Available online at www.sciencedirect.com

ScienceDirect

Current Opinion in Psychology

Review

Negotiating the contested: A framework for studying social issue negotiations

Kian Siong Tey[1], Trevor Spelman[2] and Cynthia S. Wang[3]

Negotiation research has yielded useful insights on how to manage economic and business interactions by highlighting the importance of information sharing, trade-offs, and integrative solutions in achieving mutually beneficial outcomes. However, these approaches inadequately explain why negotiations over social issues such as immigration reform and climate change can remain deadlocked despite sustained efforts to reach agreement. Drawing upon recent research, we introduce an organizing framework that identifies three common features of such negotiations: moralization, identity threat, and public contestation. Moralization frames issues as matters of right and wrong, reducing willingness to compromise; identity concerns transform policy disagreements into threats to group membership and self-concept; and public scrutiny increases reputational risks and constrains flexibility. Together, these dynamics hinder engagement, value creation, and the quality of agreements. We review emerging interventions—including moral reframing, perspective sharing, high-quality listening, informal dialogue, and third-party mediation—that may mitigate these barriers. We conclude by highlighting the need for research examining how moral, identity, and public pressures interact across levels of analysis to shape social issue negotiation processes and outcomes.

Addresses
[1] Department of Management and Strategy, The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong
[2] Department of Management, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, Hong Kong
[3] Dispute Resolution Research Center, Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL, USA

Corresponding author: Tey, Kian Siong (teyks@hku.hk)

Keywords
Negotiation, Social issues, Conflict resolution, Polarization, Social identity, Moralization, Public contestation.

Current Opinion in Psychology 2027, **73**:102398

This review comes from a themed issue on VSI: Current Directions and New Horizons in Negotiation Research

Edited by Maurice Schweitzer, Brian Gunia and Nazli M. Bhatia

For complete overview about the section, refer Current Directions and New Horizons in Negotiation Research

Available online 13 August 2026

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2026.102398

2352-250X/© 2026 The Author(s). Published by Elsevier Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

Background

Negotiation, a decision-making process through which parties seek to resolve differences, is central to how scholars understand economic and business interactions (see Ref. [1] for a review). Past research suggests that negotiators often perceive their goals as incompatible, even when there are opportunities to attain mutually beneficial outcomes. Consequently, negotiators can improve outcomes by using integrative strategies such as sharing information about underlying interests, identifying opportunities to trade concessions on lower-priority issues for gains on higher-priority issues, or jointly searching for solutions that satisfy both parties' interests [2].

Despite these important insights, negotiations over social issues—problems affecting society that individuals or groups identify as harmful, undesirable, or unjust [3]—often reach impasse. For example, U.S. immigration reform has been unsuccessful for decades, despite repeated negotiations over border security and undocumented immigration issues [4]. Similarly, United Nations climate summits face deadlock over concerns of responsibility, economic development, and the future of fossil fuels [5]. This occurs because these negotiations often involve contested beliefs about what is right or fair, whose interests count, and what society should prioritize. As a result, negotiators are less willing to share information to uncover underlying interests or to even consider tradeoffs, making integrative strategies less effective and increasing the likelihood of costly deadlocks.

Negotiation scholars have acknowledged this challenge. Wade-Benzoni et al. [6] proposed that social issue negotiations are difficult to resolve because cognitive biases hinder constructive engagement and that institutional structures sustain these biases, making impasses more persistent. We extend this perspective on individual cognition by reviewing recent research from the negotiation literature and in adjacent fields such as social psychology, political science, and communication. Specifically, we explore the micro-level psychological and interpersonal processes at play during social issue negotiations. We synthesize these findings in an organizing framework (see Figure 1) that demonstrates how three common features of social issue negotiations—moralization, identity threat, and public

Figure 1

	Reduced Willingness to Engage	Bargaining Dynamics	Suboptimal Agreements	Potential Intervention
Moralization	Negotiating may seem morally compromising, threatening, or socially costly	Proposals trading material benefits for sacred-value concessions may seem offensive, reduce interest sharing, and increase resistance	Agreements may fall short of moral ideals, making them tenuous and more likely to lapse	Moral framing: translate proposals into counterparties' moral language; engage in high-quality listening; acknowledge the legitimacy of counterparts' concerns
Identity Threat	Negotiating may seem threatening because counterparts are seen as hostile outgroup members	Proposals and concessions may feel identity-threatening, increase distrust and competitiveness, and make compromise feel like self-betrayal or group disloyalty	Agreements that seem too conciliatory toward the counterpart may lead to ingroup backlash, reducing implementation and durability	Correct misperceptions; Sharing of personal experiences; third-party mediators to facilitate communication
Public Contestation	Reputational risk of being seen at the table	Framing contests harden positions	Performative rigidity; audience costs make revision costly	Backstage negotiations

Current Opinion in Psychology

Features, outcomes, and interventions in social issue negotiations.

contestation—shape negotiation dynamics, outcomes, and promising interventions. Although we discuss these three features separately for clarity, they frequently interact and reinforce one another in practice. We return to these interactions in the final section as an important direction for future research. We next examine each feature, beginning with the role of moralization.

Moralization

Social issue negotiations are often moralized, wherein parties construe issues as matters of right and wrong [7,8]. When negotiations become moralized, engaging with counterparts may be considered as legitimizing immoral positions [9] or forsaking sacred values [10]. These concerns may make negotiation seem threatening, futile, or socially costly, reducing the willingness to initiate negotiation [11].

Moralization can further impede value creation. Proposals that offer material benefits, such as money, in exchange for concessions on sacred values may be considered offensive because they imply that those values are negotiable [12]. When negotiators evaluate such trade-offs through a moral rather than a cost-benefit logic, they may become less responsive to material incentives, less willing to reveal underlying interests, and more resistant to compromising [13,14], thereby limiting opportunities for win—win agreements. Even when agreements are reached, negotiators may feel dissatisfied despite objective gains because the settlements still fall short of their moral ideals [14].

Moral framing—presenting proposals in moral terms that resonate with the target audience—offers one potential way to lower these barriers [15]. In social issue negotiations, this framing may attenuate the negative effects of moralization by making engagement feel less threatening and integrative strategies, such as interest-based sharing, more acceptable. For example, in immigration reform negotiations, those seeking pathways to legal status may emphasize humanitarian obligation when engaging with counterparts motivated by care and fairness, but may emphasize economic contribution when engaging with counterparts who value national loyalty [16]. By tailoring both the content of proposals and the negotiation process to the audience, negotiators

may reduce perceived disagreements and foster more win—win outcomes.

Furthermore, negotiation processes that foster mutual understanding may further reduce the moralization barriers. Negotiators can be encouraged to engage in high-quality listening and to acknowledge the legitimacy of counterparts' concerns. When negotiators demonstrate attention, comprehension, and a genuine desire to understand rather than judge, counterparts become less defensive and more open to reconsider their views [17,18]. Similarly, negotiators who constructively engage with counterarguments are often perceived as more receptive and trustworthy, which can improve dialogue even when substantive disagreements remain [19].

Identity threat

Social issue positions can become markers of identity. This can occur when issues are framed along ideological or demographic faultlines, but can also emerge when people come to define themselves through their social issue positions [20,21]. This issue-identity alignment can trigger ingroup favoritism and outgroup derogation [22], leading parties to be more critical of outgroup evidence [23], perceive outgroups as more hostile, and overestimate the extremity of outgroup beliefs [24,25]. Over time, these processes can create reinforcing cycles in which negative expectations about outgroups produce behaviors that confirm those expectations. Such reciprocal dynamics can prevent engagement with counterparts across the divide [26] and explain why deeply divided groups often remain locked in conflict despite opportunities for cooperation [27].

Identity concerns can also alter how negotiators interpret concessions and proposals. Encountering opposing positions on a social issue may be experienced as a threat to who negotiators are, rather than as differing preferences [28]. As a result, parties may become more competitive, less trusting, and less willing to make concessions that could disadvantage their group [29]. Because conciliation can feel like a loss of self [30] or be seen as morally suspect by one's own side [31], group members who appear insufficiently committed risk derogation from fellow group members [32]. Negotiators may therefore overestimate how harshly their ingroup will sanction compromise, treating concession as a social risk to the self rather than a substantive trade-off [33], and may hesitate to implement agreements that appear excessively conciliatory, reducing their durability.

Several of these identity-driven barriers, however, rest on misperceptions that may be correctable. Negotiators systematically misjudge the social terrain of disagreement: they underestimate how willing opposing counterparts are to learn about their views [34] and how positively cross-cutting conversations actually unfold [35]. These misperceptions discourage engagement, but they appear tractable—briefly informing people that a counterpart is open to learning reduces derogation and increases willingness to engage across entrenched geopolitical divides [34].

Another intervention that can help manage identity-induced barriers is encouraging negotiators to share personal experiences. This approach may buffer the deleterious effects of identity-laden conflict by humanizing negotiators, fostering perceptions of authenticity, and improving cross-ideological trust [36]. Returning to the example of immigration reform negotiations, stakeholders can share their lived experiences related to immigration, community change, or family histories, which may make identity salience less likely to produce perceptions of outgroup hostility or disloyalty and discourage competitive negotiation tactics.

Leveraging third parties such as mediators can also help support the negotiation process. Mediators can facilitate communication and reframe disagreements in ways less threatening to their sense of self and group belonging [37]. By helping parties distinguish underlying interests from identity-relevant symbols and positions, mediators can reduce defensiveness and encourage more constructive engagement. This may increase trust, improve openness to opposing viewpoints, and make negotiators more willing to consider proposals that might otherwise be perceived as identity-threatening.

Public contestation

Finally, social issue negotiations often unfold in the public sphere, under scrutiny from advocacy groups, media, and the broader public [38]. Contemporary media environments, such as social media platforms, can amplify polarization by rewarding uncompromising public positions and rapidly disseminating perceived concessions to partisan audiences [39]. These dynamics increase accountability pressures for negotiators [40] and create reputational risks, as merely participating in negotiations may be interpreted as not being committed enough to one's position and group [41]. These pressures can discourage parties from engaging in the first place [42].

Furthermore, public contestation can reshape negotiations by establishing which interpretations of the social issue dominate public discourse. Activists and political elites compete to define what the issue is about, and the dominant frames that emerge shape perceptions of which actors are credible stakeholders and which solutions are acceptable. For example, framing climate change as an issue of economic competitiveness can broaden participation in policy negotiations to include

business actors and labor groups, alongside environmental frontline communities [43].

Public contestation can also reduce negotiators' flexibility by creating incentives to appear consistently resolute in front of supporters [44]. When there is public visibility, negotiators may feel obligated to publicly maintain positions that they would privately be willing to revise [45]. As a result, even when interim agreements are perceived as inadequate, negotiators are less willing or able to adjust positions in response to changing circumstances. Public visibility can therefore reduce the flexibility needed to improve imperfect agreements, thereby locking parties into suboptimal outcomes.

Given these barriers created by public visibility, one promising intervention is to use informal discussions alongside formal negotiations. Such backstage negotiations allow parties to exchange information they may be unwilling to share publicly, including their constraints and their stakeholders' interests [46]. This can help negotiators identify areas of potential agreement before triggering audience scrutiny or political costs. By enabling parties to coordinate and negotiate privately, informal settings may make more integrative strategies feasible and increase the likelihood that subsequent formal negotiations will succeed.

Future directions

In this review, we organize recent research to introduce a framework that highlights how social issue negotiations are morally and identity-laden and publicly contested, and how these features shape negotiation dynamics, outcomes, and potential interventions. Below, we outline several directions for future research and practical implications.

Although research has examined these features independently, their interactions remain largely undertheorized. Examining this gap is important because these features may mutually reinforce one another in ways that render some negotiations intractable and limit the effectiveness of the aforementioned interventions [47]. Existing work suggests that individuals often arrive at positions on social issues through intuitive, identity-consistent reasoning rather than deliberate cost-benefit analysis [48]. Consequently, attitude change can feel like a betrayal of both moral principles and group membership.

When moralization and identity barriers occur together, proposals that require compromise may be especially likely to be dismissed: the proposal itself may be viewed as morally unacceptable, while the source may be viewed with distrust because of their opposing identity. As a result, moral reframing interventions may help when resistance stems from perceptions that a proposal violates one's moral values; however, when the proposal emerges across salient group-identity differences, the same reframing may be considered insincere or devoid of moral standing.

Future studies should therefore investigate how moralization processes [49] and opinion-based identities [20,21] interact to influence willingness to negotiate, reveal interests, and accept concessions. Such work could examine when these processes reinforce one another and when they can be decoupled, and what interventions can address both the moral meaning of the issue and the identity divides of the interaction. Understanding these dynamics may clarify why some disagreements become effectively non-negotiable while others remain amenable to dialogue. Advances in artificial intelligence (AI) may also create new opportunities to study and intervene in these processes. For example, AI systems could be used to identify areas of common ground, generate alternative framings of contentious issues, model the likely consequences of different proposals, and potentially facilitate communication between parties [2].

Finally, scholars should examine how social issue negotiations evolve across levels of analysis, from individuals to organizations, social movements, governments, and stakeholder networks. Understanding how pressures at one level influence behavior at another can provide a more comprehensive account of negotiation dynamics in complex social conflicts [50]. For example, González et al. [51] propose that social change emerges through contestation over norms and legitimacy. Because social issue negotiations occur within these broader struggles, negotiators are accountable not only to counterparts but also to constituencies seeking to advance or resist change. Future research should examine how social movements shape issue moralization, identity salience, and stakeholders' perception of acceptable outcomes. This means leveraging computational methods, including large-scale analysis of legislative records, media coverage, and social media discourse, to examine how frames spread and are contested, and how public positioning shapes private negotiation behaviors.

Conclusion

Social issue negotiations differ from traditional negotiations because they are shaped by moralization, social identities, and public audiences. These features make engagement riskier, compromise more difficult, and agreements less durable. Future research should focus on how these forces interact and on interventions that promote constructive dialogue in highly polarized contexts.

Author contributions

Kian Siong Tey: Conceptualization, Writing- Original draft preparation, Writing- Reviewing and Editing.

Trevor Spelman: Conceptualization, Writing- Reviewing and Editing.

Cynthia S. Wang: Conceptualization, Writing- Reviewing and Editing.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Data availability

No data was used for the research described in the article.

References

References of particular interest have been highlighted as:

* of special interest
** of outstanding interest

1. Thompson LL, Wang CS: *Advanced introduction to negotiation*. Cheltenham, UK Northampton, MA, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing; 2022.
2. Schweitzer M, Krueger K, Boothby E, Cooney G: **Negotiation**. In *Handb. Soc. Psychol*. Edited by Gilbert D, Fiske S, Finkel E, Mendes W. 6th ed., 6th ed., Situational Press; 2025, https://doi.org/10.70400/NUZE7621.
3. Spector M, Kitsuse JI: *Constructing social problems*. London New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group; 2017.
4. Demirjian K: *Over decades, congress failed repeatedly to address immigration dysfunction*. N. Y. Times; 2023. https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/14/us/politics/immigration-legislation-congress.html. Accessed 2 June 2026.
5. Niranjan A, Gayle D: **Cop30: 'we will exterminate ourselves' if we keep extracting fossil fuels, activists say – as it happened**. *Guardian* 2025. https://www.theguardian.com/environment/live/2025/nov/13/cop30-live-calls-for-just-transition-plan-grow-as-report-warns-world-on-track-for-26c-of-heating. Accessed 2 June 2026; 2025.
6. Wade-Benzoni KA, Hoffman AJ, Thompson LL, Moore DA, Gillespie JJ, Bazerman MH: **Barriers to resolution in ideologically based negotiations: the role of values and institutions**. *Acad Manag Rev* 2002, **27**:41–57.
7. Feinberg M, Kovacheff C, Teper R, Inbar Y: **Understanding the process of moralization: how eating meat becomes a moral issue**. *J Pers Soc Psychol* 2019, **117**:50–72, https://doi.org/10.1037/pspa0000149.
8. Teas PE, Skitka LJ: **Morality cut both ways: the role of cognition and emotion in attitude moralization and demoralization**. *J Pers Soc Psychol* 2026, https://doi.org/10.1037/pspa0000489.
9. Skitka LJ, Hanson BE, Morgan GS, Wisneski DC: **The psychology of moral conviction**. *Annu Rev Psychol* 2021, **72**:347–366, https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-063020-030612.
10. Atran S, Axelrod R: **Reframing sacred values**. *Negot J* 2008, **24**:221–246, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1571-9979.2008.00182.x.
11. Reif JAM, Brodbeck FC: **Initiation of negotiation and its role in negotiation research: foundations of a theoretical model**. *Organ Psychol Rev* 2014, **4**:363–381, https://doi.org/10.1177/2041386614547248.
12. Tetlock PE, Kristel OV, Elson SB, Green MC, Lerner JS: **The psychology of the unthinkable: taboo trade-offs, forbidden base rates, and heretical counterfactuals**. *J Pers Soc Psychol* 2000, **78**:853–870, https://doi.org/10.1037//0022-3514.78.5.853.
13. Ginges J: **The moral logic of political violence**. *Trends Cognit Sci* 2019, **23**:1–3, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2018.11.001.
14. Schuster C, Majer JM, Trötschel R: **Whatever we negotiate is not what I like: how value-driven conflicts impact negotiation behaviors, outcomes, and subjective evaluations**. *J Exp Soc Psychol* 2020, **90**, 103993, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2020.103993.
15. Brugman BC: **How the effects of emphasizing ethics are examined: a systematic review of moral framing experiments**. *Ann Int Commun Assoc* 2024, **48**:436–455, https://doi.org/10.1080/23808985.2024.2393845.
16. Voelkel JG, Malik M, Redekopp C, Willer R: **Changing Americans' attitudes about immigration: using moral framing to bolster factual arguments**. *Ann Am Acad Polit Soc Sci* 2022, **700**:73–85, https://doi.org/10.1177/00027162221083877.
17. ** Itzchakov G, Weinstein N, Leary M, Saluk D, Amar M: **Listening to understand: the role of high-quality listening on speakers' attitude depolarization during disagreements**. *J Pers Soc Psychol* 2024, **126**:213–239, https://doi.org/10.1037/pspa0000366.
18. Saluk D, Itzchakov G, Weinstein N, Amar M: **Listening across the divide: high-quality listening promotes speakers' state well-being through basic psychological need satisfaction during disagreements**. *J Pers Soc Psychol* 2026, https://doi.org/10.1037/pspi0000525.
19. Minson JA, Chen FS: **Receptiveness to opposing views: conceptualization and integrative review, personal. Soc**. *Psychol Rev* 2022, **26**:93–111, https://doi.org/10.1177/10888683211061037.
20. Pratt MG, Hedden LN, Khan H: **"Mob" mentality?: on the formation and consequences of moralized opinion-based intergroup conflict in organizations**. *Acad Manag Rev* 2025, https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2022.0212.
21. Van Bavel JJ, Pereira A: **The partisan brain: an identity-based model of political belief**. *Trends Cognit Sci* 2018, **22**:213–224, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2018.01.004.
22. Shapiro DL, Iwry J: **Worldviews in conflict: negotiating to bridge the divide**. *Negot J* 2022, **38**:435–452, https://doi.org/10.1111/nejo.12407.
23. Taber CS, Lodge M: **Motivated skepticism in the evaluation of political beliefs**. *Am J Polit Sci* 2006, **50**:755–769, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2006.00214.x.
24. Finkel EJ, Bail CA, Cikara M, Ditto PH, Iyengar S, Klar S, Mason L, McGrath MC, Nyhan B, Rand DG, Skitka LJ, Tucker JA, Van Bavel JJ, Wang CS, Druckman JN: **Political sectarianism in America**. *Science* 2020, **370**:533–536, https://doi.org/10.1126/science.abe1715.
25. Moore-Berg SL, Ankori-Karlinsky L-O, Hameiri B, Bruneau E: **Exaggerated meta-perceptions predict intergroup hostility between American political partisans**. *Proc Natl Acad Sci* 2020, **117**:14864–14872, https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2001263117.
26. Kennedy KA, Pronin E: **When disagreement gets ugly: perceptions of bias and the escalation of conflict**. *Pers Soc Psychol Bull* 2008, **34**:833–848, https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167208315158.
27. Coleman PT: **Characteristics of protracted, intractable conflict: toward the development of a Metaframework-I., peace confl**. *J Peace Psychol* 2003, **9**:1–37, https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327949PAC0901_01.
28. Harinck F, Ellemers N: **Hide and seek: the effects of revealing one's personal interests in Intra- and intergroup negotiations**. *Eur J Soc Psychol* 2006, **36**:791–813, https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.321.
29. Loschelder DD, Bündgens S, Trötschel R: **Identity-B(i)ased intervention of third parties**. *J Eur Psychol Stud* 2012, **3**:24–37.
30. Fiol CM, Pratt MG, O'Connor EJ: **Managing intractable identity conflicts**. *Acad Manag Rev* 2009, **34**:32–55, https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2009.35713276.

31. Hussein MA, Wheeler SC: **Reputational costs of receptiveness: when and why being receptive to opposing political views backfires**. *J Exp Psychol Gen* 2024, **153**:1425–1448.

32. Marques JM, Yzerbyt VY, Leyens J: **The "black sheep effect": extremity of judgments towards ingroup members as a Function of Group identification**. *Eur J Soc Psychol* 1988, **18**: 1–16, https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2420180102.

33. * Spelman T, Elnakouri A, Kteily N, Finkel EJ: **Overestimating the social costs of political belief change**. *J Pers Soc Psychol* 2026, **130**:742–762, https://doi.org/10.1037/pspi0000516.

34. Collins HK, Dorison CA, Gino F, Minson JA: **Underestimating counterparts' learning goals impairs conflictual conversations**. *Psychol Sci* 2022, **33**:1732–1752, https://doi.org/10.1177/09567976221085494.

35. Wald KA, Kardas M, Epley N: **Misplaced divides? Discussing political disagreement with strangers can be unexpectedly positive**. *Psychol Sci* 2024, 09567976241230005, https://doi.org/10.1177/09567976241230005.

36. ** Hagmann D, Minson JA, Tinsley CH: **Personal narratives build trust across ideological divides**. *J Appl Psychol* 2024, **109**: 1693–1715, https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0001201.

37. Harinck F, Druckman D: **Values and interests: impacts of affirming the other and mediation on settlements**. *Group Decis Negot* 2019, **28**:453–474, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10726-019-09620-x.

38. Janusch H: **Audience, agenda setting, and issue salience in international negotiations**. *Cooperat Conflict* 2021, **56**: 472–490, https://doi.org/10.1177/00108367211000784.

39. Brady WJ, Doyle M, Elnakouri A, Finkel EJ, Jackson JC, Kteily N, Parker V, Puryear C, Spelman T, Teeny J, Torres M: **Redesigning algorithms to intervene on social norm misperceptions during a national election**. *Nature* 2026, **655**: 942–956, https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-026-10536-1.

40. Aaldering H, De Dreu CKW: **Why hawks fly higher than doves: intragroup conflict in representative negotiation, group process**. *Intergroup Relat* 2012, **15**:713–724, https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430212441638.

41. Kertzer JD, Brutger R: **Decomposing audience costs: bringing the audience back into audience cost theory**. *Am J Polit Sci* 2016, **60**:234–249, https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12201.

42. Fearon JD: **Domestic political audiences and the escalation of international disputes**. *Am Polit Sci Rev* 1994, **88**:577–592, https://doi.org/10.2307/2944796.

43. Druckman D, Wagner L: **The role of issues in negotiation: framing, linking, and ordering**. *Negot J* 2021, **37**:249–278, https://doi.org/10.1111/nejo.12358.

44. Putnam LL: **Communication and interpersonal conflict in organizations**. *Manag Commun Q* 1988, **1**:293–301, https://doi.org/10.1177/0893318988001003002.

45. Wratil C, Wäckerle J, Proksch S-O: **Government rhetoric and the representation of public opinion in international negotiations**. *Am Polit Sci Rev* 2023, **117**:1105–1122, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055422001198.

46. * Kleine M, Huntington S: **Negotiating with your mouth full: intergovernmental negotiations between transparency and confidentiality**. *Rev Int Organ* 2025, **20**:1119–1150, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11558-024-09572-1.

47. Coleman PT, Vallacher RR, Nowak A, Bui-Wrzosinska L: **Intractable conflict as an attractor: a dynamical systems approach to conflict escalation and intractability**. *Am Behav Sci* 2007, **50**:1454–1475, https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764207302463.

48. Greene JD: **The rise of moral cognition**. *Cognition* 2015, **135**: 39–42, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cognition.2014.11.018.

49. Brandt MJ, Wisneski DC, Skitka LJ: **Moralization and the 2012 U.S. presidential election campaign**. *J Soc Polit Psychol* 2015, **3**:211–237, https://doi.org/10.5964/jspp.v3i2.434.

50. ** Bilali R: **The need for context in intergroup conflict research**. *Nat Rev Psychol* 2025, **4**:501–502, https://doi.org/10.1038/s44159-025-00469-3.

51. * González R, Carvacho H, Tausch N: **Psychological processes underlying normative transformation and social change**. *Nat Rev Psychol* 2025, **4**:404–416, https://doi.org/10.1038/s44159-025-00448-8.

Further information on references of particular interest

17. ** Across four experiments using video vignettes and live disagreements, speakers who encountered high-quality listening—marked by attention, comprehension, and benign intent—showed reduced attitude extremity and perceived less polarization, even on attitudes held with moral conviction. The effect ran serially through felt social connection and less defensive self-reflection, identifying the key mechanism as the listener's conduct rather than the speaker's disposition. The study establishes listening quality as a causal lever for de-escalating disagreement, with direct implications for managing identity-threatening and moralized exchanges at the negotiation table.

33. * Across five main and five supplemental studies (N = 4535), partisans substantially overestimated how harshly their own group would sanction them for shifting away from the party line (weighted d = .87), and these inflated expectations predicted self-censoring of dissenting views. The bias appears to stem from a fear that dissent signals greater disloyalty than observers actually infer; a brief intervention prompting reflection on one's past group loyalty reduced the concern and recalibrated expectations. The work shows that a key barrier to voicing conciliatory positions is a correctable misperception of ingroup backlash rather than actual sanction.

36. ** Across five preregistered experiments, people judged ideological opponents as more trustworthy when an opposing view was conveyed through a self-revealing personal narrative than through data or third-party anecdote, with message content held constant. The speaker's apparent vulnerability mediated the effect, which was stronger for more sensitive disclosures, and embedding data within a narrative preserved trust rather than diluting it. The findings identify self-disclosure as a low-cost route to building the trust that cross-ideological collaboration & negotiation requires.

46. * Drawing on three decades of EU Council of Ministers data (1990–2019), the authors show that as formal meetings opened to public view, ministers increasingly shifted sensitive bargaining to off-record meal breaks—a pattern intensifying with stricter transparency rules, more delegations present, and domestic contestation such as Euroscepticism. Parallel evidence from the UN Security Council suggests the retreat to "ersatz confidentiality" is a general feature of publicly scrutinized negotiation. The study provides large-scale field evidence that public visibility constrains flexibility and that negotiators recover it through informal, backstage channels.

50. ** The paper's central argument is that intergroup conflict research needs to take context more seriously. Rather than treating conflicts as interchangeable examples of general psychological processes, the paper emphasizes that each conflict is shaped by its specific historical, political, cultural, and structural conditions. Factors such as power inequality, collective memory, institutional arrangements, ongoing violence, and local narratives affect how groups understand one another and respond to conflict. Even the key terms such as justice, reconciliation or peace can be interpreted differently across contexts. As a result, decontextualized findings can be misleading or difficult to apply to real-world conflicts.

51. * The paper's central contention is that social change happens when people observe gaps between existing social norms and the norms held by individuals or groups and this motivates them to push for change. This misalignment can occur between different groups, between individuals and their group, or a group's norms and wider societal norms. The importance of this paper lies in explicating the individual and group foundations underlying large-scale societal change. This suggests that social change is not simply the result of structural conditions or policy shifts, but also of changing beliefs about what is normal and acceptable.