Out of sight, out of mind: The emotional determinant of "harmful inaction" intergroup conflict[☆]

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A B S T R A C T

Groups in conflict can act against one another in various ways, such as inflicting physical injury upon out-group members, actively expelling them from the social sphere or denying them basic rights. While intergroup conflict literature is mostly dedicated to identifying the psychological determinants of such overt, or active, forms of intergroup harm, less research has been dedicated to the psychological mechanisms that intensify intergroup harm inflicted through *inaction*, such as ignoring the out-group, withholding assistance, and avoiding mutual cooperation. The goal of the present research is to identify the distinct emotional determinant of "harmful inaction" in intergroup conflict across various socio-political contexts, focusing on the experience of group-based contempt. Across seven studies, using different methods, we find that support for harmful inaction towards the rival in conflict is uniquely associated with group-based contempt, compared to anger (Studies 1a-d, 2–3), hate (Studies 1b-d, 2), disgust (Studies 1b-d, 2, 4), and fear (Studies 1b-d, 2). These findings were consistent across different contexts of intergroup conflict, different specifications of harmful inaction, and different sets of controlled emotions. Taken together, our results suggest that group-based contempt has a unique contribution to fueling and maintaining intergroup conflicts by triggering a unique type of intergroup harm.

1. Introduction

Attempts to identify the psychological processes that drive intergroup harm have been the focus of the intergroup conflict literature for decades (e.g., Struch & Schwartz, 1989; Williams, Forgas, & Von Hippel, 2013; Worchel, 1999). Empirical research on this topic, however, focuses more on blatant and "active" forms of intergroup harm, such as physically or verbally attacking the out-group or actively removing it from the social sphere, than on the psychological triggers of subtler forms of intergroup harm, particularly those inflicted through inaction (avoidance, withdrawal, and disregard). This is despite the highly destructive implications such forms of harm might yield on intergroup relations (Heatherton, Kleck, Hebl, & Hull, 2003; Pierce, 1970; Williams et al., 2013).

We would like to suggest that group-based contempt serves as a central predictor of harmful inaction in intergroup conflict. The potentially destructive implications of contempt for interpersonal and intergroup relations were discussed in length in theoretical articles (Bell, 2013; Fischer, 2011; Fischer & Giner-Sorolla, 2016; Fischer & Roseman, 2007; Gervais & Fessler, 2017; Haidt, 2003; Izard, 1977), which were followed by surprisingly few empirical studies examining them in interpersonal (Fischer & Roseman, 2007; Hutcherson & Gross, 2011) and intergroup contexts (Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2007; Mackie, Devos, & Smith, 2000). Although invaluable, these empirical studies either did not systematically examine the emotional determinants of intergroup harm via inaction versus action (Hutcherson & Gross, 2011), or did not systematically differentiate the effects of contempt from those of emotions that are hypothesized to be particularly strongly related to contempt, like hate, fear, and disgust (Cuddy et al., 2007; Fischer & Roseman, 2007; Mackie et al., 2000). To our knowledge, the current set

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of studies is the first to examine the unique emotions underlying harmful inaction in across different intergroup conflicts, compared to a wide range of related emotions, with the aim of elucidating the antecedents of a highly destructive, yet largely understudied, form of intergroup harm.

2. Harmful inaction versus harmful action

Behaviors that cause harm to others are often differentiated along the active/passive dimension (Ayduk, May, Downey, & Higgins, 2003; Ben-Shitrit, Elad-Strenger, & Hirsch-Hoefler, 2017;Buss, 1961), ranging from more overt, confrontational harm (e.g., harassment or infliction of physical harm) to more subtle, indirect harm (e.g., neglect and disregard). In the present research, we focus on the most "passive" end of this spectrum: harming the target through inaction (Buss, 1961; Richardson, Ferguson, & Daniel, 2006). This definition includes refusal to cooperate or communicate with the target, disregard and neglect of their needs and perspectives, withholding behaviors that may benefit them, and even denial of their very existence. This definition excludes any behavior that involves mobilizing resources to act against the target, such as confronting, attacking, or forcefully excluding the target from the public sphere.

The idea that harm does not necessitate active confrontation, but can rather be inflicted by *avoiding* constructive action, has a long history in social sciences. It is expressed in the broad conceptualization of the "banality of evil" thesis (Arendt, 1963), which resonates with Greenwald and Pettigrew's (2014) definition of discrimination through inaction (e. g., avoiding help towards out-groups), and with the concept of passive negative coping (e.g., withdrawal of social support; Ayduk et al., 2003). It is also akin to the concept of "passive harm" (Cuddy et al., 2007), which is defined as less directive and effortful than "active harm" (e.g., inflicting physical harm, bullying). Harm through inaction also falls under the broad definitions of relational aggression (Crick, 1995) and micro-aggression (Pierce, 1970), although both definitions also include relatively overt behaviors such as spreading rumors and threatening to withdraw relations as a retaliatory method.

The fact that such behaviors can cause harm to the target does not necessarily mean, of course, that they reflect ill intentions. In some contexts, ignoring and neglecting a target may in fact reflect mere apathy and indifference towards it. It may also be that we neglect others towards whom we feel positive emotions. But when groups are interdependent due to their involvement in mutual conflict, indifference may transform into powerful negative emotions (Cuddy et al., 2007). In such contexts, ignoring the out-group has a relational function, reflecting the desire to terminate an *existing* relation, rather than to merely avoid the *formation* of a relation.

Harmful inaction can indeed yield adverse effects on the target outgroup and the intergroup relation itself, particularly when this relation is already tense. To mention just a few examples: US liberals and conservatives ignoring each other's perspectives on common issues may intensify mutual disagreements (Heltzel & Laurin, 2020). Jewish-Israelis avoiding the inclusion of Palestinian citizens of Israel (PCIs; also referred to as Arab Israelis) in public committees, intensifies power asymmetries in society and blocks the attempts of PCIs to improve their relatively low status (Abu-Saad, 2006). Finally, Jewish-Israeli Ultra-Orthodox communities ignoring the COVID regulations imposed by the secular government, has brough their tense relations with the seculars to a boiling point (Cohen, Adini, & Spitz, 2021).

3. Emotional determinants of harmful inaction (versus harmful action)

Increasing scientific attention has been dedicated to the role of discrete group-based emotions, which are felt by individuals based on group-identification (Smith, 1993), in facilitating harmful behaviors towards the rival in intergroup conflict (Harth, Kessler, & Leach, 2008; Mackie et al., 2000; Smith, Cronin, & Kessler, 2008). This research has

mostly focused on the emotional antecedents of "active", confrontational forms of intergroup harm (e.g., attacking the out-group), such as group-based hate and anger (Reifen Tagar, Federico, & Halperin, 2011). Our research proposes that when groups are involved in mutual conflict, harmful inaction may reflect powerful negative emotions, rather than disinterest or indifference towards the out-group. The goal of our research is to identify which emotions are central in triggering this form of intergroup harm.

Previous theoretical literature identified *contempt* as a potential emotional antecedent of harm through inaction (Fischer, 2011; Fischer & Roseman, 2007). Contempt is associated with the cognitive appraisal of the target as inherently unworthy and inferior (Fischer, 2011; Fischer & Giner-Sorolla, 2016; Fischer & Roseman, 2007; Izard, 1977; Miller, 1997; Roseman, 2018; Russell, 1991). As contempt is based on the appraisal that the target cannot be changed, the social function of contempt is to terminate relations with the target by disengaging from it (Fischer & Roseman, 2007). Although fear can also trigger disengagement from the target (alongside blatant confrontation, see Spanovic, Lickel, Denson, & Petrovic, 2010), such disengagement is considered to represent avoidance of the target based on its perception as threatening, rather than rejection of the target based on its perception as inferior (Frijda, Kuipers, & Ter Schure, 1989; Roseman, 1984).

Importantly, not all negative emotions are hypothesized to trigger the tendency to disengage from the target. Anger, for example, is elicited from the appraisal that the target has committed unfair acts towards the self (Mackie et al., 2000), accompanied by the belief that the relationship is still viable and that the target's behavior can be changed (Fischer & Roseman, 2007). Anger is therefore considered an approach-emotion, leading to the tendency to confront rather than reject the target, either by attacking it (Lerner, Gonzalez, Small, & Fischhoff, 2003; Mackie et al., 2000) or by changing its behaviors or beliefs (Halperin, 2008).

Like contempt, but unlike anger, hate and disgust are hypothesized to stem from the appraisal of the target as inherently negative, which implies that the relationship with it should be terminated (Elad-Strenger, Proch, & Kessler, 2020; Russell & Giner-Sorolla, 2013). Nevertheless, while contempt implies the perception of the other as inherently worthless and inferior, the target of hate is appraised as "bad" or "evil" by nature (Halperin, 2008), while the target of disgust is appraised as inherently "contagious" or "repulsive", and thus as threatening to the self, its morality and purity (Bell, 2013; Haidt, 2003). Consequently, rather than avoiding, ignoring or neglecting the target, hate is associated with the tendency to end relations by investing considerable efforts in harming the target (Sternberg, 2003), while disgust is associated with the tendency to end relations by actively cleansing the social sphere from the target to minimize the risk of "contamination" (Fischer & Giner-Sorolla, 2016; Haidt, 2003). As it is based on perceiving the target as morally inferior, contempt can lead to moral disengagement (Bandura, 1999), which can in some cases also justify the infliction of active harm towards it, similar to disgust (Harris & Fiske, 2009). However, insofar as harmful inaction communicates the perception of the target as worthless rather than threatening, we hypothesize that inflicting harm through inaction will be more strongly associated with contempt than with disgust.

To date, only three published studies that we know of examined rejection of the target as a potential outcome of contempt: one assessing interpersonal emotions (Fischer & Roseman, 2007), one assessing individuals' emotions towards groups (Cuddy et al., 2007), and only one assessing group-based emotions towards an out-group (Mackie et al., 2000). Although all of them differentiated the behavioral effects of contempt from those of anger, they did not differentiate them from other negative emotions that are hypothesized to trigger social rejection (like hate and disgust) on the one hand, or avoidance of the target (like fear) on the other.

4. The current research

Across seven studies,[1] we examined the emotional antecedents of harmful inaction in the context of intergroup conflict. We hypothesized that although group-based contempt may be associated with support for harmful action (similarly to other negative emotions), it is uniquely associated with harmful inaction towards the rival in conflict. To properly isolate the effects of group-based contempt, we chose to control for related group-based emotions, which are thought to partially overlap with contempt: anger, fear, disgust, and hate. Controlling for these closely related group-based emotions may naturally create conceptual and statistical challenges like multicollinearity (see Campbell & Kenny, 1999). At the same time, however, it enables us to acknowledge and systematically account for these potential overlaps, rather than allowing these confounds (which naturally exist between negative emotions) to remain unaccounted for, both statistically and theoretically.

Studies 1a-d examined the unique cross-sectional association between group-based contempt and harmful inaction compared to anger (1a-d), disgust, hate, and fear (1b-d) across different intergroup conflicts: Self-identified rightists versus leftists in Israel and Germany (1a) White towards Black Americans (1b), and Jewish-Israelis towards Palestinians (1c-d). In Study 2, we experimentally tested people's lay theories of contempt and the way these theories differentiate group-based contempt from all these related emotions. Additionally, in that study we tested the unique relations between these emotions and harmful inaction vs. action, in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In Studies 3 and 4 (pre-registered), we examined the unique effects of an experimentally manipulated first-hand experience of contempt (versus related emotions), among Jewish-Israeli leftists and rightists (Study 3) and among Jewish-Israeli Ultra-Orthodox towards Jewish-Israeli seculars (Study 4). All measures, manipulations, exclusions and method of determining final sample sizes in the studies are disclosed below.

5. Studies 1a-d

Studies 1a-d aimed to provide preliminary cross-sectional evidence for the unique association between group-based contempt and harmful inaction, compared to group-based anger (Studies 1a-d), hate, disgust, and fear (Studies 1b-d). *Study 1a* was based on an existing dataset on group-based emotions and action tendencies between leftists and rightists in Israel and Germany (Hasson et al., 2016). *Study 1b* was based on an existing dataset on group-based emotions and conciliatory attitudes among White towards Black Americans (Shuman et al., 2017, Study 1). *Study 1c* was based on an existing (unpublished) dataset on Jewish-Israelis' emotions and policy preferences towards Palestinians. S*tudy 1d* was based on an original dataset examining the associations between Jewish-Israelis' emotions towards Palestinian citizens of Israel (PCIs), and their behavioral expressions of harmful action/inaction towards them.

The items used in each study captured different manifestations of support for harmful inaction: avoiding intergroup cooperation (1a), withholding behaviors that benefit the out-group (1b), avoiding communication with the out-group (1c), and denying them to voice their perspectives in the common sphere (1c-d). We hypothesized that when controlling for other negative group-based emotions, only group-based contempt will be associated with harmful inaction.

5.1. Method

5.1.1. Participants

Sensitivity power analyses using G*Power (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009) indicate that all sample sizes were sufficient for detecting

at least a small-medium sized effect ($f^2 = 0.11$) in multiple regressions, based on standard alpha (0.05) and 80% power.

Study 1a: 374 Jewish-Israelis and 322 Germans were recruited for this online study using local survey companies. After excluding 35 Jewish-Israelis and 28 Germans who did not clearly identify as leftists or rightists (see Online Appendix for exclusion criteria), the final sample included 633 participants (339 Jewish-Israelis and 294 Germans, 48.7% female, $M_{age}[SD] = 45.08[15.17]$; 55% leftists and 45% rightists).

Study 1b: 128 U.S. Americans recruited for this online study using Amazon's Mechanical Turk. After excluding 11 participants who self-identified as non-White, the final sample included 117 participants (50% female, $M_{age}[SD] = 38.02[11.94]$).

Study 1c: 210 participants were recruited by research assistants to participate in this pen-and-pencil questionnaire, in various public places in Israel. After excluding 5 non-Jewish participants, the final sample included 205 Jewish-Israelis (59% female; $M_{age}[SD] = 30.81[10.93]$).

Study 1d: 204 Jewish Israelis were recruited for this online study, using a professional local survey company (49% female; $M_{age}[SD] = 39.73[12.86]$).

5.1.2. Procedure and measures

In all studies, participants first completed demographic items, including a political ideology scale (1 = left/liberal, 7 = right/conservative). Then, they rated their emotions and support for harmful action and inaction towards the target out-group (items were rated from 1 [=strongly disagree] to 7[=strongly agree], unless indicated otherwise). Full list of items is shown in the Online Appendix.

In *Study 1a*, leftists and rightists rated the extent to which they feel *contempt* and *anger* towards their ideological out-group. Then, they rated their support for *harmful action* towards their ideological out-group (e.g., "We should fight rightists/leftists and their ideals"; α = 0.83). Given the existing set of items, *harmful inaction* was operationalized as the tendency to withhold behaviors that benefit the ideological out-group or intergroup relations (e.g., "We should cooperate with rightists/leftists to create a better society (RC)"; α = 0.80).

In *Study 1b*,[2] White US Americans rated their *contempt*, *anger*, *disgust*, *hate*, and *fear* towards Black Americans. They then rated their support for policies towards Black Americans, in relation to their struggle for racial equality, representing *harmful action* (e.g., "Police should use maximum force to disperse violent protests by African-Americans"; α = 0.78), and *harmful inaction* (e.g., "The government shouldn't take any actions to change the relative status of white and black Americans"; α = 0.74).

In *Study 1c*, Jewish-Israelis rated the extent to which they feel *contempt*, *anger*, *hate*, *disgust*, and *fear* towards Palestinians. They then rated their support for *harmful action* ("Israel should use maximal force to attack terrorist targets in the Palestinian territories"; α = 0.75) and *harmful inaction* ("The Israeli media should not provide a stage for official Palestinian speakers"; α = 0.68). These items were rated from 1 (=strongly disagree) to 6(=strongly agree).

In *Study 1d*, Jewish-Israelis first rated the extent to which they feel *contempt*, *anger*, *hate*, *disgust*, and *fear* towards PCIs. Since one of the strongest expressions of the dynamics of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict lies in the Israeli collective memory, or narrative, of the conflict (Nets-Zehngut, 2012), we operationalized *harmful action* as the choice to communicate blatant hostility towards PCIs, by disseminating narratives

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[1] Datasets are available at: https://osf.io/f6z3s/?view_only=15be2730aa074 8ceb727826f8a968c3b.

[2] The original hypotheses examined in this study pertained to the effects of protest on anger and policy preferences, using other emotions (including contempt) as controls. Therefore, it was designed such that participants were primed with the protest scenario before rating their emotions towards Black-Americans. The context of a protest is nevertheless particularly relevant to the study of contempt, as protest against inequality by the disadvantaged group is meant to challenge power relations and thus threatens the superiority of the advantaged group.

that describe them as Israel's archenemies and competitors. H*armful inaction* was operationalized as the choice to publicly disseminate an Israeli narrative which ignores the PCIs' perspective of the conflict. Finally, we measured *facilitation* of the out-group's goals, which was operationalized as the choice to disseminate an Israeli narrative that acknowledges PCIs' perspectives, without expressing hostility.

Participants read 21 short article abstracts representing different narratives of Israel's past and present across 7 different topics (e.g., the character of the state of Israel, the second intifada). Participants were told that these articles are considered to appear in an upcoming civics textbook, which is intended to be taught in Israeli junior high schools - Jewish and non-Jewish alike. For each topic, participants were presented with three abstracts represented either *harmful action* (e.g., "in 1948, Jews established the state of Israel, and were immediately viciously attacked by the Palestinians who resided in the land", α = 0.91), *harmful inaction* (e.g., "in 1948, Jews established the state of Israel on a territory which was mostly occupied by Egyptian tribes", α = 0.78), or *facilitation* (e.g., "in 1948, Jews established the state of Israel. Shortly after, a war broke out between them and the Palestinians who resided in the land"; α = 0.83). Participants rated the extent to which they would choose to include each abstract, as a full article, in the civics textbook, from 1(=strongly object inclusion) to 7(=strongly support inclusion).

In addition, we asked participants to choose whether they support or oppose the inclusion of articles written by PCIs in the textbook, while indicating the cognitive appraisal underlying their choice to object inclusion. Participants were thus asked to choose one of the following options: (1) "support the inclusion of PCIs' perspective in the textbook, as it may be important and informative for students" (*inclusion*); (2) "object to the inclusion of PCIs' perspective in the textbook, as it is unimportant and irrelevant for students" (*inferiority-based exclusion*, which was hypothesized to be most strongly associated with contempt*)*; or (3) "object to the inclusion of PCIs' perspective in the textbook, as it may include lies and biased information" (*threat-based exclusion*, which was hypothesized to be more strongly associated with hate or disgust). Participants' choices were recoded into two dummy variables (*inferiority-based exclusion and threat-based exclusion)*, with inclusion as the reference category.

Factor analyses for all action tendencies and policy preferences in each study (see Online Appendix) yielded clear two-factor solutions, which were compatible with our construction of the harmful inaction and harmful action scales (and a three-factor solution in Study 1d, which also included an independent "facilitation" factor).

5.2. Results and discussion

In all studies, group-based contempt was highly correlated with other negative group-based emotions ($r = 0.21–0.79$), and all emotions (except for fear) were positively correlated with both harmful action and harmful inaction (see Online Appendix for means, standard deviations and bivariate correlations).

To establish the unique association between group-based contempt and harmful inaction, we regressed the harmful action and harmful inaction (and facilitation in Study 1d) scales on all measures group-based emotions, in each study separately, controlling for political ideology. As shown in Table 1, in Studies 1a-c, only contempt remained significantly and positively related with support for *harmful inaction* when controlling for group-based anger, hate, disgust, and fear. Moreover, none of the other negative emotions were significantly associated with harmful inaction when contempt was controlled for. In Study 1d, however, both contempt and disgust were associated with harmful inaction. These findings are consistent with previous research which assumes a conceptual overlap between disgust and contempt, and stresses the effect of disgust on harmful inaction and prejudice via dehumanization of the target (Cuddy et al., 2007; Harris & Fiske, 2006, 2009). However, they may also be attributed to our operationalization of harmful inaction: Although the choice in a one-sided Israeli narrative

that omits PCIs perspective (compared to narratives that actively offend them or facilitate their goals) was meant to represent the behavioral tendency of ignoring/not acknowledging, our findings may indicate that publicly disseminating a narrative nonetheless has an "active" component, which may explain its association with disgust. Measuring behavioral expressions of inaction may be challenging, but future studies are encouraged to explore other ways to better distinguish the behavioral outcomes of disgust and contempt. Importantly, although our findings show that both disgust and contempt lead to social exclusion, they nevertheless suggest that these emotions are distinguishable in terms of the *motivations* for exclusion. More specifically, findings of a multiple regression (Table 2) show that while disgust (but not contempt) was associated with exclusion that is based on the attribution of threat to the out-group, contempt (but not disgust) was associated with exclusion that is based on the attribution of inferiority to the out-group.

Table 1 also shows the relations between negative emotions and support for *harmful action* across studies. In Studies 1a and 1d, contempt was also associated with harmful action, as is expected from any negative emotion. In studies 1a-b, anger also emerged as a predictor of harmful action, while disgust and hate were more strongly associated with harmful action in Studies 1c-d. This difference may be attributed to the context of violent conflict in which these studies were conducted, in which these extreme emotions are particularly salient. Finally, positive intergroup behaviors (facilitation; Study 1d), were negatively associated with anger and disgust.

Taken together, Studies 1a-d provide cross-sectional support for the unique association between group-based contempt and support for harmful inaction in conflict, across different socio-political contexts (Israel, Germany, and the US), and in the context of more symmetrical (Study 1a) and less symmetrical (Studies 1b-d) intergroup conflicts. Our findings were also consistent across different specifications of harmful inaction, covering general behavioral tendencies (Studiy 1a), policy preferences (Studies 1b-c), and behaviors (Study 1d).

Considering these findings, we proceeded to examine the unique role of group-based contempt in predicting harmful inaction experimentally in Study 2, while addressing two potential limitations of Studies 1a-d: First, instead of assessing different facets of harmful inaction separately, Study 2 assessed them simultaneously. Second, while some harmful inaction items in Studies 1a-c we framed as negative statements (e.g., "should *not*"), Study 2 used positively-framed items to assess support for harmful inaction.

6. Study 2

Examining lay theories of emotions is considered a well-established approach to the study of emotions (Fitness & Fletcher, 1993; Halperin, 2008). This is especially true when it comes to extreme negative emotions for which more direct primings or manipulations might be ethically debatable (e.g., Fernández, Halperin, Gaviria, Agudo, & Saguy, 2018). Therefore, as a first step to examine our hypotheses experimentally, Study 2 examined people's lay theories about the cognitive appraisals and policy preferences associated with group-based contempt, compared to related negative emotions (group-based anger, hate, disgust and fear). This study was conducted in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which is considered a prototypical case of a violent, protracted, and asymmetrical conflict (e.g., Bar-Tal, 2007). Most studies on intergroup harm in such contexts have thus far focused on the emotional antecedents of blatantly harmful actions (e.g., Halperin, Oren, & Bar-Tal, 2010; Harth et al., 2008; Smith et al., 2008), while the emotional mechanisms underlying harm via inaction have been greatly understudied.

In this study, we manipulated the cognitive appraisals hypothesized to differentiate group-based contempt from related emotions, by varying the appraisals supposedly held by a hypothetical Jewish-Israeli protagonist towards Palestinians, after being exposed to an alleged offense by Palestinians towards Israelis. Then, we measured the emotions and

Table 1

Multiple regressions predicting harmful inaction, harmful action and non-harm (Studies 1a-1d).

	Harmful inaction						Harmful action						Facilitation						
	B	SE	β	T	p	95% CI	B	SE	β	t	p	95% CI	B	SE	β	t	p	95% CI	VIF
Study 1a[1]																			
Contempt	0.34	0.04	0.43	8.25	<0.001	[0.26, 0.42]	0.3	0.04	0.38	8.22	<0.001	[0.23. 37]							2.06
Anger	−0.01	0.04	−0.01	−0.14	0.89	[−0.10, 0.08]	0.19	0.04	0.24	5.12	<0.001	[0.12, 0.27]							2.07
Study 1b																			
Contempt	0.2	0.1	0.26	2.07	0.04	[0.01, 0.39]	−0.15	0.12	−0.17	−1.38	0.17	[−0.36. 0.07]							2.75
Anger	−0.01	0.11	−0.02	−0.13	0.897	[−0.23, 0.20]	0.33	0.12	0.39	2.74	0.007	[0.09, 0.57]							4
Disgust	0.06	0.1	0.08	1.13	0.588	[−0.15, 0.26]	0	0.12	0	−0.03	0.976	[−0.23, 0.23]							3.94
Hate	0.07	0.09	0.08	−0.23	0.492	[−0.12, 0.25]	0.11	0.11	0.12	1.08	0.282	[−0.10, 0.32]							2.44
Fear	−0.04	0.07	−0.05	0.028	0.585	[−0.18, 0.10]	0.04	0.08	0.04	0.489	0.626	[−0.12, 0.20]							1.58
Study 1c																			
Contempt	0.13	0.07	0.17	2.08	0.039	[0.01, 0.26]	0.02	0.06	0.03	0.317	0.752	[−0.10, 0.14]							2.24
Anger	−0.05	0.05	−0.07	−0.1.00	0.319	[−0.16, 0.05]	−0.02	0.05	−0.02	−0.29	0.771	[−0.11, 0.08]							1.57
Disgust	0.03	0.07	0.03	0.35	0.73	[−0.12, 0.17]	0.22	0.07	0.23	3.16	0.002	[0.08, 0.35]							2.13
Hate	0.11	0.08	0.13	1.4	0.165	[−0.05, 0.26]	−0.03	0.07	−0.03	−0.34	0.733	[−0.17, 0.12]							2.61
Fear	−0.07	0.05	−0.09	−1.42	0.159	[−0.17, 0.03]	0.04	0.05	0.04	0.79	0.423	[−0.06, 0.13]							1.16
Study 1d																			1.36
Contempt	0.2	0.07	0.27	2.81	0.006	[0.06, 0.33]	0.27	0.08	0.28	3.47	<0.001	[0.12, 0.42]	−0.05	0.08	−0.07	−0.62	0.535	[−0.21, 0.11]	3.55
Anger	−0.05	0.06	−0.08	−0.95	0.345	[−0.16, 0.06]	−0.07	0.06	−0.08	−1.17	0.244	[−0.20, 0.05]	−0.14	0.07	−0.2	−2.05	0.042	[−0.27, −0.01]	2.39
Disgust	0.16	0.07	0.23	2.19	0.03	[0.02, 0.30]	0.14	0.08	0.16	1.77	0.078	[−0.02, 0.30]	−0.17	0.09	−0.25	−2.01	0.046	[−0.34, −0.003]	4.18
Hate	0	0.08	−0.01	−0.05	0.963	[−0.15, 0.15]	0.18	0.08	0.2	2.15	0.033	[0.02, 0.35]	0.1	0.09	0.14	1.07	0.284	[−0.08, 0.27]	4.73
Fear	−0.02	0.05	−0.03	−0.34	0.735	[−0.12, 0.09]	0	0.06	0	0.06	0.95	[−0.11, 0.12]	0.02	0.06	0.04	0.39	0.698	[−0.10, 0.15]	2.13

Note. CI = confidence interval; VIF = variance inflation factor.

[1] These effects were significant under all levels of sample (Israel/Germany) and political ideology (left/right).

Table 2

Multiple regressions predicting inferiority-based exclusion and threat-based exclusion (Study 1d).

	Inferiority-based exclusion (vs. inclusion and threat-based exclusion)						Threat-based exclusion (vs. inclusion and inferiority-based exclusion)					
	b	SE	β	t	p	95% CI	b	SE	β	t	p	95% CI
Contempt	0.07	0.02	0.47	3.86	<0.001	[0.03, 0.11]	−0.01	0.03	−0.01	−0.17	0.869	[−0.06, 0.05]
Anger	0.02	0.02	0.10	1.02	0.309	[−0.01, 0.04]	0.02	0.02	0.10	1.07	0.288	[−0.02, 0.07]
Disgust	−0.03	0.02	−0.22	−1.63	0.105	[−0.07, 0.01]	0.07	0.03	0.34	2.63	0.009	[0.02, 0.13]
Hate	0.01	0.02	0.04	0.25	0.801	[−0.03, 0.04]	−0.02	0.03	−0.08	−0.58	0.578	[−0.08, 0.04]
Fear	−0.02	0.01	−0.10	−1.09	0.279	[−0.04, 0.01]	0.02	0.02	0.07	.74	0.463	[−0.03, 0.06]

Note. CI = confidence intervals.

policy preferences Jewish-Israeli participants attribute to this protagonist based on these appraisals. According to theoretical literature, contempt is hypothesized to be triggered by the appraisal of the target as worthless and inferior, unlike group-based anger, disgust, fear, or hate (Fischer & Roseman, 2007; Gervais & Fessler, 2017; Haidt, 2003; Hutcherson & Gross, 2011; Mackie et al., 2000; Rozin, Lowery, Imada, & Haidt, 1999), and by the appraisal of the target's behaviors as rooted in their innate negative character, unlike group-based anger (Fischer & Roseman, 2007) and fear (Halperin, 2008), but similar to disgust (Fischer & Giner-Sorolla, 2016) and hate (Halperin, 2008). We thus hypothesized that (*H1a*) the attribution of *inferiority to the out-group* triggers group-based contempt more than anger, hate, disgust and fear; and (*H1b*) the attribution of *innate negative character* to the out-group triggers the group-based contempt similarly to hate and disgust, but more than anger and fear.

We manipulated the protagonist's appraisals of Palestinians in response to their alleged offense against the Israelis. Anger is elicited in response to an unjust event by the target, which is seen as important enough to be deemed offensive towards the self and to require some corrective action (Hareli & Hess, 2010; Mackie et al., 2000), while contempt is hypothesized to be triggered by the perception that the out-group's behavior is meaningless to the in-group. To further distinguish anger and contempt, we measured a third appraisal assessing the perceived importance of the offense itself to the in-group (perceived offense importance). We hypothesized that the meaningfulness of the out-group's offense for the in-group will be more strongly associated with group-based anger than with contempt. We hypothesized that the meaningfulness of the out-group's offense for the in-group will be more strongly associated with group-based anger than with contempt (*H1c*). Finally, we hypothesized (*H2*) that group-based contempt, but not anger, hate, disgust, or fear, will mediate the relations between attributions of negative character and out-group inferiority on the one hand and harmful inaction on the other.

6.1. Method

6.1.1. Participants

We conducted an a priori power analysis (using G*Power, Faul et al., 2009) for the sample size needed to detect a small-medium effect size in a multiple regression (0.07) and in a MANOVA (0.03) based on standard alpha (0.05) and 90% power. Our test yielded an estimated sample size of 241 participants for the regression and 267 participants for the ANOVA. To account for potential dropouts and excluded participants based on quality criteria (see below), we set out to recruit at least 300 Jewish-Israelis to participate in this online study, using a professional online Israeli survey company. Of the original sample of 344 participants, we omitted 5 participants who indicated that they are not Jewish and 40 participants who incorrectly answered two reading comprehension items, reaching a final sample of 299 participants (52% female; M_{age}[SD] = 42.67[12.48]; $M_{ideology}$[SD] = 3.95[1.35], 1–7 scale).

6.1.2. Procedure and materials

All items were rated on a scale ranging from 1 (=strongly disagree) to 7 (=strongly agree). Participants first completed demographic items

(including *political ideology*, rated 1[=*rightist*] to 7[=*leftist*]), and then assigned to one of eight experimental conditions. Across conditions, participants read a scenario in which Yariv, a Jewish-Israeli, is purportedly watching a news story describing Palestinians' refusal to participate in a mutual water committee, initiated by the Israeli government, aimed at solving the severe water crisis in the West Bank, which affects both Israelis and Palestinians. Participants then read a description of Yariv's appraisals of the news story, varying across three dichotomous appraisals: high/low out-group inferiority ("Yariv finds it difficult to understand the Palestinians' refusal to participate in the water committee, and *believes that it proves that Palestinians are inferior to Israelis*"/…"*believes that it does not mean that they are inferior or superior to Israelis*"), attribution/no attribution of behavior to innate negative character ("Yariv believes that Palestinians' refusal to participate in the committee *stems from their inherently bad character*"/…" *does not reflect upon their innate character*"), and high/low offense importance ("Yariv thinks Palestinians' refusal to participate in the committee *is at the top of Israel's priorities*"/…."*is not at the top of Israel's priorities*"). Each experimental condition included one possible combination of these dichotomous appraisals.

After reading the scenarios, participants completed one manipulation check item for each appraisal dimension to ensure that our manipulated appraisals were understood as intended (see Online Appendix). Then, participants rated the extent to which they thought Yariv feels *contempt, anger, disgust, hate and fear* towards Palestinians, in random order. Finally, participants rated Yariv's support for *harmful inaction* towards Palestinians (5 items, e.g., "Israel should conduct itself separately from Palestinians and ignore their existence", "Israel should ignore Palestinians' needs and wishes"; α = 0.71), and *harmful action* (5 items, e.g., "Israel should use force to change Palestinians' behaviors towards Israel", "Israel should invest continuous efforts to control Palestinians' actions"; α = 0.89), which were administered in random order. A factor analysis for all 10 policy items indicated that a two-factor solution which is compatible with our construction of the harmful action and harmful inaction scales (see Online Appendix for factor analysis and full list of items).

6.2. Results

As in Studies 1a-d, contempt was positively correlated with all related emotions (r = 0.45–0.80). All emotions were positively correlated with support for policies representing both harmful action and harmful inaction (see Online Appendix for means, standard deviations and bivariate correlations between the study variables).

6.2.1. Differentiating group-based contempt from other emotions at the appraisal level (H1a-c)

To test whether the appraisals differentiated group-based contempt from related emotions (*H1a-c*), we conducted a 2X2X2 MANOVA with the type of emotion (contempt/hate/anger/disgust/fear) as the within-subject factor and the appraisals (out-group inferiority, character attribution and offense importance) as the between-subject factors, with simple within-subject contrasts comparing the effects of contempt to each of the other emotions.

The analysis revealed a significant multivariate effect for emotion x out-group inferiority ($F(4, 288) = 7.32$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.09$) and emotion x character attribution ($F(4, 288) = 7.92$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.10$), but not for emotion x offense importance ($F(4, 288) = 0.80$, $p = .523$, $\eta p^2 = 0.01$). All three- and four-way interactions were non-significant.

Table 3 shows means, standard deviations and the effects of appraisal dimensions on the tested emotions. As shown in Table 3, all emotions were significantly higher under high versus low *out-group inferiority*. Tests of within-subject contrasts revealed that the appraisal of out-group inferiority was more important in predicting contempt compared to hate ($F(1,291) = 13.46$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.04$), disgust ($F(1,291) = 14.83$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.05$), anger ($F(1,291) = 10.89$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.04$) and fear ($F(1,291) = 23.75$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.08$), consistent with *H1a*. Also, as shown in Table 3, all emotions were significantly higher under high versus low *character attribution*. Tests of within-subject contrasts revealed that the appraisal of character attribution was more important in predicting contempt compared to fear ($F(1,291) = 26.91$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.09$), but not to anger ($F(1,291) = 0.75$, $p = .388$, $\eta p^2 = 0.00$), partially consistent with *H1b*. Finally, Table 4 shows that only anger was marginally higher under high versus low *offense importance*, but tests of within-subject contrasts revealed that the appraisal of offense importance was not significantly more important in predicting anger compared to contempt ($F(1,291) = 2.20$, $p = .139$, $\eta p^2 = 0.01$). Therefore, results are only partially consistent with *H1c*.

6.2.2. Full mediation model: appraisals, emotions and policy preferences (H2)

Before testing whether contempt uniquely mediates the effects of appraisals on policy preferences, we first examined the direct causal effects of appraisals on policy preferences in a MANOVA. The analysis revealed significant effects for out-group inferiority ($F(2,290) = 5.68$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.04$), character attribution ($F(2,290) = 22.75$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.14$) and offense importance ($F(2,290) = 30.52$, $p < .001$, $\eta p^2 = 0.17$).

We then conducted a path analysis for the full mediation model, using AMOS software, in which the dichotomous appraisals were defined as exogenous independent variables, the five emotions as mediators, and the policy scales as dependent variables, with a bias corrected bootstrap (5000 re-samples). The default model evinced excellent fit to the data ($\chi^2_{[df=3]} = 0.420$, $p = .936$; TLI = 1.03, CFI = 1.00; RMSEA<0.001). In this model (see Fig. 1), only group-based contempt mediated the effects of out-group inferiority and character attribution on support for harmful inaction, consistent with *H2*, while only group-based disgust and fear mediated their effects on support for harmful action when controlling for the effects of other emotions (see indirect effects in Table 4).[3]

A Monte Carlo power analysis for indirect effects (Schoemann, Boulton, & Short, 2017) suggested that our sample size provided a statistical power of 0.86–0.99 to identify the indirect effect of out-group inferiority on harmful inaction via contempt, controlling for indirect effects via each of the controlled emotions, and power of 0.94–0.99 to identify the indirect effect of character attribution on harmful inaction via contempt, controlling for indirect effects via each of the controlled emotions.

6.3. Discussion

Study 2 examined lay perceptions about the appraisals that differentiate group-based contempt from related group-based emotions, and about the association between contempt (compared to other emotions)

and harmful inaction versus action. We did so by manipulating the cognitive appraisals held by a Jewish-Israeli protagonist about Palestinians, and measuring the emotions and policy preferences Jewish-Israelis attribute to the protagonist based on his alleged appraisals.

Consistent with our hypotheses, Study 2 revealed that the appraisal of out-group inferiority is significantly more predictive of group-based contempt than of related negative emotions. Importantly, the appraisal of out-group inferiority, as it was manipulated in this study, does not necessarily imply that Palestinians are seen by the protagonist as weaker than Jewish-Israelis. Perceived inferiority of the out-group in some domains, such as morality or agreeableness (which may be inferred by their refusal to participate in the joint committee), may actually also make them seem as potentially threatening to the in-group. Indeed, high (vs. low) perceived inferiority of the Palestinians was positively associated with all negative emotions, including fear and disgust, both of which imply Palestinians' ability to potentially inflict harm upon the in-group. Although we did not hypothesize this initially, this perceived threat which may accompany perceived inferiority, can potentially explain the relation between perceived inferiority and these emotions, and the fact that these emotions mediated its effects of harmful action (but not inaction), as opposed to contempt (Elad-Strenger, Hall, Hobfoll, & Canetti, 2020; Elad-Strenger & Shahar, 2017). In terms of trend, our findings also suggest that character attribution is slightly more central in predicting contempt than anger, and that offense importance is slightly more central in predicting anger than contempt, but these differences were not statistically significant. It could be that our manipulations of these appraisals were not sufficiently strong to elicit significant differences.

In sum, our findings suggest that the appraisal of out-group inferiority represents the main cognitive appraisal that differentiates group-based contempt from related emotions on the appraisal level. Identifying the "active ingredient" that distinguishes group-based contempt from related emotions helps address the issue of multicollinearity between these emotions, which was demonstrated in Studies 1a-d. In addition, and consistent with our hypotheses and Studies 1a-c, only contempt emerged as a significant mediator in the relations between cognitive appraisals and harmful inaction, controlling for anger, disgust, hate, and fear. Given these findings, we now proceeded to examine the relations between participants' first-hand experience of contempt (vs. other emotions), and harmful inaction.

7. Study 3

Study 3 (pre-registered[4]) extends the findings of Study 2 in two ways: First, while Study 2 examined lay perceptions of the relations between contempt and harmful inaction, Study 3 examined this relation by manipulating participants' first-hand experience of contempt. Second, while Study 2 focused on group-based contempt towards a lower-status, lower-powered group, Study 3 examined the unique association between contempt and harmful inaction between groups of relatively equal status and power: Jewish-Israeli leftists and rightists.

The study was conducted shortly after the formation of a new unity government in Israel, in which leftists and rightists have relatively equal representation. This government was established following a two-year period of political deadlock, in which Israel has faced four rounds of national elections. During that period, the relations between leftists and rightists in Israel has become particularly tense (Elad-Strenger, Goldenberg, Saguy, & Halperin, 2020), with both ideological camps blaming each other for trying to illegitimately hijack the election results (Cohen, 2019; Shlezinger, 2020). Considering this context, we chose group-based anger as the control emotion.

To minimize the potential damage of inducing new negative emotional experiences towards a real-life out-group, we manipulated

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[3] Results remained similar when including all participants in the analysis (those who failed the reading comprehension checks), when controlling for participants' political ideology, and when including the appraisals' interaction terms as additional independent variables.

[4] https://osf.io/sgdvy/?view_only=65d6f73d505548dbb65917b326620140.

Table 3

Means, standard deviations and effects of appraisal dimensions on group-based emotions (Study 2).

Emotion	Out-group inferiority			Character attribution			Offense importance		
	High	Low	ANOVA	High	Low	ANOVA	High	Low	ANOVA
Contempt	4.61	3.15	$F(1,291) = 45.85^{***}$,	4.87	2.90	$F(1,291) = 82.63^{***}$,	3.92	3.84	$F(1,291) = 0.18$, ηp^2
	(0.155)	(0.150)	$\eta p^2 = 0.14$	(0.150)	(0.154)	$\eta p^2 = 0.22$	(0.154)	(0.151)	$= 0.00$
Hate	3.70	2.83	$F(1,291) = 18.07^{***}$,	4.21	2.33	$F(1,291) = 80.73^{***}$,	3.28	3.25	$F(1,291) = 0.05$, ηp^2
	(0.149)	(0.145)	$\eta p^2 = 0.06$	(0.145)	(0.148)	$\eta p^2 = 0.22$	(0.149)	(0.145)	$= 0.00$
Disgust	3.60	2.72	$F(1,291) = 19.10^{***}$,	4.08	2.25	$F(1,291) = 82.96^{***}$,	3.18	3.14	$F(1,291) = 0.04$, ηp^2
	(0.141)	(0.141)	$\eta p^2 = 0.06$	(0.141)	(0.144)	$\eta p^2 = 0.22$	(0.144)	(0.141)	$= 0.00$
Anger	5.11	4.36	$F(1,291) = 14.41^{***}$,	5.58	3.82	$F(1,291) = 74.42^{***}$,	4.89	4.52	$F(1,291) = 3.25^{\dagger}$, ηp^2
	(0.147)	(0.143)	$\eta p^2 = 0.05$	(0.143)	(0.146)	$\eta p^2 = 0.21$	(0.147)	(0.143)	$= 0.01$
Fear	2.42	2.03	$F(1,291) = 5.10^{*}$, $\eta p^2 =$	2.64	1.81	$F(1,291) = 23.24^{***}$,	2.31	2.14	$F(1,291) = 0.97$, ηp^2
	(0.123)	(0.119)	0.02	(0.120)	(0.123)	$\eta p^2 = 0.08$	(0.122)	(0.120)	$= 0.00$

Note. $^{***}p < .001$, $^{**}p < .01$, $^{*}p < .05$, $^{\dagger}p = .07$ (two-tailed significance).

Table 4

Standardized indirect effects of cognitive appraisals on policy preferences via group-based emotions (Study 2).

	β	p	95% CI
Out-group inferiority > harmful inaction			
Via Group-Based Contempt	0.12	0.001	[0.070,0.180]
Character attribution > harmful inaction			
Via Group-Based Contempt	0.16	0.001	[0.108,0.226]
Out-group inferiority > harmful action			
Via Group-Based Fear	0.05	0.027	[0.007,0.112]
Via Group-Based Disgust	0.07	0.002	[0.029,0.123]
Character attribution > harmful action			
Via Group-Based Disgust	0.25	0.001	[0.181,0.317]

Note. CI = confidence intervals.

group-based emotions by asking leftists and rightists to describe a past event/situation in which they felt contempt/anger towards their ideological out-group. Building on the findings of Study 2, we described the feeling of contempt to participants, as triggered by the perception of the out-group as inferior to the in-group. We hypothesized that contempt, but not anger, will be associated with support for harmful inaction towards the ideological out-group.

7.1. Method

7.1.1. Participants

Based on Study 1a, we conducted an a priori power analysis (G*Power, Faul et al., 2009) for the sample size needed to detect a medium effect size in an ANCOVA, based on standard alpha (0.05) and 90% power, yielding an estimate of 171 participants. This online survey was constructed such that participants were automatically filtered out of the survey if they (1) indicated that they are political centrists (see Online Appendix), (2) failed a pre-registered attention check, or (3) indicated that they cannot recall a relevant event. As participants were to be excluded from further analyses based on additional pre-registered exclusion criteria, we were aiming to recruit at least 250 participants who passed these initial filtering criteria successfully. Out of the original sample of 255 such participants, we omitted 21 additional participants who did not comply with the manipulation instructions (e.g., mentioned irrelevant emotions), and 2 participants who took an irregular time (2.5 SD above the mean) to complete the survey, reaching a final sample of 232 participants (52% female; $M_{age}[SD] = 35.89[11.19]$, 51% rightists and 49% leftists).

7.1.2. Procedure and materials

Participants first completed a demographic questionnaire, which included a political orientation item (1 = extreme rightist, 2 = rightist, 3 = moderate rightist, 4 = centrist, 5 = moderate leftist, 6 = leftist, 7 =
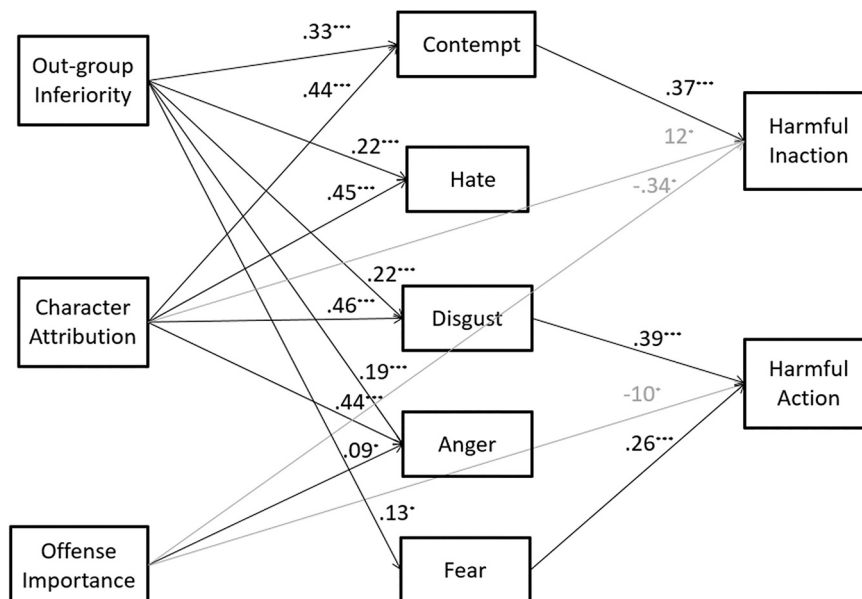

Fig. 1. Path model tested in Study 2 with standardized coefficients.

extreme leftist). Participants who rated themselves as 1–3 or 5–7 were recoded as 0 (rightist) and 1 (leftist), respectively, whereas participants who identified as 4 (centrists), were filtered out of the survey.

Participants were then randomly assigned to either the "contempt" or "anger" conditions, in which they read a description of the target emotion (full manipulation text is presented in the Online Appendix) and were then asked to recall and describe a past event/situation in which they felt the target emotion towards the out-group. Participants had the option of opting out of the survey if they could not recall a relevant event/situation.

Then, participants rated their support for 6 harmful action items and 6 harmful inaction items referring to their ideological out-group, rated on a scale of 1(=strongly disagree) to7 (=strongly agree). Harmful action/inaction items were presented in pairs, representing comparable content, in random order (e.g., "The best way to deal with [the ideological out-group's] attempts to promote their positions in politics is to simply continue pursuing our own goals, even if it goes against theirs" [inaction]".... "to invest all possible resources to fight against their positions" [action]. Total scores were calculated by averaging the harmful action items ($\alpha = 0.77$) and harmful inaction items ($\alpha = 0.82$) separately. A factor analyses for all 12 items indicated a two-factor solution which is compatible with our construction of the harmful action and harmful inaction scales (see online Appendix for factor analysis and list of items).

Finally, participants rated the extent to which they felt *contempt* and *anger* towards their ideological out-group, on a 1–7 scale, used as manipulation checks. We measured perceived emotions at the end of the questionnaire to avoid making both emotions simultaneously salient before participants' ratings of the dependent variables.

7.2. Results and discussion

7.2.1. Manipulation checks

Group-based contempt and anger were moderately correlated ($r = 0.47$; see Online Appendix for means, standard deviations and bivariate correlations between variables). To examine whether perceived contempt and anger differed across experimental conditions, we conducted two ANCOVAs with experimental condition as the independent variable, group-based contempt or anger as the dependent variable, and the other group-based emotion (anger or contempt) as a covariate.[5]

The experimental condition had a main effect on group-based contempt, controlling for anger ($F(1,229) = 4.51$, $p = .035$, $\eta p^2 = 0.02$), such that contempt was higher in the contempt condition ($M[SD] = 5.26[1.56]$) compared to the anger condition ($M[SD] = 4.96[1.84]$). Vice versa, the experimental condition had a main effect on group-based anger, controlling for contempt ($F(1,229) = 3.92$, $p = .049$, $\eta p^2 = 0.02$), such that anger was higher in the anger condition ($M[SD] = 5.26[1.60]$) compared to the contempt condition ($M[SD] = 5.02[1.72]$).

7.2.2. Hypothesis testing

To examine the hypothesis that participants in the contempt condition express higher support for harmful inaction than participants in the anger condition, we conducted an ANCOVA with the harmful inaction scale as the dependent variable, and the condition (contempt/anger) as the predictor. The analysis revealed no significant direct effect of the experimental condition on support for harmful inaction ($F(1,234) = 2.08$, $p = .151$, $\eta p^2 = 0.01$). However, when group-based contempt or anger were considered as mediators in this relation (PROCESS Macro Model 4; Hayes 2018; Fig. 2), the experimental condition had a

significant indirect effect on support for harmful inaction via contempt (effect = 0.08, $SE = 0.05$, [LLCI = 0.01, ULCI = 0.18]), but not via anger (effect = −0.04, $SE = 0.03$, [LLCI = -0.10, ULCI = 0.01]; VIFs for contempt and anger: 1.31). Similar analyses for harmful action (Fig. 3) revealed that the experimental condition also had no significant direct effect on support for harmful action ($F(1,234) = 1.04$, $p = .310$, $\eta p^2 = 0.004$). Nevertheless, it had a significant indirect effect on support for harmful action via both contempt (effect = 0.08, $SE = 0.05$, [LLCI = 0.004, ULCI = 0.19]), and anger (effect = −0.08, $SE = 0.05$, [LLCI = -0.18, ULCI = -0.002]). The effects were not moderated by political ideology.

To summarize, our manipulation had an indirect, but not direct, effect on harmful inaction, via contempt (but not via anger). Although these effects were statistically significant, they were relatively weak. A possible explanation for these relatively weak effects is our choice in an indirect manipulation of group-based emotions. Asking participants to recall an emotion-evoking event, which was chosen to avoid inducing new negative emotions in the context of real-life conflict, may be a somewhat weaker manipulation than directly manipulating participants' appraisals of the in-group and out-group. Recalling an experience which triggered a specific emotion almost inevitably makes additional emotions salient, particularly when this experience refers to a group with which one has long-lasting, and emotionally-charged, relations. Notwithstanding the limitations of our findings, the significant indirect effects observed in this study provide further support that the first-hand experience of group-based contempt, but not of anger, is uniquely associated with support for harmful inaction, consistent with our hypothesis.

Taken together, while the findings of Studies 1–3 consistently demonstrate the unique association between contempt and harmful inaction compared to fear, anger, and hate, the effects of group-based contempt and disgust on harmful inaction were less clearly distinguishable (Study 1d). To provide more evidence for the unique association between group-based contempt and harmful inaction, as compared to disgust, Study 4 focused on comparing these two group-based emotions. Also, while Studies 1–3 focused on group-based contempt towards a lower-status (which is also a lower-powered) group, or between groups of relatively equal status and power, Study 4 focused on the unique association between contempt and harmful inaction (compared to disgust) towards members of a higher-status, higher-powered group.

8. Study 4.

Study 4 (pre-registered[6]) examined the relations between a first-hand experience of contempt and support for harmful inaction by a lower-status group towards a higher-status group, using the same manipulation used in Study 3. According to social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), every group strives to maintain a positive group image relative to other groups, even if its status in society is relatively low. When the hierarchical structure is impermeable and stable, low-status groups may do so by engaging in socially creative strategies to promote a sense of a positive social identity, for example by cognitively changing certain aspects of the comparisons to higher-status groups (Becker, 2012; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Insofar as contempt is associated with perceiving the in-group as superior to out-groups, the experience of group-based contempt towards a high-status group can help low-status group members maintain their positive image.

This study was conducted among the Haredi (Ultra-Orthodox) community in Israel, which comprises 10% of the population and is considered significantly poorer than the secular community (Endweld et al., 2014). As the relationship between the secular and Haredim is seen as one of the most stable disparities in Israeli society (Caplan & Stadler, 2009; Grilak, 2002), social creativity may be a dominant

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[5] As seen in the pre-registration, we planned to conduct independent *t*-tests for each manipulation check without controlling for the other. Nevertheless, due the relatively high correlation between contempt and anger, we decided to use the other manipulation check as a covariate to detect the unique effects of the manipulation on each distinct emotional experience.

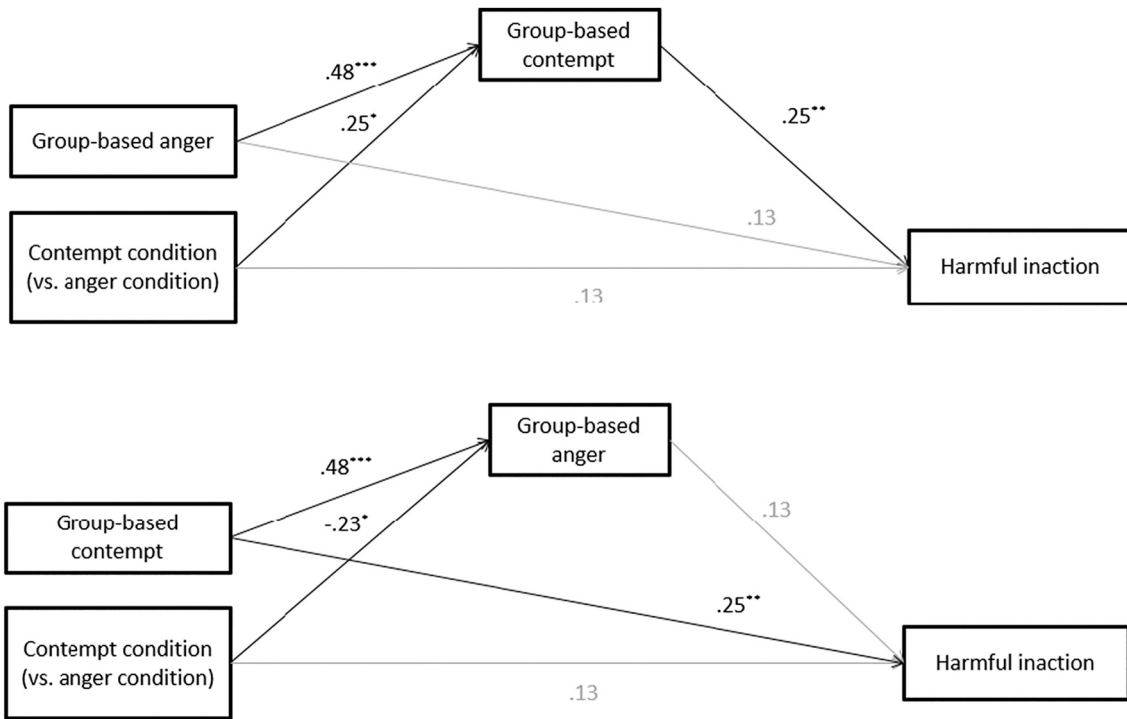[6] https://osf.io/7qus9/?view_only=c3032fe2136c4fa4a16bfdc2622422fc.

Fig. 2. Mediation analyses for harmful inaction (Study 3).
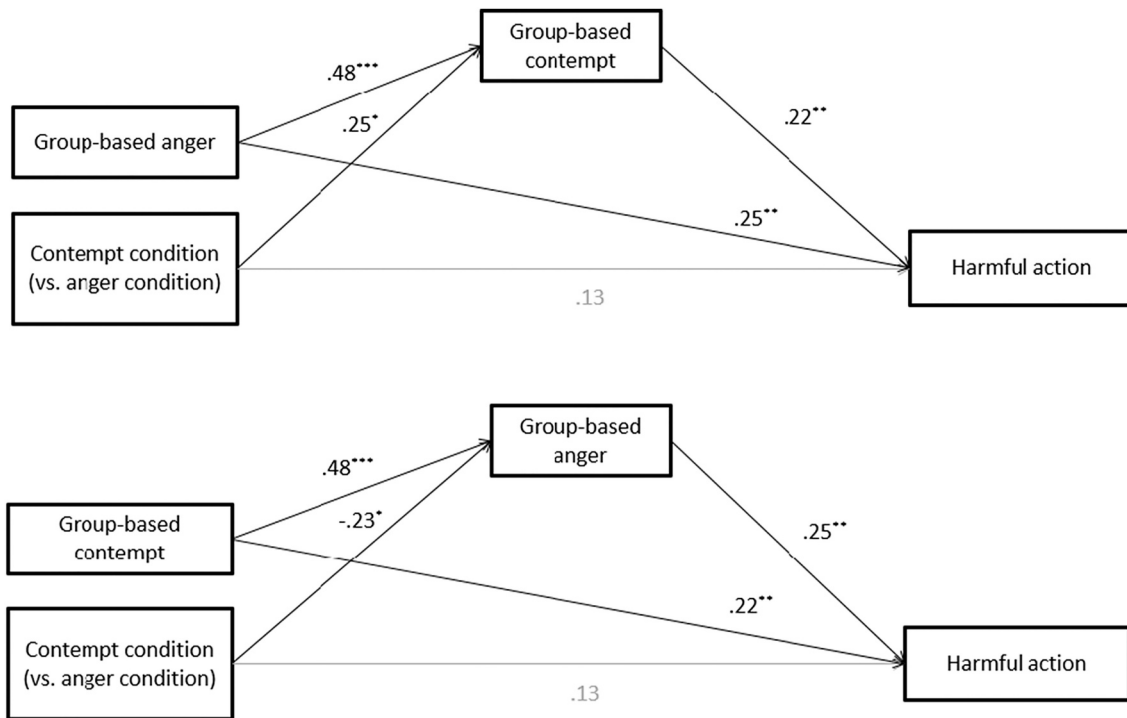

Fig. 3. Mediation analyses for harmful action (Study 3).

strategy for the Haredim to manage their low status identity vis-à-vis the higher-status seculars (Becker, 2012). Indeed, a recent study has shown that Haredi Jews reconstrue poverty as positive and desirable when faced with a threat to their positive distinctiveness (Malovicki-Yaffe, McDonald, Halperin, & Saguy, 2018).

Considering that the Haredi community is also of lower power relative to the seculars, the following question arises: Insofar as the Haredim indeed experience contempt towards the seculars, can they afford to ignore the higher-powered seculars? Clearly, lower-powered groups cannot ignore higher-powered groups altogether, given that their members may depend on the high-powered groups in many aspects of life, and that higher-powered groups' perspectives are often forced upon low-powered groups. Nevertheless, we propose that low-powered groups may engage in harmful inaction towards higher-power groups,

by isolating themselves from the high-powered group or by avoiding intergroup cooperation. In fact, harmful inaction may be seen as a particularly effective means for the lower-powered group to promote their sense of agency and independence vis-à-vis the higher-powered group.

Indeed, the Haredi community chooses to isolate itself from the dominant secular community in various aspects of life: Most Haredi Jews do not serve in the Israeli army (which is mandatory for secular Jews), live in separate neighborhoods, and send their children to Haredi-only schools (Malovicki-Yaffe et al., 2018). The Haredi-secular tensions in Israel reached a peak during the COVID crisis, when key Haredi rabbis declared the ban on gatherings issued by the Ministry of Health as a threat to cardinal Haredi values, ordering that Haredi synagogues and educational institutions should remain open (Cohen et al., 2021).

In this study, we hypothesized that the Haredi's contempt towards seculars will be uniquely associated with support for harmful inaction, in the context of COVID and in the general context of Haredi-secular relations. As in Study 3, we manipulated contempt by asking leftists and rightists to describe a past event/situation in which they felt contempt towards seculars. Building on the findings of Study 2, and as in Study 3, we described the feeling of contempt to participants, as triggered by the perception of the out-group as inferior to the in-group. As the theme of protecting themselves from the "spiritual risk" posed by the impurity of secular culture is often mentioned by the Haredim as the reason for their separatist lifestyle (Nadan et al., 2019), we chose disgust (which is related to purity concerns; Haidt, 2003) as a control emotion in this study.

8.1. Method

8.1.1. Participants

We conducted an a priori power analysis (G*Power, Faul et al., 2009) for the sample size needed to detect a medium-sized effect in a MANOVA ($f^2 = 0.0625$; 2 dependent variables), based on standard alpha (0.05) and 90% power, yielding an estimate of 206 participants.[7] This online survey was constructed such that participants were automatically filtered out of the survey if they were not self-defined as Ultra-Orthodox, or if they failed a pre-registered attention check. Experimental studies among the Ultra-Orthodox community are particularly rare, as this is very isolated community which is not accustomed to participating in research (Malovicki Yaffe, Solak, Halperin, & Saguy, 2018). Considering this unique context, we aimed to recruit as many as 300 Ultra-Orthodox participants, to account for potentially large numbers of participants who will be excluded from analyses based on our pre-registered quality criteria. Of the original sample of 316 such participants, we omitted 99 participants who did not comply with the manipulation instructions (e. g., indicated they cannot recall a relevant event, or mentioned irrelevant emotions in their descriptions), and 1 participant who took an irregularly long time (2.5 SD above the mean) to complete the survey, reaching a final sample of 216 participants (58% female; M_{age}[SD] = 31.34 [10.24]).

8.1.2. Procedure and materials

As in Study 3, participants first completed a demographic questionnaire and were then randomly assigned to either a "contempt" or

"disgust" condition, where they were asked to describe an event in which they felt the target emotion towards seculars (full manipulation texts are shown in the Online Appendix). Participants then rated the extent to which they feel *contempt* and *disgust* towards Jewish-Israeli seculars, on a scale ranging from 1 (=strongly disagree) to 7 ("strongly agree").[8]

Finally, participants rated their support for harmful action and harmful inaction towards Jewish-Israeli seculars on a scale ranging from 1 (=strongly disagree) to 7 (=strongly agree). Harmful action/inaction items were presented in pairs, as in Study 3, representing comparable content. First, participants rated their support for 5 harmful action and 5 harmful inaction items in the general context of Haredi-secular relations ("The best way to deal with seculars' attempts to intervene in matters of our community is to ignore them and continue with our ways, even if it hurts them" [inaction]…. "to respond with force to any intervention attempt" [action]). Then, they rated their support for 4 harmful action and 4 harmful inaction items in the context of the COVID pandemic ("When seculars criticize us about observing the COVID regulations, we should ignore them and act as if we don't hear them" [inaction]… "we should attack them back forcefully" [action]). The pairs under each topic (general/COVID-related) were presented in random order (full list of items is shown in the Online Appendix).[9]

A factor analyses for all 18 items using AMOS software indicated a two-factor solution with one harmful inaction scale (α = 0.74) and one harmful action scale (α = 0.75), averaging across topics.

8.2. Results and discussion

8.2.1. Manipulation checks

Group-based contempt and disgust were highly correlated ($r = 0.71$; see Online Appendix for means, standard deviations and bivariate correlations between variables), as in Studies 1b-d and in Study 2. To examine whether contempt and disgust differed across experimental conditions, we conducted two ANCOVAs with experimental condition as the independent variable, group-based contempt or disgust as the dependent variable, and the other emotion (disgust or contempt) as a covariate.[10]

The experimental condition had a main effect on contempt, controlling for disgust ($F(1,213) = 5.15$, $p = .024$, $\eta p^2 = 0.02$), such that contempt was higher in the contempt condition ($M[SD] = 2.52[1.80]$) compared to the disgust condition ($M[SD] = 2.46[1.93]$). Vice versa, the experimental condition had a main effect on disgust, controlling for contempt ($F(1,213) = 8.74$, $p = .003$, $\eta p^2 = 0.04$), such that disgust was higher in the disgust condition ($M[SD] = 2.49[1.79]$) compared to the contempt condition ($M[SD] = 2.03[1.68]$).

8.2.2. Hypothesis testing

To examine the hypothesis that participants in the contempt condition express higher support for harmful inaction than participants in the disgust condition, we conducted a MANOVA with the harmful inaction and action scales as the dependent variables, and the condition (contempt/disgust) as the predictor. The analysis revealed no significant

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[7] The pre-registration mistakenly indicated that a medium effect size in a MANOVA ($f^2 = 0.0625$) requires 252 participants. This sample size refers to 4 dependent variables, whereas our hypothesis refers to 2 dependent variables.

[8] We made some simplifications of the design of Study 4, due to its unique context. First, as opposed to study 3, we measured the manipulation checks right after the manipulation text, as we anticipated a potentially large number of dropouts as the survey progressed. Second, we kept the manipulation relatively more simple than in Study 3, to decrease the demand on participants and increase their cooperation.

[9] Our survey included additional exploratory measures. Analyses with these measures are presented in the Online Appendix.

[10] In the pre-registration, we planned to conduct a MANOVA in which both manipulation checks are considered as simultaneous DVs. Nevertheless, due the high correlation between contempt and disgust, we decided to use the other manipulation check as a covariate to detect the unique effects of the manipulation on each distinct emotional experience, as in Study 3.

direct effect for the experimental condition on support for harmful inaction ($F(1,214) = 0.69$, $p = .407$, $\eta p^2 = 0.003$) or action ($F(1,214) = 2.50$, $p = .115$, $\eta p^2 = 0.01$).

We then considered group-based contempt and disgust as mediators of this relation, as in Study 3 (PROCESS Macro Model 4; Hayes, 2018). As in Study 3, as shown in Fig. 4, condition had a significant indirect effect on support for harmful inaction via contempt (effect = 0.09, $SE = 0.04$, [LLCI = 0.01, ULCI = 0.18]), but not via disgust (effect = −0.04, $SE = 0.04$, [LLCI = -0.12, ULCI = 0.03]; VIFs: contempt = 2.04, disgust = 2.07). Similar analyses were obtained for harmful action (Fig. 5), such that condition had a significant indirect effect on support for harmful action via disgust (effect = −0.08, $SE = 0.04$, [LLCI = -0.18, ULCI = 0.02]), but not via contempt (effect = 0.05, $SE = 0.03$, [LLCI = -0.01, ULCI = 0.11]), although the effect of contempt on harmful action was significant. Results were similar when we considered harmful inaction separately for each topic (general/COVID-related; see Online Appendix).

As in Study 3, our chosen manipulation had only indirect, rather than direct, effects on harmful action and inaction. Nevertheless, these findings provide further support that the experience of group-based contempt is uniquely associated with support for harmful inaction, this time compared to disgust, and by a lower-status (and lower-powered) group towards a higher-status (and higher-powered) group.

9. General discussion

The present research examined the emotional antecedents of a largely understudied form of intergroup harm in conflict, harm through inaction, which includes ignoring the out-group's existence, needs and contributions, and avoiding cooperation and communication. Across seven studies, our findings suggest that group-based contempt is the key emotion underlying support for harmful inaction, compared to other negative intergroup emotions such as anger, disgust, hate, and fear.

We interpreted the results of our multiple regression analyses in light of the zero-order correlations between the assessed emotions, following Kashy, Donnellan, Ackerman, and Russell (2009) and others (Campbell & Kenny, 1999; Fox, 1991; Lynam, Hoyle, & Newman, 2006;

MacKinnon, Krull, & Lockwood, 2000). As expected, all negative emotions were highly correlated, and correlated positively with both types of intergroup harm. Considering these correlations, the fact that group-based contempt was positively correlated with harmful inaction in both zero-order correlations and multiple regressions despite controlling for (different sets of) related emotions, and that it consistently emerged as uniquely associated with harmful inaction across different specifications of harmful inaction and different intergroup contexts, provides strong support for our hypothesis. The results of Study 2 also suggest that the perception of out-group inferiority, which significantly distinguishes contempt from anger, disgust, hate and fear, may be the psychological factor that remains when controlling for the shared variance of group-based contempt and related emotions.

Does the fact that harmful inaction, like harmful action, is motivated by the experience of negative emotions towards the out-group, imply that these behaviors are necessarily intended to inflict harm? Clearly, our actions may at times contradict our emotions (and their social functions), as is the case when we disregard our loved ones. Furthermore, the social functions of emotions are not necessarily equivalent to their social effects (Fischer & Manstead, 2008). Nevertheless, contempt does have a social function, which is to terminate intergroup relations by avoiding and ignoring the target, and is triggered by the perception that changing its behavior (or character) is impossible and hence is not worthy of resource investment (Fischer & Roseman, 2007). Insofar as harmful inaction in conflict situations is indeed associated with contempt, and is triggered by negative appraisals of the out-group, ignoring and avoiding one's rival in conflict may be seen as an expression of this social function. In fact, when ill intentions are in place, engaging in harmful inaction may represent an effective means to inflict harm upon an out-group while maintaining a relatively positive group image (Bandura, 1999), particularly compared to engaging in blatantly harmful action.

This work contributes to the intergroup conflict literature by investigating the psychological underpinnings of an intergroup behavior that is largely understudied in these contexts, particularly compared to more overt harmful actions. Our studies suggest that contempt plays a key role in triggering various action tendencies and policy preferences that
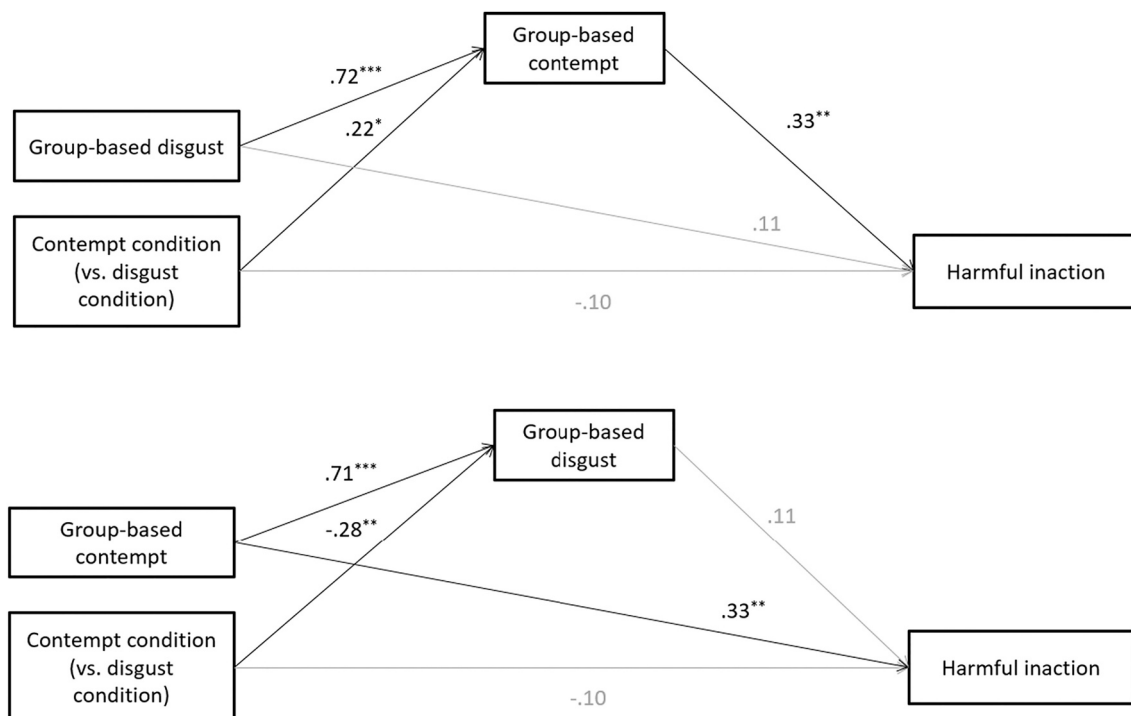

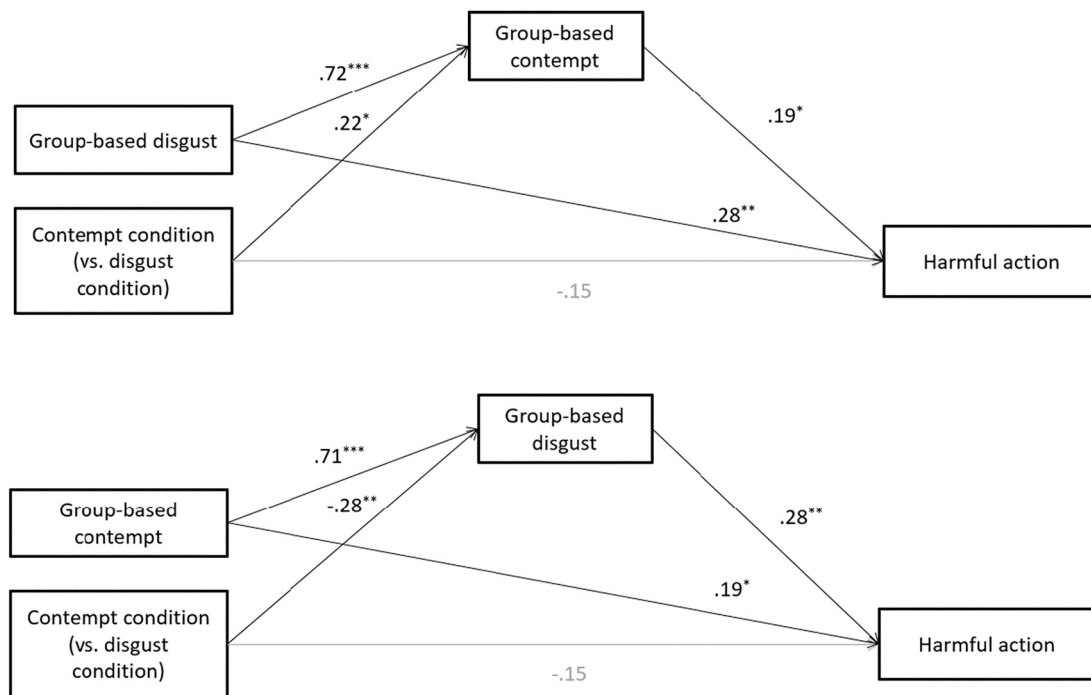**Fig. 4.** Mediation analyses for harmful inaction (Study 4).

Fig. 5. Mediation analyses for harmful action (Study 4).

undermine conflict resolution. Our findings further suggest that when directed towards lower-status groups, contempt also triggers behaviors that perpetuate societal inequality.

Insofar as contempt is based on perceived superiority, one may assume that it is primarily felt by higher-status groups towards lower-status groups. One may also assume that when the lower-status group is also lower-powered, it is less likely (and less able) than higher-powered groups to ignore and neglect its higher-powered out-group. Nevertheless, our findings among Jewish-Israeli Ultra-Orthodox (Haredim), which examined their emotions and action tendencies towards seculars, suggest that lower-status groups can indeed experience contempt towards higher-status groups. Indeed, Haredi's mean levels of contempt towards seculars seem relatively low compared to the mean levels of group-based contempt observed in other studies, most notably Jewish-Israeli leftists' and rightists' contempt towards their ideological out-group (Study 3). This may not be surprising given that the ideological divide in Israel is one of the strongest and most heated conflicts within Israeli society (Harel, Maoz, & Halperin, 2020). Furthermore, Haredim may have norms against expressing negative emotions towards seculars, who are often perceived as "captured infants" (i.e., a Talmudic concept by which seculars are not to be seen as responsible or in control of their sins; Saiman, 2018).

Most importantly, we find that Haredi's contempt towards seculars is uniquely associated with support for harmful inaction, despite their relatively low power. In fact, we find that the mean level of the Haredim's support for harmful inaction towards seculars was higher than their mean level of support for harmful action. Clearly, this finding may reflect reality constraints, as ignoring mainstream secular culture seems to be a defining characteristic of the Haredi society, given their separatist lifestyle. Also, given the reality of the power differences between the two groups, harmful action by Haredim towards secular Jews is perhaps less likely (although violent clashes have happened in the past, see for example Ben Zikri, 2017). However, insofar as the experience of contempt is based on the perception of the out-group as inferior, contempt (and the resulting harmful inaction) may also reflect a socially creative strategy on the part of the Haredim to increase their subjective sense of status, at least in certain domains, relative to the seculars. Future studies are encouraged to examine the relation between

contempt and harmful inaction among other low-status and low-powered groups, whose daily lives are more intertwined with those of higher-status group members. Also, future studies are encouraged to examine the potential effects of contempt and harmful inaction on lower-powered group members' group image and subjective status, as well as on the higher-powered group and intergroup relations. Finally, as relative status and power were confounded in our studies (with higher/lower-powered groups also having relatively higher/lower objective status in society), future studies are encouraged to examine the relations between contempt and harmful inaction while varying both the relative power and status of the in-group and out-group.

This work also contributes to basic research on intergroup emotions, by identifying the unique antecedents and outcomes of group-based contempt on intergroup relations. Our findings suggest that group-based contempt may trigger behaviors that help the group assert its positive status vis-à-vis competing out-groups while avoiding blatant harm-doing, attesting to the important implications of group-based contempt on group-based identity processes.

Despite its potential contribution, this work has some limitations. Most importantly, more experimental evidence is of course needed to establish the causal relationship between group-based contempt and harmful inaction. In Studies 3–4, we chose to manipulate contempt via an emotion salience manipulation, to avoid experimentally inducing new negative emotions towards a real-life rival in conflict. Although this manipulation increased support for harmful inaction indirectly via the experience of contempt (but not anger or disgust), it was (perhaps unsurprisingly) not strong enough to elicit direct effects on harmful action and inaction Future studies are encouraged to find ways to successfully evoke such emotions in controlled settings, while maintaining high ethical standards.

Although more work is needed to fully understand the psychological antecedents of harmful inaction, the current research is the first in-depth empirical attempt to identify its unique emotional antecedents in the context of intergroup conflict. A better understanding of the emotional experiences that trigger harmful inaction is an essential step towards moderating their potentially destructive negative consequences on intergroup relations.

Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2022.104304.

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