

What We Want Is What We Get: Group-Based Emotional Preferences and Conflict Resolution

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Imagine yourself facing someone who might attack your group—if you could control your emotions, how would you want to feel toward that person? We argue that the goals people have for their group dictate how they want to feel on behalf of their group. We further propose that these group-based emotional preferences, in turn, influence how people actually feel as group members and how they react to political events. We conducted 9 studies to test our proposed model. In a pilot study, we showed that political ideology is related to how people want to feel toward outgroup members, even when controlling for how they want to feel in general, or how they actually feel toward outgroup members. In Studies A1–A3, we demonstrated that group-based emotional preferences are linked to emotional experience and that both mediate links between political ideology and political reactions. In Study A4, we showed that political ideology influences emotional preferences, emotional experiences and political reactions. Next, in Studies B1–B4, we demonstrated that changing group-based emotional preferences can shape group-based emotional experiences and consequently influence political reactions. By suggesting that group-based emotions are motivated, our findings point to new directions for advancing conflict resolution.

Keywords: emotion regulation, group-based emotion, intergroup conflict, motivation

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On June 30, 2014, the bodies of three Israeli teenagers who were murdered by Hamas militants on their way home from school were found in a pit in the Palestinian territories. The Israeli public and its leaders were enraged. The Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, promised to take revenge. Eight days later, Israel launched Operation Protective Edge against the Hamas-controlled Palestinian Gaza Strip. Fifty days of fighting resulted in more than 2,000 dead Palestinians, among them about 500 children, and more

than 70 dead Israelis. As this example conveys, group-based emotions can carry profound implications for societies in intergroup conflict. They do so, in part, by shaping how people see the world, what they want to achieve, and how they respond to conflict-related events. Understanding the factors that shape group-based emotions, therefore, is of crucial importance.

Although group-based emotional experiences are often spontaneous reactions to group-related events, they can be influenced by regulatory processes (e.g., [Goldenberg, Halperin, van Zomeren, & Gross, 2015](#); [Halperin, Porat, Tamir, & Gross, 2013](#)). In this investigation, we argue that group-based emotional experiences may depend on preceding group-based emotional preferences. We propose that people want to experience emotions that are consistent with their group-based goals and ideologies. We further propose that these emotional preferences shape subsequent group-based emotional experiences and, as a consequence, can influence political reactions to conflict-related events. By pointing to a novel factor that shapes emotional and political reactions in intergroup conflicts, our model carries implications for understanding emotional and social processes that might ultimately promote conflict resolution.

Group-Based Emotions

Group-based emotions are felt by individuals as a result of their membership in or identification with a certain group ([Mackie, Devos,](#)

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& Smith, 2000; Smith, 1993; Smith & Mackie, 2008). In the context of violent conflicts, group-based emotions are associated with political support for war or for peace (e.g., Cohen-Chen, Halperin, Crisp, & Gross, 2014; Halperin et al., 2013). Group-based emotions can contribute to the escalation of conflicts. For example, Americans who felt angrier following the 9/11 attacks were more supportive of an American military attack in Iraq and Afghanistan (Cheung-Blunden & Blunden, 2008; Lerner, Gonzalez, Small, & Fischhoff, 2003; Skitka, Bauman, Aramovich, & Morgan, 2006).

Group-based emotions can also contribute to the resolution of conflicts. For example, studies conducted in the postconflict settings of Northern Ireland (Moeschberger, Dixon, Niens, & Cairns, 2005; Tam et al., 2008) and Bosnia (Cehajic, Brown, & Castano, 2008) found that empathy was positively associated with the willingness to forgive the opponents. Similarly, studies conducted in Israel found that Jewish Israelis who felt more hope showed greater willingness to compromise in negotiations with Palestinians (Cohen-Chen et al., 2014).

Recent studies have suggested that regulating group-based emotions can change political judgments and behaviors. For example, Halperin and colleagues (2013) found that Israeli participants who decreased their levels of anger were more supportive of conciliatory policies and less supportive of aggressive policies toward the Palestinians. This suggests that understanding what shapes group-based emotional experiences might lead to the development of psychological interventions that decrease negative group-based emotional experiences, and promote conflict resolution.

Group-Based Emotional Preferences

Emotional preferences refer to what people want to feel (e.g., Mauss & Tamir, 2014; Tamir, 2009). According to an instrumental approach to emotion regulation, people are motivated to experience emotional states for various reasons, including hedonic (e.g., to feel good) or instrumental ones (e.g., to perform well; for a recent review, see Tamir, 2015). For instance, consistent with the idea that anger can promote successful confrontation (e.g., Frijda, 1986; Parrott, 2001), when their goal was to fight, people wanted to experience more anger (e.g., Tamir, Mitchell, & Gross, 2008).

People engage in emotion regulation to achieve a desired emotional state. Therefore, emotional preferences set the direction in which people regulate their emotions (e.g., Tamir, Bigman, Rhodes, Salerno, & Schreier, 2015). By setting the direction of emotion regulation, emotional preferences can shape subsequent emotional experiences and behavior. For instance, people who were motivated to experience anger were more likely to select activities that induced anger, and experienced more intense anger after engaging in these activities (e.g., Tamir & Ford, 2012; Tamir et al., 2015). More intense anger, in turn, led to anger-consistent behavior. People who wanted to feel more anger ultimately felt angrier and became more aggressive (e.g., Tamir et al., 2008) and less prosocial (e.g., Tamir et al., 2015).

To date, research on emotional preferences focused on the motivation to experience certain emotions (e.g., the extent to which people want to feel angry, happy, or afraid; Tamir et al., 2008; Tamir & Ford, 2009). People prefer emotions that can help them achieve their goals (see Tamir, 2015). Emotional preferences, in turn, shape subsequent emotional experiences, and these effects

cannot be explained by how people already feel or by the goals they pursue.

In this investigation, we propose that people also cultivate emotional preferences as group members. Group-based emotional preferences refer to the motivation to experience certain emotions as members of a group. For instance, as members of their group, people may be motivated to feel calm, empathetic, or angry toward an outgroup member. These preferences (e.g., the motivation to experience anger toward an outgroup member) differ from preferences for general emotions (e.g., the motivation to feel angry, in general), and their operation is unique to the group context.

We propose that group-based emotional preferences depend on group-based goals. People should be motivated to experience group-based emotions that might help them achieve their group-based goals. For example, the more people want their group to be in a position of power over an outgroup, the more motivated they would be to feel angry toward members of that outgroup. To the extent that the group-based goal is stable, group-based emotional preferences are likely to be stable as well. To the extent that the group-based goal shifts as a function of context, group-based emotional preferences are likely to shift as well. Given that emotional preferences direct emotion regulation, we propose that group-based emotional preferences shape subsequent group-based emotions. Furthermore, we expect that such effects could not be attributed to preexisting group-based emotions (i.e., inertia) or to direct effects of group-based goals.

Group-Based Emotional Preferences and Political Ideology

Political ideology refers to “an interrelated set of attitudes and values about the proper goals of society and how they should be achieved” (Tedin, 1987, p. 65). Political ideology involves motivational components that help explain why people do what they do in the group context (Jost, 2006). Therefore, especially in the context of long term intergroup conflict, political ideology reflects central group goals. To the extent that people are motivated to experience emotions that are consistent with their group-based goals, what people want to feel in the political context should depend on their political ideology.

Political ideology has often been classified into two contrasting poles—right-wing and left-wing ideology. This formulation contains two interrelated aspects: advocating versus resisting social change and rejecting versus accepting inequality (Jost, 2006; Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003). Whereas right-wing ideology is associated with resistance to change and the acceptance of inequality, left-wing ideology is associated with advocating change and the rejection of inequality (Jost, Federico, & Napier, 2009). According to the Moral Foundations Theory (Graham, Haidt, & Nosek, 2009; Haidt & Graham, 2007; Haidt & Joseph, 2004), rightists and leftists also differ with respect to the moral values they endorse. While leftists pertain to fairness and care, rightists pertain to loyalty, authority, and purity.

Research on right-wing ideology suggests that people who adhere to such worldviews are more likely to see the world as a dangerous place (Altemeyer, 1998; Duckitt, 2001), hold more prejudicial attitudes toward outgroups (Altemeyer, 1988, 1998; Cunningham, Nezlek, & Banaji, 2004; Duckitt, 2001; Sidanius, Pratto, & Bobo, 1996), and prefer relations with outgroups that are

hierarchical (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, & Malle, 1994). On the other end of the spectrum, people who adhere to left-wing ideology oppose hierarchy (Pratto et al., 1994), and favor social practices aimed at achieving social and economic equality (Evans, Heath, & Lalljee, 1996; Feldman, 1988; Glaser, 2005; Graetz & Shapiro, 2005; Jacoby, 1991). Furthermore, they are less likely to hold prejudicial attitudes toward minority groups (Jost, 2006).

Rightists seek to preserve the power of the ingroup over the outgroup. Therefore, we expected them to be more motivated to experience emotions that maximize power inequality and less motivated to experience emotions that minimize it. When certain social groups dominate other groups, anger can preserve status quo and power asymmetry (e.g., Frijda, 1986; Roseman, 2001; Scherer, 1999), and therefore, we hypothesized that rightists may be more motivated than leftists to experience anger toward outgroup members, especially during conflict, to the extent that they want to dominate them. In contrast, because empathy facilitates helping and compromising with others (Batson, 1991, 2011), we expected rightists to be less motivated than leftists to experience empathy toward outgroup members, to the extent that they want to compromise with them. Importantly, we do not suggest that group-based emotional preferences are a function of political ideology per se (e.g., leftists may not always want to feel empathy toward others). Instead, we propose that group-based emotional preferences are a function of the desired relationship between the ingroup and a particular target outgroup in a given context (e.g., leftists may want to feel empathy toward members of a group with whom they want their group to compromise).

In this investigation, therefore, we propose that group-based goals, as reflected by political ideology, give rise to group-based emotional preferences. These preferences can independently shape subsequent group-based emotional experiences, and these experiences, in turn, can influence how people think and behave in the intergroup context. Figure 1 presents our proposed model.

Previous studies have already demonstrated that people's political ideology is associated with their emotional experiences (Halperin, 2011; Kahn, Liberman, Halperin, & Ross, 2014; Pliskin, Bar-Tal, Sheppes, & Halperin, 2014). Our proposed model points to one potential mechanism at play, suggesting that rightists and leftists differ in the emotions they want to experience toward members of the outgroup. These group-based emotional preferences are a function of goals rather than reactions to political emotion-inducing events, but can determine how people react to such events when they occur. Indeed, once group-based emotional preferences are established, their impact on subsequent emotional experiences and political reactions should be independent of po-

litical ideology. In this respect, group-based emotional preferences may be an important and largely unexplored factor that shapes group-based emotions.

If changing group-based emotional preferences can change group-based emotional experiences, they may ultimately influence political reactions as well. Negative group-based emotions can have negative implications for conflict resolution. According to our proposed model, therefore, decreasing preferences for negative group-based emotions could decrease negative group-based emotional experiences, which in turn, could potentially promote less aggressive and more conciliatory political reactions.

An Overview of the Current Investigation

The current investigation had two complementary goals. First, we sought to test the validity of our proposed theoretical model. Second, we sought to test whether the model might point to a new direction in conflict resolution. To do so, we first conducted a pilot study to distinguish between general emotional preferences, group-based sentiments, and group-based emotional preferences, and test their associations with political ideology. In the first part of the investigation (i.e., Studies A1–A4), we assessed group-based emotional preferences, their links to political ideology, and their unique contribution to emotional and political reactions over time. In Studies A1–A3, we measured political ideology, group-based emotional preferences, group-based emotional experiences, and reactions to real political events, both inside and outside the laboratory. In Study A4, we tested whether political ideology influences group-based emotional preferences by priming political ideology and demonstrating its downstream effects on group-based emotional preferences, emotional experiences and political reactions. In the second part of the investigation (i.e., Studies B1–B4), we tested whether changing group-based emotional preferences could alter subsequent group-based emotional experiences and change political reactions, in a manner that could ultimately contribute to conflict resolution.

We tested our hypotheses in the context of a real intergroup conflict—namely, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As an intractable conflict (Bar-Tal, 1998, 2007), the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been enduring and violent, implicating the injury and death of soldiers and civilians. In intractable conflicts, people often have strong and rigid political ideologies (Bar-Tal, 2000, 2007, 2013). As such, we expected political ideology to be related to group-based emotional preferences in that context. However, we expected emotional preferences in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to prospectively predict group-based emotional experiences and po-

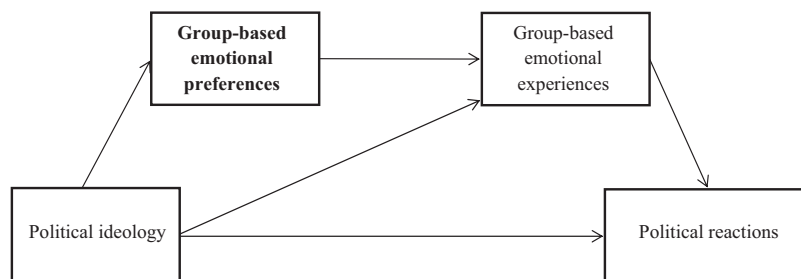


Figure 1. A model of the antecedents and consequences of group-based emotional preferences.

litical reactions, above and beyond the impact of political ideology. Although emotional experiences and political reactions in the context of violent conflicts are typically intense and very difficult to change, we hoped that by manipulating group-based emotional preferences, we may be able to temporarily change how people feel and how they react, independent of their political ideology.

Pilot Study

The goal of the pilot study was to provide preliminary support for our conceptualization of group-based emotional preferences as a unique construct that is independent of general emotional preferences and group-based sentiments. General emotional preferences refer to the emotions people generally want to experience in their daily lives, whereas group-based sentiments reflect the extent to which people generally experience certain emotions toward an outgroup, unrelated to specific events or actions of that group (for a detailed discussion, see: Halperin & Gross, 2011). Therefore, we examined links between group-based emotional preferences, general emotional preferences, group-based sentiments, and political ideology. We assessed these key constructs in a large representative sample, in separate sessions.

We expected leftists to have lower preferences for group-based anger and stronger preferences for group-based empathy, compared with rightists. We did not expect to find differences in preferences for general anger and empathy, as a function of political ideology. If preferences for general emotions are associated with political ideology, we expected links between group-based emotional preferences and political ideology to persist when controlling for preferences for general emotions. Finally, although we expected group-based emotional preferences and group-based sentiments to be positively associated, we expected the associations between group-based emotional preferences and political ideology to persist, even when controlling for group-based sentiments.

Method

Participants. We recruited 984 Jewish Israelis ($M_{\text{age}} = 38.72$ years, $SD = 12.28$, 477 females) via a survey company (Midgam) to participate in an online study in exchange for monetary compensation. In terms of political ideology, 51.3% were rightists (i.e., self-defined as extreme right, right, or moderate right), 29.9% were centrists (i.e., self-defined as center), and 18.8% were leftists (i.e., self-defined as extreme left, left, or moderate left).¹

Procedure. The same participants were contacted (via e-mail) at two different time-points. In the first assessment, participants indicated their political ideology, rated preferences for general anger and empathy, and provided sociodemographic information. In the second assessment, participants rated their preferences for group-based anger and empathy and their group-based sentiments of anger and empathy.²

Measures.

Political ideology. Participants indicated their political ideology by placing themselves on a 1 (*extreme right*) to 7 (*extreme left*) nominal scale.

General emotional preferences. Participants rated the extent (1 = *not at all*; 6 = *to a large extent*) to which they generally wanted to experience anger and empathy in their daily life.

Group-based emotional preferences. Participants rated the extent (1 = *not at all*; 6 = *to a large extent*) to which they wanted to experience anger and empathy toward Palestinians.

Group-based sentiments. Participants rated the extent (1 = *not at all*; 6 = *to a large extent*) to which they generally felt anger and empathy toward Palestinians, unrelated to specific events or actions.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 presents the simple correlations between our key constructs. As predicted, political ideology was significantly related to preferences for group-based anger, such that more leftist participants wanted to experience less anger toward Palestinians. Political ideology was also significantly related to group-based anger sentiments, but was not significantly related to preferences for general anger. Importantly, the associations between political ideology and preferences for group-based anger persisted when controlling for preferences for general anger and group-based anger sentiments ($\beta = -.20, p > .001$). Similarly, political ideology was significantly related to preferences for group-based empathy, such that more leftist participants wanted to experience more empathy toward Palestinians. Political ideology was also significantly related to preferences for general empathy and to group-based empathy sentiments. However, as expected, the association between political ideology and preferences for group-based empathy remained significant when controlling for preferences for general empathy and for group-based empathy sentiments ($\beta = .19, p > .001$), whereas the association between political ideology and preferences for general empathy was no longer significant when controlling for preferences for group-based empathy ($\beta = .05, p = .12$). None of the associations between political ideology and emotional preferences were moderated by age or gender. These findings demonstrate that group-based emotional preferences are linked in theoretically consistent ways to political ideology. These findings also show that group-based emotional preferences are not merely an extension of general emotional preferences, nor a reflection of existing group-based sentiments.

Studies A1–A4

In Studies A1–A4 we wanted to test whether political ideology is related to group-based emotional preferences, and whether these preferences are associated with subsequent emotional and political reactions to conflict-related events, independently of ideology. We predicted that compared to rightists, leftists would have lower preferences for anger (Studies A1–A4) and higher preferences for empathy (Study A1) toward members of the outgroup. These preferences, in turn, should be associated with the subsequent experiences of these emotions and with political reactions. To this end, in Studies A1–A3 we examined the associations between political ideology, group-based emotional preferences, group-based emotional experiences, and political reactions. We tested whether group-based emotional preferences and group-based emo-

¹ We followed this categorization across all the studies reported in this investigation.

² Data were collected as part of a larger study that included additional measures.

Table 1

Simple Correlations Between Preferences for Group-Based Anger and Empathy, Preferences for General Anger and Empathy, Group-Based Anger and Empathy Sentiments, and Political Ideology (1 = Extreme Right; 7 = Extreme Left) (Pilot Study)

Preference	Mean (SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Political ideology	3.45 (1.24)						
2. Preferences for group-based anger	3.16 (2.11)	-.28*					
3. Preferences for general anger	1.79 (1.15)	.02	.11*				
4. Group-based anger sentiments	4.63 (1.85)	-.34*	.33*	.02			
5. Preferences for group-based empathy	3.56 (1.99)	.46*	-.41*	-.04	-.26*		
6. Preferences for general empathy	5.40 (1.56)	.14*	-.02	-.08*	-.03	.21*	
7. Group-based empathy sentiments	3.08 (1.70)	.47*	-.29*	-.00	-.30*	.65*	.18*

* $p < .05$.

tional experiences mediate the associations between political ideology and political reactions. We examined these associations with respect to different types of conflict-related events (Studies A1 and A3), inside (Studies A1 and A2) and outside (Study A3) the laboratory, using self-report (Studies A1–A3) and a behavioral index (Study A2) of group-based emotional preferences.

We also wanted to test whether political ideology causally influences group-based emotional preferences and by that emotional experiences and political reactions. To this end, in Study A4 we primed political ideology to test whether it has a causal effect on group-based emotional preferences and, consequently, on subsequent emotional experiences and political reactions.

Study A1

In Study A1, we examined participants' reactions to two different political scenarios that were carefully created (and pilot tested) to induce either anger or empathy. We expected leftists to have lower preferences for anger and stronger preferences for empathy in response to both events, compared to rightists. To demonstrate the independent effect of group-based emotional preferences on emotional experiences, we added as simultaneous predictors political ideology and general attitudes toward anger and empathy. We expected emotional preferences to lead to congruent emotional experiences regardless of the nature of the emotion-eliciting event. Thus, people who want to feel angrier than others should respond with more intense anger to an event, whether it is anger- or empathy-inducing. We further expected group-based emotional preferences to mediate associations between political ideology and emotional reactions to political events.

Method

Participants. We recruited 212 Jewish Israelis ($M_{\text{age}} = 41.19$ years, $SD = 12.97$, 96 females, 13 did not report their gender) to participate in an online study. Half were recruited using an online survey platform that offers monetary compensation (Midgam), and the rest were recruited using snowball techniques in return for the chance to win coupons in a raffle.³ In terms of political ideology, 56.5% were rightists, 20.8% centrists, and 15% leftists (7.5% of the sample did not report their political affiliation).

Procedure. Participants were told the survey examined emotions and attitudes related to social and political issues. They reported their general attitudes toward anger and empathy and then

rated their emotional preferences for anger and empathy in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Participants were then presented with two bogus scenarios, designed to induce either anger or empathy toward Palestinians. The anger-inducing scenario featured a warning against the rise of Palestinian illegal incursions to lands owned by Jews in the city of Jerusalem. Given that anger is typically experienced in response to an unjust behavior of others and when people feel they are in control (Averill, 1982; Mackie et al., 2000), the report described an unjust behavior of Palestinians, and implied the ability of Israelis to stop this phenomenon. The empathy-inducing scenario featured a Palestinian child living in Israel who suffers from cerebral palsy and is expelled to the Gaza Strip by the Israeli authorities. Given that empathy is typically experienced when an individual perceives and shares the distress of another person (Preston & de Waal, 2002), the report emphasized the child's suffering and that her life in Gaza would be in danger as she would not have access to proper treatment.⁴ The two scenarios were similar in length, and presented to participants one at a time, as brief news reports. The order of presentation was counterbalanced across participants. After reading each scenario participants responded to two reading comprehension questions to ensure they read and understood the text. Then they rated their emotional reactions, and provided sociodemographic information, including political ideology. Finally, they were debriefed and thanked for their participation.

Measures.

General attitudes toward emotions. To assess attitudes toward anger and empathy we used the semantic differential scales developed by Netzer and colleagues (Markovitch, Netzer, & Tamir, in press; Netzer, Kim, & Tamir, 2015). Participants evaluated each emotion on five semantic differential scales that ranged from bad to good, harmful to useful, foolish to wise, worthless to valuable, and unnecessary to necessary, where "1" was the nega-

³ Post hoc analyses found no differences in the dependent variables (i.e., anger and empathy experience toward the Palestinians) as a function of recruitment technique, and so we collapsed across these samples in all the analyses.

⁴ A pilot study ($N = 34$) confirmed that participants felt more anger ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 1.28$) than empathy ($M = 2.76$, $SD = 1.25$) when reading the anger-inducing scenario, $t(33) = 2.07$, $p < .05$, Cohen's $d = .58$, and more empathy ($M = 3.88$, $SD = 1.17$) than anger ($M = 1.65$, $SD = .77$) when reading the empathy-inducing scenario $t(33) = -9.02$, $p < .01$, Cohen's $d = 2.25$.

tive anchor and “7” the positive anchor (α 's = .65 and .93 for anger and empathy, respectively).

Group-based emotional preferences. Participants rated the extent (1 = not at all; 6 = to a large extent) to which they wanted to experience anger or empathy when (a) generally thinking about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and (b) thinking about the ongoing negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians; r s = .73 and .64 for anger and empathy, respectively.

Group-based emotional experiences. Participants rated the extent to which they currently felt *anger* and *empathy* toward Palestinians (1 = not at all; 6 = to a large extent).

Political ideology. Participants indicated their political ideology by placing themselves on a 1 (*extreme right*) to 7 (*extreme left*) scale.

Results and Discussion

Are group-based emotional preferences linked to political ideology and group-based emotional experiences? Table 2 presents means, standard deviations (SDs) and simple correlations between our key variables. Whereas 47% of participants did not want to experience any anger toward Palestinians (i.e., rating 2 and below), more than 40% of participants did not want to experience any empathy toward Palestinians. Preferences for anger did not differ significantly from preferences for empathy, $t(208) = -1.17$, $p = .24$, Cohen's $d = -.13$, and the two were not significantly related, $r = -.05$, $p = .39$.

As predicted, preferences for group-based anger and empathy were related to political ideology. Compared with rightists, leftists showed weaker preferences for anger and stronger preferences for empathy. Also as predicted, preferences for group-based anger were associated with group-based anger experience following both scenarios, but not with group-based empathy experience. Preferences for group-based empathy were associated with group-based empathy experience following both scenarios, and negatively associated with group-based anger experience in response to the empathy-inducing scenario.

Next, we ran a repeated-measures ANOVA, with group-based emotional experiences as the predicted variables. In this analysis, Emotion (anger and empathy) and Scenario (anger- or empathy-inducing) were entered as within-subject factors, and preferences for group-based anger and empathy as well as political ideology were entered as covariates. We found a main effect for emotion, $F(1, 191) = 21.67$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .10$, such that on average participants experienced more anger ($M = 3.33$, $SE = .07$) than empathy ($M = 2.49$, $SE = .06$) in response to both scenarios. We also found a significant scenario \times emotion interaction, $F(1, 191) = 16.06$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .07$, such that the anger scenario induced more anger ($M = 4.35$, $SD = 1.47$) than empathy ($M = 1.76$, $SD = 1.02$), whereas the empathy scenario induced more empathy ($M = 3.22$, $SD = 1.44$) than anger ($M = 2.31$, $SD = 1.47$). This indicates that each scenario was successful at inducing the target emotion.

As predicted, we found an Anger Preference \times Emotion interaction, $F(1, 191) = 18.93$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .09$. As shown in Figure 2 (top panel), participants who wanted to feel less angry experienced less anger in response to both scenarios, but did not differ in experienced empathy. Similarly, we found a significant Empathy Preference \times Emotion interaction, $F(1, 191) = 15.24$, $p < .001$,

$\eta^2 = .07$. As shown in Figure 2 (bottom panel), participants who wanted to feel less empathy experienced less empathy in response to both scenarios. They also reported experiencing less intense anger in response to the empathy-inducing, but not the anger-inducing, scenario. These associations persisted when we controlled for general attitudes toward emotions, indicating that these attitudes cannot account for the associations between emotional preferences and emotional experiences.⁵

Did group-based emotional preferences mediate the link between political ideology and group-based emotional experiences? To test whether preferences for group-based anger mediated the associations between political ideology and the experience of group-based anger, we employed Baron and Kenny's (1986) regression procedure. As shown in Figure 3, we found evidence for mediation, which was confirmed when using the procedure of Hayes (2013) PROCESS bootstrapping command (Model 4: 5,000 iterations). The total effect of political ideology on the experience of group-based anger (anger scenario: $b = -.22$, $SE = .08$, $t = -2.64$, $p < .01$; 95% CI[-.38, -.05]; empathy scenario: $b = -.31$, $SE = .08$, $t = -3.81$, $p < .001$; 95% CI[-.48, -.15]) was reduced when preferences for group-based anger were included in the model (anger scenario: $b = -.16$, $SE = .08$, $t = -1.98$, $p < .05$; 95% CI[-.31, -.001]; empathy scenario: $b = -.25$, $SE = .07$, $t = -3.26$, $p < .01$; 95% CI[-.41, -.10]). The indirect effect was statistically different from zero (anger scenario: $b = -.06$, $SE = .03$; 95% CI[-.13, -.01]; empathy scenario: $b = -.05$, $SE = .03$; 95% CI[-.14, -.005]). Leftists wanted to feel less anger toward Palestinians, compared to rightists, and these group-based preferences were associated with less intense experience of group-based anger in response to both anger- and empathy-inducing scenarios.

We repeated these procedures to test whether preferences for group-based empathy mediated the associations between political ideology and the experience of group-based empathy. As expected and shown in Figure 4, we found evidence for mediation. The total effect of political ideology on the experience of group-based empathy (anger scenario: $b = .14$, $SE = .05$, $t = 2.59$, $p < .05$; 95% CI[.03, .26]; empathy scenario: $b = .39$, $SE = .08$, $t = 4.87$, $p < .001$; 95% CI[.23, .54]) was reduced when preferences for group-based empathy were included in the model (anger scenario: $b = .08$, $SE = .06$, $t = 1.43$, $p = .15$; 95% CI[-.03, .21]; empathy scenario: $b = .23$, $SE = .08$, $t = 2.77$, $p < .01$; 95% CI[.06, .40]). The indirect effect was statistically different from zero (anger scenario: $b = .06$, $SE = .02$; 95% CI[.01, .12]; empathy scenario: $b = .15$, $SE = .04$; 95% CI[.07, .26]). Leftists wanted to feel more empathy toward Palestinians, compared with rightists, and these group-based preferences were associated with more intense experience of group-based empathy in response to both anger- and empathy-inducing scenarios.

Consistent with our proposed model, group-based emotional preferences mediated the associations between political ideology and group-based emotional experiences. Compared with rightists, leftists wanted to experience less anger and more empathy toward Palestinians. These group-based preferences, in turn, mediated the associations between political ideology and group-based anger and empathy experiences, respectively, after exposure to relevant political scenar-

⁵ We obtained similar results when conducting this analysis separately for each emotion.

Table 2

Simple Correlations Between Preferences for Group-Based Anger and Empathy, Political Ideology (1 = Extreme Right; 7 = Extreme Left), Experience of Group-Based Anger and Empathy, and General Attitudes Toward Anger and Empathy (Study A1)

Preference	Mean (SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Preferences for group-based anger	2.52 (1.29)								
2. Preferences for group-based empathy	2.69 (1.32)	-.05							
3. Political ideology	3.23 (1.25)	-.16*	.39*						
4. Experience of group-based anger after anger scenario	4.32 (1.50)	.34*	-.06	-.18*					
5. Experience of group-based empathy after anger scenario	1.77 (1.02)	.10	.24*	.18*	-.08				
6. Experience of group-based anger after empathy scenario	2.29 (1.46)	.38*	-.21*	-.26*	.40*	.02			
7. Experience of group-based empathy after empathy scenario	3.21 (1.46)	-.10	.41*	.33*	.01	.35*	-.23*		
8. General attitudes towards anger	3.44 (1.13)	.05	-.14*	-.21*	.01	.10	.04	-.06	
9. General attitudes towards empathy	5.65 (1.14)	-.15*	.10	.01	.11	-.00	-.08	.11	.00

* $p < .05$.

ios. Given the detrimental effects of anger in intergroup conflicts (e.g., Cheung-Blunden & Blunden, 2008; Halperin et al., 2013; Mackie et al., 2000), we focused primarily on anger in subsequent studies. We were further able to show that group-based emotional preferences are not merely a side effect of political ideology or a reflection of general attitudes toward emotions.

Study A2

Study A2 was designed to replicate and extend Study A1 in several important ways. First, to establish the validity of our measures, in Study A2 we assessed preferences for anger using both a self-report and a behavioral index. Emotional preferences can be assessed by self-reports or inferred indirectly from behavior. People who want to experience a specific emotion are likely to select activities that induce that emotion, and so the selection of emotion-inducing activities often serves as an indirect index of emotional preferences (e.g., Erber, Wegner, & Theriault, 1996; Tamir et al., 2008, 2012, 2015; Wood, Heimpel, Manwell, & Whittington, 2009). Research has demonstrated the convergent validity of self-report and such behavioral indices of emotional preferences (e.g., Tamir, Ford, & Gilliam, 2013). Therefore, in Study A2, as a behavioral index of emotional preferences, participants selected nonpolitical emotion-inducing activities to engage in before reading a political scenario.

Second, in Study A2, we tested whether group-based emotional preferences are related to group-based emotional experiences, and consequently, to political reactions as well. To this end, in Study A2 participants responded to the possibility to renew peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. They first indicated their preference to experience anger toward Palestinians. Then they were asked to read a proposal to renew negotiations and rate their emotional reactions and the extent to which they support accepting the proposal. Finally, to establish emotion specificity, we assessed preferences for group-based anger, fear, and neutral feelings.

Method

Participants. Participants were 114 undergraduate students ($M_{\text{age}} = 25.58$ years, $SD = 3.16$, 61 females) who participated in return for a chance to win coupons in a raffle. In terms of political ideology, 48.2% were rightists, 18.4% were centrists, and 31.6%

were leftists (1.8% of the sample did not report their political affiliation).

Procedure. Participants were told the survey examined emotions and attitudes relating to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and that they would be asked to read and respond to a proposal of the Palestinian President, Abu Mazen, for the renewal of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. Then they read that recent studies suggest that it may be useful to focus on unrelated topics before making important decisions. Therefore, they would be able to read a newspaper article of their choosing that is unrelated to the conflict, before reading the proposal. Participants rated the extent to which they wanted to read each of a series of newspaper articles, and then reported on their group-based emotional preferences. At this point, participants read a bogus proposal from the Palestinian Authority for the renewal of the peace negotiations. The proposal offered ostensibly reasonable conditions for a return to negotiations, where both the Palestinians and Israelis would be making compromises. After reading the proposal, participants rated their group-based emotional experiences, and indicated their support for accepting the proposal and renewing peace negotiations with the Palestinians.

Measures.

Political ideology. Same as in Study A1.

Self-reports of group-based emotional preferences. Participants rated the extent to which they wanted to experience *anger* and *fear* when reading the Palestinian proposal (1 = *not at all*; 6 = *to a large extent*).

Behavioral indices of group-based emotional preferences. Participants read six bogus newspaper headlines, describing events unrelated to the political conflict, and rated the extent to which they wanted to read the respective article before reading the Palestinian proposal (1 = *not interested in reading*; 6 = *very much interested in reading*). Two headlines described content that is likely to be anger-inducing (e.g., "A resident of Israel charged with murder of four family members was released on parole after serving only one year in prison"), two headlines described content that is likely to be fear-inducing (e.g., "A new study predicts that more than 75% of Israelis over the age of 25 will have cancer by 2045"), and two headlines described neutral content (e.g., "An ancient tool that may shed light on the lives of prehistoric humans was discovered"). We averaged across ratings of headlines that targeted the same

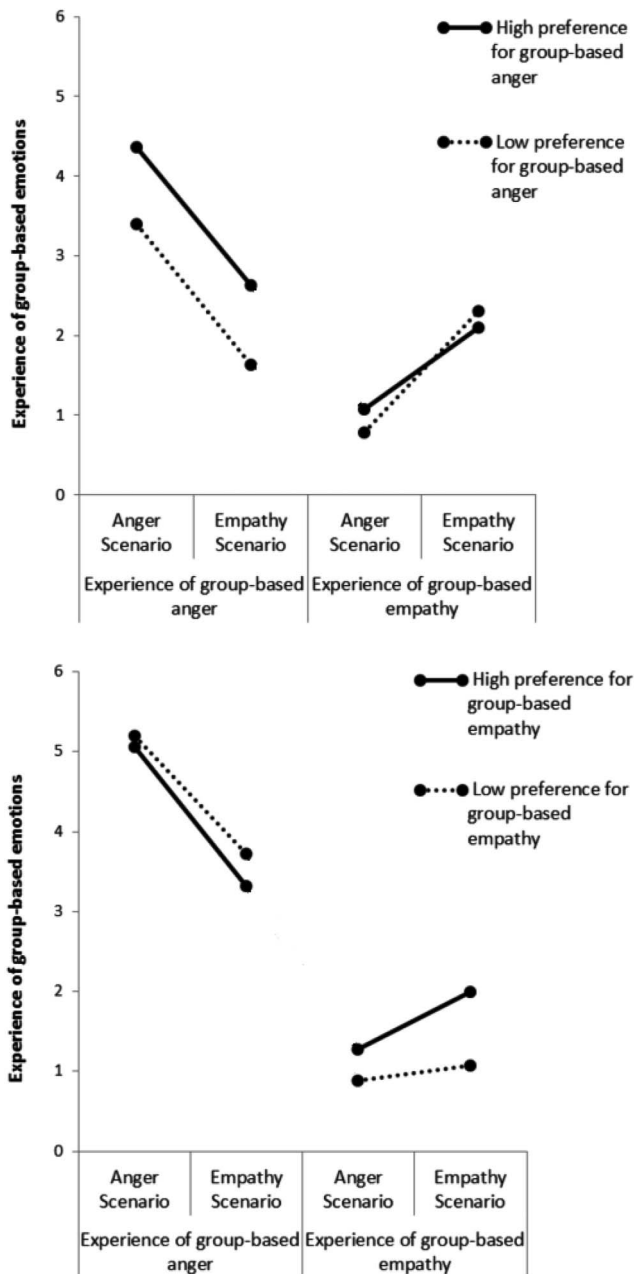


Figure 2. Experiences of group-based anger and empathy following anger- and empathy-inducing scenarios, as a function of preferences for group-based anger (top panel) and empathy (bottom panel; ± 1 SD from the mean; Study A1).

emotion, to create behavioral indices of preferences for group-based anger, fear, and neutral feelings ($r_s = .51, .62$, and $.42$ for anger, fear and neutral respectively).^{6,7}

Group-based anger experiences. Participants rated the extent to which they felt *anger, hostility and rage* toward the Palestinian citizens of Israel (1 = *not at all*; 6 = *to a large extent*; $\alpha = .86$).

Political reactions. Participants rated four items assessing their support of the Palestinian proposal (1 = *not at all*; 6 = *to a large extent*). Sample items include: "If this proposal was put to a

referendum, would you support it?" and "Should the Israeli government accept this proposal?" ($\alpha = .94$).

Results and Discussion

As expected, self-reported and behavioral indices of preferences for group-based anger were positively correlated with each other, $r = .27, p < .01$, and both were negatively associated with political ideology (self-report: $r = -.51, p < .001$; behavioral index: $r = -.19, p < .05$). We also found that both indices positively correlated with the experience of group-based anger (self-report: $r = .51, p < .001$; behavioral index: $r = .31, p < .01$) and with political reactions (self-report: $r = -.44, p < .001$; behavioral index: $r = -.18, p < .05$). Compared to rightists, leftists wanted to read anger-inducing articles less, and reported they wanted to feel less angry before reading the Palestinian proposal to renew negotiations. Political ideology was also significantly correlated with the experience of group-based anger, $r = -.41, p < .001$ and political reactions, $r = .63, p < .001$.

Political ideology, group-based emotional preferences, and subsequent group-based anger experience. To test whether self-reported preferences for group-based anger (but not fear) were related to the experience of group-based anger, even when political ideology was included as a predictor, we entered mean-centered self-reported preferences for group-based anger and fear and political ideology as predictors of the experience of group-based anger, in a simple regression analysis. As expected, stronger preferences for group-based anger ($\beta = .44, p < .001$), but not fear ($\beta = -.07, p = .47$), were associated with more intense experience of group-based anger, and left-wing political ideology ($\beta = -.19, p < .05$) was associated with less intense experience of group-based anger.

These findings were replicated when using mean-centered behavioral indices of preferences for group-based anger, fear, and a neutral state, and political ideology, as predictors of group-based anger experience. Stronger preferences for group-based anger ($\beta = .25, p < .05$), but not fear ($\beta = .06, p = .55$), or a neutral state ($\beta = -.15, p = .08$), were associated with more intense experience, and left-wing political ideology was associated with less intense experience ($\beta = -.38, p < .001$) of group-based anger.

Did preferences for group-based anger and the experience of group-based anger mediate the associations between political ideology and political reactions? To test whether associations between political ideology and political reactions were mediated by

⁶ Details on the instruments used in the manuscript are available in the supplementary materials file.

⁷ The expected emotional impact of the headlines was confirmed in a pilot test, where participants ($N = 56$) rated the extent to which they expected to feel anger and fear, upon reading the respective newspaper articles (1 = *not at all*; 9 = *to a large extent*). Participants expected the articles associated with the angry headlines to induce more anger than fear ($M_s = 7.24$ and 4.15 , respectively), $t(55) = 10.54, p < .01$, Cohen's $d = 1.52$. Participants expected the articles associated with the fearful headlines to induce more fear than anger ($M_s = 6.73$ and 3.31 , respectively), $t(55) = -12.16, p < .01$, Cohen's $d = 1.65$. Finally, participants expected the articles associated with the neutral headlines to induce little anger and fear ($M_s = 1.30$ and 1.38 , respectively), and significantly less so than the other headlines, all $t_s(55) > 6.62$, all $p_s < .01$, all Cohen's $d_s > 1.14$.

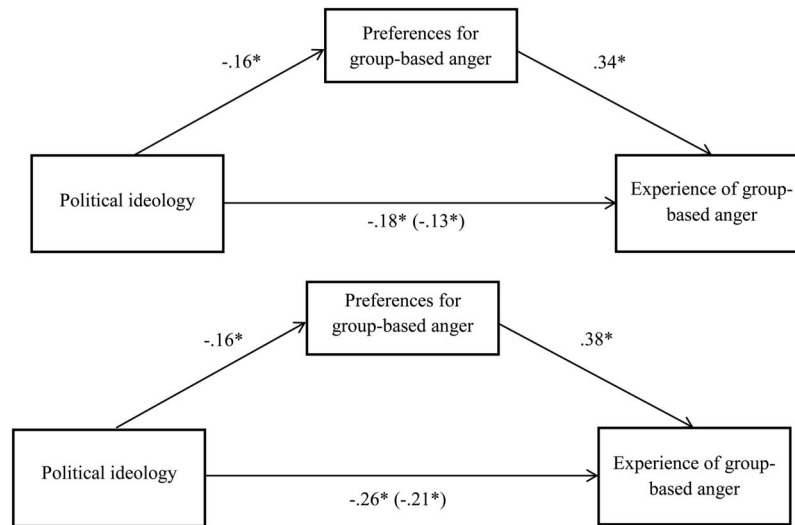


Figure 3. Preferences for group-based anger mediate associations between political ideology and group-based emotional experiences in response to an anger-inducing scenario (top panel) and an empathy-inducing scenario (bottom panel; Study A1). * $p < .05$.

preferences for group-based anger and by the experience of group-based anger, we employed Hayes' (2013) PROCESS bootstrapping command (Model 6: 5,000 iterations; for unstandardized coefficients, see Figure 5). The total effect of political ideology on political reactions ($b = .95$, $SE = .10$, $t = 8.96$, $p < .001$; 95% CI [.74, 1.16]) was reduced when preferences for group-based anger (either self-reported or behavioral) and the experience of group-based anger were entered in the model (self-report: $b = .71$, $SE = .11$, $t = 6.15$, $p < .001$; 95% CI [.48, .94]; behavioral: $b = .74$, $SE = .11$, $t = 6.67$, $p < .001$; 95% CI [.52, .96]). The indirect effect was statistically different from zero (self-report: $b = .08$, $SE = .03$; 95% CI [.03, .17]; behavioral: $b = .01$, $SE = .01$; 95% CI [.001, .06]).⁸ Compared with rightists, leftists wanted to feel less anger toward Palestinians, they experienced less anger upon reading the Palestinian proposal, and this emotional experience was associated with greater support of the Palestinian proposal to renew negotiations.

We found the same pattern of associations when using self-report measures and behavioral indices of group-based emotional preferences, demonstrating their convergent validity. Preferences for group-based anger were stronger when examined behaviorally than when examined by self-report. This may be because self-report is more likely to be influenced by social demand. From this perspective, self-report might serve as a somewhat conservative measure of preferences for negative emotions. Given that we demonstrated the validity of self-reports and that they are simpler to administer, in subsequent studies we assessed group-based emotional preferences using self-report.

Study A3

In Study A3 we addressed two complementary goals. First, we tested whether the associations found in Studies A1 and A2 extend beyond the laboratory to reactions to real political events as they unfold. Second, we tested whether emotional preferences were prospectively associated with emotional experiences and political reactions over time. We utilized a three wave design that was

undertaken at the height of two political events. In the first wave, we assessed participants' political ideology and preferences for group-based anger. This enabled us to test the stability and the independence of our measures. The second wave took place 10 months after the first, following a destructive political event—namely, a war between Israel and the Palestinians from the Gaza Strip. The third wave took place several months later, following a constructive political event—namely, the renewal of the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. A key prediction of our model is that group-based emotional preferences are uniquely associated with group-based emotional experiences. Therefore, we predicted that emotional preferences would be associated with emotional as well as political reactions, in response to both events, even when we control for political ideology, preferences for group-based fear, group-based sentiments, and sociodemographic factors.

Method

Participants. Participants were 413 Jewish Israelis $M_{age} = 46.44$ years, $SD = 15.48$, 209 females),⁹ who participated in an online study for monetary compensation. We used a nation-wide sample of Jewish-Israeli adults, who represented the diverse Jewish-Israeli society in terms of its sociodemographic features. In

⁸ In a separate analysis (PROCESS, model 4: 5,000 iterations), we confirmed that the indirect effect of political ideology on anger experience through anger preferences was statistically different from zero (self-report: $b = -.19$, $SE = .05$; 95% CI [-.30, -.09]; behavioral: $b = -.04$, $SE = .02$; 95% CI [-.11, -.001]).

⁹ Between the second and third wave 30% of participants dropped out. Although attrition was high, participants who dropped out did not differ from those who did not on all the research variables that were assessed in the first and second waves (i.e., political ideology, group-based preferences for anger and fear, group-based sentiments, religiosity, level of education, and emotional and political reactions to the war in Gaza, all $ts(411) < 1.5$, all $ps > .11$, all Cohen's $ds < .17$).

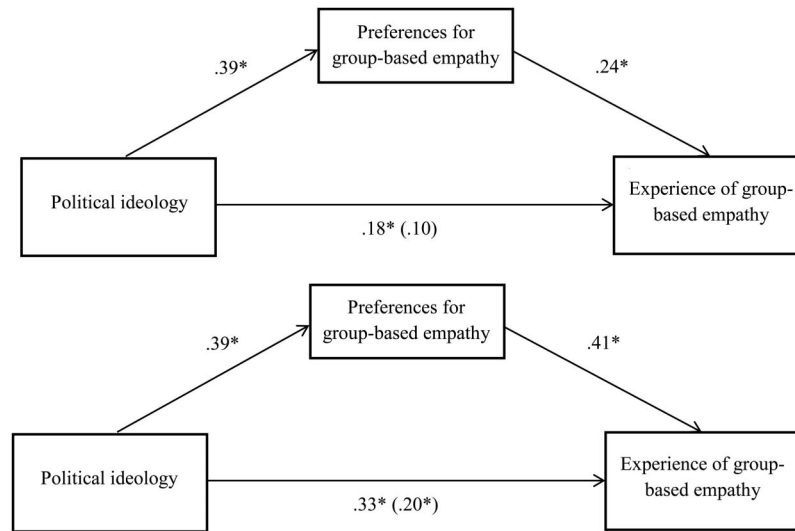


Figure 4. Preferences for group-based empathy mediate associations between political ideology and group-based emotional experiences in response to an anger-inducing scenario (top panel) and an empathy-inducing scenario (bottom panel; Study A1). * $p < .05$.

terms of political ideology, 46.8% were rightists, 29.9% were centrists, and 22.9% were leftists (0.5% of the sample did not report their political affiliation).

Procedure. The same participants were contacted (via e-mail) at three different time-points. The first assessment took place in February 2012, during a relatively peaceful period in Israeli-Palestinian

relations. The second assessment ($N = 413$) took place in November 2012, 10 months later, during the height of a war between Israel and the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip (i.e., Operation “Pillar of Defense”). During the war, which lasted one week, more than 1,500 rockets were fired at Israel, and more than 150 Palestinians were killed by Israeli attacks. The third assessment ($N = 286$) took place in July 2013, more

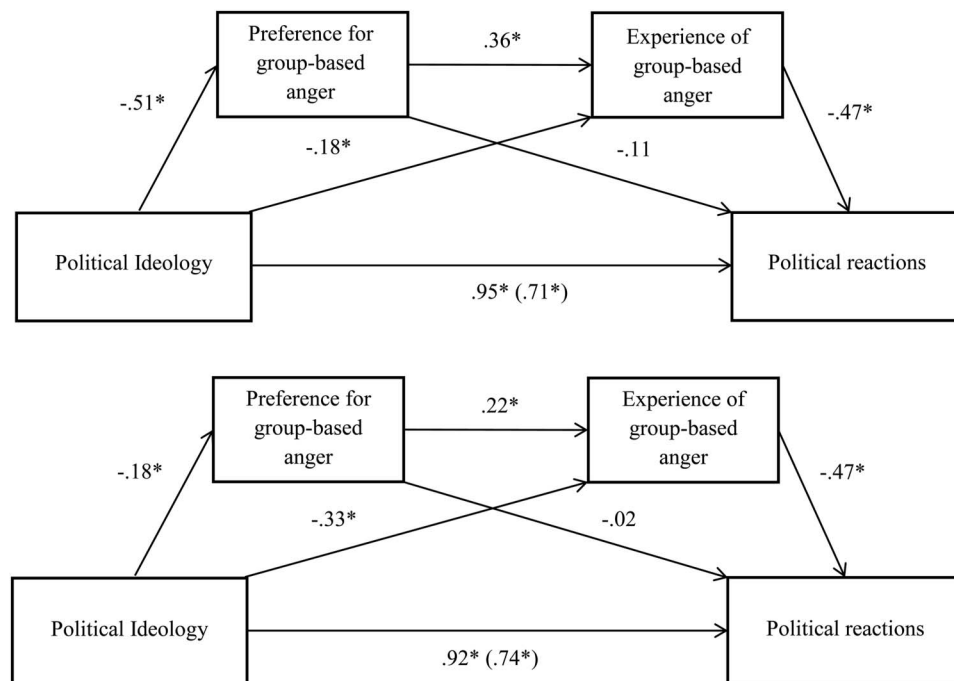


Figure 5. Preferences for group-based anger, assessed by self-report (top panel) or a behavioral index (bottom panel) and experience of group-based anger mediate associations between political ideology and political reactions (Study A2). * $p < .05$.

than 1.5 years after the first assessment, 24 hours after the American Secretary of State, John Kerry, announced the renewal of peace negotiations between the parties after more than four years of deadlock.

During the first assessment, participants were told the study dealt with emotions and attitudes toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Participants indicated their preferences for group-based anger and fear, rated their group-based sentiments, indicated their political ideology, and provided sociodemographic information. During the second assessment, we measured participants' group-based emotional reactions to the war, and their agreement with Israeli policies regarding the war. During the third assessment, we measured participants' group-based emotional reactions to the renewal of the peace negotiations, and their agreement with Israeli policies regarding the peace talks.

Measures.

Political ideology. Same as in Study A1.

Group-based emotional preferences. We used the same scale as in Study A1, measuring preferences for *anger* and *fear* ($r_s = .71$ and $.70$, respectively).

Group-based sentiments. We used the same scale as in the pilot study, measuring sentiment for anger and fear.

Sociodemographic information. We assessed levels of religiosity (1 = *secular*; 4 = *ultraorthodox*), and education (1 = *up to 8 years*; 13 = *PhD*).

Group-based anger experiences. Same as in Study A1.

Political reactions to the war in Gaza. Given that the study was conducted during the last days of the war, when various strategies to end the war were salient in the public discourse, we assessed political support for conciliatory policies. We included six items that were rated on a scale of 1 (= *not at all*) to 6 (= *to a large extent*). For example, "To what extent do you support an immediate ceasefire with Hamas?"; "In return for a ceasefire, to what extent would you support that Israel enables the passage of goods in and out of Gaza?" ($\alpha = .87$).

Political reactions to the renewal of peace negotiations. We assessed support for compromises on core issues in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as well as support for the actual negotiation

process. We included six items that were rated on a scale of 1 (= *not at all*) to 6 (= *to a large extent*). For example, "To what extent do you support negotiating with the Palestinian Authority headed by President Abbas?"; "To what extent would you support a final settlement with the Palestinians that would end the Israeli control over the West Bank, and establish a Palestinian state?" ($\alpha = .84$).

Results and Discussion

Table 3 presents means, *SDs*, and simple correlations between our key variables. As expected, preferences for group-based anger were negatively associated with political ideology. Compared with rightists, leftists wanted to experience less anger toward Palestinians, experienced less intense group-based anger in response to both destructive and constructive events, and were more supportive of conciliatory policies in both events.

Group-based emotional preferences and experiences. To test whether preferences for group-based anger were prospectively associated with group-based anger experiences in response to unfolding events related to war and peace, we ran two regression analyses. In these analyses, we predicted the Time 2 or 3 experience of group-based anger from Time 1 preferences for group-based anger, while controlling for political ideology, preferences for group-based fear, group-based anger and fear sentiments, religiosity and education. As expected and shown in Table 4, Time 1 preferences for group-based anger were prospectively associated with Time 2 group-based anger toward Palestinians during the war in Gaza ($\beta = .21, p < .001$) and Time 3 group-based anger during the renewal of negotiations ($\beta = .20, p < .01$), when controlling for all other variables.

Group-based emotional preferences and political reactions. We repeated the above analysis predicting Time 2 or 3 support for conciliatory political reactions to either destructive or constructive events. As expected and shown in Table 4, Time 1 preferences for group-based anger were negatively associated with Time 2 support for conciliatory policies during the war in Gaza ($\beta = -.17, p < .001$) and Time 3 conciliatory policies during the renewal of

Table 3

Simple Correlations Between Political Ideology (1 = Extreme Right; 7 = Extreme Left), Group-Based Emotional Preferences, Group-Based Sentiments, Religiosity, Education, and Group-Based Emotional and Political Reactions to Destructive and Constructive Political Events (Study A3)

Wave	Mean (SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Wave I											
1. Political ideology	3.56 (1.29)										
2. Preferences for group-based anger	2.72 (1.35)	-.31*									
3. Preferences for group-based fear	1.83 (1.03)	-.08	.43*								
4. Group-based anger sentiments	3.95 (1.40)	-.41*	.37*	.09							
5. Group-based fear sentiments	3.68 (1.42)	-.08	.20*	.18*	.36*						
6. Religiosity	1.61 (.85)	-.45*	.19*	.06	.23*	.10*					
7. Education	7.70 (4.89)	.07	-.09	-.07	-.06	-.04	-.07				
Wave II											
8. Experience of group-based anger	4.71 (1.37)	-.37*	.37*	.13*	.45*	.12*	.14*	-.05			
9. Political reactions	3.43 (1.30)	.58*	-.35*	-.09	-.35*	-.07	-.39*	.13*	-.33*		
Wave III											
10. Experience of group-based anger	3.33 (1.49)	-.33*	.40*	.15*	.53*	.22*	.33*	-.04	.40*	-.32*	
11. Political reactions	3.45 (1.19)	.63*	-.32*	-.12*	-.37*	-.14*	-.52*	.04	-.36*	.68*	-.41*

* $p < .05$.

Table 4

Regression Analyses Predicting Group-Based Anger Experiences and Support for Conciliatory Policies During Unfolding Events Related to War and Peace, From Group-Based Emotional Preferences, Political Ideology (1 = Extreme Right; 7 = Extreme Left), Group-Based Sentiments, Religiosity, and Education (Study A3)

Preference	Experiences of group-based anger during the war in Gaza			Experiences of group-based anger during the renewal of negotiations			Support for conciliatory policies during the war in Gaza			Support for conciliatory policies during the renewal of negotiations		
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β
Political ideology	-.20	.05	-.19*	-.06	.06	-.05	.42	.04	.42*	.41	.04	.44*
Preferences for group-based anger	.21	.05	.21*	.23	.06	.20*	-.17	.04	-.17*	-.11	.05	-.12*
Preferences for group-based fear	-.00	.06	-.00	-.01	.08	-.01	.05	.05	.04	.04	.05	.03
Group-based anger sentiments	.31	.05	.32*	.41	.06	.39*	-.08	.04	-.08	-.07	.04	-.08
Group-based fear sentiments	-.03	.04	-.03	.00	.05	.00	.02	.03	.03	-.03	.04	-.03
Religiosity	-.08	.07	-.05	.26	.10	.14*	-.23	.06	-.15*	-.34	.07	-.24*
Education	-.00	.01	-.00	.00	.01	.01	.02	.01	.07	-.00	.00	-.02

Note. Experiences of group-based anger during the war in Gaza, $R^2 = .29$, adjusted $R^2 = .27$. Experiences of group-based anger during the renewal of negotiations, $R^2 = .36$, adjusted $R^2 = .34$. Support for conciliatory policies during the war in Gaza, $R^2 = .41$, adjusted $R^2 = .40$. Support for conciliatory policies during the renewal of negotiations, $R^2 = .48$, adjusted $R^2 = .47$.

* $p < .05$.

negotiations ($\beta = -.12$, $p < .05$), when controlling for all other variables.

Did preferences for group-based anger and group-based anger experience mediate the associations between political ideology and political reactions? To test this possibility, we conducted a serial mediation analysis, employing Hayes' (2013) PROCESS bootstrapping command (Model 6: 5,000 iterations; for unstandardized coefficients, see Figure 6). The model was specified with political ideology as the independent variable, Time 1 preferences for group-based anger as the first mediator, Time 2 or 3 group-based anger experience (during the war in Gaza or during the renewal of negotiations) as the second mediator, and Time 2 or 3 political reactions as the outcome variable. As expected, the total effect (war in Gaza: $b = .58$, $SE = .04$, $t = 14.55$, $p < .001$; 95% CI[.50, .66]; renewal of negotiations: $b = .59$, $SE = .04$, $t = 13.86$, $p < .001$; 95% CI[.50, .67]) was reduced when Time 1 group-based preferences for anger and Time 2 or 3 group-based anger experience were added as serial mediators (war in Gaza: $b = .49$, $SE = .04$, $t = 11.28$, $p < .001$; 95% CI[.40, .57]; renewal of negotiations: $b = .50$, $SE = .04$, $t = 11.48$, $p < .001$; 95% CI[.42, .59]). The indirect effect through both of these mediators was statistically different from zero (war in Gaza: $b = .01$, $SE = .005$; 95% CI[.002, .02]; renewal of negotiations: $b = .01$, $SE = .006$; 95% CI[.007, .03]).¹⁰

The findings of Study A3 demonstrate that preferences for group-based anger are linked to the experience of group-based anger following charged conflict events, and together they mediate the associations between political ideology and subsequent political reactions. Compared with rightists, leftists wanted to experience less anger toward Palestinians, which in turn, was associated with less intense anger experiences and greater support for conciliatory policies. These effects were found when group-based emotional preferences were assessed 10 to 16 months before the political events people were reacting to, suggesting that group-based emotional preferences can be relatively stable and may shape emotional experiences and political reactions over time. Regardless of whether individuals were reacting to war or to peace talks, those who wanted to feel angry, ended up feeling angrier.

These effects persisted when we controlled for group-based sentiments toward Palestinians, demonstrating that group-based emotional preferences do not simply reflect the individual's emotions toward Palestinians at that time.

Study A4

Study A4 tested whether political ideology influences group-based emotional preferences, and whether doing so actively changes group-based emotional experiences and political reactions. To do so, we primed participants with their political ideology, by randomly assigning participants to answer questions about their political ideology at the outset (vs. the end) of the experiment. We then measured group-based emotional preferences. Next, we exposed participants to a provoking article about the Palestinian citizens of Israel who constitute 19% of the Israeli population and are considered by some of the Jewish majority a hostile minority with loyalties to Israel's enemies (Smootha, 2002). After this, participants rated their emotional and political reactions toward that outgroup, focusing on political intolerance. Political intolerance involves support for denouncing the basic political rights of individuals who belong to a defined outgroup in a particular society (Sullivan, Piereson, & Marcus, 1982). Political intolerance has been linked to the experience of various negative intergroup emotions (e.g., Halperin, Canetti-Nisim, & Hirsch-Hoefler, 2009; Halperin, Pliskin, Saguy, Liberman, & Gross, 2014).

We expected that priming political ideology would affect rightists and leftists differently, such that leftists in the experimental (vs. control) condition would show a weaker preference for group-based anger, whereas rightists would show the opposite pattern. We further expected that preferences for group-based anger would carry independent implications for subsequent experience of

¹⁰ In a separate analysis (PROCESS, model 4: 5,000 iterations), we confirmed that the indirect effect of political ideology on anger experience through anger preferences was also statistically different from zero (war in Gaza: $b = -.09$, $SE = .01$; 95% CI[-.13, -.06]; renewal of negotiations: $b = -.11$, $SE = .03$; 95% CI[-.18, -.06]).

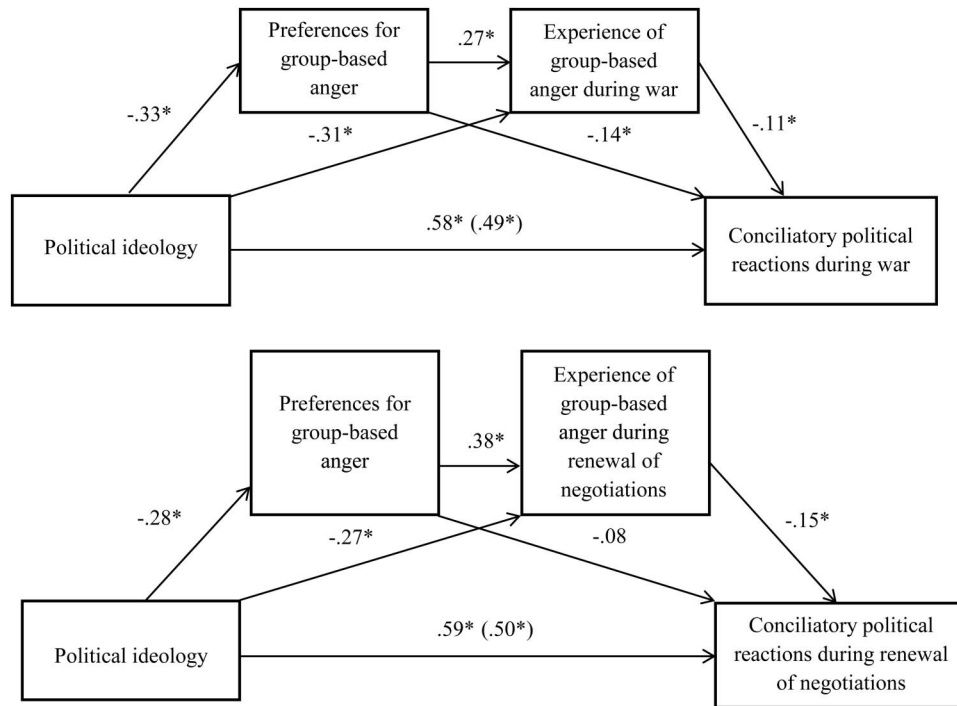


Figure 6. Preferences for and experience of group-based anger mediate associations between political ideology and political reactions to the war in Gaza (top panel) and the renewal of negotiations (bottom panel; Study A3).

* $p < .05$.

group-based anger, which would ultimately influence political intolerance.

Method

Participants. We recruited 155 Jewish Israelis¹¹ ($M_{\text{age}} = 31.03$ years, $SD = 12.12$, 94 females) to participate. In terms of political ideology, 39.4% were rightists, 23.9% were centrists, and 36.8% were leftists.

Procedure. Participants were approached on a commuter train and asked to participate in a short study. They were randomly assigned to one of two conditions. Participants in the experimental condition were told the goal of the study was to compare attitudes of rightists and leftists, whereas participants in the control condition were told that the goal of the study was to compare attitudes of people living in the city to those living in rural areas. Participants in the experimental condition were asked to answer three questions regarding their political ideology (i.e., place themselves on a right-center-left spectrum, explain why their political position is justified, and explain their position on core issues regarding the conflict). Participants in the control condition answered similar questions regarding where they live (i.e., the city or rural areas). Participants were informed that they would be asked to read an article about the Palestinian citizens of Israel, and then indicate their reactions. Before reading the article they were asked to indicate how angry they wanted to feel toward Palestinians when reading the article.

All participants then read an article ostensibly taken from Israel's leading news website. It reported that during the last round of

violence between the Israelis and the Palestinians of Gaza (i.e., Operation Pillar of Defense), the Palestinian citizens of Israel held a demonstration in support of the citizens of Gaza. The article emphasized unjust behavior of the Palestinian minority that was described as expressing support for terror activities and calling for the arrest and prosecution of the Israeli political leadership.¹² Participants then rated their emotional reactions to the article and their support of politically intolerant policies toward the Palestinian citizens of Israel.

Measures

Political ideology. Same as in Study A1.

Preferences for group-based anger. Same as in Study A2.

Group-based anger experiences. Same as in Study A2 ($\alpha = .92$).

Support of politically intolerant policies. We assessed support of politically intolerant policies toward the Palestinian citizens of Israel by asking participants to rate 7 items (1 = *definitely oppose*; 6 = *fully support*). The items were carefully chosen to reflect relevant policies in this particular context. Sample items

¹¹ Ten participants were omitted from the analysis either because they reported they were not Jewish ($n = 9$), or because they were under the age of 18 ($n = 1$).

¹² In a pilot study, participants ($N = 49$) rated the extent to which they felt *anger*, *fear*, *hatred*, and *empathy* after reading the article. These participants reported feeling more anger ($M = 4.71$, $SD = 1.36$) than fear ($M = 3.04$, $SD = 1.52$), hatred ($M = 3.53$, $SD = 1.86$), and empathy ($M = 2.20$, $SD = 1.29$) toward the Palestinian citizens of Israel (all $t(48) > 5.87$, all $p < .01$, all Cohen's $d > .72$).

include: “Israeli Arabs who participate in such demonstrations should not be allowed to appear on television or give speeches”; “the rights of citizens who participated in the demonstration should not be harmed” (reversed; $\alpha = .90$).

Results and Discussion

Did political ideology shape preferences for group-based anger? Participants were assigned to one of three groups according to their self-reported political ideology: *rightists* were participants who self-defined as either extreme right, right, or moderate right ($n = 61$, coded as 1), *centerists* were participants who self-defined as center ($n = 37$, coded as 2), and *leftists* were participants who self-defined as either extreme left, left, or moderate left ($n = 57$, coded as 3). In an analysis of variance (ANOVA), we found a significant Condition \times Political Ideology interaction $F(2, 147) = 5.25, p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .06$.¹³ As shown in Figure 7, tests of simple effects revealed that priming ideology had the expected effects on preferences for group-based anger among rightists, $F(1, 147) = 6.70, p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .04$, such that rightists in the experimental condition had stronger preferences for group-based anger than rightists in the control condition. We found a marginally significant effect for leftists, $F(1, 147) = 2.82, p = .09$, partial $\eta^2 = .02$, such that leftists in the experimental condition showed somewhat weaker preferences for group-based anger than those in the control condition. Leftists in the experimental condition reported that they did not want to feel group-based anger at all ($M = 1.05, SD = .31$), suggesting a possible floor effect. We also found a marginally significant effect for participants at the political center, $F(1, 147) = 3.11, p = .08$, partial $\eta^2 = .02$, such that those in the experimental condition ($M = 2.82, SD = 1.60$) had stronger preferences for group-based anger than those in the control condition ($M = 1.92, SD = 1.29$).

Did political ideology shape group-based anger experience and political reactions? We conducted similar analyses and found significant Condition \times Political Ideology interactions when predicting the experience of group-based anger, $F(2, 149) = 6.56, p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .08$, and when predicting political reactions,

$F(2, 148) = 7.60, p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .09$.¹⁴ With respect to group-based anger experience, we found a significant simple effect for rightists, $F(1, 149) = 3.84, p = .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .02$, such that rightists in the experimental condition ($M = 5.09, SD = 1.13$) felt more intense anger toward Palestinians than those in the control condition ($M = 4.43, SD = 1.56$). This effect was reversed for leftists, $F(1, 149) = 9.64, p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .06$, such that those in the experimental condition ($M = 1.85, SD = 1.32$) felt less intense anger toward Palestinians than those in the control condition ($M = 2.92, SD = .98$). There was no significant effect for participants at the political center.

Similarly, with respect to political reactions, we found a significant simple effect for rightists, $F(1, 148) = 10.88, p < .01$, partial $\eta^2 = .06$, such that those in the experimental condition ($M = 5.05, SD = 1.18$) were more supportive of politically intolerant policies than those in the control condition ($M = 4.23, SD = 1.00$). This effect was reversed for leftists, $F(1, 148) = 4.14, p < .05$, partial $\eta^2 = .02$, such that those in the experimental condition ($M = 1.82, SD = .93$) were less supportive of politically intolerant policies than those in the control condition ($M = 2.33, SD = .78$). There was no significant effect for participants at the political center.¹⁵

Did preferences for group-based anger and anger experience mediate the associations between political ideology and political reactions in opposite directions for leftists versus rightists? To test this, we conducted three serial mediation analyses, one for each ideology group (i.e., right, center, and left), similar to those tested in Studies A2 and A3 (for unstandardized coefficients see Figure 8 top and bottom panel).¹⁶ We expected group-based emotional preferences and group-based emotional experiences to mediate the associations between condition and political reactions for rightists and leftists, but not for center participants. The models were specified with condition (i.e., ideology priming vs. control) as the independent variable, preferences for group-based anger as the first mediator, group-based anger experience as the second mediator, and political intolerance as the outcome variable. As expected, we found support for our model among rightists and leftists, but not among center participants.

The top panel of Figure 8 presents the unstandardized coefficients, when examining the model among rightists. As predicted, the total effect of the manipulation on political reactions ($b = .82, SE = .28, t = 2.85, p < .01$; 95% CI [.24, 1.39]) was reduced when preferences for and experience of group-based anger were added as serial mediators ($b = .45, SE = .23, t = 1.91, p = .06$; 95% CI [−.02, .92]). The indirect effect through both of these mediators was statistically different from zero ($b = .15, SE = .06$; 95% CI [.04, .32]). The bottom panel of Figure 8 presents the unstandardized coefficients, when examining the model among leftists. As predicted, the total effect of the manipulation on political reactions ($b = -.64, SE = .22, t = -2.85, p < .01$; 95%

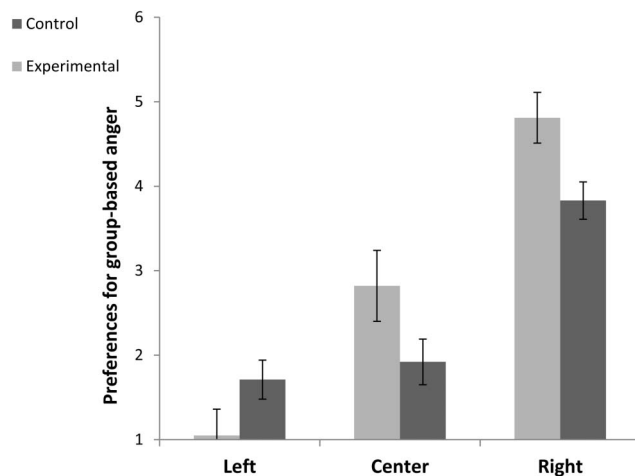


Figure 7. Preferences for group-based anger as a function of political ideology and ideology priming conditions (Study A4).

¹³ Two participants did not report their preferences for group-based anger.

¹⁴ One participant did not rate political reactions.

¹⁵ To adjust for unequal sample sizes, we used type III sum of squares ANOVA as the differences in cell frequencies were random, and did not reflect an inherent property of the population.

¹⁶ Our design included an interaction between a 2-level and a 3-level categorical variables. Because PROCESS cannot test this full model, we conducted three regression analyses, within each ideological group.

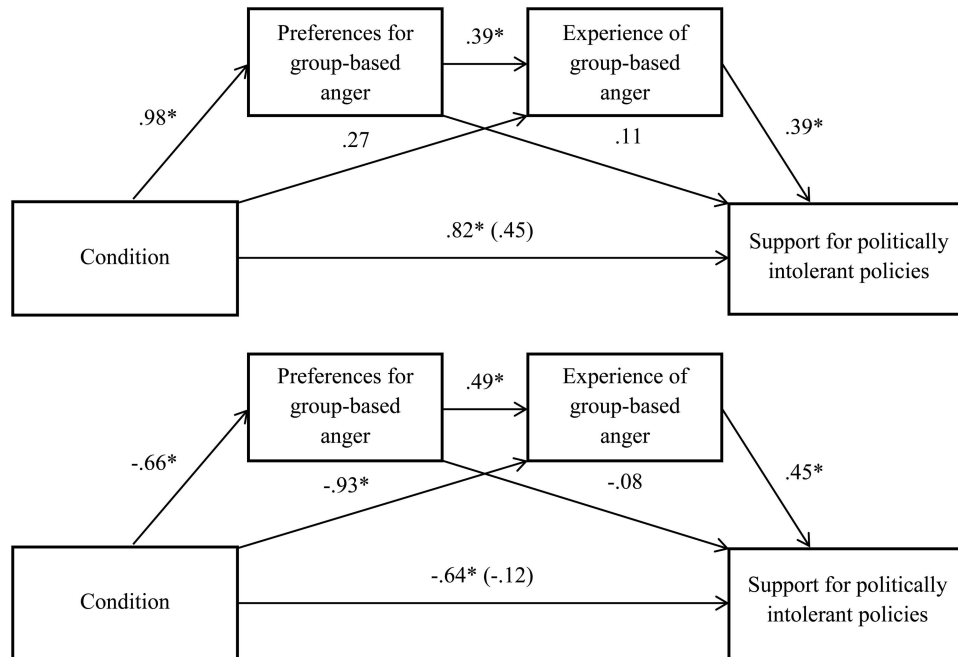


Figure 8. Preferences for and experience of group-based anger mediate the effects of the ideology priming manipulation (0 = control, 1 = ideology priming) on political reactions, for rightists (top panel) and leftists (bottom panel; Study A4). * $p < .05$.

CI[−1.09, −.19]) was reduced when preferences for and experience of group-based anger were added as serial mediators (left: $b = -.12$, $SE = .22$, $t = -.55$, $p = .58$; 95% CI[−.57, .32]). The indirect effect through both of these mediators was statistically different from zero ($b = -.14$, $SE = .07$; 95% CI[−.44, −.04]). We did not obtain these effects for center participants. For center participants, we did not find a direct effect of the manipulation on political reactions ($b = -.22$, $SE = .27$, $t = -.79$, $p = .42$; 95% CI[−.78, .34]), or an indirect effect ($b = .01$, $SE = .05$; 95% CI[−.03, .20]).

These results suggest that our manipulation had significant and opposite effects on rightists and leftists' political reactions. Priming ideology among rightists (vs. not) led to stronger preferences for group-based anger, more intense anger experience, and more political intolerance. In contrast, priming ideology among leftists (vs. not) led to weaker preferences for group-based anger, less intense anger experience, and less political intolerance. This demonstrates that changing the temporary salience of political ideology changes preferences for group-based emotions, which influences subsequent emotional experiences and behavior. Whereas political ideology is relatively difficult to change, especially in the context of long term conflicts (Bar-Tal, 2013), emotional preferences may be more malleable. If emotional preferences causally shape emotional and political reactions, as our model proposes, it might be possible to influence such reactions by changing what people want to feel in intergroup conflict. We tested this possibility in the next set of studies.

Studies B1–B4

In Studies B1–B4, we tested the idea that group-based emotional preferences causally shape subsequent group-based emotional ex-

periences and political reactions. To do so, we manipulated group-based emotional preferences. Following the manipulation, we presented participants with emotion-inducing texts, and measured their subsequent group-based emotional experiences and their political reactions. In Studies B1–B3, we expected participants who were led to prefer group-based anger less, to subsequently experience less group-based anger. We expected less intense group-based anger, in turn, to be associated with less support of intolerant political policies. With an eye on the potential implications of our research for conflict resolution, our manipulations focused on decreasing preferences for group-based anger. Finally, in Study B4 we tested whether our findings could be generalized beyond anger, by manipulating preferences for group-based fear.

Study B1

People want to experience emotions they believe are useful to them (Tamir et al., 2015). Therefore, to decrease preferences for anger, in Study B1, we manipulated the perceived utility of group-based anger in the context of political decision making. To do so, we adopted a procedure that was developed by Hong and colleagues (Hong, Chiu, Dweck, Lin, & Wan, 1999). Participants were randomly assigned to read a bogus article that suggested that anger might be harmful (or useful) when making political decisions. To ensure the manipulation was effective in decreasing the desirability of group-based anger, we assessed the extent to which participants believed that anger toward the outgroup may be harmful when making political decisions. Then, we presented participants with a similar anger-provoking text used in Study A4 and measured their group-based emotional reactions and their support of politically intolerant policies toward the Palestinian citizens of Israel. We expected participants who were led to prefer group-

based anger less, to experience less intense anger toward the outgroup upon reading an anger-inducing political scenario. We further expected less intense group-based anger to result in less support of politically intolerant policies toward the Palestinian citizens of Israel. Finally, because we hypothesized that once they are established, the operation of group-based emotional preferences is independent of political ideology, we expected our manipulation to be effective, regardless of participants' political ideology.

Method

Participants. We recruited 99 Jewish Israelis¹⁷ ($M_{\text{age}} = 37.05$ years, $SD = 15.27$, 63 females) to participate in an online study. Some were recruited via a survey company (Ipanel) and participated in exchange for monetary compensation, and others were undergraduate students from an Israeli University, who participated in exchange for course credit. In terms of political ideology, 46.4% were rightists, 29.3% were centrists, and 24.3% were leftists.

Procedure. Participants were told the study dealt with political and social issues and that they would be asked to make some political decisions. They were told that following the instructions of the ethics committee, we would inform them about findings from previous studies related to these issues. They were then asked to read two excerpts from bogus popular science journals. The first excerpt was identical across conditions, and discussed the effects of first impressions on political decision-making. Participants were then randomly assigned to one of two conditions. Participants in the anger-harmful condition read an excerpt that described the results of a scientific study, suggesting that anger toward the outgroup might be harmful for laypeople and for political leaders when making political decisions, as it leads to impulsive reactions. Participants in the anger-useful condition read an identical excerpt suggesting that anger toward the outgroup might be useful for laypeople and for political leaders when making political decisions, as it leads to decisive actions. Participants then rated how convincing they found the main arguments in the articles to be. After reading the articles and answering several reading comprehension questions, participants read an anger-inducing article similar to the one used in Study A4. They rated their emotional reactions to the article and their support of politically intolerant policies toward the Palestinian citizens of Israel. Finally, participants provided sociodemographic information and answered two open-ended questions about the purpose of the study.

Measures.

Manipulation check. Participants rated the extent to which they believed anger toward members of the outgroup can be harmful when making political decisions.

Group-based anger experiences. Same as in Study A2 ($\alpha = .88$).

Support of politically intolerant policies. We assessed support of politically intolerant policies toward the Palestinian citizens of Israel by asking participants to rate their support of 7 items (1 = *definitely oppose*; 6 = *fully support*). The items were carefully chosen to reflect relevant policies in this particular context. Sample items include: "Israeli Arabs' ability to gain power in state institutions must be curtailed"; Israeli Arabs have shown time after

time that they cannot be trusted and that they will turn their heads the other way in the moment of truth" ($\alpha = .89$).

Results and Discussion

Manipulation check. None of the participants were suspicious of the manipulation or aware of our hypotheses. We conducted a regression analysis to test whether participants who were led to prefer group-based anger less believed that anger toward the outgroup is more harmful when making political decisions. We entered condition, political ideology, and their interaction term as predictors of the manipulation check. As predicted, condition was a significant predictor of the manipulation check even when controlling for political ideology, $b = .38, p < .001$. Participants in the anger-harmful condition believed anger toward the outgroup is more harmful when making political decisions ($M = 4.65, SD = .94$), compared with participants in the anger-useful condition ($M = 3.74, SD = 1.13$), $F(3, 95) = 7.01, p < .001$, adjusted $R^2 = .15$. Also, as predicted, this effect was not moderated by political ideology, as the interaction of condition and political ideology was not significant, $b = -.01, p = .88$.

Manipulated preferences for group-based anger and group-based anger experience. We conducted a regression analysis to test whether participants who were led to prefer group-based anger less experienced less intense anger toward the outgroup in response to the article, regardless of their political ideology. As predicted, the manipulation was a significant predictor of group-based anger experience, $b = -.16, p < .05$. Participants in the anger-harmful condition felt less intense anger toward Palestinian citizens of Israel ($M = 3.65, SD = 1.14$), compared with participants in the anger-useful condition ($M = 4.24, SD = 1.11$), $F(3, 95) = 19.11, p < .001$, adjusted $R^2 = .35$. Also as predicted, this effect was not moderated by political ideology, as the interaction of condition and political ideology was not significant, $b = -.07, p = .51$.

Did the experience of group-based anger mediate the associations between manipulated preferences for group-based anger and political reactions? To test this, we employed Baron and Kenny's (1986) regression procedure, and found evidence for mediation, which was confirmed with Hayes' (2013) PROCESS bootstrapping command (Model 4: 5,000 iterations). As shown in Figure 9 the total effect of the manipulation on support for politically intolerant policies ($b = -.56, SE = .22, t = -2.44, p < .05$; 95% CI[-1.01, -.10]) was reduced when group-based anger experience was entered in the model ($b = -.17, SE = .17, t = -.96, p = .33$; 95% CI[-.53, .18]). The indirect effect was statistically different from zero ($b = -.38, SE = .15$; 95% CI[-.69, -.10]). Participants who were led to prefer less anger toward the outgroup experienced less intense group-based anger in response to the article, which in turn, led them to be less supportive of politically intolerant policies toward the Palestinian citizens of Israel.

¹⁷ Two participants were omitted from the analysis because they did not read or comprehend the manipulation text, as indicated in their inaccurate responses to the reading comprehension questions.

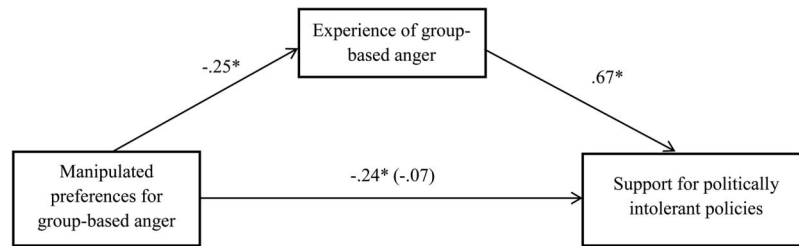


Figure 9. Manipulated preferences for group-based anger (coded: 0 = anger-useful condition, 1 = anger-harmful condition) and support for politically intolerant policies, as mediated by experience of group-based anger (Study B1). $^*p < .05$.

Study B2

Study B2 was designed to replicate the findings of Study B1 and establish the generalizability of the effect, by using a different manipulation of anger preferences. To manipulate preferences for anger in Study B2, we used a procedure that was validated by Tamir and colleagues (2015). Participants in the experimental condition read bogus feedback presumably provided by prior participants that implied the potential harmfulness of anger in the upcoming task. To test whether emotional preferences can be manipulated even in the context of real ongoing political events, we conducted the study a few days prior to the Israeli national elections. During that time, the issue of the Palestinian citizens of Israel was especially prominent in the public discourse. We used the same article as in Study A4, and examined participants' support for politically intolerant policies relevant to the upcoming elections.

Method

Participants. We recruited 68 Jewish Israelis¹⁸ ($M_{\text{age}} = 28.20$ years, $SD = 4.52$, 34 females) via a survey company (Midgam) to participate in an online study in exchange for monetary compensation. In terms of political ideology, 51.5% were rightists, 19.1% were centrists, and 29.4% were leftists.

Procedure. Participants were told the study deals with political and social issues and were randomly assigned to one of two conditions. Participants in the experimental condition were told that before we ask them to make political decisions, they will read tips from previous participants who were asked to make similar decisions. Participants read tips from three bogus participants. One tip was unrelated to emotions (i.e., "What helped me the most was to write down important points"), but two of the tips suggested that anger may be counterproductive when making political decisions (i.e., "Don't get angry. Sometimes the intuitive reaction is the least balanced"; "In order to make the best decision it is better to be emotionally detached from the situation and let it affect you as little as possible"). Participants were asked to select two tips they personally found useful and briefly explain why. Because two of the three tips referred to emotional experience, participants in the experimental condition had to explain why anger may be counterproductive. Participants also indicated the extent to which they would be willing to accept each of the tips. Participants in the control condition did not read tips. All participants then read the same article as in Study A4, rated their group-based emotional experiences, and indicated their support of politically intolerant policies toward the Palestinian citizens of Israel in light of the

upcoming elections. Finally, they indicated their political ideology, and provided sociodemographic information.

Measures.

Group-based anger experiences. Same as in Study A2 ($\alpha = .91$).

Political ideology. Same as in Study A1.

Support for politically intolerant policies. As the study was conducted just a few days before the national elections, we assessed support for politically intolerant policies relevant to that specific context. Participants were asked to rate 5 items (1 = *definitely oppose*; 6 = *fully support*) dealing with various policies related to the national elections, aimed at denouncing political rights and power from the Palestinian citizens of Israel. Sample items include: "The election propaganda of Arab parties should be restricted"; "Israeli-Palestinian candidates should not be interviewed during the election period (at least two weeks prior to voting)"; $\alpha = .95$).

Results and Discussion

Manipulated preferences for group-based anger and group-based anger experience. We conducted a regression analysis to test whether participants who were led to prefer group-based anger less experienced less intense anger toward the outgroup after reading the article regardless of their political ideology. We entered condition, political ideology, and their interaction term as predictors of group-based anger experience. As predicted, condition was a significant predictor of group-based anger experience even when controlling for political ideology, $b = -.24$, $p < .05$. Importantly, participants in the experimental condition felt less intense anger toward the Palestinian citizens of Israel ($M = 3.97$, $SD = 1.37$) compared with participants in the control condition ($M = 4.59$, $SD = 1.09$), $F(3, 64) = 8.69$, $p < .001$, adjusted $R^2 = .25$. Also as predicted, this effect was not moderated by political ideology, as the interaction of condition and political ideology was not significant, $b = .12$, $p = .41$.

Did group-based anger experience mediate the associations between manipulated preferences for group-based anger and political reactions? We used the same procedure as in Study B1 and found evidence for mediation. As shown in Figure 10, the total effect of the manipulation on support for politically

¹⁸ Seven participants (5 in the control condition and 2 in the experimental condition) were omitted from the analysis because they suspected the study dealt with the link between emotional reactions and political decision making.

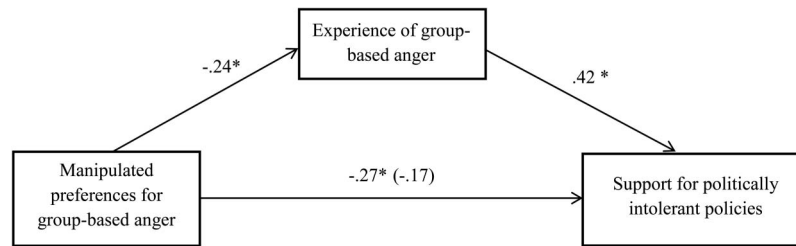


Figure 10. Manipulated preferences for group-based anger (coded: 0 = control condition, 1 = experimental condition) and support for politically intolerant policies as mediated by experience of group-based anger (Study B2). * $p < .05$.

intolerant policies ($b = -.80$, $SE = .35$, $t = -2.28$, $p < .05$; 95% CI $[-1.51, -.10]$) was reduced when group-based anger experience was entered in the model ($b = -.52$, $SE = .33$, $t = -1.55$, $p = .12$; 95% CI $[-1.20, .14]$). The indirect effect was statistically different from zero ($b = -.27$, $SE = .16$; 95% CI $[-.74, -.04]$). Participants who were led to prefer group-based anger less felt less intense anger toward the outgroup in response to a provocative article, which in turn led them to be less supportive of politically intolerant policies toward the Palestinian citizens of Israel.

Study B3

Study B3 was designed to replicate and extend the findings of Studies B1 and B2. First, our model is based on the assumption that group-based emotional preferences impact group-based emotional experiences through emotion regulation processes. To provide preliminary evidence for this effect, in Study B3 participants indicated the extent to which they tried to decrease their anger. Second, one limitation of Study B2, was that the control condition differed in several ways from the experimental condition. To provide a stronger test of our hypotheses, in Study B3 we used the same manipulation as in Study B2, only the control condition was similar to the experimental condition, except for the implied desirability of anger. We expected participants who were led to prefer group-based anger less to try harder to decrease their anger toward the outgroup in response to the anger-inducing article and to experience less intense group-based anger, as a consequence.

Method

Participants. We recruited 87 Jewish Israelis ($M_{\text{age}} = 46.17$ years, $SD = 14.97$, 43 females) via a survey company (Panel4All) to participate in an online study in exchange for monetary compensation. In terms of political ideology, 44.8% were rightists, 34.6% were centrists, and 20.6% were leftists.

Procedure. Participants were told that the study deals with political and social issues and were randomly assigned to one of two conditions. We used a similar procedure as in Study B2, with two important modifications. First, participants in the control condition also read bogus tips, presumably from prior participants. These were unrelated to emotional experiences, but similar in length and structure to those in the experimental condition (e.g., “To make a good decision you need to make sure that your work

environment is organized”). Second, after rating their support of politically intolerant policies, participants indicated the extent to which they tried to regulate their emotions and decrease their anger while reading the article. Finally, we conducted a funnel debriefing. All participants found the tips believable and none of them were suspicious of the manipulation.

Measures.

Group-based anger experiences. Same as in Study A2 ($\alpha = .94$).

Support for politically intolerant policies. We assessed support of politically intolerant policies toward the Palestinian citizens of Israel by asking participants to rate 7 items (1 = *definitely oppose*; 6 = *fully support*). The items were carefully chosen to reflect relevant policies in this particular context. Sample items include: “Israeli Arabs’ ability to gain power in state institutions must be curtailed”; Israel should revoke citizenship from Palestinians who participated in the demonstration” ($\alpha = .90$).

Political ideology. Same as in Study A1.

Emotion regulation. Participants were asked to respond to two items (1 = *not at all*; 6 = *to a large extent*): “did you attempt to regulate your emotions when reading the article?” and “did you attempt to decrease anger when reading the article?” ($r = .50$).

Results and Discussion

Manipulated preferences for group-based anger and group-based anger experience. We conducted a regression analysis to test whether participants who were led to prefer group-based anger less experienced less intense anger toward the outgroup, regardless of their political ideology. We found that the manipulation was a significant predictor of group-based anger experience, $\beta = -.20$, $p < .05$. As expected, participants in the experimental condition experienced less anger toward the Palestinian citizens of Israel ($M = 3.51$, $SD = 1.33$), compared with participants in the control condition ($M = 4.37$, $SD = 1.34$), $F(3, 83) = 9.67$, $p < .001$, adjusted $R^2 = .23$. This effect was not moderated by political ideology, as the interaction of condition and political ideology was not significant, $\beta = .09$, $p = .49$.

Manipulated preferences for group-based anger and emotion regulation. To test whether participants who were led to prefer group-based anger less tried harder to decrease their anger toward the outgroup, we conducted a separate regression analysis. As expected, condition was a significant predictor of regulatory efforts, $\beta = .22$, $p < .05$. Participants in the experimental condition reported trying harder to decrease their group-based anger

($M = 3.60$, $SD = 1.39$), compared with participants in the control condition ($M = 2.95$, $SD = 1.36$). This effect was not qualified by political ideology, as the interaction term was not significant, $\beta = -.19$, $p = .23$.

Did group-based anger experience mediate associations between manipulated preferences for group-based anger and political reactions? We used the same procedure as in Study B1 and found evidence for mediation. As shown in Figure 11, the total effect of the manipulation on support for politically intolerant policies ($b = -.58$, $SE = .25$, $t = -2.30$, $p < .05$; 95% CI $[-1.09, -.08]$) was reduced when group-based anger experience was entered in the model ($b = -.22$, $SE = .23$, $t = -.95$, $p = .34$; 95% CI $[-.69, .24]$). The indirect effect was statistically different from zero ($b = -.36$, $SE = .15$; 95% CI $[-.76, -.12]$). Participants who were led to prefer group-based anger less reported experiencing less intense anger toward the outgroup in response to the provocative article, which in turn, led them to be less supportive of politically intolerant policies toward the Palestinian citizens of Israel. These findings indicate that by changing preferences for group-based anger, it might be possible to trigger active regulatory attempts that change emotional reactions to conflict-related events and ultimately decrease political intolerance.

Study B4

In Study B4 we tested the generalizability of our effects. First, to test generalizability across different group-based emotions, we manipulated preferences for group-based fear, rather than anger as in the previous studies. Second, to establish generalizability across manipulations, we used a different and more subtle manipulation of group-based emotional preferences. Participants were told the study dealt with responses to articles published on the Internet, and were asked to read and respond to three unrelated articles. Whereas the first article was identical across conditions and unrelated to intergroup relations, the second article served as our manipulation of preferences for group-based fear, and the third article served as the fear-inducing stimulus. Third, to demonstrate that our effects are driven by group-based emotional preferences, in Study B4 we measured preferences for group-based fear.

We expected participants who were led to believe that fear of outgroup members can be harmful for political decision making to show weaker preferences for group-based fear, and in turn, experience less fear of the outgroup in response to a fear-inducing article. With respect to political reactions, we had two conflicting hypotheses. Previous research on the effect of fear on political decision making has been inconsistent. In the intergroup context, some scholars have argued that fear may increase support for conciliatory policies, especially when these policies are perceived as capable of reducing intergroup threat (e.g., Gayer, Landman, Halperin, & Bar-Tal, 2009; Halperin, Porat, & Wohl, 2013). Others have argued that because fear is associated with conservative ideology, reluctance to take risks and prejudiced views of outgroups, it can potentially decrease support for conciliatory policies (e.g., Halperin, 2011; Jarymowicz & Bar-Tal, 2006). The former research would lead to the prediction that in the context of renewed peace negotiations, leading people to prefer less fear of the outgroup could result in less support for compromises. The latter line of thought would lead to the opposite prediction.

Method

Participants. We recruited 70 Jewish Israelis¹⁹ ($M_{age} = 39.53$ years, $SD = 14.30$, 42 females) via a survey company (Ipanel) to participate in an online study in exchange for monetary compensation. In terms of political ideology, 51.5% were rightists, 25.7% were centrists, and 22.8% were leftists.

Procedure. Participants were told the study dealt with attitudes and emotional responses to articles, therefore they would be asked to read three unrelated articles, and answer related questions. The first article was about a children's TV series, and was intended to support the cover story. After reading this article and answering a series of questions about it, participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions. Participants in the experimental condition read another bogus article, which served as our manipulation. The article presented an interview with a successful Israeli basketball coach. The coach described the key to his success as not fearing the adversary, and recommended adopting this motto in the Israeli political arena as well. Participants in the control condition read a similar article, where any mention of "not fearing the adversary" was replaced with "hard work and persistence." To ensure participants understood and believed what they had read, they were asked to describe the coach's motto in their own words and rated how convincing they found the main argument in the article to be. Then all participants read a third bogus article, suggesting that the Israeli Prime Minister was considering to renew peace negotiations with the Palestinians, with the help of Arab leaders. The article emphasized the risks in renewing negotiations, and stipulated that the Prime Minister was weighing this option because renewing the negotiations could lead to an outbreak of violence by Palestinian organizations. Participants rated their group-based emotional preferences and experiences, as well as their support of concessions. Finally, participants indicated their political ideology, provided sociodemographic information, and answered three open-ended questions about the purpose of the study.

Measures.

Manipulation check. Participants rated the extent to which they believed fear toward the adversary may be harmful when making political decisions.

Preferences for group-based fear. Participants rated the extent (1 = *not at all*; 6 = *to a large extent*) to which they wanted to experience fear when reading the article about the renewal of peace negotiations with the Palestinians.

Group-based fear experiences. Participants rated the extent to which they felt fear, worry, and anxiety toward Palestinians (1 = *not at all*; 6 = *to a large extent*; $\alpha = .79$).

Support for concession making. Participants rated four items (1 = *not at all*; 6 = *to a large extent*) measuring their support for core concessions related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. A sample item was: "To what extent do you support the idea that Israel would withdraw to the 1967 border, and evacuate most of the settlements?" ($\alpha = .80$).

Political ideology. Same as in Study A1.

¹⁹ Thirteen participants were omitted from the analysis, either because they did not read the manipulation text ($n = 7$), or because they were suspicious of the manipulation ($n = 6$).

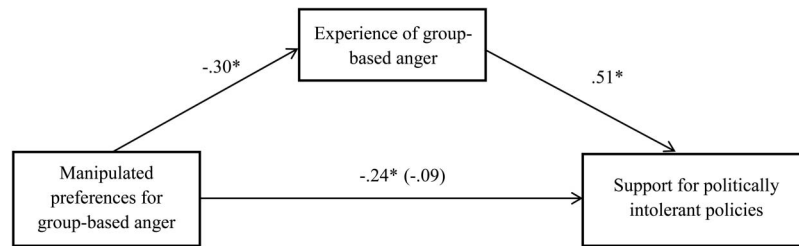


Figure 11. Manipulated preferences for group-based anger (coded: 0 = control condition, 1 = experimental condition) and support for politically intolerant policies as mediated by experienced anger (Study B3). * $p < .05$.

Results and Discussion

Manipulation check. We conducted a regression analysis to test whether participants who were led to prefer group-based fear less believed fear toward the adversary may be more harmful when making political decisions. We entered condition, political ideology, and their interaction term as predictors. As we expected, condition was a significant predictor, $b = .32, p < .01$. Participants in the experimental condition believed fear toward the adversary is more harmful when making political decisions ($M = 4.33, SD = 1.14$), compared with participants in the control condition ($M = 3.52, SD = 1.23$), $F(3, 66) = 2.78, p < .05$, adjusted $R^2 = .07$. Also as predicted, this effect was not moderated by political ideology, as the interaction of condition and political ideology was not significant, $b = .11, p = .52$.

Manipulated preferences, self-reported preferences, and the experience of group-based fear. We tested whether participants who were led to prefer group-based fear less, wanted to experience less group-based fear when reading the article about renewing peace negotiations, and whether they felt less fear of Palestinians upon reading it. As predicted, condition was a significant predictor of preferences for group-based fear and of the experience of group-based fear, even when controlling for political ideology (fear preferences: $b = -.27, p < .05$; fear experience: $b = -.26, p < .05$). Participants in the experimental condition wanted to experience less fear of Palestinians and felt less fear (fear preferences: $M = 2.19, SD = 1.41$; fear experience: $M = 2.94, SD = 1.14$), compared with participants in the control condition (fear preferences: $M = 2.91, SD = 1.21$; fear experience: $M = 3.53, SD = 1.16$), fear preferences: $F(3, 66) = 3.40, p < .05$, adjusted $R^2 = .09$; fear experience: $F(3, 66) = 2.82, p < .05$, adjusted $R^2 = .07$. These effects were not moderated by political ideology, as the interaction of condition and political ideology was not

significant (fear preferences: $b = -.22, p = .19$; fear experience: $b = .01, p = .95$).

Did preferences for group-based fear mediate the associations between manipulated fear preferences and group-based fear experience? To test this, we employed Baron and Kenny's (1986) regression procedure, and found evidence for mediation, which was confirmed with Hayes' (2013) PROCESS bootstrapping command (Model 4: 5,000 iterations). As shown in Figure 12, the total effect of the manipulation on group-based fear experience ($b = .29, SE = .13, t = 2.15, p < .05$; 95% CI [.02, .57]) was reduced when preferences for group-based fear were entered in the model ($b = .13, SE = .12, t = 1.07, p = .28$; 95% CI [-.11, .37]). The indirect effect was statistically different from zero ($b = .16, SE = .08$; 95% CI [.02, .36]). Participants who were led to prefer group-based fear less, wanted to experience less fear, which in turn, led them to experience less intense fear of the Palestinians in response to the article.

Manipulated preferences for group-based fear and political reactions. We entered condition, political ideology, and their interaction as predictors of support of concessions. The regression analysis revealed no significant effect for condition, $b = -.10, p = .19$. Participants in the experimental condition were no more supportive of making concessions ($M = 2.96, SD = 1.32$) than participants in the control condition ($M = 3.32, SD = 1.26$).

In summary, Study B4 replicated the findings from Studies B1–B3 with a different manipulation for group-based emotional preferences, and a different group-based emotion (i.e., fear). By making group-based fear temporarily less desirable, we were able to decrease preferences for group-based fear, and lead people to experience less fear of outgroup members. These effects were not moderated by political ideology. Our manipulation did not lead to

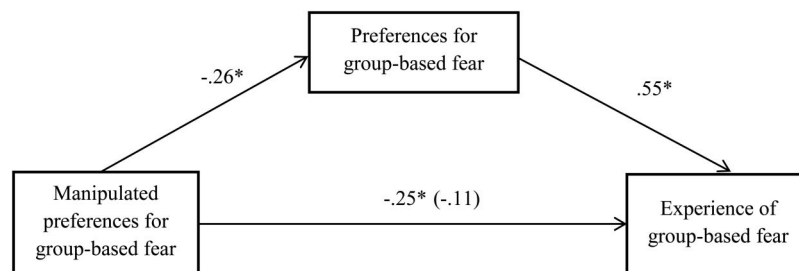


Figure 12. Manipulated preferences for group-based fear (coded: 0 = control condition, 1 = experimental condition) and experience of group-based fear, as mediated by preferences for group-based fear (Study B4). * $p < .05$.

significant effects on political reactions. As described earlier, existing work suggests that fear may sometimes increase and sometimes decrease willingness to compromise (e.g., Gayer et al., 2009; Halperin, 2011; Halperin, Porat, & Wohl, 2013; Jarymowicz & Bar-Tal, 2006). Therefore, our null findings may be, in part, because fear can have inconsistent effects on support for concessions. More research is needed to test whether and how preferences for group-based fear might influence political reactions in intractable conflicts. Perhaps future research should examine effects on political policies that are more closely associated with fear, such as taking protective measures.

General Discussion

Group-based emotions are powerful forces that can lead society members toward war or peace. As demonstrated in the opening paragraph, the raging responses of Israelis to the murder of three teenagers resulted in war, in which hundreds of civilians on both sides lost their lives. This investigation proposes a novel determinant of group-based emotions—namely, group-based emotional preferences. According to our proposed model, people differ in the emotions they want to experience in the intergroup context. These different group-based emotional preferences can lead to different group-based emotional experiences that influence subsequent political reactions. Although group-based emotions are dictated by group-based goals (e.g., political ideology), once group-based emotional preferences are established, their impact on subsequent emotional and political reactions is independent of such goals.

We tested the validity of our model in the context of the long-term and violent Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In a pilot study, we demonstrated that group-based emotional preferences are distinct from preferences for general emotions and group-based sentiments, and associated with political ideology. In Studies A1–A3, we demonstrated that rightists and leftists differ in the emotions they want to experience toward outgroup members. What people wanted to feel was related to their emotional reactions to conflict-related events, and these in turn, were linked to their political reactions. We tested these associations inside and outside the laboratory, using both self-reports and a behavioral index of group-based emotional preferences. In Study A4, we demonstrated that political ideology has a causal effect on group-based emotional preferences, which in turn, shape political reactions. In Studies B1–B4, we demonstrated the causal impact of group-based emotional preferences, using three different manipulations, and targeting two distinct group-based emotions (i.e., anger and fear). Across studies, we were able to alter group-based emotional experiences, and even political reactions, simply by changing what people wanted to feel.

Theoretical Implications

Our findings have important implications for the study of emotion regulation and intergroup relations. From an emotion regulation perspective, these findings shed light on the regulatory mechanisms that shape emotional experiences. Most research on emotion regulation focuses on cases in which regulation comes into play after exposure to the emotion-eliciting event, focusing on the role of regulation strategies and skills in shaping emotional experiences. This investigation adds to the growing research on

motivational factors in emotion regulation (Tamir, 2009; Tamir & Mauss, 2011). In addition to demonstrating the importance of what people want to feel, our findings suggest that such emotional preferences come into play even before the emotion-eliciting event occurs, and lead to congruent emotional experiences, regardless of the nature of the emotion-eliciting event. Importantly, we demonstrate that emotional preferences operate at the group level and shape group-based emotional reactions to political events.

To better understand the process of emotion regulation, research on motivational determinants of emotion regulation could be integrated with research on emotion regulation strategies and skills. There is evidence that emotional experiences can be altered by manipulating either emotion regulation strategies or emotional preferences, but not both. It may be that to change emotional experiences it might be most effective to manipulate both what people want to feel (i.e., motivation in emotion regulation) and how they get there (i.e., emotion regulation strategies).

From the perspective of intergroup relations, these studies shed new light on a topic that received little attention in the study of group-based emotions—namely, emotion regulation. Although some scholars have investigated how group-based emotions could be regulated (e.g., Goldenberg et al., 2015; Halperin et al., 2013; Halperin et al., 2014), little research if any has examined to what extent people are motivated to regulate group-based emotions. In the current investigation, we introduce motives in emotion regulation as possible determinants of group-based emotions. Our model links group-based goals, such as political ideology, to emotional preferences, to provide a more comprehensive account of what shapes group-based emotions, especially in the context of political conflicts.

Applied Implications

We believe our findings, although preliminary, may hold pragmatic implications for conflict resolution. As emotions play a cardinal role in intergroup contexts, scholars have recently begun to develop real-world interventions that alter emotional experiences. Most interventions to date have tried to directly decrease negative group-based emotional experiences by utilizing emotion regulation strategies (e.g., Halperin et al., 2013). However, we contend that the main challenge in decreasing group-based emotional experiences in intractable conflicts might lie not in the ability of individuals to change their emotions, but in their motivation to do so. Therefore, in addition to trying to train people to use effective emotion regulation strategies, our findings outline the importance of targeting the motivation to experience certain emotions.

By changing what people want to feel on behalf of their group, emotional and political reactions to intergroup events may be changed in a manner that decreases hostility and potentially promote conflict resolution. Although our findings are preliminary and limited to laboratory studies, they suggest that it might be possible to change group-based emotional preferences by changing the desirability of certain emotions. This manipulation could potentially carry downstream effects on group-based emotional and political reactions. Whether such manipulations could be successful outside the laboratory and whether they might have long-lasting effects remains to be tested.

Limitations and Future Directions

The current investigation has a number of limitations. First, most of our studies focused on negative emotions (i.e., anger and fear). Although these emotions are considered powerful and prevalent in intractable conflicts (Bar-Tal, 2007; Halperin, 2011; Halperin & Gross, 2011), some positive emotions (e.g., hope and empathy) have been found to influence political reactions in conflicts. In our Pilot Study and in Study A1 we demonstrated that our model applies to empathy as well. Building on such findings, in the future it would be important to test the generalizability of our proposed model to other positive emotions. In addition, we measured both emotional experiences and political judgments using self-reports. Although such measures have proven to be valid, future studies could utilize measures of emotional experiences that do not rely on self-report and assess actual aggressive or conciliatory actions within the political context.

Second, our proposed model focuses on how group-based goals, as reflected by political ideology, shape group-based emotional preferences. However, the mechanism by which political ideology shapes emotional preferences remains to be tested. Given that ideology contains different group-based goals (Jost, 2006; Jost et al., 2003), future studies should test whether specific ideological goals underlie specific group-based emotional preferences. Beyond political ideology, in the future it would be important to test whether other types of group-based goals give rise to preference for group-based emotions. For example, might the need to belong to a group or the need for group affirmation influence preferences for group-based emotions?

One important question that was beyond the scope of this investigation concerns group-based emotions targeted at the ingroup, like guilt or pride. Our investigation focused on emotional preferences and experiences targeted at the outgroup, primarily because these have been found to influence attitudes and behaviors toward outgroup members. However, group-based emotions may also be targeted at the ingroup (Smith, Seger, & Mackie, 2007), but affect attitudes and behaviors toward the outgroup. For example, one may want to avoid feeling negative emotions (e.g., guilt, shame) toward the ingroup. The experience of such emotions may shape reactions toward the outgroup (e.g., taking responsibility for the ingroups' misdoings). Therefore, future research should examine preferences for group-based emotions that are targeted at ingroup members and examine what shapes these preferences, and what effects they might have on subsequent political reactions.

Conclusion

Our work proposes that people differ in how they want to feel as members of their group, and that these group-based emotional preferences can shape group-based emotional experiences and political reactions. We showed that in the context of intractable conflicts, rightists and leftists want to experience different emotions as members of their group. The way people want to feel, in turn, carries independent effects on their subsequent emotional reactions toward outgroup members and on their political decisions. In this respect, what people want emotionally as group members, may ultimately be what they get. If this is the case, changing what people want to feel in the intergroup context may serve as a potential step toward conflict resolution.

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