Dynamics of Emotions in Protracted Intergroup Conflict as Microfoundations for Violent Action

Insights for Conflict Transformation from the Palestinian Territories

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Abstract

Living within prolonged intergroup conflict has detrimental psychosocial and societal consequences, especially for members of low-power groups. Experiencing repression creates intense emotions and raises serious dilemmas about handling resistance to achieve social change. In recent years, novel approaches that focus on microlevel factors, particularly emotions, have been suggested as useful predictors to understand how and why violent conflicts persist. Details of the exact dynamics between emotions and collective action, such as how emotional mechanisms predict violent action under different types of conflict escalation, remain an open question. Despite the theoretical and practical importance of the subject, limited data is available from a low-power group perspective. In this dissertation research, I investigate how emotional mechanisms predict how – mainly violent – collective action is moderated by different types of conflict escalation. These insights inform and support conflict transformation from a psychological perspective.

The research is based on extensive longitudinal mixed methods fieldwork in Israel and the Palestinian Territories over three years. To contextually comprehend the complex issues, I first 'mapped the space' between emotions and action, using explorative participatory-observation. Then, to investigate the exact mechanisms of these interrelations, particularly how emotions predict violent action under different conflict escalation settings, I surveyed two samples of West Bank Palestinians (N = 200, 450) before and during different escalations using a longitudinal design. Escalation contexts included the US embassy's highly publicized move to Jerusalem which led to widespread unrest in Palestine, the so-called 'Gaza Marches of Return', and a full lockdown of Ramallah by the Israeli army. Particular focus was placed on negative high-agency emotions such as anger, humiliation, and hate, as well as on the distinction between individual- versus group emotions. Finally, using activist narratives, I outlined how – in the light of these escalatory interrelations – constructive social change from violence to nonviolent action is possible.

Results confirmed an oppressive conflict reality for low-power group members, in which years of standstill alternate with acute phases of conflict escalation. The participatory data showed how people employ agentic coping patterns **s**imilar to established inter*personal* conflict styles. Situational context such as conflict escalation substantially affects *how* and *which* specific emotional dynamics predict violent responses. For example, in conditions of low conflict salience, *anger* was associated with citizens' support for violent action while after conflict aggravation feelings of *humiliation* elicited support for violent resistance. Furthermore, distinctive profiles of individual- versus group emotions shape an agentic response. For mainly *indirectly* experienced conflict escalations, *group* emotions predicted violent collective action, while for *closely* experienced conflict events, *individual* emotions were associated with violent engagement. The qualitative narratives of formerly violent activists showed change pathways including emotional, cognitive, and behavioral aspects. For most participants, the change sequence was triggered by an unforeseen respectful intergroup encounter. This encounter elicited empathy towards the outgroup and reduced negative emotions, resulting in the cognitive reappraisal of their situation concerning the conflict context. Despite experiencing difficult conflict events and against the mechanisms outlined above, emotional and behavioral change from radical violent to nonviolent activism was possible.

The data collected during different surges of conflict escalation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories shows how emotional mechanisms contribute to violence. Understanding psychological microfoundations, namely emotional dynamics, provides novel inroads for individual conflict transformation. The research contributes to current approaches of integrating political science with social psychology and adds more profound insights into the causes of violence, which is notoriously difficult to study. The gained insights hold the potential to positively influence detrimental intergroup behaviour in the Middle East and beyond.

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Chapter One – Introduction

My own experiences with the perplexities of violent intergroup conflict started almost twenty years ago in Africa, during a humanitarian assignment in Eastern Congo. In the Ituri district where my wife and I were based as part of an international team, the conflict was characterized by horrible tribal clashes. The absence of the Congolese state due to a succession of rebellions, led extremists from two main tribes to form militias consisting mainly of child soldiers, whom we encountered already during our afternoon strolls through the district capital. The militias had engaged in intense fighting with genocidal components against each other and the entire population. Some of the main local actors are now sentenced by the International Criminal Court. For logistical and practical reasons, our project was divided along the same tribal lines. My wife and I initially visited each community together with local staff, but then split up the responsibilities along tribal areas. We each spent several days 'in the bush' with each community, enjoying true African hospitality but also hearing horror stories about the opposing group and being exposed to militia leaders whose units had been responsible for terrible atrocities but we also heard their intriguing life stories. One remarkable militia officer – an agreeable and knowledgeable man in his late thirties – had originally been a dentist in civil life. These experiences provided interesting stories at the breakfast table when back in the team house, each one of us defending 'their' community and accusing the other one. How does one comprehend nice and hospitable people doing horrible things to each other? Later, we both worked for the same organisation in its Swiss headquarters, traveling to other conflict zones such as Afghanistan or West Darfur and preparing aid workers for their assignments. These experiences spurred a lifelong interest in protracted intergroup conflict and the underlying reasons for intergroup violence, which is now taken up in this dissertation to provide input into scientific discussions as well as applied peacebuilding approaches.

1.1 Living in Prolonged Intergroup Conflict

Intergroup hostility continues to be a relevant problem in many regions of the world. It often involves mass violence and fundamentally harms the well-being of the entangled citizens as well as hinders the development of the involved societies. According to data from the aid organization 'Save the Children', the intensity and relevance of conflicts have increased significantly in recent years. One in six children worldwide is living in areas affected by conflict and since 1991, this number has increased by 75%. Half of these areas are considered regions of protracted conflict. These trends are especially relevant to the Middle East. Two in five children in the Middle East live in a conflict zone, which is the highest rate globally (Bahgat et al., 2018; Geoghegan, 2017). Groups locked in protracted hostile conflict pay a heavy price for the continuation of the violent dispute. When the conflict is asymmetrical, the price is especially high for the lower-power group, as it suffers greater material damage and disproportional losses in human life (Leshem & Halperin, 2020; Thiessen & Darweish, 2018). This is particularly obvious in long-term and violent intergroup conflicts such as the enduring Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Palestinians face house demolitions, harassment at checkpoints, abusive detentions, night-time house searches by security forces, or settler violence. Periods of high conflict salience, for example, the announcement of the US Embassy relocation to Jerusalem or the 'Gaza Marches of Return', can culminate in widespread rioting or other forms of violent collective action.

Traditional approaches from international relations have provided valuable insights into the dynamics of protracted violent intergroup conflict (Azar, 1990; Brecher, 2017; Goertz & Diehl, 1993). Next to actual conflict transformations on the ground, achievements include valuable discourse and mediation practices as well as the institutionalisation of conflict research in academia and beyond (Kriesberg, 2011). Nevertheless, certain conflicts show complete intractability in terms of finding solutions, pointing to the need for further research to understand the specific conflict dynamics better. Especially for scholars and practitioners in the field of conflict transformation, too

little is known about the massively difficult problems they face in studying and fostering the transformation of large-scale protracted conflicts (Kriesberg, 2011). Also, from an economic perspective, as outlined in the Copenhagen Consensus ranking of worldwide problems compared to currently available solutions, a strong need for further research in peacebuilding is implied. For example, health interventions are estimated to have a six times higher return on investment compared to traditional peacebuilding (Fearon & Hoeffler, 2014). Assuming the interventions assessed include mainly expensive international missions and also assuming health includes psychosocial approaches, could there be a way to combine both approaches for overall effectiveness and overcome disciplinary boundaries? I sincerely think this is the case and will show an example of such a collaboration between disciplines in this dissertation. I want to underline that the possible contributions of social psychology are much broader than the 'psychosocial' approaches such as dealing with the past, trauma, and mental health that political science normally associates with the field of psychology.

Microfoundational bottom-up dynamics are often able to predict political action, especially within intergroup conflict settings (Bleiker & Hutchison, 2018; Hillesund, 2021). In other words, "there is no actor called 'the crowd'" (Kuran, 1997). Traditional lines of research may have overlooked crucial factors that help explain the intractability of protracted disputes, and, in particular, the high levels of citizen involvement in popular politics (Groenendyk, 2011; Valentino et al., 2009), including conflict-related violence (Pearlman, 2013). In this dissertation, I focus on these underlying individual microfoundations for explaining intergroup violence.

Understanding Microfoundations of Intergroup Conflict

Studying microfoundations and particularly emotions have been substantiated as increasingly valuable for international relations (Bleiker & Hutchison, 2018; Kertzer & Tingley, 2018), especially within violent intergroup conflict settings (Pearlman, 2011, 2018). In recent decades, novel theoretical and empirical approaches that focus on microlevel processes and

sociopsychological antecedences of protracted ethnonational conflicts, have shed new light on how and why protracted conflicts endure. The approaches are part of a larger research trend of looking at macrolevel processes in the international and domestic arenas through the examination of microlevel factors (Groenendyk, 2011; Kertzer, 2017; Stein, 2017). Understanding these foundations and including human needs within a security context can provide crucial insights into our efforts of contributing to lasting stability in the local, regional and international spheres (Goetschel, 2005).

While psychologists focus on understanding individual reasonings, social psychology is especially concerned with the *interaction* between the individual ('I') and group ('we') and how the environment is given meaning (Reynolds et al., 2010). This is the specific realm where social psychology can contribute to political science. Especially interesting here is the concept of group emotions (Smith et al., 2007) which has been gaining attention within social psychology over the last years (Halperin & Tagar, 2017).

Emotions as Influential Microfoundations

The growing scholarly acknowledgment outside psychology of the role of psychological factors in the perpetuation of protracted conflict is exemplified in the claim that *„the rift between Israelis and Palestinians is perpetuated by a destructive psychological dynamic…. The conflict between these two nations is a clash of emotions – specifically a painful confrontation between fear and humiliation.”* (Goodman, 2018). Although the most suitable conceptualizations of emotions in political science are still in discussion (Emirbayer & Goldberg, 2005; Sasley, 2011), in recent years, emotions have increasingly become a focus of attention in international relations (Hutchison & Bleiker, 2014; Kertzer & Tingley, 2018) and particularly conflict research (Halperin, 2016; Pearlman, 2013). Emotions, particularly group emotions, were shown to play an important role in understanding cause and effect in protracted conflict as well as substantially influencing political behavior, especially security-sensitive activities (Tausch et al., 2011; van Zomeren, 2013). Emotions

are situational and dynamic, fluctuating much stronger than other relevant factors in an intergroup context such as political attitudes. This makes emotions particularly interesting to study, also as a possible basis for change processes.

However, the *exact mechanisms* of how microfoundations, namely emotions, influence people's decision to engage for example in security-sensitive or violent activities remain unclear. Especially under different types of conflict escalation and with a disadvantaged group perspective, data acquisition is particularly difficult. I engaged in broad mixed methods research to study the distinct role of negative emotional antecedents to security-sensitive activities of disadvantaged-group members. More specifically, I wanted to specify how emotional mechanisms predict (mainly violent) collective action under different conflict escalation contexts as a basis for conflict analysis and transformation. How exactly are conflict escalation, emotions, and violent action associated? Out of this social psychological 'emotions perspective', researchers can provide useful input for practitioners and researchers on applying conflict transformation methods. Therefore, how can we better understand the details of these psychological microfoundations to overcome conflict intractability and support conflict transformation from a psychological perspective? And how can these detrimental emotional dynamics be changed?

Individual Bases for Conflict Transformation

Conflict transformation refers to a process in which parties to a dispute consciously work towards a modification of the structural and constructivist dimensions of a conflict with the short-term objective of prevention or at least intensity reduction of renewed violence and with the long-term objective of sustainable peace (Goetschel, 2009; Kriesberg, 2011). Both of the mentioned dimensions include relational and interactive aspects of framing and understanding contested issues. Conflict transformation frameworks refer to the importance not only of elites and political leaders but also of social intermediaries, such as business people, teachers, religious or traditional

authorities, as well as grass-roots movements that include non-state actors, civil society, and private sector representatives (Goetschel, 2009; Taylor & Lederach, 2014).

Knowledge about microfactor dynamics and mechanisms could give valuable input to a wide range of academic and applied transformation approaches (Burton, 1997; Dudouet, 2006). Specifically, microprocesses can provide inputs into the macroprocesses. Furthermore, it can serve as a metaphor for what needs to happen in the macroprocess of conflict resolution (Kelman, 2009). In the existing literature though, there is only limited consideration of individual factors contributing to conflict transformation (Boege, 2006; Mitchell, 2002) although especially emotions are considered an essential part of conflict and conflict transformation, both for analytical and practical purposes (Bramsen & Poder, 2018; Folger & Bush, 1996). Accordingly, emotions are important components of the underlying psychological appraisal and regulation processes (Halperin, Sharvit, et al., 2011a). This includes prejudice reduction models *as well as* collective action models (Dixon et al., 2016), the main psychological frameworks to explain social change and improve relations between people groups. However, further intellectual effort needs to be made to clarify the various ways in which individual and intergroup emotional relationships can be changed in conflict settings (Fisher, 2008; Mitchell, 2002). Appreciating the role emotional dynamics play in conflicts, expands our understanding of conflict and fosters new opportunities for productive transformations (Bramsen & Poder, 2018; Van Kleef & Côté, 2018).

In my research, I focus initially on the broad topic based on which microfactors disadvantaged group members experience *social agency* in protracted intergroup conflict using participatory-observational and qualitative approaches. How do people's sense of assertiveness and relationality (Abele & Wojciszke, 2014) including their conflictual agency (Collins, 2013) built by negative emotional energy (Bramsen & Poder, 2018) get impacted in particular oppressive contexts such as checkpoints or resource appropriations? Grounded on these initial empirical findings, I pursue two further lines of research. First, I study the detailed mechanisms by which specific

negative emotional dynamics elicit violent action among citizens from low-powered groups using mainly quantitative empirical approaches as a *basis* for individual conflict analysis and transformation (Folger & Bush, 1996; Little, 2017). Furthermore, I assess concrete instances of *psychosocial change*, individual conflict transformation with a particularly entrenched subset of people, radical violent activists. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict which comprises my research setting – in many ways the symbolic default for protracted conflict – is a fitting case due to its mix of intensity and conflict salience as well as accessibility to primary sources of information. The latter is mostly not the case within larger-scale intergroup conflicts as they can entail considerable levels of violence and structural instability.

Research Design

The overall project methodically combines participatory-observational, quantitative, and qualitative approaches to study the emotional antecedents of social agency, collective action, and social change. This includes contextual-, group and individual perspectives (Pettigrew, 1997; Ron et al., 2017), providing focus as well as a broader perspective. As such, the dissertation proceeds along three distinct subsequent streams: 1) initial explorative participatory-observational and qualitative research to investigate the issue of conflictual *social agency* for low-power group members in the wake of intergroup repression. As an outflow of these empirical indications, I pursue two further lines of research: 2a) detailed quantitative analyses to explain the exact mechanisms of how specific *emotional dynamics* predict (mainly violent) collective action moderated by different 'real-world' circumstances of conflict escalation including the development and testing of a two-dimensional framework how conflict events impact violent collective action. As another follow-up of the initial findings, 2b) qualitative analyses of emotional and behavioral *psychosocial change* processes of former radical activists to investigate the motives underlying their choice for nonviolent and even joint activism. In a final step, I suggest implications and applications of my findings for conflict transformation from a psychological microfactor perspective.

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Mixed methods research offers powerful tools for investigating complex processes and systems (Fetters et al., 2013), including particularly the study of political violence and intergroup conflict (Thaler, 2017). Mixed methods approaches, combining different assessments on complementary levels of analysis, provide several advantages such as completing each other and allowing triangulation of results (Elcheroth et al., 2019; Guest & Fleming, 2014) to achieve an enhanced understanding of complex issues through multiple perspectives. Reviews showed that social psychological studies are designed in their overwhelming majority aimed to explain intergroup attitudes, stereotypes, or prejudice in *narrow society subsets* ('Western, educated, industrial, rich, democratic'), and that they typically rely on either *experimental* or *self-reported* data from *university students* (Vollhardt & Bilali, 2008; Vollhardt & Cohrs, 2013). To counteract these tendencies, I made an effort to study intergroup conflict dynamics with a focus on ecologically valid field research in naturally occurring settings, complementing quantitative measures with qualitative data as well as allowing an extended longitudinal frame of the research. The research process will be further explained in Chapter Three, but follows 'classic' suggestions within social psychology (Sherif, 1977) which have also been underlined more recently again (Levy Paluck, 2010; Swann & Jetten, 2017).

My research strategy specified in Table 1.1 follows a sequential design (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2010; Fetters et al., 2013) and relies on dynamic or longitudinal comparisons in different escalation and conflict salience settings within all three methodologies. Paired- or multi-comparisons are widely used in political science also referred to as 'controlled case' comparisons or 'matching cases' (Gisselquist, 2014; Tarrow, 2010), and successfully applied in intergroup conflict settings (Krause, 2016).

Table 1.1

Overview of Used Multicase- and Multimethods Comparison Approaches

	(Exploratory I) **Study 1**	(Stream II) **Study 2 & Study 3**	(Stream III) **Study 4**
Empirical Focus	Conflict Context	Escalation Events	Life Narratives
Method	Participatory-Observational	Quantitative & Mixed Method	Qualitative
Comparison	Dynamic	Longitudinal	Postdictive
Social Level	Macro (Context)	Meso / Micro (Group / Individual)	Micro (Individual)
Main Construct	Social Agency	Emotions (Violent) Collective Action	Social Change

Although by no means a 'magic bullet' (Bergman, 2011), mixed methods approaches are increasingly recommended in conflict studies (Elcheroth et al., 2019) and found useful to prevent methodological pitfalls (Guest & Fleming, 2014) when approaching 'grand challenges' such as intergroup conflict (Eisenhardt et al., 2016; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). They are especially relevant for validating data in our delicate protracted intergroup conflict context (Leshem et al., 2020), for example, social desirability bias (Bauhoff, 2011) for sensitive constructs such as violent action (Thaler, 2017). As will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter, I include in my endeavours the rich historical, religious, cultural, and political context around Jerusalem or just took time to explore places such as Bethlehem or Ramallah, where my study participants spent their time. I listened and learned purposefully beyond academic and scientific methods borrowing from transdisciplinary approaches (Ison, 2008; Nicolescu & Ertas, 2013). These are arguably especially relevant within peacebuilding (Goetschel, 2005) if pursued in a conflict-sensitive way (Gabriel & Goetschel, 2017; Goetschel & Pfluger, 2014).

1.2 Organisation of the Dissertation

Chapter 2 - Social Agency in Protracted Intergroup Conflict

In this chapter, I describe a participatory-observational study that investigates the question of how group members experience and respond to 'living in intractable conflict' facing intergroup violence and repression. In particular, I explore how citizens' sense of social agency (Bandura, 2006) in the tension between acceptance and protest (Wright, Taylor & Moghaddam, 1990; Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013; Dixon & Durrheim, 2012) is impacted by daily events in a conflict setting. I focus on relevance for conflict transformation (McEvoy & Shirlow, 2009; Bush & Pope, 2002; MacGinty, 2014) but as well emotion-based and problem-oriented coping (Heyden & Mona, 2021). Over many years, the 'classic' social psychological literature suggested that when people find themselves in strong situations, they *fail* to display agency. The early classic studies of conformity, obedience, and bystander intervention, for example, are renowned for showing that when challenged by strong situational pressures, participants acquiesced demonstrating lack of agency – even if it meant abandoning important moral principles (Swann & Jetten, 2017). Also, from a collective action research perspective, the 'effectiveness route' of prompting social action (Tausch & Becker, 2015; van Zomeren, 2013) is seriously impaired by long years of unchanged oppression circumstances within conflict. One of the dangers here is that perceived low effectiveness has strong links to intergroup violence (Tausch et al., 2011). Agency has been put forward for deeper study as a basis for collective action, including recommendations of methodically broadening the diversity of how to study behavior within social psychology (Swann & Jetten, 2017).

Study 1 investigates the daily life of Palestinians mainly in the Bethlehem Governorate with a focus on agency from a participative-observational and qualitative perspective. Participatory-observational and qualitative methods were chosen mirroring recent peace research trends towards a 'local turn' and its longitudinal focus on the everyday resistance, hybridity, and friction resulting in

research that can better interpret local experiences of conflict (Autesserre, 2014; Millar, 2018). In line with recent work that has suggested revisiting classic evidence that people overall *lack* agency in strong situations (Swann & Jetten, 2017; Stekelenburg, 2013), indeed I find substantial support for the centrality of certain types of escalation in shaping conflictual agency defined by negative conflictual emotions, at least for an important subset of the population and importance of the role of emotions in this regard. The results are laying the empirical groundwork for the subsequent studies on violent action as well as social change in the next chapters. They also underline the requirement for a more specific understanding of how distinct microfoundations, namely emotions, contribute to violent and nonviolent collective action.

Chapter 3 (Theory Development) – Situational Events Classification for Emotional Predictions of Violent Collective Action

I describe first the overall research process, tracing the steps and giving an account of my data analysis and reflection processes (Luttrell, 2000), especially focusing on longitudinal mixed methods approaches as described above. Longitudinal observations are also relevant in the quantitative methods, using 'natural field experiments' to the extent possible, trying to make sense of 'real-world' events, especially focusing on dynamic processes and comparing different circumstances of acute conflict escalation with more 'regular' conflict conditions.

Measuring political conflict escalation has a long tradition in political science. One obvious aspect has always been *conflict intensity*, normally *the* main overall dimension of 'classical' event coding scales (e.g. WEIS - Goldstein, 1992; ICB - Brecher & Wilkenfeld, 1997; COPDAB - Azar, 2009). Mirroring more recent trends in conflict analysis such as greater emphasis on local sub-state settings and non-state actors (Wucherpfennig, 2011; Hegre et al., 2019; Walther et al., 2020), I suggest *conflict proximity* as the second important dimension. I will use existing theories and knowledge to tailor each of these dimensions to the relative effect of specific emotions like anger, or humiliation as

well as types of emotion – individual versus group – on support for mainly violent collective action. I integrate these findings into a formal model that outlines the effects of specific types of situational escalation based on literature and the initial qualitative findings. The model is tested in subsequent analyses.

Chapter 4 – Oppression and Resistance – Uncovering the Violent Behavioral Consequences of Anger versus Humiliation

Next, I turn to examine the distinct emotional foundations low-power group members provide for their decision to use violent means of resistance in a particularly intense and central conflict issue linked to the status of Jerusalem, testing the situative importance of specific negative emotions in predicting violent action.

Several scholars have underlined the importance to study discrete negative emotions (e.g. Feldman Barrett & Gross, 2001; Halperin, Pliskin & Gross, 2013). Past studies suggest that emotions such as anger, humiliation, or hate predict support for collective action against the oppressor but the exact levels that make either of these trigger support for violent versus non-violent measures in specific conflict escalation situations are still unclear.

To better understand when specific intergroup emotions experienced by oppressed groups elicit the different forms of political resistance, I conducted **Study 2** in the Palestinian Territories during relative calm and immediately after a provocative demonstration of Israel's power in a correlative longitudinal design. As outlined in the last chapter, I will focus here on a particular provocative event that is further underlining the power imbalance. The event included high levels of conflict intensity *and* proximity, leading to a substantially higher conflict salience amongst the population as demonstrated by widespread public protest.

Results revealed that for citizens living under oppression, intergroup anger and humiliation are present at relatively high levels even during relative calm. In these day-to-day conditions of

oppression, anger, but not humiliation was associated with citizens' support for violent means of resistance. As anticipated, levels of anger and humiliation surged after Israel's public conflict aggravation, but the context moderated their effect. Now, feelings of humiliation elicited support for violent resistance while anger was not associated with such action. Perhaps most alarmingly, humiliation also seems to suppress Palestinians' support for more constructive nonviolent forms of struggle such as boycott. Overall, situational effects seem to moderate emotional effects, pointing to emotion-context interaction.

Chapter 5 - Violence, Nonviolence, and Inaction – How Emotions and Collective Action are Associated under Two Different Conflict Escalations

In this chapter, I turn to examine how the distinct emotional foundations of disadvantaged group members under two *different* types of *conflict escalation* conditions feed into their decision to engage or not engage in resistance and collective action. Escalation leads to different cognitive attitudes and more extremism. The central role of emotions within conflict escalation and de-escalation has been widely recognized, so similar effects might be visible for emotions. Past studies suggest that emotions such as anger, humiliation, or hate predict support for collective action against the oppressor but the exact levels that make either of these trigger support for violent versus non-violent measures in specific conflict settings is still unclear. More importantly, these dynamics have rarely been studied within conflict escalations.

To better understand *when and how* specific emotions experienced by oppressed groups elicit the different forms of political resistance, I conducted mixed methods field research in the Palestinian Territories during two incidents of conflict escalation in a paired correlative longitudinal design. Using additional data from **Study 2**, I explore the collective action tendencies within two different conflict escalation settings, the announcement of the 'US-embassy move' to Jerusalem in December 2017, which led to widespread riots in the Westbank, as well as the so-called 'Gaza Marches of Return' in the first half of 2018, that led to almost no visible collective action in the Westbank.

Focusing here on the comparison between different escalation settings, first on a central and particularly provocative conflict issue further underlining the current power imbalance, then on an event of very different levels of conflict intensity and proximity. While both escalations were leading to an increased conflict salience amongst the population, results reveal that low-power group members experiencing specific escalation settings result in different emotional profiles and distinct action tendencies. Results suggest that escalations are indeed different from each other in terms of emotional profile as well as action tendencies and the two dimensions – intensity and proximity – are relevant 'conceptual cuts' to distinguish conflict escalation.

Chapter 6 – Two Paths to Violence – Individual versus Group Emotions during Different Types of Conflict Escalation

So far, I mainly focused on *group* emotion dynamics in my studies. But is it *exclusively* the group-level that matters, even in intergroup contexts? In social psychology, the focus is on the interaction between the individual ('I') and group ('we') and how the environment is given meaning (Reynolds, 2010). Research on self-categorization theory (Turner, Oakes, Haslam, & McGarty, 1995) indicates that identity ebbs and flows in a dynamic process between the individual and collective self as a function of contextual configurations. As contemporary events can impact personal identity in significant ways (Reicher & Haslam, 2006; Reynolds, 2010), which type of emotions are more impactful in which setting?

Using further data from longitudinal **Study 2**, I first combine specific negative group emotions – namely anger, humiliation, and hate – that are relevant for violent and nonviolent collective action in specific settings to individual- versus group emotions and next examine their distinct impact on violent collective action.

Results reveal that for low-power group members experiencing intergroup conflict, distinctive levels of individual- versus group emotions are present during different types of conflict intensifications. More specifically, for intense but mainly indirectly experienced conflict escalations, *group* emotions

predicted violent collective action, while for closely experienced conflict events, *individual* emotions predicted violent engagement.

To better understand when individual- versus group emotions experienced by oppressed groups elicit violent forms of political resistance, we conducted **Study 3** in the Palestinian Territories during an escalation defined by intensity *and* proximity of events. Results indicate that *both* types of emotions predict violent action under these circumstances. Along the situational dimensions of intensity versus proximity, individual and group emotions play a distinct role to incite violence. I conclude a verification of the suggested model, underlining the importance of different real-world escalation aspects as it alters emotional dynamics in terms of *mechanisms* (individual versus group) contributing to violent action as well as the unique role of *specific* emotions (anger versus humiliation) for distinct escalation settings.

Chapter 7 – Turning Points: Leaving Violence - Changes from Violent Activism

Given the unfortunate conflict dynamics of 'violence begets violence' (Vollhardt, 2009) and 'hardening the hearts' of group members (Canetti, 2014) detailed in the last chapters, the issue of *social change* is of utmost importance and is therefore studied here. Using a small sample of a particularly entrenched subgroup – radical violent activists - in qualitative **Study 4**, I analysed the unstructured in-depth life narratives of twelve adult male Palestinians that were formerly involved in violent action and are now involved in joint Israeli-Palestinian peace activities. The participants described their journey of change from hate-filled militants to reconciliation advocates. The data showed consistent pathways of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive situational change components. For 75% of the participants, the change process was triggered by an unforeseen direct or indirect positive intergroup encounter in contrast to the normally experienced intergroup power asymmetry. In 58% of the cases, this encounter triggered the emotion of empathy towards the Israeli outgroup, leading in 91% of cases to a cognitive reappraisal of their situation concerning the conflict context.

Understanding these situational change patterns lays the basis for further research on emotion regulation and intergroup contact.

Chapter 8 – Conclusions: Conflict Transformation and Beyond

In the conclusion of this dissertation, I outline ideas for the application of my results to support conflict transformation approaches from a psychological perspective based on microfactors, namely the possibilities for multi-level interventions within different peacebuilding trajectories (top-down/top leadership, middle-range leadership, bottom-up/grassroots). Next to their behavioral implications, emotions themselves can and should be *specific targets* of individual conflict transformation. In my research, I specified *which emotions* are to be targeted under *which context*. Several important implications for top-down communications as well as bottom-up conflict transformation approaches such as 'Track Two' mediation are described. On a more conceptual level, based on the dimensional framework 'proximity' versus 'intensity', alongside 'theories of conflict-in-context' (Miall, 2004; MacGinty, 2014), I propose *how* analyses of conflict microfactors must give proper consideration to the *situational* individual, social, regional, and international context. Within these deliberations, I provide two exemplary suggestions how the translational implications could be approached through indirect emotion regulation techniques within psychological conflict intervention- as well as deradicalization research.

1.3 Implications and Conclusions

This work has several important implications, both for scholars and policy-makers. Following recommendations on possible avenues to advance conflict transformations (Kriesberg, 2011), this dissertation aims to improve what is known already about how emotions contribute to violence, focussing on distinctive questions systematically – specifically unpacking the role of context and particular conflict escalations for emotional mechanisms. The research project particularly included approaches to improve popular thought and enhance constructive awareness among sub-elites. Another focus was to improve relations between theory and practice and therefore included practical aspects in characteristic scholar-activist tradition.

First, understanding the nuanced emotional and behavioral responses of low-power group members in the face of violence and oppression is a crucial basis for applied peacebuilding activities such as psychological interventions. This understanding is especially important in these settings as intractable conflicts are tough environments where good intentions often backfire. Many studies outline the difference between former conflict settings compared to ongoing conflict dynamics (e.g. Čehajić et al., 2009; Spanovic et al., 2010). Demonstrating according to which dynamics substantial transformation is possible, even for entrenched subsets of the population in already entrenched settings, this work provides insight for mediators or conflict transformation practitioners, for example on the mechanism of *how* to shape mutual understanding within intergroup contact in a way that supports their delicate efforts. These insights are applicable to psychological interventions but also providing a basis for structural policy changes. An especially fertile ground for application of the results might arguably be 'Track Two' interventions, which are supposed to influence emotions and attitudes of participants but also develop policy suggestions to be transferred to decision-makers (Bercovitch, 2007; Kelman, 2008).

On a conceptual level, a shift from theories of conflict to theories of conflict-in-context has been suggested, arguing that in the framework of microfactors our analyses of conflict must give proper consideration to the individual, social, regional, and international context (Miall, 2004; MacGinty, 2014). Since all conflicts are situated within a social context that shapes conflict formation, the *transformation* of conflict often requires a change in the conflict's context as well. This suggests that conflict transformation theory needs to extend to become a theory of conflict-in-context (Miall, 2007). For this purpose, several possible factors have been suggested in different domains (Goetschel, 2005, 2018; Tomoaia-Cotisel et al., 2013). Going beyond a *static* idea of context towards *situational and adaptive* considerations (De Coning, 2018), I suggest and empirically validate a framework for describing this context with the dimensions 'conflict intensity' versus 'conflict proximity' to predict the most suitable 'emotional targets' for individual conflict transformation. I will be providing concrete recommendations how research could profit from these insights on contextuality, for example psychological conflict intervention research (Cehajic-Clancey, 2017) as well as deradicalization approaches to reduce intergroup violence (Kruglanski, 2014).

Finally, this work makes important contributions for the interdisciplinary integration of political science with social psychology, not only regarding mixed methods research but more importantly for further integrating the important microfoundations topic of emotions research within political science. To enhance the knowledge about emotions and harness their potential within peacebuilding, political science and social psychology can complement each other in several ways, for example, methodological competencies or stakeholder access. But both will have to work together more purposefully in the future. The research will thus not only contribute to the current analysis of integrating political science with social psychology approaches, but it will also promote a deeper understanding of short-term and long-term processes causing intergroup violence. Understanding costly and detrimental intergroup behavior in the Middle East and beyond is notoriously difficult to study appropriately – this project is hopefully a useful step in this direction.

Chapter Two

Experiencing Protracted Oppression – Social Agency between Resistance and Acceptance in the Palestinian Territories

In this chapter, I describe an explorative participatory-observational study that provides initial insights about relevant psychological microfactors within intergroup conflict. I investigate, how disadvantaged-group members cope with and respond to 'living in intractable conflict' facing intergroup violence and repression. Following the 'local turn' in conflict studies, the chapter outlines dynamics of how social action becomes structured at a microfoundations level within disadvantaged groups based on experienced conflict events. In recent years, approaches that focus on microlevel factors, such as individual agency, have been suggested as useful predictors to understand how and why conflicts persist. Classic theories from social psychology, predict that strong situational forces *repress* expressions of human agency. However, this has recently been called into question.

Drawing from three years of participatory observation within the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, I describe the psychological aspects of intergroup repression on the disadvantaged. I explore how group members' sense of social agency is impacted by micro-escalations in a conflict setting, how it impacts agentic lifestyle choices, and how these constructs are linked to my central dissertation topic, the role of emotions in the context of individual conflict transformation. Results indicate that the strong situational forces of intergroup conflict settings allow for, and may even facilitate, expressions of human agency mediated by negative intergroup emotions. The ensuing agentic coping patterns result in action inclinations remarkably similar to well-established inter*personal* conflict styles. The study lays the foundation for theory development in the next chapter as well as the quantitative studies on the emotional bases of collective action in the following empirical chapters.

2.1 Introduction

Groups locked in a protracted conflict pay a heavy price for living in a violent dispute. In asymmetrical conflicts, the price is especially high for the lower-power group members, as they suffer greater material damage and disproportional losses in human life (Leshem & Halperin, 2020; Thiessen & Darweish, 2018). Disenfranchised groups experience oppression and violence from the high-power group in the form of movement restrictions, detention, injury, or even death.

One way that low-power groups try to influence their situation and cope with these unfair circumstances is by engaging in social collective action against the high-power group (Wright et al., 1990). However, this is risky and 'classical' social psychology contends that in strong situations, social agency is substantially *reduced*. This has been recently contested (Bukowski et al., 2016; Leach & Livingstone, 2015; Swann & Jetten, 2017), but the exact dynamics of agency within protracted intergroup conflict settings remain underexplored (Bou Zeineddine & Leach, 2021; Krause, 2016). The current study fills this gap by examining how agency develops for disadvantaged group members. Understanding the connection between oppression context, emotions experienced based on this context, conflictual agency and coping patterns can help mitigate the 'cycles of violence' that enhance intergroup conflicts.

The chapter is organized as follows. I first describe the linkages between local conflict events such as checkpoints or appropriations of resources and agentic as well as emotional perceptions of disadvantaged-group members. Second, I examine the same setting quantitively, before, third investigating resulting long-term agentic coping patterns. Finally, I outline associated possibilities for conflict transformation, borrowing from inter*personal* conflict approaches.

Protracted Intergroup Conflict

Social environments shape behaviour directly through various forms of influence such as peer pressure and social learning, and indirectly by dictating what opportunities or social positions are available (Blalock, 1984; Bruch & Feinberg, 2017). Accordingly, these social environments have to be integrated into peacebuilding (De Coning, 2018; Mac Ginty, 2014). Protracted intergroup conflict settings are high-intensity, prolonged, violent conflicts that are perceived as irresolvable by the parties involved. These types of conflicts are usually characterized by self-perpetuating cycles in which sociopsychological infrastructures developed to *assist* the societies in conflict to cope with their harsh reality end up *deepening* the presence of the conflict in the collective psyche (Moghaddam, 2017). They are of extremely long duration, usually lasting longer than one generation. As intractable conflicts can involve extreme aggression and violence, groups locked in a protracted hostile conflict pay a heavy price for the continuation of the dispute (Barber et al., 2016; Halperin, 2016).

When the conflict is asymmetrical, the price is particularly high for the lower-power group, as it suffers greater material damage and disproportional losses in human life (Leshem & Halperin, 2020; Thiessen & Darweish, 2018). The context of conflict and longstanding military occupation positions the lives and narratives of disadvantaged groups in a place of insecurity and uncertainty (Hammack, 2010; Khalidi, 1997). Above all, lower power groups have very little control about what they can do in the face of repression and limited options how to influence contested issues in their favour (Kamans et al., 2011; Shnabel & Nadler, 2008), which impacts their agentic confidence negatively.

Social-psychological theorizing suggests that there are two universal dimensions along which people judge themselves and others at both individual and group levels: the agency dimension, representing traits such as strength and influence, and the social dimension, representing traits such as trustworthiness and relationality (Abele & Wojciszke, 2014). Based on these two dimensions,

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action intentions for example in organisational conflict settings can be described alongside *cooperation,* attempting to satisfy the other's concern, as well as *assertiveness*, attempting to satisfy one's own concern (Thomas, 1992). The resulting conflict coping styles vary between strong competition, conflict avoidance, accommodating, compromising, and cooperation (Thomas et al., 2008). Protracted intergroup conflict settings also create intense emotions such as anger or despair (Halperin, 2016). In conflict contexts, researchers distinguish between activating and dispiriting emotions (Bramsen & Poder, 2018; Pearlman, 2013), but the precise situated interlinkages, as well as functional mechanisms, remain unclear. Subsequently, there is also considerable ambiguity on the exact link between emotions and agency, particularly in intergroup conflict. While substantial literature on collective action as an outflow of agency in these contexts exists, conflict settings can trigger activating emotions such as anger while *at the same time* creating dispiriting emotions such as fear.

Social Agency in Intergroup Conflict

The concept of agency is central to understandings of collective action (Cleaver, 2007), which will be in the focus in later chapters. Agency has lately become a hot topic in peacebuilding literature (see for example (Björkdahl & Gusic, 2015; Mac Ginty, 2014), and is an assumed necessary ingredient for successful conflict transformation (Bramsen & Poder, 2018; McEvoy & Shirlow, 2009. Agency has been defined very simply as 'the capacity to act' (Schlosser, 2015), also against existing social norms (Hancock, 2017). Human agency can take the form of personal-, proxy-, and collective agency (Bandura, 2000). Agency is important as it affects behaviour not only directly, but also indirectly by impacting goals, outcome expectations, as well as impediments and opportunities in the social environment (Bandura, 2000, 2006). Extending agency theory to diverse settings can be accomplished by formally recognizing and incorporating the social context and surrounding relations into agency-based models (Wiseman et al., 2012). *Social* Agency can be defined as the sense of agency experienced in any situation in which the effects of our actions are

related to others. This includes the other's reactions being *caused* by our action, *joint* action modulating our sense of agency, or the other's mere *social presence* (Silver et al., 2021).

While some researchers place a high premium on human agency even in extremely challenging settings (Frankl, 2000), 'classical' social psychological literature suggested that when people find themselves in difficult situations such as – in our case – when experiencing intergroup conflict, they *fail* to display agency (Asch, 1955; Milgram, 1963; Zimbardo, 1973). The early studies on conformity, obedience, and bystander intervention, are renowned for showing that when challenged by strong situational pressures, participants acquiesced by demonstrating a *lack* of agency – even if it meant abandoning important moral principles (Swann & Jetten, 2017). The uncertainty involved in experiencing intractable conflict might even trigger learned helplessness (Peterson & Seligman, 1983), and the psychological price of 'living in conflict' is indeed high (Ayer et al., 2017; Canetti et al., 2013).

Intergroup conflict generates conditions for intense interaction (Collins, 2013). *Dominating* interactions by the high-power group cause conflictual responses by the disadvantaged (Bramsen & Poder, 2014), creating fear within the advantaged group and a stronger need for security resulting in further dominating interactions. Agentic reactions to grievances can be differentiated along three dimensions: inaction versus action, individual- versus collective action, and last by normative- versus non-normative action (Wright et al., 1990). None of the choices are straightforward and each type of action can have serious consequences for individuals or the community. Factors relevant for willingness to participate in collective action include ingroup identification, collectivist orientation, but also outgroup stereotyping, and perceived intergroup conflict (Kelly & Kelly, 1994). On the other end of the activity extreme, also strategic *inaction* can be 'weaponized', for example through boycott or civil noncollaboration (Karatnycky & Ackerman, 2005; Sharp, 2008) such as the Palestinian BDS movement (Bakan & Abu-Laban, 2009) and individual action can have strong collective impacts (Stroebe et al., 2015). Also, someone might be inactive in a certain situation, but

provide clandestine support to militants or donate money to political causes. Other research points out that when their sense of *personal* control is threatened, people try to restore perceived control through the *social* self (Stollberg et al., 2015).

Agency is particularly interesting in intergroup conflict for several reasons. Some scholars suggest that within theories of social movements, the structural models of the last decades may have reached certain limits of their utility (Jasper, 2010). Future breakthroughs might more likely arise from empirical attention to the personal microfoundations of political action (Kertzer, 2017). Within microfoundations, agency is a central factor on the nexus between the individual self and more group-oriented concepts such as collective action as well as openness for conflict transformation (Mac Ginty, 2014; McEvoy & Shirlow, 2009).

From a collective action research perspective, the 'effectiveness route' of prompting social action (Becker & Tausch, 2015; van Zomeren, 2013) is seriously impaired by long years of unchanged oppression. One of the dangers here is that perceived *low* effectiveness is linked to intergroup violence (Tausch et al., 2011). Bandura (2000) also underlines the danger of reduced proxy agency, as in this case people might be using more confrontative tactics outside the traditional political realm. Such reduced proxy agency is particularly problematic in conflict settings, where almost all actions of the high-power group are meant to show 'overwhelming force' against which all action would have no effect.

Finally, the needs-based model of reconciliation (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008) postulates that experiencing transgressions results in reduced agency and increased need for power. Agency as a basis for collective action has been put forward for deeper study from a basic research perspective, including recommendations of methodically broadening the diversity of *how* to study social behavior within social psychology, suggesting a stronger focus on qualitative, longitudinal, and field approaches (Swann & Jetten, 2017). Similarly, from the disadvantaged-group field research

perspective, the notion that oppression circumstances 'automatically' result in reduced agency has recently been questioned (Albzour et al., 2019; Bou Zeineddine & Leach, 2021).

The Present Study

Incorporating recent suggestions that call for local- and microfactor approaches (Ejdus, 2021; Kertzer & Tingley, 2018) to analyse intergroup conflict, I explore how agency becomes central to conflict behaviour patterns. I show how agency is shaped by conflict events in a social process. While according to some researchers the degree of cooperation is the key dimension of social agency (Silver et al., 2020), I contend that in intergroup conflict, using confrontative means is another important element, concretely the agentic nexus between assertive self-confidence and intergroup relationality (Abele & Wojciszke, 2013). Furthermore, alongside Bramsen and Poder (2014), this paper argues that important agency-related emotions grow out of situational interactions and that in intergroup disputes, accumulated levels of negative emotions such as anger or resentment, build conflictual emotional energy, fuelling the agency of opposing parties which drives negative conflictual action. It is clear that under the right social conditions, the disadvantaged can become active agents in the attempt to transform repression experiences (Dixon et al., 2012). However, what these conditions are, remains an open question.

Two major questions guided me in this inquiry: (1) As agency seems generally 'under threat' in conflict settings for low-power groups, the question remains how group members experience this issue? I describe in 'rich narrative' the different patterns of *how* low-power group members are trying to maintain their agency within difficult circumstances.

More (2): I want to gain insights into how these interlinkages are impacted by different types of acute *escalation* through specific conflict-related events and increased conflict salience. These escalation events are a frequent aspect of daily life in conflict and they will impact long-term conflict dynamics negatively.

Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

The ongoing dispute between Israel and the Palestinians is considered a prototypical case of protracted intergroup conflict (Bar-Tal & Halperin, 2013). The conflict is also asymmetric, with Israel having superior political, economic, and military power over Palestinians. Since 1967, the conflict has had a devastating impact on the daily lives of the Palestinians living under Israeli military rule. Wars, popular uprisings and a never-ending cycle of retaliations have been the backdrop of life in the Palestinian Territories for over 50 years. Palestinians experience widespread repression, ranging from permit refusal and curfews to night-time army house searches, detention, injury, and death. The social structural environment of the Palestinian territories is characterized by strong power asymmetry (Rouhana, 2004; Rouhana & Korper, 1997) and lack of control in issues of mobility and basic daily affairs, including trade and economic subsistence (Roy, 2004). Israel legislates discriminatory rules and implements unilateral policies that have a detrimental effect on Palestinian well-being and livelihood, with little formal ability of the Palestinian citizens to do something about it.

The collapse of the Israeli-Palestinian peace processes at the turn of the millennium (Barak, 2005) and the overwhelming support Israel's expansionist policies recently received from the United States, leaves Palestinians not only oppressed, but also vulnerable, irritable, helpless, and uncertain regarding their future (Salinas, 2007; O'Malley, 2015). The ongoing oppression, and the challenges of life under militarized occupation as well as their negative emotional experiences, afforded me with an opportunity to study the emotional bases of agency among disadvantaged group members experiencing a frequently violent conflict setting.

Carrying out research in an environment of militarized conflict and occupation in the Palestinian Territories is extremely challenging. Apart from logistical issues, researchers must also address ethical and methodological considerations. Palestinians are suspicious of unknown sources

that ask about political opinions such as their support for actions against Israel (Leshem et al., 2020). However, I think it is imperative to understand the agentic elements of resistance not only to better comprehend the mechanisms of political violence but also to reveal potential ways to achieve tenable 'microfoundation-based' solutions for conflict transformation without violent means. I thus went forward with this study, taking the necessary ethical and good practice considerations (Gabriel & Goetschel, 2017; Goetschel, 2021).

The study includes different contexts and uses mainly participatory observation. First, I will start with 'setting the scene' and describe our local situation. Then I will utilise some quantitative and qualitative event data to describe and substantiate the inherent psychological agency dynamics. In the end, I will extrapolate the event data towards different overall 'agentic identity types', consistent behaviour patterns to illustrate how low-power group members cope *over time* with circumstances of oppression.

2.2 Methodology

Data Collection Approach

Participatory-observational methods were chosen mirroring the recent 'local turn' in peace research, resulting in research that can better interpret bottom-up experiences of conflict (Autesserre, 2014; Millar, 2018). The approach follows Collins's methodological considerations, arguing that we can explain more by first analysing situations instead of assuming certain properties of individuals and systems (Collins, 2013). For further methodological discussions to assess agency as well as emotions with participatory-observational approaches, see for example (Bramsen & Poder, 2014).

Although ethnographic methods are not often employed in political science research, if applied, they can provide great quantities of important information (McNabb, 2010). Theory building within major challenges, such as protracted intergroup conflict, seems to profit particularly from interpretivist studies, and ethnography (Eisenhardt et al., 2016). This rationale is also following methodological considerations within social psychology of 'broadening the lenses' through which researchers study behaviour, engaging in ecologically valid research in naturally occurring settings as well as extending temporal frames of research (Swann & Jetten, 2017). The comparatively long time in the country, allowed me to fully engage with communities from both conflict parties. It enabled me to develop relationships with individuals and families, to participate in community events, and simply to engage in informal conversations about everyday life. Such informal interactions provide for a contextual perspective that multiplies manyfold the substantive understanding of formal data. It is arguably the broader context of people's lives that shapes their ideas and opinions, their expectations, and experiences (MacGinty, 2016).

Researcher Characteristics and Reflexivity

In these complex fieldwork considerations, any researcher must engage in the critical reflection about relational positionality. First of all, our spatial situation 'on the seam' between two communities in intergroup conflict was rare in a setting where taking sides seemed to be the automatic consequence of any engagement. As a family, we found ourselves within an unusual spectrum, deeply rooted in a small Israeli town *as well as* a nearby Palestinian community *and* at the same time being able to pass restricted borders between the two regularly without serious risk.

Because of this special standpoint 'beyond borders', I was often positioned as an 'outsider-within – caught between groups of unequal power' (Collins, 1986). My 'outsider-within' status as a male Western research practitioner was marked by foreignness and privilege, especially regarding the Palestinian culture. As long-term residents permanently based in the Jerusalem-Bethlehem area for three years, as a family with children we experienced different degrees of estrangement and assimilation with both cultures. This said, I was exceptionally positioned to combine academic insight with closeness and distance, experiencing but at the same time overcoming power structures.

Particular effort has been made to ensure the studies described and the overall approach prevented the reproduction of existing power asymmetry through a reflective attitude to the field and balanced personal positionality. I am well aware that research results are instruments of power. Exposing myself to the existing power structures and overcoming these at least to some extent combined with emotional awareness and reflection framed the conduct of my field research and influenced the development of my theoretical framework.

Participants and Procedure

This article is based on three years of participatory-observational field research conducted in Israel and the Palestinian Territories between April 2017 and July 2020. The research design of the study utilizes relational ethnography (Desmond, 2014). During the duration of my observations, I collected field notes from sites located mostly within the wider Jerusalem area (Bethlehem- as well as Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorates, Mateh Yehuda Regional Council). Residing as a family in the Jerusalem-Bethlehem area directly at the border, every morning, we crossed into the Westbank for work and schooling, every afternoon we came back. Additionally, we visited further conflict-affected communities all over the country, such as Hebron, Jenin, Ramallah, and Jericho but as well 'mixed' population areas within Israel such as Jerusalem, Jaffa, or Akko.

My position is one as a participant, for example as a father of children at a local school as well as a researcher. I actively engaged with my positionality and remained transparent to my contacts. The researched conflict events include individually relevant incidents such as checkpoint crossings, permit refusal or appropriation of resources as well as broader-scale conflict escalations such as the widespread demonstrations around the relocation of the US embassy to Jerusalem, the 'Gaza Marches of Return' and a military closure of 'Ramallah' due to Palestinian violence. These cases cover different stages of conflict salience, relatively quiet periods as well as different types of – sometimes severe – conflict escalation.

Despite an overall focus on the low-power perspective, the research also includes Israelis to broaden perspective and triangulate certain information. I conducted interviews with and collected data from researchers, community members and leaders, activists, journalists, entrepreneurs, local officials, and civil society organizations whose work is directly related to issues of resistance or who work more broadly on conflict issues. I also engaged with people normally not professionally related to the conflict such as teachers, tourist guides, administrators, farmers, religious leaders, shop

owners. Finally, I reviewed existing studies, media coverage, and documentation on conflict events, perception, identity and attended numerous public- as well as informal meetings.

My research started with a convenience sample of people we developed a relationship such as neighbours or other parents, developing further into a more theoretical sample (Draucker et al., 2007) from different realms of life, most but not all with a certain activist streak. Because my contacts were part of a snowball sample, they may not be representative of the population in a statistical sense, but I intended to understand how disadvantaged group members made sense of their world rather than to test specific hypotheses or make quantifiable conclusions at this stage. The 'behavior patterns' results were developed based on a subset of about twenty people that I learned to know in sufficient detail over a certain time. I included cases to ensure sociodemographic diversity along attributes that the literature and my research suggested might shape the experience of agency in conflict such as political attitudes or religiosity. I made sure that all identifying features are anonymized and changed. There is no possibility to trace the people described below, even if one is familiar with the area.

Measures

My observations, which kept track of time, date, and location, ultimately were described in multiple transcripts. During my time in the country, I filled several field diaries. The most important incidents and interview summaries connected to the research focus were transferred to an excel-based Lab Notebook.

Data Processing and Analysis

Methods for processing data followed the usual good practice principles such as transcription, data entry, data management on password-protected computer, anonymized data storage and usage of pseudonyms, anonymization, and deidentification of excerpts. Data analysis was based on event descriptions and informal interview transcriptions of the meetings, interviews, or participatory

events. I observed most described events directly. Additionally, insights came from – mostly informal – debriefing meetings held among the research group I was attached to including Israeli Arab members as well as close confidants.

The transcripts were then examined using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). From this approach, I studied agentic patterns in social interactions. I mostly selected interactional moments where I or the participants experienced conflict dynamics directly, such as checkpoint crossings, and analysed the interactions or discourses in detail. For example, I would select sequences of events that happened during the Second Intifada, described within several broader conversations during a social event. Triangulation of sources happened to the extent possible, especially between Israeli versus Palestinian perceptions. Also, I followed adherence to a conflict sensitivity approach (Gabriel & Goetschel, 2017).

As it often happens in the Holy Land, the main field sites were geographically and temporally close to each other. For example, the distance between our place of living in Israel and daily schooling in Palestine was merely a ten-minute drive – although for both local populations in completely different worlds that hardly ever overlapped.

2.3 Results

Analysing the participatory observational and qualitative data together, I identified two important aspects of the research questions – short-term agentic choices based on direct event experiences as well as long-term 'social agentic identity'. Describing the general context in more detail first, I present the results accordingly. Where I felt names were needed for the sake of readability, I made use of pseudonyms (as one might guess from using the name initials A to E). As mentioned above, certain identifying characteristics of people such as gender or profession are adapted and the longer-term 'agentic identity' behaviour pattern descriptions are composed of several real people for the sake of anonymity. To better quantify certain 'event frequency' aspects of these agentic choices, the data is enriched by 'borrowing' quantitative conflict events data from a later study (Study 2).

The Separate Spaces – Two Towns and One Short Commute

Our daily commute as a family into the Westbank started in a typical neat and clean Israeli town in the hills south of Jerusalem. As it was situated directly at the border to the Palestinian Territories, it was surrounded by a high fence with barbed wire and a guarded gate. Palestinian friends 'smuggled' over the border into town were convinced we were living in an 'illegal settlement'. The town was so close to the border, during one of the summer fires next to it, both fire brigades – Israeli and Palestinian – refused to intervene ("*too dangerous as too close to the fence*" versus "*not our responsibility*"). The town has a lively activist scene, committed to the extent that on at least one occasion two different Israeli NGOs were opposing each other on behalf of two different Palestinian communities. Less than a minute drive after the checkpoint, there are two Palestinian communities and one Israeli settlement. Only a year ago before we moved there, the road – serving as the main commuting route for the inhabitants of the area working in Jerusalem – was the location

of repeated stone-throwing incidents. In typical Mideastern fashion, rumours about incitement from settlement shopkeepers to prevent their fellow compatriots buying from cheaper Palestinian shops became rampant and still, this 'settler road' was protected from the Palestinian village next to it by an impressive barbed wire fence as well as frequent military patrols.

The next bigger Palestinian town, our daily destination, is one of the very few distinctly Christian communities remaining in Palestine. It has a southern European look-and-feel that kept fascinating me, as remnants of Christianity are normally not linked to the Arabic letters you could see on the signs all over town or on local Church frescos. By general atmosphere or dress, this could easily be somewhere in Greece or Portugal. This said, the town had still an 'Intifada Street' (incidentally leading to the biggest local church) and was one of the hotspots during the second Intifada, still salient in local narratives. It was a unique experience to get detailed explanations on *"shooting directions, house damages and clashes with the occupying force"* on the rooftop terrace during a schoolgirl's birthday party. Most of the current violent incidents though are attributed to "*the Arabs*" from a Muslim village close by. Although overall relatively calm, during the time we experienced several incidents of Palestinian violence in the area, such as stabbing attacks, the murder of an Israeli family in a nearby settlement, a bomb attack on a hiking settler family, leading to especially one occasion where the single elderly private guards at our town's entrance gate were replaced with IDF and border patrol forces.

The Spaces Collide – Events Context and Conflictual Interactions in the Westbank

To illustrate the general 'strong situation' context in the Westbank during the described timeframe, I want to show the extent of exposure to specific conflict events during 'normal' times. The according quantitative study (N=200) took place in the Ramallah and Al Bireh Governorate (see Chapter Four for more details). Overall, this 'baseline', was a relatively calm period. Almost 30% of

participants reported having experienced *no conflict events at all* during this time and only 22% of participants reported levels of oppression that were above the midpoint of the scale. Nevertheless, the period was characterized by a certain number of directly experienced conflict events (M = 2.15, SD = 1.27). All responses ranged on a scale from 1 (never) to 6 (very frequently). As shown in Figure 1, the most frequently experienced events by Palestinians during this time were linked to movement restrictions such as checkpoint crossings (M = 2.81, SD = 1.85) and harassment at checkpoints (M = 2.73, SD = 1.84) as well as experienced Westbank closures (M = 2.58, SD = 1.56). Almost 28% of our respondents reported cases of permit denial that were above the midpoint of the scale, with 21% experiencing it "frequently" or "very frequently". Almost 20% of our respondents reported cases of resource appropriation that were above the midpoint of the scale, with 13% experiencing it "very frequently". Regarding checkpoint crossings, more than 32% of our respondents reported this issue above the midpoint of the scale, with 23% having to do this "frequently" or "very frequently" and almost 35% of our respondents reported cases of harassment at checkpoints above the midpoint of the scale, with 21% experiencing it "very frequently". The results underline considerable direct and structural oppression experiences for our participants with overall relatively low conflict salience.

Figure 2.1

Conflict Event Frequency during 'Quiet' Times in the Westbank (number of responses, n = 200)
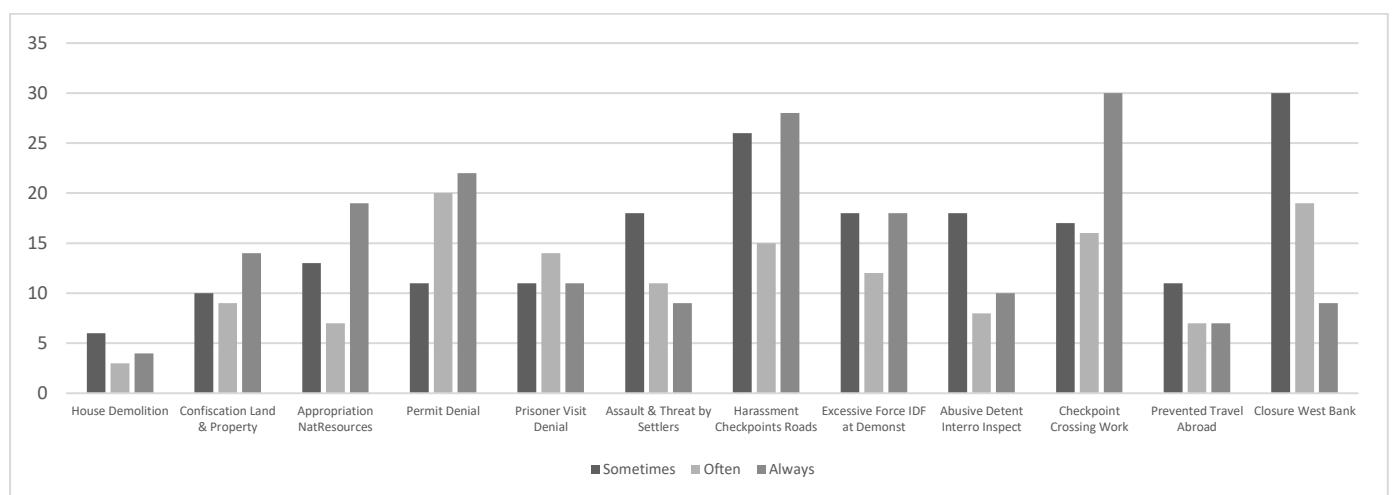
Permit Denial & Movement Restrictions. Many Palestinian friends shared stories about the often seemingly arbitrary Israeli permit office responsible for the local Palestinian Governorate. Procedures were described as utterly humiliating in a context of complete power asymmetry. Although there are as well positive developments regarding permits, the impact of the permit office on agency can only be described in devastating terms with illustrations from Kafka's novel 'The Trial' –helplessness and power asymmetry leading to frustration and despair. On two occasions I could experience the contrast between how foreigners versus Palestinians are treated by Israeli officials. One of the most touching stories we were directly exposed to include a good friend of ours, a European married to a Palestinian national for many years, who experienced periods of over a year without a legitimate visa, completely limiting movements. The administrative procedure included as well attempts of coercion to sign a waiver for future visa rights.

Also, movement restrictions can have a strong impact on agency. During one of our drives, we came across some olive farmers at a strategic location between a Palestinian village and an Israeli settlement. The farmers were kneeling on the ground, being held at gunpoint by the IDF – humiliated, seemingly paralyzed, and overwhelmed by military force simply because they wanted to harvest their olive trees and make a subsistence living.

Checkpoint Crossings. Closer to the Palestinian checkpoint experience than our comfortable morning and afternoon commute was the so-called 'Tunnel Checkpoint' between Bethlehem and Jerusalem. Still, it was a relatively civil affair – international or Israeli passport holders could stay seated in the local bus which Israeli soldiers with submachine guns would board to control visas and permits. 'Real' checkpoints that you have to cross on foot, such as the infamous Qalandia Crossing, the main checkpoint between the northern West Bank/Ramallah and Jerusalem, as well as 'Bethlehem 300', the main crossing towards the southern Westbank/Bethlehem. Several Israeli entities have criticized the overcrowding at this checkpoint and the attitude of the Israeli authorities against the Palestinians. We experienced these conditions ourselves on several occasions, for

example crossing with my elderly mom and little daughter. The most impressive 'authentic' checkpoint experience happened to us in the early morning hours of Christmas Day – returning into Israel after the night pilgrimage from Dormitio Abbey in Jerusalem to the Nativity Church in Bethlehem. At the checkpoint, we were suddenly crowded in by several thousand Palestinian workers. For us, a substantial counterpoint to a special Christmas experience, for the – mostly Muslim – Palestinians around us the usual start into a hard day of menial labour in Israel. Despite the inconvenience, as international passport holders with proper visas, we had nothing to fear. For Palestinians, checkpoints are an entirely different story – agentic impact on *every* Palestinian I ever crossed a checkpoint with, can be described as extremely nervous and tense. Accompanying emotions are a mix between anger, humiliation, and fear – as again all authority is with the advantaged high-power group.

Harassment at Checkpoints. While my own experiences – due to my European looks and Israeli number plates – are mostly positive, Palestinians have a completely different perspective. A senior member of the local administration described a visit to Jerusalem *"I'm a respected man, how can you treat me like this? Keep Jerusalem to yourself, I even don't want to go there anymore".* A social worker was harassed as a teenage girl, detained for several hours together with her little sister, and only released when she handed over her phone number. At the HaMachpela Synagogue ('Tomb of the Patriarchs') in Hebron, the contrast in behaviour of the security personnel towards us and my elderly parents-in-law [possibly foreign Jews or at least sympathizers] versus our – very polite – Palestinian guide just trying to do his job was stunning. I recognize that the area is a true hotbed if there ever was one and the only area in Israel-Palestine where I felt uncomfortable, despite having been exposed to a fair share of intergroup conflict settings including facing Congolese child soldiers or Janjaweed Militia in Darfur. The other side of the story is that very young Israeli staff are given serious responsibility, in extreme cases over life and death. But the outcome of their dominating interactions is that any goodwill and joint action – anyway rather unusual for Palestinians – is

substantially discouraged and negative emotional energy facilitated, increasing conflictual agency. A Palestinian active in joint education and intergroup encounter projects described his checkpoint experiences *"We said goodbye to our Israeli counterparts, and then it took me eight hours to reach [my hometown] right after a joint international meeting"* for a drive that should take a maximum of two hours.

Appropriation of Land & Resources. Palestinian friends have their family fields near the infamous Etzion Junction in the Westbank, which is easily accessible to Israelis and Palestinians alike and therefore location for regular – sometimes deadly – security incidents. One day during grape harvesting season, a kindergarten group from a nearby settlement on their outing came to the fields [these groups are always accompanied by armed personnel] and one of the adults mentioned casually "*take it, kids, it's all yours anyway*" – and the settlers in this area 'moderate' compared to others.

Another Palestinian was facing issues on the traditional rights of way with an Israeli settler. After grazing sheep from the settler destroyed dozens of newly planted grape and fruit tree saplings, the Palestinian complained. The discussion between Palestinian landowner and Israeli settler went as follows. Settler: *"We have the right to do this, you either agree or we use force"* Palestinian: *"I can't be seen collaborating with you in any way, so I guess it will have to be violent"*. He concluded to us afterward "*I'm kind of ok myself with all this, but I fear for the reaction of my son"*. The discussions on site after the incident were held with the settler showcasing a sidearm and a German shepherd dog. Impact on agency can be described with a mix between resistance and resignation, impotence or helplessness but as well the desire for retribution at a later stage. Relevant emotions are again anger and humiliation.

Table 2.1

Summary of Social Agency and Emotional Energy in Four Common Intergroup Conflict Settings

	Permit Denial	Checkpoint	Harassment	Appropriation
Interaction	Dominating	Dominating	Conflictual	Dominating
Social Agency	Low	Mixed	High	High
Emotional Energy	Dispiriting-Diminished	Dispiriting-Diminished	Negative-Conflictual	Negative-Conflictual
Relevant Emotions	Hopelessness, Frustration, Despair, Resignation	Nervous Agitation, Fear	Emboldening, Resentful Anger	Emboldening, Resentful Anger, Rage

Note: Agency is displayed as perceived at the moment. The long-term impact might differ (see 'Conflict Styles').

Agency under Threat

Concluding this first results part, substantial subsets of regularly occurring conflict events are not resulting in *diminished* agency, but – via emboldening emotions such as anger – in *conflict-enhancing* agency (see Table 2.1), even if this agency is not actively displayed in the same situation. Conflict agency can be as simple as driving the least confrontational way to a friend's wedding, taking longer but avoiding checkpoints and settler hotspots to the extent possible, or knowing how to act in specific conflict escalation settings, for example when to discuss with authorities and when to let go, generally making the best of a difficult situation. One of our Palestinian friends – active during the second intifada – nicely illustrated this specific agentic competence with a story when he was about to be detained by a – in his words – 'Russian' IDF soldier during a violent incident. Having observed that the supervisor of the soldier looked distinctly 'Mizrachi' (Arab Jewish), he called out to him "*your guy here is horrible, he insulted my mother*" (a deep offense in the oriental context). After a brief reflection, the supervisor responded [to my friend]: "*OK, you - bugger off* [turning to his subordinate soldier] "*and with you, I need to talk*". Agency can also be the

comprehension when to ask for help foreseeing difficult intergroup encounters. During a social evening with friends, one of the other guests – an 'expatriate' Palestinian on a visit back home – got a call that his son, also visiting, had forgotten his international passport while being with friends at a potentially risky location near a settlement. The host decided that they would fetch him, offering to me – *"come along with us, it will be fun"*. On the one hand, he was being culturally appropriate (me joining with the other men, leaving the women at home) but he was also well aware that my 'international' presence might come in very handy just in case.

Next, I want to focus on longer-term agentic perspectives. Over time, emotional energy and agency shape distinct behaviour patterns, styles of agency alongside the two already described dimensions assertiveness versus relationality. In a participatory-observational depiction of emotional and identity aspects of polarization in the United States (Hochschild, 2016), narratives of powerful *agentic* but as well *emotional reality,* how people comprehend their world were described. In the following section, I will illustrate comparable narrative identities within an intergroup conflict context.

Collisions over Time – Archetypes of Agency in Conflict

Pragmatic Individualism. Abdallah is a resourceful and active professional leading his own business. Coming from difficult family background, he ended up with a loving family and four children. In many aspects, he is remarkably similar to one of our best Israeli friends. He is living in a bustling city in a modern high-rise apartment, unlike the traditional Palestinian housing. His ingroup business transactions are competent and at the same time relational. Active during the Second Intifada, he gave up completely on political activism later due to disillusion [Abdallah to a high-ranking local politician during a confrontational 'day of rage'-protest: *"where is your son?"* response: *"He is at school, he needs to study!"*] and bad experiences including a short spell in

prison. He repeatedly said to me he doesn't even read the news anymore. Very critical towards Palestinian governmental authority but also towards religious entities [*"it's all about power and control"*], he is probably the most conciliatory towards Israel within his wider family. He speaks fluent Hebrew and also sees the positive sides of a strong Israel – *"we live with the lion, we need not fear. Not ONE Syrian rocket hit Israel during all those years"*. His strong agency and resourcefulness show mainly in his private and business life instead of politics, his strongest emotion of anger is mostly directed towards Palestinian entities.

Activism 'with an Edge'. Basma ['smile'] has been growing up in a Palestinian refugee camp and her political position, as well as agentic approaches, are very different from Abdallah's. She has an academic background but with an activist twist. Her viewpoints can include well-selected confrontation at times ["*the situation is complex*"] and she is an avid supporter of the BDS movement ['boycott, divestment, sanctions against Israel]. The slight hipster atmosphere in her stylish university office is remarkably different from the traditional Palestinian family home (her elderly father can still recite the English poems he learned during the mandate times in his early childhood). She seems to be grooming a certain victim identity, which arguably harms her agency, but on the other hand, enhances the 'morality route' to collective action. Her considerable agentic resourcefulness fully plays out in the political context, her central emotion of anger is directed at the State of Israel and unlike Abdallah's carries a certain 'edge' of sharpness that doesn't exclude confrontation.

Peace Activism. Chalil ['friend'] is also a resourceful and creative entrepreneur like Abdallah, founder of several organisations including innovative business/non-profit combinations. I met him in a traditional Palestinian town in the restaurant next to his gift shop, but also in the quiet office of another one of his business ventures that still showcases his former international exposure. Unlike Abdallah, next to his social entrepreneurship endeavours, he is active in the political activism and intergroup reconciliation realm, even active in joint activism (which is rare amongst Palestinians

and completely against the societal mainstream). Having spent substantial time abroad contributed to a change process from confrontational to peace activism. Having grown up within a Palestinian refugee context outside of the Westbank, to quite some extent his social entrepreneurship activity had been started by an emotional healing process in a Western country abroad. Already of a certain age, he displays quiet sympathetic confidence, and hopeful but at the same time pragmatic energy despite his accounts of being a rather violent personal and political hothead in his youth.

Confrontational Activism. Diab lives in a typical bustling oriental town in the northern part of the country. I selected his name as it means 'wolf' in Arabic, which is telling in several ways. The contact had been made via the friend of a friend of a friend. He loves his young family and children, but he definitely doesn't love Israel. He also spent four years in an Israeli prison (as did probably over 30% of the male Palestinian population). In this sense, he is a not too serious outlier; his best friend I encountered later did fifteen years in jail, a timeframe that substantially alters one's life course. Diab could have significantly shortened his time in jail by a brief formal and widely meaningless apology for his delinquency, which he refused. Of physically robust appearance, I met him and his friends in different places, including a quiet shisha bar, his clean office, and an impressive prisoner memorial event late in the evening with speeches, testimonials, fireworks, and traditional Palestinian 'Dabke' dancing. As he lives close to a known confrontation hotspot, already while waiting for him at the local municipality one evening, I experienced tensions and the burning of an Israeli flag. Again, this tension completely goes away once you're in the 'in-group' – I was warmly welcomed by himself as well as his rough-looking prisoner friends. Interacting with Diab, I couldn't help but notice a resourceful intergroup contempt [*"Are you a Zionist? If you were a Zionist, I wouldn't even speak with you"*], very distinct from his warm personal attitude towards family and friends – and also towards myself, showing typical Palestinian hospitality.

Assertive Activism. Emad ['support, pillar'] is an old, weathered Palestinian farmer living in the Bethlehem Governorate. His scarce but beautiful family land for many generations is high in the Westbank hills with magnificent views all around. It also stretches between two settlements, which makes it a very attractive *and* contested property. Many years of struggle and legal battles against these neighbouring settlements have not made him hard or bitter, unlike many other people we met. He exudes the gentle shrewdness I know from my grandfather, also a farmer. Luckily, he has strong land ownership records which is not always the case in Palestine. Nevertheless, the cost for his legal issues is enormous and the contest often feels extremely one-sided. For example, a legal notification from the Regional (Settlers) Council doesn't need his recognition of receipt, it counts as delivered if it is placed *anywhere* on his 100-acre land, whether he is aware of the delivery or not. From then onwards he has thirty days to file an appeal, if he only stumbles across the random envelope thrown under a bush after ten days, he has accordingly less time. Once he got offered a blank cheque if he were to sell his property (which we also heard in other cases of contested Palestinian land). He nevertheless refused. *"The land is like a mother to us* (an expression I heard as well from other Palestinians), *how can I sell my mother?"*. Despite these legal nightmares, he hasn't become confrontative or vengeful. He even uses his situation and land for peace activism and creating positive awareness of the Palestinian perspective, stating *"We want to use our frustration and disappointment constructively. To convert these emotions into energy, positive action is needed, otherwise, we will become a breeding ground for anger and bitterness."*

Coping with Intergroup Conflict

Concluding the results section, my study suggests that in intergroup conflict settings, agency patterns can be described along similar dimensions – intergroup assertiveness as well as intergroup cooperation – as in interpersonal or organisational conflict settings. The resulting problem-oriented conflict coping can vary again between strong competition, avoidance, accommodating, compromising, and cooperative activism (see Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2

Intergroup Conflict Patterns as defined by Dimensions (a) Assertiveness, and (b) Cooperativeness

b) Cooperativeness

		Low	High
a) Assertiveness	High	'Diab' **Confrontative Activism**	'Emad' **Assertive Activism**
		'Basma' **Activism 'with an Edge'**	
	Low	'Abdalla' **Pragmatic Individualism**	'Chalil' **Peace Activism**

Importantly, none of these styles are 'predetermined' by the indeed difficult life circumstances encountered. Everyone described would have had the choice to act out conflictual agency in alternative ways. One well-known extraordinary case of constructive agency despite extremely difficult personal conflict experiences is Izzeldin Abueleish, a medical doctor from Gaza who lost several family members including three daughters during a severe escalation. He writes *"The biggest weapon of mass destruction is the hatred in our hearts... It is important to feel anger in the wake of events like this* [the loss of his family due to intergroup violence] *but you have to choose not to spiral into hate"* (Abuelaish, 2011).

2.4 Discussion

Asymmetrical prolonged conflicts are immensely prevalent and they have a detrimental impact on people's lives. The hardships of especially low-power groups struggling for self-determination might best be studied by living close to their circumstances. In subsequent studies, I will unpack further *which mechanisms* direct social agency of low-power groups to support not only coping processes but also enhance openness to conflict transformation. As a first 'lay-of-the-land' overview, this participatory-observational analysis provided initial insight into the factors facilitating short-term social agentic reactions and long-term agentic patterns in the Israeli-Palestinian context. It can be seen as complementing quantitative studies on disadvantaged collective action (e.g. Hasan-Aslih et al., 2020; Shuman et al., 2016), a methodical route that will be explored in subsequent chapters.

Facing prolonged intergroup conflict, the disadvantaged become *active social agents*, despite experiencing structural and direct oppression. In line with recent work that has suggested revisiting classic evidence that people overall *lack* agency in difficult settings (Swann & Jetten, 2017; van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013), the study found substantial support for the centrality of certain escalation experiences such as checkpoint crossings in *shaping* conflictual agency and suggests the importance of emotions in this regard. Substantial subsets of regularly occurring conflict events are not resulting in *diminished* agency, but – via emboldening emotions such as anger – in negative *conflict-enhancing* agency, even if this agency is not always displayed right away. Although the results need to be deepened further with complementary methods in subsequent studies, I have shown how emotional mechanisms become pivotal as a source of activation for social action. Additionally, I have highlighted the *diversity* of conflict-linked agentic identities and how these determine attitudes towards confrontational and relational action. The deeper issue here might be less

a question of *high versus low agency*, but rather between more *conflictual versus conciliatory agency*.

Contributions

The research investigates the interface between agency and emotions in conflict settings and advances intergroup relations in several important ways. While we might expect mainly situational passiveness from disadvantaged-group members, we find substantial 'agency against all odds' even if partly displayed in the personal realm. The results are contributing to the knowledge about an important precursor of collective action in intergroup conflict. They also underline the advantages of combining inclusive methodological perspectives within social psychology. Finally, the research has important implications not only for the understanding of social coping strategies in intergroup conflict (Heyden & Mona, 2021; Page-Gould, 2012) but can furthermore serve as a valuable individual basis for conflict transformation approaches. The described intergroup conflict patterns are similar to interpersonal conflict styles that are extensively used in corporate management training courses (Blake & Mouton, 1978; Thomas et al., 2008). The assumption is that people cannot be characterized as having a single, rigid style of dealing with conflict. Most people use some modes more readily but are capable of using others and developing more skills in them. It might be possible to situationally 'nudge' people towards another style, even if it is not their main one (Kilman, 2007). This could be used for example to encourage informal negotiations or other grassroots initiatives (discussed in Chapter Eight).

This participatory-observational study is the empirical starting point and leads to two interesting subsequent questions. On the one hand, what are the *exact dynamics* between emotional energy and emotions, situational escalation factors, and political action? Furthermore, although 'nudging styles' and *social change* might be possible within an interpersonal or organisational

context, to which extent is this also the case in protracted intergroup conflict? Conflict dynamics are defined after all by their intractability. Both questions will be pursued in the next chapters.

Limitations

The present research demonstrated the interrelations between agency and emotions from an integral perspective. Nevertheless, there are several limitations to this study. While this study provides a participatory-observational field-based mapping of these interrelations, exact 'predictions' remain unclear and further studies will include quantitative correlational approaches. Further research could develop these themes by examining the association of specific negative emotions such as anger or humiliation as predictors of agentic expression such as violent and nonviolent collective action. Also, the study disregards the quantitative perspective of the sample, my qualitative research is less about statistical representativity but instead about general principles. Nevertheless, as *intractable* conflicts are defined by their psychosocial entrenchment, the question remains if conflict styles that can in principle be situationally changed, people are also inclined to do so under protracted conflict conditions.

Conclusion

The current research suggests that without further exploring the nuanced link between emotions and collective action shaped by social agency *in context*, the reactions tendencies of the disadvantaged will remain unclear. Findings can help conflict scholars and practitioners by highlighting the functions of emotions in the peaceful promotion of social change (pursued in Chapter Seven) while understanding the activation of confrontational agency (examined in Chapters Four to Six). These initial findings underline the enhancing agentic power of emotions in conflict. Before looking closer into the detailed emotional dynamics, I will describe the overall research process and engage in some theorizing on conflict context as well as escalation dynamics.

Chapter Three

Theory Development – 'Situational Events Framework' of Collective Action: How Situation Shapes Violence

In real life as in research, endeavours are normally complex and far from linear. In this chapter, I describe the overall research process, "tracing the steps and giving an account of my data analysis and reflection processes so that other researchers can see for themselves what has been lost and what has been gained… by the decisions made at particular stages" (Luttrell, 2000). As already described in the participatory observation of the last chapter, I will again be concentrating on longitudinal mixed methods approaches, using 'natural field experiments' to the extent possible, trying to make sense of 'real-world' events. I will be focusing on dynamic processes and comparing different circumstances of acute escalation to more 'regular' conflict conditions or comparing violent with nonviolent action.

Measuring conflict escalation has a long tradition in political science. One obvious aspect has always been *conflict intensity*, normally *the* main overall dimension of 'classic' event coding scales. Mirroring more recent trends in conflict analysis such as greater emphasis on local sub-state settings and non-state actors, I suggest *conflict proximity* as a second important dimension. I will use existing theories and knowledge to customize each of these dimensions to the relative effect of specific emotions such as anger, or humiliation as well as types of emotion – individual versus group – on support for (mainly violent but also nonviolent) collective action. I integrate these findings into a formal framework that outlines the effects of specific types of situational escalation on violent action.

3.1 Tracing the Steps - Development of the Research Path

I began my research endeavours profoundly influenced by my intergroup conflict experiences from Congo – still intrigued why and how seemingly nice people on both sides could do horrible things to each other. Which mechanisms are at play that could help better understand these complex issues of intergroup violence? Many years later, I came across research on the topic of 'group emotions' in intractable conflict settings and how this setting is defined by 'non-rational' choices beyond instrumental cost-benefit reasonings – factors such as identity, narrative, values, and especially emotions. I enrolled in PhD research and moved with my family to Israel, first we were living at the coast just north of Tel Aviv and then in the town described in the last chapter, directly at the border to the Westbank. I wanted – at least informally – to include both groups' narratives and perspectives into my research and did extensive reading of the relevant literature as well as some initial qualitative interviews. I attempted to learn how microfoundational factors express how people define themselves and which impact on action can be deducted from their descriptions. Their narratives and my participatory observations generated a series of more specific questions I wanted to understand with mainly quantitative methods as described later in Chapters Four to Six.

Decision #1: Focusing on the Field

As former humanitarian worker in intractable conflict settings and mirroring the 'going-local' approaches in peace research described in Chapter Two, but also wanting to understand emotional underpinnings of intergroup violence, it was important from the beginning to focus on the field, making sense of real-world events in social contexts (Fischer & Van Kleef, 2010; Sherif, 1977) in contrast to more controlled lab settings. Despite the 'messiness' of this context, ecological validity weighed more in terms of my research preferences. As described in the last chapter, I began taking field notes on *very* different aspects of the conflict setting (geographical, cultural, historic, religious, political, philosophical…) as well as everyday conversations and interactions on both sides. I engaged also in different – where possible joint – conflict actions such as joint demonstrations, olive

harvest with activists and Palestinian farmers, participating in the Bethlehem 'Freedom of Movement' *and* Jerusalem Marathon within a week from each other, and further reaching out to various state and non-state actors. Experiencing the asymmetry of the conflict, but also experiencing *both sides* prevented facing the full impact of the conflict setting as I could in most cases overcome asymmetries or boundaries.

Methodically, I felt drawn to longitudinal mixed methods approaches. Longitudinal considerations were also relevant in the quantitative methods while maintaining a broad explorative approach. Luckily, the research group I was seconded to was prioritizing different approaches, so I'm extremely grateful to their efforts to keep me scientifically balanced while at the same time strongly requiring me to keep *all* efforts at high levels of scientific rigour.

Decision #2: Combining Mixed Methods Approaches

Through my own (research) history as well as exposure during the time, I was drawn to methodically and regarding content to differing approaches including scholar-activism, transdisciplinary activities, and prefigurative action, not only *studying* agency and collective action in intergroup conflict but also *experiencing* the tension between action and inaction as well as different forms of engagement in a context of 'felt powerlessness' as a mere student. I believed it was important to have as well a 'participatory action' component included and as a former clinical psychologist to study the topics within a self-experience perspective (Coles, 2003; Hochschild, 2016). Almost by accident, I started looking for coherent common denominators as well as contrasts in these very different types of storylines.

As it turned out, strong context dependency is a major component in these intricate dynamics, I was right in my initial notion to reach out broadly, experience both conflict contexts, and 'escape' conventional and one-sided social interpretation settings to the extent possible or 'cross-reference' certain ideas with the 'other side'.

In the qualitative data, I was eliciting the impact of context while in the quantitative data I could directly compare it. In the participatory-observational data, I was looking at the bigger picture. In the final qualitative study, an intuitive small 'wise intervention' encounter sets in motion a massive change process in the difficult-to-reach subset of violent Palestinian activists. Nevertheless, the research process that looks straightforward and logical in hindsight, was in itself emotionally loaded with fear and frustration, the 'dark cloud' of concern about lack of progress and conceptual clarity (Alon, 2009).

Decision #3: Focusing on the Interplay Individual- versus Group

I always sensed that the distinction between individual and group self could be important in our framework, as it suggests an elegant solution to the important issue 'how the individual becomes political' (Hutchison & Bleiker, 2014). Next to studying specific negative emotions such as anger, humiliation, or hate, one fascinating feature of the quantitative data is the interplay between individual versus group emotions and the impact of this interplay on collective action, a phenomenon we named 'emotional fusion' that was especially striking under conflict escalation. An intriguing aspect of emotional life in conflict with possibly interesting parallels into neighbouring realms such as identity fusion (Swann et al., 2009; Swann & Buhrmester, 2015) or emotional fit (De Leersnyder et al., 2014; Delvaux et al., 2015), but we never managed to prove the concept statistically beyond doubt. I finally achieved progress on conceptual clarity regarding the theoretical model through discussions and support from more experienced fellow researchers in the Lab and via repeated systematic data analysis along the various 'axes of interest'. In hindsight, our main difficulty with the longitudinal data – lack of consistency over different contexts – turned out to be a major effect. Finally, my social-psychological advisor became impatient about these unclear theoretical efforts already in the process of writing up the various quantitative results and declared in a crucial zoom meeting after intense questioning and discussions *"we achieved 'pitzuach' today"* – it meant in Hebrew 'cracking a nut' or in this case, solving a riddle.

Decision #4: Studying Change Directly and Attending to Outliers

The issue of understanding emotional and behavioral *change* in intractable conflict is of tremendous importance (Bar-Tal & Hameiri, 2020; Hirsch-Hoefler et al., 2016) and at the same time very difficult to achieve (Bhat & Rangaiah, 2015; Hameiri, Bar-Tal, et al., 2014). From the beginning, in addition to understanding the emotional dynamics on the ground, I was also interested in the topic of emotional change as a basis for individual conflict transformation as the conceptual endpoint, to the extent that I included 'Emotion Regulation' in my initial dissertation's working title. I was equally interested in material and data sources different from 'classical' approaches. Trying to understand the dynamics of violence, I was from the start equally interested in the type of activists that would pursue more radical approaches, knowing very well that it would be very difficult to enter into these types of circles and gain their trust, very common hazard in extremism research. Despite interesting leads and equally interesting meetings such as 'coffee with a terrorist' ["*15 years in an Israeli prison cell do change your emotions*"], I decided to abandon these pursuits for various reasons, some of them practical such as getting enough reliable data (one questionnaire returned from thirty distributed to former prisoners), some more conceptual such as concerns from experienced radicalization researchers ["*What can you learn from these special cases that is valuable for the general population in intractable conflict? If I'd do it all over again, I would study conflict dynamics rather than extremists*"]. Nevertheless, understanding violent behavior and changes from radicalisation are still relevant for some of my considerations (Eisenhardt et al., 2016; van Stekelenburg, 2017; van Stekelenburg & Klandermans, 2013), for example in Chapter Seven.

Halfway through my research journey, I came across captivating narrative material that I could use to study questions on emotional and behavioural changes of the more 'difficult cases' within the population despite challenging personal conflict contexts. This was done again with mainly qualitative methods. Although limited in participant numbers, a frequent hazard of extremism

research but also self-inflicted due to strong dropout criteria, the data was precious and fascinating despite the small sample size.

Decision #5: Putting it all Together Holistically

After my field phase, presenting parts of the results at my home university, the feedback on "general narrative and logical flow" was positive. Nevertheless, due to my wide interest and diverse approach, I had to be careful to produce something methodologically meaningful, especially specify the applicable context carefully. Integrating ethnological concepts beyond the anecdotal, qualitative, and quantitative material together is no small endeavour. As the nature of the material in total – in addition to the already inter- and transdisciplinary nature of thesis – defies traditional scientific boundaries and publication conduct for research articles, I decided to write a monograph instead of a cumulative thesis to allow for wider freedom in style and included relatively diverse material. Good research comes in many different forms and styles, multi-methods and inter-disciplinary approaches are increasing (Bergman, 2008), also in conflict research (Thaler, 2017). Ending my PhD also formally in an interdisciplinary research collaboration between Religious Studies and Political Science on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict enhanced my already broad interests even further beyond the scope of social psychology.

3.2 Measuring Political Events Context

Within peace- and conflict research, a shift to theories of conflict-in-context has been suggested over the last years, arguing that in the framework of microfactor analyses researchers must give proper consideration to the individual, social, regional, and international context (Mac Ginty, 2014; Miall, 2004). Since all conflicts are situated within a social context that shapes conflict *formation*, the *transformation* of conflict should equally include context reflections. To account for this purpose, several possible factors have been suggested (e.g. Goetschel, 2005, 2018; Tomoaia-Cotisel et al., 2013). In my concepts of context, I'm going beyond *static* ideas of context including social roles, attitudes, or behavioral norms towards *situational adaptive* peacebuilding (Broome & Collier, 2012; De Coning, 2018). From everything described so far one seemingly simple fact appeared evident: conflict events, especially conflict *escalation* massively defines and impacts life under intractable conflict, particularly in terms of agency and collective action.

Escalation scenarios trigger – often violent – collective action responses on the side of the low-power groups. Historically, the study of intergroup violence has been influenced by specific societal and political events (Gøtzsche-Astrup et al., 2020), most notable here are the tragic events of the September 11 attacks. Situational factors not only have an important influence on emotions, but additionally, these situational factors might dynamically alter systematically the mechanisms of *how* emotions impact political action (Huddy et al., 2002). Although scientists have examined allied phenomena for some time (Fontan, 2006; Spanovic et al., 2010; Van Kleef et al., 2010), there have been surprisingly few attempts to integrate this research data into a systematic conceptual framework of *how* context influences emotional dynamics. Here I propose such a framework. I first 'map the space' differentiating types of contexts according to two dimensions, whether political conflict events are experienced as particularly intense or whether they happen close to group members. Later in Chapter Six, I will additionally distinguish between two types of emotional experiences – individual versus group emotions – that could further specify emotional reactions. This framework

classifies an array of situations through which intergroup conflict context situationally influences emotional reactions and subsequently political action. More broadly, it organizes diffuse, heretofore independent data on "pieces" of situational intergroup context, and identifies concrete political events for specific study to provide empirical support for the claims.

Conflict Escalation as Moderating Factor in Social Context

The psychological agency dynamics within the 'space' of social context in intractable conflict can arguably be described along the following lines (see Figure 3.1). Detailed understanding of context as moderator and individual/group emotions in conflict as microfoundations predict collective action. Knowledge about these dynamics has crucial applications for emotional change and subsequently conflict transformation approaches. It will more comprehensively predict perspectives on intergroup processes ["What is the self that signs a petition - or throws a stone?"].

Figure 3.1

Context as Moderator between (Individual & Group) Emotions and (Violent & Nonviolent) Action

Social Context
↓
Emotions　　　=========➤　　　**Collective Action**
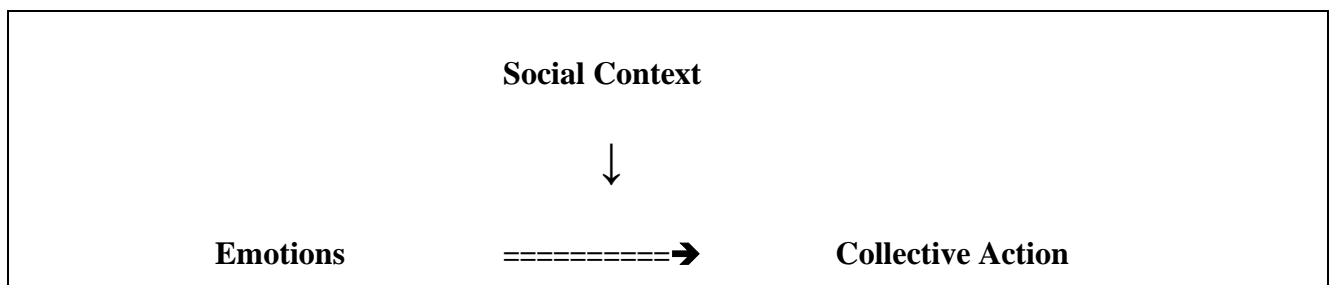
Introducing contextuality in more detail and mapping the space of psychological agency within context, I'm basically asking the question 'how is escalation perceived on a psychological level'? Within these deliberations, I make four "conceptual cuts": (a) specifying when a conflict context is *intense* and when it is not; (b) distinguishing contexts that trigger *specific emotions* differently compared to other contexts; (c) broadly dividing contexts based on whether relevant events happen in close *proximity* or are more distant; and (d) drawing a boundary between *individual* self/emotions *versus group* self/emotions predicting political action. In line with my original research

question, I will mainly focus on *violent* collective action as dependent variable due to its importance

for peacebuilding processes.

Measuring political conflict escalation is practised for a long time in political science. One

obvious aspect, to specify contextual configurations in intergroup disputes, has always been *conflict*

intensity, normally *the* main overall dimension of 'classical' event coding scales such as WEIS

(Goldstein, 1992), ICB (Brecher & Wilkenfeld, 1997), or COPDAB (Azar, 1980). Also from a social

psychology perspective, researchers contend that different degrees of escalation are linked to

different social perception concepts and mechanisms on the individual- as well as group levels

(Fisher, 2008; Hasan-Aslih et al., 2020). To test my assumptions how situational factors are of

important influence on specific negative emotions, such as anger, hate and humiliation experienced

by oppressed groups elicit the different forms of political resistance, we conducted a field study in

the Palestinian Territories (N=200) during relative calm and immediately after a public provocative

demonstration of Israel's power that led to intense demonstrations in the Westbank (Study 2 – local

'Baseline' context and 'US embassy move to Jerusalem' escalation). Seeing the strong impact of

context when an issue – admittedly quite central to the conflict – completely changed the underlying

emotional prediction dynamics. But is this intensification all there is? How can we describe context

more systematically?

Mirroring more recent trends in conflict analysis such as greater emphasis on local sub-state

settings and non-state actor considerations (Hegre et al., 2019; Mac Ginty & Firchow, 2016; Walther

et al., 2021), as well as the incorporation of geospatial information (Aas Rustad et al., 2011; Buhaug,

2010; Schrodt, 2012), I suggest *conflict proximity* as second important dimension. I will use existing

theories and knowledge to tailor each of these dimensions to the relative effect of two types of

emotion – individual versus group – on support for violent action.

Building a 'Situational Events Model' of Collective Action

The two dimensions (intensity versus proximity), create a 2 x 2 matrix of intergroup conflict escalation dimensions (see Figure 3.2). Contexts where we assume the *individual* self/emotions predict violent action would be characterized by high levels on the *proximity* dimension and low levels on the intensity dimension, where people would be directly implicated by the ongoing events. Settings where *group*-self/emotions predict violent action would be differentiated by high levels on the *intensity*- and low levels on the proximity dimension where conflict might be experienced more implicitly or indirectly.

Figure 3.2

Intergroup conflict escalation as defined by two dimensions (a) conflict intensity, and (b) conflict proximity

		b) Conflict Proximity	
		High	Low
a) Conflict Intensity	High	Individual & Group	'Gaza' - Group
	Low	'Baseline' - Individual	(Other)

To test these assumptions, I used data from the same longitudinal field study in the Palestinian Territories (N=200) during both types of contexts, focusing on particular political events and real-world issues (Study 3 – local 'Baseline' context with local 'low-level' conflict experiences such as checkpoint crossings and the – for Westbank Palestinians – more distantly experienced 'Gaza Marches of Return' escalation). Critically, in mapping the conflict space, I don't mean to imply that both dimensions or processes are mutually exclusive. Everyone who has experienced intergroup conflict can imagine contexts that are intense *and* close, defined by intra- *as well as* intergroup comparisons. Indeed, cognitive-affective processes of people in the political realm (especially in conflict settings) are messy, likely involving at times the simultaneous deployment of different procedures (Zaki & Williams, 2013). Self-categorization theory has given up the notion that the relationship between the personal and collective is necessarily antagonistic (Hornsey, 2008), and

Smith & Mackie (2007) contend that some group-related events, may lead people to feel similar emotions at the group and individual levels.

Such a context, characterised by overall high conflict intensity *and* proximity of events, where – next to elevated generic conflict agency – there are concrete challenges and possibly severe consequences of *any* conflict behavior due to higher physical proximity. I assume the self processes intra- *and* intergroup cues as both types of comparisons seem plausible in this context and both types of emotions are involved in predicting violent action. To enhance my understanding, we conducted another field study in the Palestinian Territories (N=450), again focusing on specific real-world conflict events, characterised by high conflict intensity *and* proximity of events, where – next to elevated overall conflict salience – there are direct challenges and possibly severe consequences of any behavior (Study 4 – 'Ramallah-Lockdown').

The final category – low conflict proximity *and* low intensity – is least relevant for my research, as intergroup conflict loses much of its salience when neither dimension is pertinent. Due to our diverse social identities, we can imagine other social identities taking over, for example associated with interpersonal relational matters or economic concerns (Roccas & Brewer, 2002). How can these conceptualizations be used in meaningful ways for conflict *transformation*?

3.3 Application for Conflict Transformation

In both initial chapters, I stated briefly that the processes described so far – interlinkages between emotions and agency or collective action – impact openness for conflict transformation. At the same time, these approaches might provide opportunities to achieve or explain emotional and behavioral *change*. Starting point here is the *understanding* of emotional dynamics, important within different types of conflict escalation processes. Several scholars have argued that microfactor analyses of conflict must properly consider individual, social, regional, and international realities to facilitate transformation (De Coning, 2018; Miall, 2004). As described in Chapter One, conflict transformation approaches not only include structural but also substantial *relational* aspects (Goetschel, 2009). Specifically relational, but in essence also structural aspects are possible subject to *reframing* processes (Benford & Snow, 2000; Chong & Druckman, 2007; Kriesberg, 2011). In social psychology in general, these processes are described as *psychological interventions* (Bar-Tal & Hameiri, 2020; Hewstone & Cairns, 2001). If linked to emotions, normally the term *emotion regulation* (Čehajić-Clancy et al., 2016; Halperin, Sharvit, et al., 2011a) is used. As I'm operating within a political science framework, the term *individual conflict transformation*, which includes emotional and behavioral components impacting the social setting, is equally relevant.

The field of social psychology has made critical inroads toward our understanding of the dynamics that foster inter-group hostility, stereotyping, and prejudice. Over the past years, many of these insights have been applied by practitioners as they have experimented with various forms of inter-group interaction within conflict transformation processes (Cuhadar & Dayton, 2011). Social psychology is especially concerned with the *interaction* between the individual ('I') and group ('we') and how the environment is given meaning (Reynolds et al., 2010). This is the particular realm where social psychology can contribute to political science. The main theoretical foundations here are social identity theory (Tajfel et al., 1979), self-categorisation theory (Turner et al., 1987), and finally intergroup emotions theory (Smith et al., 2007).

Although the application of social psychology theory in conflict transformation might need further theoretical work (Botes, 2003), cognition and emotions play a crucial role in generating attitude change in intergroup conflict (Cuhadar & Dayton, 2011). Therefore, practitioners should also consider these as part of the change process.

Insights into the described emotional dynamics afford us with ample opportunity to reframe specific settings or relational aspects using for example linguistic cues (Idan et al., 2018), 'wise' interventions (Walton, 2014), or paradoxical thinking (Hameiri et al., 2019), but these approaches require *detailed insight* into underlying social psychology dynamics to be effective. If the *effect* of a certain emotion for example *on violent action* is known to be more relevant in certain circumstances than others, this emotion can be specifically targeted within psychological intervention considerations. If *group* identity is proven to be more important for action than individual identity in a certain setting, appealing to this identity – in contrast to the personal one – to 'nudge' people back to the negotiation table or frame bigger intergroup interventions can be attempted. If humiliation is shown to be associated with intergroup violence in certain situations, mitigating the humiliation experience for example through an increasing agency might be a promising way forward to facilitate individual conflict transformation. The concrete *application* possibilities of these general ideas based on the specific study results will be outlined more concretely in Chapter Eight.

Chapter Four

Oppression and Resistance – Uncovering the Relations between Anger, Humiliation and Violent Collective Action in Protracted Intergroup Conflict

After looking into the basic layout between conflict events, emotions, and social action as well as some theory building in the last chapter, I will now empirically study *specific* emotions, concretely how emotional dynamics predict support for *violent* forms of resistance. What are these antecedences of support for violence among low-power groups living in conditions of hardship and oppression? Previous studies suggest that emotions such as anger and humiliation can elicit support for violent actions against the oppressor. However, the exact circumstances that make these emotions trigger support for violence within conflict remain unclear.

To better understand when anger and humiliation experienced by oppressed groups evoke violent political resistance, I conducted a two-wave survey in the Palestinian Territories during relative calm and immediately after a public provocative demonstration of Israel's power. Results revealed that for citizens living under oppression, intergroup anger and humiliation are present at relatively high levels even during relative calm. In these day-to-day conditions of oppression, anger, but not humiliation was associated with citizens' support for violent means of resistance. As anticipated, levels of anger and humiliation surged after Israel's public conflict aggravation, but the context moderated their effect. Now, feelings of humiliation elicited support for violent resistance while anger was not associated with such action. Theoretical and applied implications of the detrimental consequences of humiliation are discussed.

4.1 Introduction

Groups locked in a protracted conflict pay a heavy price for the continuation of the violent dispute and this price is especially high for the lower-power group, as it suffers greater material damage and disproportional losses in human life (Leshem & Halperin, 2020; Thiessen & Darweish, 2018). These disenfranchised groups experience oppression and violence from the high-power group in the form of movement restrictions, detention, injury, or even death. Lower power groups have little control over what they can do in the face of repression and limited options on how to voice their needs (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008).

One way that low-power groups try to influence their situation is by engaging in violent action against the high-power group. Past studies show that support for violent action is predicted by low perceived efficacy (Tausch et al., 2011), group identity (Ferguson & McAuley, 2021), and negative emotions. Among these, emotions such as anger, hate, contempt, and humiliation stand out as recognized predictors of support for violence (Halperin, 2016; Pearlman, 2013). Yet, the specific conflict-related contexts in which anger and humiliation trigger support for violent resistance remain underexplored. The study fills this gap by examining the contexts in which anger and humiliation elicit support for violence. Understanding the connection between context, emotions, and support for violence can help in mitigating the 'cycles of violence' that enhance intergroup conflicts.

Violent Collective Action

Collective action is typically defined as individual action undertaken as a psychological group member on behalf of a collective to improve their group's condition (Wright, Taylor & Moghaddam, 1990) and normally nonviolent versus violent forms are differentiated. During asymmetrical conflict, low-power groups have limited paths to counter the excessive force of the high-power group. Within this limited scope, low-power group members may use both nonviolent and violent collective action to improve their group's conditions (van Zomeren, 2013, van Zomeren et al., 2008). The question of why people engage in which form of collective action within intergroup

conflict is the subject of growing research (e.g. Pearlman, 2013; Shuman et al., 2016, 2020; Tausch et al., 2011; van Zomeren, 2013).

Violent collective action is riskier for low-power group members facing the non-proportionally strong capabilities of the high-power group. Nevertheless, as evident in the cases of the conflicts in Algeria, Northern Ireland, and Israel-Palestine, violent forms of struggle are commonly practiced by low-power groups (Pearlman, 2011; Vandello et al., 2011). Although violent action makes a strong statement against experienced injustice and increases local and international attention to these claims, it may also backfire by alienating potential sympathizers within the outgroup and third-party members (Shuman, 2020). So, how can we explain that violence is used recurrently by low-power groups despite the risk?

Although there are diverse antecedents to explain violent action such as effectiveness (Valentino & Groenendyk, 2009) and group identity (Hogg et al., 2017a), emotions are central components of existing models (Tausch et al., 2011; van Zomeren et al., 2004). Emotions such as anger (Iyer, Schmader & Lickel, 2007; Petersen & Zukerman, 2010), hate (Shuman, 2017), or humiliation (Lacey, 2011; Stern, 2010) are commonly included to help explain aggressive intergroup violence.

Negative Emotions During Conflict

Emotions drive behavior (Keltner & Gross, 1999), arguably even more so during intergroup conflicts (Halperin, 2016). In this study, I focus on group emotions – experienced by individuals when they identify with a social group, making the group part of the psychological self (Smith et al., 2007). During conflict, negative group emotions may lead to conflictual agency (Bramsen & Poder, 2018), aggression (Halperin & Gross, 2011), and opposition to political compromise (Hirsch-Hoefler et al., 2016). Several scholars have underlined the importance to study discrete negative emotions (e.g. Feldman Barrett & Gross, 2001; Halperin, Pliskin & Gross, 2013). Two negative emotions,

anger, and humiliation, are pivotal influencers of behavior during conflict (Mann, 2017; McCauley, 2017).

Anger is a negatively valenced emotion that arises from the blockage of movement toward the desired goal (Carver & Harmon-Jones, 2009). It is elicited by the appraisal that an unfair or unjust act has been committed against oneself or one's group (Averill, 1983; Mackie et al., 2000). Anger is an approach-oriented emotion aiming to correct perceived wrongdoing (Carver & Harmon-Jones, 2009; Fischer & Roseman, 2007) and, as such, is one of the most common emotions in intergroup conflict (Halperin, 2016). Anger predicts taking action against outgroups (Mackie et al., 2000) and support for political violence (Halperin & Gross, 2011; Petersen & Zukerman, 2010). However, in certain situations, anger can elicit constructive political attitudes (Halperin, Russell, et al., 2011), positive risk-taking (Shuman et al., 2018), and support for non-violent policies (Reifen Tagar et al., 2011) as long as these actions are perceived to redress injustice and wrongdoings. Anger holds special significance for the study of political violence because it is usually aimed at creating political change rather than outright destruction (Halperin, 2016).

Humiliation arises when a person feels demeaned, put down, or exposed (Fernández et al., 2015). It is a profound relational violation, as it calls into question one's worth as a human being (Hartling et al., 2013; Klein, 1991). Humiliation combines powerlessness with outrage and is associated with both avoidance and approach tendencies (Fernández et al., 2015, 2018). During intergroup conflict, the behavioral consequences of humiliation vary from suppressing support for conflict resolution (Ginges & Atran, 2008) to violent aggression (Fattah & Fierke, 2009; Fontan, 2006; Longo et al., 2014). De Rivera (2013) suggests that humiliation experienced as a *loss-of-rights* leads to loss of power and, in turn, *inaction*, whereas public humiliation (acts aimed to publicly degrade the outgroup) is experienced as a *loss-of-status* and is more likely to lead to *violent* retaliation. Further empirical work has substantiated these indications (Elshout et al., 2017; Vorster et al., 2021). Unlike aggression elicited from anger, aggression stemming from humiliation is not

aimed at improving circumstances but at hurting the humiliator to reaffirm the ingroup's image (Lickel, 2012).

The Emotional Antecedents of Violent Collective Action

Collective action, whether violent or nonviolent is defined as individual action undertaken on behalf of a collective (Wright et al., 1990). Although violent collective action may convey a strong statement against experienced injustice and increase attention to these claims, it may also backfire by alienating potential sympathizers (Shuman et al., 2020). So, what makes groups engage in violence despite the risk? Although there are diverse antecedents to explain violent action (Mironova & Whitt, 2020), negative emotions are central components of existing models (Tausch et al., 2011; van Zomeren et al., 2004). Existing studies suggest that situational factors may affect the impact of emotions on support for violence (Spanovic et al., 2010; Van Kleef et al., 2010). For example, the harsh daily existence under military occupation that involves checkpoints, curfews, and other movement restrictions, is likely to elicit anger and humiliation (Longo et al., 2014). These 'routine' experiences facilitate anger-prompt aggression characterized by increased desire for violent confrontation intended to change the unfair situation (Claassen, 2016). At the same time, this day-to-day oppression is also likely to elicit a "loss-of-rights" humiliation associated with avoidance and retreat. However, when the high-power group publicly devalues the low-power group, humiliation would be experienced as a loss-of-status that triggers aggression aimed at hurting the outgroup. Anger is also expected to rise and, activating a risk-embracing mindset (Lerner & Keltner, 2001), will increase support for violence even further.

The Present Study

The study was conducted in 2017, before and right after the US announcement to move its embassy to Jerusalem. The announcement broke a fifty-year international consensus that embassies should be located outside Jerusalem until the status of the city is settled in an agreement and was regarded as a de-facto recognition of Israel's sovereignty over the disputed city. Although carried out by the United States, Israel had been advocating for years for such a symbolic step. Palestinians took this unilateral move as an insult and as an orchestrated demonstration of their helplessness vis a vis the diplomatic might and clout of Israel. The announcement resulted in widespread confrontational demonstrations.

The study examined emotions and support for violent resistance in two different settings. The first is the routine life under military control, while the second situation is during the highly provocative act by Israel. I first postulate that as a change-oriented risk-increasing emotion anger elicited during "routine" military control will predict Palestinians' support for violent collective action. I also hypothesize that during this "routine" experience of oppression, humiliation will *not* predict support for violent action, as *loss-of rights-based* humiliation is associated with passivity and retreat (de Rivera, 2013; Ginges & Atran, 2008). I thirdly predict that after Israel's provocative move, *loss-of-status-based* humiliation among Palestinians will be activated and will now predict support for violent forms of action while anger is yet again postulated to predict violent action.

4.2 First Wave - Daily Oppression

Methods

Participants and Procedure

Participants (*N*=200, 98 females; ages 18–86, *M*=36.2, *SD*=12.8) were Palestinians living in the Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate in the West Bank, recruited by a local survey company. The sample included both urban (39%) and rural (56%) Westbank Palestinians as well as inhabitants of refugee camps in the Governorate (5%). Sampling was done by an experienced and locally well-known professional survey company (Near East Consulting) in a random household sampling approach at sixteen different localities within the Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate following a predefined route.

The questionnaires were provided face-to-face and participants were surveyed by a trained local interviewer in their native language of Arabic. In both waves, after obtaining their informed consent, the interviewer read to participants the questions and recorded their answers. Each interview lasted around 40-60 minutes, and each participant received an anonymized identification code, allowing us to match First Wave and Second Wave responses. All materials were translated into Arabic by a native Arabic-speaking social psychologist and back-translated into English.

Measures

Emotions. Participants rated the degree to which they felt negative emotions by the item: "If you think about the situation of Palestinians in general, to what extent have you felt the following emotion during the last month – 1) anger, 2) humiliation" *(1= not at all, to 6= very much so)*. I also gauged participants' hatred to ensure that the tentative effects of anger and humiliation were not confounded by another negative emotion relevant in intergroup conflict (Fischer et al., 2018; Halperin, 2008).

Support for Violent Collective Action. Concern for the safety of participants limited the ability to directly ask Palestinians about their support for actions against Israel. Therefore, following Tausch et al. (2011), I measured support for violent actions indirectly, via participant's levels of tolerance for the action and the actions' perceived effectiveness. Participants were asked to rate how much they "*understand* people who engage in armed resistance?" and whether "Armed resistance… will produce more *positive outcomes* regarding achieving liberation for Palestinians" *(1= not at all, to 6= very much so)*. The two items collapsed well (α=.69) to form a single measure with higher scores representing greater support for violence.

Demographic Indicators. Participants reported their gender, age, level of religiousness, level of education, and average income. Almost all (95%) defined themselves as Muslims, 2.5% as Christians, and another 2.5% did not self-identify. In terms of religiosity, 12% of the subjects identified themselves as secular, 16% as secular with traditionalism, 47% as conservative [traditionally] religious, 20% as religious, and 2% as very religious. The average family income of the participants sample is given with 4380,- NIS, slightly below the average Palestinian household income of 4580,- NIS in 2017 (Ayyash et al., 2020). Slightly more than 20% report a household income below 2000,- NIS and slightly less than 13% reported a household income above 7000,- NIS, while 6.5% did not answer the question.

Results

It seems that even in relatively calm times, the day-to-day life under military restrictions elicits moderate levels of anger (*M* = 3.75, *SD*=1.45) and humiliation (*M* =2.93, *SD*=1.69) with more than 50% of participants reporting levels of anger above the midpoint of the scale and more than 34% reporting levels of humiliation above the midpoint. As can be seen in Table 1, all negative emotions were positively related to support for violent collective action.

Table 4.1

Bivariate Relationships Between Main Study Variables and Demographics

	Range	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Anger	1-6	3.75	1.45	-							
2. Humiliation	1-6	2.93	1.69	.42**	-						
3. Violent Action	1-6	3.86	1.14	.30**	.20**	-					
4. Hate	1-6	3.44	1.55	.72**	.55**	.18*	-				
5. Age	18-86	36	12	-.16*	-.04	-.10	-.06				
6. Gender (1=male, 2=female)	1-2	1.49	0.50	.02	-.05	-.02	-.01	-.01			
7. Education	1-4	2.02	1.04	.39**	.32**	.17*	.25**	-.41**	.00		
8. Level Religiosity	1-5	2.84	0.96	.03	-.09	-.07	.05	.29**	.21**	-.18**	
9. Income	1-10	5.38	2.05	-.03	.06	.30**	.00	-.05	-.15*	.28**	-.17*

**p < .01 (two-tailed significance), *p < .05 (two-tailed significance)

To test the hypothesis concerning the relations between emotions and support for violence, I estimated a regression model predicting support for violent action from negative emotions, with all demographics as controls. Results showed that anger positively predicted violent action tendencies (β = .32, p = .003). The higher the anger, the greater the support for violence. As hypothesized, humiliation did not predict support for violent action (β = .11, p = .22).

Table 4.2

Effects of Emotions and Covariates on Violent Action Tendencies

	Support Violent Action
Anger	.32**
Humiliation	.11
Hate	-.07
Age	-.04
Gender	.01
Education	-.08
Religiosity	-.03
Income	.33***
Adjusted R²	.15

Note. Entries are Standardized Coefficients, two-tailed, p*** < .001, p** < .01, p* < .05.

Results confirm the hypotheses by showing that even during relative calm, living under military rule elicits negative emotions like anger, hate, and humiliation. Out of these, anger but not hate or humiliation predicted support for violence against the adversary. It seems that anger, as an approach-oriented emotion predicts support for violent means of resistance. However, humiliation is not related to these outcomes, perhaps because during daily oppression, humiliation is experienced as loss-of-rights humiliation associated with retreat and passivity. But what happens when the high-power group publicly provokes the low-power group? Do these dynamics stay the same?

4.3 Second Wave - Provocative Escalation

On December 6, 2017, the US announced the move of its embassy to Jerusalem. The highly televised announcement led to widespread unrest and a general strike in the Palestinian Territories. The follow-up survey was launched at the height of the tensions, one week after the announcement of the move to test the hypothesis that humiliation plays a much more manifest role when the low-power group is publicly provoked.

Methods

Participants and Procedure

Respondents from the first study were recontacted to answer the present questionnaire. The sampling was done by the same survey company but this time phone numbers acquired during the baseline study were used to recontact respondents. Apart from the contact by phone, the procedure was similar to the first wave.

All materials were translated again into Arabic by a native Arabic-speaking social psychologist and back-translated into English based on the existing questionnaire. Materials were

adjusted to make them appropriate to the views of the sample and the issues confronting them in

discussion with the survey company, especially in the light of the delicate dependent variable.

In all, 160 participants from the first wave completed the follow-up survey (80 females, ages 18–80,

M=35.5, SD=11.9). The low and favourable attrition rate (20%) was not associated with particular

demographics (see Table 4.3).

Table 4.3

Demographics Sample Means, Standard Deviation and Statistics for Testing Differences between First Wave (FW) only and Second Wave (SW) Participants

	Range	M_{FW}	SD	M_{SW}	SD	F (p-value)
1. Age	18-86	39.1	12.0	35.5	11.9	2.98 (.08)
2. Gender (1=male, 2=female)	1-2	1.47	0.50	1.49	0.50	0.32 (.57)
3. Education [a]	1-4	2.24	1.09	1.96	1.02	1.25 (.26)
4. Level Religiosity [b]	1-5	3.03	0.96	2.79	0.90	3.46 (.06)
5. Income [c]	1-10	5.39	2.08	5.31	1.91	0.50 (.48)

Note. a 1 = compulsory education; 2 = secondary education; 3 = community college; 4 = university diploma, technical college or more. b 1 = secular; 2 = secular with traditionalism; 3 = traditionally religious, conservative; 4 = religious; 5 = very religious. c 1 = income bracket under NIS 500; 2 = income bracket NIS 501 – 1,000; 3 = income bracket NIS 1,001–2,000; 4 = income bracket NIS 2,001 – 3,000; 5 = income bracket NIS 3,001 – 4,000; 6 = income bracket NIS 4,001 – 5,000; 7 = income bracket NIS 5,001 – 7,000; 8 = income bracket NIS 7,001 – 9,000; 9 = income bracket NIS 9,001 – 11,000; 10 = income bracket above NIS 11,000.

Measures

Designing an adapted questionnaire connected to Israel's specific actions, I included the same group

emotions and support for a range of violent collective actions.[1]

Emotions. Emotions were captured using the same item from the first survey.

Support for Violent Collective Action. To account for the changed setting, measurements were

stronger connected to Israel's specific actions, so items are slightly different. Support for violence

was assessed by gauging participants' willingness to take the following actions: "Participating in

confrontational demonstrations against the army"; "Personally confront army forces if they assaulted

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[1] The downside is that direct longitudinal analysis is limited.

me"; "Take justice into my hands if I got assaulted by the army forces"; "Avoiding participating in any activity against the occupation" -reverse coded).[2] The four items collapsed well to form a single measure for support for violent action (α=.68). High scores represent greater support for violent resistance.

Support for Nonviolent Action (Boycott). I used one item to gauge support for nonviolent action such as boycott ("Shaming people who do not boycott Israeli institutions and products"). All responses ranged from 1 (not at all) to 6 (very much so).

Results

Overall, the public announcement to move the embassy heightened negative emotions among Palestinians. Almost 90% of the participants reported anger levels above the midpoint of the scale (compared to 50% in the first wave). Similarly, 66% reported humiliation levels above the midpoint of the scale (compared to 34% in the first wave). A within-subject t-test shows that both emotions have significantly increased across timepoints $t(155)$=-8.19, $p < .001$ for anger, and $t(155)$=-6.05, $p < .001$ for humiliation (Figure 1). Repeated measure ANOVA showed no interaction between emotions and time, $F(1,153) = 1.46$, $p = .229$, meaning both emotions increased in similar magnitudes over time.

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[2] A controversial item "Supporting Armed Resistance" was measured but not included in the analyses due to a low response rate. Results replicate when we include the item in our analyses.

Figure 4.1

Means of Experienced Emotions over Contexts
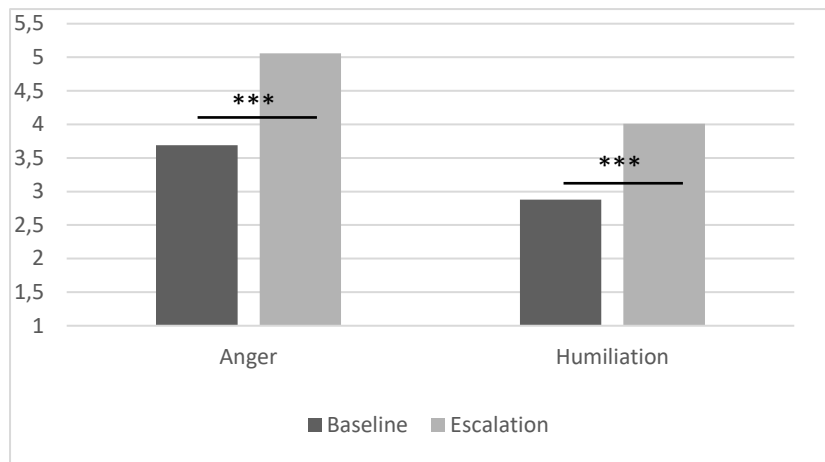
I used the same regression model to test whether anger and humiliation predicted support for violent collective action. Results (Table 3) show that after Israel's provocation, humiliation predicted support for violence ($\beta = .31$, $p = .002$). The more one felt humiliated, the more one supported violent action against Israel. Interestingly, anger did not predict support for violent action perhaps because the impact of humiliation overshadowed the effect of anger.

Table 4.4

Effects of Predictors and Covariates on Violent Action after the Embassy Move

	Support Violent Action
Anger	.02
Humiliation	.31**
Hate	-.05
Age	-.01
Gender	-.02
Education	.12
Religiosity	.12
Income	-.04
Adjusted R²	.04

Note. Entries are Standardized Coefficients, two-tailed, p*** < .001, p** < .01, p* < .05.

Overall, it seems that humiliation, which was not associated with violence during routine oppression, became a clear predictor of violence when the lower-power group was publicly provoked. It could be the case that the loss-of-status humiliation elicited by Israel's provocation resulted in Palestinians' desire to hurt Israel, regardless of whether violence will advance Palestinians' interests. As a post-hoc examination of this rationale, I also looked into participants' support of a non-violent act against Israel (in the form of boycotting Israel). It seems that when provoked, humiliation predicted *less* support for boycott ($\beta = -.38$, $p < .001$). It appears that the *loss-of-status humiliation* linked to destruction and revenge, not only increased support for violence but also alarmingly *decreased* support for nonviolent ways of struggle (see Table 4.5 for measure and full regression results).

Table 4.5

Effects of Predictors and Covariates on Nonviolent Boycott after the Embassy Move

	Nonviolent Boycott
Anger	.16
Humiliation	-.38**
Hate	.12
Age	.11
Gender	.13
Education	.23**
Religiosity	.14
Income	-.09
Adjusted R²	.15

Note. Entries are Standardized Coefficients, two-tailed, p*** < .001, p** < .01, p* < .05.

4.4 Discussion

The hardship of people living under prolonged oppression is difficult to imagine. World history shows that those struggling to end oppression often utilize violence. This study explores the role of negative emotions in increasing the chances that violence will be used. Specifically, I examined anger and humiliation as potential antecedences of support for violence. Overall, results confirm our hypotheses. In day-to-day conditions of oppression, the approach-oriented emotion of anger predicted support for violent resistance. At the same time, humiliation caused by these daily adversities does not predict support for violence perhaps because *loss-of-rights humiliation*, related to the routine hardships of military occupation, generates retreat and inaction (Ginges & Atran, 2008).

Yet, after a unilateral move of the powerful rival, the *loss-of-status humiliation* predicted support for violent actions. The more one felt humiliated, the more one supported violence (and opposed nonviolent ways of resistance). It could be postulated that when faced with provocative actions of their omnipotent oppressors, the disadvantaged group does not necessarily seek to improve their situation, but inflict pain on their powerful rivals regardless of the consequences. As both emotions increased in the same way and only their *impact* on levels of support for violence changed over time. Situation seems to moderate emotional effects, pointing to emotion-context interaction.

Theoretical and Applied Contributions

My research provides new insights on the nuanced connection between negative emotions and support for violent resistance within different contexts. Thus far, examining the relations between negative emotions and violence was done with little attention to situational perspectives. The present study offers a glance at the broad theoretical and empirical potential of exploring intergroup emotions as context-dependent. Specifically, I show why humiliation has differentiated effects in different settings. When humiliation stems from the loss of rights, passivity and retreat will

mark the reaction of the disadvantaged. When humiliation stems from a loss of status, outright revenge will become the way of action. The study thus reveals context-dependent factors linking anger, humiliation, and violent action among the oppressed and as such contributes to our understanding of how situational context shifts the impact of emotions during conflict. This enhanced understanding of emotional mechanisms can be utilized for example within large-scale communications or psychological interventions to support conflict transformation approaches.

Limitations and Future Directions

The present research demonstrated how anger and humiliation predict support for violence among low-power groups entrapped in asymmetric conflict. However, to establish causality, an experimental approach is needed. The local nature of the study is a further limitation. Future studies should examine these relationships in different contexts and include potential antecedents beyond emotions such as perceived efficacy or moral standards. In addition, changing measurements due to the sensitive nature of the study might have impaired consistency. While being careful to measure support for violence in the most appropriate way, future research should examine the link between emotions and action tendencies more consistently. Another important addition would be an intervention study, developing and testing constructive ways how to mitigate feelings of powerlessness and humiliation during 'loss of status' escalations and increase positive notions of agency.

Conclusion

The current research suggests that without exploring the specific link between context and emotion, the reactions tendencies of the disadvantaged will remain unclear. Findings can help conflict scholars and practitioners by highlighting the nuanced function of emotions in the promotion of social change while reducing the activation of destructive and radical actions. The findings underline once more the power of emotions in prolonged violent conflicts. Those who contribute to justice and sustainable peace between conflict parties or support individuals in their coping processes

should take the destructive potential of humiliation especially linked to loss of status into account. They should also include the nuanced effect of situational context in their efforts.

This study builds upon growing research into an important gap in the literature, namely understanding the *dynamic* situational nature of emotional impact as psychological roots of violent and nonviolent action. It adds new mechanisms and underlines the importance of situational context. The current research offers evidence that without taking distinct emotional dynamics into account, people's violent reactions will continue to take their political toll, not only for the low-power group, but in a 'cycle of violence' also impact their high-power adversary. More specifics when and how to target which emotional mechanism will be outlined in Chapter Eight.

But are all escalations the same? In next chapter, I will be comparing the psychosocial impact of two very different escalation settings on disadvantaged-group members.

Chapter Five

Violence, Nonviolence, Inaction – How Emotions and Collective Action are Associated under Two Types of Conflict Escalation

In this chapter, I turn to examine how emotional foundations of low-power group members under *different* conflict escalation conditions, feed into their decision to engage or not engage in collective action. Escalations, in general, leads to changed cognitive attitudes and more extremism. The central role of cognitions within conflict escalation and de-escalation has been widely recognized, so similar effects could be visible for emotions. Past studies suggest that emotions such as anger, humiliation, or hate predict support for collective action against the oppressor but the exact specifications that make either of these trigger support for violent versus non-violent measures in concrete conflict settings is still unclear. More importantly, these dynamics have rarely been studied comparing different types of conflict escalation conditions.

Based on the last chapter, to better understand *when and how* emotions experienced by oppressed groups elicit different forms of political resistance, I conducted additional mixed methods correlational field research in the Palestinian Territories during two incidents of conflict escalation again in a longitudinal design. Focusing here on the comparison between *different* escalation settings, first on a central and particularly sensitive conflict issue, then on an event of very different levels of conflict intensity and proximity. While both escalations were leading to a higher conflict salience amongst the population, results reveal that low-power group members experiencing specific escalation settings, result in distinct emotional profiles and different action tendencies. The findings will be used to conceptualize further study, particularly to specify the impact of context mechanisms that undermine favourable conflict transformation.

5.1 Introduction

Despite their intractability, protracted intergroup conflicts are not stable environments as we have outlined already, they escalate and deescalate (Halperin & Levy, 2017; Vallacher et al., 2010). How do we account for these differences in context within our academic predictive models? In May 2021 for example, Israel experienced a major conflict escalation that started with communal unrest in the East Jerusalem quarter of Sheikh Jarrah due to a pending legal case of house evictions concerning Arabic citizens of Israel, leading to unrivalled numbers of Hamas rockets from Gaza and according retaliation by the Israeli Air Force as well as to widespread communal violence within Israel. Communities that lived together peacefully for many decades, for example in Jaffa or Akko, clashed against each other. While we can be almost certain that relevant psycho-sociological indicators such as conflict salience, ingroup membership, or outgroup perception changed due to these events, shouldn't there be as well different affective dynamics involved?

While studying the elementary psychological building blocks under conflict escalation in a mainly descriptive way, I lay the foundation for the next chapter where I aim to predict violent action out of these elementary emotional building blocks. This study applies theories of context changes to the case of two specific escalation settings within the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, namely comparing the announcement of the relocation of the US-embassy to Jerusalem in December 2017 – which I examined already in the last chapter – to the 'Gaza Marches of Return' in spring 2018.

Theories of Escalation

Escalation, defined as periods of increased tensions within intergroup conflict settings (Fisher, 2008), has a fundamental impact on conflict dynamics such as tactics used by the conflict parties or aims targeted by mediators (Bollerup & Christensen, 1997; Pruitt & Rubin, 1986), based on different cognitive attitudes and more pronounced extremism of group members compared to 'normal' times. As mentioned in Chapter Two, social environments shape behavior directly and

indirectly (Blalock, 1984; Manski, 2000). This 'behavior shaping' is important within asymmetric conflicts, particularly escalation contexts. For example, researchers found that individuals' beliefs that mark differentiation from outgroups become radicalized as intergroup tensions escalate. They also show that this differentiation is proportional to tension escalation (Alizadeh et al., 2014). As the central role of emotions within conflict escalation and de-escalation has been widely recognized (e.g. Halperin, 2016), comparable effects should be especially visible for emotions. Relying on the appraisal-based framework (Halperin, Sharvit, et al., 2011a), the suggested mechanism has been a model of escalation and de-escalation of violent intergroup conflicts, which takes into account the interaction between threat salience and features of the social situation (Jonas & Fritsche, 2013). In summary, escalation further feeds competitive interactions and recycles the conflict to higher levels of intensity through broadly similar orientations and processes that initially escalated the conflict (Bar-Tal, 2013; Fisher, 2016).

Also, in terms of willingness to participate in collective action to achieve social change in intergroup conflict as well as the means used for this action, we should see changes due to the escalation setting. In general, low-power groups might more easily use violence, because they perceive to have 'nothing to lose' (e.g. Mann, 2017; Tausch et al., 2011). Readiness for collective action has been suggested to change according to specific settings, as the motivations for collective action are assumed to be relatively context-dependent (van Zomeren, 2013). Especially intriguing in a low-power setting is, what happens after political provocation that underlines the power-asymmetry even further, when low-power groups are 'pushed into a corner'? Examples for changing collective action motivation being impacted by political events are illustrated by the fluctuating incidences of 'popular activism' (Carpenter, 2018; Darweish & Rigby, 2015; Høigilt, 2015) which sometimes culminate in the symbolized violence of so-called 'days of rage' in the Palstinian Territories. As already suggested in Chapter Four of this monograph, are the emotional bases of

predicting such collective behavior the same, or have they been altered to a different dynamic under these contrasting conditions compared to the day-to-day experience of occupation?

Emotional Frameworks

Scholars who study intergroup conflicts have long recognized the central role played by emotions in conflict escalation, de-escalation, and transformation (Helmick & Petersen, 2002; Horowitz, 1985; Lindner, 2006) and they developed relevant conceptualizations (Goldenberg et al., 2016; Halperin, Sharvit, et al., 2011). Emotions are considered central to international politics particularly in times of urgency and crisis (Bleiker & Hutchison, 2008; Crawford, 2000; Ross, 2006). Several scholars have also underlined the importance to study *discrete* negative emotions (e.g. Barrett & Gross, 2001; Halperin & Pliskin, 2015). Past studies suggest for example that emotions such as anger, humiliation, or hate predict support for collective action against the oppressor but the exact levels that make either of these trigger support for violent versus non-violent measures in specific conflict escalation situations is still unclear. And especially – these dynamics have almost never been studied within conflict escalation settings.

As emotions grow out of situational interactions, and accumulated levels of emotional energy were found in Chapter Two to fuel agency during a conflict, comparing different escalation conditions might be a crucial research gap for conflict transformation (Bramsen & Poder, 2018). Assuming a broad as well as situational perspective on the microdynamics of emotions can help us understand what drives actors in conflicts and conflict transformation as these dynamics define emotional energy (Collins, 1993). Defined as the agentic potential of discrete emotions (Bramsen & Poder, 2018) researchers differentiate for example between positive emotional energy (based on emotions such as happiness, hope, confidence, trust), diminished energy (based on fear, depression, sadness, hopelessness) and negative emotional energy (based on anger, rage, contempt, hate). Pearlman (2013) distinguishes dispiriting (fear, sadness, shame) from energizing emotions (anger,

joy, pride). As outlined in Chapter Four, the downstream effects of emotions include violent and nonviolent collective action (Groenendyk, 2011; Shepherd et al., 2013).

The Present Study

The study applies the described theories of context and conflict escalation to the case of two specific escalation settings to discuss the inductively derived impact on emotions and political action based on a mixed methods dataset. Research on this issue particularly from a low-power perspective is lacking partly due to practical difficulties to study these processes in escalatory settings but also as social psychology focuses widely on 'experimental data from university students' (Elcheroth et al., 2019; Vollhardt & Bilali, 2008). Even though conflict escalation is by no means a new phenomenon, its underlying psychological processes remain understudied.

To understand the psychological processes around conflict escalation, the study describes a mixed methods approach using thematic and content analysis as well as computerized quantification of qualitative material. These methods are combined with quantitative techniques to explore psychological microprocesses, namely emotions and collective action of low-power group members during two different escalation settings. In the investigation, I sought to explore the following research questions: (1) What are the most common themes and issues emerging in qualitative descriptions of emotions and collective action comparing both escalation contexts? (2) What are the underlying factors that can support or hamper the psychological driving force for political action under conflict escalation? How do the two different conflict escalation *contexts* influence our two constructs, emotions and collective action, in unique ways?

5.2 Methodology

Data Collection Approach

A convergent mixed methods design (Bergman, 2008; Fetters et al., 2013; Guest & Fleming, 2014) was adopted for this study. It is suited to the deeper exploration of the multi-layered and contextual nature of escalation processes after the participatory-observational study and the focused quantitative study comparing baseline to strong conflict escalations. Qualitative research is compatible with the investigation of under-researched low-power groups to facilitate a broader exploration of the issues. It holds the promise for gathering novel, diverse and detailed information in a short time, building models, and generating hypotheses (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Van de Vijver & Chasiotis, 2010). Quantitative research facilitates the identification of general patterns of participants' reactions to conflict escalation and arguably initial predictions to the extent possible in correlative field designs. Accordingly, quantitative and qualitative methods can fulfil complementary purposes within mixed methods designs (Kelle, 2006), cross-validating findings and helping to illuminate different aspects of the psychological reality in intergroup conflict. Structured short interviews allow participants to voice their personal experiences while questionnaires were used to quantify emotions and behavioral tendencies. Combined, the methods provide an important approach to overcome the limitations of both qualitative and quantitative 'single-method research'. Furthermore, the displayed *integration* of quantitative and qualitative data can substantially enhance the value of mixed methods research (Bryman, 2006; Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2010; Fetters et al., 2013).

The survey was conducted at two different escalation timepoints. The study was launched one week after the announcement of the US Government to move their embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem (December 2017), which lead to widespread confrontational demonstrations in the Westbank (see the last chapter). The second follow-up was conducted in the weeks after the start of the "Gaza Marches of Return" (March 2018) which led to widespread violence between Israel and

the Gaza strip including over 300 casualties while there were only very few organized

demonstrations in the Westbank. Both contexts were periods of high conflict salience and collective

action but of a very different nature and relevance to Westbank Palestinians. While there is very little

direct contact between Westbank and Gaza due to severe movement limitations, the status of

Jerusalem is probably the most sensitive issue of the Israel-Palestine conflict and any rumour or

actual change regarding its status has major conflict repercussions.

Participants and Procedure

Participants were Palestinians living in the Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate in the West

Bank, recruited by a local survey company. Sampling had been done by an experienced survey

company in a random household sampling approach at sixteen different localities within the

Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate (see the last chapter). I used a two-wave longitudinal design. In

all, 160 ('Jerusalem') and 150 ('Gaza') Palestinian participants from the Baseline survey described in

the last chapter (80 females; ages 18–80, M=35.5, SD=11.9) completed the follow-up surveys. The

sampling was done by the same survey company but this time phone numbers acquired during the

baseline study could be used. The low and favourable attrition rate (7%) was not associated with any

demographics.

Measures

I designed a closed-ended mixed methods questionnaire incorporating measures of one

selected experienced event to be described in detail, a range of individual- and group emotions

(hope, anger, hatred, humiliation, fear, pride, happiness), and a range of collective action tendencies

based on the event including also inactivity as an option.

After the introduction, participants gave oral consent (phone study) and the questions started, first

regarding events "*The following questions we will ask you about your emotions and attitudes in the*

context of political conflict-related events that you have experienced either personally or indirectly

(via the media, hearing from others)", then emotions and action (see Table 5.1 for exact wording of the qualitative questions) followed by the quantitative questions.

Description of Conflict Events. For the events, we asked the participants to focus on *one* specific event – "*Select one specific experienced conflict event and describe it in detail - what did happen exactly and where did it take place?"*. This could also include indirectly experienced large-scale events communicated via media or events that significant others experienced directly, for example, the imprisonment of the participant's husband. Examples to select from were given as in the baseline study. The described event was rated by the participants according to the dimensions significance, intensity, and unpleasantness, for example, "*To what extend would you say that the event had a significant influence on your life?*" on a 1 (not at all) to 6 (very much so) scale.

Table 5.1

Matching Domains in Interview Guide Exploring Emotions and Political Action during Escalations

	Qualitative	Quantitative (scale 1-6)
Event	Please describe the event you are referring to in some detail: what did happen exactly?	Event qualities – significance, intensity, unpleasantness
Emotions	What were your thoughts and feelings at the time?	Emotions (individual/group) – hope, anger, hatred, humiliation, fear, pride, happiness
Action	How did you react?	Coping steps willing to take – confrontative, normative, none (inaction)

Emotions. Participants were asked to rate the degree to which they were feeling the emotions outlined above on a 1 (not at all) to 6 (very much so) scale. We first asked about individual emotions "To what extent did you personally feel each of the following emotions due to the event you described above?". Then, the concept of group emotions was briefly introduced "Emotions can also be experienced in the name of your people. Thinking about the situation of Palestinians in the West Bank, to what extent did you as a Palestinian feel each of the following emotions due to the event described above?". Participants then rated the extent they felt group-based emotions on the same scales used with individual emotions.

Collective Action. We assessed participants' response to the conflict-related events "Based on the event described, which of the following coping steps or actions are you willing to take?". The items included three items for confrontative actions ("To personally confront army forces if they assaulted me"; "To take justice into my hands if I got assaulted by the army forces"; "Participating in confrontational demonstrations against the army"), one for inactivity ("Avoiding participating in any activity against the occupation") and one item for normative action ("Shaming people who do not boycott Israeli institutions and products"). Answers ranged from 1 (not at all) to 6 (very much so).

The confrontative items including the reverse-coded inactivity item collapsed well (α=.71) to form a single item for confrontative action where higher scores represent higher readiness for confrontation. The very confrontative but also controversial item used in the baseline study ("Supporting armed resistance") was again not included in the further analysis due to a high dropout rate.

Full demographic measures such as gender, age, religion, level of religiousness, education, and average income of the participants were be provided in the last chapter. Importantly, unspecific qualitative attributions, emotions, and action tendencies were described *before* the participants rated the specific pre-defined items.

Data Processing and Analysis

Qualitative data analysis was performed initially based on thematic analysis (Neuendorf, 2002; Weber, 1990) to derive my findings from the real-life conflict experiences of the participants and their perspectives (Thomas, 2006). As the theoretical conceptualizations are widely defined already, several quantification techniques were used including qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2001) and 'Linguistic Inquiry and Wordcount' (Tausczik & Pennebaker, 2010), a computerized text analysis program that counts words in psychologically meaningful categories. Empirical results using LIWC demonstrate its ability to detect meaning in a wide variety of settings, including emotionality,

social relationships, and thinking styles. All the Arabic transcripts were translated by a local research assistant, and then coded and analysed in English.

Integration at the *methods* level occurred as the studies were connected directly through the same participants, through matching of all three concepts (events, emotions, action) across qualitative and quantitative questions and joint presentation of the results as well as discussion in this chapter. The *results* from the dataset were merged through a side-by-side comparison to assess for confirmation, expansion, or discordance between both types of information. Confirmation occurred if the findings from both types of data reinforced the results from the other. Expansion occurred when the findings from the two data types expanded insights by addressing complementary aspects of the conflict escalation experience. Discordance occurred if the survey and interview results were inconsistent or disagreed with each other (Fetters et al., 2013). Integration at the *reporting* level occurred through matched construct-by-theme descriptions and joint display.

5.3 Results

Data from the study was analyzed in several steps. In each subsection, I first provide some *quantitative* statistics about experienced event frequency then explore emotions as well as action tendencies, always comparing both contexts. Next, escalation outcomes of low-power group members in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are *qualitatively* investigated under the same major themes: events, experienced emotions as well as political collective action. Finally, quantitative statistical comparison between the two different escalation contexts is suggested using computerized 'open vocabulary' word processing.

Events

Conflict salience as well as perceived exposure to conflict events and political violence seemed overall a lot higher compared to the 'baseline' setting described in Chapter One. While at baseline many participants reported low conflict exposure (30% of the participants reported no events exposure at all), now nearly all of the respondents experienced at least one conflict event during both follow-up surveys either directly or indirectly (Figure 5.1). The most frequently reported directly experienced events were at both timepoints "harassment at checkpoints" and "interrogation by the military" (together 25% at E1 and 31% at E2). The biggest total category though were indirectly experienced events, normally "US embassy move to Jerusalem" (37% at E1) and "Gaza Marches of Return" (55% at E2).

Figure 5.1

Reported Events at both Escalation Timepoints
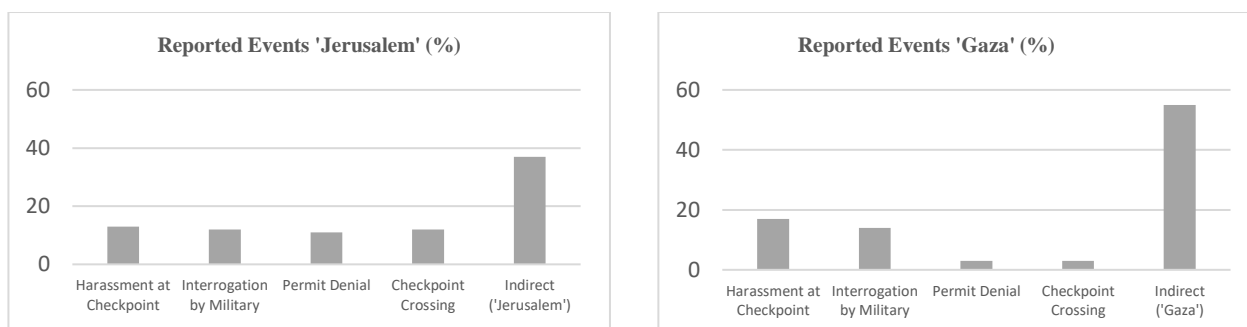
When looking at differences between the more 'symbolic-provocative' status humiliation (Jerusalem) and the more distant but 'violent-aggressive' (Gaza) conflict escalation, as Table 5.2 shows, participants at experienced higher levels of event relevance (significance, intensity, unpleasantness) during the first escalation in regards to the different event characteristics compared to the second events. Despite the substantially higher number of casualties and levels of direct violence during the Gaza escalation, the events around Jerusalem are perceived as more significant, intense, and unpleasant.

Table 5.2

Descriptive Statistics and Differences Between Events Classifications

	'Jerusalem'		'Gaza'			
	M	(SD)	M	(SD)	t	Sig
Significance	4.63	(0.47)	4.08	(1.75)	3,487	.00**
Intensity	4.25	(1.29)	3.78	(1.48)	-3,306	.00**
Unpleasantness	5.48	(1.02)	4.08	(1.02)	-12,487	.00**

Note. SE = standard error. SD = standard deviation.
*p < .05.
**p < .01 (two-tailed significance)

When comparing *only indirect* events, the differences between "Jerusalem" and "Gaza" are even more pronounced for example in terms of significance (M=4.45, SD=1.10 versus M=3.55, SD=1.67) or unpleasantness (M=5.45, SD=1.08 versus M=3.69, SD=0.97), symbolic 'loss-of-status' aggressions was experienced as more significant, intense and unpleasant than the violent Gaza events and very similar to a *directly* experienced event. This is interesting as we can see that symbolic 'loss-type' gestures of aggression in the international arena, can be experienced in a very negative way, even compared to acts of comparatively violent aggression. I will examine the emotional underpinnings and especially the effects on political action of these differences in the next chapter. Admittedly, this effect might be also due to – perceived or real – proximity and centrality of the issues at hand – see also more recent escalation from May 2021 that also escalated due to issues around Jerusalem belonging and the Al-Aksa Mosque.

From a *qualitative* perspective, it was interesting to examine *how* events were described. The participants for example repeatedly referred to the "*martyrs and the wounded people…*" providing strong linguistic cues towards suffering and victimization when describing the Gaza setting. Regarding 'Jerusalem' we can see an interesting twist to what was actually announced (a third country relocating its embassy) to how it was perceived by the participants: "*they announced on papers that Jerusalem is the capital of the Jews…, they took Jerusalem through talking…*". Even in the mere event description of this *indirectly* experienced event, a strong emotional component comes through, such as "*we were worried about the people in Jerusalem*" or "*we heard about it and it moved us*". The mere US- embassy relocation announcement was perceived in a highly symbolic negative way to the Palestinians losing the right to the city.

'Gaza' on the other hand, was described in different words. References were as mentioned mostly linked to loss of people, such as "*the martyrs and the wounded people*", "*martyrdom of young people, children and women*", "*anger Friday and martyrs wounded people*" or even specific cases such as "*assassination of the young paralyzed man and the death of the child in Gaza*". The main characteristics are the victims ("martyrs") and the 'helpless people from Gaza'.

Emotions

On the emotions side, we can see a differentiated scenario between both escalation settings (see Figure 5.2). As we could see already from the event descriptions, both settings are perceived as very emotional to the Palestinian participants, but each of distinct emotional quality. While the levels of some of the emotions are widely similar such as anger ($M = 5.08$, $SD=1.35$ versus $M = 4.95$, $SD=1.16$ and $t = 1.31$, $p = .191$) and some are correlated, such as fear ($\beta = .27$, $p = .002$) or hate ($\beta = .20$, $p = .019$), we can see that most of the emotion levels are substantially different from each other, with $t(135)=-8.93$, $p < .001$ for hope, $t(135)=11.19$, $p < .001$ for hate, $t(134)=-8.20$, $p < .001$ for pride, and $t(135)=-8.34$, $p < .001$ for happiness (Figure 1).

Figure 5.2

Comparison Emotional Profile under Escalation E1 ('Jerusalem') versus E2 ('Gaza')
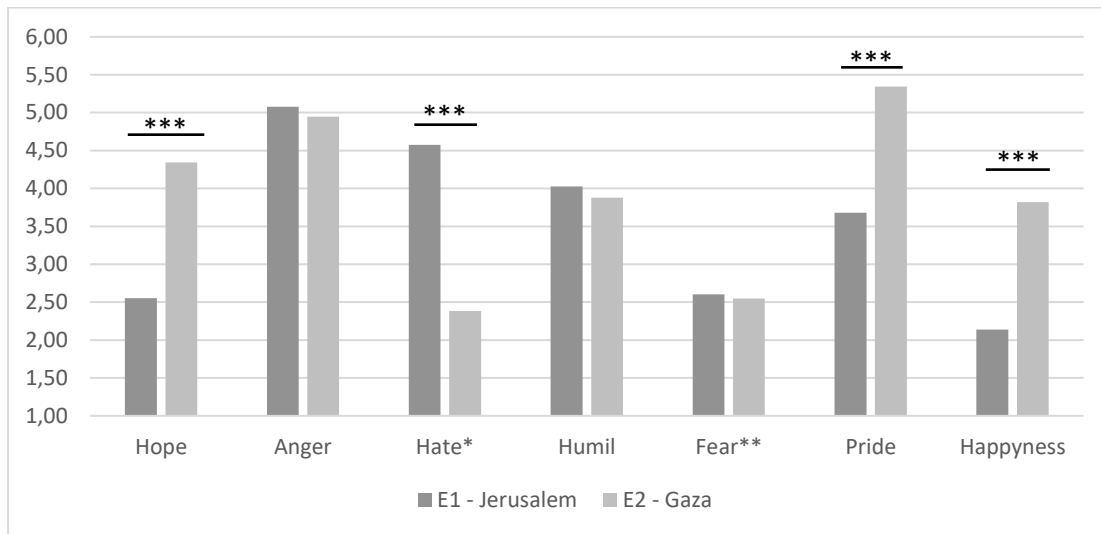
Overall, these results suggest that there is a *qualitative* difference between the two escalation scenarios in terms of emotional profile, not merely a quantitative one in the sense 'Jerusalem is worse than Gaza'. This is further underlined from a qualitative perspective. Emotions described in qualitative form during the Jerusalem escalation are sometimes unspecific including words such as "*upset, unclear, annoyed, bad*". More specific descriptions include being "*angry, humiliated*" and "*sad*" due to the events around Jerusalem. In over 30% of cases, more than one emotional attribute was used to describe how people feel, when the word 'anger' or 'angry' was used, even in two-thirds of the cases it was completed with another emotional attribute, such as '*nervous, provoking, upset, annoyed or fearful*. This underlines our idea from the quantitative data that emotional states are complex and often can't be described by a single emotion, rather pointing to complex 'emotional profiles' in a given situation instead. Emboldening emotions such as anger or pride versus dispiriting emotion descriptions such as fear or sadness (Pearlman, 2013), was favoured in the descriptions of the 'Jerusalem' events – in 28% of the cases, the emotional depiction was emboldening, in 21% it was dispiriting and in 8% it contained both elements. In 53% of the cases, a clear tendency attribution was not possible from the affective description.

Qualitative emotional descriptions during the 'Gaza Marches of Return' include "*anger and grief on the people of the martyrs*" or *"sadness and anger about what happen to the people"*. The specific emotions mentioned most frequently in this case, were indeed *"sadness",* mentioned in 37% of the cases, *"anger",* mentioned in 26% (in 14% of the cases together) as well as *"fear"* in 9% of the emotional event descriptions. What's interesting is that on the emboldening side *as well as* on the dispiriting side we have more 'extreme' attributions such as "*extreme anger*" and "*extreme sadness and fear*", particularly when specifically referring to "*the events of Gaza, the martyrs and the wounded people*". In this case, almost *half* of the attributions (46%) were linked to dispiriting emotions mainly sadness and only 23% were referring to emboldening emotions while 21% contained dispiriting as well as emboldening emotional descriptions such as "*anger and sadness*".

Collective Action

Like the emotional patterns, confrontative action patterns are equally different between the two study time points. First of all, as we could guess from the emotional attributions, 'Jerusalem' is as such much more confrontative, when comparing normative versus confrontative action between the timepoints or even the ratio normative/confrontational within each time point, the "Jerusalem" event seems to have triggered a context where the "norm" is confrontation (during the time of the study, widespread clashes happened in the Westbank) compared to the "Gaza Marches of Return" where it stayed relatively quiet.

Table 5.3

Descriptive Statistics and Difference Between Events Classifications E1 ('Jerusalem') - E2 ('Gaza')

	'Jerusalem'		'Gaza'			
	M	(SD)	M	(SD)	t	Sig
Avoidance	3.16	(1.71)	3.83	(2.10)	-3,191	.00**
Boycott (Normative)	2.61	(1.61)	3.60	(1.68)	-5,026	.00**
Confront. Armed Forces	4.56	(1.49)	2.98	(1.50)	8.431	.00**
Retaliation Justice	4.50	(1.52)	2.94	(1.54)	7.926	.00**
Confront. Demonstrations	3.41	(1.48)	2.50	(1.73)	4.736	.00**
Armed Resistance	3.77	(1.58)	3.12	(1.84)	2.915	.00**
Confrontative Action	4.07	(1.11)	2.90	(1.30)	7,364	.00**

Note. SE = standard error. SD = standard deviation.
*p < .05.
**p < .01 (two-tailed significance)

What did these different types of conflict escalation mean in terms of collective action? We see substantial differences in the reported action tendencies. While 15% of the participants are "much" and "very much" (rating in the two highest categories) willing to engage in violent action in the symbolic 'Jerusalem' status-loss context, this is only the case for 6% in the 'Gaza' context. For nonviolent action, we see the opposite trend: while only 4% of the participants report this as their "much" and "very much" preferred option under the symbolic scenario, this is the case for 15% in the violent one. The differences between the two contexts as well as the interaction are statistically significant ($t = 7.36$ $p = .000$) for violent action and ($t = -5.02$ $p = .000$) for nonviolent action (see Figure 5.3). Also, there is a significant interaction between action tendency and context, F (1, 119) = 66.58, p = .000.

Figure 5.3

Action Tendencies over Timepoints (close symbolic 'Jerusalem' versus distant violent 'Gaza')
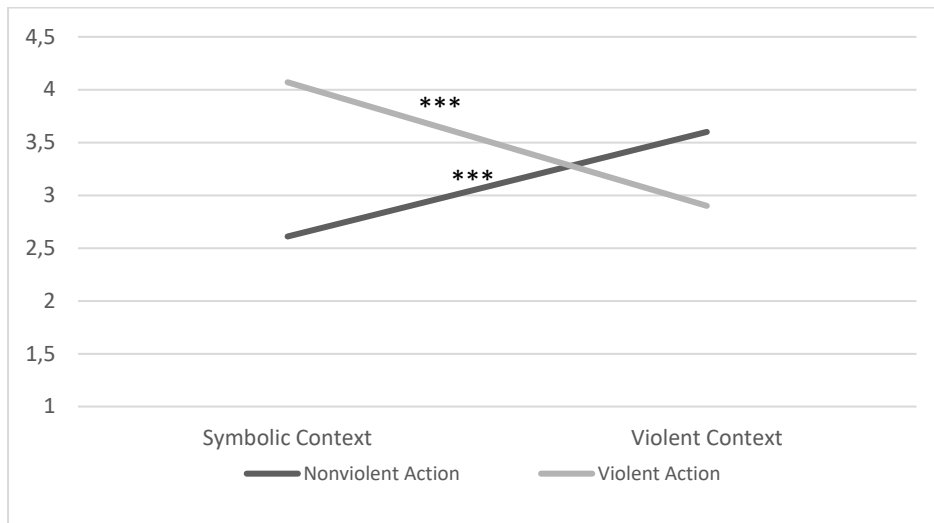
We see these different trends as well in the qualitative collective action testimonials. The action tendencies are rather distinct for each context, indicating for 'Jerusalem' mostly either active support such as *"we participated in the events [to the extent] that we can"* or passive backing such as *"…but our thinking was with the people in Jerusalem"* or *"extreme anger over the silence of the world"*. During the 'Gaza Marches of Return' events, the action descriptions have often a more passive connotation, such as "*crying and incapable of doing anything"*, or reference to *"nothing you can do except praying"* or explicitly mentioning power inequalities and asymmetry *"the oppression of the inability to defend them"*. Relatively often there is a certain 'spiritual' reference such as "*praying for patience*" that is almost completely missing from the events around the 'third most holy site of Islam'. In terms of emotional response, there are certain indications for a self-directed destructiveness described for example as "*anger, because there is nothing to do*" or emotions directed at the wider public, described as "e*xtreme anger over the silence of the world*". In light of the social agency discussion in the introductory Chapter Two, it is almost painful to see how 'normal' both escalation situations are described, for example *"[I did] nothing at all, this is*

normal… what can I say or do?". The exact words '*this is normal'* occurred in 12% of 'Jerusalem'

and still 3% during 'Gaza' event descriptions, despite dozens of deaths at the study timepoint.

Joint Display of Mixed Methods Results

In addition to the results being displayed separately, merged presentation of key results is

described here to integrate both types of findings (Guest & Fleming, 2014; Plano Clark et al., 2010)

using a data matrix format (Table 5.4) and LIWC.

Table 5.4

Mixed Methods Data Summary for Comparison of Both Contexts

	Quantitative Construct M (SD)			Qualitative Theme (% of statements)		Sample Quote
'Jerusalem'	**(n=160)**					
Events	Significance	4.63	(0.47)	Jerusalem	(37%)	*"they announced in papers that Jerusalem is the capital of the Jews…, they took Jerusalem through talking…"*
	Intensity	4.25	(1.29)	Checkpoint	(16%)	
	Unpleasantness	5.48	(1.02)	Permit	(14%)	
Emotions	Anger	5.08	(1.35)	Embolden	(28%)	*"upset, annoyed, provoking"* *"fearful, sad"* *"angry, fearful"*
	Fear	2.60	(1.79)	Dispiriting	(21%)	
	Hope	2.55	(1.81)	Mixed	(8%)	
Action	Boycott	2.61	(1.61)	EmotAggr	(13%)	*"We participated in the events [to the extent] that we can"* *"extreme anger over the silence of the world"*
	Confrontative	4.07	(1.11)	Resignate	(36%)	
	Avoidance	3.16	(1.71)			
'Gaza'	**(n=150)**					
Events	Significance	4.08	(1.75)	Gaza MoR	(55%)	*"martyrdom of young people, children and women", "anger Friday and wounded martyrs"*
	Intensity	3.78	(1.48)	Harassment	(16%)	
	Unpleasantness	4.08	(1.02)	Interrogate	(13%)	
Emotions	Anger	4.95	(1.16)	Embolden	(23%)	*"anger and grief on… the martyrs"* *"sadness" (37%)* *"anger and sadness" (21%)*
	Fear	2.55	(1.72)	Dispiriting	(46%)	
	Hope	4.34	(1.84)	Mixed	(21%)	
Action	Boycott	3.60	(1.68)	EmotAggr	(3%)	*"crying and incapable of doing anything"* *"the oppression of the inability to defend them"*
	Confrontative	2.90	(1.30)	Resignate	(54%)	
	Avoidance	3.83	(2.10)			

Widely *confirmation*, as well as expansion, occurred. The findings from both data types

reinforced the results from the other and expanded insights by addressing complementary aspects of

the conflict escalation experience. This is the case for example regarding the emotional qualities of

both timepoints or the mix between emboldening and dispiriting emotions as well as diverging action tendencies. To further strengthen the connection between qualitative and quantitative data, I compare both contexts with computational means to expand how the Jerusalem context versus the Gaza context is described compared to each other as well as general writing examples (Table 5.5).

Table 5.5

LIWC-Standard Dimensions for Escalation Settings and Comparison Data

	'Jerusalem'	'Gaza'	Average 'Social Media & Blog'	Average 'Personal Writing'
I-Words (I, me, my)	2.9	0.2	5.5	8.7
Social Words	15.7	7.5	9.7	8.7
Positive Emotions	0.6	0.2	4.5	2.5
Negative Emotions	14.7	13	2.1	2.1
Cognitive Processes	13.2	4.1	10.7	12.5
SUMMARY VARIABLES				
Analytic	50.5	99.0	55.9	44.8
Clout	93.7	70.3	55.4	37.0
Authenticity	10.1	5.0	55.6	76.0
Emotional Tone	1.0	1.0	63.3	38.6

Traditional LIWC dimensions reflect the percentage of total words within the text provided. In both descriptions, I find comparatively low numbers of personal words as the events describe mainly indirectly experienced group events. Especially the Jerusalem context is described using social words and personal 'I-words'. When looking at positive versus negative words, both events have highly negative connotations. For the Gaza events, comparatively little cognitive processing is described while cognitive processing is high during the Jerusalem timepoint.

The Summary Variables are research-based composites that have been converted to 100-point scales where 0 = very low along the dimension and 100 = very high. Each of the summary variables is an algorithm made from various LIWC variables based on previous language research. The numbers are standardized scores that have been converted to percentiles (based on the area under a

normal curve) ranging from 0 to 100. Analytic refers to formal and hierarchical thinking, which is especially the case for the 'Gaza' events and understandable for group events with mainly indirect exposure. In this sense, it is interesting that the 'Jerusalem' group event, is described in personal terms comparable to personal writing or blogging using narrative ways, focusing on the here-and-now, and personal experiences. Clout taps writing that is authoritative, 'confident', and exhibits leadership, which is the case for both events but especially in the case of 'Jerusalem' reflects the high readiness for action. This is particularly interesting due to its closeness to the partially high social agency during some 'micro-escalations' suggested in Chapter Two. While both scenarios are described as tremendously activating, 'Jerusalem' is much more so, which is displayed equally in the energizing versus dispiriting emotions ratios. Authenticity refers to writing that is personal, humble, and vulnerable. Here, we have in our sample comparatively low numbers, arguably displaying a Palestinian 'show of strength'. Emotional tone is scored such that higher numbers are more positive and upbeat and lower numbers are more negative, which puts our sample in the lowest percentile as there is no positive emotion mentioned anywhere in the narrative texts provided.

5.4 Discussion

Conflict escalations are one of the many tragic side effects of intractable conflicts. They "harden the hearts" (Vollhardt, 2009) of people entrenched in it and provide fertile ground for further cycles of violence, but they do so in distinct ways. Two different escalation settings in terms were explored with mixed methods to gauge their psychological impact on emotions as well as action tendencies. Results of the study underline that both escalations events were perceived substantially different in terms of event qualities significance, intensity, and unpleasantness as well as qualitative descriptions. The findings on escalation narrations showed that Palestinian low-power group members described more emboldening emotions during the 'Jerusalem' escalation and more dispiriting emotions during the 'Gaza Marches of Return'. Accordingly, their description of collective action included stronger action tendencies in 'Jerusalem' and more passivity in 'Gaza'. Analysis of both data types indicated distinct emotional profiles for each escalation as well as a preference for confrontative action over nonviolent in 'Jerusalem' and the reverse preferences during the 'Gaza' incidents. Computerized text analysis indicates that while both escalations settings are experienced as utterly negative, the Jerusalem escalation includes more personal implications, using more social words, higher levels of cognitive processing as well as more resolve. In sum, I conclude that the two escalation contexts are substantially distinct from each other, triggering different types of action tendencies as well as different emotional profiles.

Theoretical and Applied Contributions

This mixed methods analysis provides a deeper insight into the factors blocking positive conflict transformation outcomes under different escalation settings. While obvious in cases of 'active' confrontative settings, this is equally relevant for more – in the Westbank – 'passive' contexts such as the 'Gaza Marches of Return' as there are also negative conflict dynamics at play despite these being seemingly 'quiet' settings.

The study contributes to theories on violent intergroup conflict by revealing the situation-dependent emotional and behavioral foundations of conflict escalation settings. Based on data confirmation and expansion, there is now a much more comprehensive understanding of the psychological impact of disadvantaged-group members experiencing these escalations. The findings of this research can be used to increase high-power group or conflict mediator awareness of the intergroup dynamics and the impact of their perceptions on escalation dynamics. How this can happen concretely will be elaborated more in the last chapter of this dissertation.

Limitations and Future Directions

The present research demonstrated how two specific conflict escalation situations impact emotions and collective action tendencies of low-power group members entrapped in conflict. The current field study is only correlational and while relatively broad in its approach, could have benefited from deeper qualitative work with selected participants as the qualitative part – although spanning over all participants – is of limited word count per participant. This issue will be targeted in the 'Turning Points' chapter using longer narratives of fewer participants with a focus on emotional *change* despite difficult experiences.

To establish prediction to the extent possible in a correlative field design, a more targeted quantitative approach using regression models is again needed. In the next chapter, I will examine specific emotional dynamics, namely anger, humiliation, and hate, to establish how they predict violent collective action in different escalation contexts, utilizing an empirical examination of the contextual model (conflict intensity *and* proximity) theorized in Chapter Two. Finally, the line of study would profit from a more systematic examination of the situational importance of group- versus individual identity for collective engagement. Social identity- (Tajfel et al., 1979; Tajfel & Turner, 1986), as well as self-categorisation theory (Turner & Reynolds, 2012), suggest an altered relevance over different settings, supported for example through the distinct levels between

individual- versus group emotions shown in Figure 5.2 or the dissimilar frequency of 'I-words' over both settings in Table 5.5.

Conclusions

The implications of the study are valuable to policymakers showing concern for conflict transformation and third-party conflict mediators alike. Thinking about such 'emotion- targeted' conflict transformation can shape large-scale psychological interventions (Hameiri et al., 2016) as well as structural policy changes with an indirect effect on negative emotions such as humiliation or anger (Salmela & von Scheve, 2017). They provide empirical foundations for preventative and coping measures before and during conflict escalation. It will further contribute to the work of academics, psychologists, political scientists, educators, and other professionals assisting in the complex process of transforming intergroup conflict. The findings underline the nuanced power of emotions in prolonged violent conflicts, especially during different types of conflict escalation. Further implications are described in more detail in Chapter Eight.

Chapter Six

Two Paths to Violence – Individual versus Group Emotions during Different Types of Conflict Escalation

To explain support for violent forms of resistance among low-power groups living in conditions of hardship and oppression, I have examined so far *specific* negative emotions of the oppressed such as anger, humiliation, or hate and their postulated link with support for violent collective action and compared the impact of two *different* escalation settings. In this chapter, I will study the *systematic elaboration of escalations* within protracted intergroup conflict, based on the dimensions of conflict intensity versus conflict proximity influencing *individual versus group emotions* as antecedences of support for violence. Past studies suggest that mainly *group* emotions are important within intergroup conflict to predict support for collective action against an oppressor, but the exact influence of *individual* emotions remain unclear, especially during conflict escalation with personal implications.

To better understand *when* individual- versus group emotions experienced by oppressed groups elicit violent forms of political resistance in our setting, I conducted two quantitative longitudinal field studies in the Palestinian Territories during different types of conflict escalation, either defined by general conflict intensity or personal proximity of events. For low-power group members experiencing these escalations, distinctive profiles of individual- versus group emotions are not only intensified during different types of conflict intensifications but more importantly shape their agentic response. Specifically, for intense but mainly indirectly experienced conflict escalations, *group* emotions predicted violent collective action, while for closely experienced conflict events, *individual* emotions predicted violent engagement. Theoretical and applied implications for conflict transformation are discussed.

6.1 Introduction

As outlined in the last chapters, groups locked in protracted hostile conflict pay a heavy price for the continuation of the violent dispute and in asymmetrical conflicts, this toll is especially high for the lower-power group (Kteily et al., 2013, Thiessen & Darweish, 2018). Disenfranchised groups might experience oppression and violence from the high-power group on different, for example immediate and structural levels (Galtung, 1990). After studying two particular escalations in detail in the last chapter, here I systematize escalation specifications according two dimensions intensity and proximity based on existing literature and study the impact of these dimensions on action tendencies

One way that low-power groups may try to impact their situation is by engaging in collective action against their oppressors. Violence may be a forceful tool to change the circumstances in favour of the low-power group (Gould & Klor, 2010; Pearlman, 2013), but, besides normative considerations, violent action is riskier for the weaker party. It may also backfire, likely to be perceived as communicating destructive intentions from the disadvantaged and thus alienating potentially sympathetic advantaged group members. The question then remains, what are antecedents of support for violent forms of resistance among low-power groups? There are several established factors such as perceived efficacy or group identity, but emotions are by all means one of the most recognized predictors (Halperin, 2016; Pearlman, 2013). Therefore, my approach is to examine the negative emotional experiences of the oppressed and their link with support for violent resistance. Understanding these emotional dynamics can help reducing the frequent 'cycles of violence' that enhance intergroup conflicts. In my research, I contend that these emotional expressions are elicited by the *type* of conflict escalation in specific ways.

Negative Group Emotions During Conflict

As has been established in the previous chapters, emotions are substantial motivators for human behavior (Keltner & Gross, 1999), arguably even more so in conflictual social contexts (Halperin, 2016). Accordingly, emotions experienced during violent intergroup conflict have been intensely studied (e.g. Halperin et al., 2011; Maitner et al., 2007; McDoom, 2012). Negative emotions lead to negative agency (Bramsen & Poder, 2015), aggression (Halperin & Gross, 2011), and a host of other adverse outcomes such as opposition to or reduced support for compromise (Canetti, 2017; Canetti et al., 2013; Hirsch-Hoefler et al., 2016; Petersen, 2002). While there are several precedents of political action, emotions are amongst the most established (Halperin, 2016). While they influence political action tendencies, emotions are much less stable than cognitive concepts or political attitudes and therefore very interesting within cause-and-effect questions as well as an interesting starting point for possible change processes (Halperin et al., 2014; Halperin et al., 2011).

Within intergroup conflict, the concept of *group* emotions is especially relevant and has been a theoretical as well as practical research focus over the last years (Halperin, 2016; Smith et al., 2007). Intergroup emotions are based on individual feelings, but they are characterized by the representation of a reference group e.g. "the Palestinian people". They are experienced by individuals when they identify with a social group, making the group part of the psychological self (Mackie & Smith, 2016; Smith et al., 2007). People mired in intergroup conflict can experience conflict-related emotions such as anger and hate as individuals, or in the name of their collective. In intergroup conflict contexts, group emotions are of specific interest as they elegantly answer the question 'how emotions become political' or why individual group members react to political conflict events they haven't experienced themselves. Accordingly, group emotions have been used so far in the last two chapters.

To examine how emotions predict collective action in specific situations, it might be useful to distinguish *individual-* from *group* emotions situationally and measure both at the same time. As self-categorisation as individual or group member varies depending on the specific context (Turner et al., 1994; Turner & Reynolds, 2012), both types of emotions might *situationally differ* in their relative relevance for collective action. Still, literature to date failed to examine the exact interplay between individual- and group emotions, specifically which of the two is associated stronger with violent action under distinct circumstances of acute conflict escalation.

Individual versus Group Emotions

The importance to look at group-level motives for (inter)group behavior, is well established and specified by theories on social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), self-categorisation (Turner & Reynolds, 2012), or intergroup emotions theory (Smith et al., 2007). This is certainly relevant in intergroup conflict, where research on these emotions has played an increasingly important role over the last years to explain intergroup behavior (Halperin, 2016; Halperin & Tagar, 2017) and specifically violent collective action (Shuman et al., 2016; Tausch et al., 2011).

But is it exclusively the group level that matters? In social psychology, the focus is on the *interaction* between the individual ('I') and group ('we') and how the environment is given meaning (Reynolds et al., 2010). Research on self-categorization theory (Turner et al., 1994) indicates that identity ebbs and flows in a dynamic process between the individual and collective self as a function of contextual configurations. While social identity theory initially focused mainly on intergroup relations, with the development of self-categorization theory there has been an increasing focus on intragroup structural differentiation – particularly the way that people vary in their actual or perceived match to the group's prototype (see Hogg, 2005; Hogg et al., 2017). Other lines of research even attribute high importance to the individual self in *all* contexts (Sedikides et al., 2013). Also, emotions themselves can be contextual in their effect (Smith & Mackie, 2021; Van Kleef et al.,

2010; Zeitzoff, 2014) and contemporary events can impact personal identity in significant ways (Haslam & Reicher, 2006; Reynolds et al., 2010). For example, distinguishing personal from national threats, researchers found distinct affective impact and attitudes. Personal threats – especially threats posing physical danger – were found to elicit fear to a greater degree than more remote threats to the nation (Huddy et al., 2002). On the other hand, individual emotions have been elicited by 'indirect' media coverage of terrorism in intergroup conflict settings (Gadarian, 2010; Shoshani & Slone, 2008). What are the specific contextual factors that determine if either individual- or group emotions are more relevant for violent collective action within different circumstances of conflict escalation? For example, if you consider joining a specific violent protest, would you get prompted based on group emotions or rather based on your individual feelings? Situational factors affect the intensity and thus the potential impact of emotional experiences. The harsh daily existence under occupation may elicit substantial levels of individual- and group emotions.

Conflict Escalation as Moderating Factor in Social Context

Intergroup conflict can be described by phases of escalation and de-escalation (Halperin & Levy, 2017). These situational factors affect the intensity and thus the potential impact of emotional experiences (Spanovic et al., 2010). Thorough understanding of political behavior requires a comprehensive account of the characteristics and consequences of conflict context and the distinction between personal and public conflict events (Huddy et al., 2002). How can these different types of conflict experiences or escalations be described systematically?

Intensity. One obvious candidate to specify contextual configurations in intergroup disputes has always been *conflict intensity*, normally *the* main overall dimension of 'classical' event coding scales such as WEIS (Goldstein, 1992), ICB (Brecher & Wilkenfeld, 1997), or COPDAB (Azar, 1980). Examples here would be breaking off diplomatic relationships, armed forces mobilizations, or even military clashes.

Proximity. Mirroring more recent trends in conflict analysis which emphasize the importance of local sub-state settings and regional non-state actors (Gleditsch et al., 2011; Hegre et al., 2019; Mac Ginty & Firchow, 2016; Walther et al., 2021), as well as the incorporation of geospatial information (Aas Rustad et al., 2011; Buhaug, 2010; Schrodt, 2012), I suggest *conflict proximity* as second important dimension. Obviously, it makes a difference if a specific escalation like military clashes happens in the same location or a distant province.

I propose that in contexts characterized by high levels on the *proximity* dimension and low levels on the intensity dimension, *individual* emotions are associated with collective action. People would be directly implicated by the ongoing events, and apply mainly intragroup comparisons ("my neighbour recently experienced the same difficulties at this checkpoint"). These settings make mainly one's personal identity salient. Therefore, group members experience conflict primarily as individuals, can compare specific ingroup members and their different reactions to the ongoing events ("me" in contrast to "you"-comparisons, Turner et al., 1994). If someone considers engaging in violent action, they do this for individual reasons.

In settings differentiated by high levels on the *intensity-* and low levels on the proximity dimension, *group* emotions would be associated with collective action as the conflict might be experienced more implicitly or indirectly. I presume mainly intergroup comparisons as these contexts make mainly collective identity salient ("those Israelis are just mean to us Palestinians"). Group members focus on overall ingroup-outgroup dynamics in their attribution processes ("us" in contrast to "them"-comparisons, Turner et al., 1994). If someone considers engaging in violent action, they do this for group reasons (Shadiqi et al., 2022; for further considerations on self-categorization in different contexts see also Kampmeier & Simon, 2001; Schmitt et al., 2006).

Drawing from existing theories to tailor each of these dimensions to the relative effect of each type of emotion – individual versus group – on support for violent action, the two dimensions intensity versus proximity create a 2 x 2 matrix of intergroup conflict 'space' (see Figure 6.1).

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Figure 6.1

Intergroup conflict 'space' as defined by two dimensions (a) conflict intensity, and (b) conflict proximity

		b) Conflict Proximity	
		High	Low
a) Conflict Intensity	High	Individual & Group	Group
	Low	Individual	(Other)

Critically, in mapping this 'space', in no way do I mean to imply that both processes are mutually exclusive. Everyone who has experienced intergroup conflict can imagine contexts that are intense *and* close, defined by intra- *as well as* intergroup comparisons. Indeed, cognitive-affective processes of people in the political realm (especially in conflict settings) are messy, likely involving at times the simultaneous deployment of different procedures (Zaki & Williams, 2013). Self-categorization theory has given up the notion that the relationship between the personal and collective is necessarily antagonistic (Hornsey, 2008). The final category – low conflict proximity *and* low intensity – is least relevant for this study, as intergroup conflict loses much of its salience when neither dimension is pertinent. Due to our diverse social identities, we can imagine other pressing issues taking over, such as interpersonal relational matters or economical concerns (Roccas & Brewer, 2002).

The Present Study

The study examined emotions and support for violence in different escalation contexts. During directly experienced "routine" life under military control, after high-casualty but more distant escalation in Gaza as well as directly experienced escalation due to violent acts of own group members. Following these general conceptualizations, I propose the following hypotheses: (1) I first predict that within contexts defined by high proximity and low intensity, *individual* emotions will be associated with violent action. Assuming mainly *intra*group comparisons in high conflict proximity

contexts, these settings make mainly one's *personal* identity salient. Therefore, group members experience conflict primarily as individuals, can compare specific ingroup members and their different reactions to the ongoing events ("me" in contrast to "you"-comparisons). If someone considers engaging in violent action, they do this for *individual* reasons. (2) Next, I predict for contexts characterised by high conflict intensity but low proximity, *group* emotions will be relevant for violent action. I presume mainly *inter*group comparisons as these contexts make mainly *collective* identity salient. Group members focus on overall ingroup-outgroup dynamics in their attribution processes ("us" in contrast to "them"-comparisons). If someone considers engaging in violent action, they do this for *group* reasons. Finally, (3) I predict for contexts defined by high proximity *as well as* high intensity, *both* emotions will predict violent action. I assume, the self processes intra- *and* intergroup cues as both types of comparisons seem plausible and hypothesize that both types of emotions are involved in predicting violent action.

To test these assumptions, I conducted a longitudinal field study in the Palestinian Territories (N=200), focusing on particular political events and real-world issues (Study 1 – local 'Baseline' context versus 'Gaza Marches of Return' escalation) in a 'natural experiment'. First, I measured both types of emotions and violent action tendencies during high proximity and low intensity, then during high intensity and low proximity. Although arguably also close and intense, the 'Jerusalem' context could not be used for these analyses due to multicollinearity between individual and group emotions in this setting. I will show the effects when both dimensions are high in a further study (Study 2 – 'Ramallah-Lockdown' context) during an intense but local conflict escalation.

6.2 Wave 1 ('Low Intensity – High Proximity' Context)

Wave 1 was a baseline study aimed at examining the relations between negative individual versus group emotions and support for violent collective action amongst citizens living under military occupation during relative 'calm' conflict context with local escalation incidents. The study tested our hypothesis regarding the relationship between anger, hate and humiliation, and support for violent collective action. Here, I examined namely that mainly *individual* emotions will predict group violence during relative calm when conflict is experienced directly and group salience is comparatively low.

Methods

Participants and Procedure

Participants were Palestinians living in the Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate in the West Bank, recruited by a local survey company. The study was conducted in February 2017, during a period of relative calm, with no major events or conflict escalation, allowing us to assess all variables at baseline levels capturing the daily life of people living under foreign military control. Even when overt confrontations are not present, Palestinians have to endure checkpoints, travel restrictions, the presence and actions of military forces, and other constraints regularly. These difficult day-to-day situations are likely to elicit certain levels of negative group-related, but also individual emotions.

The sampling was done by an experienced company, sampling approach and sociodemographic details are already described in Chapter Four.

Measures

Individual- and Group Emotions. To measure overall individual versus group emotions and distinguish both from each other, I followed the same approach Mackie and Smith (2007) used in the chain of experiments originally establishing the concept of group emotions. Participants were asked

to rate the degree to which they felt individual- as well as group anger, hate, and humiliation by the item: "To what extent did you personally feel each of the following emotions during the last month?" respectively "If you think about the situation of Palestinians in general, to what extent have you felt the following emotion during the last month – anger, hate, humiliation". (1= not at all, to 6= very much so). [3] The three items collapsed well (α=.69 for the individual- and α=.79 for group emotions) to form two single measures with higher scores representing higher levels of individual- and group emotions.

Support for Violent Collective Action. Ethical challenges and practical considerations concerning the safety of participants limited our ability to directly ask Palestinians about their support for violent collective actions against Israel. Following Hayes & McAllister (2005) and Tausch and colleagues (2011), I measured public support for violent actions indirectly, via tolerance for the action as well as the actions' perceived effectiveness: Thus, to gauge support for violent actions, participants were asked to rate, on a scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 6 (very much so) the degree they "understand people who engage in armed resistance?" as well as the types of action that "will produce more positive outcomes regarding achieving liberation for Palestinians" with the first action being "Armed resistance actions strategically planned to attack Israeli military or security objectives". The two items are highly correlated (r = .52, p < .001) and therefore collapsed well (α=.69) to form a single measure with higher scores representing greater support for violence.

Demographic Indicators. Participants reported their gender, age, religion, level of religiousness, level of education, and average income, see Chapter Four for more details.

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[3] other emotions were collected for exploratory purposes (see Chapter Five)

Results

Factor Analyses

Although the conceptual difference between individual- and group emotions is well established (Smith et al., 2007; Smith & Mackie, 2008), the authors also state that there can be an overlap between the two under certain circumstances. Therefore, we wanted to confirm the differences before proceeding with further analysis. We were especially interested in emotions linked to confrontative collective action, namely anger, hate, and humiliation. To account for possible other paradigms such as three factors alongside the three emotions, I performed an exploratory factor analysis first and then corroborated the results with confirmatory factor analysis.

Exploratory Factor Analysis. Initially, the factorability of the items was examined. Firstly, it was observed that all items correlated at least .3 with at least one other item, suggesting good factorability. Secondly, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was .74, above the commonly recommended value of .6, and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($\chi 2$ (15) = 433.08, p < .001). The communalities were all above .3, further confirming that each item shared some common variance with other items. Given these overall indicators, factor analysis was deemed to be suitable with all items of interest.

Maximum likelihood analysis was used because the primary purpose was to confirm an existing theoretical model. Initial eigenvalues indicated that the first two factors explained 53% and 16% of the variance respectively. The two-factor solution, which explained about 70% of the variance, was preferred because of (a) its previous theoretical support; (b) the 'leveling off' of eigenvalues on the scree plot after two factors, and (c) the insufficient number of primary loadings and difficulty of interpreting the third- or subsequent factors. Still, we proceeded to validate the suitability of the solution with confirmatory factor analysis.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis. In this step, we tested the hypothesized underlying factor structure of the included emotions with confirmatory factor analysis (Hu & Bentler, 1999) using AMOS 19 software. The model fit the data reasonably well, $\chi2$ (8, N = 200) = 60.47, p < .001 (NFI =.87, IFI = .88, CFI = .88, RMSEA = .18). More importantly, as can be seen in Table 6.1, the two-factor model showed a better fit than the one-factor model on all relevant indicators.

Table 6.1

Confirmatory Factor Analyses: Fit Indices and Model Comparison

Model		Fit Indices						Comparison	
	N	$\chi2$	df	CFI	IFI	NFI	RMSEA	$\Delta\chi2$	Δdf
Two-Factor Model	200	60.47*	8	.88	.88	.87	.18		
One-Factor Model	200	80.37*	9	.83	.84	.82	.20		
Two- Versus One-Factor								19.9*	1

Note. CFI = Comparative Fit Index; IFI = Incremental Fit Index; NFI = Normative Fit Index; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation. *p < .001.

The findings of both analyses demonstrate that the underlying construct representing confrontative emotions like anger, hate, and humiliation in a Palestinian context is best described in a two-factor model distinguishing between individual- and group emotions.

Emotions and Action Tendencies

First, it seems that even in relatively calm times, the day-to-day experiences of living under military restrictions cause negative individual as well as group emotions such as anger, hate, and humiliation, to a relatively moderate extent (M_{IE}=2.84, SD=1.15 and M_{GE} =3.33, SD=1.29 on a scale from 1-6) below the midpoint of the scale. Less than 23% of participants reported levels of individual emotions that were above the midpoint of the scale. Group emotions, on the other hand, were reported by 40% of the participants above the midpoint of the scale. In terms of support for violent action, participants scored around the 3.5 midpoint of the scale (M=3.86, SD=1.14 on a scale

from 1-6) and 48% of the participants reported support for violent resistance at levels that were above the midpoint of the scale.

Means, standard deviations, and correlations among variables are presented in Table 2. Both types of emotions were positively related to support for violent collective action at $r_{IE} = .36$, $p < .01$ and $r_{GE} = .28$, $p < .05$ respectively. While the correlation between individual- and group emotions is high ($r = .59$, $p < .01$), the level is well below critical levels of multicollinearity (i.e. r =.70; Bagozzi, Yi, & Phillips 1991) and their means are distinct from each other with t(185)=-6.25, p < .001. In terms of demographic indicators, interestingly the level of education is positively associated with both types of emotions ($r_{IE} = .31$, $p < .01$; $r_{GE} = .37$, $p < .01$) as well as with support for violent action ($r = .38$, $p < .01$). Age, gender, level of religiosity, were not correlated with emotions or the action tendency.

Table 6.2

Bivariate Relationships Between Main Study Variables and Demographics

	Range	M	(SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Individual Emotions	1-6	2.84	(1.15)	-					
2. Group Emotions	1-6	3.28	(1.29)	.59**	-				
3. Support Violent Action	1-6	3.86	(1.14)	.36**	.28*	-			
4. Age	18-86	36	12	-.08	-.11	-.13	-		
5. Gender (1=male, 2=female)	1-2	1.49	(0.50)	-.04	-.02	.03	-.01		
6. Education	1-4	2.02	(1.04)	.31**	.37**	.38**	-.41**	.00	
7. Level Religiosity	1-5	2.84	(0.96)	-.08	-.01	-.01	.29**	.21**	-.18**

**p < .01 (two-tailed significance), *p < .05 (two-tailed significance)

To test our hypothesis concerning the relations between both emotions and violent action, we estimated a regression model predicting support for violent action. In the model, we entered both emotions as our main predictors and all demographics as controls. Results show that levels of individual emotions positively predicted support for violent action ($\beta = .30$, t = 3.24, p = .001). The more one felt negative *individual* emotions, the more one supported violent action against the adversary. *Group* emotions on the other hand were *not* found to be robust predictors of violent action

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tendencies during this data collection. No demographic measures were significantly related to support for violent action.

Table 6.3

Effects of emotions and covariates on violent action tendencies (standardized coefficients)

	Support Violent Action
Individual Emotions	.30***
Group Emotions	.04
Age	-.02
Gender	.01
Education	.02
Religiosity	-.06
Adjusted R²	.09

Two-tailed, p*** < .001, p** < .01, p* < .05.

Results from the survey show that during high conflict proximity events combined with overall low intensity, living under military rule elicits negative individual and group emotions like anger, hate, and humiliation. Out of these, combined *individual* but not group emotions, are associated with citizens' support for taking violent action against an adversary.

But what happens when conflict escalates in a way that the group identity might become more salient and relevant for violent collective action? Do these dynamics stay the same? This is a pivotal question because violent escalations are a regular occurrence in intractable conflicts and we have shown in the introduction that contextual factors can have a strong influence on emotional experiences and expressions. Accordingly, we expected *group* emotions to play a much more manifest role under a mainly group-relevant escalation setting to predict violent action.

6.3 Wave 2 ('High Intensity – Low Proximity Context')

The follow-up data collection to test the 'opposite' conflict context, namely *high* intensity and *low* proximity of events, was conducted in the weeks after the start of the 'Gaza Marches of Return' in March 2018, which lead to widespread violence between Israel and the Gaza strip including over 300 casualties over the following several months. Despite a strong media presence and many Westbank Palestinians being personally troubled by the violence and suffering in Gaza, there were only a few organized demonstrations in the Westbank in support of Gaza and it stayed overall reasonably calm. The escalation around the 'Gaza Marches of Return' was highly violent and confrontational, further underlining the suffering of the population in the Gaza strip caused by overwhelming Israeli forces, but did not have strong 'direct' violent action implications.

Methods

Participants and Procedure

148 Palestinian participants from the Baseline survey (73 women; ages 18–80, M=35.5, SD=11.9) completed the follow-up survey. The sampling was done by the same survey company but this time phone numbers acquired during the baseline study could be used to re-contact the respondents. After again obtaining their informed consent, the interviewer read to participants the questions and recorded their answers. Each interview lasted around 20-30 minutes. The favourable attrition rate (26%) was not associated with any demographics (see appendix).

Measures

We designed an adapted questionnaire, including the same emotions and support for a range of violent collective actions.

Individual- and Group Emotions. Emotions were captured using the same item from the first survey. As in the baseline study, participants were asked to rate the degree to which they as

individuals and afterward as [Westbank] Palestinians were feeling anger, hate, humiliation on a 1 (not at all) to 6 (very much so) scale.

Support for Violent Collective Action. To account for the changed political situation, we assessed participants' responses to experienced conflict-related events which they had to describe briefly: "Based on the event described, which of the following coping steps or actions are you willing to take?". Five items assessed participants support for violent actions based on the events ("To personally confront army forces if they assaulted me"; "To take justice into my hands if I got assaulted by the army forces"; "Participating in confrontational demonstrations against the army"; "Supporting Armed Resistance" and "Avoiding participating in any activity against the occupation" - reverse coded). The items assessing support for violence collapsed well (α=.71) to form a single measure for support for violent action. High scores represent greater support for violence. All responses ranged from 1 (not at all) to 6 (very much so).

Results

Emotions and Action Tendencies

What did this conflict escalation, perceived as somewhat distant oppressive action by the adversary but resulting in a substantial humanitarian catastrophe for fellow Palestinians, mean in terms of emotions? While at baseline 23% reported individual emotion levels above the midpoint of the scale, this is now the case for almost 84% of the participants, the levels of group emotions rose from 40% to 56% under the aggravation scenario. Looking at the means in a within-subject comparison, the different contexts elicit different levels of emotions as can be seen in Figure 1. As predicted, both types of emotions have significantly increased compared to baseline with $t(138)$=-16.92, $p < .001$ for individual- and $t(142)$=-3.27, $p = .001$ for group emotions.

Figure 6.2

Means of Experienced Emotions between Contexts
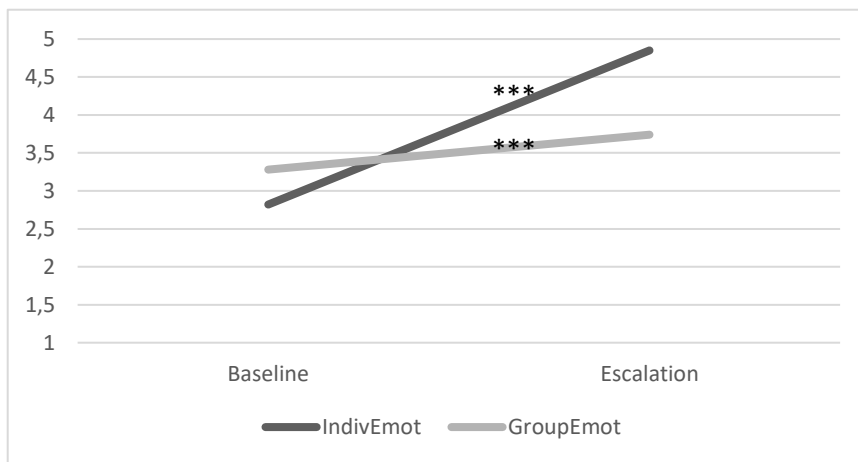
Comparing the emotions at both timepoints in a repeated measure ANOVA, there was a significant interaction between time and type of emotion, Wilks' Lambda = 0.54, $F(1,133) = 112.87$, $p < .001$. Overall and in line with the relevant literature (Smith & Mackie, 2007) group emotions are supposed to fluctuate less than individual emotions as they are socially shared wider amongst group members), the data indicate different trends of individual- versus group emotions over time and context, namely stronger fluctuation of individual over group emotions between baseline and escalation scenario which further confirms the systematic and structural differentiation of the two for our context despite a certain degree of correlation (Smith & Mackie, 2007).

I then proceeded to test our hypothesis that despite the lower increase in their intensity, *group* emotions are connected to violent collective action more than individual emotions, in times of group-relevant distant conflict intensification. I conducted a multiple regressions model, again predicting support for violent actions, and entered the emotions as the main predictor while controlling for demographic measures. As can be seen in Table 4, individual emotions are not a robust predictor of violent action anymore during more distant conflict escalation. Instead, the group emotions provoked by witnessing the suffering of fellow Gaza Palestinians during 'Gaza Marches of Return' were associated with Palestinians' support for violent actions. As expected, higher group emotions were

associated with higher support for violent actions (β = .44, t = 5.35, p < .001). In our high intensity but low proximity conflict escalation context, group emotions increase support for violence. As we recall, this was not the case in our high-proximity study condition, where individual emotions were associated with violent collective action.

Table 6.4

Effects of predictors and covariates on Violent Action (standardized coefficients) during severe but distant conflict escalation ('Gaza Marches of Return')

	Support Violent Action
Individual Emotions	.03
Group Emotions	.44***
Age	-.16
Gender	-.09
Education	.13
Religiosity	.16
Adjusted R²	.23

Two-tailed, p*** < .001, p** < .01, p* < .05.

Results from the follow-up data collection show that high intensity and low proximity conflict escalation elicits stronger negative individual *and* group emotions such as anger, hate, and humiliation. Out of these, combined *group* but not individual emotions, are associated with citizens' support for taking violent action against an adversary. In sum, during relative calm, *individual* emotions are associated with support for violent methods of resistance. When conflict escalates and conflict salience increases, both levels of negative emotions not only increase among the lower power group but also the main type of emotion predicting collective action shifts from individual- to *group* emotions.

Although the 'Gaza'-incidents were tragic, they did *not include personal experience* of direct intergroup violence for Westbank Palestinians. They triggered only very few confrontative demonstrations in the Westbank, it stayed overall relatively quiet. What happens during conflict

escalation with 'skin in the game' for the participants, namely the explicit threat of personal injury or detention? According to Mackie & Smith (2007), "some group-related events… may lead people to feel similar emotions at the group and individual levels." To enhance our understanding further and test how both types of emotions predict violence in contexts of high conflict intensity *as well as* proximity including personal risk, we conducted another field study (N=450), again focusing on specific real-world conflict events, characterised by high conflict intensity *and* proximity of events, where – next to elevated overall conflict salience – there are direct challenges and possibly severe consequences of any action (Study 2 – 'Ramallah-Lockdown'). Our first hypothesis is that under confrontation that is equally relevant for the individual as well as the group identity, both individual *and* group emotions predict violent action.

6.4 Second Study ('High Intensity – High Proximity' Escalation)

In December 2018, during a period of severe escalation following two drive-by shootings carried out by Palestinians near Israeli settlements, two Israeli soldiers were killed in one of the shootings, and several settlers were wounded in the other. Subsequently, the Israeli army imposed a military closure on Ramallah, raiding residential neighbourhoods and shutting down major checkpoints between it and surrounding cities in a complete lockdown over several days. While the 'Gaza Marches of Return' led to over 300 deaths over several months but happened more distant to the Westbank, this 'Ramallah-lockdown' was of much more local nature for the participants but included the very present direct threat to be detained or physically hurt due to massive and agitated IDF presence on the ground (relatively unusual in 'zone A' where violence is normally limited to specific pre-defined locations e.g. refugee camps, Qalandia checkpoint).

Methods

Participants and Procedure

Participants were again Palestinians living in the Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate in the West Bank, who were recruited by the same local survey company as before, but consisted of an entirely different sample compared to the first two data collections. As mentioned, the study was conducted during a period of severe direct escalation. Again, phone numbers acquired during another baseline study done before could be used to contact the respondents. For this initial study, the survey company had employed convenience sampling to recruit participants for the baseline study this time. Due to the sensitive socio-political content of the study, it was difficult to approach people randomly across a longer period. The interview procedure was generally the same as in Study 2, each interview lasted around 40-60 minutes.

Four-hundred-thirty Palestinian participants (215 females; ages 18–86, M=33.7, SD=12.8) completed the survey. The sample included both urban (32%) and rural (62%) Westbank Palestinians as well as inhabitants of refugee camps (6%).

Measures

Individual- and Group Emotions. Participants were asked to rate the degree to which they were feeling individual- as well as group anger, hate, and humiliation by the item: "To what extent did you personally feel each of the following emotions during the last month?" respectively "If you think about the situation of Palestinians in general, to what extent have you felt the following emotion during the last month – anger, hate, humiliation". (1= not at all, to 6= very much so). [4] The three items collapsed again well (α=.69 for individual- versus α=.79 for group emotions) to form two single measures with higher scores representing higher levels of individual- versus group emotions.

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[4] As the study was part of a large longitudinal survey, other measures were collected as well.

Again, factor analysis confirmed the usefulness of the utilized concept. Initial eigenvalues indicated that the first two factors explained 60% and 15% of the variance respectively. The two-factor solution, which explained about 75% of the variance, was again preferred empirically due to the sharp drop of explanatory value after the second factor as well as the theoretical considerations outlined before.

Support for Violent Collective Action. Participants were asked about the degree to which they are personally willing to engage in each of the following actions along with the same themes – support of and tolerance for violence – as in the Baseline Study: "Participating in demonstrations that can involve confrontation with the Israeli army" and "Supporting non-peaceful resistance" as well as "To what extent do you perceive some people's usage of non-peaceful resistance is understandable and justified", "To what extent do you perceive some people's usage of non-peaceful resistance is legitimate" and "To what extent do you understand the reasons that drive some people to engage in non-peaceful resistance". The five items assessing support for violence collapsed well (α=.83) to form a single measure for support for violent action. High scores represent greater support for violence. All responses ranged from 1 (not willing at all) to 6 (very much willing).

Demographic Indicators. Participants reported their gender, age, religion, level of religiousness, and level of education during the baseline study.

Results

Emotions & Action Tendencies

First, experiencing direct military aggravation exacerbates negative emotions like anger, hate, and humiliation substantially (M_{IE}=4.66, SD=1.19 and M_{GE}=4.78, SD=1.01 on a scale from 1-6). Over 79% of participants reported levels of individual emotions that were above the midpoint of the scale, group emotions were also reported by 82% of the participants above the midpoint of the scale. In terms of violent action, participants described sizeable support (M=4.06, SD=1.29 on a scale from 1-6) for such actions, and 60% of the participants reported support for violent resistance at levels that were above the midpoint of the scale. Means, standard deviations, and correlations among variables are presented in Table 5. Both types of emotions were again positively related to support for violent collective action at $r_{IE} = .51$, $p < .01$ and $r_{GE} = .41$, $p < .01$ respectively. Correlation between individual- and group emotions are again high ($r = .61$, $p < .01$), but well below critical levels of multicollinearity. In terms of demographic indicators, age is negatively associated with both types of emotions ($r_{IE} = -.20$, $p < .01$; $r_{GE} = -.16$, $p < .01$) as well as with support for violent action ($r = -.17$, $p < .01$). Education, gender, level of religiosity, were not correlated with emotions but gender (male) and education level were correlated with violent action.

Table 6.5

Bivariate Relationships Between Main Study Variables and Demographics under direct high proximity – high intensity escalation ('Ramallah Lockdown')

	Range	M	(SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Individual Emotions	1-6	4.66	(1.19)	-					
2. Group Emotions	1-6	4.78	(1.01)	.61**	-				
3. Support Violent Action	1-6	4.06	(1.29)	.51**	.41**	-			
4. Age	18-73	34	12	-.20**	-.16**	-.17**	-		
5. Gender (1=male, 2=female)	1-2	1.49	(0.50)	-.07	.01	-.13**	-.06		
6. Education	1-4	2.23	(1.01)	.05	.02	.11*	-.20**	-.06	
7. Level Religiosity	1-5	3.00	(1.03)	.02	.04	.08	.12**	.10*	-.11*

**p < .01 (two-tailed significance), *p < .05 (two-tailed significance)

I then proceeded to test the hypothesis that group *and* individual emotions are connected to violent action under direct and aggressive conflict escalation. I conducted a multiple regressions model, again predicting support for violent actions, and entered the emotions as the main predictor while controlling for demographic measures. As can be seen in Table 6, both emotions evoked by experiencing the direct conflict- and group-related threat of the events around the Ramallah lockdown were associated with Palestinians' support for violent actions. As expected, higher individual emotions ($\beta = .40$, $t = 7.52$, $p < .001$) as well as group emotions ($\beta = .16$, $t = 3.06$, $p = .002$) were associated with higher support for violent actions.

Table 6.6

Effects of predictors and covariates on Violent Action (standardized coefficients) during severe direct conflict escalation ('Ramallah Lockdown')

	Support Violent Action
Individual Emotions	.40***
Group Emotions	.16**
Age	-.05
Gender	-.10*
Education	.07
Religiosity	.09*
Adjusted R²	.30

Two-tailed, p*** < .001, p** < .01, p* < .05.

Results from the follow-up study show that direct, severe conflict escalation elicits stronger negative individual *and* group emotions like anger, hate, and humiliation. In this direct conflict escalation ('skin in the game') context, group and individual emotions increased, are relatively close together and *both* predict support for violence. As we recall, this was neither the case in our 'baseline' data collection, where individual emotions were predicting violent collective action nor in our distant group escalation context, where group emotions were associated with higher support for violent actions.

6.5 Discussion

The hardship of people living under prolonged oppression is difficult to imagine and those struggling to end oppression have limited options for action. Conflict escalation elicits negative emotions of the type that enhances violent methods of resistance. This study explores how negative individual- and group emotions experienced by the oppressed impact their support for violence *depending on situational context*. Specifically, I examined both of these emotion types as potential antecedences of violent collective struggles against injustice dependent on conflict intensity and proximity. Overall, the results confirm the hypotheses. In day-to-day conditions of oppression where local incidents are experienced directly, *individual* approach-oriented emotions predicted support for violent methods of resistance, while group emotions did not predict support for violence. This might be because direct experiences related to the hardships of military occupation are associated with personal involvement as well as *intra*group comparisons. Yet, after an event uniquely experienced from an indirect group perspective, *group emotions* predicted support for violent actions arguably due to social *inter*group comparisons (Ginges & Atran, 2008). Thirdly, in escalation contexts that are both close and intense, *both* types of emotions predict violence as here both types of social comparisons might be actively used. Overall, it could be postulated that when faced with conflict escalation settings providing reasons for violent forms of resistance, the disadvantaged group does not decide to engage based on a single emotional channel, but instead both types of emotions might predict violence based on the type of comparisons used or categorisation activated.

Theoretical and Applied Contributions

This research advances the study of intergroup conflict particularly under self-categorisation considerations by providing a framework for the nuanced connection between individual- and group emotions and their association with violent resistance within different contexts (Costalli & Ruggeri, 2017; Halperin, Sharvit, et al., 2011; Hartmann, 2016; Malthaner, 2017; Saguy & Reifen-Tagar,

2022). Thus far, examining the relations between negative emotions and violence in intergroup conflict was done mainly with attention to one type of emotions – individual *or* group – (Goldenberg et al., 2016; McDoom, 2012; Ray et al., 2014; Shoshani & Slone, 2008), but hardly ever both simultaneously (Shadiqi et al., 2018). The present study offers a glance at the broad theoretical and empirical potential that emerges from conceptualizing the *relevance for action* of negative intergroup/personal emotions as *context-dependent*. Concretely, I integrate both types of emotions, context as important moderator, and studying the interplay within oppressed societies. For example, we offer insights as to why individual- versus group emotions have differentiated effects in particular settings. When emotions and according appraisals stem from experiencing direct events, *individual* emotions will mark the reaction of the disadvantaged towards their oppressor. When emotions result from indirectly experienced group-relevant events, *group* emotional constructs against the oppressor seems to facilitate the way of action. The study thus reveals the context-dependent moderation of self-categorisation as individual or group members linking how negative emotions have a direct impact on the reasons *why* violence might be used by the oppressed. As such, the study contributes to our understanding of intergroup conflict and opens new possibilities for conflict transformation.

Limitations and Future Directions

The present research demonstrated how individual- versus group emotions uniquely predict support for violent collective action among low-power groups depending on conflict context. However, to establish causality, an experimental approach using for example specific escalation vignettes would be needed. In my research I decided against this option to strengthen the ecological validity within a 'real case' field setting first. Nevertheless, based on these initial findings, such an approach using vignettes of different escalations and including deeper elaboration of social-cognitive attribution processes besides emotions would be a logical next research step. The local nature of the study within a specific conflict is a further limitation. Future studies should examine these relationships in different contexts, particularly enlarging the model to the high-power group or going

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beyond the Israel-Palestine conflict setting. Furthermore, it will be worthwhile to investigate if the findings are unique to Middle Eastern cultures, including possibly additional self-categorization (Roccas & Brewer, 2002). Especially the inclusion of categorizations such as relational self or complex collective self might be considered culturally dependent as certain intercultural differences are suggested (Feitosa et al., 2012; Hogg et al., 2017; Oyserman et al., 2002). Future research should also examine how other potential violence antecedents beyond emotions such as perceived efficacy, group identification, or moral standards influence both types of emotions.

Conclusions

The research in this chapter suggests a framework including both types of emotions as well as two dimensions of escalation, namely intensity and proximity of conflict events. *Directly-*experienced escalations affected violent action based on *individual* emotions, while more *distant* escalations changed action tendencies based on *group* emotions. Taking the differences between these pathways into account can once again help conflict transformation practitioners. Highlighting the contextual function of individual- versus group emotions through facilitating either constructive *intra*group or instead *inter*group social comparison provides an additional tool of shaping constructivist conflict dimensions in the promotion of social change. Next, in the final empirical chapter, I will examine the pending question to which extent the described destructive emotional and behavioral dynamics can be *changed*.

Chapter Seven

Leaving Violence Behind – Understanding Emotional and Behavioral 'Turning Points' of Radical Activism

In this line of research, I have mainly examined so far, the emotional dynamics of *escalation* and further entrenchment. Given the unfortunate patterns of 'hardening the hearts' in intergroup conflict, social and individual *change* in these difficult settings is of utmost importance for conflict transformation. In this last empirical chapter, I examine *when and how* psychological microfactors of low-power group members are *positively* impacted despite extremely difficult circumstances for a very entrenched subset of the general population, namely violent activists. Specifically, I study how these foundations feed into their decision *not* to engage in violent actions anymore and instead participate in peaceful and event joint Israeli-Palestinian collective action.

Methodically, I examine the unstructured life narratives of twelve adult male Palestinians who were formerly involved in violent action but are now active in joint Israeli-Palestinian pro-peace activities. The participants describe their journeys from violent militants to reconciliation advocates engaged in peaceful joint collective action. The data showed a change pathway including emotional, cognitive, and behavioral components. For most participants, the change sequence was triggered by an unforeseen respectful intergroup encounter 'on equal terms' in contrast to the usually experienced power asymmetry. This encounter elicited empathy towards the Israeli outgroup and reduced negative emotions, resulting in the cognitive reappraisal of their situation concerning the conflict context. Understanding these situational change patterns lays an important foundation for the application of the results for conflict transformation in the next chapter and enlarging the insights about change processes to the general population. Further research on emotion regulation and implications for intergroup contact and conflict discourse is discussed.

7.1 Introduction

As outlined over the last chapters, people living in areas of intractable conflict experience extreme negative emotions. Exposure to violence increases threat perceptions and psychological distress – '*conflict will harden your heart*' (Bar-Tal, 2013; Hirsch-Hoefler et al., 2016) making the concerned population less likely to support peace efforts and ultimately leading to backing aggressive policies (Porat et al., 2020). One of the most challenging questions is how to overcome these conflict-enhancing barriers and resolve conflicts peacefully (Hameiri, Bar-Tal, et al., 2014), breaking the never-ending cycle of '*violence begets violence*' (Vollhardt, 2009), enabling conflict transformation from a microfactor perspective.

One possibility to examine change is to study individual change *despite* these conflict entrenchments, for example through psychological interventions or 'natural change outliers'. Despite the growing literature on psychological transformation in protracted intergroup conflict (e.g. Bar-Tal & Hameiri, 2020; Hameiri et al., 2014) and beyond (e.g. (Walton & Wilson, 2018), no theory fully accounts for this important phenomenon of substantial transformations against strong social patterns. It is contended though, that *situational* factors play an important role (Berger & Zimbardo, 2012; Kenney & Chernov Hwang, 2021).

What exactly *are* these situational mechanisms of change from violence to peace activism and how can we understand the exact factors triggering a constructive transformation in the presence of social dominance and experienced oppression? I will elaborate on these questions studying a particularly relevant subgroup within intractable conflict, namely violent activists. While examining the elementary psychological building blocks of change within difficult conflict situations with qualitative methods, I lay the final empirical foundations for the last chapter. There I attempt to utilize these considerations for broader conflict transformation application, suggesting how, for example, mediation practitioners, could influence people towards less escalatory approaches of handling conflict.

Difficulties of Psychological Change in Intergroup Conflict

In Chapter Two, based on inter*personal* research, I claimed that conflict patterns should be malleable. But is this indeed the case within intergroup conflict? Social environments shape behavior (Blalock, 1984; Bruch & Feinberg, 2017). Exposure to violence increases threat perceptions and psychological distress (Bhat & Rangaiah, 2015; Canetti et al., 2013), thereby leading to further violence (Vollhardt, 2009). Members of a society immersed in protracted intergroup conflict are entrenched in their conflict-supporting societal beliefs and changing these dynamics is extremely difficult (Bar-Tal, 2000; Hameiri, Bar-Tal, et al., 2014). As described in earlier chapters, escalation further feeds competitive interactions and drives the conflict to higher levels of intensity through similar processes to those that initially escalated the conflict (Bar-Tal, 2013; Fisher, 2016). The most challenging question that remains, is how to overcome these psychosocial barriers. Previous chapters focused on the emotional dynamics of conflict *enhancement*, while here *changing* these barriers will be examined.

Social psychology research is important not only to understand the psychological foundations of intergroup conflicts but also to suggest interventions that aim to resolve these conflicts peacefully. Various approaches have been designed to promote intergroup peace (Halperin & Gross, 2011; Hameiri et al., 2019). They shed light on the nature and potential resolution of intergroup conflicts and can be a substantial contribution to peacebuilding and conflict transformation. As is the case in conflict enhancement, I assume that emotions play an equally crucial role in change processes. In his touching account 'I Shall Not Hate: A Gaza Doctor's Journey on the Road to Peace and Human Dignity', a medical doctor from Gaza describes how he first lost his wife due to the difficult structural conflict circumstances and then several children in an acute conflict escalation. He concludes "*The biggest weapon of mass destruction is the hatred in our hearts … You shouldn't hate something you don't know, because it may turn out to be the bearer of your greatest good fortune. Tragedy cannot be the end of our lives. We cannot allow it to control and defeat us…*" (Abuelaish,

2011). How can such an attitude regarding for example traumatic personal conflict experiences be explained or even facilitated and how do emotional mechanisms contribute to it?

As described before, most emotions grow out of situational interactions, and accumulated levels of emotional energy, fuel agency during conflict and its transformation (Bramsen & Poder, 2018). Assuming a situational perspective on the micro-dynamics of change including emotions can help us better understand what drives actors in specific conflict situations. Examining 'outliers' of naturally occurring change, comparable trajectories are described in concepts such as altruism born out of suffering (Staub & Vollhardt, 2008) or post-traumatic growth (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). Studying these outliers might be especially difficult but at the same time very instructive in the case of violent activists, as they are especially entrenched in their confrontative conflict identities (Ferguson & McAuley, 2021). If even these violent group members can change, everyone can.

Theories of Psychological Change

Despite these difficulties, I postulated in Chapter Two based on inter*personal* research that the mentioned conflict styles should be changeable. Several streams of research offer insights to the question of which factors could be relevant 'mechanisms of change' from confrontative- to peace activism.

Intergroup Contact. A meta-analysis of over 500 studies and more than 250,000 subjects demonstrated that intergroup contact typically reduces stereotyping and prejudice (mean r = −.21), enabling attitude changes. To address the question of *how* intergroup contact induces positive effects, separate meta-analyses have been conducted on the most-studied mediators, namely cognitive factors such as increased knowledge, as well as emotional factors such as anxiety reduction and enhanced empathy (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008). Reduction of further negative emotions, such as fear, anger, and particularly threat to the ingroup, can also serve as mediators that intergroup contact alleviates (Pettigrew et al., 2011). Conceptually, intergroup contact does not end at the individual level but

includes dyadic- and group concepts (Reynolds et al., 2010; Smith & Mackie, 2008). To be

sustainable, it also has to take real-life changes redressing inequalities and injustices into account

(Klar & Branscombe, 2016). What if intergroup contact is not positive but has been negative, which

is often the case in protracted intergroup conflict especially in the case of radical activists? The value

of studying outliers from social norms can open particularly instructive inroads. Here, two concepts,

altruism born out of suffering and post-traumatic growth are especially influential.

Emotional Aspects. Individuals who have suffered may become particularly motivated to

help others because of their personal experience (Staub, 2003; Staub & Vollhardt, 2008). This

'altruism born of suffering' is linked to resilience and posttraumatic growth. Such altruism proposes

potentially facilitating influences on altruism after victimization and trauma such as promoting

healing, understanding what led harm doers to their actions, helping others, and being prosocial role

models. Psychological changes that result from these influences leading to altruistic action may

include strengthening of the self, a more positive orientation toward other people, increased empathy,

and belief in one's responsibility for others' welfare. The most prominent factor in altruistic action

seems to be increased empathy including perspective taking as well as the perception of a common

fate. The psychological changes lead to helpful action (Vollhardt, 2009). Concrete situational effects

on specific people though are still widely unclear, especially in our protracted intergroup context.

Positive affective changes may also occur as a result of the struggle with highly challenging

life crises or in the aftermath of traumatic events (Calhoun et al., 2010; Tedeschi et al., 1998;

Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). These changes mainly emerge in the domains of self-perception,

relationships with others, and changes in life philosophies (Tedeschi et al., 1998).

In both concepts about affective transformation, one emotion stands out as pivotal influencer

of positive social change. *Empathy* plays a central role in social relations, impacting prosocial as well

as aggressive behavior (e.g. Cikara et al., 2011; Iyer et al., 2003). Empathy involves sharing and

understanding others' emotional states (Decety & Jackson, 2004) and is characterized by feelings of sympathy and compassion for those in need (Batson & Shaw, 1991). Increased empathy is negatively correlated with support for aggression (Kaukiainen et al., 1999; Mehrabian, 1997), also in intractable conflicts (Shechtman & Basheer, 2005), even during times of conflict escalation (e.g., Rosler et al., 2017). Empathy is also related to helpful intergroup behavior (Pagano & Huo, 2007) and the motivation to advance outgroups' welfare (Batson et al., 2002). Although there is abundant evidence of its importance in our social lives, empathy has substantial limitations, most notably it is – especially intergroup empathy – notoriously elusive and impossible to 'force' upon people.

Cognitive Aspects. Proposed models for understanding social processes include as well cognitive aspects such as meaning-making and sense of coherence. Intergroup conflict context involves cognitive structures being threatened or nullified, for example by traumatic events. Sense of coherence describes the orientation to see one's environment as comprehensible, manageable and meaningful (Antonovsky, 1996). It has been developed in Israel with Holocaust survivors focusing on a salutogenic perspective and is considered an important cognitive concept in trauma and resilience literature (Almedom, 2005). Although originally developed as a stable personality trait, more recent empirical work in different settings, including intergroup conflict, suggests that sense of coherence can fluctuate situationally (Braun-Lewensohn et al., 2011; Idan et al., 2013; Vastamäki et al., 2009) and, therefore, might be an influential cognitive facet of social change. In intergroup conflict, a high sense of coherence has been described as a powerful protective factor of community resilience (Braun-Lewensohn & Sagy, 2014) even in acute escalation settings, through the mediation of situational factors (Braun-Lewensohn et al., 2010). Further situational and personal factors include optimism, social support, coping strategies (Prati & Pietrantoni, 2009), the reappraisal of core beliefs (Taku et al., 2015) as well as action-focused growth, 'doing what is meaningful' (Hobfoll et al., 2007). More recently, the importance of 'redemptive narratives', life trajectories wherein the tragedy

experienced is framed as leading to prosocial behavior has been stressed as instrumental to *sustain* a prosocial change (Dunlop et al., 2015).

The distinction between emotional and cognitive processing is to some extent 'artificial', as they are closely connected and influence each other. Combining both types of processing, it has been argued in philosophical research that negative backward-looking emotions such as regret, grief, resentment, and anger are *self-consuming* attitudes that become less fitting the longer they endure or when facing new events of a different quality. Additionally, backward-looking emotions can fittingly diminish when the transition is part of a process that is *itself* a fitting response to the past or new occurrence (Na'Aman, 2020). These philosophical considerations still lack empirical backing though, particularly within an intergroup conflict context. In studies on deradicalization, often socio-psychological push- and pull factors leading to *disengagement* of activists, such as disillusionment or vocational opportunities are discussed (Altier et al., 2017; Bjørgo, 2008). But is mere disengagement the best we can do? Shouldn't we be studying factors that predict *engagement*, just with a different focus and peaceful means? Recent studies contend that at least some of these push- and pull factors are equally valid for 'persistent activists' that stay entrenched in their violent activities, pointing to supportive social relations outside the extremist group as a crucial key factor distinguishing both groups (Kenney & Chernov Hwang, 2021). This would underline again the importance of intergroup encounters as the starting point.

The Present Study

Given the unfortunate dynamics of 'hardening the hearts' in intergroup conflict, social change in difficult settings is of utmost importance for conflict transformation. This study examines *when and how* particularly entrenched group members *change* despite extremely difficult circumstances, using narrative material from an especially entrenched subgroup, radical activists using political violence. Although peculiar for example in its sociodemographic structure (it is an all-

male sample), the research might still provide valuable input about change processes of 'typical' people in intergroup conflict (Gøtzsche-Astrup et al., 2020), while most importantly exemplifying the *possibility* of change even for an extreme subgroup. The general idea behind this study – if these entrenched violent activists can change, everyone can. This type of 'outlier'-research can serve as 'prove of concept' for change processes within more 'typical' group members (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007).Research on situational mechanisms of these types of changes particularly from a low-power perspective is lacking partly due to practical difficulties in studying such processes in conflict settings but also as social psychology focuses extensively on "experimental data from Western university students" (Elcheroth et al., 2019; Vollhardt & Bilali, 2008). On the other hand, radicalization and deradicalization researchers face difficulty with 'data access', resulting in a lack of studies on the underlying psychological processes. Situational factors are considered relevant (Berger & Zimbardo, 2012) as they might mediate (motivational stage) and moderate (volitional stage) the motivation to engage in prosocial behaviour (Vollhardt, 2009).

To understand the process better, this chapter describes a qualitative study of how situational factors feed into activist decisions *not* to engage in violent action anymore and participate in peaceful joint Israeli-Palestinian collective action instead. In the investigation, I explored the following two interconnected research questions: (1) What are the most common emotional- and cognitive *themes* concerning behavioral change from violent- to peace activism? Which elements are essential for the change? (2) What are the situational '*processes* of change' from confrontative- to peace activism? How are these mechanisms triggered? Do they always follow the same sequence?

7.2 Methodology

Data Collection Approach

A qualitative design was adopted for this study, as it is suited to the exploration of the dynamic, multidimensional, and contextual nature of individual change 'in the field'. Narratives are especially compatible with investigating sensitive 'turning points' to understand change processes within under-researched low-power groups such as offenders in their desistance from crime or gang membership (Bubolz & Simi, 2015; Carlsson, 2012a) but also attitudinal change in intergroup conflict (Hammack, 2010). Sometimes, studying individual changes in these two fields is even approached together (e.g. Berger & Zimbardo, 2012). Relatively unstructured instruments and an open-minded attitude by the researchers facilitate the broader exploration of relevant issues and hold promises for gathering diverse and detailed information in a short period, building models, and generating hypotheses (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Van de Vijver & Chasiotis, 2010). Personal narratives offer particular leverage for tracing the inner motives that drive agency developments in time. Nevertheless, the material must be analysed with caution as individuals' post hoc explanations of their actions can carry deliberate or inadvertent rationalizations or misrepresentations (Pearlman, 2018). The original narrative interviews were conducted in their Arabic mother tongue, translated by the organisation, and then coded and analysed in English. My positionality and reflexivity were already discussed in Chapter Two.

Participants and Procedure

Participants were Palestinians living throughout the West Bank or Arab citizens of Israel. The geographically diverse sample included participants from cities such as East Jerusalem, Ramallah, Tulkarem, Hebron, Nablus, Jericho, and several villages throughout the Westbank. Extreme cases such as these radical activists are insightful beyond their specific target group to examine major challenges such as social change within intergroup conflict because they make it easier to generate

insights that might otherwise be obscure or even absent from 'typical' group members. In other words, their 'extremeness' makes the insights more transparent (Eisenhardt, 1989) and serves as a metaphor for the whole entrenched society. These formerly violent activists might be an 'extreme' example of 'nudging' conflict style possibilities mentioned in Chapter Two.

Participant narratives were collected using theoretical rather than representative sampling (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). First, I acquired relevant accessible documents from grassroots organisations associated with joint peaceful activism such as 'Combatants for Peace' or 'Parents Circle Family Forum', where Israelis and Palestinians actively and directly work together, using also existing narratives of activists that had been used in my research group for a different study. In the second round, I verified that within the selected subset all had been formerly engaged in confrontative intergroup violence, have either been in prison or experienced the loss of very close relatives due to political violence, the primary criteria for inclusion in the sample. Participants provided detailed records of their experiences, events they were facing, their cognitions, affects, and conflict behaviors before, during, and after their change process. The interviews forming the narratives were conducted at different places over several years, accounting for different contexts. Overall, the participants experienced extended periods of high conflict salience due to their political activity as well as facing personally very challenging intergroup conflict settings.

Measures

Narrative material was used on comparable research questions for example in the Arab uprising context (Pearlman, 2018), life narratives were used to explain activism in the Palestinian society (Hammack, 2010). Life story interviews provide a useful method of inquiry (Carlsson, 2012b), giving meaning to turning points in the life course (Ragin & Becker, 1992; Ulmer & Spencer, 1999). By using life story interviews, the time process – for example of a criminal career – is studied with attention to the 'contingencies that facilitate or constrain movement from one stage to another' (Carlsson, 2012b; Emler, 2005; Ulmer & Spencer, 1999).

The participants were free to construct the narratives at their discretion. As the material existed already, I could not ask for turning points directly (see Carlsson, 2012b; Sampson & Laub, 2003 for methodical considerations). In line with Carlsson and given the rare material, I nevertheless analysed the interviews. With very few exceptions, the underlying pre- versus post-change structure was inherently clear.

Description of Pre-Change Situation. The described life phase was broadly analysed according to the dimensions of significant events, according to emotions and cognitions for example examining paragraphs such as *"I was convinced that whoever spoke Hebrew was an assassin. There was in me only blood, pain, and violence. One day, one of my friends died in the Intifada. I returned home filled with [more] hatred of the Jews, blood, and the war."* Especially I was investigating references to negative emotions relevant within escalation scenarios such as anger, humiliation, or hate.

Description of Change Events. As the next step, narratives were analysed regarding details provided describing events that *initiated* their personal change. Participants described experiences such as the following *"When I entered [the house of my sister] I met someone by the name of XY who respectfully stood to greet me. He shook my hand. I felt as though he was about to kiss me. I asked: 'What are you doing here? Aren't you afraid?' He said: 'Aren't we all human beings?' He started to tell me how he had lost his beloved daughter and how much he missed her."*

Description of Post-Change Status. Finally, narratives were examined under post-change considerations, descriptions of processes *after* the initial trigger for change such as "*In addition to reading and watching documentary films, every day I participated in learning groups; I began to have new thoughts about the conflict and the means for resolving it. In an attempt to learn about the "enemy," I studied the history of the Jewish people and taught myself both Hebrew and English. It was then that I realized there are multiple narratives to the conflict – for both our peoples."* On the emotional side, I was especially looking out for different aspects of empathy (emotional,

cognitive/perspective-taking, prosocial). Cognitive aspects to be considered included particularly meaning-making concepts a such as the sense of coherence aspects comprehensibility, manageability, and meaningfulness (Antonovsky, 1996). Although the construct is often measured using a quantitative scale validated in different contexts (Almedom et al., 2007; Jakobsson, 2011; Olsson et al., 2008), it has also been evaluated from life-history interviews (Sagy & Antonovsky, 2000).

Data Processing and Analysis

Methods for processing data followed the same good practice principles already outlined in Chapter Two. The research questions guiding the current analysis focus on the process of narrative engagement in the context of political conflict. As suggested by the theoretical frameworks outlined, this psychosocial process is best accessed through analysis of the personal narrative – its form, thematic content, and ideological setting (McAdams, 1996, 2008), with a special focus on personal life 'turning points'. The narratives were analysed using inductive content and thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Neuendorf, 2002) to derive findings from the real-life conflict experiences of the participants and their perspectives (Thomas, 2006). The coding process was done iteratively, with narrative sequences recoded once new codes or themes were identified or existing themes were modified. Additionally, several quantification techniques were used including content analysis (Mayring, 2000) complemented by open-vocabulary computerized text analysis using 'Linguistic Inquiry and Wordcount' (Tausczik & Pennebaker, 2010). As already described in Chapter Four, empirical results using LIWC demonstrate its ability to detect meaning in a wide variety of settings, including emotionality, social relationships, and thinking styles.

7.3 Results

Data from the study were analyzed in three steps. First, I assessed the life trajectories of the participants in general. Next, I examined the *pre-change* aspects provided including experienced significant conflict events, where I explored particularly emotions as well as action tendencies. Next, the detailed *change- and post-change* outcomes of the participants are investigated under the same major themes: conflict-related events, experienced emotions and cognitions, as well as collective action. Finally, quantitative statistical comparison between the two different contexts is attempted using automated word processing ('linguistic word count').

Life Trajectories of Activism

The *form* of the narrative refers to its overall organizational pattern (Gergen & Gergen, 1986; Lieblich et al., 1998). For example, a *progressive* narrative assumes a constant upward trajectory, with few low points or crises. By contrast, a *tragic* narrative assumes a constant downward trajectory, particularly in its presently conceived 'ending.' A *redemptive* (McAdams, 2006; Schafer et al., 2011) form is characterized by ups and downs, with challenges followed by cumulative gains and a 'final' upward trajectory.

The participants showed mostly a *redemptive* life trajectory with deep impact due to the conflict early in life, a substantial crisis event such as own imprisonment or death of a close relative, and an upward trajectory after overcoming a personal crisis of meaning-making due to their violent lifestyles resulting in peaceful joint activism. They described a conflict-related crisis event, in many cases during early childhood *"Growing up, my family was badly impacted by the ongoing conflict; there was so much suffering all around me. My heart cried out for my people, and I desperately wanted to help my family and my community."* Another participant described *"I was born and raised in the Palestinian refugee camp XY. We lived in very difficult circumstances and were not treated*

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like human beings at all. All around me there was violence, killings, and arrests". Circumstances such as these were setting the participants on a downward trajectory of bitterness and revenge – "*As for me, I sat quietly pondering. I left my job, left my friends, and having left everything I sat alone, thinking things over on my own as to what to do.*" These considerations specifically included the use of violence, such as "*I wanted to kill all the Israelis around me to avenge my brother's death*". Their according lifestyle is over the next several years resulting in a personal crisis such as imprisonment. "*We were arrested and sentenced to 15 years in jail, respectively. During this time two of my brothers were also arrested and imprisoned; my mother's heart broke. Additionally, the Israeli army invaded her house and barricaded off my room with concrete – which only added to her suffering.*" The described crisis could also be experienced over long periods and include reflection period linked for example to disillusion regarding the overall effects of their violent lifestyles "*It was at this time that I began to develop the understanding that stones do not deliver results. Apart from injuries, arrests, and surgery I had not achieved anything. I ended my connection with resistance groups*". Another participant described it "*I also lost four of my best friends. It was around this time that I began to ask myself, 'Where is all this violence getting us?'*" This disillusion about their lifestyles is something that did not happen for example to the violent activists I interviewed in Chapter Two ['Diab'] despite their imprisonment but to other people that used violence occasionally or during a certain period in their lives ['Abdallah'].

Out of this crisis experience, mainly through specific instances of the appreciative intergroup encounter, a new identity is formed, an identity that still includes social activism. "*We are the ones with the power to end it. The change starts within us. No hero will save us; it is ordinary people: it is you and me – together*" but has found a very different meaning and contextualisation of the conflict and enemy identities. "*My understanding of the Jewish people started to collapse after just a few weeks of the language school. I found myself confused, thinking 'How can they be normal human beings, just like me?' I was amazed that I could build friendships with these students and share their*

struggles. We went out for coffee together. We studied together. Sometimes we even found that we shared the same interests". While this new life is not exempt from further setbacks in their life-trajectories - as the conflict is still the same - *"It has not been easy: we still face checkpoints, ever-expanding settlements and the separation wall keeping our two sides apart. But together we hold firm to our resolution of nonviolence".* In one extreme case, a reconciliation activist had to endure losing his teenage daughter to intergroup violence*, nevertheless,* the activists have found now a new meaning and experience.

Before the Change

As already described above, the activists didn't start their violent activities 'out of the blue', instead, everyone was deeply marked by difficult or even tragic conflict-related pre-change events that set them down the spiral of hate and violence.

Triggering Event. All participants experienced substantial personal pain during intergroup escalations that triggered their own 'retaliatory' activities, only in two cases no further details on personal hardship are mentioned. While sometimes described only in unspecific terms such as *"my family was badly impacted by the ongoing conflict; there was so much suffering all around me"* or *"We lived in very difficult circumstances, and were not treated like human beings at all. All around me there was violence, killings, and arrests"*, sometimes the triggering event was described specifically: "*The soldiers took my father away; I didn't know where to. I stayed with my sisters and my mother cried all night. My father returned in the morning, with marks on his body. He didn't speak, he just sat on the side quietly and smoked. I decided that these were my enemies and that I wanted revenge".* Another participant described an incident where "*the army broke into our house one night, and in the morning, I found my father tied to a tree with a group of men. From there, they were taken to prison. No explanations were given".* Accordingly, conflict salience, as well as perceived exposure to conflict events and political violence, seemed arguably overall higher for the

radical participant group compared 'normal' people, if we conjecture for example from the 'baseline' setting described in Chapter One where many participants reported low conflict exposure (we remember, 30% of the participants reported no events exposure at all over an extended period), but here *all* of the respondents experienced at least one substantial conflict event that involved either loss or substantial harm to a close relative (father, uncle, brother) or close friend, in several cases during their early childhood. The most frequently reported directly experienced events were "abusive detention" (mentioned by 41% of the participants), normally arrest of the father or brother as well as "excessive force by the military" (described in 33% of the cases), normally death of a close relative such as the own brother or a close friend. These results link well with radicalization trajectories as a reaction to experienced or perceived threat to the ingroup (McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008) or difficult life situations such as social, political, and economic inequalities, resource demands, adverse physical circumstances, threats to security, respect and self-determination. They provide the background in which perceptions of social injustice are tied to social identities (Fisher, 2016) and according collective action. While the impact on human agency of early adversity and cumulative inequality in life trajectories is discussed controversially (e.g. Schafer et al., 2011), the results fit well with the notion that violent actions are often driven by a sense of *low* efficacy (Tausch et al., 2011). As one participant described it, "*I was determined to make a difference, but there was no peaceful way to do this*".

Negative Emotions. As also already described in Chapter One and as shown in Table 1, this substantial conflict exposure led to negative emotions "*I worked with anger and bitterness, and used my pain to spread hatred against the other side*" as well as despair and lack of hope for a constructive way forward "*However, the more I worked the emptier and angrier I became. Eventually I grew tired of the anger*" or another participant described it simply as "*I was lost in anger and revenge*. Specific negative emotions described in the narratives include anger, hate, sadness, and fear, but often emotional references are used in the form of much more unspecific

expressions such as "*my heart cried out for my people", "desperately", "extreme difficulties", "intimidation"* or just "*bad, worse*". The participants are very upset due to the overall situation and their specific experiences, without describing specific details in hindsight in distinct psychological categories without further prompting. This underlines again the idea from the quantitative data that emotional states are complex and sometimes can't be described by a single emotion, rather pointing to complex 'emotional profiles' in a given situation instead. Also, some researchers contend that the most accessible emotion, for example, anger, could be a secondary emotion, pointing to the underlying primary emotion such as hurt (e.g. Retzinger & Scheff, 2000). While there are certain cases where emboldening emotions such as anger or pride are linked to action versus dispiriting emotion descriptions such as fear or sadness were linked to inaction (Pearlman, 2013). *"I did not think for a minute to take part in the Second Intifada, or in any activity which could cause more suffering and grief to my family."* In their descriptions, often both types of emotions are intertwined ("*I found myself crying, and feeling angry*").

In some cases, the emotional aspect had a certain cognitive component to it from the description. One participant mentioned for example "*I decided that these were my enemies and that I wanted revenge… I decided that the Jewish nation could not be trusted, that peace would not happen*" or "*I started to ask many questions. I understood these soldiers are the enemy*" leading in both instances to the action-oriented notion of revenge using violence.

Despair and Low Future Expectation. Examining the psychological underpinnings further with a certain future- and action-oriented focus, the effects on political action of these change in the next section. References were mostly linked to loss of hope, such as *"By killing this man the Israelis killed any hope for peace [in us]. It simply fuelled antagonism" or "he [own brother] had hoped for self-fulfillment but he died and will not return"* and despair about a constructive meaningful way forward. While there is a certain emotional component in the description (hope is an emotion after all), this factor is more directed towards future orientation and cognitive situational assessment rather

than the emotional impact of unfair events and includes an action component, almost like an 'agentic' collective action conclusion.

It was interesting to examine closely *how* the agentic conclusion was described i.e. referring to the "*As for me, I sat quietly pondering. I left my job, left my friends, and having left everything I sat alone, thinking things over on my own as to what to do. How could I calm the storm raging in me? I wanted to kill all the Israelis around me to avenge my brother's death. …*" providing strong linguistic cues towards suffering and victimization, but concluding the use of violence due to this suffering and injustice perceived by the participants. First describing the difficult living circumstances of his family and frequent violence in his surroundings, one participant continued "*when I was just 14 years old, I informally joined the 'YZ' movement. I threw stones at soldiers, wrote graffiti on public buildings, prepared Molotov Cocktails and more.*" Even in the mere description of these directly experienced conflict events, a strong emotional quality, as well as 'agentic violence', is expressed, such as *"In the end, after yet another arrest, I ran and kept on running. Soon I became a wanted man. While on the run I became responsible for the political and military wing of the local XZ party. We fought the Occupation relentlessly, trying to secure freedom for the Palestinian people."*

All these experiences are resulting in violent collective action trajectories and extremely confrontative conflict coping patterns without any (or rather negative) intergroup interactions as well as hardly any considerations for intergroup relations (see Chapter Two).

Table 7.2

Triggering and Maintaining Violence Among Low-Power Group Members in Intractable Conflict

Theme	Example Quotes
Triggering Event	*It was a retaliation for what they did to my father.*
Negative (Intergroup) Emotions	*One of my friends died in the Intifada. I returned home filled with hatred of the Jews, blood, and the war.* *"Our jailers taught us how to continue hating and resisting. I was lost in anger and revenge."* *[It] killed any hope for peace. It simply fueled antagonism.*
Despair & Low Future Expectation	*So, I decided that the Jewish nation could not be trusted, that peace would not happen.*

Despair is sometimes described as the emotional endpoint of a negative emotional journey in intergroup conflict, used as justification for violence (Halperin et al., 2011). "As a result, hatred is associated with very low expectations for positive change, and with high levels of despair… If one is convinced of the destructive intentions of the out-group and feels total despair regarding the likelihood of the out-group changing its ways, the violent alternative may seem like the only reasonable one." This is very obvious from the narratives, but not the endpoint for our participants.

Change Process & Post Change

The narrative data showed a clear pathway of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive situational change components. As the change process in most cases was triggered by one specific factor (appreciative intergroup encounter), I combine both aspects – change and post-change - integrative outlining the full change sequence.

Respectful Encounter. For 75% of the participants, the change process was triggered by an unforeseen direct or indirect encounter in contrast to the normally experienced power asymmetry, for example, a respectful meeting 'at eye level' with an Israeli in the house of a relative or watching an

empathy arousing movie on the holocaust. One participant described the encounter in the house of a relative in the following way – "*He respectfully stood to greet me. He shook my hand. I felt as though he was about to hug me. I asked: 'What are you doing here?'*". These encounters didn't follow the usual intractable conflict patterns, where almost all contacts are asymmetric in terms of power like in a dependent work setting where Palestinians do menial labour in Israel or settlements and often hostile like at checkpoints or during house searches by the armed forces. Notably, these encounters can happen in dire circumstances - in two cases, these meetings happened while participants were detained in prison. "*This led to a conversation with a prison guard. The guards all thought of us as terrorists and we hated them fiercely in return; but this guard asked me, 'How can someone quiet like you become a terrorist?'... It was the start of a dialogue and a friendship. We discovered many similarities and some months later the guard said he understood and supported the Palestinian struggle. From then on, he always treated us with respect,*". The surprising reversal of power representations like seeing oppressors as weak holocaust victims and experiencing contact on equal terms where asymmetric encounters are the norm, had substantial effects on the participants. This intergroup encounter-facilitated perspective-taking, arguably the 'cognitive' aspects of empathy) might build a foundation for increased empathy and poses interesting preliminary implications for the approaches discussed in the next chapter.

Empathy. In 58% of the cases, this unforeseen encounter managed to elicit the elusive emotion of empathy towards the Israeli outgroup as the next factor. One participant described for example *"one day I had the opportunity to watch Schindler's List. I was deeply moved, and it changed my life forever"* as well as reduction of negative- and increase of positive emotions such as hope (*see next factor*) and/or… (*The incident with the soldiers made me realize that we had to preserve our humanity – our right to laugh and our right to cry –to save ourselves*). This includes *cognitive* components of empathy ("*I decided to try and understand who the Jews were.*") as well as *prosocial* components ("*Seeing how this transformation happened through dialogue, and without*

force, made me realize that the only way to peace was through non-violence. Our dialogue enabled us to see each other's purity of heart and good intent.").

In some cases, also other positive emotional reactions are mentioned, most prominently hope *("And then I heard for the first time about the Israeli draft refusal movement. It was a hope for me and my friends, a hope that there is a chance that "the human conscience is beginning to wake up."* Other positive emotions mentioned during the change or post-change phase include joy or relief due to acknowledgment of harmdoing of the opposing side (see also Shnabel & Nadler, 2008). Emotion references described here were sometimes unspecific including expressions such as "*crying and feeling angry", "deeply moved",* or *"there's nothing more precious than life"*. Although empathy stands out in the positive change, this underlines our idea from the quantitative and mixed data that emotional states are complex and often can't be described by one single emotion, rather pointing to complex 'emotional profiles' in a given situation instead.

New Skills. In some cases, acquiring new competencies played a certain role. "*There [in prison], I worked in the library and had the opportunity to read a lot. I never had a chance to get a formal education, but I educated myself in jail. We used to call prison, "The Revolutionary University." In addition to reading and watching documentary films, every day I participated in learning groups; I began to have new thoughts about the conflict and the means for resolving it. In an attempt to learn about the "enemy," I studied the history of the Jewish people and taught myself both Hebrew and English."* Another participant described *"it was through these hunger strikes that I first learned about nonviolent struggles and the virtue of patience."* Explicitly language skills (Hebrew is indicated in 30% of the cases) or nonviolent communication are mentioned *("During my time in prison I became a representative for Palestinian prisoners, and through liaising with Israeli guards I learned how to use dialogue to get our needs met."* These skills were mentioned in facilitating the change process further, they provided new possibilities and a basis for developing new perspectives. *"After graduating from high school, I found myself stuck in Jerusalem. I had refused to learn Hebrew*

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growing up: it was the 'enemy's' language. Now, to attend university or get a good job I would have to compromise. I started studying Hebrew in Ulpan, an institute for Jewish newcomers to Israel. It was the hardest experience I had faced yet, but its results were the best I have encountered. It was the first time I had sat in a room of Jews who were not superior to me. It was the first time I had seen faces different from the soldiers at the checkpoints."

Cognitive Reappraisal. The factors mentioned so far were leading in 91% of cases to a cognitive reappraisal of their situation concerning the conflict context. One participant referred to his experience in the following way: *"I realized for the first time that I had mistaken the enemy. I had thought it was the Israeli people, but I was wrong. Instead, we had a common enemy, hatred, and fear."* This cognitive reappraisal was 'sealing' the change and led in all cases to significant behavioral lifestyle changes like for example the active engagement in joint pro-peace activities. Additionally, this cognitive reappraisal very often includes references to activism *"I joined with some friends, and we established the … Centre for Peace. A few years later, I helped to found…"*. *"I've been involved in the nonviolent resistance movement from that day onwards. Through the years I've brought many friends around to my way of thinking. I truly believe that nonviolence is the only way."* As mentioned, this activism seems necessary to sustain the change process over time.

While not easy to assess in all detail from the narrative material, sense of coherence, especially its aspect of meaningfulness is one crucial cognitive element. *"It has not been easy: we still face checkpoints, ever-expanding settlements, and now the separation wall keeping our two sides apart. But together we hold firm to our resolution of nonviolence."* Meaningfulness is mentioned as one aspect of reaching out for more during their violent phase (*"I felt the drive to engage in more meaningful actions."*) as well as an important aspect of their new identity (*"This was the beginning of a meaningful resistance [=joint/peaceful] to the occupation."*).

Table 7.3

Change Processes towards Nonviolence Among Low-Power Group Members in Intractable Conflict

Theme	Example Quotes
Respectful Encounter (75%)	*"It was the first time I had sat in a room of Jews who were not superior to me. It was the first time I had seen faces different from the soldiers at the checkpoints. Those soldiers had taken my brother; these students were the same as me."*
Positive Emotions (Empathy & Hope) (67%)	*"It was then that I realized there are multiple narratives to the conflict – for both our peoples."* *"One day I had the opportunity to watch Schindler's List. I was deeply moved, and it changed my life forever."* *"It was a hope for him and his friends, a hope that there is a chance that "the human conscience is beginning to wake up."*
Learning Skills (17%)	*"During my time in prison I became a representative for Palestinian prisoners, and through liaising with Israeli guards I learned how to use dialogue to get our needs met… I taught myself both Hebrew and English."*
Cognitive Reappraisal (91%)	*"I realized for the first time that I had mistaken the enemy. I had thought it was the Israeli people, but I was wrong. Instead, we had a common enemy: hatred and fear."*

Many of the described factors can be found as well in other narratives of formerly violent intergroup life trajectories such as the well-known 'Green Prince' (Yousef & Brackin, 2010) or social activist Tass Saada (Saada & Merrill, 2008), whom I encountered several times. Although not included in my data, situational factors such as respectful intergroup contact (which I also find in my study triggering the change) or moving to a different context and channeling entrepreneurial energy. Interestingly in both of these cases, a personal encounter 'at eye level' also plays a strong role.

Computerized Text Analysis

Initial quantifications through content analysis are described above, here I compared the narratives of both contexts additionally with open-vocabulary approaches (Tausczik & Pennebaker, 2010), to establish further how the pre-change versus the post-change descriptions differ between each other as

well as compared to general personal writing examples. Traditional LIWC dimensions reflect the percentage of total words within the narratives. The Summary Variables are research-based composites that have been converted to 100-point scales where 0 = very low and 100 = very high. Each of the summary variables are algorithms made from various LIWC categories based on previous research. The numbers are standardized scores that have been converted to percentiles.

Table 7.4.

Linguistic Pre-Post Change Comparison of Word Usage among Activists in Intergroup Conflict

	PreC	PostC	Average Personal Writing
I-Words (I, me, my)	5.7	6.2	8.7
Social Words	11.2	13.8	8.7
Positive Emotions	1.3	2.8	2.5
Negative Emotions	3.5	3.4	2.1
Cognitive Processes	7.2	11.0	12.5
SUMMARY VARIABLES			
Analytic	74.9	66.1	44.8
Clout	62.3	64.9	37.0
Authenticity	63.0	54.3	76.0
Emotional Tone	7.7	24.8	38.6

In both descriptions, we find comparatively low numbers of personal- and a higher number of social words. *Both* contexts have a highly negative emotional connotation – living as a low-power group member in intergroup conflict is psychologically difficult after all. Positive emotions, as well as emotional tone, increased substantially in the post-change context. Emotional tone is scored such that higher numbers are more positive and upbeat and lower numbers are more negative, which reflects the already mentioned substantial increase of positivity in the post-change setting.

Cognitive reappraisal is attested via the analytic word category, referring to formal and hierarchical thinking. This type of thinking is especially the case for the pre-change narratives, but both contexts

include strong formal processing. Also, for the post-change, comparatively high cognitive processing is described.

Particularly interesting in regards to the social agency elaborations discussed in Chapter Two, is the high level of 'clout' described for both contexts. Clout taps writing that is authoritative, 'confident', and exhibits leadership, which is the case for both contexts (almost twice compared to average personal writing). The participants describe their lives in very agentic and social entrepreneurial terms. They seem to be generally social influencers – either in a confrontational or reconciliatory sense, while at the same time describing themselves in reasonably authentic terms, referring to writing that is personal, humble, and vulnerable.

Overall, the results showed consistent situational 'building blocks' of change involving emotional, cognitive, and behavioral components. For most participants (75%), the change sequence was triggered by an unforeseen respectful intergroup encounter in contrast to the usually experienced power asymmetry. This encounter elicited empathy towards the Israeli outgroup as well as hope (67%) and reduced negative emotions, resulting in cognitive reappraisal of the conflict context (91%). The cognitive meaning-making process patterns included emotional 're-fitting' (Na'aman, 2019) and resulted in an adapted sense of coherence regarding conflict setting as well as possible individual roles within it.

7.4 Discussion

Violent activism is one of the key issues within protracted intergroup conflict, leading to individual suffering and cycles of negative social repercussions. Emotional and behavioral change from these dynamics is difficult to achieve. Results of this final study underline, that despite these difficulties, change is conceptually and practically possible even for entrenched radical activists, and appreciative intergroup contact 'on equal terms' plays a big role as it increased intergroup empathy. Reduced negative emotions enable cognitive reappraisal to achieve a new conflict coherence that provides hope as well as meaning but does not include the use of violent means. Computerized text analysis confirms these results and also suggests that while both contexts are experienced as mostly negative, the post-change includes substantial positive emotions. Both contexts involve considerable social activism and 'resolve' although of a very different nature. Personal 'turning point' narratives not only provide strong sources of meaning in the context of military occupation within asymmetric intergroup conflict (Galtung, 1990; Hammack, 2010), they also present a rich data source to investigate emotional-behavioral change.

Theoretical and Applied Contributions

Deradicalization research often analyses the *disengagement* of activists (Kennedy & Chernov Hwang, 2021). My research concedes that in some cases, radical activists will *not* disengage from social activism but instead from *violent means*, showing equal dedication to peaceful action. Understanding these situational change patterns lays an important foundation for the application of the results for conflict transformation also for the general population. This qualitative study advances the scholarship of change in intergroup conflict by providing a deeper insight into the nuanced factors worsening versus facilitating individual conflict transformation within life trajectories. Thus far, examining the emotional factors of change from violence was done with limited attention to intrapersonal microfactors. The present study offers a glance at the broad theoretical and empirical potential that emerges from conceptualizing individual change as context-dependent based on

positive intergroup contact completed by cognitive-affective processes. Linking the results to conceptual considerations, we can see empirical substantiation of *how* the participants apply appraisal-based patterns of emotion regulation (Halperin et al., 2011; Halperin, 2016) within specific intergroup settings. Exposure to certain events leads to the cognitive-emotional appraisal of the situation resulting in matching actions and attitudes. Furthermore, the study offers insights into how respectful intergroup contact can be powerful when negative asymmetric contact has been the norm, especially for our target group involved in violent collective action. Particularly when appreciative intergroup contact achieves to trigger positive emotional constructs such as empathy, it will be a powerful tool as a basis for cognitive change, facilitating constructive meaning-making and an adapted sense of coherence. The study thus reveals the context-dependent factors linking situation, intergroup contact, from violent- to joint collective action and as such contributes to our understanding of individual conflict transformation. The results are particularly impressive considering the suggested limits of human agency after the constraints during early adversity (Schafer et al., 2011) described by most participants.

Limitations and Future Directions

This qualitative study is using narrative material, that could be falsified or 'idealized' in hindsight. The small number of participants is a further limitation. Future studies might examine these relationships also in different contexts. For example, it will be worthy to investigate if the findings are unique to the low-power group context and how comparable change processes evolve in a high-power context (Howell et al., 2015). One possibility is to compare the findings on change with advantaged-group narratives 'against the social mainstream' such as 'Breaking the Silence'-testimonials or hawkish ideological settlers. Finally, the line of study would profit additionally from a more elaborate. arguably quantitative, examination of similar change processes of more 'typical' group members. As the target group of violent confrontational activists is notoriously elusive and examples are probably limited, a common hazard of radicalisation research, it might be necessary to

look at less dramatic occurrences of political change (for further discussion of complementary methods of (de)radicalisation research see e.g. Gøtzsche-Astrup et al., 2020).

From an emotion regulation perspective in intergroup conflict, which will be elaborated more in the next chapter from an applied perspective, strategies of prospective reappraisal are supposed to focus on attempts to reduce levels of long-term negative emotions such as hatred toward the opponent and despair about the situation (Halperin et al., 2011). The impact of the described 'spontaneous' appreciative intergroup encounter seems to achieve the same effect. Purposeful intergroup contact or unofficial 'track two' mediation could emphasize for example humanness and heterogeneity of the out-group as well as the ability of individuals and groups to *change* their characteristics, moral values, positions, and behavior (Dweck et al., 1995). To achieve this objective, strategies of perspective-taking can be used to increase understanding regarding the motives and goals of the adversary (Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000). From the perspective of the examined narratives, this will only work though, if a truly appreciative encounter (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008) followed by credible experiences 'on the ground' can be conveyed.

Conclusions

The present research suggests empirical factors enhancing social change in entrenched protracted intergroup conflict. Findings can help conflict transformation practitioners by highlighting the importance of respectful intergroup contact. Empathy, as well as cognitive reappraisal, finding meaning and coherence in the promotion of social change, will reduce the salience of violent action also of the general population. This study provides initial evidence to be used as a basis within conflict transformation approaches. In the next chapter, I will provide suggestions on how to emulate these spontaneous processes and propose ideas for 'wise interventions' (Walton, 2014; Walton & Wilson, 2018) that are targeted to enhance positive individual social change within conflict transformation processes of less 'extreme' activists but more 'regular' population members.

Chapter Eight

Implications and Applications for Conflict Transformation

The promotion of peace can be improved through adequate knowledge and evidence-based practice. This is the rationale for peace research in general as well as this dissertation. This concluding chapter presents a summary of the main findings, discusses their translational implications for researchers and policymakers, and – most importantly – provides recommendations and examples for the specific application of the findings within conflict transformation. This includes concrete intervention possibilities for practitioners within multi-level trajectories such as top-down/top leadership, middle-range/track two as well as bottom-up/grassroots activities. The process how to design intervention implications will be exemplified with the anger versus humiliation results from Chapter Four as well as individual- versus group emotions findings from Chapter Six.

The overarching idea of my research is that next to their behavioral implications, emotions *themselves* can and should be *specific targets* of individual conflict transformation. In my field studies, I specified *which emotions* are to be targeted under *which context*. Understanding the emotional and behavioral responses of low-power group members in the face of violence and oppression can be a crucial basis for peacebuilding interventions. Nuanced psychological awareness based on empirical findings is especially important as intractable conflicts are challenging environments where good intentions often backfire. This dissertation on the nexus between social psychology and political science provides insight for mediators or transformation practitioners on how focusing on emotional mechanisms can shape an understanding of the disadvantaged within intergroup conflict. I argue that integrated psychological microfactor analyses of conflict must consider emotional *as well as* situational context. Specifically, a fitting framework for describing this situational context with the dimensions 'conflict intensity' versus 'conflict proximity' has been proposed.

8.1 Introduction

The hardships of people living within prolonged intergroup conflict are difficult to imagine. Integrating power considerations into the promotion of peace through deeper knowledge as done in this dissertation, can be particularly impactful in disadvantaged-group settings (Goetschel, 2021). Throughout the last chapters, I outlined mechanisms that contribute to our understanding of how disadvantaged groups apply violent means of resistance. These 'dynamics of desperation' foster even within some members of the research community considerations of applying violent measures such as sabotage in pressing issues, such as climate change (Malm, 2021). For conflict transformation to be more effective within protracted disputes, approaches can benefit from research on emotions, particularly explaining violence versus less violent responses from a social psychology perspective.

People mired in intergroup conflict employ different agentic coping patterns **(Chapter Two)**. Similar to interpersonal conflict, influencing people towards more constructive styles might be feasible. Notably, this does *not* mean being silent towards injustice and suffering but instead preventing harm and making collective action more *effective* in the long run via constructive – nonnormative *and* nonviolent – disruption (Shuman et al., 2020). Situational escalation patterns normally change general conflict dynamics to the worse. Conflict escalation has a substantial effect on *how* and *which* specific emotions predict violent responses, for example, anger versus humiliation **(Chapter Four)**. Including status considerations as well as framing context in less humiliating ways might be useful to avoid retaliatory confrontation. Furthermore, different escalations are experienced distinct from each other. 'Proximity' and 'intensity' dimensions **(Chapter Six)** can be used for framing approaches (Benford & Snow, 2000; Chong & Druckman, 2007) within 'conflict-in-context' considerations. Targeted focus on individual versus group identities might enable peace advocates to harness the full potential of conciliatory collective engagement. Most importantly, even entrenched violent activists can change towards applying nonviolent approaches **(Chapter Seven)**, pathways we might be able to utilize and create purposefully change opportunities.

Conflict Transformation

One of the most promising aspects of understanding emotional and interactional dynamics is how it can inform mediation and peacebuilding practices, and be of direct value for practitioners in the field (Bramsen & Poder, 2018). Conflict transformation as a concept has already been briefly described in the first chapter of this monograph. The distinctions between the various conflict transformation approaches of scholar-practitioners such as Burton, Kelman, Lederach, and Dudouet are beyond the scope of this dissertation. As my research is mainly operating in the realm of understanding microfactors, relational and interactive aspects of conflict transformation, instead I want to provide in the next section some concrete practical examples on framing and understanding contested issues along the findings outlined above, taking general practitioner perspectives into account (Taylor & Lederach, 2014). Social impact has been proposed as one of the most important attributes of peace research (Goetschel, 2018). Important for my approach within the conflict setting is the inclusion of 'prejudice reduction models' such as intergroup contact initiatives (Study 4) *as well as* 'collective action models' (Study 2 & 3) to achieve social change and conflict transformation as they propose complementary psychological pathways (Dixon et al., 2016).

In my research, I also differentiated between the *immediate situation* as specified by concrete conflict escalation events, *underlying patterns and context* as shown in the specific connecting mechanisms between emotions and action ('conflict styles') as well as the *conceptual framework* for specifying conflict context dimensions outlined in chapter 3. The importance of including environmental context as a moderator in social settings (Lewin, 1947) has also been underlined in conflict concepts such as 'bottom-up peace' or 'everyday diplomacy' (Mac Ginty, 2014). I want to go one step further and provide empirical configurations on *how* to apply these situational dynamics concretely. The substantial impact of local factors strongly emerged as a relevant theme throughout my findings and might therefore be important as well in microfactor conflict transformation applications (Ditlmann et al., 2017; Miall, 2004), displaying emotions as exacerbating or restraining

factor. This implies also going beyond a static towards a more dynamic understanding of the role of emotions in conflict settings. The suggested distinction between two specific aspects of context 'conflict proximity' and 'conflict intensity' might provide a practical distinction between as well as useful for predicting group member responses and emotion-action associations.

Although the question of *how* collective action creates social change, remains empirically disputed within social psychology (Louis, 2009; Prentice & Paluck, 2020), collective action- and emotions research as modeled in the last chapters provides fertile ground for conflict transformation and social change on an individual level (Fisher, 2008). Following recommendations on possible avenues to advance conflict transformations (Kriesberg, 2010, 2011), on a process-level, I aim to improve what is known already about how emotions contribute to violence, focussing on specific questions systematically specifically unpacking the role of the context within conflict escalation settings. My research project includes a particular focus on 'bottom-up' approaches to improve popular thought and enhance constructive awareness among sub-elites (Mac Ginty, 2014). Another focus was to improve relations between theory and practice and therefore our pursuits always included practical 'prefigurative action' aspects and grassroots activities during the stay in Israel/Palestine in characteristic scholar-activist tradition.

The structure for concrete implications is following multitrack considerations (Diamond & McDonald, 1996; Palmiano Federer et al., 2019), which is normally recommended as 'best-practice' approach for conflict transformation. Out of my findings, I will give examples of how these results could have been or were taken into consideration on three concrete levels by practitioners or advisors following Lederach (1997). The bulk of my recommendations will be relevant for grassroots and middle-range activities because I'm most familiar with these approaches. Nevertheless, implications are in principle applicable on all levels.

Individual Conflict Transformation – Emotion Regulation

To suggest applications for conflict transformation from my research, it is useful to introduce first some theoretical considerations from social psychology on how this transformation might look like on an individual level, namely outline current concepts on the theme of emotion regulation (Goldenberg et al., 2016; Gross, 2008; Halperin et al., 2011). Emotion regulation is defined simply as how emotions may be altered or influenced (Gross, 2008). Although these general frameworks do not answer why a *specific* individual is engaging in a *specific* change, postulated models provide a valuable integrating framework of describing general emotion-based change processes (Goldenberg et al., 2016; Gross & Thompson, 2007; Halperin et al., 2011). Emotion regulation – in general as well as in intergroup conflict – may be impulsive or controlled, conscious or unconscious, and may have its effects at several points in the emotion generation process (Halperin, Sharvit & Gross, 2011). The process begins with the occurrence of a new event or the appearance of new information related to the conflict (or recollection of a past conflict-related event). As outlined over the last chapters, although events can be experienced personally, in many cases they are experienced directly by only a few group members and transmitted to other group members through social/mass media or other individuals. These events will elicit individual and group-based emotions and the ensuing political action, depending on how they are appraised. Comparable considerations to explain emotional change are proposed as well by recent publications within other lines of research such as philosophy (Na'aman, 2021).

In protracted intergroup conflict, most psychological interventions including emotion regulation efforts will have to be applied indirectly due to the strong forces of entrenchment in conflict dynamics (Bar-Tal 2000; Bar-Tal & Hameiri, 2014). Concretely, researchers will be targeting action tendencies and 're-engineering' specific core appraisals of emotional dynamics as displayed in Figure 8.1 (Goldenberg et al., 2016; Halperin et al., 2014). Subsequently, the intervention will be empirically tested.

Figure 8.1

Indirect Emotion Regulation in Protracted Intergroup Conflicts
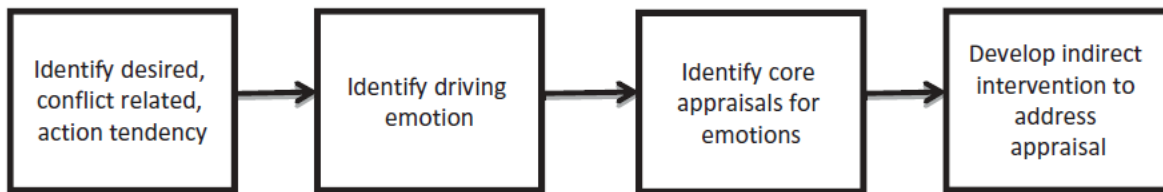
Note. From Halperin, Cohen-Chen & Goldenberg (2014)

As this level of elaboration is beyond the scope of this dissertation, I want to refer to excellent applied intervention research in social conflict settings within and beyond the Middle East. Examples include group malleability- (Halperin et al., 2011) or paradoxical interventions (Hameiri, Porat, et al., 2014) in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, intergroup encounter in a regional soccer league in Northern Iraq (Mousa, 2020), but also the reintegration of former FARC combatants in Colombia (Bruneau et al., 2022) or mass-media interventions in Nigeria targeting interreligious prejudices (Blair et al., 2021). They provide rich examples how the sequence described above could be applied within specific challenging contexts (Moore-Berg et al., 2022). To illustrate how to relate this process to the current research, I will provide below two examples on this 'reverse engineering' process about emotional implications within deradicalization processes as well as moral exemplar research.

A particularly useful technique in our indirect conflict transformation context that will be relevant for the recommendations is 'framing' (Benford & Snow, 2000; Chong & Druckman, 2007; Hoffmann, 2011; see also Thaler & Sunstein, 2009). Frames provide a broad, interpretive answer or definition to "what is going on" or "what should be going on" and framing has been studied considerably in collective action (Benford & Snow, 2000). As collective action often includes social injustice frames (Gamson et al., 1982), if events are perceived as an aggressive action with no justified or 'wrong' causes, it may lead to extreme anger or even retaliatory humiliation and violent

action. Accordingly, events may be framed in alternative ways, and this framing influences individuals' appraisal of the event including emotional and behavioral responses. Useful frames should highlight appraisals that correspond with emotions that serve constructive purposes while avoiding appraisals that are associated with destructive emotions (Halperin, Sharvit, et al., 2011a; Mashuri & van Leeuwen, 2021). Framing also extends to conflict-sensitive (Gabriel & Goetschel, 2017; Goetschel, 2021) 'nudge interventions' (Bar-Tal & Hameiri, 2020).

Summary of the Main Findings with Implications

Understanding emotional and interactional dynamics can be of direct value for practitioners in the field (Folger & Bush, 1996; Lederach, 2003; Retzinger & Scheff, 2000; Shapiro, 2010; Zariski, 2010). The overall aim of my work was to develop a concrete psychological knowledge basis to engage with the rich 'relational and interactive aspects of framing' (Goetschel, 2009), providing guidance *when* to target *which* emotion or emotional mechanism. Using multi-methods approaches over several studies, I first addressed oppression conditions of Palestinian low-power group members suggesting individual coping styles in intergroup conflict that are relatively consistent over time. Furthermore, I constructed a matrix of two situational context escalation factors and tested its impact on specific emotions and individual versus group emotions as well as their impact on – mainly violent – collective action. Most of my research concerns conflict escalation, either through current escalatory events or entrenched personal narratives. These are problematic conditions for conflict transformation. Including emotional approaches might provide advantages, namely that activated emotions might be more *or less* associated with violent action at a given moment. Accordingly, emotions themselves can and should be *specific targets* of individual conflict transformation. In my research, I provide guidance *which emotions* are to be targeted under *which context*.

Conflict Coping Styles. Results show that people mired in intergroup conflict maintain their agency via employing different agentic coping styles, displaying more conflictual versus more conciliatory behavior **(Study 1)**. People are active agents even in strong settings such as intergroup

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conflict *and* within a low-power perspective. Diverse patterns of conflictual versus more conciliatory agency appear as relevant in low-power intergroup conflict settings for coping processes. Similar to interpersonal disputes, conflict transformation practitioners might be able to 'nudge' people towards more constructive coping styles. Borrowing from interpersonal conflict research, where people are also using several conflict styles (Kilman, 2007; Rahim, 1983; Thomas et al., 2008), practitioners could try to activate people towards more constructive styles, even if it is not their main one, engaging for example in nonviolent collective action or intergroup encounters **(Study 4)**.

Situational Context. Situational context has a substantial effect on how and which specific emotions predict violent versus less violent responses, for example, group anger under *'daily' oppression* versus group humiliation under *escalation* **(Study 2a)**. On the same theme of 'situational context' – escalations are different from each other, particularly the distinction between *'proximity'* and *'intensity'* dimension **(Study 2b)** might be useful for targeted framing and reappraisal processes. Including status considerations as well as framing context in less humiliating ways might be useful techniques to avoid retaliatory confrontation. The concrete mechanism would be the situational upregulation of intergroup- versus intragroup appraisal processes as well as the downregulation of humiliation.

Negative Emotions. Both emotions, anger and humiliation, are relevant for collective action in distinct contexts and both can lead to specific violent behavior. Under 'daily baseline' conditions mainly group *anger* is associated with violent action and in intense as well as close escalation linked to the central theme of Jerusalem, mainly group *humiliation* predicts violent responses. While reactive negative emotions, are themselves natural and legitimate responses to offensive acts or provocations, violent behavior not only increases suffering but facilitates retaliatory effects escalating violence further. Especially recognizing 'loss of status' humiliation seems to have substantial effects on the collective action potential. Acknowledging the basic value of someone is of tremendous importance for example within Track Two mediations in different cultural contexts

(Pearson d'Estrée & Parsons, 2018). Being offered the right to participate might be at times even more important than actually being able to influence negotiation outcomes (Rifkind & Yawanarajah, 2019). Procedural justice research often brings forward arguments on 'human rights', arguably 'loss of status' reasonings can be even more powerful. Also influencing the emotion of hate – arguably the most stable and destructive emotion in intergroup conflict – should be included in these considerations (Fischer et al., 2018; Halperin et al., 2011), as it was found to have substantial contextual effects on violent action, for example during the relatively 'distant' Gaza-escalation.

One central appraisal linked to high humiliation is low agency (Ginges & Atran, 2008). This perceived low agency might be a crucial factor of choosing violence as mode of collective action (Tausch & Becker, 2011), in the sense of "using violence if you're out of other coping options" (Lederach, 2005). Accordingly, one crucial aspect of humiliation interventions is the increase of agency (Fernández et al., 2022), which can be applied for example in deradicalization programs through different means (Kruglanski et al., 2014).

Individual- versus Group Emotions. Both types of emotions can be relevant inroads for violent action in distinct contexts. The distinction affects how individual- versus group emotions predict violence **(Study 2 & 3)**. In intense but distant escalations mainly *group* emotions predict violence, while in less intense but close circumstances mainly *individual* responses are associated with violent action. In escalations that are close as well as intense, *both* types of emotions predict violent responses. Depending on the contextual situation, issues could be framed according to the individual- *or* group relevance. Furthermore, mediation practitioners might be able to harness these distinctions for a more inclusive integration of different self-concepts. Using the interplay between individual- and group identities might facilitate to 'harness the full potential' of emotional predictors to appeal to two separate routes for collective engagement. This interplay between individual- versus group identity is also relevant for concepts such as identity fusion (Swann et al., 2012; Swann & Buhrmester, 2015) as well as emotional fit (De Leersnyder, 2017; De Leersnyder et al., 2014).

Once concrete consideration of my research within individual conflict transformation, is how to target individual versus group emotions specifically. The main relevant social-cognitive process here would be *intra*group versus *inter*group appraisals (Turner et al., 1994). Accordingly, interventions can situationally target either destructive outgroup versus ingroup homogeneity assumptions (Simon, 1992). Examples of this can be applied within moral exemplar research (Čehajić-Clancy & Bilewicz, 2017, 2021) and will be outlined in more detail below.

Emotional Change. Finally, and maybe most importantly, people – even in difficult settings – can change **(Study 4)**. Change is initiated by respectful encounter that leads to increased empathy, reduced negative intergroup emotions as well as cognitive restructuring. Social conflict transformation is achieved by prejudice reduction. Alongside an impressive body of research on how intergroup contact is one important basis for conflict transformation, reducing stereotyping and prejudice (Pettigrew et al., 2011; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008), we can suggest how to 'nudge' people and create purposefully change opportunities.

Multitrack approaches (Palmiano Federer et al., 2019) suggest incorporating initiatives on *different* societal levels, from official top leadership to grassroots initiatives. Accordingly in the following sections, I describe possible or experienced intervention examples for different tracks although proposed interventions can in principle be conceptualized on *all* levels. While the description of the results is descriptive, the next section considers how emotion regulation and reappraisal may be used to facilitate conflict transformation, taking a normative approach.

8.2 Suggestions for Conflict Transformation Interventions

As mentioned at the start of this chapter, the promotion of peace can be improved through adequate knowledge. This is the rationale for peace research that generates such data (Goetschel, 2021). Successful strategies to deal with conflict transformation must be more fine-grained than often practiced at present. Based on my empirical findings, strategies should include aiming to transform social practice at the micro level through including comprehensive use of microfactors (Goetschel, 2021), particularly emotional approaches (Bramsen & Poder, 2018; Friedman et al., 2018; Jameson et al., 2009). Also, to account for existing power asymmetries and reach broad parts of the population, possible interventions should be feasible at different social levels, so my following examples and recommendations cover different societal spheres.

Level 1 – TopDown / Top Leadership

The definition includes military, political or religious leaders on a national or international level with high visibility and an equal amount of symbolism. The impact here happens either via direct contact between top leadership members facilitated by high-profile mediators, but mostly through communication via mass-media (for a fascinating case-study account of a direct leader reconciliation process between French president Robert Schuman and German chancellor Konrad Adenauer that included humiliation considerations, increased agency and led to the foundation of the European Union, see Fountain, 2013). Based on my results, the most obvious recommendation to use non-humiliating and inclusive language during escalation settings might seem painfully clear but is nevertheless not always adhered to as there might be perceived populist domestic political benefits of conflict enhancement such as appealing to a far-right voter base. Arguably though, this could be done equally well without humiliating the opponent. Using two concrete examples from the recent past in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict where this was not adhered to at the top leadership level and accordingly led to negative consequences and further conflict enhancement.

Status Humiliation Case Study. During the negotiations initiated by US President Donald Trump and already before being faced with the threat to cut annual aid of over $300 million to force the Palestinians to the negotiating table, also Saudi Arabia offered Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas $10 billion to accept the US' so-called 'deal of the century' according to Lebanon's Al-Akhbar newspaper. Crown Prince Bin Salman offered Abbas $10 billion over ten years if he accepts the US peace plan and has the Palestinian government's base "in Abu Dis instead of occupied Jerusalem". Abbas, however, rejected the offer and said "it would mean the end of my political life". Abbas explained that the situation on the ground leaves him unable to make any concessions on the illegal settlements, the two-state solution, and Jerusalem. Concretely Abbas responded, "We say that national rights are not pieces of real estate that are purchased and sold and that arriving at a political solution that guarantees freedom, dignity, independence and justice for our people must precede any economic programs or projects because that will create stability and security for everyone." (Middle East Monitor, 2020). Recognizing and including status humiliation aspects already during the US-embassy/Jerusalem top-down communication, for example highlighting specific appraisals and framing Abu Dis as a suburb of Jerusalem instead as a separate geographical entity ["You get East-Jerusalem as capital as you always wanted"] might have had much more favourable and less confrontative outcomes.

Prerequisite here is the willingness of top leadership to engage in dialogue or calming communication. During the most recent bigger conflict escalation in May 2021 triggered by a concrete Supreme Court case regarding Israeli/Palestinian housing rights in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah, this principle was not adhered to. Instead – if we can believe the Israeli chief of police – humiliating symbolism was used for further escalation of violence by a particular Israeli far-right-wing politician and Knesset member in an already very tense situation. While the Israeli Supreme Court delayed its decision to avoid further violent escalation, some politicians engaged in humiliating status demonstrations and initiated for example a provocative

ceremonious office move next to the contested houses during Ramadan, an escalation culminating in widespread communal violence amongst Jewish and Arab Israeli citizens. In the words of the frustrated chief of police, "whenever we had the situation under control, [Knesset member] showed up with his supporters to fan the flames again" (Times of Israel, 2021).

Top Level Applications. Escalation settings are intense surroundings that need as much appeasing influence as possible. Based on my study results, I suggest appealing to upregulated more constructive change-oriented emotions such as anger that does *not predict* violent action within escalation settings, for example in media communications. More importantly, efforts should be made to *downregulate* perceived status-oriented humiliation. For these purposes, the framing of events and the assessments of possible responses to them by the advantaged group should highlight acknowledgment of and status concern for the opposing low-power side. Furthermore, upregulating group emotion and downregulating individual emotions depending on contextual intensity and proximity, framing issues according to *individual or group relevance*, namely the less violent one, is suggested. For example, to downregulate individual and upregulate group-based emotions in response to localized low-profile events ['baseline-conditions'], media reports may highlight personal non-involvement and overall group-relevant calm, since the targeted appraisal of inter/intra-group comparisons is important for the emotional prediction of group-based violence.

Level 2 – Middle Range Leadership

These include respected sector leaders, former officials, academics and intellectuals or NGO leaders. Approaches include Track Two interventions, most notably interactive problem-solving workshops (Kelman, 2009), but also other mediation approaches or conflict resolution initiatives. Although its exclusive importance might have been overemphasized (Paffenholz, 2015), middle-range activities are probably still the most relevant approach, particularly if nothing happens at the top leadership level and grassroots initiatives are too limited in scope.

Any worthwhile mediation initiative will base interventions on thorough conflict analysis (Druckman, 2005; Kelman & Fisher, 2003). Analysis tools as the basis for conflict transformation (Dudouet, 2006; Tropp, 2012) on the 'key drivers of conflict' often already include current contextual features, focus on different levels of analysis, and – at least on some of these levels – should include in the future emotional aspects and microfactor considerations similar to the ones outlined in this dissertation.

Conflict Styles Case Study. Unacknowledged from official channels, informal Track-Two activities are still ongoing in Israel currently. In the course of the right-wing shift over the last years in the country, in contrast to the original secular-leftist members, participants now include national-religious right-wing mid-level leaders that would – according to their conflict styles – never engage with one another. Nevertheless, this group exists for several years and very unlikely people engage with each other if not jointly, at least peacefully. Convincing people to participate in the first place was a delicate endeavour. Borrowing from interpersonal conflict mediation, responsible initiators had to play with different conflict styles and according identities or action tendencies of participants. *"I'm only here to spy out the enemy"* was only half-joking used by one particular participant as justification for his engagement at the beginning of currently ongoing religious/right-wing Track Two intergroup encounter (either towards ingroup or himself). Regardless of his initial lack of conviction, said participant is a regular and productive member of the group for several years.

Middle Range Applications. Track Two mediation could profit from this research in several ways. As in the case study above, borrowing from interpersonal conflict research on people using several *conflict styles*, trying to nudge people towards a more constructive style, even if it is not their main one, for example motivating someone to join a mediation initiative. Similar reasoning on coping styles could be used to adapt towards more constructive responses *during* ongoing mediations, reframing appraisals why someone might [not] engage in certain, for example

aggressive, behavior. One could even envisage training sessions on conflict- and coping styles in the same way as these are part of standard management curriculums in organisational leadership development programs.

Before negotiations, status considerations and inclusion, acknowledging the basic value of both parties is standard practice in Track Two mediations, while taking existing status differences into account and not downplaying them. During negotiations or mediations, deliberate monitoring of emotions (together with certain cognitive constructs) and appealing to a broad range of emotions as well as framing the more constructive ones and deducting needs from emotions is recommended (Ryffel, 2021). Not all 'strong' emotions are destructive, some might even be helpful, demonstrating personal engagement in the issue at hand as well as a desire for change. Framing emotions might be easier than reframing concrete conflicting issues and identities during disputes (Stevens et al., 2020). As we have seen, several emotions can be elevated at the same escalation timepoint but predict different behavioral outcomes. It might be easier to focus on the more constructive emotions in contrast to shared perspectives on contested issues.

As on the top level, the possible application of context and emotional mechanisms in interactive problem-solving workshops or similar endeavours include framing issues in the opposite direction of violence, namely depending on context situation framing issues according to individual or group concerns is suggested. For example, to upregulate individual emotions via intragroup comparisons in response to a contested conflict issue, the mediator may highlight ingroup outliers, well-known and respected personalities that apply personal standards to the conflict that are different from the standard ingroup norm and come accordingly to different conclusions. Ideally, at some stage, Track Two mediations publish joint statements, and including emotional aspects might be helpful. As mentioned, it might be easier to agree on joint or distinct emotions than factual statements. Also, as we have seen symbolic statements of concern by the high-power group can be extremely powerful if perceived as honest and credible by the opposing disadvantaged group.

Level 3 – BottomUp / Grassroots

This level consists of local leaders, refugee camp leaders, local peace commissions, or any other group of citizens, and includes measures such as grassroots training, bottom-up prejudice reduction, intergroup encounter programs, psychosocial work in post-war trauma cases. Although intergroup encounter arguably advantaged high-power group members are the main change agents (Dixon et al., 2016), as we have seen this model can as well work equally for the disadvantaged group further along the line "*When I arrived, I discovered there were Israelis there. I didn't want to sit or talk to them, so I sat on the side. I heard an Israeli woman say, 'We're allowed to defend ourselves and we're allowed to defend our people, but what happened in Gaza – to blow up a whole building and kill several families to take out one terrorist, that's not acceptable to me. That is not my people, that is not my army.' I wanted to hug her. That hug changed my life.*" Accordingly, our own grassroots activism as a family, focused mainly on prejudice reduction and intergroup contact, facilitating intergroup encounters of very different types and participants including intergroup birthday parties of my wife or even our children's intergroup playdates [can't get more grassroots than that] giving Palestinian children different encounters with Israelis than they normally would have. As we had a strong footing in both communities, this was comparatively easy for us to organize.

Intergroup Encounter Case Study. Through our personal connection to a director at Yad Vashem and 'our' German-Palestinian school, my wife was involved in a Yad Vashem visit with Palestinian students and the invitation of a contemporary witness to the holocaust as part of the standard German school curriculum. Despite the clear Israeli benefits, administrative proved difficult to organize (see Chapter One) and is by no means part of the standard Palestinian curriculum. Without going into too much detail, the perceived change of power reversal and perspective-taking increasing empathy seems to follow the same trajectory as in the last qualitative study. As our friend at Yad Vashem put it "*Human suffering is universal*". My wife could engage with the speaker after

the event over lunch. He said, "*rarely are students so interested and are asking so deep questions for example on the role of religion during my suffering or changes in my personal belief afterwards*".

Grassroots Applications. There is already substantial literature on 'best practice' in intergroup encounters (Pettigrew et al., 2011) but also its limitations in asymmetric conflict (Thiessen & Darweish, 2018). Mainly based on the last study, I suggest facilitating grassroots encounters with different target groups that include all three aspects of change, focusing on increasing agency. Depending on the needs and capabilities of the target group such as teenagers or children, reversal of power asymmetry can be approached in a playful way such as football games with unequal teams and discussion afterward. Interesting perspective-taking exercises are already conceptualized for example with approaches from organisations such as 'Narrative4You' or open-source projects such as 'LivingRoomConversations'. Intergroup empathy might be the only aspect that is difficult to activate 'artificially' without extraordinary effort such as through the Holocaust Memorial Site.

An important concern with any intergroup conflict intervention is the entrenched belief that the members of an adversary social group are mostly bad, essentially all the same and that every ingroup member agrees on this issue. Moral exemplar interventions are aimed at challenging these beliefs by exposing people to stories about individuals who have risked some important aspects of their lives to save the lives of other social groups' members (Čehajić-Clancy & Bilewicz, 2017; Čehajić-Clancy & Bilewicz, 2020). One relevant question within prosocial moral exemplar interventions is, *which* documented stories of individual moral exemplars will have the most pronounced effect in a given situation (Čehajić-Clancy & Bilewicz, 2021). My research could provide cues when it is more efficient to pick *within-group* example such as – from a Palestinian perspective – Izzeldine Abueleish or *intergroup* examples such as 'Breaking the Silence' activists depending on the given escalation context.

8.3 Discussion

Intractable intergroup conflicts are entrenched with negative emotions, and for those struggling to cope with repression, these emotions at times result in the use of violence. To fully examine the complex contextual interactions between emotions and violence, in this dissertation, I have adopted an integrative, multi-method approach, examining the motivations that drive militant behavior of disadvantaged group members and introducing a new empirical conceptual framework for the role of emotions in context, particularly under different conflict escalation conditions.

As outlined in this chapter, together these findings have important implications, most notably on individual conflict transformation approaches. From a prescriptive perspective, I have suggested implications for conflict transformation on three different trajectories considering multitrack methods. These may mitigate the impact of destructive emotions and facilitate constructive conflict engagement on an individual microfactor level.

Theoretical and Applied Contributions

For social psychology, the research provides new insights between negative emotions and support for violent resistance *in context* going beyond static models regarding the function of emotions. Thus far, examining the relations between negative emotions and violence was done with little attention to context. The current work offers a glance at the broad theoretical and empirical potential that emerges when exploring intergroup emotions as context-dependent. Specifically, I show why emotions have differentiated effects in different settings, namely anger versus humiliation as well as individual- versus group emotions on violent action among the disadvantaged. As such, the work contributes to our understanding of how contexts shift the impact of emotions during conflict escalation and it provides conceptualizations on how to specify relevant context dimensions. Regarding conflict transformation, the research is laying a more refined basis for 'wise interventions' (Walton, 2014; Walton & Wilson, 2018) in intergroup conflict, connecting an *emotional perspective*

with *conflict analysis* and emotion regulation concepts (English et al., 2017; Gross, 2013; Halperin et al., 2011).

For political science, the present line of study enlarges traditional concepts of conflict analysis and reveals the rich basis of understanding emotions as a crucial individual perspective of conflict transformation. The work also underlines the general importance of microfactors, particularly emotions for political action. As mentioned in my initial considerations, Timur Kuran (1997) contended – "an uprising results from multitudes of individual choices to participate in a movement for [social] change, there is no actor called 'the crowd'" (Pearlman, 2018). Furthermore, social psychological concepts such as emotion regulation provide a rich possible basis for individual conflict transformation approaches. Finally, the research is further underlining the importance and concretely substantiating 'local shift' theories about adaptive situational 'conflict in context' (De Coning, 2018; Miall, 2004).

Limitations and Future Directions

Many specific limitations were already covered in the relevant empirical chapters. Despite promising developments over the recent years, for example regarding the importance of emotional constructs within political science (Hutchison & Bleiker, 2014), studying the role of emotions for conflict transformation is still in its initial stages. Further theoretical and applied work is needed to elaborate on key aspects. Overall, the present research demonstrated the nuanced contextual importance of emotions for violent reactions among low-power groups entrapped in conflict using multi-method field research. However, to establish strict causality, a more experimental approach is needed. Initial experimental approaches were conceptualized for the last field phase, but its implementation was cut short by the ongoing pandemic.

Multi-method approaches are gaining wide recognition in many important research fields and a combination of methods can provide substantial methodological advantages as well as a richer understanding of research problems (Guest & Fleming, 2014). Despite its successes in academic and

applied types of research, some theorists and empirical researchers remain apprehensive, considering this approach at times insufficiently rigorous (Bergman, 2011).

Although both of my translational implication 'reverse engineering' examples are in line with empirical research, they must be tested in further studies. Intractable conflict is after all a challenging context with substantial barriers against psychosocial change. My own initial efforts in this regard were cut short by research limitations imposed during the covid pandemic. Future studies should also examine microfactors beyond emotions linked to collective action as well as intergroup contact, for example, religiosity, education, or cognitive factors such as injustice appraisals. Some of these factors I will be examining in my postdoctoral research project, analysing Track Two mediation workshops from an emotions and cognitions process perspective. Concretely, I will be studying how specific emotions including the interplay between individual- versus group emotions together with cognitive factors impact negotiation outcomes. This opens intriguing further avenues of research, for example, can someone hold seemingly contradicting emotions such as individual empathy at the same time with group hate?

8.4 Final Conclusions

The current research suggests that without exploring the link between context and emotions further, the reactions tendencies of the disadvantaged will remain unclear and continue to take their political or even violent toll. Findings can help conflict scholars and transformation practitioners by highlighting the nuanced function of emotions in the promotion of social change, transforming intergroup conflict settings while reducing the activation of destructive and violent action.

Summarizing his examination of the legendary 'Mann Gulch Fire' that killed fourteen 'smokejumpers' in Western Montana, author and scholar Norman McLean comes to the following conclusion: *"I would no longer be nervous if asked the first and last question of life, 'how did it happen'? This is a catastrophe that we hope will not end where it began, it might go on and become a story – but we do have to know where to look for its missing parts. [...] It would be the start to a story if this catastrophe… could return to itself with explanations of its own mysteries and with the grief left behind, not removed, because grief has its own place at or near the end of things, but altered somewhat by the addition of something like wonder, for example, because now we can say that the fire whirl which destroyed was caused by three winds on a river. [...] What we would be talking about would start to change from catastrophe without a story to what could be called the story of a tragedy, but tragedy would be only a part of it, as it is of life."* (Maclean, 2017).

Something similar can hopefully be said of my efforts to understand crucial emotional microfactors of the catastrophe entailed in the protracted intergroup conflict in the Middle East and beyond. I sincerely hope that the insights from my research about how '*three winds on a river*' can cause a destructive firestorm, will help guide the efforts of those who strive to transform intractable conflict and establish sustainable peace in places where it is genuinely needed.

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