

Abstract of the thesis **“Investigating how emotions, and emotion regulation interventions change conflict-related social interactions”**

This research focused on how emotions and emotion-based interventions can help to promote more constructive social relationships in difficult contexts, encompassing conflicts from interpersonal disputes in romantic couples to intergroup conflicts. We conducted five empirical studies exploring three different axes aiming to: 1) shed light on understudied emotions (compassion and schadenfreude) in the context of conflict 2) test the effectiveness of emotion regulation interventions, namely compassion training and reappraisal training, to contribute to healthier and more positive social relationships and 3) examine the causal effects of sleep loss on emotions and conflict resolution. The contexts studied in this thesis ranged from interpersonal to intergroup conflicts in Switzerland and in Israel.

Taken together, our findings highlighted the central role of emotions in different conflict-related social relationships and in different phases of conflict. As for the first axis, we presented a more nuanced perspective on schadenfreude feelings in intractable conflicts and outlined various perspectives to provide a more comprehensive understanding of counter-empathic responses in violent conflicts. Based on our findings on studies investigating emotion regulation interventions, we also offer further evidence for the relevance of using these interventions to reduce tensions in interpersonal and intergroup contexts. Notably, our work emphasized the ability of compassion training to enhance social connectedness by fostering feelings of closeness in ongoing conflict-related interactions at both interpersonal and intergroup levels. Our findings provide further support for the relational core of compassion training and suggest that compassion may facilitate an affiliative function even in challenging contexts. Finally, in measuring the effect of sleep loss on conflict, one of our studies reveals a causal impact of sleep loss on conflict resolution through the modulation of affective responses. Overall, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of role of emotion in conflict-related processes within psychological science, and offers several avenues to build more tolerant, cohesive and compassionate relationships.