

Beyond Personal Emotions: How Emotion Norms Shape Policy Support in the Context of Violent Conflict

Sandra Penić¹, Noga Mostovoy², and Eran Halperin²

¹ Department of Political Science and International Relations, Swiss Center for Affective Sciences, University of Geneva

² Department of Psychology, Hebrew University of Jerusalem

How people perceive social norms plays a vital role in conflict dynamics. Whereas most previous studies on social norms have focused on people's perceptions of others' beliefs and behaviors, the role of emotional social influence in conflict transformation has thus far been less studied. Yet, emotion norms may also be important, considering that it is well established that how people feel about the opponent group strongly shapes their conflict-related attitudes and behaviors. In this study, based on an original survey conducted in Israel in 2022 ($N = 620$), we examine how people perceive emotion norms—that is, the perceived prevalence of emotions felt toward the opponent group among one's group members—and how these emotion norms relate to policy attitudes. We measured the perception of emotion norms in two reference groups, that is, one's national (Israeli Jews) and political (left/center/right) group, for six emotions felt toward the opponent group (i.e., Palestinians): hate, anger, fear, empathy, hope, and guilt. Our results show that emotion norms are related to policy attitudes directly and indirectly via personal emotions. However, they show that the impact of emotion norms depends on the reference group, where the emotion norms in one's political group are more strongly and consistently related to policy support than emotion norms in one's nation. Overall, this study demonstrates the important role of emotion norms in shaping conflict-related attitudes and suggests that we need to move beyond the predominant focus on personally experienced emotions in the literature on conflict resolution.

Public Significance Statement

This study suggests that how people perceive emotion norms—that is, the prevalence of emotions felt toward the opponent group among their own group members—shape their personal emotions and their support for conflict-related policies.

Keywords: emotions, emotion norms, policy support, conflict transformation, Israel

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In violent intergroup conflicts, people often experience and express strong emotions about the conflict and the opponent group. Sometimes they do it privately, but in most cases, these emotions are communicated and shared within the group, as well as between groups. Accordingly, emotions such as fear of the outgroup, anger about their actions, or even hatred of their members can be shared in private conversations, as well as through public and mass-mediated communication. Observing others' emotions can profoundly shape people's perceptions of emotion norms, that is, the perception of prevalent and desirable emotions in their group about the conflict and

the opponent group (see Hochschild, 1979; Thoits, 2004; Vishkin et al., 2023).

In this article, we posit that people's perceptions of emotion norms shape their conflict-related beliefs and behavior, often over and above the effect of their personally experienced emotions. We build on extensive literature showing that perceived social norms are drivers of social and political change (for a review, see Tankard & Paluck, 2016). Whereas most previous studies on social norms have focused on people's perceptions of others' beliefs and behaviors (see, e.g., Bicchieri, 2005; Gelfand et al., 2011; Legros & Cislighi,

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Sandra Penić  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5575-0680>

Eran Halperin  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3379-2935>

SANDRA PENIĆ is a senior researcher and lecturer at the Department of Political Science and International Relations, University of Geneva. Her research focuses on the psychological impacts of political violence and repression. She coordinated a large-scale, interdisciplinary Pluralistic Memories Project and led a multimethod research design implementation in several conflict-affected societies. She has published in various leading scholarly outlets and is an associate editor of the *Journal of Social and Political Psychology*.

NOGA MOSTOVOY is a PhD student at the Hebrew University. She holds an MA in Environmental Studies from Tel Aviv University and a BA in Psychology from Tel Hai College. Specializing in environmental psychology, she has devoted several years to researching social norms, with additional interests in behavioral change and conflict resolution. She has authored two articles in reputable academic journals, serving as the leading author.

ERAN HALPERIN holds a PhD from Haifa University and a postdoc from Stanford University. He is a professor of Social Psychology in the Hebrew University and served as the dean of the School of Psychology in the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya, Israel. He published more than 250 articles in peer-reviewed journals and four books. His main line of research focuses

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2020; van Kleef et al., 2019), the role of emotional social influence in conflict resolution has thus far been less studied. However, studies suggest that emotions play a crucial role in intergroup conflicts by motivating support for aggressive or conciliatory policies and behaviors (Halperin, 2015), and therefore, it would only make sense to assume that emotion norms might also play a role in determining people's policy support in conflicts.

Addressing this gap, we examine how perceived emotion norms (which, for brevity, we refer hereafter as "emotion norms") relate to people's support for conflict-related policies. Do emotion norms predict policy support over and above the impact of personal emotions? And how does the effect of emotion norms depend on the reference group? We address these questions in the context of Israel, embroiled in a decades-long violent conflict with Palestinians due to its military occupation of the Palestinian territories (Fahoum & Abuelaish, 2019; Pappé, 2007). Israeli society is deeply polarized politically, partially due to the different views regarding the conflict with Palestinians, between the right-oriented "hawks" and left-oriented "doves"¹ (Gidron et al., 2022; Harel, Maoz, et al., 2020). In this study, we have conducted a survey among Israeli Jewish participants ($N = 620$), to examine how they perceive emotion norms in their national and political groups, regarding Palestinians and the conflict, and how emotion norms relate to their support for conflict-related policies.

Group-Based Emotions as Predictors of Conflict-Related Attitudes

In conflict-affected societies, people's support for aggressive or inclusionary policies can make a difference between the continuation or resolution of the conflict. Israel, for example, has been systematically implementing policies of territorial dispossession and expulsion of Palestinians (B'Tselem, 2017a), of militarized aggression (B'Tselem, 2017b), as well as security-related policies ostensibly aimed at stifling Palestinian violence and dissent (B'Tselem, 2017c). Some Israelis, however, have been opposing these policies and instead have advocated for more inclusive solutions, such as through policies of reparation (see, e.g., Halperin et al., 2014) and humanitarian action (see, e.g., Shulman et al., 2021), as well as equality-promoting policies (see, e.g., Shuman et al., 2023). Understanding psychological factors that shape people's support for these different types of conflict-related policies has been a long-standing aim of the psychological studies of intergroup conflicts. These studies suggest that among various psychological predictors, group-based emotions, which people experience on behalf of a group to which they belong and identify with (Mackie et al., 2008; Niedenthal & Brauer, 2012), play a central role (Halperin, 2015): How people feel about the members of the opponent group, about their own group, or about the conflict itself motivates their support for conflict-related policies and behaviors.

Studies show that each group-based emotion discretely influences attitudes and behavioral tendencies related to resolving intergroup

conflict (see Halperin, 2015). In this article, we focus on six of the most studied emotions in conflicts: hate, anger, fear, empathy, guilt, and hope. Hate, anger, and fear are generally considered as emotions that motivate support for conflict-promoting policies, although anger and fear can, under some circumstances, motivate constructive responses (Halperin, 2015). *Hate* is rooted in a core appraisal of the outgroup as evil by nature and unable to change, and is associated with support for policies of expulsion, and even complete eradication and destruction of the outgroup (A. Fischer et al., 2018; Halperin, 2008, 2011). *Anger* stems from the perception of the other's actions as unjust and deviating from acceptable norms, leading to support for policies of confrontation and aggression (Berkowitz, 1989; Frijda, 1986). *Fear* arises in a situation of perceived threat or danger and motivates withdrawal and support for security-related policies (Haner et al., 2019).

In contrast, empathy, guilt, and hope are generally considered positive emotions, as they tend to motivate support for policies that promote inclusion and reconciliation. For example, *empathy* for outgroup members is related to positive outgroup attitudes (Dovidio et al., 2009) and increased support for humanitarian policies (Brown & Cehajic, 2008). Empathy refers to our ability to understand, share, and care for the experiences and emotions of others (Zaki, 2014). Moreover, studies show that *guilt*, which arises from the acknowledgment of the ingroup's wrongdoings, motivates support for reparative policies (Brown et al., 2008; Wohl et al., 2006). Finally, *hope* is a future-oriented emotion associated with searching for new and creative solutions to conflict (Cohen-Chen, Halperin, Porat, et al., 2014) and support for political compromise (Cohen-Chen, Halperin, Crisp, et al., 2014).

Most previous studies have examined how personally experienced (group-based) emotions shape conflict attitudes and behaviors and how to change them to promote conflict resolution (see Čehajić-Clancy et al., 2016; Halperin, 2015). It is, however, well established that emotions are profoundly social and that we are deeply influenced by the emotions of relevant others (see, e.g., A. H. Fischer et al., 2004; Mesquita, 2022; Rimé, 2009). In this study, we focus on one such social aspect of emotions whose role in conflict dynamics has thus far been relatively understudied, that is, emotion norms. It should be noted that what we have presented here are simplified versions of the discrete effects of each emotion on concrete policy. Whereas recent studies portray a more nuanced picture (e.g., Tagar et al., 2011), this is less relevant for the current conceptualization of emotion norms effects.

¹ Analyzing 2 decades of survey data, Yaker and Tessler (2023) concluded that dovish views persist despite the escalation of violence since the second intifada. The Yaker and Tessler (2023) argued that "Rather than a strictly hawkish shift, many voters have become 'Doubtful Doves': supportive of territorial compromise in principle, but skeptical about reaching an agreement with the Palestinians in practice" (p. 504).

on the role of emotions and emotion regulation in conflicts and conflict resolution, integrating psychological theories and methods to explain intergroup relations and conflicts.

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CORRESPONDENCE CONCERNING THIS ARTICLE should be addressed to Sandra Penić, Department of Political Science and International Relations, Swiss Center for Affective Sciences, University of Geneva, UniMail, Bd du Pont d'Arve 40, 1205 Geneva, Switzerland. Email: sandra.penicjunge@unige.ch

Emotion Norms and Their Role in Intergroup Conflicts

Social norms are rules that guide group members' behavior (Cialdini & Trost, 1998). Social-psychological studies focus on people's *perceptions* of social norms, that is, positions seen as prevalent or desirable in one's group (Tankard & Paluck, 2016). Norms can refer to behaviors and experiences that are perceived to be widely approved or seen as desirable by group members (i.e., prescriptive norms) or to behaviors and experiences that are perceived to be highly prevalent among group members (i.e., descriptive norms; Cialdini et al., 1990). Both types of norms have been shown to influence individuals' behavior (e.g., Borsari & Carey, 2003; White et al., 2009); and which of the two types of norms is more influential typically depends on the context (e.g., Schultz et al., 2007).

In recent years, some scholars have argued that in some cases, perceived social norms are more important for social and political change than individual beliefs (see Paluck, 2009; Portelinho & Elchereth, 2016). People are motivated to follow the norms of the social groups they belong to and care for (Spears, 2021), especially in conditions of uncertainty and moral controversy, which are likely to be found in conflict-affected societies (Miller & Prentice, 1996). Accordingly, studies suggest that interventions targeting social norms may be particularly successful in promoting conflict transformation (i.e., Paluck, 2009; Portelinho & Elchereth, 2016).

Norms can apply to any socially significant psychological construct, including emotions (A. H. Fischer et al., 2004). With *emotion norms*, we refer to the people's perceptions of the prevalence or desirability of emotions in groups related to a specific event or issue (see Hochschild, 1979; Thoits, 2004; Vishkin et al., 2023). Classic work by Hochschild (1979) has shown that both private, subjective experiences of emotions, as well as public, observable expressions of them, are subject to social norms and control. Emotion norms can prescribe which emotions one should feel and express in particular social settings (i.e., prescriptive emotion norms, see Hochschild, 1979; Thoits, 2004), such as the socially shared expectation to feel sad at a funeral or happy at a wedding.

People's experience and expression of emotions are also influenced by their perception of descriptive emotion norms, that is, emotions seen as prevalent or typical in one's group. For example, Nook et al. (2016) showed that when group members perceive empathy for stigmatized social targets as prevalent in their groups, they are more likely to experience it and act prosocially toward those targets. In this article, we focus on descriptive emotion norms, as they capture a more basic process of group influence (see Spears, 2021) and most previous research on the role of social norms in intergroup conflicts has examined descriptive social norms (see, e.g., Tankard & Paluck, 2016).

Emotion norms differ conceptually from various other social aspects of emotions that have been studied in affective sciences, such as group-based emotions (Mackie et al., 2008; Niedenthal & Brauer, 2012), collective emotions (Goldenberg et al., 2020), social appraisal (Manstead & Fischer, 2001), or emotional fit (De Leersnyder et al., 2015). For example, whereas group-based emotions refer to *personally* experienced emotions as a result of one's group membership (Mackie et al., 2008), emotion norms refer to people's perceptions of emotions experienced by *other* group members. Moreover, collective emotions are *macrolevel* affective phenomena that emerge from emotional dynamics among individuals

who are responding to the same situation (Goldenberg et al., 2020). By contrast, emotion norms, as conceptualized here, refer to *individuals'* perceptions of collectively shared or appropriate emotions. Observing or participating in collective emotions—such as in the situations of collective celebration, collective action, or collective mourning—can reinforce people's perception of certain emotions as normative in their group. Similarly, social appraisal is distinct from emotion norms, as it refers to the *interpersonal* process through which “thoughts or feelings of one or more other persons in the emotional situation are appraised in addition to the appraisal of the event per se” (Manstead & Fischer, 2001, p. 222), but is potentially an important bottom-up mechanism underlying the formation and reinforcement of emotion norms. Finally, emotional fit is “the extent to which an individual's emotions are similar to the culture's average emotional pattern in the situation” (De Leersnyder et al., 2015, p. 2) and therefore refers to the degree to which an individual has *internalized* the normative emotions.

Studies on the role of emotion norms in intergroup conflicts have thus far been sporadic and relatively disparate due to their use of different terminology. For example, Kim (2016) referred to “perceived collective emotional responses” (p. 456) and defined them as “emotions that are perceived to be shared by the majority of group members in response to group-level events,” which in our reading corresponds to descriptive emotion norms. Notably, Kim (2016) showed that Americans' perception of anger norms in their nation regarding the 9/11 attacks predicted their personal anger and support for counterterrorism policies. Moreover, Kaakinen et al. (2021), in the context of the Paris terror attacks, referred to the “Zeitgeist of fear” (p. 1019) as people's perception of the prevalence of fear in their society. They showed, across five countries, that the “Zeitgeist of fear”—that is, the perceived norm of fear in one's nation in our reading—is related to higher personal fear of terrorism both immediately after the attacks and a year later. Finally, Penić et al. (2021) showed that empathy norms in one's local community—or the “perceived communal inclusive empathy” (p. 402), as referred to by the authors—predict support for transitional justice policies in postwar Sri Lanka.

We believe that “emotion norms” is a useful concept that can unify the findings from these previous studies. As a broader concept that describes a general group-based process of social influence (Spears, 2021; van Kleef et al., 2019), we expect that emotion norms matter for various discrete emotions beyond those studied in the above-described studies. Moreover, rather than presuming that perception of emotions in a specific group—such as in the broader society, as in Kim (2016) and Kaakinen et al. (2021)—will always affect individuals, the group-based approach to emotion norms helps to explain when and why a group will be an effective source of normative information, as detailed in the next section (Spears, 2021; Tankard & Paluck, 2016). Accordingly, the key question that we address in this study is whether the impact of emotion norms generalizes across different emotions and how it depends on the reference group.

Importance of the Reference Groups

As a group-based process, social norms are influential when they relate to *reference groups*, that is, groups to which people belong to and care about (Sherif & Sherif, 1964). In other words, we are not equally influenced by the emotions of all people around us but rather

by the emotions of those people with whom we identify with and care for (Spears, 2021). Notably, we belong to multiple social groups with different social norms that we tend to follow in situations when the group identity is salient (Spears, 2021; Turner et al., 1987). Accordingly, a reference group may be influential for some behaviors, beliefs, or emotions and not others (Miller & Prentice, 1996). Thus, Tankard and Paluck (2016) argued that intervention studies that target norms require an initial process of identifying the correct reference group that is meaningful and relevant to participants.

In conflict studies, the focus is typically on conflict-defined groups and related identities, such as the ethnonational identity among Jewish Israelis. This is not surprising, as numerous studies show that violent conflicts enhance identification with the conflict-defined group and that this identity can become chronically salient and a key lens through which the conflict and the outgroup are seen and understood (see Elchereth & Reicher, 2017). We accordingly expect that the perceived emotion norms in the conflict-defined group (i.e., the national group for Jewish Israelis in our study) are related to conflict-related policy attitudes.

However, recently, some researchers have argued that we need to move beyond the two-group view of the conflicts, as usually these groups are not monolithic and there may be relevant subgroups or cross-groups that structure people's experiences and beliefs (see Dixon et al., 2020; Elchereth et al., 2019; Harel, Maoz, et al., 2020). For example, especially when conflicts are prolonged, there can be different political and ideological subgroups that understand the conflict in radically different ways. This is well documented in the case of Israeli society, which is deeply politically polarized, partially concerning different views regarding the conflict with Palestinians (Shamir & Arian, 1999; Talshir, 2022). Accordingly, we examine how emotion norms in one's political group relate to policy support, and whether they are potentially more impactful than emotion norms in typically studied conflict-defined groups.

Emotion Norms and Policy Support: The Role of Personal Emotions

The final question we address in this study concerns the role of personally experienced group-based emotions—to which we refer hereafter as personal emotions—in the process of emotional social influence. More specifically, we expect that emotion norms can influence people's policy attitudes indirectly by shaping their personal emotions. When people identify with and care for the group, they are likely to internalize its norms, which then guide their behavior (Spears, 2021). Indeed, group influence often involves a process of genuine, private acceptance of the group's norms and values (Turner, 1991; Turner et al., 1987). Especially when there is uncertainty or moral controversy, we rely upon trusted group members to inform us what to think and how to feel about the issue at hand (Spears, 2021). Internalization of emotion norms can occur through the process of emotional self-stereotyping (Moons et al., 2009). According to the social identity and self-categorization theories, a salient group membership leads to self-stereotyping, or adoption of the group's perceived values, attitudes, and other characteristics (Hogg & Turner, 1987; Spears et al., 1997; Turner, 1991). Moons et al. (2009) have shown that self-stereotyping also applies to emotions: People tend to genuinely internalize and experience (rather than just express) emotion perceived as normative (i.e., prevalent) in their group. In line with these findings, previous

studies have shown that emotion norms influence personal emotions (Kaakinen et al., 2021; Kim, 2016) and that personal emotions mediate the impact of emotion norms on policy attitudes (Kim, 2016).

Emotion norms, however, can also influence people's policy support without them internalizing and experiencing normative emotion. This corresponds to the classic conceptualization of normative influence, defined as conforming to the expectations of others for instrumental reasons to gain rewards (such as social approval) or avoid disapproval (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955). Paluck and Chwe (2017), for example, argued that antihate norms can discourage hate crimes regardless of what people personally feel. Even hateful individuals will be discouraged from acting upon their emotions and beliefs when they think other community members disapprove of or do not share their views. Conversely, however, when hate is perceived as shared in one's community, it can empower hateful individuals to act and lead those who oppose it to silently stand by to "get along" with the group and avoid ostracism and punishment (Reicher et al., 2008). Especially in times of conflict when pressure for unity is high (Hornsey, 2016) and when deviating from group norms can be costly (Adelman & Dasgupta, 2019; Ariyanto et al., 2010), people may act along the perceived norms without internalizing them. In this article, we, therefore, examine whether emotion norms shape policy support indirectly via personal emotions or also directly, over and above the effect of personal emotions.

Current Research and Context of the Study

To summarize, the main goal of the present study is to examine how people perceive emotion norms and how they are associated with their conflict-related policy attitudes. Moreover, we examine the role of personal emotions, specifically, whether personal emotions mediate the effect of emotion norms on policy attitudes and whether emotion norms predict policy attitudes over and above the effect of personal emotions. Finally, we examine whether the impact of emotion norms depends on the reference group (i.e., national vs. political ingroup).

We hypothesize that perceived emotion norms in one's national group (i.e., among Jewish Israelis), as well as the emotion norms in one's political group (i.e., right, center, left), predict policy attitudes directly and indirectly via personal emotions. We expect this pattern to hold across all studied emotions and policy attitudes. However, building on the studies on affective polarization in Israel (see Harel, Maoz, et al., 2020), we expect that policy attitudes will be related more strongly to emotion norms in one's political group than the national group.

We conducted our study in the context of the Jewish Israeli society in Israel. The Israeli–Palestinian conflict is characterized by a violent history of deep-rooted, recurring disputes over the territory (Fahoum & Abuelaish, 2019). Its defining feature is the military occupation of the Palestinian territory (West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip), which has resulted in systematic human rights violations against Palestinians (Erakat, 2019). The military occupation of the Palestinian territory involves a systematic process of dispossession and expulsion of Palestinians through Israeli settlement building, which is illegal under the Fourth Geneva Convention (Erakat, 2019). The Israeli–Palestinian conflict has also involved violent confrontations and wars, which have been highly asymmetrical in their consequences for the local populations:

For example, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (2023) estimated that from 2008 to 2022 (when we conducted our study), there have been 289 Israeli and 6,226 Palestinian fatalities, and 6,114 Israeli and 144,963 Palestinian injuries. Even though much less victimized on average, many Israelis live in a climate of threat and fear due to terror attacks by Palestinians from the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip (Berrebi & Lakdawalla, 2007; von Borstel et al., 2019). While these attacks do not necessarily claim many lives, they create a climate of uncertainty and threat that affect Israelis' narrative toward Palestinians and the conflict, specifically by increasing the frequency and legitimacy of conflict-promoting narratives (Canetti, 2017).

Despite this climate, throughout the conflict, some Israelis—mainly on the political left—have systematically opposed the military occupation and advocated for more inclusive policies and political solutions. In fact, today, Israeli society is deeply politically polarized, partially concerning different views regarding the conflict with Palestinians (Shamir & Arian, 1999; Talshir, 2022). The political divide in Israel between different ideological groups is a good predictor of attitudes and policy support concerning the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, with right-oriented Israelis having more hawkish, pro-war attitudes and left-oriented Israelis being more supportive of peace initiatives and inclusive policies (Tagar et al., 2014). The relations across the political divide can be highly conflictual: In extreme cases, members of far-right groups tend to dehumanize leftists on social media and portray them as enemies of the country due to their political attitudes (Harel, Jameson, et al., 2020).

Moreover, while external threats can lead to cohesion and minimize the ideological gap, this has not been the case in Israel. For example, John and Dvir-Gvirsman (2015) found that during the Israeli–Gaza conflict in 2014, the divide between ideological groups grew and reached the point in which individuals “unfriended” the political “others” on social media. These examples demonstrate that conflict situations and external threats are not enough to bridge the political gap and overcome the polarization the state of Israel is experiencing due to ideological differences in attitudes, related among other things, to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict (for review, see Harel, Maoz, et al., 2020). This indicates that perceived emotion norms in one's political group may be particularly powerful in shaping people's policy support, even more so than emotion norms in the (traditionally studied, conflict-defined) ethnonational group. Accordingly, we have conducted our study among Jewish Israelis to examine how their emotions toward Palestinians, and their perceptions of emotion norms in their national and political groups, relate to support for various conflict-related policies.

Method

Sample and Procedure

We conducted the survey online, using the Qualtrics platform, from October 17 to 25. Participants were recruited by an Israeli survey company (iPanel) in exchange for monetary compensation. iPanel is a leading survey company in Israel, which contains over 100,000 panel members and works according to international quality standards (ESOMAR member). In total, 620 participants replied to the questionnaire (97 men and 509 women²). Considering that political identity was a key variable, respondents were recruited if they identified politically as right ($N = 284$), center ($N = 141$),

or left ($N = 196$) oriented. The sample is diverse with regard to age (ranging from 18 to 70) and education levels. Sample characteristics are reported in Table 1.

Measures

The questionnaire was developed by the authors in English and was translated and back-translated from English to Hebrew. Because this study was part of a larger project, not all measures are used in the present analysis. To test the role of emotion norms in determining policy support, we have tailored our measures to match six group-based emotions, perceived norms for each of these emotions, and support for theoretically relevant policy for each of the emotions, as detailed below.

Personal (Group-Based) Emotions

We have measured the following participants' emotions toward the conflicting group (i.e., Palestinians). All emotion items were rated on a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) scale.³

Hate was assessed with the item “I hate Palestinians for what they have done to Jewish Israelis in the conflict.”

Anger was assessed with the item “I feel anger about the actions of Palestinians in the context of the conflict.”

Fear was assessed with the item “I feel fear of the Palestinians' actions.”

Empathy was assessed with the item “I feel empathy for the suffering of Palestinians in the context of the conflict.”

Guilt was assessed with the item “I feel guilty for the actions of some Jewish Israelis against Palestinians in the conflict.”

Hope was assessed with the item “I am hopeful that relations between Jewish Israelis and Palestinians will improve.”

² We have performed robustness checks to test whether our findings are affected by the gender imbalance in our sample (see Supplemental Table S1). We find only a few statistically significant differences between men and women in the key measures: More specifically, among six policy items, only one was statistically significant with $p < .05$ (reparation, $p = .029$); among six political ingroup norms, only one was statistically significant (anger, $p = .049$); similarly, among six national ingroup norms, only one was statistically significant (fear, $p = .003$); while among six personal emotions, two were statically significant (fear, $p < .001$ and hope, $p = .002$). Notably, except for fear, for the measures with significant gender differences, we find the same pattern of correlations with other variables as for the measures without significant gender differences (see Table 4). Thus, considering that for most measures, we do not find significant gender differences and that there are no systematic differences in correlations for measures with and without gender differences, we assume that the sample gender composition did not systematically bias our findings.

³ The items were rated on the following scale: 1 (*strongly disagree*), 2 (*disagree*), 3 (*somewhat disagree*), 4 (*agree*), and 5 (*strongly agree*). The response category “somewhat agree” was excluded due to a coding error. The scale is, therefore, less sensitive for the agreement with the items. However, the error has been systematically applied to all six emotions of different valence and, therefore to all participants across the entire range of opinions (i.e., equally among those who express empathy as among those who express hate). Considering that we do not find systematic differences in the results for emotions of different valence, we do not expect that this coding error has significantly biased our findings.

Table 1
Descriptives

Measure	N	Minimum	Maximum	M/%	SD
Personal emotions					
Hate	613	1	5	3.71	1.141
Anger	615	1	5	4.29	0.953
Fear	618	1	5	4.11	0.948
Empathy	614	1	5	3.18	1.286
Guilt	613	1	5	2.84	1.415
Hope	615	1	5	3.38	1.233
National ingroup norms					
Hate	616	1	5	3.60	0.997
Anger	619	1	5	4.04	0.917
Fear	619	1	5	3.91	0.999
Empathy	617	1	5	1.99	0.931
Guilt	610	1	5	1.68	0.880
Hope	613	1	5	2.36	1.045
Political ingroup norms					
Hate	602	1	5	3.01	1.431
Right-oriented	275	1	5	3.92	1.157
Center	131	1	5	2.85	1.173
Left-oriented	196	1	5	1.85	0.986
Anger	602	1	5	3.52	1.318
Right-oriented	275	1	5	4.27	1.117
Center	131	1	5	3.24	1.008
Left-oriented	196	1	5	2.66	1.159
Fear	599	1	5	3.28	1.223
Right-oriented	273	1	5	3.58	1.246
Center	131	1	5	3.16	1.080
Left-oriented	195	1	5	2.93	1.180
Empathy	598	1	5	2.59	1.389
Right-oriented	271	1	5	1.79	1.113
Center	131	1	5	2.39	1.027
Left-oriented	196	1	5	3.84	1.010
Guilt	589	1	5	2.32	1.349
Right-oriented	268	1	5	1.61	1.045
Center	129	1	5	2.16	1.074
Left-oriented	192	1	5	3.42	1.169
Hope	601	1	5	2.87	1.411
Right-oriented	274	1	5	2.04	1.181
Center	131	1	5	3.11	1.148
Left-oriented	196	1	5	3.87	1.132
Policy support					
Expulsion	586	1	6	3.08	1.621
Aggression	597	1	6	2.24	1.335
Security	608	1	6	4.53	1.356
Compromise	590	1	6	3.36	1.658
Reparation	600	1	6	3.23	1.364
Humanitarian action	604	1	6	4.50	1.308
Control variables					
Female	609			83.6	
Higher education	609			59.1	
Higher income	609			43.7	

Emotion Norms

We have measured perceived emotion norms in two reference groups: national ingroup (i.e., Jewish Israelis) and political ingroup, for each of the six emotions.

For the *national ingroup norms*, for each of the six group-based emotions, we have asked the respondents to estimate “How many people among Jewish Israelis feel the following emotions?” with the following response scale: (a) Few Jewish Israelis (less than 20%), (b) Some Jewish Israelis (20%–40%), (c) About half of the Jewish Israelis (40%–60%), (d) Plenty of Jewish Israelis (60%–80%),

and (e) Almost all Jewish Israelis (more than 80%). Accordingly, we have six measures of national ingroup norms, one for each of the six personal (group-based) emotions.

For the *political ingroup norms*, we have first asked the respondents to which political group they belong to, on the following scale: (a) extreme right, (b) right, (c) moderate right, (d) center, (e) moderate left, (f) left, and (g) extreme left. Respondents identifying as the right-oriented (i.e., from extreme to moderate right) were asked to estimate emotion norms in the right-oriented political group; those identifying as “center” were asked to estimate emotion norms in this (their) political group, and, finally, those identifying as the left-oriented (i.e., moderate to the extreme left) were asked about norms in (their) left political group. More precisely, they were asked to estimate “How many Jewish Israelis in [political group] feel the following emotions?” on the following response scale: (a) Few Jewish Israelis in my political group (less than 20%), (b) Some Jewish Israelis in my political group (20%–40%), (c) About half of the Jewish Israelis in my political group (40%–60%), (d) Plenty of Jewish Israelis in my political group (60%–80%), and (e) Almost all Jewish Israelis in my political group (more than 80%). Accordingly, we have six measures of the political ingroup norms, one for each of the six personal (group-based) emotions.

Policy Support

Building on previous studies that show that each group-based emotion discretely influences support for conflict-related policy (see Halperin, 2015), we have measured participants’ support for the following six types of conflict-related policies, theoretically matched to each of the studied emotions. All policy items were rated on a 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*) scale.

For hate, we measured support for the expulsion of Palestinians (self-developed measure).

Expulsion was measured with the item, “I would support policies that aim to expel Palestinians from the Israeli territory.”

For anger, we measured support for aggression against Palestinians (adapted from Halperin, 2011).

Aggression was measured with the item, “I would support physical and violent actions against the Palestinians to promote our goals in the conflict, even if it meant harming their civilians.”

For fear, we measured support for security-related policy (self-developed measures based on Haner et al., 2019).

Security was measured with two items ($r = .75$), “I would support security policies, such as the stronger military armament of Jews in Israel, to protect us against our enemies” and “I would support security policies such as building of more checkpoints and installing surveillance cameras in the West Bank, in order to limit and track the movement of Palestinians.” The total score was computed as the mean of the two items.

For empathy, we measured support for humanitarian action (adapted from Halperin & Gross, 2011).

Humanitarian action was measured with two items ($r = .74$), “I would support humanitarian policies, such as the provision of humanitarian aid (e.g., transfer of food and medicine, medical care) to Palestinians” and “I would support policy of providing medical care to injured Palestinian women and children in Israeli hospitals.” The total score was computed as the mean of the two items.

For guilt, we measured support for reparatory policies (adapted from Brown et al., 2008).

Reparation was measured with two items ($r = .54$), “I would support reparation policies that compensate Palestinians for what they were hurt by Israel during the conflict” and “In order to achieve stable peace, I would support policies that include giving some Palestinian refugees the rights to return to Israel.” The total score was computed as the mean of the two items.

Finally, for hope, we measured support for political compromise (adapted from Cohen-Chen, Halperin, Crisp, et al., 2014).

Compromise was measured with two items ($r = .80$), “I would support political compromise with Palestinians in order to achieve lasting peace” and “I would support Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 borders and evacuation of settlements in order to achieve lasting peace and stop the violence with Palestinians.” The total score was computed as the mean of the two items.

Control Measures

In all analyses, we have controlled for the following socio-demographic variables: gender, level of education, and level of income. Moreover, we controlled for political identification on the scale: (a) extreme right ($N = 18$), (b) right ($N = 132$), (c) moderate right ($N = 134$), (d) center ($N = 141$), (e) moderate left ($N = 91$), (f) left ($N = 100$), and (g) extreme left ($N = 5$).

Results

We have performed our analyses in two steps. First, we have performed descriptive analyses to examine how people perceive the prevalence of emotions in two reference groups (i.e., national and political groups) and how emotion norms relate to their personal emotions. In the next step, we tested our key questions of whether emotion norms are related to policy support and whether the impact of emotion norms depends on the reference group.

Descriptive Analyses: How Do Respondents Perceive Emotion Norms?

We find that respondents tend to experience more strongly negative emotions (i.e., hate, anger, and fear) compared to positive emotions (i.e., empathy, guilt, and hope; Table 1): On average, they tend to “agree” with the negative emotion items and “slightly disagree” with the positive emotion items ($M_{\text{negative}} = 4.03$, $M_{\text{positive}} = 3.13$, $t = 14.651$, $df = 619$, $p < .001$).

We find a similar pattern for the *national ingroup norms*: On average, respondents tend to estimate that “plenty of Jewish Israelis (60%–80%)” feel the three negative emotions, compared to the average estimate that “some Jewish Israelis (20%–40%)” feel the three positive emotions ($M_{\text{negative}} = 4.03$, $M_{\text{positive}} = 2.01$, $t = 43.015$, $df = 617$, $p < .001$). Interestingly, we find that respondents from three different political groups largely converge in their perceptions of the national emotion norms: The differences are statistically nonsignificant for all emotions except for empathy, which right-oriented respondents tend to perceive as less prevalent in the nation, empathy: $M_{\text{right}} = 1.89$, $M_{\text{center}} = 2.05$, $M_{\text{left}} = 2.10$, $F(2, 611) = 3.358$, $p = .035$; hate: $M_{\text{right}} = 3.63$, $M_{\text{center}} = 3.55$, $M_{\text{left}} = 3.60$, $F(2, 610) = .251$, $p > .05$; anger: $M_{\text{right}} = 4.02$, $M_{\text{center}} = 4.09$, $M_{\text{left}} = 4.01$, $F(2, 613) = .389$, $p > .05$; fear: $M_{\text{right}} = 3.91$, $M_{\text{center}} = 3.79$, $M_{\text{left}} = 4.01$, $F(2, 613) = 1.959$, $p > .05$; guilt: $M_{\text{right}} = 1.60$, $M_{\text{center}} = 1.77$, $M_{\text{left}} =$

1.74, $F(2, 604) = 2.348$, $p > .05$; hope: $M_{\text{right}} = 2.25$, $M_{\text{center}} = 2.50$, $M_{\text{left}} = 2.41$, $F(2, 607) = 2.937$, $p > .05$.

However, when asked about emotion norms in their political group, we find that, as expected, they strongly depend on the political group: The right-oriented participants perceive negative emotions as more prevalent in their group than positive emotions ($M_{\text{negative}} = 3.92$, $M_{\text{positive}} = 1.82$, $t = 23.728$, $df = 272$, $p < .001$), whereas the left-oriented participants, conversely, perceive positive emotions as more prevalent ($M_{\text{negative}} = 2.48$, $M_{\text{positive}} = 3.72$, $t = 12.326$, $df = 195$, $p < .001$), with the respondents identifying with the center falling in between ($M_{\text{negative}} = 3.08$, $M_{\text{positive}} = 2.57$, $t = 5.143$, $df = 130$, $p < .001$).

In sum, these descriptive findings show that people can belong to multiple social groups with potentially different emotion norms. In the next step, we examined how perceived emotion norms relate to personal emotions. Table 2 shows the bivariate correlations between group-based personal emotions and emotion norms in two reference groups (i.e., national ingroup and political ingroup). Across all emotions except for fear, we find that group-based personal emotions correlate more strongly with political ingroup emotion norms than with national ingroup norms, indicating that how respondents feel about Palestinians is more strongly tied to their political rather than the national identity (fear: $r_{\text{political}} = .467$, $r_{\text{national}} = .415$, $z = .454$, $N = 594$, $p > .05$; hate: $r_{\text{political}} = .552$, $r_{\text{national}} = .295$, $z = 6.065$, $N = 585$, $p < .001$; anger: $r_{\text{political}} = .413$, $r_{\text{national}} = .298$, $z = 2.681$, $N = 594$, $p = .010$; empathy: $r_{\text{political}} = .517$, $r_{\text{national}} = .284$, $z = 5.383$, $N = 587$, $p < .001$; hope: $r_{\text{political}} = .543$, $r_{\text{national}} = .460$, $z = 2.224$, $N = 589$, $p = .026$; guilt: $r_{\text{political}} = .547$, $r_{\text{national}} = .333$, $z = 5.212$, $N = 578$, $p < .001$). Crucially, we find that correlations between the two types of norms, and with personal emotions, are moderate at the highest, indicating that we can empirically distinguish emotion norms (in two reference groups) and personal emotions.

Table 2

Correlations Between Personal Emotions and Emotion Norms

Measure	National ingroup norm	Political ingroup norm
Hate		
Personal emotion	.294***	.551***
National ingroup norm		.261***
Anger		
Personal emotion	.294***	.406***
National ingroup norm		.288***
Fear		
Personal emotion	.418***	.464***
National ingroup norm		.487***
Empathy		
Personal emotion	.283***	.517***
National ingroup norm		.305***
Guilt		
Personal emotion	.327***	.542***
National ingroup norm		.341***
Hope		
Personal emotion	.455***	.540***
National ingroup norm		.393***

*** $p < .001$.

Regression Analyses: Do Emotion Norms Predict Policy Attitudes?

To examine whether emotion norms predict policy attitudes and whether the impact depends on the reference group (i.e., national and political ingroup), we performed analyses in three steps. First, we tested whether national ingroup norms predict policy attitudes directly and indirectly, via personal emotions. Second, we performed the same analyses to test whether political ingroup norms predict policy attitudes. Last, in the third step, we tested the impact of national and political ingroup norms simultaneously, to examine which type of norms is more predictive of policy attitudes. In all analyses, we controlled for sociodemographic variables. We performed all analyses separately for each of the six emotions and their anticipated policies. This allows us to test whether the potential impact of emotion norms generalizes across all studied emotions.

National Ingroup Emotion Norms

We performed regression analyses in two steps. In the first step, we tested the impact of national ingroup norms only (which we added to the base model with sociodemographic controls). In the second step, we added the measure of personal emotions and tested the indirect effect of emotion norms via personal emotions (see Table 3). In such a way, we tested whether emotion norms in national ingroup predict policy attitudes, that is, the total effect in Model 1 (M1), Table 3; whether the impact is mediated by personal emotions (i.e., indirect effect, Table 3); and whether emotion norms predict policy attitudes over and above personal emotions, that is, the direct effect of norms in Model 2 (M2), Table 3. We used the SPSS macro PROCESS (Hayes, 2017, Model 4) and bootstrapping (5,000 iterations).

We found that the impact of national ingroup emotion norms depends on the type of emotions. Among negative emotions, we found a statistically significant total effect only for the norms of hate: The more prevalent the respondents think hate is among Israeli Jews, the more they support the expulsion of Palestinians (see Table 3). The impact of the perceived hate norms was, however, relatively small: It predicted 2.8% of the outcome variance. Among positive emotions, we found a consistent statistically significant impact of norms for all three emotions (i.e., empathy, guilt, and hope) for the corresponding policies: The more respondents perceived empathy, guilt, or hope as prevalent in their nation, the more they supported policies of humanitarian action, reparation, and compromise, respectively (with 1.1%–4.9% of explained outcome variance; see Table 3).

Moreover, we found a statistically significant indirect effect of norms via personal emotions for hate and the three positive emotions (see Table 3). As expected, the more prevalent people perceived an emotion in their nation, the more likely they were to experience that emotion, which in turn explained their policy attitudes. After controlling for personal emotions, however, the previously statistically significant effect of norms became nonsignificant in all cases. Moreover, in the case of fear, we found a buffer effect, where the statistically nonsignificant impact of fear norms became statistically significant after including the measure of personal fear but predicted support for security policies in a theoretically unexpected pattern (i.e., negatively).

In sum, we found a partial confirmation of our hypotheses for the nation as the reference group: The national ingroup emotion

norms predicted policy attitudes for some of the studied emotions. However, the impact of national ingroup norms was relatively small and ceased to be significant after including personal emotions in the models.

Political Ingroup Emotion Norms

In the next step, we have tested the impact of emotion norms in one's political ingroup. We have performed the same analyses as described above for the national ingroup norms.

Contrary to the national ingroup norms, the impact of political ingroup norms is strikingly consistent and clear: For *all* emotions, we found a statistically significant impact of political ingroup norms on policy support (see Table 4). As expected, the more prevalent respondents perceived hate, anger, and fear in their political group, the more supportive they were of, respectively, policies of expulsion, aggression, and national security. Moreover, the more normative respondents perceived empathy, guilt, and hope, the more supportive they were of theoretically relevant, corresponding policies that promote humanitarian action, reparation, and political compromise (see Table 4). With the exception of fear, emotion norms in political ingroup explained a relatively high percentage of the outcome variance: For some emotions and policies, even over 20% of the outcome variance.

As expected, we found a statistically significant indirect effect of political ingroup emotion norms on policy attitudes via personal emotions for almost all emotions and corresponding policies (see Table 4). The more prevalent people perceived an emotion in their political group, the more likely they were to experience that emotion, which in turn explained their policy attitudes. Only in the case of anger, we did not find a statistically significant indirect effect because personal anger toward Palestinians was a statistically nonsignificant predictor of support for aggression in a model with the anger norm (see Table 4). Moreover, for all emotions except for fear, we found that the impact of emotion norms remained statistically significant after controlling for personal emotions, thus indicating that political ingroup emotion norms explain policy attitudes over and above personal emotions.

Finally, we have performed additional analyses to verify whether the impact of political ingroup emotion norms on policy attitudes remains statistically significant after controlling for the respondents' political identification (i.e., their identity on a left–right continuum). In other words, we examined whether the observed effect of norms is explained by political identity or whether, on the contrary, emotion norms explain policy attitudes over and above one's political identification. We found that, with the exception of fear, the impact of emotion norms in one's political group is robust to control of political identification (Supplemental Table S2).

In sum, we found a full confirmation of our hypotheses in the case of the political group as the reference group: The political ingroup emotion norms predict policy attitudes for all emotions and policy attitudes and, in most cases, over and above the impact of group-based personal emotions.

Contrasting the Impact of National Versus Political Ingroup Emotion Norms

In the final step, we examined the relative contribution of the national and political ingroup emotion norms in explaining policy

Table 3
Mediation Analysis of the Impact of National Ingroup Norms on Policy Support via Personal Emotions

Model	Expulsion	Aggression	Security	Model	Humanitarian action	Reparation	Compromise
Hate							
M1: National ingroup norms <i>R</i> ² change	.275*** (.067) .028***			Empathy M1: National ingroup norms <i>R</i> ² change	.272*** (.057) .037***		
M2: National ingroup norms	-.019 (.058)			M2: National ingroup norms	.073 (.052)		
M2: Personal emotion <i>R</i> ² change	.840*** (.050) .318***			M2: Personal emotion <i>R</i> ² change	.517*** (.038) .229***		
Model fit (adjusted <i>R</i> ²)	.366***			Model fit (adjusted <i>R</i> ²)	.290***		
Indirect effect	.294** (.044)			Indirect effect	.199** (.035)		
<i>N</i>	569			<i>N</i>	585		
Anger							
M1: National ingroup norms <i>R</i> ² change		.015 (.059) .000		Guilt M1: National ingroup norms <i>R</i> ² change		.343*** (.063) .049***	
M2: National ingroup norms		-.029 (.062)		M2: National ingroup norms		.100 (.060)	
M2: Personal emotion <i>R</i> ² change		.139* (.061) .009*		M2: Personal emotion <i>R</i> ² change		.456*** (.037) .193***	
Model fit (adjusted <i>R</i> ²)		.026**		Model fit (adjusted <i>R</i> ²)		.250***	
Indirect effect		.044 (.023)		Indirect effect		.243** (.035)	
<i>N</i>		582		<i>N</i>		578	
Fear							
M1: National ingroup norms <i>R</i> ² change			.005 (.056) .000	Hope M1: National ingroup norms <i>R</i> ² change		.207** (.066) .017**	
M2: National ingroup norms			-.173** (.058)	M2: National ingroup norms		-.077 (.069)	
M2: Personal emotion <i>R</i> ² change			.487*** (.064) .088***	M2: Personal emotion <i>R</i> ² change		.542*** (.059) .126***	
Model fit (adjusted <i>R</i> ²)			.107***	Model fit (adjusted <i>R</i> ²)		.146***	
Indirect effect			.177* (.029)	Indirect effect		.283** (.038)	
<i>N</i>			595	<i>N</i>		571	

Note. Nonstandardized coefficients and standard errors. All models control for gender, age, and education level. M1 = the total effect of norms; M2 = the direct effect of norms (while controlling for the impact of personal emotions).
* *p* < .05. ** *p* < .01. *** *p* < .001.

Table 4
Mediation Analysis of the Impact of Political Ingroup Norms on Policy Support via Personal Emotions

Model	Expulsion	Aggression	Security	Model	Humanitarian action	Reparation	Compromise
Hate							
M1: Political ingroup norms	.586*** (.041)			Empathy			
R^2 change	.266***			M1: Political ingroup norms	.380*** (.036)		
M2: Political ingroup norms	.313*** (.044)			R^2 change	.160***		
M2: Personal emotion	.610*** (.055)			M2: Political ingroup norms	.178*** (.038)		
R^2 change	.128***			M2: Personal emotion	.429*** (.042)		
Model fit (adjusted R^2)	.416***			R^2 change	.127***		
Indirect effect	.273** (.030)			Model fit (adjusted R^2)	.314***		
N	559			Indirect effect	.202** (.028)		
Anger							
M1: Political ingroup norms		.244*** (.041)		N	574		
R^2 change		.057***		Guilt		.484*** (.038)	
M2: Political ingroup norms		.254*** (.046)		M1: Political ingroup norms		.226***	
M2: Personal emotion		-.031 (.063)		R^2 change		.305*** (.042)	
R^2 change		.000		M2: Political ingroup norms		.318*** (.040)	
Model fit (adjusted R^2)		.077***		M2: Personal emotion		.076***	
Indirect effect		-.010 (.024)		R^2 change		.311***	
N		573		Model fit (adjusted R^2)		.180** (.027)	
Fear							
M1: Political ingroup norms			.205*** (.045)	Indirect effect		.563	
R^2 change			.034***	N		563	
M2: Political ingroup norms			.075 (.050)	Hope			.532*** (.044)
M2: Personal emotion			.362*** (.067)	M1: Political ingroup norms			.203***
R^2 change			.046***	R^2 change			.414*** (.052)
Model fit (adjusted R^2)			.099***	M2: Political ingroup norms			.255*** (.060)
Indirect effect			.130* (.027)	M2: Personal emotion			.025***
N			581	R^2 change			.231***
Indirect effect							
				Model fit (adjusted R^2)			.118* (.030)
				Indirect effect			.566
				N			

Note. Nonstandardized coefficients and standard errors (in parentheses) are displayed in table. All models controlled for gender, age, and education level. M1 = the total effect of norms; M2 = the direct effect of norms (while controlling for the impact of personal emotions).

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 5
Regression Analysis of the Impact of National Ingroup Norms and Political Ingroup Norms on Support for Conflict-Related Policies

Model	Expulsion	Aggression	Security	Model	Humanitarian action	Reparation	Compromise
Hate				Empathy			
National ingroup norms	.036 (.061)			National ingroup norms	.117* (.055)		
Political ingroup norms	.582*** (.042)			Political ingroup norms	.357*** (.037)		
Model fit (adjusted R^2)	.287***			Model fit (adjusted R^2)	.193***		
N	564			N	578		
Anger				Guilt			
National ingroup norms		-.095 (.060)		National ingroup norms		.084 (.062)	
Political ingroup norms		.257*** (.042)		Political ingroup norms		.464*** (.040)	
Model fit (adjusted R^2)		.075***		Model fit (adjusted R^2)		.236***	
N		578		N		562	
Fear				Hope			
National ingroup norms			-.137* (.063)	National ingroup norms			-.095 (.065)
Political ingroup norms			.264*** (.052)	Political ingroup norms			.554*** (.048)
Model fit (adjusted R^2)			.060***	Model fit (adjusted R^2)			.205***
N			583	N			566

Note. Nonstandardized coefficients and standard errors (in parentheses) are displayed in table. All models controlled for gender, age, and education level.

* $p < .05$. *** $p < .001$.

attitudes. Our previous analyses described above already indicate that emotion norms in one's political ingroup are stronger and more consistent predictors of policy attitudes. To directly test this assumption, we performed regression analyses in which we simultaneously tested the impact of the two types of emotion norms—that is, emotion norms in one's national and political groups—while controlling for the respondents' sociodemographic characteristics. The results are shown in Table 5.

As assumed, we found that political ingroup emotion norms predict policy attitudes more strongly than the national ingroup emotion norms, and we observe this pattern for *all* of the measured emotions and policy attitudes (see Table 5). In fact, in most models with the two types of norms, the impact of national ingroup emotion norms becomes statistically nonsignificant. In a few cases, and most notably for the emotion of fear, we found a buffer effect, where the impact of national ingroup norms becomes statistically significant after including the political ingroup norms in the model (i.e., a similar pattern as observed in the above-described models with personal emotions). In sum, these analyses show that political ingroup emotion norms are stronger and more consistent predictors of policy attitudes than national ingroup emotion norms.

We performed additional analyses to verify whether the different impact of emotion norms in two reference groups is potentially driven by different degrees of identification with these groups. First, we found that the level of identification with the national group is very high (see Table 1), where between 80% and 90% of respondents tend to agree with each of the three identification items. Moreover, we directly compared the levels of identification with two reference groups, but only among political centrists⁴: We found that, in this group at least, the level of identification with the national group is *higher* than the level of identification with their political group ($M_{\text{national}} = 4.85$, $M_{\text{political}} = 3.51$, $t = 10.619$, $df = 137$, $p < .001$). In sum, these results suggest that the stronger impact of political ingroup norms may not be due to the higher level of identification with this group, but rather that this group is more relevant to participants when it comes to conflict-related emotions and attitudes (see Harel, Maoz, et al., 2020).

Discussion

In this study, we examined how emotion norms relate to policy support in the context of a violent conflict. More specifically, among Jewish Israelis, we measured descriptive norms for six emotions, most commonly studied in conflict studies (see Halperin, 2015), and their theoretically related policy attitudes. We measured descriptive norms in two reference groups: one's national and political groups, as the previous studies suggest that political identity is a more powerful predictor of conflict-related attitudes (for a review, see Harel, Maoz, et al., 2020). Two key findings have emerged from our analyses.

First, we find that emotion norms are associated with the respondents' policy support: The more the respondents perceived an emotion as prevalent in their group, the more likely they were to support the corresponding, theoretically relevant conflict-related policy. This pattern held across almost all the studied emotions and policy attitudes, indicating that the effect of emotion norms generalizes beyond particular emotion constructs. Moreover, we

⁴ Due to a coding error, the questions on identification with the political group were administered only to self-declared centrists.

found that personal emotions mediate the effect of emotion norms: In line with the previous studies on emotional self-stereotyping (Moons et al., 2009), the more respondents perceived an emotion as normative in their group, the more likely they were to personally experience it, which in turn explained their policy attitudes. However, we also found—for the political group as the reference group only—that emotion norms predict policy attitudes over and above the impact of personal emotions. More precisely, even when controlling for personal emotions, perceived emotion norms in political ingroup were consistent and strong predictors of policy attitudes.

Second, our results show that the effect of emotion norms depends on the reference group. In particular, they show that perceived norms in one's political group are stronger and more consistent predictors of policy attitudes than the perceived norms in the national group. Our results suggest, in line with the studies on political polarization in Israel (Harel, Maoz, et al., 2020), that how people think about the Israeli–Palestinian conflict is strongly structured along their political identities. Psychological studies of intergroup conflicts typically focus on conflict-defined identities. Our results build on the calls for a more contextualized approach to the study of identity processes for conflict dynamics (Elchereth & Reicher, 2017; Reicher, 2004) and highlight the importance of studying the role of multiple groups and perspectives (Dixon et al., 2020; Elchereth et al., 2019). Which groups and the associated norms are particularly relevant for individuals' political attitudes and behavior can vary across individuals and political contexts.

Overall, these findings indicate an important role of emotion norms in shaping policy support: How people perceive the prevalence of various emotions in their group systematically relates to their support for various conflict-related policies. These findings, hence, contribute to the literature on the role of social norms in intergroup conflicts and their resolution. Whereas previous studies have typically focused on people's perception of others' behavior and beliefs, our study shows that perceived norms for emotions also matter for policy support. Moreover, our findings have implications for the research on the role of emotions in intergroup conflicts. Appraisal approaches to emotions have convincingly demonstrated that our emotions are not deterministically determined by the emotion-eliciting events; rather, it depends on how we appraise and understand these events (see Halperin, 2015). Our results indicate that a stronger focus on the processes of emotional social influence, such as studying people's dynamic perceptions of how their group members feel, can help explain their own emotions and conflict-related attitudes. Accordingly, our findings have implications also for a new, rapidly growing field of emotion-focused conflict resolution interventions, which examines how personally experienced emotions can be changed to promote peace (see Čehajić-Clancy et al., 2016; Halperin, 2015). They show a positive but limited impact because people need to be motivated to change their emotions in the first place (Landry & Halperin, 2023). Our results suggest that social motivations, grounded in the perception of relevant others' emotions, may be an important pathway toward changing personal emotions and attitudes.

We acknowledge several limitations of our study. First, the nature of the data does not allow us to draw causal conclusions, and we are not claiming a specific directionality of these relationships. New studies are, therefore, needed to test the causal impact of perceived emotion norms on policy support. Second, we have studied only descriptive emotion norms. New studies should also examine

prescriptive emotions norms (see Hochschild, 1979; Thoits, 2004) and how the perception of which emotions one *should* feel about the opponent group shape policy support. Moreover, new studies should examine whether emotion norms predict policy attitudes over and above other types of social norms. Insofar as personal emotions are unique predictors of policy attitudes, independently of other psychological constructs (see Halperin, 2015), it is reasonable to assume that the perceived emotion norms are related to policy attitudes independently of other social norms. Indeed, Vishkin and Tamir (2023) argued that emotion norms are a unique type of social norm, distinct from other social norms in their scope, variability, and variation across cultures. For example, one study has shown that contrary to other social norms, emotion norms are stronger in more individualist cultures (Vishkin et al., 2023). Nevertheless, new studies are needed to assess the potentially unique character of emotion norms. Third, our study has been conducted in one context, among one of the conflicting groups, and at one point in time. New studies should aim to replicate our findings in various conflict-affected societies, among different groups in conflict, and at different conflict stages, to examine the generalizability and the boundary conditions of our findings. Last, our study is based on a large, diverse, but not nationally, representative sample. Accordingly, we could not examine whether people tend to misperceive the prevalence of emotions in their groups. For example, Penić et al. (2021) have found that Sri Lankan respondents tend to underestimate the prevalence of outgroup empathy in their communities, and the more they do so, the less they support transitional justice policies. Therefore, new studies with representative samples are needed to explore whether, when, and why people tend to misperceive emotion norms in conflict-affected societies and whether correcting these misperceptions can foster more constructive attitudes and behaviors (see Prentice & Paluck, 2020).

In sum, our study shows that emotion norms matter in the context of a violent conflict. How people perceive the prevalence of emotions in their group explains their policy support over and above their personally experienced emotions. Our findings thus indicate that when it comes to conflicts that concern people collectively, how “we feel” is sometimes even more important than how “I feel.” We accordingly hope that our study will spark a more systematic examination of the role of emotional social influence in conflict transformation.

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