form impressions about conflict situations."

Participants then read a first text about a long-lasting and bloody conflict between two tribes living in the Omo Valley, Ethiopia (the Suri and Nyangatom). This information was a summary of the information provided at the website of the BBC series *Tribe* (BBC, 2008) and we adjusted the sections that represented our manipulations of power and communicated emotion. After filling out the first set of dependent measures, participants read a second text describing a violent raid undertaken by one of the tribes, followed again by our second set of dependent measures. Our key dependent measures are described next.[3] As part of the cover story, we also asked questions about what the United Nations should do with respect to this intergroup conflict. All measures employed 7-point scales (1 = not at all, 7 = very much; means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations of the dependent variables are reported in Table 1).

Conflict description. We deliberately chose an existing conflict situation that people would know very little about. This context enabled us to provide detailed and real-life information about the conflict (without having to resort to

making a fictitious intractable intergroup conflict credible) while still having the possibility to manipulate the variables of interest. The situation was described to participants by first providing a text about the conflict between the two tribes; the Suri and the Nyangatom. Participants read that these two tribes have been involved in a long-lasting and bloody conflict about cattle and scarce lands in which armed raids and counter-raids are common and casualties a real prospect (i.e., intractable intergroup conflict). After the general conflict description, we focused on the *Suri* tribe and varied whether they were the powerful or powerless group and whether they communicated feeling anger or fear with respect to the Nyangatom.

Power manipulation. We manipulated power by giving information about the arms that the two tribes had access to. More precisely participants read: "due to a civil war in a neighboring country the use of machine guns has become more common among the two tribes." Then, in the high (low) power condition it was stated: "the Suri [Nyangatom] were among the first to get hold of AK47s, giving them increasingly more power than the Nyangatom [Suri]. As a result, they pushed their Nyangatom [Suri] foes to the north taking possession of some of the most fertile grazing lands in the dry Omo Valley. Today, the Suri [Nyangatom] are the more powerful party in this long lasting conflict."

Emotion manipulation. We manipulated the emotions that the Suri communicated feeling (via the BBC report) in response to the Nyangatom (in general, as a result of attack and when going to battle). In the anger (fear) condition participants read that the Suris name the Nyangatom "Bume," and that this literally means "those we are angry at" ("those we fear"). They further read that when the BBC crew was filming at the Suri village, the Suri were attacked, and that this fortunately did not result in casualties but that the Suri said they felt deep anger (fear). Furthermore, participants read that the Suri often try to reclaim cattle once theirs is stolen and that they prepare for this in a ceremony in which the anger (fear) that the tribe's men are feeling is aroused. They further read that when the Suri men go out for battle they fight out of anger (fear).

Violence description. A second text described an act of revenge by the Suri. More precisely, participants read that the BBC received a report from the Omo Valley stating that the Suri just returned from a violent raid to reclaim the 60 cattle that were taken by the Nyangatom. More than 20 Nyangatom were killed and many more injured. More than 150 cattle were stolen. The communicated emotion was reinforced by adding that the Suri claimed they did this out of anger or fear.

Manipulation checks. The manipulation checks were taken before the violence description. Three items served as a power manipulation check; "In this conflict the Suri are more powerful/stronger/better armed than the Nyangatom" ($\alpha = .96$). The *anger manipulation check* ($\alpha = .80$) and *fear manipulation check* ($\alpha = .94$) both included three questions: "To what extent were the Suri angry/irritated/furious [afraid/anxious/fearful] after the attack by the Nyangatom?" After the violence description we included two additional single-item emotion measures to measure the extent to which people thought the Suri engaged in violence to reclaim cattle out of anger and out of fear.

Legitimization of violence. Three questions ("To what extent do you think the raid to reclaim cattle was legitimate/unfair (-)/justified?"; $\alpha = .76$) tapped whether participants legitimized the Suri violence.

Sympathy and morality. Feelings of sympathy and perceptions of group morality were measured before and after the violent raid description. We used five items to measure the extent to which people *sympathized* with the Suri (e.g., "To what extent do you sympathize with the Suri?"; $\alpha_{pre-violence} = .89$, $\alpha_{post-violence} = .91$, $\alpha = .89$ and $\alpha = .91$). Perceived group *morality* (Leach, Ellemers, & Barretto, 2007, morality subscale[4]) was measured with three items (i.e., "To what extent do you view the Suri as moral/honest/reliable?"; $\alpha_{pre-violence} = .73$, $\alpha_{post-violence} = .86$, $\alpha = .73$ and $\alpha = .86$).

Results and Discussion

Manipulation checks. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) with group power and communicated emotion as factors and the power manipulation

Table 2. Means per condition on the measures taken before and after the violence description for Study 1.

	Before violence				After violence			
	Powerless		Powerful		Powerless		Powerful	
	Anger	Fear	Anger	Fear	Anger	Fear	Anger	Fear
Sympathy	3.89	5.00	2.76	3.60	3.18	4.16	2.87	2.96
	(0.88)	(0.87)	(0.94)	(1.20)	(1.29)	(1.01)	(1.12)	(1.27)
Morality	3.52	3.95	3.02	3.64	2.92	3.26	3.59	2.64
	(0.96)	(0.95)	(1.06)	(1.25)	(1.09)	(1.09)	(1.33)	(1.20)

check as the dependent variable showed the expected main effect of power, $F(1, 55) = 54.24$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .50$. In the high power conditions, the Suri were perceived as more powerful ($M = 5.48$, $SD = 1.72$) than in the low power condition ($M = 2.54$, $SD = 1.32$). There were no other effects, Fs < 1.

A similar ANOVA on the *anger manipulation check* showed the expected main effect of emotion, $F(1, 55) = 30.52$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .36$. In the anger condition, the Suri were seen as more angry ($M = 5.63$, $SD = 0.81$) than in the fear condition ($M = 3.98$, $SD = 1.45$). There were no other significant effects, Fs < 2.86, ps $> .095$. Similarly, an ANOVA on the *fear manipulation check* showed a significant main effect of emotion, $F(1, 55) = 39.63$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .42$. In the fear condition, the Suri were seen as more afraid ($M = 6.02$, $SD = 1.15$) than in the anger condition ($M = 3.73$, $SD = 1.63$). There were no other significant effects, Fs < 1.99, ps $> .16$.

Analysis of variance on the measure of anger as a reason for violence again showed a strong main effect of emotion $F(1, 55) = 43.55$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .44$, a trend for an effect of power $F(1, 55) = 2.90$, $p = .094$, $\eta^2_p = .05$, as well as a borderline significant interaction effect, $F(1, 55) = 4.15$, $p = .047$, with a moderate effect size, $\eta^2_p = .07$. In order to explore this unexpected interaction we used further simple effect analysis. This showed that within the low ($M_{\text{anger condition}} = 6.63$, $SD = 0.50$; $M_{\text{fear condition}} = 5.14$, $SD = 1.66$), $F(1, 55) = 10.57$, $p = .002$, as well as within the high power condition ($M_{\text{anger condition}} = 6.73$, $SD = 0.59$; $M_{\text{fear condition}} = 3.93$, $SD = 1.77$), $F(1, 55) = 36.72$, $p < .001$, participants scored higher on the anger as a reason when the Suri were depicted as angry compared to afraid. A similar ANOVA on the fear as a reason for violence measure only revealed the intended main effect of emotion $F(1, 55) = 32.20$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .37$ ($M_{\text{anger condition}} = 2.97$, $SD = 1.68$; $M_{\text{fear condition}} = 5.54$, $SD = 1.77$), while power $F < 1.84$, $p > .18$ and the interaction $F < 1$ had no effect. Taken together, this shows that both our manipulations were successful, establishing the appropriate emotion as the reason for violence.

Violence legitimization. An ANOVA on legitimization of violence showed the expected main effect of power, $F(1, 55) = 7.84$, $p = .007$, $\eta^2_p = .13$, such that outsiders considered violence of the powerless more legitimate ($M = 4.11$, $SD = 1.14$) than violence of the powerful ($M = 3.33$, $SD = 1.22$). Further in line with predictions, this main effect was qualified by a significant two-way interaction, $F(1, 55) = 7.94$, $p = .007$, $\eta^2_p = .13$. There was a trend for outsiders to legitimize violence of powerless groups more strongly when they communicated fear ($M = 4.52$, $SD = 0.99$) rather than anger ($M = 3.75$, $SD = 1.16$), $F(1, 55) = 3.56$, $p = .065$, $\eta^2_p = .06$. Moreover, outsiders legitimized violence of powerful groups more strongly when they expressed anger ($M = 3.76$, $SD = 1.04$) rather than fear ($M = 2.88$, $SD = 1.26$), $F(1, 55) = 4.40$, $p = .040$, $\eta^2_p = .07$. There was no main effect of emotion, $F < 1$. Thus, we found support for the idea that although powerless groups hold an edge over powerful groups in terms of outsiders' legitimization of their violence (the *underdog hypothesis*), violence of the powerless will be legitimized even more when they communicate fear rather than anger, while violence of the powerful will be legitimized when they communicate anger rather than fear (the *fit hypothesis*).

Sympathy and morality. We proposed that the psychological processes underlying legitimization of violence should be different for the powerless and the powerful (revolving around feelings of sympathy and perceptions of morality, respectively). We therefore tested for *conditional indirect effects* using the bootstrap method (5,000 samples; Preacher, Rucker, & Hayes, 2007). More specifically, we did two analyses testing their Model 2 (Preacher et al., 2007); one with sympathy as the mediator to see whether sympathy mediated the effect of emotion on legitimization for powerless groups but not for powerful groups (see Figure 1) and one with morality as the mediator to see whether morality mediated the effect of emotion on legitimization for powerful groups but not for powerless groups (see Figure 2).

In line with expectations, feelings of sympathy (measured after the violent raid) explained why
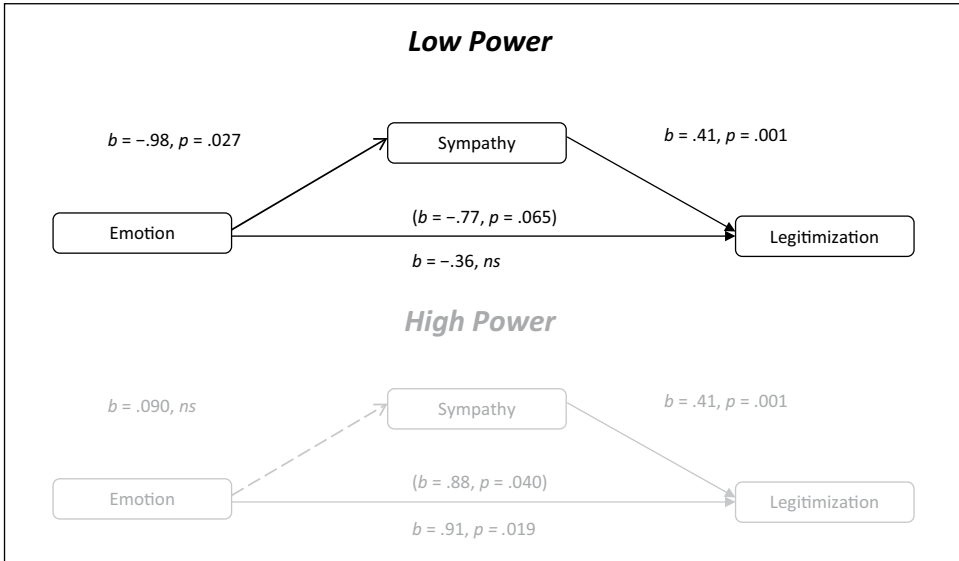
Figure 1. The role of sympathy in explaining legitimization of violence by the fearful powerless (only in upper panel). Emotion is dummy coded (0 = fear, 1 = anger). Dark shade indicates at which level of power mediation is expected.
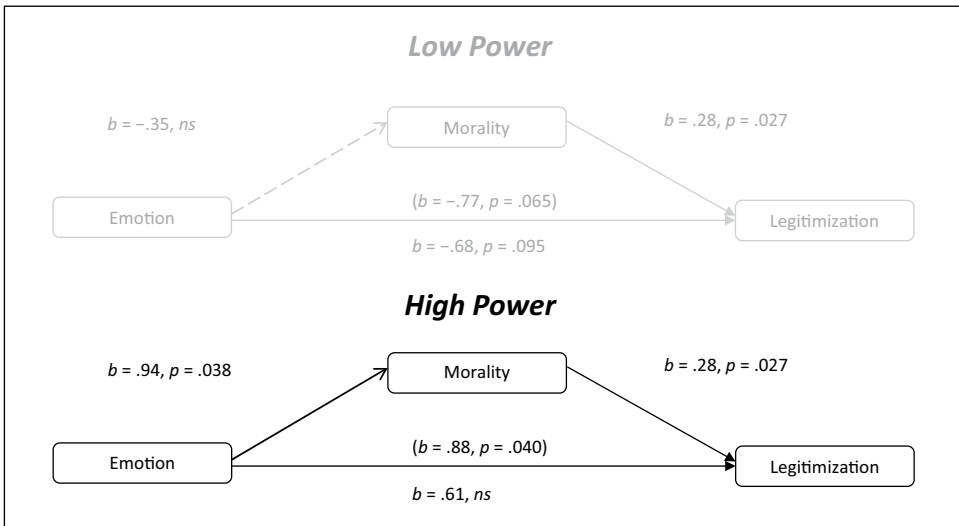
Figure 2. The role of morality in explaining legitimization of violence by the angry powerful (only in lower panel). Emotion is dummy coded (0 = fear, 1 = anger). Dark shade indicates at which level of power mediation is expected.

observers legitimized violence by the *powerless* more when they communicated fear (coded as 0) rather than anger (coded as 1; 95% bias corrected and accelerated confidence interval [BCACI]: [−.91, −.08]), while feelings of sympathy did *not* explain why observers legitimize violence by the powerful when they expressed anger compared to fear (95% BCACI: [−.45, .34]).

Similarly, perceived group morality (measured after the violent raid) explained why violence by the *powerful* was legitimized more when they communicated anger (1) rather than fear (0), (95% BCACI: [.016, .75]), while perceived group morality did *not* explain why violence was legitimized when the powerless communicated fear rather than anger (95% BCACI: [−.45, .11]). Thus, results showed support for our line of thought with respect to the different psychological processes underlying the legitimization of violence (the *differential process hypothesis*).

Stability of sympathy and morality. Finally, we tested our ideas regarding the stability of the different basis for the legitimization of violence perpetrated by the angry powerful (i.e., morality) and the fearful powerless (i.e., sympathy). We analyzed how observers' feelings of sympathy and perceptions of group morality *changed* after reading the description of the violent raid. Specifically, we tested for simple effects within a mixed-model ANOVA with power and emotion as between-subject factors and the pre- and postmeasures of sympathy or morality as within-subject factors. Our *stability hypothesis* is supported when this analysis shows that within the low power/fear condition sympathy decreases, while in the high power/anger condition perceptions of morality remain unaffected. The relevant means can be found in Table 2.

As predicted, perceived group *morality* was not negatively affected by reading about the violent act when the powerful group communicated anger, and in fact tended to increase, $F(1, 55) =$ 3.73, $p = .059$, $\eta^2_p = .06$. In all three other conditions group morality *decreased* significantly when observers read about the violent raid, $Fs > 4.70$, $ps < .034$, $\eta^2_p > .07$. *Sympathy* for the fearful powerless turned out to be rather fragile as it was negatively affected when observers read about the violent raid. This was also true for the powerful/fear and powerless/anger conditions, $Fs > 7.47$, $ps < .008$, $\eta^2_p > .11$. But sympathy was unaffected when the powerful group communicated anger $F < 1$.

Taken together, the findings of Study 1 suggest that although outsiders typically favor the underdog in intractable intergroup conflict, their sympathy that legitimizes violence is potentially fragile because perpetrating violence per se is incompatible with the group's communication of fear. Similarly, although powerful groups cannot play the "sympathy card," results show that they can communicate anger to legitimize their violence in the eyes of outsiders because it makes the group appear moral. Moreover, this basis for the legitimization of violence by the powerful appeared more stable than was sympathy for the powerless.

Study 2

In Study 2 we wanted to replicate the finding that although the fearful powerless may have an initial edge over the angry powerful when it comes to the legitimization of violence, the sympathy it is based on is a rather fragile basis, while morality offers the angry powerful a quite stable basis. We therefore zoomed in on the conditions in which the powerless expressed fear and the condition in which the powerful expressed anger (i.e., the "fit" conditions), as these are the conditions that are the focus of *the stability hypothesis*.

Downsizing the design also allowed us to manipulate an additional factor that enabled us to move beyond mere replication by exploring whether we could replicate Study 1's key findings when violence was explicitly labeled as an act of defense (rather than revenge). This is important because one could argue that our finding that sympathy is negatively affected when the fearful powerless use violence is based on a lack of fit between the communicated emotion and the type of aggression that is used; hence, results could be different when the fearful powerless engage in "powerless violence," such as self-defense. However, as our argument is based on the compatibility between aggression and the psychological bases that are targeted by communicating anger (morality) and fear (sympathy) we should find a similar effect when self-defense is the motive for using violence. To that extent we

manipulated whether the BBC received a report stating that the Suri fought to *reclaim* cattle or to *defend* cattle from being stolen.

Finally, we improved on Study 1 by adding several measures (participant's anger, just world beliefs, credibility of report and intensity of report) that potentially could explain the Study 1 findings. Thus unlike Study 1, Study 2 could test our hypotheses while controlling for potential alternative explanations of the Study 1 findings.

More precisely we predict the following. First, we expect that violence by powerless fearful groups is legitimized more than violence by angry powerful groups, independent of how violence is framed (replicating support for the *underdog hypothesis* across different settings that differ in the motivation for violence). Second, we expect that, independent of violence framing, outsiders feel less sympathy for fearful powerless groups once they read about the violent act, while we do not expect such a decrease in morality for angry powerful groups (replicating support for the *stability hypothesis*).

Method

Participants and design. One-hundred-and-five first-year psychology students were assigned to a 2 (group description: Suri powerful and angry vs. Suri powerless and afraid) x 2 (violence description: reclaim vs. defense) design (in which parts of the questionnaire were counterbalanced).[5] All participants indicated to be fluent in Dutch. We used an univariate outlier analysis on the reported measures and excluded participants that were identified as such (studentised deleted residual > 3; N = 5; 1 on the first sympathy measure, 2 on the power manipulation check, 2 on the revenge motivation check, and 1 on the second fear manipulation check).[6] This left us with a dataset of 74 women and 26 men (M age = 19.00, SD = 1.74).

Procedure. The materials of Study 2 were in Dutch. As in Study 1, participants first read one of the two *group descriptions* (i.e., Suri powerless/afraid or powerful/angry). Participants subsequently answered manipulation checks, sympathy

and morality ratings, and indicated the intensity of the report. After this, the *violence description* manipulation followed. Similar to Study 1, in the *reclaim condition* participants read: "We've (the BBC) received a report from the Omo Valley saying that the Suri have just returned from a battle to reclaim cattle that were stolen by the Nyangantom 2 weeks ago. During this more than 20 Nyangatom were killed and many more injured."

In the *defense condition* the text was the same, except for the reason why the Suri fought the Nyangatom. More precisely, participants read: "The Suri have just returned from a battle to defend their cattle against being stolen by the Nyangatom." As in Study 1, the communicated emotion (in Study 2 part of the group description manipulation) was reinforced by stating that the Suri claim they acted out of anger or fear (depending on condition). Participants then filled in a questionnaire that measured our key dependent variables: legitimization of violence, feelings of sympathy and perceived group morality, manipulation checks as well as additional measures[7] included to refute possible alternative explanations of the Study 1 results (means, standard deviations and intercorrelations of all dependent variables are reported in Table 3).

Manipulation checks. Similar checks as in Study 1 were used to check whether we were successful in creating descriptions that differed in the extent to which people considered the Suri powerful ($\alpha = .96$), angry ($\alpha = .92$) and afraid ($\alpha = .97$). After the violence description, we added a check whether participants differentiated between the motivations for the attack. More precisely, three items focused on revenge (e.g. "The Suri fought with the other tribe out of revenge/to retaliate a previous attack/to defend their honor," $\alpha = .66$) and three items focused on self-defense ("The Suri fought with the other tribe out of self-defense/out of necessity/because their safety was jeopardized," $\alpha = .70$). We also measured whether participants thought the Suri fought out of anger and out of fear (one item each).

Table 3. Means, standard deviations and intercorrelations of dependent measures, Study 2.

Measure	M (SD)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Legitimization (1)	3.44 (1.21)	–	.32*	.51**	.35**	.52**	−.01	−.05	.00	.03
Presympathy (2)	4.50 (1.16)		–	.62**	.49**	.31**	−.03	−.00	.22*	.05
Postsympathy (3)	3.84 (1.05)			–	.39**	.58**	.03	.04	.29**	.12
Premorality (4)	3.72 (1.13)				–	.65**	−.07	.19	.12	−.05
Postmorality (5)	3.38 (1.15)					–	−.06	.16	.08	.00
Experienced anger (6)	2.23 (.86)						–	.06	.39**	.15
JWB (7)	3.18 (0.52)							–	.09	.18
Intensity (8)	3.60 (1.30)								–	.27**
Credibility (9)	4.84 (1.09)									–

Note. JWB = just world beliefs.
*p < .05; **p < .01; (N = 100).

Legitimization of violence. In order to measure legitimization in all conditions, we had to adjust the legitimization scale so that it measured whether violence was considered legitimate rather than whether the reclaim was considered legitimate. When translating the scale to Dutch, we substituted one item ("unfair") with a new item because its literal translation in Dutch makes little sense in this context. However, this new item did not scale well with the other two ($\alpha = -.01$) and was therefore excluded. We thus relied on two items; "To what extent do you believe the violence used by the Suri is legitimate?" and "To what extend do you believe the violence used by the Suri was justified?" ($\alpha = .65$), $r(100) = .48$, $p < .001$

Sympathy and morality. Sympathy and morality before ($\alpha_{sympathy} = .92$ and $\alpha_{morality} = .83$) and after the violent conflict description ($\alpha_{sympathy} = .88$ and $\alpha_{morality} = .84$) were measured in the same way as in Study 1.

Potential alternative explanations. After the group description, we measured *intensity of conflict description* ("To what extent were you touched/moved/emotionally affected while reading the description?"; $\alpha = .90$). After the violence description we measured the extent to which people felt *anger* (mad, anger, irritation, $\alpha = .74$, part of 25 mood adjectives; Lambert et al., 2010) when reading the violence description. We also measured threat to individuals' *just world beliefs* (eight items; two taken from Lipkus [1991], four from Dalbert [1999] and two from Dalbert, Montada, & Schmitt [1987]; e.g. "I basically feel that the world is a fair place" and "I believe that most of the things that happen in my life are fair"; $\alpha = .62$). Finally, *credibility of description* was measured with three items (e.g., "I find the conflict description credible"; $\alpha = .87$)

Results and Discussion

Manipulation checks. An ANOVA with the group description as factor showed that, as expected, the Suri were considered more powerful ($M = 5.12$, $SD = 1.35$ vs. $M = 2.45$, $SD = 1.29$), $F(1, 98) = 101.97$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .51$, and angry ($M = 6.65$, $SD = 0.61$ vs. $M = 5.16$, $SD = 1.31$), $F(1, 98)$

= 53.32, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .35$, and less afraid ($M = 4.20$, $SD = 1.42$ vs. $M = 6.37$, $SD = 0.88$), $F(1, 98) = 84.15$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .46$ when they were described as powerful and angry compared to when described as powerless and afraid.

We then ran an analysis on the manipulation checks taken after the violence description. With respect to the checks tapping into the extent to which people believed the Suri fought out of *anger*, an ANOVA with group description and violence description as factors only showed the expected main effect of group description $F(1, 96) = 43.35$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .31$, ($M_{\text{angry powerful}} = 6.61$, $SD = 0.64$ vs. $M_{\text{fearful powerless}} = 5.51$, $SD = 0.98$), other Fs < 1.

For the same analysis predicting fear, however, results showed a different pattern. That is, in addition to the expected main effect of group description ($M_{\text{angry powerful}} = 3.71$, $SD = 1.64$ vs. $M_{\text{fearful powerless}} = 5.59$, $SD = 1.29$), $F(1.96) = 43.09$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .31$, there was also an interaction effect, $F(1, 96) = 6.57$, $p = .012$, $\eta^2_p = .06$. Inspection of the means surprisingly showed that when described as angry and powerful, people believed the Suri acted more out of fear when the Suri reclaimed cattle $M = 4.15$, $SD = 1.54$, compared to defending cattle, $M = 3.21$, $SD = 1.64$, $F(1, 96) = 5.40$, $p = .022$, $\eta^2_p = .05$. More importantly though, when the Suri were indeed described as afraid and powerless, violence description did not affect fear ratings ($M_{\text{reclaim}} = 5.30$, $SD = 1.52$ vs. $M_{\text{defense}} = 5.85$, $SD = 1.01$), $F(1, 96) = 1.72$, $p = .19$, $\eta^2_p = .02$.

Finally, we checked the violence manipulation via the revenge and self-defense manipulation checks. However, results showed significant main effects of group description on both the self-defence, $F(1, 96) = 4.02$, $p = .048$, $\eta^2_p = .04$, and revenge check, $F(1, 96) = 15.24$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .14$, while the main effects of violence description and the interactions were not significant, all Fs < 1. Thus, the way in which the group was described in terms of power and communicated emotion overpowered any effect of the specific violence description with respect to perceived revenge motivation ($M_{\text{angry powerful}} = 6.17$,

$SD = 0.70$ vs. $M_{\text{fearful powerless}} = 5.49$, $SD = 0.99$), and perceived self-defense motivation ($M_{\text{fearful powerless}} = 5.05$, $SD = 1.12$ vs. $M_{\text{angry powerful}} = 4.55$, $SD = 1.32$). This suggests that the communication of power-congruent emotions is more informative for outsiders than providing explicit reasons for the violence committed.

A factor analysis (with orthogonal rotation) further confirmed this idea by showing that anger and fear systematically grouped together, respectively, with self-defense and revenge motivations; the anger item (factor loading .79) loaded on the same factor as the revenge items and the fear item (factor loading .58) loaded on the same factor as self-defense items.

Legitimization of violence. An analysis of variance with group description and violence description as predictors of the violence legitimization measure showed, in line with the Study 1 results, a significant main effect of group description. Thus, we replicated the finding that violence by the fearful powerless ($M = 3.76$, $SD = 1.15$) is considered more legitimate than violence by the angry powerful ($M = 3.14$, $SD = 1.20$), $F(1, 96) = 6.95$, $p = .010$, $\eta^2_p = .07$. The main effect of violence description was not significant, $F < 1$, nor was the interaction, $F < 2.72$, $p > .10$. Thus, the *underdog hypothesis* was also supported when violence was used for defensive purposes.

Stability of sympathy and morality. We then tested the *stability hypothesis*. As in Study 1, we examined how the use of violence affected sympathy and morality ratings by testing for simple effects within a mixed-model ANOVA with group description as between-subject factors and the pre- and postmeasures of sympathy or morality as within-subject factors; as the violence description had no significant effects, Fs < 1.48, we collapsed across this factor.

This analysis showed that, as in Study 1, sympathy for the fearful powerless decreased after the use of violence, $F(1, 98) = 34.90$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .26$. The fearful powerless were also considered

Table 4. Means per condition on the measures taken before and after the violence description for Study 2.

	Before violence		After violence	
	Fearful powerless	Angry powerful	Fearful powerless	Angry powerful
Sympathy	5.08	3.93	4.27	3.43
	(0.80)	(1.18)	(0.83)	(1.07)
Morality	4.20	3.25	3.71	3.07
	(1.04)	(1.02)	(1.06)	(1.16)

less moral after perpetrating violence, $F(1, 98) = 13.41$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .12$.

However, for the angry powerful, the picture was quite different. As expected, although the use of violence by the angry powerful affected outsiders' sympathy negatively, $F(1, 98) = 13.87$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .12$, it did not affect outsiders' perceptions of that group's morality, $F(1, 98) = 1.76$, $p = .19$, $\eta^2_p = .02$ (means are reported in Table 4).

Thus, both the Study 1 and Study 2 findings are in line with the idea that, for outsiders, perceived group morality is a fairly stable psychological basis for legitimization of violence perpetrated by an (angry) powerful group. By contrast, the initial edge that the (fearful) powerless appear to have in terms of sympathy offers a more fragile basis for legitimization of the violence that this group perpetrates.

Importantly, this finding was independent of the explicit rationale provided for the violence. As such, Study 2 shows that it is the power of communicating power-congruent emotions, rather than providing explicit reasons, that determines how using violence affects outsiders' judgments of sympathy and morality. This is key to our argument because it shows that it is the compatibility between violence and the psychological grounds (morality) that is targeted by communicating anger which legitimizes the perpetration of violence, rather than the perceived fit between emotions and associated action tendencies.

Ruling out alternative explanations. The additional measures taken in Study 2 enabled us to rule out potential explanations for our findings. Analyses showed no support for any of the alternative explanations we tested. For instance, the two group descriptions did not differ in experienced intensity of the report ($F < 1$; $M = 3.60$, $SD = 1.30$). Thus, this variable cannot explain our key findings. Furthermore, participants' anger was not affected by the group description manipulation ($F < 1.04$; $p > .31$; $M = 2.23$, $SD = 0.86$) nor by the interaction, $F < 1.33$, $p > .25$, while there was a trend for a main effect of violence description, $F(1, 96) = 3.76$, $p = .055$ ($M_{defense} = 2.06$, $SD = 0.84$, $M_{reclaim} = 2.39$, $SD = 0.84$). Yet, as legitimization was only affected by group description (and not by the violence description) participants' anger could not explain why violence is legitimized. Moreover, threats to just world beliefs did not differ as a function of the manipulations ($Fs < 2.25$, $ps > .13$; $M = 3.18$, $SD = 0.52$). Finally, the perceived credibility of the news report could not explain our key findings either, even though some effects were found. In line with our idea that violence is more appropriate for a powerful angry group, there was a trend for a main effect of group description, $F(1, 96) = 3.49$, $p = .065$, $\eta^2_p = .04$, such that the report on the angry powerful tribe ($M = 5.05$, $SD = 1.13$) was considered somewhat more credible than the report on the fearful powerless tribe ($M = 4.63$, $SD = 1.00$). In addition, there was an unexpected main effect of violence description, $F(1, 96) = 5.20$, $p = .025$, $\eta^2_p = .05$. People perceived the reclaim report ($M = 5.09$, $SD = 1.03$) as more credible than the defense report ($M = 4.59$, $SD = 1.09$). The interaction was not significant, $F < 1.60$, $p > .20$. Mediation analysis showed that when both variables are entered into a regression analysis, credibility was not a significant predictor of legitimacy, $\beta = 0.08$, $t < 1$, while group

description (0 = low power fear, 1 = high power anger) was, β = −0.27, *t*(96) = 2.72, *p* = .008. Thus, although there are some small differences in perceived credibility, they cannot explain the results.

In sum, Study 2 adds to Study 1 by replicating some of its key findings. Study 2 further helped to establish that the fragility of sympathy is not based on an artifact of Study 1 in the sense that its findings do not appear to be influenced by the type of violence that is used. Study 2 further allowed us to rule out a number of alternative explanations related to participants' own emotions, just world beliefs and the credibility of the materials.

General Discussion

The results of Study 1 supported our line of thought about how the communication of power-congruent emotions leads outsiders to legitimize intergroup violence in intractable conflict. One key conclusion is that although outsiders typically condemn violence less when perpetrated by the powerless (Vandello et al., 2011), communicating power-congruent emotions increases the extent to which violence by powerless as well as powerful groups is perceived as legitimate. Because fear depicts the group as a victim in need of assistance, its communication by the powerless increased observers' sympathy. Sympathy in turn served as a psychological basis for their legitimization of the violence by the powerless in particular. At the same time, because anger communicates that the group is wronged, it increases outsiders' perceptions of group morality of a powerful group. Morality, in turn serves as a psychological basis for the legitimization of violence perpetrated by the powerful.

Study 1 and Study 2 both supported our line of thought with respect to the potential fragility of sympathy for the powerless. Our second key conclusion is that the powerful group appears to have a more solid basis (perceived group morality) for the legitimization of violence than the powerless, while sympathy for the powerless appears to be a somewhat more fragile basis for this. When viewed in this light, playing the "sympathy card" may not be as effective as is popularly assumed. Although it is true that outsiders typically favor the "underdog" (and even more so when the communicated emotion is power-congruent), this sympathy evaporates after violence has been carried out (see also Vandello et al., 2011, Study 2). By contrast, the compatibility between power, anger, and violence appears to be a potent combination that allows the powerful to successfully convey an image of morality. Indeed, because violence is compatible with what anger communicates, outsiders perceived the powerful as equally moral even after they engaged in violence.

Theoretical Implications

Following a recent general trend to study the social functions of emotions (e.g., Fischer et al., 2003; van Kleef, 2009), we move beyond previous work by showing that observing anger or fear in powerless or powerful groups affects outsiders' legitimization of intergroup violence in the context of intractable conflict. Our work adds to but is also different from mainstream work on the study of intractable intergroup conflict (e.g., Bar-Tal, 2007; Halperin & Gross, 2011) in two ways. First, we focus on the observation of emotions that are communicated rather than on the experience of emotions in intergroup conflicts (see also De Vos, van Zomeren, Gordijn, & Postmes, 2013). This is important because our and others' work clearly shows that the psychology of the communication of emotions adds to our understanding of the dynamics of intergroup conflict. Second, our focus on outsiders is different from a focus on the communication of emotions *between* groups (or their members) involved in (intractable) conflict. This is important because, perhaps especially in such conflicts, the support of third parties or more generally foreign public opinion can have strong political ramifications (e.g., the recognition of Palestine as a state by the United Nations). Thus, the current work integrates insights from theories about intractable intergroup conflict and from theories about emotions and their communication.

Our differentiation between the communication of emotions and outsiders' experience of them should not be interpreted as implying that observing the emotions of others cannot trigger the experience of emotions. In fact, the Study 1 finding—that feelings of sympathy explain why outsiders' legitimize violence by the (fearful) powerless—suggests that this is actually the case. Yet, what observers feel might be strongly influenced by the *information* conveyed by specific emotions, and by whether specific emotions fit expectancies about who (the powerful or powerless) should feel and express them (Loseke, 2009; Tiedens, 2001; Tiedens et al., 2000). Thus, like others we view communicated emotions as sources of social information (Fischer et al., 2003; van Kleef, 2009).

We started exploring this domain by focusing on anger and fear, but other emotions are likely to be expressed in intergroup conflict as well. For instance, future research should assess the communicative potential of emotions like sadness (Tiedens et al., 2000) and hatred (Halperin & Gross, 2011) in legitimizing violence in the eyes of observers. Sadness communicated by powerless groups (Tiedens et al., 2000), due to its associations with helplessness (e.g., Frijda et al., 1989; Smith & Lazarus, 2001) might for example also induce sympathy. Hatred, however, although accompanied by the appraisal that an outgroup did something unfair to the ingroup, is also an emotion that people consider as immoral and illegitimate (Halperin, 2008). Consequently, although hatred might mobilize the ingroup for violent action, it most likely will put off outsiders.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Although our results supported our predictions, the two experiments are each, of course, not without their limitations. We nevertheless tried to address some of the Study 1 limitations in Study 2, which allowed us to successfully rule out several alternative explanations. One limitation that applies to both studies is that although

we speak of legitimizing violence, one could argue that the somewhat low means on this measure (especially in Study 1) suggest that it taps more into its opposite. We reason, however, that the violence described in the study is so disproportionate that people generally consider it as illegitimate by any (moral) standard. Therefore, any effect toward legitimization that we observe (i.e., higher scores on this measure) can be safely interpreted as such.

Second, some might consider our operationalization of group power as military power (i.e., weapons) in both studies as quite narrow. Indeed, although access to weapons is an important indicator of group power in the context of intractable intergroup conflict, there are of course other sources of power that may be important (e.g., control over resources, the social standing of a group, political alliances, etc.). Yet, we have no reason to assume, however, that our predictions would be different for other types of power and hence do not regard this issue as problematic for the interpretation of our findings.

Third, in the current study, groups very explicitly stated (through a media report) which emotions they felt. However, quite often communication of emotion occurs more subtly, in the sense that people infer it from behavior or facial expressions. The question is, of course, whether this would yield similar effects. However and especially when it comes to communication within intractable conflict, communication occurs very often in the forms of (written) news reports and in these cases emotions are quite often explicitly labeled. Therefore, our findings should apply to these forms of communication and possibly beyond them.

Fourth, one might argue that communicating anger does not always lead outsiders to infer that one has a moral case (e.g., Sell, Tooby, & Cosmides, 2009). The reason why we think that anger helps to build a moral case is because it makes the claim that one is wronged. We believe though that it might depend heavily on the context whether this claim can be made or is considered valid by outsiders. In the current study anger was expressed in the context of ongoing

conflict. However, it might be that our findings will not transfer to situations where violence is not a response to a previous attack or where very severe violence is used to retaliate for example small insults. Furthermore, although the current study shows that the "morality card" is reserved for the powerful, its successful use might depend on whether people consider the group's power position to be legitimate (Lammers, Galinsky, Gordijn, & Otten, 2008). Future research could explore these potential boundary conditions.

Future research could also explore more broadly the theme of the communication of specific emotions in intergroup conflicts. A key question within this theme is how strategic groups in conflict need to be about the emotions they communicate to specific audiences. Both powerful and powerless groups are involved in a delicate balancing act because they often need to address multiple audiences at the same time (e.g., their in-group, the out-group, potential third parties, the general public; Klein et al., 2007). Because the communicative function of a specific emotion may differ depending on who is listening, these audiences are likely to determine which emotion is strategic and which is not (Fischer et al., 2003).

Anger is an interesting emotion in this respect. It is frequently mentioned as a key motivator of constructive action within intergroup conflicts (e.g., van Zomeren, Spears, Fischer, & Leach, 2004), and even within the grim realities of intractable conflicts (Halperin & Gross, 2011; Reifen Tagar, Federico, & Halperin, 2011). Although communicating anger about the out-group to the *in-group* might serve to mobilize the group for action against the out-group, other dynamics are also possible. For instance, De Vos et al. (2013) show across three experimental studies that a disadvantaged out-group's communication of anger about their disadvantage evokes empathy (including perspective taking as well as feelings of sympathy) in members of the advantaged group. The authors explain this effect by proposing a *relational* function of the communication of anger, suggesting that anger communicates not only a sense of injustice but also the importance of and the desire to maintain the relationship (Fischer & Roseman, 2007). Future research could examine whether this relational function of communicating anger also applies in contexts where conflict seems intractable.

Societal Implications

Our work has implications for how groups can legitimize their violent deeds in the context of intractable conflict, with further implications for how the victims of this violence can undermine those justifications. This is important for several reasons. The strategic communication of emotions in times of war might affect judgments of decision-makers who have the power to intervene in conflict situations (e.g., members of the U.N. Security Council), or the power to judge whether the use of violence was illegitimate (e.g., the International Court of Law). Moreover, because third parties are potential allies in achieving group goals such as social change (van Zomeren, Postmes, & Spears, 2008), persuading them might increase chances of achieving these goals. At the same time, our data also offer important pointers towards *preventing* such framing effects. If the media are aware of these effects they might be more careful about explicitly using power-congruent emotions in framing intergroup violence.

As modern media bring the violence of intractable intergroup conflicts quite literally into observers' living rooms, a large audience is exposed to the emotional outcries of the powerful and the powerless. This development appears to be amplified by the use of social media, which allows individuals to observe not only the emotions strategically communicated in formal political statements, but also the emotions communicated by the citizens of both groups involved in intractable conflict. As our data show, these emotions may have strong effects on whose violence we legitimize. These developments also illustrate how important it is to study the power of communicating emotions in intergroup conflict.

Notes

1. For exploratory reasons, we also ran conditions in which the Suri communicated contempt. However, as we did not have a clear hypothesis about the effects of contempt we do not report findings on the contempt manipulation and contempt related measures.

2. Analyses on the full sample show similar results. ANOVA on legitimization shows a power main effect, $F(1, 56) = 4.89$, $p = .03$, no emotion main effect, $F < 1$, and a two-way interaction, $F(1, 56) = 4.95$, $p = .03$. Further, moderated mediation analyses show that sympathy mediates the emotion effect in the low power condition (95% BCACI: [−1.11, −.11]), while it does not in the high power condition (95% BCACI: [−.71, .26]), and that morality almost reliably mediates the effect of emotion on legitimization in the high power condition (95% BCACI: [−.02, .80]), while it clearly does not within the low power condition (95% BCACI: [−.54, .15]). Finally, analysis looking at the pre/post violence measures show that morality is not negatively affected (and in fact slightly increases) by violence within in the high power anger condition, $F(1, 56) = 3.74$, $p = .058$, while it is negatively affected in all other conditions, Fs > 4.70, ps < .035. Sympathy however decreases significantly within all conditions (including the powerless fear one), Fs > 4.60, ps < .037, except for the high power anger condition, $F < 1$.

3. An additional measure was included for explorative reasons. Two newly developed short scales were intended to measure perceived motives for conflict: self-defense and justice restoration. But because we failed to differentiate the two groups' motives, the construct validity of the scale is poor and we do not report results here.

4. This scale also measures group warmth and competence; the full scale was included in the questionnaire.

5. We counterbalanced the order of the questionnaire. About half of the participants filled in the questionnaire in the original order; while the other half's emotional experience and just world beliefs were measured first. Order of questionnaire only interacted with group description on the two sympathy measures, $F(1, 92) = 3.90$, $p = .051$, and $F(1, 92) = 9.00$, $p = .003$ (all other Fs < 2.68, ps > .10). Inspection of the means show that when asked in the original order, people had more sympathy for the underdog at T1 ($M = 4.95$, $SD = 0.75$ vs. $M = 4.16$, $SD = 1.21$), $F(1, 92) = 7.95$, $p = .006$, while this difference was not significant at T2 ($M = 3.92$, $SD = 0.57$ vs. $M = 3.61$, $SD = 1.14$), $F(1, 92) = 1.78$, $p = .19$. When emotions and just world beliefs were asked first, we found that the underdog is favored at both T1 ($M = 5.23$, $SD = 0.84$ vs. $M = 3.66$, $SD = 1.10$), $F(1.92) = 28.25$, $p < .001$ and T2 ($M = 4.66$, $SD = 0.92$ vs. $M = 3.22$, $SD = 0.97$), $F(1, 92) = 28.47$, $p < .001$.

6. Analyses on the full sample show similar findings on the key variables. That is, ANOVA on legitimization showed a main effect of group description, $F(1, 101) = 10.36$, $p = .002$, no main effect violence description and no interaction, $F < 2.68$, $p > .10$. Analysis looking at the change in sympathy and morality showed that sympathy for the fearful powerless decreased, $F(1, 103) = 24.71$, $p = .001$ as did the morality ratings, $F(1, 103) = 10.33$, $p = .002$. However, whereas sympathy for angry powerful groups decreased, $F(1, 103) = 11.31$, $p = .001$, morality ratings did not, $F < 1.67$, $p > .20$.

7. We also included the Dutch translation of the Moral Foundation Questionnaire (Graham et al., 2011) to assess whether the group and violence descriptions would make the moral domains of harm ($\alpha = .58$, $M = 4.42$, $SD = 0.63$) and care and fairness and reciprocity ($\alpha = .42$, $M = 4.55$, $SD = 0.52$) more relevant and accessible. This was not the case, all Fs < 1.62.

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