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Title:

Explaining the (Un-) Willingness to Compromise on Sacred Values in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: An Emotion-Based Approach

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is undoubtedly one of the most intractable ongoing conflicts in the world. With its long history of failed peace initiatives it appears to be highly resistant to any kind of resolution. After yet another failed attempt to bring the conflicting parties to the negotiation table instigated by US President Barack Obama in September 2010 Israelis and Palestinians find themselves once again caught in a seemingly endless cycle of violence and resentment. This is puzzling insofar as there is probably no other conflict in the world that has attracted so much interest from scholars, practitioners and activists alike and absorbed so much mental power and dedication to finding a formula for a peaceful solution. Thus, throughout its long duration it has generated countless theoretical proposals by a wide range of national, regional, and international actors leaving no detail or technicality unresolved. Yet, in reality a termination of the conflict seems further away than ever. It suggests that there is indeed a dynamic at work that hinders the opposing parties from making peace and that common negotiation theories, which rest on the assumption of rational actors and the primacy of hard politics, can hardly account for (Bar-Tal 2011: 4; Coleman 2003: 25; Maiese 2006: 189; Rouhana / Bar-Tal 1998: 761; see also Long / Brecke 2003).

In light of these failures, Bar-Siman-Tov (2010) dedicated a whole volume to identify the “barriers to a peaceful resolution” of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As one of the contributors Landman (2010) argues that the missing conciliation between Israelis and Palestinians stems rather from the parties’ *unwillingness to compromise* values that are “sacred” to them than from their *inability to find a solution* on matters of realistic concern. More precisely, she proposes a conceptual distinction between issues, such as the question of security arrangements or the management of common water resources, which are characterized by a *difficulty* to find an agreement between the parties, and issues, such as the division of the disputed land (including the question of Israeli settlements), the status of Jerusalem, or the Right of Return, which are marked by the parties’ *resistance* to find an agreement. The foundation of this distinction is the concept of so-called “protected” (Baron / Spranca 1997) or “sacred values” (Fiske / Tetlock 1997; Tetlock 1999, 2003; Tetlock et al. 2000). Tetlock and colleagues (2000: 853) define these as values that “a moral community implicitly or explicitly treats as possessing infinite or transcendental significance that precludes comparisons, trade-offs, or

indeed any other mingling with bounded or secular values”. That is to say, in contrast to material or instrumental values which are subject to consequentialist thinking or “interest-based, utilitarian calculations” (Landman 2010: 152) sacred ones follow a “logic of appropriateness” (Ginges et al. 2011: 7) or deontological reasoning (Berns et al. 2011). As such, they are “absolute and non-negotiable” (Hanselmann / Tanner 2008: 52), and drive action in a way that is independent from prospects for success (Atran / Axelrod 2008: 222)¹.

Public opinion polls from both Israel and the Palestinian Territories provide indeed strong evidence for the existence of sacred values among the two people. A survey by the Israeli Institute for National Security Studies from the year 2007 revealed, for example, that 41% of the Jewish population in Israel rejected a dismantling of Israeli settlements at any price (Ben Meir / Shaked 2007: 59). The Palestinian AWRAD Institute (2007) in turn found in the same year that 46.5% percent of Palestinians residing in the West Bank and Gaza found an establishment of a Palestinian State that included the annexation of large settlement blocs by Israel as well as territory swaps unacceptable in all circumstances. Last but not least, Shamir and Shikaki (2009) examined in a Joint Israeli-Palestinian Poll the support for a division of the old city of Jerusalem. 37.2 % of the Jewish and 22.4% of the Palestinian respondents “absolutely opposed” the proposed compromise. An experimental study with Jewish-Israeli settlers, Palestinian refugees and Palestinian students supporting either Hamas or Islamic Jihad by Ginges et al. (2007) yielded similar results. Thus, 46% of the participating settlers refused to compromise the ‘Land of Israel’ as part of a peace agreement by all means (so-called *taboo trade-off*). The same held true for 54% of the Palestinian students with reference to the Right of Return and the status of Jerusalem. Among the Palestinian refugees, no more than 80% refused to compromise the Right of Return as a matter of principle (Ginges et al. 2007: 7358). More importantly, the study revealed that those respondents with sacred values act upon them in a seemingly “irrational” manner, i.e. exactly contrary to what rational choice theories would predict. Specifically, when offered a material compensation in return (*taboo plus trade-off*) “moral absolutists” showed a significant increase in

¹ It deserves mentioning that “sacred values” are not equivalent to “religious values”, even though religious beliefs may serve as a source of sacred values. However, as the concept is understood here “even the most mundane material thing may be thought of as a sacred value” (Sheikh et al. 2012: 110). In other words, “sacred” refers to the way individuals think about a preference and not to a divine object.

opposition to compromise, anger reactions as well as support of violence. This implies that the attempt to “buy off” the compliance of this type of respondents clearly backfired. “Non-absolutists”, by contrast, were appeased by the additional material pay-off. Interestingly, opposition to compromise, anger reactions as well as propensity for violence among “moral absolutists” dropped only after the adversary made a symbolic compromise over one of its own sacred values (*symbolic trade-off*) (Ginges et al. 2007: 7357).

Considering the above-mentioned studies as well as the fact that Israelis and Palestinians have so far always avoided to get straight down to the most disputed issues of the conflict, Landman’s (2010) argument seems indeed accurate and empirically valid. A closer look reveals, however, that it lacks some theoretical underpinning. As a matter of fact, “sacredness” poses a mere circumscription of the observation that an issue is invulnerable to material but vulnerable to immaterial, i.e. symbolic calculations for a particular individual. It does not explain, however, why an individual relates to the respective issue in such a way. In other words, it remains to be asked why some Israelis and Palestinians are willing to sacrifice certain issues in return for mere symbolic concessions by the opponent but not in return for material ones. Therefore, the goal of the present paper is to provide a deeper theoretical understanding of the phenomenon of sacred values within the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. More precisely, I intend to construct a number of hypotheses that account for the variance in *opposition towards compromise* among Jewish-Israelis and Palestinians with regards to the core issues in dispute, i.e. division of the territory, settlements, Jerusalem, and Right of Return, which ranges from *non-absolute opposition*, that is, an unwillingness to compromise that can be overcome by means of a material benefit, to *absolute opposition*, that is, an unwillingness to compromise that further increases in the face of a proposed material concession but decreases only after the opponent has symbolically given up a sacred value of his own.

In order to explain the identified theoretical puzzle I apply an emotion-based approach. As several authors note, emotion has been theoretically and empirically understudied in the social sciences, particularly when it comes to the disciplines of international relations and conflict research (Barry / Fulmer / Van Kleef 2004; Bleiker / Hutchison 2008; Crawford 2000; Fattah / Fierke 2010; Hutchison 2010; Hutchison /

Bleiker 2008; Jones / Bodtker 2001; Retzinger / Scheff 2006; Saurette 2006). According to Retzinger and Scheff (2006: 71), however, this lack of attention to emotion and relationships constitutes “the biggest gap in our understanding of conflict”². The rationale underlying this notion is, on the one hand, that “human conflict does not exist in the absence of emotion” (Bodtker / Katz Jameson 2001: 260; see also Jones 2001; Jones / Bodtker 2001), that is to say, that individuals involved in conflict are necessarily emotionally charged, even more so as the conflict becomes intractable (Maiese 2006: 188), and on the other, that emotions are a central driving force of human behaviour and therefore serve as valuable approximations to how people evaluate and act in a given situation (Bar-Tal 2001: 602; Lickel 2011: 378).

Starting from these two assumptions I draw on the *Appraisal Based Framework of Emotion and Emotion Regulation* by Halperin, Sharvit and Gross (2011) which spells out how in the context of intractable intergroup conflict the attitudes of individuals and collectives towards conflict-related events, such as peace negotiations, are shaped by discrete emotions. These emotions are meanwhile mediated by distinct *cognitive appraisals* and *response tendencies* and depend on various affective (long-term sentiments about the adversary) and non-affective (ideology, religious convictions, etc.) predispositions. In accordance with this proposition I hypothesize, firstly, that moral absolutists are unlike non-absolutists characterized by long-term sentiments of fear, anger, and hatred as well as by high levels of religiosity and adherence to the so-called “ethos of conflict”, and secondly, that moral absolutists appraise other than their counterpart compromise solutions which involve a division of the Land of Israel and the city of Jerusalem, or an acknowledgment of the Palestinian Right of Return, as a *symbolic threat*, that is, a threat to their in-group’s belief system and therefore display the emotional reaction of anger and the response tendency of aggression towards the out-group. Symbolic compromises, by contrast, which involve e.g. the recognition of the Jewish people’s ties to its historical homeland by the Palestinian population are appraised as acknowledgment of the in-group’s belief system and therefore elicit the emotion of contentment and a response tendency of openness to new solutions. The practical implication following from this argument is that a successful down-regulation of the negative long-term sen-

² For the role of emotion in negotiation see e.g. Allred (1999); Barry / Oliver (1996); Kumar (1997); Davidson / Greenhalgh (1999); Lawler / Yoon (1995); Morris / Keltner (2000); Thompson / Nadler / Kim (1999).

timents and ethos of conflict among moral absolutists might decrease their threat appraisals and negative emotional reactions in response to taboo trade-offs and therewith break the rigid structure of their political positions.

The relevance of the present study is hence twofold: at a *theoretical* level, it illuminates the phenomenon of absolute opposition towards compromise in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by referring to the appraisal based framework of emotion and emotional regulation which has so far not been applied in the given context. In doing so, it not only closes a theoretical gap but also paves the way for further empirical analysis. At a *societal* level, it provides valuable practical clues about how to overcome the resistance to negotiate the non-negotiable among Israelis and Palestinians, and how to arrive at a compromise solution that also respects the beliefs of those “absolutely opposed”. In view of the fact that the latter are “characterized by a substantively distinct discourse in their reaction to compromise” (Landman 2010: 158) and above all prone to violent extremism (Ginges / Atran 2009, 2011) that can impede the most promising peace process – most poignantly demonstrated by the assassination of former Israeli prime minister, Yitzhak Rabin, by a religious fanatic – it is particularly urgent to find a language that speaks to this politically explosive segment of society, no matter how small or big it is. Such being the case, the underlying paper seeks to make a contribution to the broader discussion on the “barriers to a peaceful resolution” of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In advancing my argument, I proceed as follows: First, I give an overview of the existing academic work on sacred values as well as willingness to compromise and make clear what the added value of the present work is. Second, I introduce the appraisal based framework of emotion and emotion regulation with special emphasis on the role of negative emotions for political attitudes. Third, I apply the theoretical framework to the present case and derive a number of hypotheses that answer the postulated research question. Finally, I conclude my work by outlining some practical implications and suggesting directions for future research.

2. CURRENT STATE OF RESEARCH

The interest of peace and conflict researchers in sacred values is only of recent nature even though the concept itself has been introduced more than a decade ago (Fiske / Tet-

lock 1997)³. Thus, the experimental study of Ginges and colleagues (2007) was the first to recognize that particular issues in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict actually constitute sacred values. Although intuitively some observers might have known this way before it was – to the best of my knowledge – not until Landman (2010) to fully comprehend the meaning of these findings and consequently propose a new understanding of the conflict by which certain compromises are simply “taboo”. Academic research on this topic accordingly is in its early stages. It is nevertheless possible to identify a number of relevant studies which I shall briefly summarize now.

To begin with, several scholars state that sacred values are closely related to group identity (Atran 2007; Atran / Axelrod 2008; Fiske / Tetlock 1997; Ginges / Atran 2011; Landman 2010; Ledgerwood 2007). Unfortunately, none of them gives a profound theoretical argument for that assumption let alone an empirical underpinning. The only minor exception to this rule constitutes Sachdeva’s and Medin’s (2009) replication of the findings of Ginges et al. (2007) in the context of the Indian-Pakistani conflict on Kashmir. Thus, they discovered – although incidentally – that only those individuals for whom the disputed issue was a core element of their group identity treated it as a sacred value. In a similar vein, Atran (2007: 158) hypothesizes that “sacred values necessary to an individual’s identity take on a truly absolute value only when value-related identity seems gravely threatened (for example via humiliation)”. This is most apparent in situations where “different moral communities come into conflict” (Atran / Axelrod 2008: 235). Following this notion Ginges and Atran (2008) examined the influence of humiliation on the willingness to compromise on sacred values among Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza. Their study indicates that support for peace deals decreases when the involved compromise on a sacred value is experienced as humiliating. If the opponent simultaneously compromises on a sacred value of his own and thereby reduces the sense of humiliation, however, support for the peace deal grows. More recently, Sheikh and colleagues (2012) came to know that the likelihood for holding a sacred value increases the more people engage in and are reminded of religious ritual. What is more, the relationship is all the stronger the more people perceive a high threat to the in-group. In view of these findings the authors theorize that threatened groups intentionally incorporate endangered objects into their religious ritual in order to distin-

³ In the latest line of research Dehghani et al. (2009, 2010) apply the concept of sacred values to the international conflict on the Iranian nuclear program.

guish between trustworthy and untrustworthy groups and to strengthen their collective identity, or alternatively, that individuals become more involved in religious rituals the higher the perceived threat so as to demonstrate their commitment to in-group values. Finally, there are a number of studies which revealed that trade-offs involving sacred values are “emotionally stressful and difficult” (Hanselmann / Tanner 2008: 51), or lead to “moral outrage” (Ginges et al. 2007; Tetlock 2000; Tetlock et al. 2000), that is, feelings of anger, disgust and contempt. However, none of the studies mentioned above further investigates the sources of perceived threat or emotional distress. Hence, it is still unclear why and how taboo trade-offs provoke such negative cognitions and affective reactions while symbolic trade-offs obviously do not. Also, there is no theory that outlines how these perceptions and emotions finally translate into the respective decisions.

Irrespective of that, there exists another line of research dealing with people’s readiness to make compromises in the specific Israeli-Palestinian context. Using an experimental study among Jewish-Israelis, Palestinian citizens of Israel, as well as Palestinians residing in the West Bank, Halperin and colleagues (2011) learned, for example, that willingness to compromise is positively related to beliefs about the malleability of the out-group. Likewise, the emotion of hope (Halperin et al. 2008) as well as anger was found to have a positive effect, however, only in the absence of hatred (Halperin / Russell / Dweck / Gross 2011). In a similar vein, Halperin (2011) could show elsewhere that hatred is the only emotion that reduces support for symbolic concessions. Maoz’ and McCauley’s (2005, 2009) results, on the other hand, indicate that support for compromise is best predicted by perceptions of zero-sum relations between Israelis and Palestinians, perceptions of collective threat from Palestinians, personal fear of Palestinians, as well as sympathy towards Palestinians. Gayer et al. (2009) in turn highlight the importance of information about potential losses from a continuation of the conflict, while Bar-Tal et al. (2012) point to the negative effects of the *ethos of conflict*. It follows from this work that both beliefs and emotions play a significant role in shaping people’s attitudes towards compromise. It should be noted, however, that none of these studies took into consideration whether or not any of the respondents was vulnerable to additional material or symbolic incentives thereby making no distinction between absolute and

non-absolute opposition. Therefore, it remains to be asked how moral-absolutists and non-absolutists differ with regards to the identified factors.

In a nutshell the present literature on sacred values and opposition towards compromise provides a number of valuable references albeit no satisfactory solution to the puzzle at hand. The present paper closes this academic gap showing, on the one hand, how moral absolutists and non-absolutists differ in their identities, emotions and beliefs, and on the other, how these differences lead to diverging attitudes towards compromise.

3. THEORETICAL ELABORATION

In the following section I elaborate on the theoretical argument briefly set forth in the introduction. For this purpose, I proceed in two steps: in the first step, I introduce the appraisal based framework of emotion and emotion regulation in detail including its core concepts, the specific context of intractable intergroup conflict to which it refers, the causal relationship it posits, as well as some relevant empirical results. In the second step, I transfer the theoretical propositions of the framework to the present research puzzle and derive a number of hypotheses about why some Israelis and Palestinians are unwilling to sacrifice certain issues for peace.

3.1. The Appraisal Based Framework of Emotion and Emotion Regulation

The appraisal based framework of emotion and emotion regulation describes how in situations of intractable intergroup conflict individual and collective political attitudes, such as towards compromise solutions, are shaped by a combination of cognitive and affective factors. In particular, it suggests a multistage process by which each political attitude can in fact be traced back to a distinct interpretation of conflict-related events and a corresponding emotional reaction. Before delineating this process at length, however, I shall first define the concept of emotion and briefly outline how it is able to account for the variance in opposition towards compromise between moral-absolutists and non-absolutists.

3.1.1. Basic Concepts and Definitions

What are emotions? And what do they tell us about people's attitudes and actions? The first question is admittedly not that easy to answer inasmuch as there is up to date no clear consensus in the academic world about how to conceptualize emotions (Halperin /

Sharvit / Gross 2011: 84; Otto / Euler / Mandl 2000: 11; Petersen 2011: 24). It is commonly understood, however, that emotions constitute highly complex psychophysiological phenomena which involve a number of different components, including bodily reactions, facial expressions or intersubjective feelings, and as such play a central role in directing human behaviour (Bar-Tal 2001: 602; Crawford 2000: 125; Jarymowicz / Bar-Tal 2006: 369; Lickel 2011: 379; Otto / Euler / Mandl 2000: 15; Ulich / Mayring 2003: 52; see also Frijda 1986; Geen 1995; Lazarus 1991; Oatley / Jenkins 1996; Zajonc 1998). More precisely, the perspective adopted in the present study is that emotions serve as mediators between how people evaluate and act in a given situation (Lickel 2011: 378). This kind of understanding goes back to a particular school of thought in the psychology of emotion by which *cognitive appraisals* and *response tendencies* are the two most important features of emotion (Halperin / Sharvit / Gross 2011: 84)⁴.

Cognitive Appraisal and Response Tendency

Appraisal Theory of Emotion holds in its most basic form that emotions are elicited by cognitive appraisals, that is, subjective evaluations of events, situations or other kinds of internal or external stimuli which typically operate at a direct, immediate and intuitive level (Arnold 1960: 172; Hess / Kappas 1990: 248; Roseman / Smith 2001: 3; see also Frijda 1986; Lazarus 1991; Ortony / Clore / Collins 1988; Roseman 1984; Scherer 1984; Smith / Ellsworth 1985)⁵. According to Magda Arnold (1960), one of the first and most prominent proponents of this theory, the appraisal process follows a three-stage sequence. Thus, the first stage includes a factual judgement about the *existence* of a given situation, i.e. the detection or expectation of change in the environment of the individual. The second stage comprises an evaluative judgement about the *desirability* of that situation, i.e. whether it is good or bad for the individual and its concerns. Fi-

⁴ Interestingly, Petersen (2011: 24) considers these also as most relevant for studying political conflict. Nevertheless, it should be noted that appraisal theory constitutes only one particular approach to emotions alongside many others. In line with this, I make no pretence to give an exhaustive account of the phenomenon of emotion or to provide a consensual definition. For a brief introduction into the conflicting theories of emotion see for instance Crawford (2000). An academic discussion of the appraisal concept can be found in Roseman / Smith (2001) or Eyesenck / Keane (2011).

⁵ Some scholars hold, however, that it is possible to reconstruct the appraisal process consciously after the stimulus (Kappas 2001, 2006). Thus, it must be believed that emotions are elicited by a combination of *conscious* and *unconscious* appraisals that take place simultaneously and partly independently from each other (Hess / Kappas 1990: 249).

nally, the third stage involves a judgement about the *manageability* of the situation, i.e. whether the individual has the capabilities to cope with the situation or not. To give an example, the appraisal of an existent, positive and manageable situation would elicit the emotion of happiness, whereas an anticipated, negative, and hardly manageable situation would invoke fear (Galliker 2009: 296).

The particular value of an appraisal based conceptualization of emotion lies in its ability to solve a number of theoretical problems that alternative approaches had difficulties to address. Most notably, it can account for the wide spectrum of human emotions as they manifest themselves, for example, in different gestures, facial expressions, physiological changes, or body reactions. Consequently, distinct emotions are the result of distinct evaluations of the same stimulus. That is to say, depending on which appraisal components are combined different emotional reactions will be evoked, so that “each distinct emotion is elicited by a distinctive pattern of appraisal” (Roseman / Smith 2001: 6; Eyesenck / Keane 2011: 573). Secondly, appraisal theory is able to explain why various individuals experience different emotions in an objectively identical situation, or likewise, why an objectively similar situation evokes different emotions in the same individual at various points in time. Consequently, it is not the objective qualities of the stimulus per se that induce the emotional reaction but rather its subjective interpretation. From this it follows that “different individuals who appraise the same situation in significantly different ways will feel different emotions” (Roseman / Smith 2001: 6). Similarly, an individual who appraises the same situation in significantly different ways at various points in time will feel different emotions. Thirdly, the appraisal concept can illuminate why objectively distinct situations may trigger identical emotional reactions in different individuals. In particular, it holds that every time a stimulus is evaluated by an identical pattern of appraisals – be it by the same individual or not – it will lead to the same emotional reaction. Finally, appraisals can account for seemingly “irrational” emotions. Accordingly, conscious and unconscious appraisal processes that operate simultaneously may be at times at conflict. As the result, conflicting, involuntary, or inappropriate appraisals may invoke emotions that seem unreasonable or maladaptive in a given situation (Roseman / Smith 2001: 9).

Beyond that, appraisal theory claims that each emotion is accompanied by a particular type of attitudinal or behavioural *action* or *response tendency*, that is, an impulse

or motivation to act in a certain way (Arnold 1960)⁶. Following this line of thought, the authors of the appraisal based framework define emotions as “flexible response sequences that transform a substantive event into a motivation to respond to it in a particular manner” (Halperin / Schwartz 2010: 217). This motivational effect of emotions is grounded on a fundamental hedonistic alignment by which human beings are naturally geared to maximize positive and minimize negative mental states (Abele-Brehm / Gendolla 2000: 299). Hence, emotions have evolved as adaptive reactions to challenges from the environment (Hess / Kappas 1990: 248; Jarymowicz / Bar-Tal 2006: 369) and function to “monitor and safeguard the individual’s concerns” (Frijda / Mesquita 1994: 54). They do so, on the one hand, by providing information about how the individual relates to his environment and about whether or nor this relationship requires modification, and on the other, by regulating his behaviour accordingly (Abele-Brehm / Gendolla 2000: 298; Smith / Seger / Mackie 2007: 433):

“[Emotions] signal the presence of circumstances that threaten or profit important goals (...) and direct and energize behavior toward the remediation of such threats or the exploitation of such benefits” (Cottrell / Neuberg 2005: 771).

To be more precise, emotions raise the salience of one concern over all others, and activate the necessary physiological and cognitive processes to achieve the desired change or consistency in the individual’s environment. Frijda (1986) refers to this activation process as changes in “action readiness”. Similarly, Petersen notes that “emotion is a mechanism that triggers action to satisfy a pressing concern” (2002: 17). In this sense, positive emotions create the desire to maintain a pleasant condition whereas negative emotions create the desire to avoid or modify an unpleasant condition. It has to be noted though that the relationship between action tendency and behaviour is flexible insofar as the former does not necessarily translate into the latter but rather depends on additional external factors. To give an example, the emotion of fear is commonly related to the action tendency of creating a safer environment. Depending on the situation, however, this can be achieved either by fight or flight (Halperin / Sharvit / Gross 2011: 85).

In short, the conceptualization of emotions as being preceded by a particular pattern of appraisal and succeeded by a particular action tendency (that functions to satisfy the individuals needs that arise from that appraisal) suggests that emotions “serve as

⁶ I shall henceforth use the terms “action tendency” and “response tendency” interchangeably.

mediators and as data for processes of judgment, evaluation, and decision-making” (Bar-Tal 2001: 602). Thus, their analytical value for the present study lies in the causal link they establish between how individuals experience a trade-off situation and why they react in that situation the way they do.

Affects, Feelings, Moods, and Sentiments

Apart from emotion there exist a number of related terms which need to be specified and delimited from the appraisal based conceptualization mentioned above. For example, *affect* shall be understood as either a synonymous or superordinate term for emotional states (Barry / Fulmer / Van Kleef 2004: 72; Jones 2001: 85; Otto / Euler / Mandl 2000: 13) while *feeling* usually denotes a much narrower understanding of the phenomenon, that is, a subjective sensation that does not necessarily include cognitive elements. Finally, *moods* and *sentiments* (also chronic emotions) can be considered as two equivalent concepts which refer to “a temporally stable emotional disposition toward a person, group, or symbol” (Halperin / Sharvit / Gross 2011: 85). As such, it persists over a longer period of time than an emotion, has a comparatively lower intensity, and is unrelated to a particular event. Similar to emotions sentiments have the function to provide the individual with information about the realization of his goals and to direct his behaviour accordingly. However, due to their enduring character they are not associated with an immediate and specific response tendency but rather with more general, long-term motivations, so-called *emotional goals* (Abele-Grehm / Gendolla 2000: 300; Barry / Fulmer / Van Kleef 2004: 72; Halperin / Schwartz 2010: 218).

Collective, Group-Based, and Intergroup Emotions

Furthermore, it deserves mentioning that emotions might have a social dimension. As a matter of fact, the conventional understanding of appraisal theorists of emotion was that of an individual phenomenon. As Manstead and Fisher (2001) noted, however, such an understanding de-emphasizes the social context in which emotional experience usually takes place. Consequently, they introduced the concept of *social appraisal* which denotes “the appraisal of the thoughts, feelings, and actions of other persons in response to an emotional situation” (Manstead / Fisher 2001: 223). The underlying premise is that appraisals are in fact socially constructed. Hence, the social world needs to be taken into account when studying the appraisal process. More precisely, they argue that the actual object of appraisal is not the event per se but rather the event as it relates to the individ-

ual (Manstead / Fisher 2001: 224). Since the individual is inherently social in nature, however, that is, since the individual by and large defines itself in relation to others, it is very likely that events are also appraised in relation to the reaction of others and not merely in relation to the self. In a similar vein, Smith and colleagues posit in their *Intergroup Emotions Theory* (Devos et al. 2002; Mackie / Devos / Smith 2000; Smith 1993, 1999; Smith / Mackie 2008; Smith / Seger / Mackie 2007) that emotions might be *group-based*, that is, “felt by individuals as a result of their membership in or identification with a certain group or society” (Halperin / Sharvit / Gross 2011: 85; see also Iyer / Leach 2009)⁷. Accordingly, they found that appraisal processes, emotional reactions and action tendencies at the intergroup level follow the same pattern as at the interpersonal level (Devos et al. 2002). The subjacent argument is that once individuals become part of a social group they no longer perceive themselves as mere individuals but rather as exemplary members of that group so that “in-groups and in-group memberships become part of the self” (Mackie / Devos / Smith 2000: 603). As a result, individuals are likely to become emotional also about events that affect their in-group:

“When a social identity is salient, appraisals of situations or events relevant to that particular social identity will also trigger emotions. Individuals may not be personally concerned by the situation or the event, but they will experience emotion because it may help or hurt their group. When appraisals occur on a group basis, emotions are experienced on behalf of the ingroup” (Devos et al. 2002: 113).

In principle, such group-based emotions may be directed at various objects including events, individuals or social groups. In an intergroup context, however, the latter is the most relevant case. This specific type of group-based emotions is therefore commonly referred to as *intergroup emotions* (Halperin / Sharvit / Gross 2011: 85; see also Bar-Tal / Halperin / de Rivera 2007; Iyer / Leach 2009; Smith / Mackie 2008; Smith / Seger / Mackie 2007).

An empirical study by Smith, Seger and Mackie (2007) was able to confirm that group-level emotions are indeed fundamentally distinct from individual-level emotions and contingent upon the level of identification with the in-group. Also, the study verified that group-level emotions regulate group members’ intragroup and intergroup atti-

⁷ Other authors refer to “group-based emotions” as “group-level emotions”. I shall use both terms interchangeably.

tudes and behavioural tendencies just as individual emotions do at the personal level. Ergo, group-based emotions are able to explain how individuals interpret and act within an intergroup situation towards the out-group (Reifen Tagar / Federico / Halperin 2011: 158). More interestingly, they found that group-level emotions are socially shared within the in-group, in fact all the more the stronger people identify with each other. In line with these findings, Bar-Tal and colleagues (2007) argue that emotions which are directed at generalized out-groups or group-related events might in fact become *collective*, that is, shared among large numbers of society members (see also Stephan / Stephan 2000).

The Feedback Effect of Intensive and Enduring Emotions on the Appraisal Process

Last but not least, emotions themselves may bring about a feedback effect on the appraisal process by which only emotion-congruent information is sought. Thus, Lerner and Keltner (2000) argue that “each emotion activates a cognitive predisposition to appraise future events in line with the central-appraisal dimensions that triggered the emotion” (Bar-Tal / Halperin 2011: 225). That is to say, highly intense or long lasting emotions may narrow our information processing such that we pay attention only to those cues that correspond to our emotions. As a result, our information collection becomes distorted and selective (Abele-Grehm / Gendolla 2000: 302; Petersen 2011: 27):

“We propose that strong [and enduring] emotion can initiate *attentional funneling*, a positive feedback loop in which strong feeling narrows attention to goal-relevant information (Easterbrook, 1959). Focusing on only the most goal relevant aspects of events may then increase their apparent importance, which in turn may intensify emotional reactions to them. An increase in emotional intensity may further narrow attentional focus, making the overall cycling of emotion and information support the French saying that we come to believe what we fear” (Clore / Gasper 2000: 39; italics added).

In this sense, negative intensive emotions or sentiments may cause comparatively negative appraisals while positive intensive emotions or sentiments may cause comparatively positive appraisals. For instance, the long-term sentiment of fear can make individuals highly anxious about a pending catastrophe because they perceive only information that confirms their fear while ignoring information that contrasts it. In short, the effects of long lasting and very intense emotions on human cognition imply that it is necessary to consider the wider “emotional climate” (Bar-Tal / Halperin / de Rivera

2007: 443; see also de Rivera 1992) in which individuals are situated in order to make sense of their appraisal processes and subsequent short-term emotional reactions. In the present case, this climate is first and foremost determined by the persistent conflict situation between Israelis and Palestinians. As I shall demonstrate next, it gives rise to a particularly negative emotional climate which in turn has a very destructive feedback effect on people's perception of conflict-related events.

3.1.2. The Context of Intractable Intergroup Conflict

Conflict theory commonly defines *intergroup conflict* as a situation in which two or more groups *perceive* that they have incompatible goals or interests and decide to *act* upon this perception (Bar-Tal 2011a: 1; Kriesberg 2007: 2). Such definition implies that the appearance of conflict necessarily involves, first, a subjective evaluation of the goal and interests of the in-group and the out-group as well as how they relate to each other, and second, the expression of such evaluation in a respective action readiness. In this sense, conflict situations can be considered to be inherently tied up with emotions inasmuch as the two most relevant components of emotions, cognitive appraisals and response tendencies, are also “an integral part of the most basic definition of conflict” (Halperin / Sharvit / Gross 2011: 86):

“Perceived interruption of plans and-or perceived discrepancies between our goals and aspirations and reality are the things most identified as emotion-eliciting (Ortony, Clore, and Collins 1988). Since the triggers of emotion and the triggers of perceived conflict are the same, to recognize that we are in conflict is to acknowledge that we have been triggered emotionally” (Jones / Bodtker 2001: 221).

It follows from this that situations of intergroup conflict are by definition to a high degree emotionally charged (Bodtker / Katz Jameson 2001; Jones 2001; Maiese 2006). If a conflict becomes intractable, however, this circumstance is further exaggerated (Coleman 2003: 25; Halperin / Gross 2010: 1; Halperin / Russell / Dweck / Gross 2011: 275; Lickel 2011: 378; Lindner 2006; Retzinger / Scheff 2000). Thus, Kriesberg (1993, 1998) characterizes *intractable conflicts* as violent, protracted, being perceived to be irresolvable, and demanding extensive investment from the parties. According to Bar-Tal (2007), they are furthermore total, central, and being perceived to be zero-sum. In other words, intractability refers to immense losses of life, accumulated animosities and

hostilities that last for more than one generation as well as vast and enduring material and psychological resources. Moreover, it concerns existential threats that permanently occupy the lives of the society members, and the belief that one can benefit only at the expense of the other (see also Fiol / Pratt / O'Connor 2009; Northrup 1989; Rouhana / Bar-Tal 1998; Zartman 2005)⁸. Needless to say, living in such a conflict-laden environment poses an extraordinary psychological challenge to everyone involved (Bar-Tal 2007: 1434). On the one hand, it becomes very difficult for the society members to satisfy their basic needs, which from a psychological perspective include e.g. a sense of certainty, security, manageability, or positive self-image. On the other hand, people need to find a way to cope with the chronic stress, hardship, frustration, pain, grief, anxiety, suffering, and more that comes along with the conflict situation. Finally, intractability demands a high level of loyalty, unity, and commitment to the collective cause from the society members in order to successfully resist the rival party. Therefore, Bar-Tal (2007) argues, societies in intractable intergroup conflict develop a unique *socio-psychological infrastructure* to meet these severe psychological challenges. It consists of three mutually interrelated but distinct elements: collective memory, ethos of conflict, and collective emotional orientation (see also Bar-Tal 1998, 2000; Bar-Tal / Halperin 2011; Bar-Tal / Halperin / Oren 2010; Bar-Tal / Halperin / Sharvit / Zafran 2012; Bar-Tal / Teichman 2005; Halperin / Oren / Bar-Tal 2010).

Collective memory thereby describes a set of societal beliefs about the outbreak and course of the conflict⁹. As such, it provides a consistent and meaningful yet highly biased and selective account of the conflict's history for the society members which also finds its public expression, e.g. via school books or official commemorations. It typically gains the status of universal validity and presents the in-group in a positive light by depicting it as the victim of the conflict, justifying its violent acts, and delegitimizing the out-group (see also Paez / Hou-Fu Liu 2011: 114). As a result, parties involved in intractable conflict often come up with opposing narratives of their common past¹⁰. In a

⁸ As Bar-Tal (2007) notes, the state of intractability begins once all seven features appear. However, intractable conflicts may escalate and de-escalate and consequently the intensity of the seven features might change over time as well.

⁹ *Societal beliefs* shall be understood as „cognitions shared by society members on topics and issues that are of special concern for their society and contribute to their sense of uniqueness” (Bar-Tal 2007: 1435).

¹⁰ For more details on narratives, particularly in the Israeli-Palestinian context, see e.g. Auerbach (2009, 2010); Friedman (2003); Kelman (1987, 1997, 1999, 2001, 2010); Lustick (2006); Ross (2007); or Rotberg (2006).

similar vein, they develop and maintain a set of societal beliefs about the conflict's present and future, which is called *ethos of conflict*. As Bar-Tal et al. (2012: 41) emphasize, the ethos can be viewed as a type of ideology inasmuch as it "supplies the epistemic basis for the hegemonic social consciousness of the society and serves as one of the foundations of societal life" by construing a connection between the present situation and the society's goals and aspirations that foster their future development. It contains the following eight themes: First, societal beliefs about *the justness of one's own goals* which refer to the motivations and justifications for why the in-group is in conflict with the enemy, second, societal beliefs about *security* which highlight the importance of and conditions for the nation's survival, third, societal beliefs of *positive collective self-image* which attribute positive traits, values and behaviour to the in-group, fourth, societal beliefs of *one's own victimization* which present the in-group as the victim of the conflict, fifth, societal beliefs of *delegitimizing the opponent* which depict the adversary in extremely negative ways and deny its humanity, sixth, societal beliefs of *patriotism* which stress the importance of loyalty and sacrifice for the nation, seventh, societal beliefs of *unity* which highlight the importance of neglecting internal disagreement and uniting forces in light of existential threat, and finally, societal beliefs of *peace* which describe the own society as peace-loving and willing to end the conflict (see also Bar-Tal 1998, 2000, 2007; Bar-Tal / Salomon 2006).

Taken together the societal beliefs of the collective memory and ethos of conflict play an important role for shaping, maintaining, and reinforcing the society members' social identity. In particular, people's sense of identification with society usually grows stronger in times of intractable conflict due to the increased need for security and belonging. It depends, however, to a large extent on the perception that "other individuals are similar and share the same notion of being members of society, whereas other individuals are different and therefore belong to other groups" (Oren / Bar-Tal 2006: 294). The societal beliefs of the collective memory and ethos of conflict meanwhile provide the foundation for such similarity, or as Bar-Tal (2007: 1443) notes, they offer "contents par excellence that imbue social identity with meaning". Therefore, strong identification with the society in intractable conflicts typically correlates with the internalization of the societal beliefs of the collective memory and ethos of conflict. This again has a major effect on the emotional functioning of society members, inasmuch as:

“[The societal beliefs] evoke the particular emotion(s), (...) they supply the criteria and sensitivity necessary for the selection of information which, in turn, evokes emotion; they affect the interpretation and evaluation of situations in terms of particular emotions; signal what emotions are appropriate in general and especially in particular situations; direct how these emotions should be expressed and guide the behaviors performed in reaction to these emotions” (Jarymowicz / Bar-Tal 2006: 376).

As a consequence, societies involved in intractable intergroup conflict develop a *collective emotional orientation*, that is, a tendency to express identical emotional reactions in particular situations (Bar-Tal 2007: 1439). In view of the constant and continuous exposition to threat, danger, and harmful acts by the opponent this concerns first and foremost negative emotions. Thus, these societies become dominated by the collective emotions of fear, anger, and hatred which eventually turn into deeply entrenched sentiments due to the prolonged nature of the conflict (Bar-Tal 2007: 1439; Bar-Tal / Teichman 2005: 73; Jarymowicz / Bar-Tal 2006: 378):

“The nature of long-term, intractable conflicts creates a fertile ground for the continuation and aggregation of emotions beyond the immediate time frame. Some major conflict-related events, which may be accompanied by repeated dissemination of specific information about the conflict, may produce stable group-based emotional sentiments toward the opponent and the conflict. As a result, stable negative intergroup emotions such as fear, anger, and hatred become an inherent part of the standing psychological context of individuals in such conflicts” (Halperin / Sharvit / Gross 2011: 87).

Considering the feedback effect of enduring emotions on the appraisal process this means that people who are affected by such negative long-term sentiments are open only to that information which corresponds to their emotions, that is, to the societal beliefs of the collective memory and ethos of conflict:

“Involvement in intractable conflict tends to ‘close minds’ and stimulate tunnel vision, which excludes incongruent information and alternative approaches to the conflict” (Bar-Tal 2007: 1447).

In short, intractable conflicts create a vicious cycle of mutually reinforcing societal beliefs and emotional sentiments which – if not interrupted – leads to an endless continuation of the conflict situation. The implication of this finding is that the political attitudes of people affected by intractable conflict can only be understood within the above-

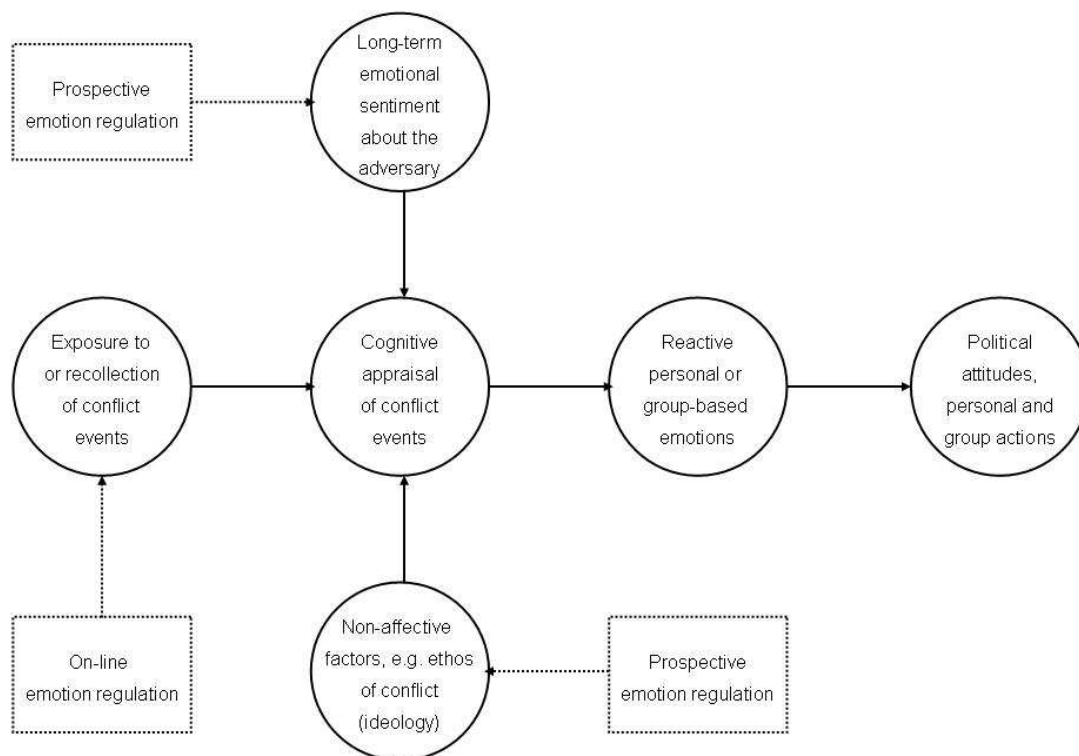
mentioned socio-psychological processes. The appraisal based framework of emotion and emotion regulation therefore highlights the role of long-term sentiments and societal beliefs for the appraisal process and explicates how these factors together translate into distinct conflict-relevant political attitudes.

3.1.3. From Emotions to Political Attitudes

In particular, the appraisal based framework proposes a multi-stage process that begins with the exposure of an individual to a conflict-related event. This can take any of the following three forms: first, a new event takes place, second, new information about the conflict is disseminated, or third, an event from the past is recollected. The respective event or information can as such be positive or negative, i.e. a generous peace offer, a cessation of hostilities, or by contrast a military operation or terrorist attack. In any case, in order to have an effect on his political attitudes the exposed individual has to appraise the event as meaningful either to his or to the concerns of his in-group. Likewise, the event may be experienced in person, or more likely, indirectly, i.e. by a small number of individuals who then forward their experiences to fellow in-group members via various communication channels, including group leaders, mass media or other individuals. In case of an indirect experience the event or information will elicit group-based – or when specifically directed at the out-group – intergroup emotions (Halperin / Schwartz 2010: 219; Halperin / Sharvit / Gross 2011: 87). Given that the conflict-related event is relevant for himself or his in-group, the exposed individual will attempt to make sense of his experience by further evaluating the situation. This subjective appraisal process determines which distinct individual or group-based emotions and accompanying action tendencies are elicited as a consequence. As appraisal theories of emotion hold, however, individuals may appraise the same event very differently and therefore experience diverging emotions in an identical situation. Halperin, Sharvit and Gross (2011: 88) attribute such variation to three factors (see Figure 1):

First of all, the appraisal depends on the *framing* of the conflict-related event. To give an example, a peace offer by the adversary that is represented as genuine and honest will most probably arouse hope and sympathy. If the same offer, however, is portrayed as treacherous and deceptive it will rather provoke anger and hatred. Second of all, a number of *non-affective factors* have to be taken into consideration. These include the personality of the individual, its moral values, religious conviction, socio-economic

Figure 1: The Appraisal Based Framework of Emotion and Emotion Regulation (according to Halperin, Sharvit, and Gross 2011)



status as well as deeply held ideology about the conflict and the enemy, called *ethos of conflict* (cf. Bar-Tal 2007). Most important of all, the framework predicts *long-term emotional sentiments* about the adversary to influence how someone appraises a conflict event. Taken together, the framework posits that:

“The occurrence of a new event, integrated with these three groups of factors [framing of the event, non-affective factors and long-term sentiments], will shape the cognitive appraisal of the event, which will provide the basis for the development of corresponding discrete emotions. In turn, these discrete emotions, and particularly the emotional goals and response tendencies embedded within them, will dictate the behavioural and political responses to the event” (Halperin / Sharvit / Gross 2011: 89).

Recently conducted empirical studies by Halperin and colleagues lend some first validity to the model. More precisely, using a two-wave nationwide representative panel design among Jewish-Israelis Halperin and Gross (2010) could show that the long-term sentiment of anger towards Palestinians, which had been identified among the respon-

dents 13 months in advance of the Gaza War, served as the most reliable predictor of short-term anger responses toward Palestinians during the war. Moreover, the effect of anger sentiments on anger responses during the war was mediated by the participants' cognitive appraisal of unjust Palestinian behaviour. Another study (Halperin 2011), which was conducted shortly before the 2007 Annapolis Peace Summit again among a representative nation-wide sample of Jewish-Israelis, revealed not only that attitudes towards the peace process were shaped by the negative emotions of fear, hatred and anger and the associated appraisals, but also that each emotion had a distinct effect. Thus, it can be reckoned that each political attitude can in fact be attributed to a distinct (combination of) emotional reaction(s) to a conflict event. The most relevant of these emotions shall be outlined now:

Fear

Fear is a primary event-based emotion which arises in situations of perceived threat and danger to the physical safety of the self and/or his environment or society. Such threat and danger can result from a present situation, or alternatively, be recalled from the past or anticipated in the future. Similarly, it may refer to another individual, such as a murderer, or a collective phenomenon, such as a terror attack or war (Bar-Tal 2001: 603; Cottrell / Neuberg 2005: 773; Jarymowicz / Bar-Tal 2006: 371; Petersen 2011: 38; see also Gray 1989; Öhman 1993; Rachman 1978). In addition to that, fear involves appraisals of relative weakness and low coping capabilities as well as high estimations of risk and pessimistic outlooks. Accordingly, it is associated with the action tendency to avoid risks and create a safer environment by means of fight or flight¹¹ (Halperin 2011: 25; Halperin et al. 2008: 2; Halperin / Sharvit / Gross 2011: 91; see also Roseman 1984; Lerner / Keltner 2001). More interestingly, fear may not only be elicited by consciously appraised threats and dangers but also by a number of additional conditioned or unconditioned cues which do not necessarily constitute an actual risk to the well-being of the self or his environment (Bar-Tal 2001: 603). Thus, the individual may become attuned to information about (seemingly) threatening objects, events, or situations which he then stores in his *implicit emotional memory*. This is particularly problematic inasmuch as this type of memory is very fast in the learning of an evaluation but slow in and resistant

¹¹ Petersen (2011: 38) suggests that “fight” results from the appraisal of high coping capabilities whereas “flight” refers to the perception of low coping capabilities.

to its unlearning. As a result, this memory will unconsciously and automatically activate fear reactions whenever the individual encounters the conditioned or similar stimuli thereby overcoming the individual's "cognitive control, rationality, and logic" (Jarymowicz / Bar-Tal 2006: 372). That is also why fear is considered to be "perhaps the primary mechanism for attentional funnelling" (Petersen 2011: 38). Most notably, enduring experiences of fear make individuals extraordinarily sensitive to threatening stimuli, prioritize information about dangers, and overestimate their significance. Hence, self-regulation or alternative views of a given situation become very difficult once the individual's consciousness is flooded with fear:

"[Fear] tends to cause adherence to know situations and avoidance of risky, uncertain, and novel ones; it tends to cause cognitive freezing, which reduces openness to new ideas, and resistance to change (...). Finally, fear motivates defense and protection from events that are perceived as threatening. When defense and protection are not efficient, fear may lead to aggressive acts against the perceived source of threat" (Jarymowicz / Bar-Tal 2006: 372).

In line with these propositions Halperin (2011) found in an experimental survey with Jewish-Israelis that the emotion of fear has a negative effect on support for territorial, i.e. security-related compromise as well as on support for taking risks in negotiation. Moreover, Cottrell and Neuberg (2005) identified fear as a secondary emotional reaction to threats to group values.

Anger

The emotion of anger, on the other hand, is typically elicited when a particular action of another person or group is appraised as being unjustified, unfair or violating accepted social norms (Averill 1982). Moreover, it is commonly associated with cognitions of relative strength and high control of the self or the in-group (Mackie / Devos / Smith 2000), arbitrary, inconsiderate, or malevolent actions against the self or the in-group (Bar-Tal / Teichman 2005: 75, Petersen 2011: 35), threats or damage to personal or in-group resources, property, rights, values or identity (Bar-Tal / Teichman 2005: 75; Cottrell / Neuberg 2005: 773) as well as to the obstruction of desired outcomes (Cottrell / Neuberg 2005: 773). As such, anger is closely related to the fundamental attribution error by which the blame for the wrongdoing is directed at other individuals not the situation. This in turn often gives rise to a desire for revenge (Bar-Tal / Teichman 2005: 75; Halperin 2011: 27; Lindner 2006: 275; Petersen 2011: 35; see also Small / Lerner /

Fischhoff 2006). More specifically, anger evokes the action tendency to correct the perceived bad behaviour either by aggressive means such as punishing, confronting, hitting, killing, or attacking the initiator (Berkowitz 1993; Fischer / Roseman 2007; Mackie / Devos / Smith 2000; Roseman / Wiest / Swartz 1994). As Halperin emphasizes, however, anger may also provoke rather moderate behaviour such as “to reconcile and change the source of anger or the nature of the interaction” (Halperin 2011: 27). Thus, he and his colleagues found that it can lead to both constructive as well as destructive political attitudes. In particular, their experimental study with Jewish-Israelis revealed that a manipulation of anger in fact facilitated willingness to compromise, however, only for those respondents with low levels of hatred. Otherwise it had the opposite effect (Halperin / Russell / Dweck / Gross 2011). Other studies in the Israeli-Palestinian context revealed that anger is positively correlated with willingness to take risks in negotiations, openness for new information about the adversary (Halperin 2011) as well as non-violent policies in the de-escalation stage of conflict (Reifen-Tagar et al. 2009). Results from Northern Ireland and the United States, by contrast, yielded that anger leads to an objection of negotiation, compromise, reconciliation, and forgiveness (Tam / Christopher / Halperin 2007), as well as to support for military operations (Huddy / Feldman / Cassese 2007; Lerner et al. 2003; Skitka et al. 2006).

Hatred

Hatred can be described as a continuous, secondary and object-based emotion. That is to say, it is directed at a particular individual or group that is condemned “fundamentally and all inclusively” (Bar-Tal / Halperin / de Rivera 2007: 448; see also Opatow / McClelland 2007; Petersen 2011; Royzman / McCauley / Rosin 2005; Sternberg 2003; Sternberg / Sternberg 2008). It results from an extremely negative evaluation of the hated object. More specifically, hatred is related to the cognitive appraisals that, first, the out-group has an innately and unchangeably evil character, and second, that the out-group has inflicted intentional harm upon the in-group (Halperin 2008; see also Ben-Zeev 1992). Similarly, Petersen (2011: 43) writes that hatred stems from the belief that the opponent is “both inherently defective and dangerous”. In this sense, hatred implies that the very character or existence of out-group is problematic. Hence, it is associated with low expectation for positive change, high levels of despair, dehumanization and delegitimization (Halperin / Sharvit / Gross 2011: 92; see also Bartlett 2005; Haslam

2006) as well as particularly aggressive and violent action tendencies such as to injure, remove, or in the worst case to eliminate the hated group in its entirety (Halperin / Schwartz 2010: 223; Petersen 2011: 43; see also Halperin 2008; Staub 2005): “Hatred is a hostile feeling (...) that consists of malice, repugnance, and willingness to harm or even to annihilate the object of hatred” (Bar-Tal / Teichman 2005: 73). With regards to its effect on political attitudes empirical results from Jewish-Israeli society indicate that hatred is closely related to unwillingness to reconcile with the adversary, low openness for new information, the demand to stop negotiations immediately, and the support for indiscriminate military action against the opponent (Halperin 2011). Other studies point to political activism, extremism, and racism against the out-group (Mudde 2005; Watts 1996). In any case, it becomes evident that hatred constitutes one of the most powerful and destructive motivational forces in any conflict situation (Halperin 2008; Petersen 2002).

Guilt

As opposed to the three negative emotions mentioned above guilt is considered to play a positive role for the de-escalation and resolution of conflicts, particularly when experienced at a group-level. It results from the appraisal that the in-group has inflicted harm upon the out-group and thereby violated norms and values to which it is committed. In other words, guilt involves the acknowledgment of one’s responsibility for someone else’s suffering. As such, it can be understood as a perceived discrepancy between the ideal and the real image of one’s self or in-group (Halperin / Schwartz 2010: 224; Roos 2000: 269; Ulich / Mayring 2003:183). Cottrell and Neuberg (2005: 772) refer to this phenomenon as a threat to the “moral standing of the perceiver’s group”. Empirical research indicates that the experience of group-based guilt is closely related to the emotional goal of rectifying the in-group’s wrongdoings and compensating the victims accordingly, for instance, by offering reparations (Branscombe / Doosje 2004; Brown / Čehajić 2008; Brown et al. 2008; Iyer / Leach / Crosby 2003; Zebel et al. 2008). To give an example, Čehajić and colleagues (2011) found in two studies, conducted in Israel and Bosnia and Herzegovina that those respondents who affirmed themselves displayed higher levels of group-based guilt and as a result were more supportive of reparation policies for the respective victimized out-group.

Hope

A similarly positive effect for the de-escalation and resolution of conflicts is expected from hope (Halperin / Schwartz 2010: 226; Halperin / Sharvit / Gross 2011: 93) It is usually elicited by the appraisal that a better future is possible, or more precisely, by the expectation or visualization of a positive, attainable and vitally important goal that the individual (or collective) strives for. This may also include the longing to be relieved from negative conditions. Thus, hope comes along with positive feelings about the desired events or outcomes (Halperin / Schwartz 2010: 226; see also Averill / Catlin / Chon, 1990; Lazarus 1991; Staats / Stassen, 1985; Stotland 1969). Unlike other emotions, however, hope is not associated with a specific behavioural response tendency. It rather equals a “state of mind” (Bar-Tal 2001: 604) which “liberates people from fixed – and limiting – beliefs about the irreconcilability of the conflict to find creative ways to resolve it. It enables them to imagine a future that is different from the past and present and motivates them to change their situation by means of actions that were long unthinkable” (Halperin / Schwartz 2010: 225). As such, hope rests upon higher cognitive processing and presupposes mental representations of “setting goals, planning how to achieve them, use of imagery, creativity, cognitive flexibility, mental exploration of novel situations, and even risk taking” (Jarymowicz / Bar-Tal 2006: 373). With regard to its effect on political attitudes, empirical studies from the Israeli-Palestinian and Northern Irish conflicts revealed that hope facilitates willingness to make compromises as well as to forgive the opponent (Moeschberger et al. 2005; Rosler / Gross / Halperin 2009). Other results indicate that individuals with high levels of personal and collective hope were significantly less inclined to delegitimize the adversary as well as to identify with the *collective memory* of a society (Halperin et al. 2008).

Contentment

Last but not least, I shall mention the emotion of *contentment* (also happiness, joy or satisfaction). It is admittedly not well researched within the context of political attitudes but nevertheless plays an important role for the present research question. Contentment arises when the individual or in-group recognizes a situation as safe and having a high level of certainty and low levels of effort (Fredrickson 1998: 7; see also Ellsworth / Smith 1988), or alternatively, when the individual or in-group has realized its aspired

Table 1: The Specific Effects of Distinct Emotions on Political Attitudes (Summary)¹²

Cognitive Appraisal	Emotion	Response Tendency	Political Attitude
Out-group threatens us (physically) In-group is weak / has low coping potential	Fear	Create safe environment	Avoid territorial compromise Avoid risk taking in negotiation
Unjust behaviour by out-group Out-group threatens our values, identity etc. In-group is strong / has high coping potential	Anger	Always an approach tendency At times: aggression towards out-group At other times: desire to "educate" out-group	Political violence or willingness to compromise
Out-group is inherently evil Out-group intends to harm us Out-group cannot change	Hatred	Harm or eliminate out-group entirely	Avoid negotiation / compromise Intensify military capacity, strength and aggressiveness
In-group is responsible for out-group victimization In-group has violated own norms and values	Guilt	Rectify wrongdoings Compensate victims	Symbolic gestures Support for reparative measures
A different / better future from the past / present is imaginable and attainable	Hope	Broadening thought-action repertoire	Willingness to conceive of new approaches: Negotiation, making compromises etc.
In-group has achieved aspired goals In-group is safe In-group has high degree of certainty / low degree of effort	Contentment	Broadening thought-action repertoire	Willingness to conceive of new approaches: Negotiation, making compromises etc.

goals and interests (Fredrickson 1998: 6; see also Izard 1977; Lazarus 1991). In this view, contentment necessarily involves a positive subjective evaluation of the personal or collective achievements against the background of its needs and demands (Mayring 2000: 225; Ulich / Mayring 2003: 173). Similar to hope, contentment is not associated with a specific response tendency but rather broadens the individual's "thought-action repertoire", that is to say, it widens people's scope of attention, cognition, and action (Fredrickson 1998). From this perspective, it can be expected to have an equally posi-

¹² The table is based on Halperin / Schwartz (2010) and includes own amendments.

tive effect on political attitudes as hope by making people open to new ways of dealing with the conflict situation, such as negotiation, compromise, or forgiveness.

Taken together, the above-mentioned empirical results indicate that each conflict-related political attitude can in principle be related to a particular set of cognitive appraisals and response tendencies (see Table 1 for an overview). It follows from this that a successful manipulation of these two influencing factors should also result in different political positions. Drawing on this premise, scholars have increasingly discovered the domain of emotion regulation as a means of fostering political attitudes that forward conflict resolution and reconciliation (Halperin et al. [in press]; Halperin / Gross 2011; Pliskin et al. 2012).

3.1.4. The Role of Emotion Regulation

Broadly defined, *emotion regulation* denotes “the management and control of emotional states” (Eysenck / Keane 2011: 577). In a narrower sense, it can be conceptualized as “processes that are engaged when individuals try to influence the type or amount of emotion they (or others) experience, when they (or others) have them, and how they (or others) experience and express these emotions” (Halperin / Sharvit / Gross 2011: 86). Since the generation of emotion constitutes a multi-level process there are various potential entry points for emotion regulation. In particular, five different types of emotion regulation are distinguished in the present literature each of which refers to a different stage in the experience of emotion and hence to a different point of impact. These are: situation selection, situation modification, attention deployment, cognitive change, and response modulation (Gross 1998, 2011). With regards to large-scale inter-group conflicts cognitive change is considered to be the most relevant regulatory strategy. In line with this, Halperin, Sharvit and Gross (2011: 86) advance the concept of *reappraisal* as a particular type of cognitive change in their appraisal based framework. More specifically, it “involves reinterpreting the meaning of a stimulus to change one’s emotional response to it” (Ochsner / Gross 2008: 245). In the context of intractable intergroup conflict, however, it has to be reckoned that individuals will most likely be unwilling to directly engage in reappraisal, i.e. to re-consider and reinterpret conflict-related events of their own accord due to the widespread adherence to the socio-psychological repertoire (cf. Bar-Tal 2007). As a consequence, indirect forms of reappraisal need to be ap-

plied. That is why, Halperin, Sharvit, and Gross (2011: 89) put forward the idea of online and prospective reappraisal (see Figure 1).

Online reappraisal thereby denotes a type of cognitive change that begins and operates while the emotion-stimulating event is still unfolding. Applied to the current framework, this refers primarily to the (public) framing of conflict-related events in such a way that it provokes appraisals which are associated with constructive emotions and inhibit appraisals that are associated with destructive emotions. To give an example, in order to avoid an escalation of conflict a down-regulation of hatred is necessary. This could be achieved by media reports emphasizing the humaneness and heterogeneity of the out-group thereby decreasing the likelihood of appraisal patterns that are commonly attributed to emotional reactions of hatred, such as that the out-group is inherently evil and unable to change (Halperin / Sharvit / Gross 2011: 93; see also Dweck / Chiu / Hong 1995). *Prospective reappraisal*, in contrast, describes a type of cognitive change that proceeds even before the respective stimulus occurs. As the authors of the framework state “the logic underlying prospective reappraisal is that significant changes in the long-term emotional sentiments and beliefs of members of groups that are involved [in (sic!)] intergroup conflicts will alter their appraisals and resulting emotional reactions to specific events” (Halperin / Sharvit / Gross 2011: 90). In this sense, strategies of prospective reappraisal would, on the one hand, ideally aim at reducing deeply held sentiments of fear, anger, and hatred – as well as the societal beliefs that fuel such destructive emotions – , and on the other, at amplifying sentiments of hope and guilt.

Some initial empirical tests lend indeed credence to the notion of emotion regulation. For example, a nationwide survey with Jewish-Israeli adults conducted by Halperin and Gross (2010) revealed that those respondents who regulated their emotional response during the Gaza War by means of reappraisal were more willing to provide humanitarian aid to Palestinians than those who did not. What is more, the reappraisal effect was by and large mediated by an increased feeling of hope. In a similar vein, Pliskin and colleagues (2012) investigated the effects of reappraisal on political intolerance in an experimental study with Jewish-Israeli students and found that the respondents in the reappraisal condition showed significantly lower levels of political intolerance towards Palestinian citizens of Israel as well as towards their most disliked social group than those in the control condition. More importantly, the effects were me-

diated by a decline in negative emotions as well as by an increase in support for general democratic values.

With that said, I now transfer the theoretical and empirical propositions of the appraisal based framework to the context of sacred values.

3.2. Application to the Opposition towards Compromise on Sacred Values

Applied to the present research question the appraisal based framework of emotion and emotion regulation predicts that the variance in opposition towards compromise between moral-absolutists and non-absolutist results from a variance in the emotional reactions to and the associated cognitive appraisals of the trade-offs in question. Therefore, the next step in my argumentation is to consider in what way moral absolutists and non-absolutists appraise the respective compromise solutions differently. In doing so, I first of all highlight the different non-affective factors and long-term emotional sentiments about the adversary of the two groups, and then infer their cognitive appraisals and emotional reactions from this¹³.

3.2.1. The Diverging Affective and Non-Affective Predispositions

Of Moral Absolutists and Non-Absolutists

With regards to the affective and non-affective predispositions of the two groups I argue that moral absolutists are marked by a high degree of adherence to their society's ethos of conflict as well as by long-term sentiments of fear, anger and hatred towards the opponent. Non-absolutists, by contrast, are characterized by a low degree of adherence to their society's ethos of conflict as well as by long-term sentiments of fear, guilt, and hope (see Table 2 for an overview, p. 43). The foundation of this reasoning are empiri-

¹³ As shown earlier, the appraisal of an event depends not only on *the long-term sentiments about the adversary* and *non-affective factors* of the involved individual but also on the *framing* of the event. Following this line of thought it is conceivable that the different attitudes towards compromise between moral absolutists and non-absolutists result from distinct representations of the compromise, for instance, because the two groups consume different media. However, this is explicitly not the analytical interest of the present study. Rather, I intend to illuminate the internal and not the external factors influencing people's appraisals. That is why I will not further consider how a trade-off is framed in my analysis. With regards to the *non-affective factors*, on the other hand, I focus on the ideology (ethos of conflict) of moral absolutists and non-absolutists and pay less attention to other aspects such as their personality or socio-economic status. The assumption at this point is that the ideology (ethos of conflict) has the biggest impact on the appraisal process.

cal findings about the prevalence of the ethos of conflict as well as long-standing collective emotional orientations in Jewish-Israeli society¹⁴.

The Ethos of Conflict in Jewish-Israeli Society

As several studies confirm the ethos of conflict is still very present in Jewish-Israeli society even though it has undergone some changes throughout the past fifty years or so (Bar-Tal / Halperin / Oren 2011; Bar-Tal / Oren 2000; Bar-Tal / Sharvit 2008; Halperin / Oren / Bar-Tal 2010; Oren 2005, 2009; Oren / Bar-Tal 2006; Oren / Bar-Tal / Ohad 2004). Hence, in the heyday of intractability no less than 75% of the Jewish population in Israel shared the societal beliefs of the ethos of conflict. The visit of former Egyptian President Anwar as-Sadat to Jerusalem (1977), the subsequent Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty (1979) as well as the Oslo Peace Process (1993-1995), however, significantly diluted the intractable character of the conflict and consequently led to a meaningful decrease in the adherence to the ethos of conflict. With the renewed eruption of violence between Israelis and Palestinians in the wake of the *Second Intifada* in September 2000 this trend was again reversed (Halperin / Oren / Bar-Tal 2010: 32) so that contemporary Jewish-Israeli society remains “greatly divided” (Bar-Tal / Raviv / Raviv / Dgani-Hirsch 2009: 100) with regards to the societal beliefs of ethos of conflict. That is to say, while one part of the society continues to adhere to the various beliefs of the ethos of conflict another began to distance itself from it. Drawing on these findings I argue that moral-absolutists belong to the former segment whereas non-absolutists fall under the latter.

To fully understand the relevance of this circumstance I shall outline the Jewish-Israeli ethos of conflict in more detail. I thereby focus on four of the eight themes, that is, societal beliefs about the justness of one’s own goals, delegitimization of the opponent, one’s own victimization, and positive collective self-image¹⁵.

¹⁴ Unfortunately, there is a lack of empirical data on the existence of the ethos of conflict as well as collective emotional orientations from Palestinian society. Hence, I will restrict my analysis to the Jewish-Israeli case. However, as Bar-Tal (2011b: 214) notes, the socio-psychological infrastructure of Jewish-Israeli society constitutes a “mirror image” of its Palestinian counterpart (see also Bar-Tal 2011a: 15; Bar-Tal / Halperin / Oren 2010: 95; Halperin / Bar-Tal 2011: 647). Elsewhere, Bar-Tal and colleagues (2012: 57) posit with regards to the ethos of conflict that it is “a general construct that can be used in the analysis of every intractable conflict” (see also Nasie / Bar-Tal 2012). Thus, my hypotheses can in principle be transferred to the Palestinian case despite that fact that they are extrapolated from Jewish-Israeli society.

¹⁵ As Bar-Tal, Raviv, Raviv, and Dgani-Hirsch (2009: 113) found these four themes are the most powerful in shaping individuals’ perception.

Societal beliefs about the justness of one's own goals

Societal beliefs about the justness of one's own goals describe the major collective aspirations of the in-group that led to the outbreak of the conflict as well as the justification for the achievement of these aspirations. In the case of Jewish-Israeli society, this refers first and foremost to the establishment of a *Jewish state in its biblical homeland*, called "Eretz Israel" (the Land of Israel), after 2,000 years of exile as inspired and propagated by the Jewish national movement known as Zionism. The idea developed as a reaction to the persistent persecution of Jews in Europe which the spiritual fathers of Zionism believed to be "a universal and permanent phenomenon" (Bar-Tal / Antebi 1992: 53). Thus, they argued that the Jewish people would over and over again fall victim to anti-Semitic resentments and remain foreigners in their countries of residence no matter how much they assimilated, and concluded that this problem could only be solved with the establishment of a Jewish State where the Jewish people could live in peace.

As Oren and colleagues (2004: 136) hold, this goal constitutes an essential component of Jewish-Israeli national identity up to today. Its territorial aspect, however, has ever since been fiercely disputed. For this reason, a number of "historical, theological, national, existential, political, societal, and cultural arguments" (Oren / Bar-Tal / Ohad 2004: 136) were brought to the fore to justify it. Among the most popular of them is found in the Hebrew Bible. Accordingly, the Land of Israel was promised to the Jewish people by God. In this view, the Israelites (also known as "The Children of Israel" or "The Twelve Tribes" whose remnants later became known as Jews) are as a nation as well as individuals obliged to conquer and settle the Promised Land (Reiter 2010: 240). Besides, supporters of Zionism commonly argued that the Land of Israel has always remained the homeland of the Jewish people throughout its thousands-of-years-old history, that the Jews have never ceased to maintain close spiritual and physical ties to the Land of Israel during times of exile, or that their ancient homeland constituted the only secure shelter for the Jewish people in light of the continuing anti-Semitism in the Diaspora (Oren / Bar-Tal 2006: 298). To give an example of these motifs I shall refer to the Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel (1948) in which it reads:

"Eretz Israel was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious and political identity was shaped. Here they first attained to statehood, created cultural values of national and universal significance and gave to the world the eternal Book of Books. After being forcibly exiled from their land, the

people kept faith with it throughout their Dispersion and never ceased to pray and hope for their return to it and for the restoration in it of their political freedom. Impelled by this historic and traditional attachment, Jews strove in every successive generation to re-establish themselves in their ancient homeland. In recent decades they returned in their masses.”

In a similar vein, Israeli Jews justified their country’s seizure of the Sinai, the Golan Heights, Gaza, and the West Bank from its neighbouring Arab countries in the wake of the “Six Day War” (1967) with security concerns as well as their exclusive right to the land (Oren / Bar-Tal 2006: 299). Most importantly, the historical argument was applied to justify the *conquest of the old city of Jerusalem*, which contains some of the holiest sites of Judaism, most notably, the Temple Mount where the Divine Presence of God (*shekhina*) within the First and Second Temples rested and Abraham almost sacrificed his son Isaac. As Reiter (2010: 228) notes, the regained control over the whole Land of Israel as well as Jerusalem in 1967 gave rise to a particular national-religious turn in the Jewish-Israeli ethos which initially only reached a small minority of society but eventually, specifically since the Oslo Peace Process (1993), expanded to the wider – even secular – society:

“Religious values have permeated the non-religious public and have been marketed as a contemporary national ethos, shaping public opinion on every matter relating to negotiation and compromise” (Reiter 2010: 247).

This increased significance of religious values in Jewish-Israeli society manifested itself first of all in the emergence of the settler movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s, such as represented, for instance, by *Gush Emunim* (“The Bloc of the Faithful”) which interpreted the divine commandment very conservatively and translated it into a religious duty to conquer and settle the entire territory without exception. In their view, the settlement of the holy land is of vital importance for the redemption of the Jewish people by the Messiah (*mashiach*) in the End of Days (*aharit ha-yamim*). It follows from this that any relinquishing of parts of the land fundamentally contradicts the divine covenant. Rabbi Eliezer Melamed summarizes this by the following words:

“The commandment is not fulfilled by conquest of the Land alone; the second part must be fulfilled: settlement of Greater Israel in practice, in a way that leaves no part barren. (...) Every Jew living in the Land of Israel participates to

some extent in settlement of the Land, which reinforces our national hold on the Land” (As cited in Reiter 2010: 242).

Another evidence for the “widespread public acceptance of the national-religious ethos” (Reiter 2010: 246) in Jewish-Israeli society since 1967 can be found in the establishment of “Jerusalem Day” as a public holiday. It is dedicated to the “liberation” and “re-unification” of Jerusalem in the “Six Day War”. As Reiter (2010: 247) stresses, the Israeli government turned this holiday into a “national event” including a state ceremony, religious practices as well as public marches and demonstrations. In addition to that, there has been an increase in activities on and around the Temple Mount which demonstrate the Jewish attachment to their holy site in recent years.

According to public opinion polls the beliefs outlined above are still widely spread in Jewish-Israeli society. Thus, a majority of Jews in Israel (55%) as well as significant parts of the political establishment believes that the West Bank (in the Zionist discourse referred to as “Judea and Samaria”) constitutes “liberated” rather than “occupied territory” and belongs solely to the Jewish people (Peace Index, March 2008). An interview by former Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, from the year 2004 reflects this notion very well:

“We insist on the historical right of the Jewish people to the whole of *Eretz Israel* [the Land of Israel]. Every hill in Samaria, every hill in Judea, is a part of our historical homeland. We do not forget this fact, even for one moment” (As cited in Halperin / Oren / Bar-Tal 2010: 33).

Societal beliefs about delegitimization of the opponent

The dissemination of the societal beliefs about the justness of Jewish-Israeli goals is paralleled by a delegitimization of the opponent, that is, by attempts to rebut Palestinian ties to the contested land as well as Jerusalem. According to this, the Palestinian people are often denoted as “Arabs” in the Jewish-Israeli discourse and thereby denied their distinctiveness as an own people. Elsewhere they are referred to as an ethnic minority within the wider Arab population which again denies their status as a nation (Kelman 1987: 355). Another commonly shared belief among Jewish-Israelis is that the contested territory was, on the one hand, only “sparsely populated by Arabs, who, moreover, had immigrated there in recent centuries” (Oren / Bar-Tal 2006: 298), and on the other, resembled an uncultivated and uncivilized desert that only the Jews made bloom. In a

similar vein, Israeli Jews do not recognize the relevance of Jerusalem to Muslims before the rise of Zionism (Reiter 2010: 246) as well as the Palestinian Right of Return (Friedman 2003).

In line with these figures and comments a majority of the Jewish public in Israel dismisses any effort to acknowledge the Palestinian narrative. Specifically, 56% of Jewish-Israelis reject the idea of Israel accepting even a partial responsibility for the historic events that eventually led to the creation of the Palestinian refugee problem as it significantly questions the legitimacy of the Zionist enterprise (Peace Index, June 2009)¹⁶. A similar amount of people disapproves of adopting a school curriculum which recognizes the Palestinian right of self-determination and abandons the idea of regaining parts of the Jewish homeland that are now under Palestinian authority, even within the framework of an Israeli-Palestinian peace treaty (Halperin / Oren / Bar-Tal 2010: 34).

In a more extreme form the societal beliefs about delegitimization of the opponent involve the denial of humanity to the rival group. In the Israeli case, this is primarily reflected in the image of Arabs, or Palestinians respectively, as being “primitive, dirty, stupid, easily agitated, and violent” (Oren / Bar-Tal / Ohad 2004: 143), as well as “killers, bloodthirsty mob, rioters, treacherous, untrustworthy, cowards, cruel and wicked” (Oren / Bar-Tal 2006: 300). In line with this description a study from the year 2008 yielded that about eight out of ten Jewish-Israelis agreed with the statement that Arabs and Palestinians have little respect for human life, as well as that they have a dishonest character (Halperin / Bar-Tal 2011). These figures correspond to further results from the year 2009 according to which almost three quarters of the Jewish population in Israel believe that the ultimate aspiration of the Arab people was to annihilate the State of Is-

¹⁶ The birth of the Palestinian refugee problem goes back to the events revolving around the establishment of the State of Israel on May 14th 1948 and the Arab-Israeli War which started one day later. Israelis and Palestinians are up to today at odds about who holds responsibility for the exodus of approx. 750 000 Palestinians during the course of those events. According to the Israeli narrative, the Palestinian refugee problem arose out of Israel’s “War of Independence” (*Milchemet HaAtzmaut*) which was forced upon her by the aggressive rejection of the UN Partition Plan by the Palestinian population and its allied Arab states. From this perspective, it was the Arab leaders that called upon the Palestinians to leave their homes for the time of the war. The Palestinian narrative, on the other hand, describes the Palestinian exodus as “the Catastrophe” (*Al-Nakba*). Thus, rather than having left “voluntarily” the Palestinian population fell victim to a forceful and systematic expulsion by the Jewish military forces or fled of fear to be massacred (Kelman / Martin 2010: 16). Following the events of 1948 the United Nations General Assembly passed Resolution 181 which declares that “the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbors should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return” (cited after Friedman 2003: 63). In spite of this resolution, the Palestinian refugee problem has not been resolved up to today. One reason for this circumstance can be found in the societal belief about the justness of Jewish-Israeli goals.

rael. In contrast, only 44% (2007) thought that the majority of Palestinians were interested in peace (as cited in Halperin / Oren / Bar-Tal 2010: 36). Not surprisingly, Palestinians are publically defamed as being solely responsible for the outstanding resolution of the conflict, as can be read, for instance, in the electoral manifesto of the *Likud* party from the year 2009:

“There is no evidence that the Palestinians are ready to accept even the minimal demands that are demanded of any Israeli leader. They have rejected unprecedented concessions, that we, the Israelis, proposed eight years ago, and their stance has neither changed nor been moderated to date” (As cited in Halperin / Oren / Bar-Tal 2010: 36).

Another example can be found in a speech by Israeli Prime Minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, at Bar-Ilan University in which he states that:

“The closer we get to a peace agreement with them [the Palestinians], the more they are distancing themselves from peace. They raise new demands. They are not showing us that they want to end the conflict” (As cited in Halperin / Oren / Bar-Tal 2010: 36).

Similarly, 68% of the Jewish Israeli public reported in a Peace Index survey of January 2011 that in their view the Palestinians “will continue the struggle to create a Palestinian state in the entire Land of Israel” even if a peace agreement is reached (Peace Index, January 2011). An even more dramatic picture reveals a Peace Index poll from October 2010 according to which no less than 80% of Jewish-Israelis were of the opinion that “the Palestinians have not come to terms with Israel’s existence and would destroy Israel if they could” (Peace Index, October 2010).

Societal beliefs about one’s own victimization

This concordant blame of the Palestinians goes along with societal beliefs about one’s own victimization, that is, the perception that the non-Jewish world is hostile towards the Jewish population and has the intention to harm it. Bar-Tal and Antebi (1992) came to describe this belief as a *siege mentality*. It emanates from the long history of anti-Semitism that Jews all over the world had been faced with, beginning with the Roman period and culminating in the Holocaust. In addition to that, more recent events from the history of the State of Israel, specifically, the numerous wars Israel has fought with its neighbouring Arab countries, which in this view have been constantly trying to ac-

tively destroy Israel ever since its establishment, as well as the many terror attacks against Israeli targets committed by Palestinian organizations are brought up to support this belief. Not surprisingly, a nationwide survey from November 2007 showed that 80.8% of Jewish-Israelis believed that the Arabs have repeatedly imposed war upon Israel despite its desire for peace (Halperin / Bar-Tal 2011). Another poll conducted in August 2008 found that 61% of the Jewish population in Israel agreed at least to some degree with the statement that Israel has been the victim of the conflict while Palestinians and Arabs have been the perpetrators (Bar-Tal / Chernyak-Hai / Schori / Gundar 2009). These beliefs of one's own victimization go even so far as to perceive oneself as being "forced" to use violence against the opponent, which is most poignantly summarized by a statement of former Israeli Prime Minister, Golda Meir, who said when meeting Egyptian President, Anwar as-Sadat: "We can forgive you for killing our sons. But we will never forgive you for making us kill yours" (as cited in Halperin / Oren / Bar-Tal 2010: 39). What is more, no less than 88.6% of Israeli Jews believe that the Jewish people have been constantly faced with an existential threat throughout its history, as a survey from November 2007 brought to the fore (Halperin / Bar-Tal 2011).

According to Bar-Tal and Antebi (1992), the most prominent manifestation of the Jewish siege mentality is Zionist ideology itself inasmuch as it grew out of the continuous experience of anti-Semitism. Other manifestations can be found in Israeli prose, poetry, films, music, press, education, public statements and commemorations. To give an example, a number of authors have found that Israeli literature for children, adolescents, and adults alike was in the midst of the conflict preoccupied with "the continuous Jewish victimhood throughout history, the persecution of Jewish people by non-Jews, the sense of siege and entrapment in the Diaspora, and the threat and dangers that the Jews have faced more recently in Israel" (Bar-Tal 2001: 612). The Holocaust thereby received particular mentioning. In fact, the very detailed descriptions by Holocaust survivors of their experiences gave rise to a real "art of nausea" (Bar-Tal 2001: 612). Likewise, Firer (1985: 57) discovered in his analysis of Israeli history schoolbooks that the dominant approach was "that the hatred against Jews is eternal, with only its external manifestations changing according to periods". The depiction of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict follows a somewhat similar pattern insofar as the Arab population is commonly presented as vicious, aspiring to destroy the State of Israel, and being exclu-

sively responsible for the onset and perpetuation of the conflict (Bar-Tal 2001: 614). More recent analyses of school books bring by and large the same results to the fore, although Firer and Adwan (2004) discovered a trend towards a more balanced account of history since the 1990s by which Zionism is less glorified than before.

Societal beliefs about positive self-image

Lastly, Jewish-Israelis are imbued with societal beliefs of positive self-image which means that they perceive their in-group as being militarily and morally superior (Halperin / Oren / Bar-Tal 2010: 39). In 2009, for example, three out of four Jewish-Israelis were confident that Israel had the capacity to wage total war with its neighbouring Arab countries, while eight out of ten were convinced the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) were able to successfully defend its country (Ben-Meir 2009). Moreover, according to a Joint Israeli Palestinian Poll from June 2009 42% of the Jewish respondents believed that Israel could bear the burden of the conflict on “forever”, while another 17% believed that this was possible for “several more decades”, and 15 % for “another ten years” (as cited in Halperin / Oren / Bar-Tal 2010: 40). Meanwhile, a Peace Index survey from October 2007 found that 63% of Jewish-Israelis were of the opinion that Israeli society was in a better condition than the Palestinian one. The belief that the IDF was “the most moral army in the world” (Haaretz 2009, as cited in Bar-Tal / Halperin / Oren 2010: 86), as once claimed by Israeli Chief of Staff, Gavriel Ashkenazi, on the other hand, is exemplified by the fact that about two thirds of the Jewish public in Israel do not trust in testimonies of IDF soldiers by which they were ordered to deliberately harm Palestinian civilians and structures during the Gaza War (Peace Index, March 2009).

In sum, the above representation suggests that adherents to the ethos of conflicts – to which I count moral absolutists – share a national identity that is to a large extent founded on the conviction that the Jewish people have an exclusive and historical right to the entire territory between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River including the holy city of Jerusalem, that the Jewish people are faced with a hostile world, and in particular, an Arab enemy that seeks to destroy the State of Israel, as well as that it is morally and militarily superior to its opponents. What is more, since significant parts of the ethos of conflict, in particular the beliefs about the historical right of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel and Jerusalem, are inspired by Judaism it has to be reckoned that

moral absolutists display on average higher levels of religiosity than non-absolutists (see also Sheikh et al. 2012).

The Ethos of Peace in Jewish-Israeli Society

In contrast, Jewish-Israelis who do not adhere to the ethos of conflict in the same way – to which I count non-absolutists – share a somewhat different understanding of their national identity. Thus, Bar-Tal (2000, 2008) introduced the concept of *ethos of peace* as a counterpart to the ethos of conflict. However, it is much less theoretically developed. Besides, there is – to the best of my knowledge – a lack of empirical studies to document the scale of its existence among Jewish-Israelis. Nevertheless, it is possible to highlight a few important aspects.

As Bar-Tal (2000: 357) emphasizes, the most relevant difference between the two concepts lies in their *societal beliefs about justness of one's own goals*. Consequently, adherents to the ethos of peace do not regard the societal goals of the two conflicting societies as necessarily opposing but rather as compatible, that is to say, the belief in the justness of one's own goals is extended to the rival party. In this sense, adherents to the ethos of peace recognize the connection of the Palestinian people to the contested territory, including the old city of Jerusalem, and its right to self-determination therein. In addition to that, the ethos of peace involves *societal beliefs about the adversary* which grants the opponent humanity and portrays it as having legitimate concerns, equal rights, as well as various opinions and characteristics (Bar-Tal 2008: 368). At the same time, it contains *societal beliefs about the in-group* which acknowledge the responsibility of the own society for the outbreak and continuation of the conflict. As such, the in-group is depicted in a less self-glorifying way but rather as having also committed wrongdoings against the out-group. In the context of Israeli-Palestinian conflict, this refers first and foremost to the recognition of responsibility of the State of Israel for the Palestinian refugee problem. From this perspective, the ethos of peace considers both the in- as well as the out-group as victims (and perpetrators) of the conflict. Furthermore, *societal beliefs about intergroup relations* stress the importance of normalizing relations between the rival groups and creating a future that respects the needs of both parties. Finally, *societal beliefs about peace* refer to the concrete steps and actions that need to be taken in order to achieve reconciliation (Bar-Tal 2000: 359).

In this sense, the weaker adherence of non-absolutists to the ethos of conflict can be interpreted as simultaneous internalization of the societal beliefs of ethos of peace. As a result, moral absolutists and non-absolutists can be considered to have opposing conceptualizations of their social identity¹⁷.

Long-Term Sentiments in Jewish-Israeli Society

As mentioned earlier, human cognition and emotion are closely related insofar as our beliefs influence how we appraise different stimuli. At the same time, the experience of very intense or enduring emotions can lead to attentional funnelling by which we seek only that information which corresponds to our beliefs. Considering this relationship it becomes evident that the adherence to the societal beliefs of the ethos of conflict or ethos of peace respectively, necessarily correlates with the internalization of particular long-term emotional sentiments. Specifically, moral absolutists should due to the destructive nature of the ethos of conflict be imbued with negative long-term sentiments whereas non-absolutists should due to the rather constructive nature of the ethos of peace be imbued with more positive long-term sentiments.

To begin with, the prevailing siege mentality and belief in the harmful intentions of Arabs in general, and Palestinians in particular, within the ethos of conflict points to high levels of deep seated *fear* among moral absolutists. This assumption is supported by Bar-Tal, Halperin and Oren (2010) who argue that Jewish-Israeli society is dominated by a collective fear orientation (see also Bar-Tal 2001; Halperin / Oren / Bar-Tal 2010; Jarymowicz / Bar-Tal 2006). A study of the Anti-Defamation League from the year 2008 yielded, for example, that no less than 82% of Jewish youngsters (aged 15-18) and 77% of Jewish adults (aged 18 and above) in Israel were convinced that their country was either seriously or somewhat threatened by extermination. Similarly, 39% of the youngsters and 35% of the adults considered another genocide of the Jewish people either as notably probable or imminent (Ynet 2008, as cited in Bar-Tal / Halperin / Oren 2010). In the meantime, Ben-Dor and colleagues (2007) found that in the inquiry

¹⁷ Obviously, the cited public opinion polls indicate that certain beliefs are shared widely across Jewish-Israeli society while others seem to apply to rather small parts of society. From this perspective, it is rather difficult to divide Jewish-Israelis in two clear-cut segments by which one reflects an ethos of conflict and the other an ethos of peace. There might in fact be more complex differences between the two ideologies with regards to the distinct themes. Yet, at this point it shall serve as an ideal-typical theoretical description of Jewish-Israeli society which provides the basis for a more sophisticated empirical investigation.

period of 2003 until 2005 one out of four Jewish-Israelis was highly anxious about the possibility that their entire population would be thrown into the sea by the Arabs. The same study revealed that 83% (2006) of the Jewish-Israeli public thought that ongoing terror attacks would cause a strategic and even existential threat to the State of Israel. Interestingly, this number has not dropped significantly after the biggest wave of violence against Israel has ceased (2002: 86.6%; 2000: 85.5%).

A similar trend could be detected by Ben-Simon (2004) who found that even in 2004, when the Second Intifada was fading, a wide majority of Israeli Jews (80.4%) were afraid of using public transportation or being in crowded places (59.8%). Likewise, about 70% of Jewish-Israelis (2009) are further on fearful or very fearful of their family members being hurt by terror attacks (1999: 58%; 2002: 92%) (Arian 2002). All in all, these figures suggest that fear has been a “stable and central psychological characteristic of the entire Jewish society in Israel” for the past decade (Bar-Tal / Halperin / Oren 2010: 90). However, this raises two potential contradictions: firstly, it implies that even non-absolutists are despite their distinct societal beliefs characterized by high levels of fear. An argument in favour of such an assumption is the “irrational” nature of fear by which it easily overrides consciousness. On this view, non-absolutists are socially contagioned by the omnipresent fear orientation in Jewish-Israeli society (cf. Bar-Tal 2001; Jarymowicz / Bar-Tal 2006). Another possible explanation is that non-absolutists are primarily affected by personal fear whereas moral absolutists are rather fearful of their in-group as a whole due to their comparatively higher identification with Jewish-Israeli society. Secondly, the omnipresence of sentimental fear in Jewish-Israeli society runs contrary to the positive self-image of military strength of moral absolutists insofar as it suggests a high coping potential. Fear, however, is related to appraisals of low coping capabilities (Roseman 1984). Following Petersen (2011: 38) it can be argued at this point that moral absolutists, too, perceive threat from their environment and thus experience fear but translate it into aggressive response tendencies due to their high coping potential. Non-absolutists, on the other hand, develop defensive response tendencies as a result of their less positive self-image and comparatively lower coping capabilities.

Irrespective of that, the extreme delegitimization of Arabs and Palestinians within the Jewish-Israeli ethos of conflict indicates that moral absolutists are filled with

hatred towards that group. Accordingly, two surveys conducted by Kupermintz and colleagues (2007) in the years 2004 and 2005 showed that whole 31.9% and 38.4%, respectively, of Jewish-Israeli youngsters displayed feelings of hatred towards Arab people. Similarly, 36.5% of Jewish-Israeli adults reported to have at least medium levels of hatred towards Palestinians (Halperin 2008). During the Gaza War 32.7% of Jews in Israeli were found to have high levels of hatred (Halperin / Gross 2011). Considering the fact that hatred constitutes an emotion that is socially not very desirable it has to be reckoned that the levels of hatred among Jewish Israelis are even higher than indicated by public opinion polls. In line with this notion, a recently conducted study by Halperin, Canetti-Nisim, and Kimhi (in press), which relied on an implicit measure, yielded that no less than 63.9% of the Jewish population in Israel feels hatred towards Palestinians. Interestingly, the level of hatred in Israeli society has remained stable over the course of the conflict. That is to say, it has not changed significantly in line with an escalation or de-escalation of violence thereby alluding to its deep-seated nature (Bar-Tal / Halperin / Oren 2010: 91). As opposed to this, non absolutists should display significantly lower levels of hatred due to their more positive image of the adversary.

Moreover, the belief that Jewish-Israeli goals are justified, as put forward by the ethos of conflict, implies that the continuing experience of Palestinian violent acts are most probably evaluated as illegitimate by moral absolutists thereby invoking a long-term sentiment of *anger* towards this group. This should be furthermore amplified by the positive self-image of military and moral superiority inherent to the ethos of conflict. The latter also suggests that moral absolutists display low levels of group-based *guilt*. Finally, the belief in an inherently and permanently evil enemy and a hostile world speak against imagining a positive future, that is, long-term sentiments of *hope*. By contrast, non-absolutists, should due to their principal recognition of the justness of Palestinian goals as well as less glorifying positive self-image (lower coping capabilities) display lower levels of long-term anger than their counterpart. However, even a bigger sympathy for the Palestinian cause can hardly make non-absolutists consider Palestinian violence against the own in-group as justified. Therefore, I argue that non-absolutists are marked by moderate levels of long-term anger. On the other hand, the more positive image of the Arab, or respectively Palestinian population, as well as the belief in the necessity of peaceful relations between the two people indicates higher le-

Table 2: The Diverging Affective and Non-Affective Predispositions of Moral Absolutists and Non-Absolutists

	Non-Affective Factors	Long-Term Sentiment About the Adversary
<i>Moral Absolutists</i>	Ethos of Conflict High Religiosity	High fear, anger, hatred Low hope and guilt
<i>Non-Absolutists</i>	Ethos of Peace Low Religiosity	High fear, hope, and guilt Moderate anger, low hatred

vels of hope. Also, the refusal to unconditionally believe in the justness of Jewish-Israeli goals as well as self-victimization argues in favour of an acknowledgment of in-group responsibility for the misdeeds against the out-group. Hence, non-absolutists should be characterized by higher levels of group-based guilt.

3.2.2. The Diverging Cognitive Appraisals and Emotional Reactions

Of Moral Absolutists and Non-Absolutists

What do these affective and non-affective predispositions of moral absolutists and non-absolutists imply for their appraisal of particular compromise solutions, such as to disengage from the Jewish settlements in the West Bank, to divide or give up sovereignty over Jerusalem, or to acknowledge the Palestinian Right of Return? Generally speaking, it can be expected that moral absolutists are primarily driven by group-level emotions as a result of their high identification with their society, which in view of the suggested trade-offs becomes particularly salient. Non-absolutists, on the other hand, should display comparatively more individual-level emotions¹⁸.

Taboo Trade-off

“Taboo trade-off” refers to a compromise proposal by which there would a two-state-solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. That is to say, the contested territory would be divided between the State of Israel and a future Palestinian state. As part of this agreement Israel would *give up 99% of Jewish settlements* in Judea and Samaria (i.e. the West Bank). An alternative version of this trade-off would be a two-state solution that furthermore involves a *division of sovereignty over Jerusalem* between the State of Is-

¹⁸ If not specified otherwise, I refer in the following derivation of my hypotheses to group-level, or more specifically, to intergroup emotions.

rael and a future Palestinian state. Finally, a taboo trade-off can be thought of as a two-state solution that includes the *recognition of the Palestinian Right of Return* by the State of Israel (without absorbing any refugees). According to the experimental study by Ginges and colleagues (2007) both moral absolutists and non-absolutists were opposed this kind of trade-off and displayed feelings of anger as well as support for violence. However, the values were higher for moral absolutists than for non-absolutists. How can these results be explained considering the identified affective and non-affective predispositions of moral absolutists and non-absolutists?

Moral absolutists: Drawing on the assumption that moral absolutists strongly adhere to the ethos of conflict, and additionally display on average high levels of religiosity, it becomes evident that any of the outlined taboo trade-offs markedly contradicts their national and religious belief system¹⁹. In particular, the division of the Land of Israel or Jerusalem runs contrary to the belief in the justness of Jewish-Israeli goals. In the same vein, the acknowledgment of the Palestinian Right of Return questions the legitimacy of the Zionist enterprise and at the same time destroys the positive self-image of moral superiority (see also Friedman 2004; Kelman / Martin 2010). In addition to that, the long-term sentiment of fear makes moral absolutists highly sensitive to perceive threatening cues in their environment, particularly from the Palestinians. Also, their accumulated anger towards that group predisposes moral absolutists to regard any action by the out-group as unjustified, unfair, or violating social norms. Finally, their deep-seated hatred implies the cognition that Palestinians are inherently evil and intend to harm the Jewish people. Taking these factors together I argue that moral absolutists appraise the taboo trade-off as a *symbolic threat* to the in-group²⁰. Appraisals of such non-physical threats are typically associated with anger. Thus, I argue that the perceived threat in combination with an appraised high manageability of the situation (positive self-image) together evokes the emotion anger as well as the corresponding response tendency of aggression towards the out-group. In light of the fact, that moral absolutists

¹⁹ Cf. Sheikh et al. 2012 who found that high levels of religiosity increase the perception of threat to the in-group and treatment of values as sacred.

²⁰ The concept of *symbolic threat* is borrowed from Stephan and Stephan (2000: 25) who defined it as threats to the in-group's attitudes, standards, moral, values, and beliefs: "Symbolic threats are threats to the worldview of the ingroup. These threats arise, in part, because the ingroup believes in the moral rightness of its system of values". It stands in contrast with *realistic threats* which describe threats to the physical and material well-being of the in-group, its political and economic power, or very existence (see also Stephan / Renfro 2002).

simultaneously display high levels of sentimental hatred towards the out-group the anger reaction results in a rejection of the proposed compromise²¹.

Non-absolutists: For non-absolutists the picture is somewhat different. First of all, their comparatively low levels of religiosity and identification with the ethos of conflict suggest that the taboo trade-off does not contradict their national or religious identity. In this sense, the trade-off is basically reconcilable with their worldview. The high sense of in-group responsibility for the victimization of the out-group, which is reflected in higher levels of group-based guilt, should furthermore emphasize this. Also, the fact that the long-term fear of non-absolutists is experienced rather at the personal than on the group level should make them less attuned to threats from the out-group. But even if their sentimental fear refers to the group level its effect should be significantly moderated by the simultaneously high level of hope and low level of long-term hatred towards the adversary. The moderate level of long-term anger furthermore predicts short-term anger reactions, yet to a lesser degree than among moral absolutists.

In light of this, I argue that non-absolutists do not appraise the taboo trade-off as a symbolic threat to their in-group but at best as a moderate *realistic threat* – inasmuch as an Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank could weaken its strategic and military position – and hence elicits the emotion of (personal) fear. However, since the ethos of peace involves a rather objective image of the in-group, i.e. a less self-glorifying one, non-absolutists should appraise a lower coping potential to their group. From this perspective, their reaction of fear should result in a more defensive response tendency, that is, opposition to compromise on territorial matters²². More importantly, I argue that non-absolutists appraise the taboo trade-off as *unfair and violating social norms* in the sense that it does not make the two parties discharge their duties equally. In other words, it invokes costs upon the in-group without granting it any benefits. At the same time it offers benefits to the out-group without demanding any quid pro quo. Consequently, the appraisal of unfair behaviour should evoke the emotion of anger among non-absolutists and lead to the response tendency of rejecting the compromise.

²¹ Cf. Halperin, Russell, Dweck, and Gross (2011) who found that anger leads to unwillingness to make compromises in the presence of long-term hatred.

²² Cf. Halperin (2011) who found that high levels of fear are associated with unwillingness to make territorial, i.e. security related compromises. See also Petersen (2011) who attributes low coping potential to the action tendency of “flight”.

Taboo plus Trade-off

“Taboo plus trade-off” describes any of the previously described taboo trade-offs plus an additional *material incentive*. To give an example, the compromise solution could read as follows: there is a two-state solution of the Israel-Palestinian conflict. As part of this solution Israel gives up 99% of Jewish settlements in Judea and Samaria / divides sovereignty over Jerusalem / recognizes the Palestinian Right of Return. In return, Israel receives annually 1 billion US Dollars from the United States over the course of the next 100 years. According to the experimental study by Ginges and colleagues (2007) moral absolutists rejected this proposal. Moreover, they showed significantly higher levels of anger and propensity for violence than when faced with a taboo trade-off. Non-absolutists, by contrast, accepted the offer. Furthermore, their anger reactions as well as support for violence dropped remarkably. What accounts for the different reactions between moral absolutists and non-absolutists in this case?

Moral absolutists: Given the fact that the taboo trade-off was already appraised by moral absolutists as a symbolic threat to their in-group the offer of an additional material incentive can only reinforce that perception. In this sense, not only the division of the Land of Israel and Jerusalem or the acknowledgment of the Right of Return contradicts the value system of moral absolutists but also the acceptance of a material good in return. It would mean to trade what was given to the Jewish people by God for collective enrichment. Thus, a taboo plus trade-off must be necessarily appraised as another, more severe symbolic threat to the in-group. This in turn elicits an even more intense emotion of anger and leads to an aggressive response tendency towards the out-group. As a result, the compromise is again rejected.

Non-absolutists: For non-absolutists, on the other hand, the additional material compensation constitutes a more balanced compromise solution than a mere taboo trade-off inasmuch as it significantly shifts the cost-benefit calculation in their favour and thereby addresses their need for fairness. It should also appease those non-absolutists who perceived a realistic threat from the taboo trade-off before insofar as the additional material benefit for the State of Israel could be used to increase its military capabilities and thereby reduce the security risks arising from a territorial compromise. Therefore, I argue that non-absolutists appraise the taboo plus trade-off as a realization of their goals as well as a situation that grants safety and certainty to the in-group, or in-

Table 3: Summary of Hypotheses

Event	Group	Long-Term Sentiments About the Adversary	Non-Affective Factors	Cognitive Appraisal	Emotion	Response Tendency
<i>Taboo trade-off</i>	Moral absolutists	Anger, fear, hatred	Ethos of Conflict High religiosity	Symbolic threat High coping potential	Anger	Opposition Aggression towards out-group
	Non-absolutists	Fear, guilt, hope, (anger)	Ethos of Peace Low religiosity	Unjust behaviour (Realistic threat) (Low coping potential)	Anger, (Personal Fear)	Opposition (Aggression towards out-group) (Create safe environment)
<i>Taboo plus trade-off</i>	Moral absolutists	Anger, fear, hatred	Ethos of Conflict High religiosity	Symbolic threat High coping potential	Anger	Opposition Aggression towards out-group
	Non-absolutists	Fear, guilt, hope, (anger)	Ethos of Peace Low religiosity	Realization of Goals Certainty for Individual / In-group	(Personal) Contentment	Acceptance
<i>Symbolic trade-off</i>	Moral absolutists	Anger, fear, hatred	Ethos of Conflict High religiosity	Realization of Goals Certainty for In-group	Contentment	Acceptance

dividual respectively. Such appraisal corresponds to the emotion of contentment and translates into willingness to consider new approaches of conflict resolution, such as making compromise on the suggested issues.

Symbolic Trade-off

“Symbolic trade-off” concerns only moral absolutists. It denotes any of the above-mentioned taboo trade-offs plus an additional *symbolic gesture* by the opponent. Thus, the compromise solution could read as follows: there is a two-state solution of the Israel-Palestinian conflict. As part of this solution Israel gives up 99% of Jewish settlements in Judea and Samaria / divides sovereignty over Jerusalem / recognizes the Palestinian Right of Return. The Palestinians, on their part, recognize the historic and legitimate right of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel, or alternatively, renounce their Right of Return which is sacred to them. According to the experimental study by Ginges and colleagues (2007) moral absolutists accepted this proposal. What is more, their levels of anger and support for violence decreased significantly. So why are moral absolutists at this particular point finally willing to make a compromise?

Moral absolutists: Considering once again the ethos of conflict, to which moral absolutists adhere, it becomes evident that recognition of the historic and legitimate right of the Jewish people to their ancestral homeland is identical to the societal beliefs about the justness of Jewish-Israeli goals. The same holds true for giving up the Right of Return by the Palestinian people. In other words, this type of trade-off acknowledges the belief system and national identity of moral absolutists. Consequently, it should no longer be appraised as a symbolic threat to their in-group but rather as an attainment of their collective goals. As such, it grants safety and a high level of certainty to the in-group. As already outlined above, such appraisals are associated with the emotion of contentment and a consequent willingness to consider new ways of interaction, such as compromise on the respective issues. Table 3 summarizes the postulated hypotheses.

4. CONCLUSION

The present paper dealt with the phenomenon of sacred values in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In particular, it addressed the question of why some Israelis and Palestinians are “absolutely opposed” to particular compromise solutions, that is, why there are unwilling to sacrifice certain issues, such as the exclusive control over the contested terri-

tory including the city of Jerusalem, or the Right of Return, in return for peace or additional material incentives but rather for mere symbolic concessions by the opponent. As demonstrated, the existing literature has not yet accounted for this puzzle adequately, which in view of the fact that sacred values are closely related to political violence, especially religiously motivated suicide bombings (Ginges / Atran 2009, 2011), poses an academic void that urgently has to be filled.

Drawing on the premises that emotions are, on the one hand, directive for human behaviour, and on the other, an inherent component of every conflict situation – specifically those intractable ones – I applied the *Appraisal Based Framework of Emotion and Emotion Regulation* by Halperin, Sharvit and Gross (2011) to elucidate the identified research gap. It predicates that the different attitudes of moral absolutists and non-absolutists towards compromise arise out of diverging emotional reactions in response to the specific trade-offs. These emotional reactions are mediated by distinct cognitive appraisals and action tendencies and depend on the various affective (long-term sentiments about the adversary) and non-affective (ideology, religious convictions, etc.) predispositions of the two groups. Following this line of thought I made a two-step argument: first, I hypothesized that moral absolutists are characterized by long-term sentiments of fear, anger, and hatred as well as by high levels of religiosity and adherence to the ethos of conflict whereas non-absolutists are marked by long-term sentiments of fear, hope, and guilt, as well as significantly lower levels of religiosity and adherence to the ethos of conflict. Secondly, I hypothesized that moral absolutists appraise unlike their counterpart compromise solutions which involve a division of the Land of Israel and the city of Jerusalem, or an acknowledgment of the Palestinian Right of Return, as a threat to their in-group's belief system (*symbolic threat*) and hence display emotional reactions of anger and the response tendency of aggression towards the out-group. Symbolic compromises, by contrast, which involve e.g. the recognition of the Jewish people's ties to its historical homeland by the Palestinian population are appraised as acknowledgment of the in-group's belief system and therefore elicit the emotion of contentment and a response tendency of openness to new solutions.

With this work I have laid the foundation for a subsequent empirical examination. The experimental study of Ginges and colleagues (2007), which also serves as the basis of this paper, thereby constitutes a helpful starting point. Understandably, it would

have to be expanded by measurements of short- and long-term emotions, cognitive appraisals, response tendencies, degree of religiosity and adherence to the ethos of conflict among moral absolutists and non-absolutists. The comprehensive work of Halperin and colleagues provides numerous examples about how to approximate such variables empirically (e.g. Halperin 2008, 2011; Halperin / Gross 2010). More recently, Bar-Tal and colleagues (2012) also developed a measurement for the concept of ethos of conflict. Thus, the existing literature holds several tools available to accomplish a reliable empirical test of the theoretical propositions forwarded here. In addition to that, approaching any of the following still unresolved and emerging research questions might be of great importance for our understanding of conflict theory and practice:

First, how come that some individuals engulfed by intractable conflict strongly adhere to their society's ethos of conflict while others apparently do manage to escape from it. As Bar-Tal (2007) holds, intractability causes societies to develop a particular socio-psychological repertoire which permeates deeply into their social fabric and finally turns into a standing infrastructure. Yet, there exists some individual variance in the degree of adherence to this hegemonic discourse (Bar-Tal et al. 2012: 43). So, what makes some people resistant to particular societal beliefs? Also, why do some individuals hold onto to some aspects of the ethos of conflict but not to others? Likewise, why do some individuals change their degree of adherence of the course of their lifetime? Does a de- or escalation of the conflict influence the prevalence of the ethos of conflict, or vice versa? A potential reference point at this stage is offered by the work of Hammack (2006, 2008, and 2010) who investigates the relationship between the personal identity of Israeli and Palestinian youth and their societies' master narratives by looking at their particular life stories.

Second, what is the picture in Palestinian society? As mentioned earlier, empirical studies examining the prevalence of particular societal beliefs and emotional orientations have so far concentrated on Jewish-Israeli society. That is not to say, however, that the same socio-psychological dynamics do not operate at the Palestinian side of the conflict as well (Bar-Tal / Halperin / Oren 2010: 95). The question then is how exactly are these dynamics expressed, and are there any differences compared to Jewish-Israeli society? If yes, what does this imply for our understanding of sacred values in those two societies, and for the hypotheses as derived in this work? One of the few exceptional

studies in this context was recently conducted by Nasie and Bar-Tal (2012). They analysed the socio-psychological infrastructure among Palestinian children and adolescents by scrutinizing their views on the conflict as expressed in their writings in a youth newspaper. The key finding is that the elements of the socio-psychological infrastructure appeared almost entirely in the investigated writings, in fact also during periods of relative political calm. Interestingly, special emphasis was given to the themes of victimization and patriotism as well as to the collective emotional orientation of hope. It deserves mentioning though, that the collective hope orientation referred less to the expectation of peace but rather to such objectives as liberation from Israeli occupation, return of the refugees to Palestine, or taking vengeance for the martyrs (*shahids*) thereby demonstrating that identical emotions may have substantially different meanings across societies.

Third, what is the exact interaction between the ethos of conflict and particular long-term sentiments? It is evident that the two factors are closely related inasmuch as certain elements of the ethos entail accumulated negative affects and vice versa. To the best of my knowledge, however, so far there has been no comprehensive empirical investigation of what specific emotions are associated with each of the themes of the ethos of conflict. Similarly, how do these emotions differ from those conveyed by the ethos of peace? Also, the question arises whether the “collective memory” of a society should not be included into the appraisal based framework as another non-affective factor influencing the appraisal of a conflict-related event. After all, it constitutes another relevant set of societal beliefs within the socio-psychological repertoire. Furthermore, as the construction of the hypothesis in the current paper has revealed some beliefs might imply seemingly contradictory emotions. For example, the belief in one’s own victimization suggests sentimental fear while the belief in one’s military and moral superiority (high coping potential) indicates the exact opposite. So, how do the several beliefs or emotions relate to each other?

Fourth, “What good are positive emotions?” As Fredrickson (1998) emphasizes, positive emotions have by and large marginalized been in theory building and hypothesis testing which is also reflected in the existing literature dealing with emotions and conflict where the focus has been on emotions like fear, anger, hatred, humiliation, revenge and others. This is easily comprehensible inasmuch as “negative emotions pose a

huge array of problems for individuals and society” (Fredrickson 1998: 302) and the social sciences subsist on the self-conception of a problem-solving discipline. Yet, as the emotion of hope, which appears to be a crucial ingredient for conflict resolution, exemplifies it is highly advisable to study positive emotions more intensively. However, it also points to a theoretical challenge at the same time. In particular, it seems that it is much more difficult to associate positive emotions with concrete action tendencies. Fredrickson (1998) even proposes to discard this assumption altogether. Instead, she puts forward to think of positive emotions as being linked to rather unspecific “thought-action tendencies” which motivate people to renounce routine-like behavioural patterns and adopt new ways of thinking and acting. With regard to the current theoretical framework this implicates, however, that it is rather problematic to connect positive emotions with particular political attitudes. How then can the role of position emotions be understood and integrated into conflict theory and practice?

Fifth, what about the “real” moral absolutists? In principle, it is conceivable that there are individuals who do not respond even to symbolic concessions by the opponent. To the best of my knowledge this segment of society has not been identified yet. It deserves asking though if such a segment exists in the first place, and if yes, how it can be approached politically.

Last but not least, I shall refer to the practical implications of the present work. The hypotheses as postulated here correspond to Atran’s (2007) argument by which issues are not inherently sacred but turn into sacred values when they are relevant for an individual’s identity and this identity is seriously threatened. It follows from this that sacred values should also be able to lose their absolute nature in the absence of threat. How then can threat perceptions among moral absolutists be reduced or avoided? The first practical implication that immediately suggests itself is that of *symbolic politics*. As the experimental study by Ginges and colleagues (2007) has revealed symbolic concessions by the opponent are accepted because they are not perceived as threatening but rather as a form of in-group validation – at least as theorized in this paper. Following this line of thought, mutual symbolic gestures at the top political level by Israelis and Palestinians, such as recognition of responsibility of the Palestinian refugee problem by the State of Israel, for example, might bear fruit. To illustrate this argument Axelrod and Atran (2008) cite several interviews they conducted with high-rank Israeli and Palestin-

ian politicians. For example, a Hamas leader and then-spokesman for the Palestinian Authority expressed:

“In principle, we have no problem with a Palestinian state encompassing all of our lands within the 1967 borders. But let Israel apologize for our tragedy in 1948, and then we can talk about negotiating over our right of return to historic Palestine” (As cited in Atran / Axelrod / Davis 2007: 1040).

Similarly, Israeli Prime Minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, answered to the question whether he would seriously consider accepting a two-state solution following the 1967 borders if all major Palestinian factions, including Hamas, were to recognize the right of the Jewish people to an independent state in the Middle East:

“Yes, but the Palestinians would have to show that they sincerely mean it, change their textbooks and anti-Semitic characterizations and then allow some border adjustments so that Ben Gurion [Airport] would be out of range of shoulder-fired missiles” (ebd.).

In addition to that, the appraisal based framework points out emotion regulation, specifically prospective reappraisal, as another rather long-term strategy to decrease threat perceptions among moral absolutists. To be more precise, the theory as applied in the current analysis suggests that the crucial factors for the appraisal of symbolic threat by moral absolutists are their high levels of sentimental hatred and low levels of hope and guilt, as well as their high degree of adherence to the ethos of conflict²³. Hence, attempts of prospective reappraisal would have to aim at down-regulating sentimental hatred and adherence to the ethos of conflict and up-regulating sentimental hope and guilt among moral absolutists. A possible way to achieve this is outlined by Salomon (2004) who highlights the importance of “coexistence education”. It describes a type of school education that seeks to foster empathy for each other’s cause among the two people by legitimizing the other’s narrative. A vivid example of such an approach is the “Dual Narrative” project by the Peace Research Institute in the Middle East (PRIME). It involves the development of a booklet for high school students which tells the history of relevant conflict-related events, such as the Balfour Declaration 1917, the 1948 War, or the 1987 Palestinian Intifada, from both an Israeli and a Palestinian perspective.

²³ Remember that both moral absolutists and non-absolutists are hypothesized to have similar or rather similar levels of sentimental fear and anger. Therefore, the remaining characteristics constitute the decisive difference between the two groups.

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