

# Emotion Regulation and the Cultivation of Political Tolerance: Searching for a New Track for Intervention

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## Abstract

The goal of the current project is to integrate psychological research on emotion regulation with the study of democratic practices in general and political intolerance in particular. We hypothesized that the use of a well-established emotion regulation strategy, cognitive reappraisal, would be associated with lower levels of group-based negative emotions toward one's least-liked group and lower levels of political intolerance toward that group. Preliminary data based on nationwide survey conducted among Jews in Israel show that the tendency to reappraise negative emotions during war is associated with more tolerant attitudes. In studies 1 and 2, we experimentally manipulated reappraisal, and this led to reduced levels of political intolerance toward Palestinian Citizens of Israel (study 1) and toward one's least-liked group (study 2). These effects were transmitted via a decrease in negative emotions in both studies, as well as by an increase in support for general democratic values in Study 2.

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Even in apparently stable democratic regimes, nondemocratic attitudes and practices can create fertile ground for nondemocratic legislation and the realization of discriminatory policies (Gibson 2006). Throughout the years, social–psychological research on intergroup conflict has emphasized the roles of both social identity (e.g., Brewer and Brown 1998; Hewstone and Greenland 2000; building on Tajfel 1981) and realistic group conflict and competition over real or symbolic resources (e.g., Bobo and Hutchings 1996; Coser 1956) in the emergence of negative intergroup attitudes such as prejudice and intolerance. One important manifestation of such intergroup attitudes is political intolerance toward minority groups, widely viewed by political scientists, ever since Stouffer's ([1955] 1992) seminal work, as one of the most prominent expressions of nondemocratic attitudes. Political intolerance may be defined as the support for denouncing—or a willingness to denounce—the basic political rights of individuals who belong to a defined outgroup in a particular society (Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus 1982). Because it contradicts basic democratic values, political intolerance poses a threat to democracy itself.

Understanding the causes and consequences of political intolerance as well as the mechanisms involved in its appearance is of great importance—not only for descriptive purposes but also in order to conceptualize and promote novel methods of addressing political intolerance, identifying its bases, and reducing it so as to diminish the political consequences of intergroup conflict. Such an understanding may suggest specific interventions that could be of special significance for unstable democracies and politically and ethnically divided societies.

Traditionally, most scholars have explained political intolerance by invoking psychological tendencies such as right-wing authoritarianism (Duckitt 1993; Funke 2005), general values such as religious beliefs (Eisenstein 2006) or democratic principles (Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus 1982), concrete intergroup processes and perceptions such as intergroup conflict and perceived threat (e.g., Stephan and Stephan 2001; Stouffer [1955] 1992; Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus 1982; Sullivan et al. 1985), and personal characteristics such as socioeconomic status (Quillian 1995). These constructs have been conceptualized as the central antecedents of exclusionary attitudes in general and political intolerance in particular (see for reviews, Gibson 2006; Sullivan and Transue 1999).

***Negative Emotions and Political Intolerance***

More recent accounts have suggested an additional explanatory factor of political intolerance, namely negative emotion. Contemporary scholars see emotion as a multidimensional process that involves conscious or unconscious cognitive appraisal,

affect, and behavioral aspects (Frijda 2004). The motivational or behavioral aspect of emotion creates the basis for its potential influence on political intolerance, as it gives expression to individuals' adapted reaction to the stimulus behind the emotion (see Frijda 2004; Frijda, Kuipers, and ter Schure 1989). Most relevant to political intolerance are group-based (as opposed to interpersonal) emotions, personal experiences targeted at events, individuals, or social groups, which are felt by individuals as a result of their identification with a certain group or society (Mackie, Devos, and Smith 2000; Wohl, Branscombe, and Klar 2006). In the case of social groups, these emotions are defined as intergroup emotions, that is, emotions that are felt as a result of the felt belongingness to a certain group and are targeted at another group (Smith, Seger, and Mackie 2007).

Emotions play a central role in the way people form political attitudes (e.g., Druckman and McDermott 2008) such as political intolerance—an attitude that, for most individuals living in democratic societies, goes against their long-standing convictions (Marcus et al. 1995). Indeed, the endorsement of politically intolerant attitudes toward various out-groups has been found to be driven by high levels of negative intergroup emotions. Specifically, emotions such as intergroup fear, anger, and hatred have been found to play a central role in promoting political intolerance, either directly or indirectly (Capelos and Van Troost 2007; Gibson and Bingham 1982; Halperin, Canetti-Nisim, and Hirsch-Hoefler 2009; Marcus et al. 1995; Skitka, Bauman, and Mullen 2004).

### *Emotion Regulation and the Reduction of Political Intolerance*

If intergroup emotions do in fact play a role in the development of political intolerance, reducing such negative emotions could potentially lead to a decline in levels of intolerance. To examine this possibility, it is useful to draw upon psychological research on emotion regulation, which is concerned with the processes that are engaged when individuals try to influence the emotions they (or others) experience, when they experience them, and how they experience and express the emotions (Gross 1998). While the literature on emotion regulation has principally been concerned with individual-level emotion and interpersonal interactions (Gross 2007), it is also highly relevant to intergroup conflicts and the group-based emotions that emerge in their wake (Halperin et al. 2011).

Of the five families of emotion regulation processes identified in the literature (Gross 1998), most relevant to our present research is the regulatory strategy of cognitive change, and particularly cognitive reappraisal. This strategy involves changing a situation's meaning in a way that alters its emotional impact (Gross 2002), and recent empirical evidence suggests that it may also be applicable to intergroup interactions and conflicts (Halperin and Gross 2011; Halperin et al. 2013). Because it is capable of drawing attention to the broader meaning or consequences of events (Ray, Wilhelm, and Gross 2008), leading to a more balanced perspective (Gross 2002), cognitive reappraisal has the potential of reducing political intolerance by tackling

the negative intergroup emotions that accompany it and the narrowed perspective through which people view the context of intergroup conflict in its light. Hence, within the context of intergroup conflicts, attempts to reappraise emotion-inducing information may serve to downregulate certain intergroup negative emotions, in turn reducing political intolerance.

Previous studies have shown that negative intergroup emotions lead to heightened levels of political intolerance mostly among those who are furthest in their positions from the relevant out-group (e.g., Halperin, Canetti-Nisim, and Hirsch-Hoefler 2009), as these people tend to construe events in a one-sided, biased manner. Reappraisal's focus on the broader meaning of events (Ray, Wilhelm, and Gross 2008) might, in turn, engender more positive attitudes specifically among those whose perspective is most influenced by high levels of negative emotion. Hence, we postulate that reappraisal should reduce political intolerance through the reduction of negative intergroup emotions, particularly among the most intolerant people or those who feel the most extreme levels of negative emotions toward a particular out-group.

### *Preliminary Data: The Relationship between Reappraisal Use and Political Intolerance during War*

To provide some preliminary indications for the association between reappraisal use and lower levels of political intolerance, we referred to data from an existing nationwide survey based on a representative sample of Jewish–Israeli adults (201 participants, matching the distribution within Israeli society in terms of gender, socioeconomic status, religiosity, and political orientation). The survey was conducted in January 2009 in the midst of the Gaza War between Israel and the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip (see Halperin and Gross [2011], for further details on the survey).<sup>1</sup> Although the survey did not include well-established measures of political intolerance, the unique context in which it took place provided interesting insights into the discussed relations.

In this survey, people's *Reappraisal* tendency was assessed using a three-item abbreviated version of the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire reappraisal scale (Gross and John 2003), asking participants to what extent (on a scale of 1 = *not at all* to 6 = *very much*) each of the three statements (e.g., *When faced with a stressful situation, I've made myself think about it in a way that helped me stay calm*) reflected the way they had dealt with the negative emotions they may have experienced in the preceding days ( $\alpha = .64$ ). Participants were then asked to rate their agreement with various statements, including one addressing an aspect of political tolerance (i.e., the willingness to allow the expression of critical opinions during wartime) on the same six-point scale detailed earlier. We examined the data to determine whether reappraisal would be associated with levels of intolerance.

Levels of reappraisal spanned the full range of the scale, from 1 to 6, averaging slightly below 3.5, the scale midpoint ( $M = 3.23$ ,  $SD = 1.33$ ), as did levels of

intolerance ( $M = 3.06$ ,  $SD = 1.86$ ). In line with our reading of the preceding literature, political intolerance was negatively correlated with the reported use of reappraisal to cope with negative emotions during the war ( $r = -.25$ ,  $p = .001$ ). Furthermore, a regression analysis revealed that when controlling for all relevant sociopolitical variables (political orientation, religiosity, household income, and educational attainment) and other potential predictors of political intolerance (Right-Wing Authoritarianism, Need for Structure, and Perceived Threat), reappraisal's ability to predict intolerance remained strong ( $\beta = -.22$ ,  $p = .001$ ;  $R^2 = .15$ , adjusted  $R^2 = .08$ ).

These data provide initial corroboration for a link between reappraisal and political intolerance, even in intense circumstances such as wars, while also indicating that this relationship holds even when controlling for other variables that could be expected to affect support for democratic principles. Given the centrality of political orientation and religious convictions in predicting attitudes toward war and democracy in Israel, the relationship found in these data between emotion regulation and intolerance when controlling for other relevant variables is all the more striking and provides further incentive for examining the causal relationship between the two constructs. These findings motivated us to investigate a causal relationship between the two constructs, such that the use of reappraisal leads to a reduction in political intolerance, and also to examine the mechanisms involved in this relationship and the factors that may serve to moderate it.

### *The Present Research*

The goal of the present project was to integrate psychological research on emotion regulation into the political study of political intolerance. We hypothesized that use of a well-established emotion regulation strategy, cognitive reappraisal, would lead to lower levels of group-based negative emotions toward one's least-liked group, and lower levels of political intolerance toward that group. To test this hypothesis, we conducted two studies among Israeli Jews. In the first study, conducted among university students, we experimentally manipulated reappraisal and assessed negative emotions and political intolerance toward Palestinian citizens of Israel (PCIs). In the second study, also conducted with Jewish-Israeli students, we manipulated reappraisal and measured negative emotions, political intolerance toward a least-liked group, and support for abstract democratic values.

## **Study 1**

### *The Causal Role of Reappraisal in Reducing Political Intolerance*

Drawing upon the indications discovered in the analysis of the preliminary data, in study 1 we sought to provide evidence for a causal relationship between reappraisal and political intolerance by showing that emotion regulation, when experimentally

manipulated, could decrease intolerance of a disliked out-group. Additionally, we ventured beyond our preliminary data using an anonymous response format (questionnaires), which may have advantages over a phone survey in this context because people may be reluctant to share their true emotional experiences with a stranger. Finally, we addressed political intolerance comprehensively by employing questions that reference a specific out-group and measure different facets of this construct as the dependent variable, including the principles of equality, freedom, and free speech.

PCIs, who constitute 19 percent of the Israeli population, served as the specified object of measured political intolerance. The unique and complicated political relations in Israel, and specifically those between the Jewish majority and the Palestinian minority, are worth noting. Despite the fact that PCIs are largely uninvolved in the violent conflict themselves, they are perceived by much of the Jewish majority to be a hostile minority with loyalties to Israel's enemies (Smootha 2002). Indeed, studies persistently show that PCIs are the single most disliked group in Israeli society (e.g., Shamir and Sagiv-Schifter 2006; Sullivan et al. 1985). While this particular study took place at a time of relative calm in Israeli–Palestinian relations, relations between Israeli Jews and PCIs have been continuously declining, with many reports of rising racism against PCIs and frequent statements by leading politicians against the PCI population and its members, as well as official legislation that is deemed racist by many (e.g., The Association for Civil Rights in Israel 2009; Khoury and Weiler-Polak 2010).

One of the most dramatic events affecting Arab–Jewish relations in Israel in 2009 was the Israeli attack of Gaza described earlier and the allegations of Israeli war crimes in its wake. Statements by leading PCI figures in this regard served to justify much of the intolerance expressed by Israeli Jews toward the PCI population, and such statements were used in study 1 to test whether reappraisal can affect Israeli Jews' response to them.

We hypothesized that reappraisal would lead to a decrease in negative emotions and, consequently, a decrease in levels of Israeli Jews' political intolerance toward PCIs. Since political orientation (i.e., right vs. left) is the most powerful predictor of negative attitudes and emotions toward PCIs in Israel, and given that previous studies (e.g., Halperin, Canetti-Nisim, and Hirsch-Hoefler 2009) have shown that negative emotions more strongly predict political intolerance toward PCIs among rightists than among leftists, we expected reappraisal to be more effective in reducing political intolerance among those who identified themselves as political right (the “hawkish” side of Israeli politics) than among those who defined themselves as centrists or leftists.

## Method

### *Participants*

One hundred sixty-one economics, law, and business students at the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya (eighty-five males and seventy-six females, age ranging from

twenty-one to thirty-nine,  $M = 24.72$ ,  $SD = 2.11$ ) participated in this study in return for course credit. We omitted five cases from our analyses due to a failure to follow instructions. Participants were quite diverse in terms of their political orientation (1.9 percent identified themselves as belonging to the extreme right, 36.6 percent as belonging to the right, 42.9 percent as centrist, and 17.3 percent as belonging to the political left, with 1.3 percent not responding to the question), but less diverse in terms of their religious conviction (64 percent identified themselves as secular, 23.6 percent as secular traditional, 9.9 percent as traditional, and only 2.5 percent as religious). While the sample was more secular than the general Jewish Israeli public, it matched the political orientation distribution well (see The Peace Index 2011).

### Procedure

Participants, in their classrooms, were randomly assigned to either the *reappraisal* condition ( $N = 82$ ) or the *control* condition ( $N = 79$ ) and subsequently filled out a short booklet containing the study materials. The booklet contained a paragraph presented as an excerpt from an opinion piece criticizing the Arab minority in Israel, followed by an emotion questionnaire and a political intolerance scale. The paragraph was preceded by instructions on how it should be read, in accordance with the two experimental conditions: instructions prompting reappraisal, based on the instructions used in Richards and Gross (2000) in the experimental condition and neutral instructions in the control condition.

The two sets of instructions included in the experimental conditions (translated back into English) are as follows:

#### 1. Reappraisal condition:

Following is a short excerpt from an opinion piece published on Ynet<sup>2</sup> about a month following Operation Defensive Shield. From our experience, most people reading the excerpt experience negative emotions. We wish to understand to what extent people are capable of controlling the way in which they process information. Thus, it is important to us that you try to adopt a neutral perspective while reading the excerpt. To do this, please read the excerpt from an exterior perspective, as if you were scientists examining it objectively and analytically, without assigning it personal or national relevance. Read the text thoroughly, and try to think of it in as cold and detached a manner as you can.

#### 2. Control condition:

Following is a short excerpt from an opinion piece published on Ynet about a month following Operation Defensive Shield. From our experience, most people reading the excerpt experience negative emotions. We would like to understand these emotions. Thus, please read the excerpt thoroughly and try to acknowledge the various feelings that arise in you when reading it in light of its content, experiencing these fully.

These instructions were followed by a short text, presented as an excerpt from an opinion piece on *Ynet*, a popular Israeli news website. The text was worded so that it tapped into the main justifications for intolerance toward PCIs, with the aim of inducing negative emotions toward them and prompting intolerance. Translated into English, the text was worded as follows:

While hundreds of missiles and rockets were being launched at Negev towns and the citizens of Israel were forced to hide in shelters, MK Ahmad Tibi<sup>3</sup> relentlessly attacked Israel from within, bombarding it with criticism and condemnations and even claiming that “the attack on Gaza is a war crime.” This is particularly infuriating because even though the Arab citizens of the state enjoy all the rights it accords, many of them refuse to acknowledge this, attack it when it is fighting its enemies, and even do this over the podiums of Israel’s Knesset. In doing so, they constitute a fifth column that undermines the government from within and damages Israel’s status abroad. In a time of war, when we are all mobilized to defend the state, not only do the Arabs not serve in the IDF, they take a stand against the state and mainly against the soldiers fighting and risking their lives for the state—the same state that allows them to stand on its podiums and lash out at it and at all of us, its citizens.

## Measures

*Negative emotions* targeted at PCIs (anger, hostility, compassion, fear, empathy, and trepidation) were rated by participants on a six-point scale, with participants asked to indicate “to what extent” they experienced each of the listed emotions toward PCIs after reading the excerpt (e.g., “Anger toward Arab Israelis”; “Fear of Arab Israelis and their future actions”). Scores for positive emotions were then reversed, and responses to all items were averaged to create a single negative emotion score ( $\alpha = .66$ ).<sup>4</sup>

Political intolerance was assessed using a five-item measure (“Israeli Arabs should not be allowed to appear on TV or give speeches”; “Israeli Arabs should be barred from being MKs or ministers”; “Israeli Arabs’ parties and organizations should be outlawed”; “The right of Israeli Arabs to vote in elections should be revoked”; “Israeli Arabs’ ability to gain power in state institutions must be curtailed”). Participants rated the five intolerance items on a six-point scale, and their responses were averaged to create a single intolerance score ( $\alpha = .88$ ).

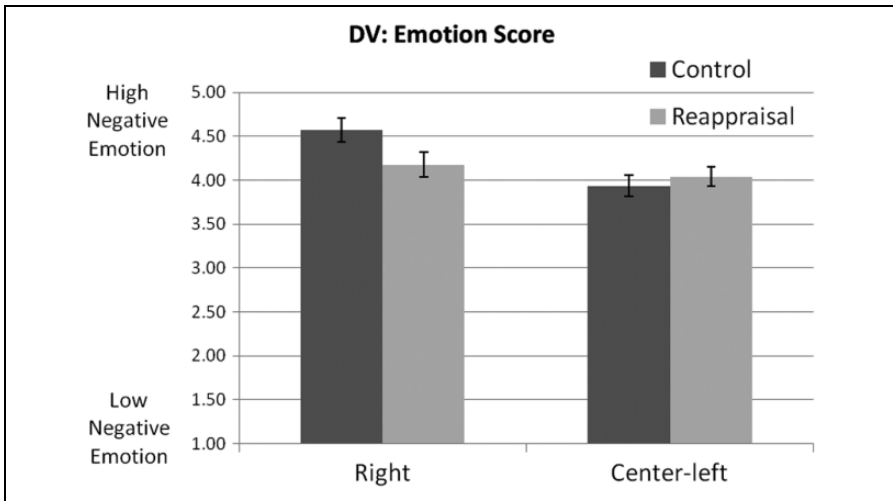
Finally, participants were asked to rank their level of religiosity (on a scale ranging from 1 = *secular* to 5 = *Ultra-Orthodox*) and their political orientation (1 = *extreme right* to 5 = *extreme left*) and to state which party they voted for in the last elections.<sup>5</sup>

## Results

### *The Effects of Reappraisal and Political Orientation on Political Intolerance*

The main effect of the reappraisal manipulation on levels of political intolerance<sup>6</sup> was not significant ( $M = 2.7$ ,  $SD = 1.3$  in the control condition vs.  $M = 2.35$ ,  $SD = 1.12$  in

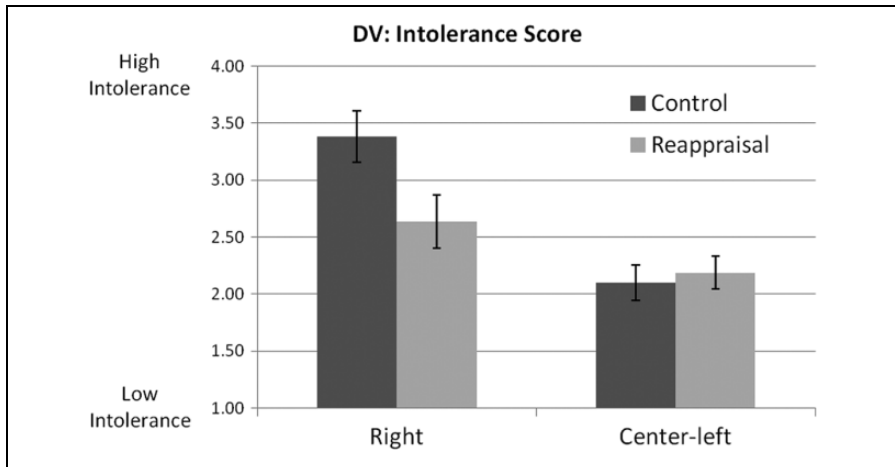




**Figure 1.** Means and standard errors of negative emotion scores as a function of reappraisal condition and political orientation (study 1).

the reappraisal condition,  $t_{(154)} = 1.64$ , *ns*). There were also no significant main effects for reappraisal on the negative emotion composite score ( $M = 4.22$ ,  $SD = .84$  in the control condition vs.  $M = 4.09$ ,  $SD = .77$  in the reappraisal condition,  $t_{(154)} = 1.01$ , *ns*) or for any of the discrete emotions measured. We thus turned to test the hypothesized Condition  $\times$  Political Orientation interaction. Participants were assigned to one of the two groups according to their self-reported political orientation: *rightists* ( $N = 61$ , coded as "0") and those on the *center left* ( $N = 93$ , coded as "1"). Using an analysis of variance (ANOVA), we found a significant interaction on levels of negative emotion,  $F_{(1,150)} = 3.67$ ,  $p = .05$  (see Figure 1) and a significant interaction on levels of intolerance,  $F_{(1,150)} = 3.9$ ,  $p = .05$ ; see Figure 2. These interactions remained significant (albeit only marginally) when controlling for age, gender, and religiosity.

Analyses of the simple effects revealed that the reappraisal manipulation had little or no effect on our *center-left* participants, on either negative emotion scores ( $M = 3.94$ ,  $SD = 0.8$  in the control condition vs.  $M = 4.04$ ,  $SD = 0.78$  in the reappraisal condition,  $F_{(1,150)} = 0.4$ , *ns*), or intolerance scores ( $M = 2.1$ ,  $SD = 1$  in the control condition vs.  $M = 2.2$ ,  $SD = 1.03$  in the reappraisal condition,  $F_{(1,150)} = .15$ , *ns*). For the *right-wing* participants, however, reappraisal reduced both negative emotion scores (from  $M = 4.57$ ,  $SD = 0.79$  in the control condition to  $M = 4.18$ ,  $SD = 0.76$  in the reappraisal condition,  $F_{(1,150)} = 3.81$ ,  $p = .05$ )<sup>7</sup> and intolerance scores, (from  $M = 3.38$ ,  $SD = 1.29$  in the control condition to  $M = 2.64$ ,  $SD = 1.22$  in the reappraisal condition,  $F_{(1,150)} = 4.94$ ,  $p = .03$ ). Here, again, the effects remained significant when controlling for age, gender, and religiosity.

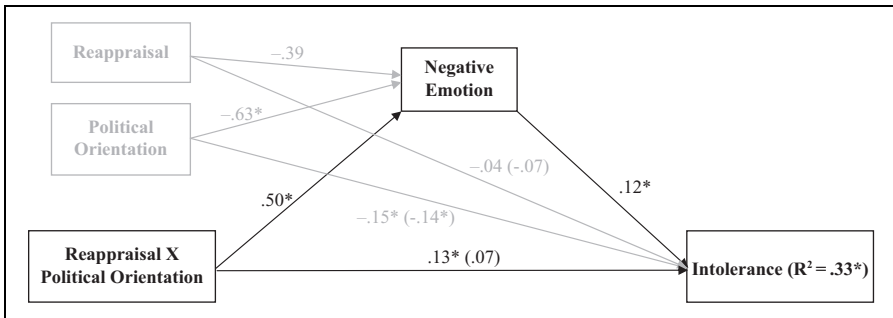


**Figure 2.** Means and standard errors of intolerance scores as a function of reappraisal condition and political orientation (study 1).

It is also worth noting that while in the control condition there were highly significant differences in negative emotions ( $F_{(1,150)} = 12.16, p = .001$ ) and levels of intolerance ( $F_{(1,150)} = 20.32, p < .001$ ) between rightists and center-leftists, in the reappraisal condition, differences in negative emotion all but vanished ( $F_{(1,150)} = 0.57, p = .45$ ) and differences in intolerance scores were only marginally significant, ( $F_{(1,150)} = 2.82, p = .095$ ). This suggests that among those more prone to intolerance toward a specific group, reappraisal acts to bring levels of intolerance closer to the levels present among those less prone to such intolerance.

### *Assessing the Mediated Moderation Model of Political Intolerance*

In light of these results, we next examined whether the interaction's effect on levels of political intolerance could be explained by its effect on levels of negative emotion. Specifically, we tested a mediated moderation model, in which intergroup negative emotions would transmit the effect of the Experimental Condition  $\times$  Political Orientation interaction on political intolerance. Having already established the interaction effects on both the potential mediator and the political intolerance, we regressed the latter on the mediating variable (negative intergroup emotions), the predictor variables (the experimental condition and political orientation), and their cross product (the interaction term). To this end, we used Hayes's (2012) PROCESS bootstrapping command with 5,000 iterations (model 8) to test the indirect effect (Preacher, Rucker, and Hayes 2007) of the interaction term on political intolerance through negative emotion (controlling for the unique effects of the condition and political orientation variables). The analysis revealed that the interaction term's



**Figure 3.** Mediated moderation model predicting intolerance from the interaction between the manipulation and political orientation through levels of negative emotion (study 1).

Note. Coefficients are unstandardized.

\* $p \leq .05$ .

effect on political intolerance ( $B = .13$ ,  $SE = .07$ ,  $t = 1.97$ ,  $p = .05$ ) was reduced after negative emotion scores were considered in the model ( $B = .07$ ,  $SE = .06$ ,  $t = 1.21$ ,  $p = .23$ ) and that the interaction's indirect effect was significant ( $a \times b = .06$ ,  $SE = .03$ , 95 percent confidence interval [CI]: [0.0004, 0.13]). Because zero is not in the 95 percent CI, the indirect effect is significantly different from zero at  $p < .05$ , thus establishing mediated moderation (see Figure 3). Consistent with the findings from the ANOVA and with our predictions, when probing this effect further we found a significant indirect effect for rightists ( $a \times b = -0.05$ ,  $SE = .03$ , 95 percent CI: [-0.1, -0.001]), indicating that for them, the effect of the manipulation on intolerance was transmitted through emotions. For those who identified themselves as centrists-leftists, the indirect effect was not significant ( $a \times b = .01$ ,  $SE = .02$ , 95 percent CI: [-.023, .05]).

## Discussion

Our study 1 findings provided evidence for a causal relationship between reappraisal and political intolerance, one that is transmitted via levels of negative emotion and moderated by political orientation, such that rightists are more affected by reappraisal than are leftists, indicating that reappraisal acts to promote tolerance most among those who are most prone to intolerance toward certain groups. These findings are of special importance, given that our study was carried out in a highly charged political context involving two rival groups and high levels of negative emotion, exacerbated in this study through a reminder of harsh political criticism by a high-profile member of the out-group.

Although these findings are promising, several important limitations should be noted. First, our focus in this study was a specific sort of intolerance (i.e., that of Israeli Jews toward PCIs), rather than a phenomenon that can be readily generalized to explain the wider phenomenon of intolerance, regardless of the out-group at hand.

Second, the text and the questions presented to participants did not necessarily refer to all participants' least-liked groups, toward which they may be significantly less tolerant. Given that Israeli society is characterized by a pluralistic model of political intolerance (Sullivan et al. 1981; Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus 1982), and studies show expressions of negative attitudes toward a whole range of subgroups within this society (e.g., Sullivan et al. 1993), some important insights into the effects of reappraisal on negative emotions and political intolerance may be lost when not allowing participants to respond directly regarding their own least-liked groups.

## Study 2

### *Multiple Mediation Model of Political Intolerance*

In the second study, participants were asked to select their own least-liked group and respond to questions specifically addressing that group. Participants also completed measures of other relevant mediator and control variables. Our goal in study 2 was to test the hypothesis that reappraisal could decrease intolerance toward one's most disliked out-group. This experiment elaborated upon the design of study 1 so as to allow participants, all of them Israeli Jews, to choose their own least-liked group in Israeli society and subsequently read and respond to a short text addressing their chosen out-group.

This "least-liked group" paradigm was initially suggested by Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus (1982) as a more accurate method of measuring intolerance, because, for intolerance to exist, participants need to hold personal objection to the group at hand, which might not be the case when the out-group is predetermined by the researcher. The selection of a least-liked group attempts to neutralize the content of the out-group. Since its initial introduction, the paradigm has been used often and has repeatedly proven itself to be an effective way of assessing levels of tolerance and intolerance (e.g., Bahry, Boaz, and Burnett Gordon 1997; Halperin, Canetti-Nisim, and Hirsch-Hoefler 2009; Shamir 1991; Shamir and Sagiv-Schifter 2006; Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus 1982).

By definition, the goal of emotion regulation is to influence one or more aspects of the emotional response (Gross 1998, 2007). It seems likely, however, that emotion regulation strategies that are targeted at the cognitive aspects of emotions might also lead to substantive cognitive change and not just to emotional change. Although not all citizens of democratic societies adhere to democratic principles, these principles are perceived in most of these societies as the moral standard that should guide policy makers and lay citizens alike. Hence, when negative intergroup emotions increase levels of political intolerance, they also disconnect some people from their dispositional democratic values and beliefs, while disconnecting others from the attitude favored by their society. Reappraisal, in turn, leads to a more nuanced, objective, and complex view of intergroup relations (see Halperin and Gross 2011; Halperin et al., 2011). Accordingly, we hypothesized that reappraisal might lead

to a reduction of political intolerance toward one's least-liked group and that this reduction would be transmitted not only via a reduction in the experience of negative intergroup emotions but also via an amplification of adherence to democratic values.

## Method

### Participants

One hundred seventy-three business administration students at the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya (eighty-two males and ninety-one females, age ranging from twenty to thirty-three,  $M = 24.49$ ,  $SD = 2.3$ ) completed an online questionnaire for either course credit or a chance to win a meal for two. Of this initial sample of 173 participants, 145 (sixty-four male and eighty-one female, age ranging from twenty to thirty-two,  $M = 24.46$ ,  $SD = 2.26$ ) were included in the data analyses. The remaining 28 cases were omitted from our analyses because of careless responding (assessed using the instructional manipulation check [IMC], as described in the following)<sup>8</sup> or took over 40 minutes to complete the questionnaire. The sample was largely secular, with 67.6 percent of the participants identifying themselves as secular, 22.8 percent identifying themselves as secular traditional, 7.6 percent as traditional, and only 2.1 percent as religious or Ultra-Orthodox. Politically, the sample leaned somewhat to the right, with 34.5 percent of the participants identifying themselves as belonging to the right or the extreme right, 42.1 percent identifying themselves as centrist, and 23.4 percent as belonging to the left or extreme left. Here, again, the distribution of political orientations was similar to that found in the general Jewish-Israeli public, with a larger proportion of centrists at the expense of the proportion of rightists (see The Peace Index 2011).

### Procedure

All participants were e-mailed a link to the questionnaire, in which they were initially asked to select the group within Israeli society "from which they feel most distanced, that which they least like or that to which they most object," leading them to one of the four forms of the questionnaire, addressing attitudes and emotions to either PCIs, extreme leftists, Ultra-Orthodox Jews, or extreme rightists. The participants were then presented with one of the four paragraphs, each fashioned as an excerpt from an opinion piece criticizing their least-liked group, worded so that it tapped into the main justifications for intolerance toward that particular group, while maintaining maximum similarity in structure and themes among the four different paragraphs (e.g., criticism of the state, unfair use of the parliamentary system, etc.), with the aim of inducing negative emotions and prompting intolerance toward the group.

The text was preceded by instructions on how it should be read, in accordance with each of the two experimental conditions: a *reappraisal* condition with

instructions on how to reappraise emotions and a *control* condition with neutral instructions, similar to those used in study 1. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the two conditions (with seventy-one assigned to the control condition and seventy-four to the reappraisal condition). The opinion piece excerpts were followed by items tapping the mediating and dependent variables—an emotion questionnaire, a support for democratic principles questionnaire, and an intolerance scale—as well as several control variables.

## Measures

*Negative emotions* targeted at the selected group included anger, disgust, and hatred. These items were again rated on a six-point scale, with participants again asked to indicate “to what extent” they experienced each of the listed emotions toward their selected out-group (e.g., “Anger towards the outgroup”). We focused only on negative emotions that we expected could be applicable to all disliked groups, regardless of their identity ( $\alpha = .75$ ). *Support for democratic values* was measured using three items used by Shamir and Sullivan (1985) to measure Support for Abstract Democratic Norms. Participants’ agreement with each item (e.g., “Every person is entitled to the same legal rights, no matter what his or her political beliefs”) was rated on a six-point scale, ranging from 1 = *not at all* to 6 = *very much*. A final support for democratic values score was computed as an average of scores on the three items ( $\alpha = .74$ ). *Political intolerance* was assessed using three of the five items used in study 1 (taking into account the variance in attitudes to different out-groups in Israeli society and the fact that some of the previously used items could not be applied to all of them), adjusting them to fit all groups (*The outgroup’s political parties and organizations should be outlawed; Outgroup members should be barred from being MKs or government ministers; The ability of outgroup members to gain power in state institutions should be curtailed*), adding two other items (*Outgroup members should get equal rights [reversed]; Outgroup MKs [parliament members] don’t deserve the political immunity granted by their status*). All items were tailored specifically to the selected out-group, and participants rated their agreement with them on a six-point scale (ranging from 1 = *not at all* to 6 = *very much*). The mean score for all five items served as our single intolerance score ( $\alpha = .83$ ).

We included three measures that we hypothesized might act as moderating or control variables: *Perceived threat* from the out-group (the score was a composite average of a four-item scale adapted from Sullivan et al. [1985],  $\alpha = .85$ ), *right-wing authoritarianism* (the score was a composite average of a twelve-item scale based on Altemeyer [1996],  $\alpha = .73$ ), and *emotion regulation tendency* (rated on a ten-item scale based on Gross and John [2003], with averages computed separately for the scores on all reappraisal items [ $\alpha = .79$ ] and all suppression items [ $\alpha = .77$ ] to provide the reappraisal and suppression scores, respectively). These variables were chosen because they have been proven to be either valid predictors of intolerance or related to emotion regulation. As additional control variables, participants indicated

their level of religiosity (1 = *secular*, 2 = *secular traditional*, 3 = *traditional*, 4 = *religious*, 5 = *ultra-orthodox*), their political orientation (1 = *extreme right* to 5 = *extreme left*), and the party for which they voted in the last elections.

Finally, we also included a single-item IMC (based on Oppenheimer, Meyvis, and Davidenko 2009) that was meant to ensure a careful reading of the text and the items. The IMC item was embedded within the Right-Wing Authoritarianism scale as a disguised thirteenth item (*For research purposes, this question is designed to guarantee comprehension of the instructions provided. Therefore, on this item only, please mark all six of the choice squares before you*). Only participants who marked all six options (as opposed to a single option, as required in the preceding items) were included in our analysis. The notion of the IMC was developed specifically for studies such as ours, in which the manipulation may be dependent on the careful reading of the presented instructions. It has been found to increase statistical power and reliability.

## Results

Among the 145 participants, 42.1 percent chose least-liked groups belonging to the population of PCIs, 8.3 percent chose groups belonging to the political far left, 31.03 percent chose groups representing the ultra-orthodox population, and 18.6 percent chose groups belonging to the political far right. This distribution is highly similar to other studies conducted in Israel in recent years using the least-liked group paradigm, in which the division between Jews selecting PCIs and those selecting Jewish out-groups is almost identical (Halperin, Canetti-Nisim, and Hirsch-Hoefler 2009; Shamir and Sagiv-Schifter 2006), albeit with a greater portion of those who chose ultra-orthodox groups than that found in studies conducted among a representative sample of the population (see Halperin, Canetti-Nisim, and Hirsch-Hoefler 2009).

### *Descriptive Statistics and Correlations among Variables*

We examined the means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations among our variables, including the dependent variables, possible control and mediating variables, and demographic indicators (see Table 1). As hypothesized, levels of political intolerance were significantly correlated with almost all other variables, showing strong and highly significant positive correlations with negative emotion, right-wing authoritarianism, perceived threat from the out-group, and religiosity, a modest significant correlation with gender (females were slightly less politically tolerant than males), and highly significant negative correlations with support for democratic values<sup>9</sup> and political orientation (rightists were less tolerant than leftists). Interestingly, levels of negative emotions were only slightly negatively correlated with support for democratic values.

**Table 1.** Means, Standard Deviations, and Pearson Correlations among Variables in Study 2.

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Political intolerance	3.11	1.26	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2. Negative emotion	4.17	1.08	.49*	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3. Democratic values	4.92	0.83	-.42*	-.18*	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
4. Right-wing authoritarianism	2.93	0.59	.49*	.38*	-.38*	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
5. Reappraisal tendency	4.84	1.06	.14	.27*	.10	.12	1	—	—	—	—	—
6. Perceived threat	4.14	1.19	.45*	.39*	-.14	.30*	.15	1	—	—	—	—
7. Religiosity	—	—	.35*	.12	-.23*	.40*	.03	.13	1	—	—	—
8. Political orientation	—	—	-.32*	-.26*	.37*	-.51*	-.09	-.09	-.29*	1	—	—
9. Age	24.46	2.26	-.27*	-.18*	.23*	-.36*	-.07	-.14	-.18*	.25*	1	—
10. Gender	—	—	.19*	-.02	-.06	.09	.02	-.07	.01	-.14	-.33*	1

\* $p \leq .05$ .



### *The Effects of Reappraisal*

Comparing levels of political intolerance between the control and reappraisal conditions in the overall sample, regardless of the least-liked group selected, we found significantly lower levels of intolerance in the reappraisal condition ( $M = 2.89$ ,  $SD = 1.27$ ) than in the control condition ( $M = 3.34$ ,  $SD = 1.23$ ,  $t_{(143)} = 2.15$ ,  $p = .03$ ).<sup>10</sup> A multiple regression analysis further revealed that this effect remained significant when controlling simultaneously for all other possible predictors and demographic variables, namely, age, gender, level of religiosity, political orientation, reappraisal tendency, levels of perceived threat from the out-group, and right-wing Authoritarianism (see Table 2 for regression coefficients).

Next, we compared differences between the two experimental conditions in levels of our two hypothesized mediating variables in the overall sample. In accordance with our hypothesis, we found a trend toward lower levels of negative emotion in the reappraisal condition ( $M = 4.02$ ,  $SD = 1.09$ ) than in the control condition ( $M = 4.33$ ,  $SD = 1.07$ ,  $t_{(143)} = 1.74$ ,  $p = .08$ ). Also, as hypothesized, we found significantly higher levels of support for democratic values among participants in the reappraisal condition ( $M = 5.06$ ,  $SD = 0.88$ ) than among those in the control condition ( $M = 4.78$ ,  $SD = 0.75$ ,  $t_{(143)} = -2.29$ ,  $p = .02$ ).

### *Assessment of the Multiple Mediation Model of Political Intolerance*

Because we expected to find more than one variable responsible for the transmission of the reappraisal manipulation's effect on levels of political intolerance, we used Hayes's (2012) PROCESS bootstrapping command with 5,000 iterations to assess a multiple mediation model (model 4; Preacher and Hayes 2008). This model specified the reappraisal manipulation as the independent variable, political intolerance as the ultimate outcome variable, and two potential mediators: negative emotion and support for democratic values. Moreover, this model controlled for demographic variables (age and sex) and for general reappraisal tendencies (see Figure 4). The analysis revealed that the manipulation's effect on political intolerance ( $B = -.48$ ,  $SE = .2$ ,  $t = -2.36$ ,  $p = .02$ ) was reduced after both mediators were considered in the model ( $B = -.17$ ,  $SE = .17$ ,  $t_{(6,138)} = -1$ ,  $p = .32$ ) and that the total indirect effect (the sum of the two indirect effects; see Hayes 2009) was significant as well ( $a \times b = -.30$ ,  $SE = .11$ , 95 percent CI:  $[-.10, -.54]$ ) with 95 percent confidence, as zero was not included in the CI. Moreover, each specific indirect effect, that of negative emotions ( $a \times b = -.18$ ,  $SE = .08$ , 95 percent CI:  $[-.03, -.36]$ ) and that of democratic values ( $a \times b = -.13$ ,  $SE = .07$ , 95 percent CI:  $[-.01, -.29]$ ), was also significant. Thus, this model corroborated our prediction that the effect of reappraisal on political intolerance is (at least partially) explained by both a decrease in negative emotions and an increase in democratic values.

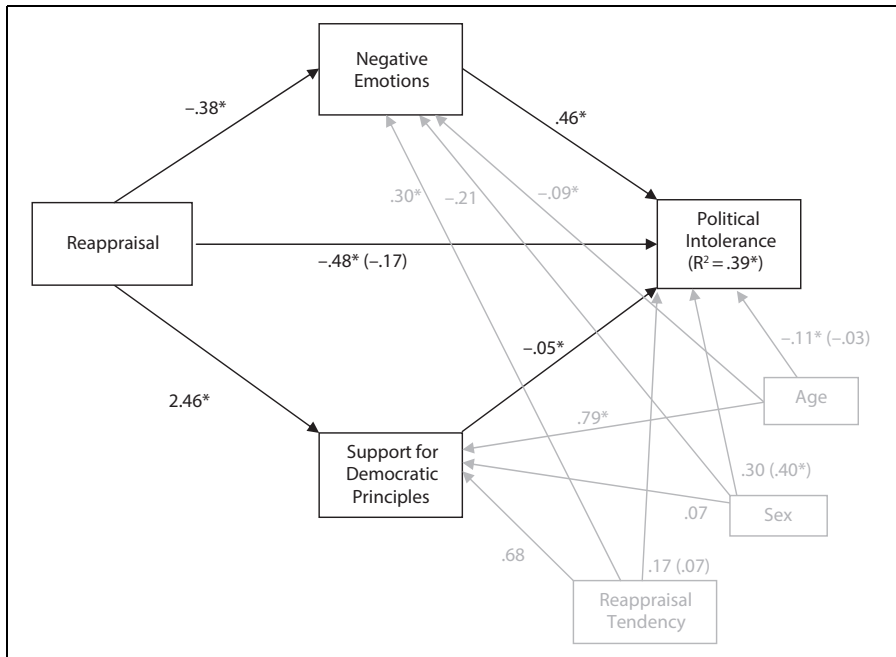
While our hypothesis did not predict specific order effects among the mediators in the model, we explored whether such effects may exist using the Hayes's

**Table 2.** Summary of Unstandardized (B) and Standardized (β) Regression Coefficients from a Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Political Intolerance from All Potential Predictors in Study 2. Dependent Variable (DV): Intolerance Score.

Variable	B	SE (B)	β
(Constant)	-.521	1.488	
Reappraisal manipulation	-.329	0.169	-.131*
Age	-.007	0.041	-.012
Gender	.453	0.177	.179*
Religiosity	.268	0.120	.160*
Political orientation	-.087	0.111	-.061
Reappraisal tendency	.064	0.080	.054
Perceived Threat	.368	0.074	.346*
Right-Wing Authoritarianism	.550	0.181	.259*

Note. Adjusted  $R^2 = .39$ ,  $F_{(8,136)} = 12.64$ ,  $p < .01$ .

\* $p \leq .05$ .



**Figure 4.** Multiple mediation model predicting political intolerance from reappraisal, transmitted by negative emotions and support for democratic principles (study 2).

Note. Coefficients are unstandardized.

\* $p \leq .05$ .

(2012) PROCESS bootstrapping command with 5,000 iteration to assess two possible three-path mediation models (model 6), both also controlling for age, sex, and tendency to reappraise. The first three-path model specified reappraisal as the independent variable, negative emotion as the first mediator, and democratic values as the second mediator, with the ultimate outcome being political intolerance. In the second model, the order of the two mediators was reversed. Both models showed rather weak effects, of similar magnitudes ( $a \times b = -.02$ ,  $SE = .02$ , 95 percent CI:  $[-.001, -.08]$  in the former model, in which negative emotion precedes democratic values, and  $a \times b = -.02$ ,  $SE = .02$ , 95 percent CI:  $[-.08, .001]$ , in the latter model, in which democratic values precede negative emotions). Because of the exploratory nature of these analyses, bringing forth only minor differences between the two models, we cannot make strong inferences about the order of the mediators in the model. Additionally, as both mediators were measured simultaneously (and not manipulated), inferences about their order would be particularly unwarranted. Future research can productively pursue this research direction.

## Discussion

Study 2, with its altered research design, extended the findings of study 1 by showing their relevance not only to political intolerance toward a specific ethnic-religious minority—PCIs—but also to various types of least-liked out-groups. Because of the slightly differing measures and analyses used, the results of the two studies cannot be directly compared. Nevertheless, study 2's findings, like study 1's, were well in line with the theoretical framework lending further support for our general hypothesis about the effect of reappraisal on political intolerance. Furthermore, study 2 offered a more complex and better understanding of the process through which reappraisal may influence levels of political intolerance. Its findings indicate that reappraisal may reduce levels of intolerance not only toward an ethnically and religiously different out-group but also toward other disliked groups in a given society. Furthermore, they indicate that this effect is indirectly caused by the effect of reappraisal both on levels of negative emotion and on levels of support for democratic values. Further research should delve deeper and more rigorously into this process and its order, possibly by manipulating the proposed mediators (see Spencer, Zanna, and Fong [2005] for a discussion of the benefits of manipulating hypothesized mediators) so as to assess each mediator's role in the process of reducing political intolerance.

## General Discussion

Adhering to values of political tolerance is a huge challenge for citizens living in democracies at large, and specifically for those living in unstable and politically or ethnically divided societies, such as the one examined in our studies. The challenge stems

from the inherent conflict between the aspiration to ensure the minority rights guaranteed by democracy on one hand, and the natural instinct to gain more political power by limiting the access of out-groups to such power on the other hand. The second motive may at times be magnified by the willingness to hurt disliked out-groups as an expression of anger or way of coping with the perceived threats posed by them. As such, the political intolerance dilemma highlights the conflict between values and emotions in its most explicit form.

### *Emotion Regulation and Political Intolerance*

The main goal of the current research was to tackle one aspect of this interesting dilemma by examining whether emotion regulation, and specifically reappraisal, could lead to a reduction in negative emotions and increase adherence to democratic values, consequently leading to a reduction in political intolerance. Our initial presumption that reappraisal could potentially constitute an effective tool for reducing political intolerance was based on an innovative synthesis of knowledge from political science and psychology. More specifically, we integrated the above-cited knowledge in political science and political psychology that negative emotions are deeply involved in the occurrence of political intolerance (Capelos and Van Troost 2007; Gibson and Bingham 1982; Halperin, Canetti-Nisim, and Hirsch-Hoefler 2009; Kuklinski et al., 1991; Marcus et al. 1995, 2005; Skitka, Bauman, and Mullen 2004) with more recent developments in the field of emotion regulation showing that reappraisal can both decrease negative emotions (Gross 2007) and give rise to the broader meaning or consequences of events (Ray, Wilhelm, and Gross 2008).

It is worth clarifying that our contention is not that negative emotions necessarily have a negative impact on intergroup relations. Certain negative emotions, such as anxiety, have even been found to play a positive role in certain behaviors that may benefit intergroup relations, such as information seeking (Marcus, Neuman, and MacKuen, 2001), and others, such as anger, have been specifically linked to a desire to resolve intergroup conflicts (Halperin et al. 2011). Instead, we have identified certain intergroup emotions identified in the literature as common predictors of political intolerance, such as anger, fear, and hatred (Capelos and Van Troost 2007; Gibson and Bingham 1982; Halperin, Canetti-Nisim, and Hirsch-Hoefler 2009; Skitka, Bauman, and Mullen 2004). By identifying these emotions, we were able to present stimuli that raise these emotions, thus allowing ourselves to examine how reappraising the themes connected with the emotions might affect political intolerance.

The two studies described earlier provide initial support for our hypothesized model. First, in study 1, we sought to establish a causal relationship by manipulating reappraisal and assessing changes in political intolerance. We found that rightist participants who read reappraisal instructions prior to a text criticizing PCIs displayed lower levels of political intolerance than did rightists who did not read such instructions (i.e., the control group). Interestingly, this effect was transmitted via a decrease in levels of negative emotion. Subsequently, in study 2, we examined the

multimediation model of political intolerance, finding that the decrease in intolerance was transmitted via both negative emotions and general support for democratic values. Furthermore, we were able to generalize our hypothesized effect to other kinds of out-groups, using the least-liked group paradigm.

### *Theoretical Implications*

Although preliminary, the findings of the current research augment the literature on intergroup relations and conflict in general and political intolerance in particular in several ways. First and foremost, the results lend further credence to the notion that the development of politically intolerant beliefs is closely associated with affective and emotional processes (e.g., Capelos and Van Troost 2007; Gibson and Bingham 1982; Halperin, Canetti-Nisim, and Hirsch-Hoefler 2009; Marcus et al. 1995; Skitka, Bauman, and Mullen 2004). Second, while most previous studies used correlational designs to support this argument, the current investigation, with its experimental designs, provides preliminary causal evidence for these relations. Third, our results lend further support for recent trends in psychology and political psychology suggesting that cognitions and emotions intertwine and should not be seen as two distinct psychological phenomena. We accomplished this by demonstrating that cognitive reappraisal, which affects levels of emotion by encouraging individuals to change their cognitive appraisals of various stimuli, can ultimately affect political intolerance.

Furthermore, the results of the current investigation (and particularly those of study 1) suggest that when negative emotions are reduced, the connection between political ideology and political intolerance is significantly weakened. These are dramatic findings that raise many interesting questions regarding the interactive effects of ideology and emotions on political attitudes in general and political intolerance in particular. At the same time, caution is in order, and these results should be further examined and validated in other societies with regard to various out-groups.

From an emotion regulation perspective, the present findings augment previous research by demonstrating that the effect of emotion regulation strategies (like reappraisal) extends beyond their direct impact on the actual emotional experience. Our relatively minor emotion regulation manipulation influenced deeply rooted political beliefs and political action tendencies. Furthermore, the results contribute to the emotion literature by further extending the potential impact of emotion regulation beyond the individual and interpersonal levels, into the intergroup and even political domains.

Finally, another intriguing theoretical contribution of the current research is evidence showing that emotion regulation reduces political intolerance not only by reducing negative emotions but also by enhancing adherence to general democratic values. By manipulating reappraisal, a method capable of drawing attention to the broader meanings of new information (Ray, Wilhelm, and Gross 2008), we managed to effect levels of support for these values and were able to demonstrate indirect effects as evidence of such a causal relationship. This implies that within the political domain, emotion regulation strategies can reconnect people with their core

values and beliefs. That is not to say that all people are intrinsically democratic. Instead, we believe that in democratic societies, some people truly hold positions supporting fundamental democratic practices and ideals, while others, even if they do not personally hold strong democratic values, believe that the “right” positions to hold within their society and context are democratic.

### *Applied Implications*

While our studies set out to examine the effects of emotion regulation on lay citizens, their findings may have important implications for the understanding of how world leaders may use emotion-laden speech provoking intolerance against out-groups to gain political capital. Political scientists have demonstrated how the use of inflammatory language by political leaders has served to manipulate and increase political intolerance in both national and ethnic conflicts around the world: in the United States, in Europe (Snyder 2000), in Eastern Europe (Petersen 2002), and in the South Asia (Wilkinson 2006), often focusing on the specific effects of emotion on nationalistic and exclusionary attitudes (de Figueiredo and Weingast 1999; Petersen 2002). This research may serve to illuminate the emotional processes behind these manipulations and, more importantly, provide insight as to how such politically motivated provocations may be countered to prevent intergroup conflict and overcome it.

The present research also has implications for possible interventions to reduce political intolerance and improve intergroup relations among the general public, especially in highly fragmented societies. Our findings indicate that simple reappraisal instructions can significantly decrease individuals’ willingness to limit the political rights of members of disliked out-groups, even though these instructions in no way address the specific characteristics and background of the relations between the groups. Therefore, it appears that it may be possible to construct interventions to decrease intolerance toward an out-group simply by teaching people how to reappraise their negative emotions whenever these arise, in intergroup settings or otherwise. The indirect approach of reappraisal training may be particularly valuable for reducing political intolerance because, in charged intergroup contexts, individuals may not be open to direct attempts to persuade them to change their intergroup attitudes (Bar-Tal and Rosen 2009).

### *Limitations and Future Directions*

Even though each of our studies set out to either address the limitations of the existing correlational data or those of the preceding study, the present research still has limitations that should be addressed in future research. The most important of these limitations is the unique character of Israeli society. Attitudes toward each of the two least-liked out-groups within Israeli society, PCIs and Ultra-Orthodox Jews, are influenced by the unique context in which Israeli society exists. The former is influenced by its members’ real or symbolic connection to an adversary in a protracted conflict,

and the latter by the unique relations and tensions that exist between secular and orthodox Jews in Israel due to the state's often-conflicting secular and Jewish character. While we believe study 2 supports the notion that our findings are applicable to various types of out-groups, it would nonetheless be valuable to attempt to replicate these findings in additional societies within different cultural and political contexts.

Another limitation relates to the type of samples used in both of our studies, as student samples may differ from the general population on key political variables. The present research is a first and novel attempt to manipulate political intolerance using emotion regulation, but because both samples were student samples, it may be difficult to draw from our findings to the general population. Future research should thus expand on its findings by replicating them using different, more diverse samples, as well as representative and nationwide samples, to secure greater external validity. It is important to note, however, that both our samples matched the political-orientation distribution of the general population and that the sample in study 2 also matched the distribution of the general population's least-liked group selection. We have also made sure to base our hypothesis on preliminary findings indicating a positive relationship between cognitive reappraisal and political intolerance, thus assuring that our theoretical basis is externally valid. Furthermore, with these studies we follow the recent trend within political science research to focus on issues of internal validity, using controlled experiments to account for political processes and outcomes and avoid confounding variables (e.g., Marcus et al. 2005)—a factor that was important for us when examining variables as elusive and dynamic as emotions.

A third limitation of our study also relates to the external validity of its findings, and specifically the ability to infer attitude change from self-report measures rather than behavioral measures. We acknowledge the inherent shortcomings of this approach, and firmly believe future research should undertake to (a) manipulate the mediating variables, rather than simply measuring them, so as to examine with greater power the order of their reciprocal effects, and (b) examine the behavioral effects of emotion regulation. Nonetheless, in political contexts, support for political measures constitutes more than a general attitude, as citizens in democracies may actually affect policies by lending their support to them—in polls, in referendums, and in elections. Thus, the value of self-report measures in this context is higher than in contexts in which self-reports have no bearing on outcomes. Specifically in the context of intergroup conflicts, we often view self-reported positions toward the adversary group as action tendencies toward the out-group (acknowledging that such tendencies may not always materialize into actions), because of their bearing on possible policy change.

The present research covers new ground, integrating existing conceptions and theories about political intolerance with findings from the rapidly developing field of emotion regulation. The findings presented offer a new perspective on the emotional process involved in the development of political intolerance toward out-groups. Perhaps more importantly, it is our hope that the current research will serve

to refine our ability to propose interventions based on these and future findings so as to decrease levels of political intolerance and its negative consequences.

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### **Authors' Note**

The first two authors contributed to this article equally. The data files containing all findings from both studies presented in this research are available alongside the electronic version of the article, on the *Journal of Conflict Resolution* website.

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### **Notes**

1. Israel launched the wide-scale offensive after a six-month ceasefire between Israel and the Hamas movement ruling the Gaza Strip collapsed in December 2008 and missile attacks against civilian areas inside Israel intensified. The war resulted in almost 1,400 Palestinian casualties (about half of them noncombatants), 13 Israeli casualties (3 of them noncombatants), and mass destruction on the Palestinian side (B'Tselem 2009).
2. Ynet (<http://www.ynet.co.il>) is the second most popular Israeli website (*Nana10 Online* 2012) and the most popular Israeli website that is chiefly concerned with news. Ynet is affiliated with *Yediot Aharonot*, until recently (and shortly before our studies were conducted) the most widely read newspaper in Israel (Hodorov and Bar Zohar 2010). Both Ynet and *Yediot Aharonot* are considered highly mainstream, affiliated with neither the right nor left wings of Israeli politics.
3. Ahmad Tibi is a well-known member of the Israeli Knesset on behalf of the Arab political party Ta'al. He is disliked by much of the Jewish population in Israel for his criticism of state actions and is often accused by his political opponents of anti-Israeli activities (e.g., Alon and Ettinger 2002). The short text was accompanied by a picture of Tibi speaking.
4. Although we acknowledge the importance of assessing discrete emotions individually, our focus in this study was on overall levels of negative emotion.
5. Having to administer the questionnaires in class limited the time we had for running the study, and we thus excluded the control variables examined in the preliminary data, running only our dependent and independent variables.



6. Preliminary screening revealed that the distribution of the political intolerance variable deviated from normality. We therefore transformed the variable using a log transformation (Tabachnick and Fidell 2007). All analyses were conducted with this transformed variable. For clarity of presentation, however, reported means and standard deviations refer to the untransformed scale.
7. The same analysis conducted separately for each of the discrete emotions revealed similar trends, with reappraisal producing a greater reduction in negative emotions and greater increase in positive emotions among rightists. The discrete emotion most affected by this interaction was fear,  $F_{(1,150)} = 5.80, p = .02$ .
8. Compared with other studies employing an instructional manipulation check, this exclusion rate is quite low.
9. Preliminary screening revealed that the distribution of the support for democratic values variable almost significantly deviated from normality. We therefore transformed the variable by squaring it (Tabachnick and Fidell 2007). All analyses were conducted with this transformed variable. For clarity of presentation, however, reported means and standard deviations refer to the untransformed scale.
10. We also compared the two conditions within the specific subsamples, grouped according to the participants' target groups. The vast majority of participants selected either "Israeli Arabs" ( $N = 61$ ) or "Ultra-Orthodox" ( $N = 45$ ) as their least-liked groups, and for each of these two subsamples separately, as in the overall sample, the results supported our hypothesis. Participants who selected Arabs as their least-liked group (Control:  $M = 3.87, SD = 1.18$ ; Reappraisal:  $M = 3.26, SD = 1.15$ ) as well as those who selected Haredim (Control:  $M = 3.11, SD = 1.17$ ; Reappraisal:  $M = 2.4, SD = 1.16$ ) showed significantly lower levels of political intolerance toward these groups after reading reappraisal instructions,  $t_{(59)} = 2.05, p = .04, d = 0.52$  and  $t_{(43)} = 2.03, p = .04, d = 0.61$ , respectively. Unfortunately, we could not examine the subgroups of participants who selected either "Extreme Leftists" or "Extreme Rightists" due to the low number of participants who selected these as their least-liked groups ( $N = 12$  and  $N = 27$ , respectively).

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